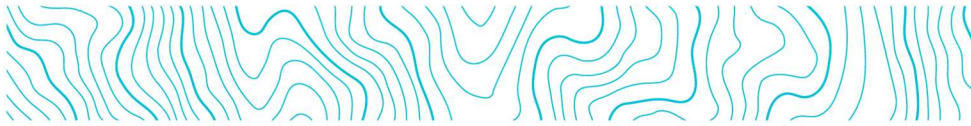


**HUTT CITY COUNCIL: TE AWA KAIRANGI SUBMISSION ON  
UPDATING NATIONAL DIRECTION 2025  
Packages 1- 4**

**To:** Ministry for the Environment  
Email: [ndprogramme@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ndprogramme@mfe.govt.nz)

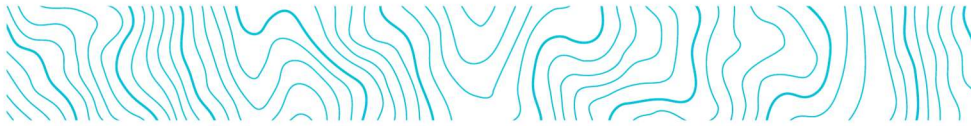
**Submitter:** Hutt City Council  
Private Bag 31912,  
Lower Hutt 5040  
Attention: Nathan Geard – Policy Planning Manager, Hutt City Council  
Email: [Nathan.Geard@huttcity.govt.nz](mailto:Nathan.Geard@huttcity.govt.nz)

Hutt City Council makes submissions in the **attached** document.



## Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Structure of this Submission	2
1.3	Submission overview	2
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Package 1: Infrastructure and Development</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Submission Overview	3
2.2	National Policy Statement for Infrastructure	3
2.3	National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation	5
2.4	National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission	5
2.5	National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities	6
2.6	National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities	6
2.7	National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats	6
2.8	National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga	7
2.9	National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards	8
2.10	Implementation	10
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Package 2: Primary Sector</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement	10
3.2	National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land	11
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Package 3: Freshwater:</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Package 4: Going for Housing Growth</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1	Summary of Submission	11
5.2	Questions	12



## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Hutt City Council has been a leader in bringing forward initiatives to provide for intensification and deliver housing growth in Lower Hutt:

- From 2012 to 2018 the Council had a development stimulus package in place to encourage and enable housing intensification in its residential areas.
- Beginning in the late 2010s, Hutt City Council began a sequence of widespread zoning changes to encourage housing supply that culminated in approximately 80% of residential land being upzoned to support high or medium density housing.
- Plan Change 43 was approved in 2019 in advance of any Government direction on housing intensification. This plan change provided for greater housing capacity in the city.
- In 2020 Hutt City Council became the first city to remove minimum car parking spaces as required under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD).
- In 2021 the Government made the implementation of the intensification policies in the NPS-UD and the MDRS a mandatory requirement for all tier one councils. Hutt City Council was one of the first councils in New Zealand, and the first city council, to implement these requirements through Plan Change 56, which came into effect in 2023.
- In 2025 we notified our Proposed District Plan to update the remaining parts from the Operative District Plan that there were outdated from early 2000s, and to provide a well-rounded implementation of the NPS-UD plan that enabled more growth across the whole of the city in addition to the more specific and targets requirements of the NPS-UD.
- Some examples of how the Proposed District Plan enabled and supported growth include: permitting minor dwelling units / granny flats across most of the city, including the rural areas; introducing new zones for the purpose of enabling growth, such as the mixed use zone to provide flexibility for a range of uses to support increased density; updated infrastructure and subdivision chapters to facilitate growth; new specific zones to provide for the operation and development of the hospital; WelTec Whitireia campus, Seaview Marina, and the existing quarries in the city.

As set out above, Hutt City Council has been an early adopter and leader and of national policy directives to enable housing intensification. We committed significant resources to implement these national policy directives to meet the needs of our growing population.

This next package of proposed national directives will need additional resources potentially imposing more cost on councils and bringing in more change and uncertainty. This will impact on the coherence of the council's current planning documents that are already delivering on the national directions of the Government. The proposed national directives may put at risk some of the housing outcomes that the Government is seeking.



Hutt City Council (“HCC” or “The Council”) has reviewed the Phase 2 National Direction (ND) instruments released on 29 May and 18 June 2025. The Council acknowledges the broader context of the ongoing Resource Management (RM) system reform. The Council understands that these Phase 2 documents serve as an interim measure. The Council also recognises that Phase 3 of the Resource Management reform will supersede Phase 2 and introduce new legislation to replace the Resource Management Act (RMA), specifically the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act. Each of these will be accompanied by a comprehensive set of national direction instruments.

The Council’s feedback on Phase 2 is outlined within this submission. It is important to note that HCC’s position may evolve as the reform process progresses, and Phase 3 of the resource management review is released.

## 1.2 Structure of this Submission

The Hutt City Council’s submission on the National Reform documents, is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Package 1: Infrastructure and Development
- Section 3: Package 2: Primary Sector
- Section 4: Package 3: Freshwater
- Section 5: Package 4: Going for Housing Growth

The Council’s submission focuses on the aspects of the reform that are most relevant to Lower Hutt and not all questions or provisions in the national direction have been discussed or answered. This is due to the interim nature of the proposals and the need to take a cost-proportionate review of these packages. We acknowledge that Phase 3 will require further consultation and there will be further opportunities to provide feedback as the RMA reform progresses.

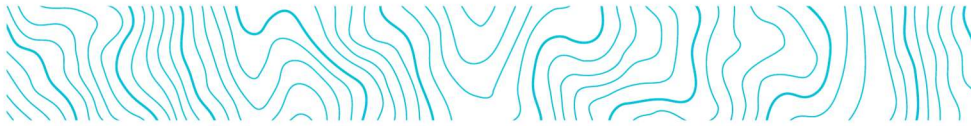
## 1.3 Submission overview

The Council acknowledges the significance of the national reform, and its potential to enable development across Aotearoa New Zealand. We support the intent to improve system efficiency, environmental outcomes, and community engagement, and offer the following high-level feedback.

The following high-level comments apply across the Phase 2 tranche of National Directions:

### **Lack of coherent national instruments:**

- A key observation from the Council’s review is that the proposed changes do not adequately address existing tensions between the various national direction instruments. Rather than resolving these conflicts, the Government appears to be deferring resolution to the upcoming Phase 3 legislative reforms that will replace the RMA.
- Some instruments prioritise enabling development, while others focus on environmental protection, creating conflicting policy signals and implementation challenges at a local level. Without a clear framework for resolving these tensions or articulating the trade-offs, councils are left to navigate competing priorities without adequate guidance. The



Council recommends that the Government provide greater clarity on how these directions are intended to interact and establish a mechanism for reconciling conflicts.

- We also doubt how effective the proposed national direction is in terms of influencing plan provisions and achieving the intended outcomes in the short term, particularly noting the announcement of new legislation to prohibit Councils from initiating new plan changes.

**Cost and Value:**

- The Council is concerned about the implementation costs of the proposed national direction on Council and other parties. These costs also come after years of frequent changes to legislation and national direction, many of which the Council is still dealing with.

## 2.0 Package 1: Infrastructure and Development

### 2.1 Submission Overview

**The key submission points for Package 1 are:**

**Capacity Checks:**

- For permitted development that provides new habitable development, a formal pre-approval framework should be implemented to assess whether existing infrastructure can accommodate additional demand. A capacity check of existing infrastructure is essential to ensure sustainable development and avoid unintended strain on existing public assets.

**Development / Financial Contributions:**

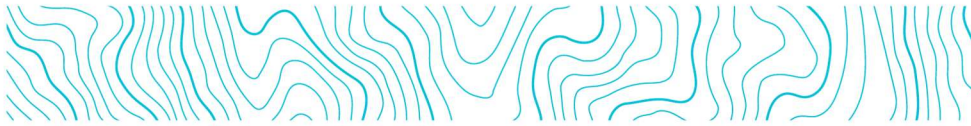
- For permitted development that provides new habitable development, what mechanisms are proposed to ensure the permitted activity contributes appropriately—through development contributions or financial contributions—to address the cumulative demand placed on existing infrastructure?

**Monitoring and Enforcement:**

- For permitted development that provides new habitable development, who will be responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the new permitted activity provisions, and who will bear the associated costs?

### 2.2 National Policy Statement for Infrastructure

The Council generally supports the proposal for an NPS-I, however, as previously raised, there is still no clear resolution of tensions or integration across the various National Direction instruments. The following feedback is provided in response to the proposed provisions and selected questions.



The Council has made specific comments on the proposed provisions and responded to questions considered relevant to the Lower Hutt context.

**The key submission points are:**

**Proposed Definitions**

<b>D1 Additional infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>a relevant school or institution as defined in the Education and Training Act 2020;</i></li> <li>b) <i>a hospital care institution within the meaning of section 58(4) of the Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2001;</i></li> <li>c) <i>fire and emergency services facilities;</i></li> <li>d) <i>defence facilities operated by the New Zealand Defence Force to meet its obligations under the Defence Act 1990;</i></li> <li>e) <i>correction facilities operated by the Department of Corrections to meet its obligations under the Corrections Act 2004;</i></li> <li>f) <i>a stormwater network; and</i></li> <li>g) <i>district or regional resource recovery or waste disposal facilities.</i></li> </ul>
-------------------------------------	--

**Response:**

- The Council supports the inclusion of social infrastructure in the definition of additional infrastructure. The Council supports the NPS-I applying to social infrastructure through the definition of additional infrastructure.
- Clarification is sought regarding the inclusion of parks and reserves in this definition. While the Package 1 discussion document refers to these being included, they appear to be missing from the formal definition in Attachment 1.1 NPS-I to the discussion document. HCC considers parks and reserves are a form of infrastructure as they offer a range of community and environmental benefits that are vital for a functioning city. They also provide refuge and support areas during emergencies.

<b>D18 Reverse sensitivity</b>	<i>in relation to infrastructure, means the vulnerability of existing infrastructure activity to complaint, burden, or constraint from a new or more intensive activity proposed or located near the existing infrastructure.</i>
<b>D19 Sensitive activities</b>	<i>residential activity (including visitor accommodation and retirement accommodation), care facilities, childcare facilities, schools, hospitals, custodial or supervised accommodation where residents are detained on site, marae, or place of worship.</i>

**Response:**

- The Council opposes the proposed definitions of D18 Reverse sensitivity and D19 Sensitive activities. These terms are commonly defined in planning documents and apply to a variety of contexts. The proposed NPS-I definitions would create inconsistencies and not apply to a range of contexts.



- The definition of *reverse sensitivity* is framed solely from the perspective of infrastructure providers and does not reflect the broader planning considerations councils must manage, such as the separation of incompatible land uses and deciding when reverse sensitivity is a relevant issue.
- The definition of *sensitive activities* is overly prescriptive and fails to recognise that sensitivity is context dependent and dependent on the particular effect. For example, schools are not typically sensitive to night-time noise or light spill.
- The proposed definition may also conflict with other planning contexts where “sensitive activities” are defined differently.

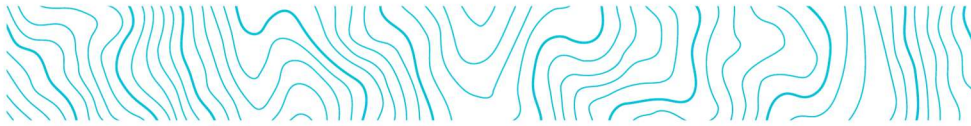
	Questions	Comments
Part 2.1		
2	Do you agree with the definition of 'infrastructure', 'infrastructure activities' and 'infrastructure supporting activities' in the NPS-I?	<b>General support.</b> The Council seeks the inclusion of parks and reserves as part of the 'additional infrastructure' definition. Parks and reserves are a form of infrastructure as they offer a range of community and environmental benefits that are vital for a functioning city. They also provide refuge and support areas during emergencies.
6	Do you support the proposed requirement for decision-makers to have regard to spatial plans and strategic plans for infrastructure?	<b>Support.</b>
9	Do the proposed policies sufficiently provide nationally consistent direction on assessing and managing the adverse effects of infrastructure?	<b>Disagree.</b> As noted in this submission, there is still a lack of coherence between national directions. Tensions remain between infrastructure and natural environment priorities across the full suite of existing and proposed national direction. Additionally, there is a gap in how natural hazards are addressed for infrastructure.
10	Do the proposed policies sufficiently provide for the interface between infrastructure and other activities including sensitive activities?	<b>Disagree.</b> The proposed definitions are framed from an infrastructure-centric perspective and do not reflect the complexity of land use interfaces. The definitions should be amended to apply to a variety of contexts, and recognize that the interface between activities may vary depending on the circumstances.

## 2.3 National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation

The Council has reviewed the amendments to the Amendments to the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation and confirms that there are no comments to be submitted.

## 2.4 National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission

The Council has reviewed the amendments to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008 and confirms that there are no comments to be submitted.



## 2.5 National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities

The Council has reviewed the amendments to the Amendments to the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009 and confirms that there are no comments to be submitted.

## 2.6 National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities

The Council has reviewed the amendments to the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009 and confirms that there are no comments to be submitted.

## 2.7 National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats

The Council generally supports the proposal for a NES-GF in its capacity to provide affordable housing choice. However, as previously raised in the Council's August 2024 submission on *Making it easier to build Granny Flats*, there are concerns with the infrastructure capacity checks, servicing and financial contributions for the new permitted granny flats (minor residential units).

**The key submission points are:**

### **Previous consultations:**

- The Council previously made a submission on *Making it easier to build Granny Flats*, in August 2024. This submission contained suggestions to improve the proposal, and the submission points remain relevant.

### **Pre-approval Infrastructure Capacity Check:**

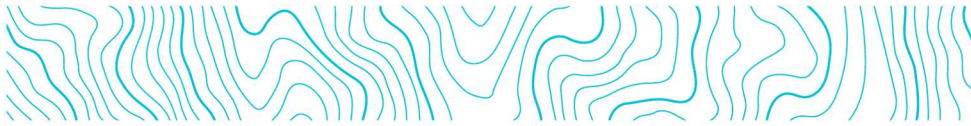
- In relation to the permitted activities proposed under the new NES, we are concerned that no mechanisms are proposed for infrastructure capacity checks. New housing will put pressure on existing networks, particularly the three waters. A mechanism needs to be incorporated to ensure the existing infrastructure networks are capable of supporting new connections. We understand under the proposed changes to the Building Act to enable granny flats, this capacity check would be through the Project Information Memorandum (PIM) process. However, we question the effectiveness of the PIM process if it is found there is insufficient infrastructure capacity to service the minor residential unit.

### **Financial Offsetting Mechanisms:**

- The Council raises concerns about the lack of financial offsetting mechanisms proposed, particularly around the National Environmental Standards which introduce a tranche of permitted development activities. There needs to be mechanisms in place to ensure that new development contributes to the cost of infrastructure and enables Local Authorities to collect development contributions.

### **Project Information Memorandum (PIM) process:**

- The Council seeks clarity on the use of the PIM process with respect to minor residential units (MRUs). It is understood that this mechanism will be required to be sought by developers prior to constructing an MRU, and that Councils can provide



feedback regarding compliance. However, the legislation puts the onus on licensed building practitioners (LBPs) to make sure they are not working on projects that are illegal. What mechanisms are in place to ensure the standards (i.e. 70sqm) are being adhered to if an LBP is not used?

**Proposed Provisions:**

<b>Where does it apply?</b>	This NES is proposed to apply to MRUs in residential, rural, mixed use, and Māori purpose zones across all of New Zealand.
-----------------------------	--

**Response:**

- The Council opposes the application of the policy to the mixed-use zone. The policy should only apply to residential, rural, and Māori purpose zones.
- The mixed-use zone provides for a variety of land use priorities that need to be managed in addition to providing for residential development, such as ensuring there is sufficient commercial and community space to meet the needs of the city or to serve surrounding neighbourhoods. Mixed use zones are enabling of residential activities but are still commercial zones that tend to need a greater attention to urban design factors and Councils need the flexibility to require resource consents to manage this.

Questions		
59.	Do you support district plans being able to have more lenient standards for minor residential units?	<b>Support.</b> The Council has implemented the NPS-UD and MDRS, and this should not be trumped by an NES that has the potential to be more restricting.
62.	Do you support existing district plan rules applying when one or more of the proposed permitted activity standards are not met?	<b>Support.</b>

- While not a key issue, the Council also suggests that the name “Granny Flats” does not fit with the usually formal and non-emotive tone of planning documents and legislation, or PCO’s guidance for drafting secondary legislation<sup>1</sup>. We suggest the government choose a more professional name for the instrument such as “Minor Residential Units”.

## 2.8 National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga

The Council generally supports the proposal for a NES-P. The following is provided as feedback:

**The key submission points are:**

**Pre-approval Infrastructure Capacity Check:**

- In relation to the permitted activities proposed under the NES, there is concern that no mechanisms are proposed for infrastructure capacity checks. New housing will put pressure on existing networks, particularly the three waters. A mechanism needs to be

<sup>1</sup> See the section titled “Using plain language” under the headings “Words / Use the simplest words to convey meaning”, which gives the comparable example that secondary language should talk about “gaming machines” rather than “pokies”.



incorporated to ensure the existing infrastructure networks are capable of supporting new connections.

**Financial Offsetting Mechanisms:**

- The Council raises concerns about the lack of financial offsetting mechanisms proposed, particularly around the National Environmental Standards which introduce a tranche of permitted development activities. There needs to be mechanisms in place to ensure that new development contributes to the cost of infrastructure and enables Local Authorities to collect development contributions.

## 2.9 National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards

The following is provided as feedback.

**Implementation:**

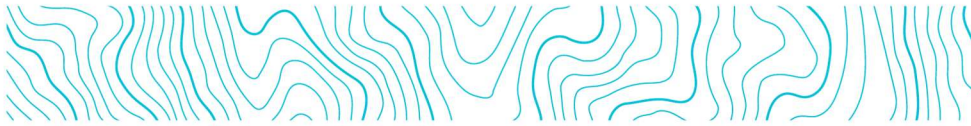
- The NPS-NH has been proposed as an interim national direction that will be superseded by the Planning Act. The Council is concerned about the proposed timing and considers this interim NPS may have limited effectiveness due to its limited scope and application. In addition, it is likely to cause greater confusion and cost for the public, who will be challenged with more and more complex information and uncertainty in relation to the impacts on managing natural hazard risk on their properties.
- The Council considers it is preferable to wait until the proposed Planning Act is introduced and fully developed national direction on natural hazards is prepared. This also allows time for the new provisions to be tested and ensured they are fit for purpose.
- The Council suggests that there should be a single national direction for all natural hazards to ensure a consistent approach to the management of risks and hazards. This includes incorporating coastal hazards into the NPS-NH. In a Lower Hutt context, the natural hazards in the Petone area are subject to both the NZCPS and the proposed NPS-NH, which will result in considerable overlap for existing residents, commercial, and industrial premises and Council in applying these two sets of national direction.
- The Council agrees with the 100-year climate change window; however, it requests that a specific IPCC scenario is chosen and specified in the NPS-NH. Without this level of clarity, it results in disagreements over the assumptions within assessments. National direction on an IPCC scenario would create better reassurance for applicants and local authorities.

**Proposed Definition**

<b>D2 New development</b>	Means development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of new buildings or structures on land that currently does not have buildings or structures on it; or</li> <li>• of the extension or replacement of existing buildings and structures.</li> </ul>
---------------------------	---

**Response:**

- The Council opposes the definition for 'New Development' that includes extensions or replacements of existing buildings and structures.



- Within the local context of Lower Hutt, the majority of Petone and the Eastern Bays are located within natural hazard areas due to the fault line and the low-lying setting in a coastal environment. The definition would suggest that Council's must restrict land uses within these existing developed areas.
- Within the Lower Hutt context this would result in an unmanaged retreat of existing urban areas. Councils need to be able to manage existing development in a nuanced way, and so national direction on development in existing areas should wait until the national framework on adaptation is complete.
- Clarity is sought on how large existing urban areas within natural hazard areas are intended to be managed under the NPS-NH.

**Objective 1**

<p><b>OB1 Embedding a risk-based approach</b></p>	<p>An objective that could be expressed as: <i>In order to avoid, mitigate and reduce risks arising from natural hazards on subdivision, use and development, local authorities apply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>a risk-based approach to managing natural hazard risks; and</i></li> <li>• <i>land use or use controls that are proportionate to the level of natural hazard risk.</i></li> </ul>
---	--

**Response:**

- The Council must consider the impact of this objective in its local context, with large urban, commercial and industrial zones being located in natural hazard prone areas.
- The Council seeks flexibility around existing development in the interim to ensure adequate planning approaches can be implemented to address these sensitive existing urban environments. There is a risk that the NPS-NH will have a negative impact on the commercial and industrial premises and result in abandonment of residential areas in a worst-case scenario.
- The Council wishes to emphasize the important distinction between natural hazards and the risks they pose, and the implications this has for assessing new development. It is essential that the scale and scope of risk assessments are proportionate to the nature and likelihood of the hazards being considered. Planning decisions should not be based solely on quantified risk; they must also take into account a broader range of factors, including implementation feasibility, community tolerance for risk, existing investment in infrastructure, and the functional or operational needs of the development. A balanced approach ensures that hazard management is integrated with practical planning considerations, supporting more resilient and context-sensitive outcomes.

**Policy 4:**

<p><b>P4 Best available information</b></p>	<p>Local authorities must use best available information when making planning decisions managing natural hazard risk.</p>
---	---

**Response:**

- The Councils seeks clarity on what “best available information” for decision makers refers to.



Part 3.3:		
77.	Do you support the definition of significant risk from natural hazards being defined as very high, high, medium risk, as depicted in the matrix?	<b>Disagree.</b> The approach does not add value and does not line up with the modelling approach the Council has undertaken.
80.	Should the proposed NPS-NH direct local authorities to use the best available information in planning and resource consent decision-making?	The Council seeks clarity on the use of 'best available information' in Policy 4. A suggestion would be that this should be publicly held information, and ensure applicants are not expected to provide additional information outside of what the Council considered 'the best available information'.
82.	What additional support or guidance is needed to implement the proposed NPS-NH?	This national direction should be the single natural hazard document, for example the NZCPS should have coastal hazards removed and added to the NPS-NH.
83.	Should the NZCPS prevail over the proposed NPS-NH?	No. Natural hazards should be removed completely from the NZCPS and handled only in the NPS-NH. This should also be reflected in the National Planning Standards, with coastal hazards not required to be split out from non-coastal hazards.

## 2.10 Implementation

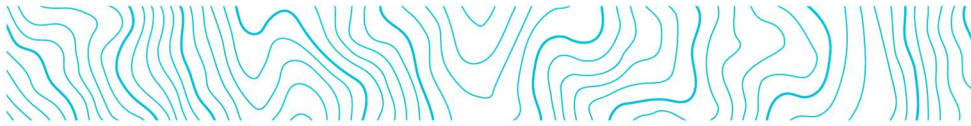
Questions		
84.	Does 'as soon as practicable' provide enough flexibility for implementing this suite of new national policy statements and amendments?	The Council has an overarching concern with the proposed instruments being interim, and the proposed Planning Act to be released and supersede these.
86.	Is it reasonable to require all plan changes to fully implement a national policy statement before or at plan review?	The Council supports the intention to allow Councils to implement the changes at the next plan review cycle.

## 3.0 Package 2: Primary Sector

### 3.1 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

The Council generally supports the amendments to the NZCPS in its capacity to recognise specified infrastructure and more enabling of 'operational need' in the coastal environment.

<b>Policy 6 Activities in the coastal environment</b>	<p>recognising that priority activities may have either a <u>functional need or operational need</u> under policy 6(1)(e) and policy 6(2)(c) and (d) to locate in the coastal marine area.</p> <p><u>(k) in relation to (1)(e) recognise that Infrastructure, renewable electricity, electricity transmission, aquaculture and resource extraction activities may have a functional need or operational need to locate in the coastal marine area.</u></p>
---	--



**Response:**

- The Council supports the strengthening of the language in Policy 6 to better enable development of priority activities. This change would enable the development and maintenance of existing and new infrastructure and activities in the coastal environment and coastal marine area, such as seawalls for roads and shared paths, and stormwater systems. The other matters in Policy 6 of the NZCPS ensure the adverse effects on the coastal environment are appropriately managed.

### 3.2 National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land

The Council generally supports the amendments to the NPS-HPL, to remove LUC3 classified land from how highly productive land is defined.

<b>Definition: LUC 1, 2 or 3 land</b>	Amend to remove LUC 3, refer to clause 3.4 and clause 3.5(7).
---------------------------------------	---

**Response:**

- HCC supports the removal of LUC 3 land from the NPS-HPL. The Council notes that there is only a very small area of LUC3 land in Lower Hutt and this land is mostly not used for highly productive agriculture at present.

## 4.0 Package 3: Freshwater:

The Hutt City Council has reviewed Package 3 and confirms that there are no comments to be submitted.

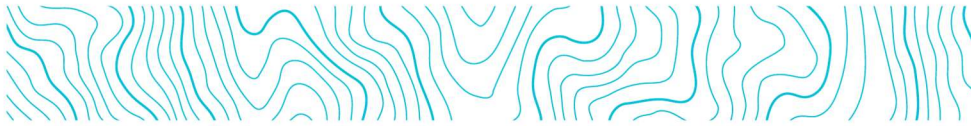
## 5.0 Package 4: Going for Housing Growth

### 5.1 Summary of Submission

The Council understand the proposals in this package are proposed to be implemented in Phase 3 of the RM Reform. The Council supports this timing for this implementation to minimise the need for plan changes given the short period when the new legislation is proposed. However, the Council has identified a few implementation issues that may arise with aspects of proposals in Package 4.

The Council wishes to highlight the potential impact of any changes to the methodology used in calculating development capacity. Hutt City Council as part of a regional group has developed models for calculating development capacity, and any alterations to the methodology would have significant implications in terms of both time and cost.

Changes to these foundational planning tools could require substantial rework of existing strategies, data models, and consultation processes. This would not only divert resources from other critical planning activities but also risk undermining the progress already made in aligning with national direction. Changing the methodology also limits the value of historic data and reduces our ability to track trends over time. The Council urges that any proposed changes be



carefully considered, with clear guidance and transitional support provided to ensure continuity and minimise disruption.

HCC also makes the following points, and requests that these be acknowledged and considered in future decisions that have an impact on Lower Hutt:

- In 2021 the government made the implementation of the intensification policies in the NPS-UD and the MDRS a mandatory requirement for all tier one councils such as HCC.
- HCC was one of the first councils in New Zealand, and the first city council, to implement this requirement through Plan Change 56. Plan Change 56 came into effect in 2023. The costs of implementing the NPS-UD intensification policies and MRDS through Plan Change 56 were around \$800,000.
- In order to implement the NPS-UD intensification policies and MDRS, HCC had to pause the full review of its District Plan which it had commenced in 2019. A key focus of this review was to ensure that HCC was taking a well-planned approach to enabling housing intensification in Lower Hutt. Plan Change 56 was intended to be an interim implementation while the full District Plan was progressed to give a well-rounded implementation of the NPS-UD, while also increasing overall growth capacity through measures such as permitting minor dwelling units / granny flats across the city; introducing new zones to support increased density, such as the mixed use zone; updating infrastructure and subdivision chapters to facilitate growth; and new specific zones to provide for the operation and development of education and infrastructure providers, such as the Tertiary Education Zone covering the WelTec Whitireia campus in Petone, and the quarry zone covering the existing quarries in the city.
- Being forced to implement further changes in national direction in the dated and obsolete operative plan rather than getting a new plan finished (whether under the RMA or the new planning system) further undermines the coherence of the council's planning and results in ongoing costs to the Council and ultimately to ratepayers.

## 5.2 Questions

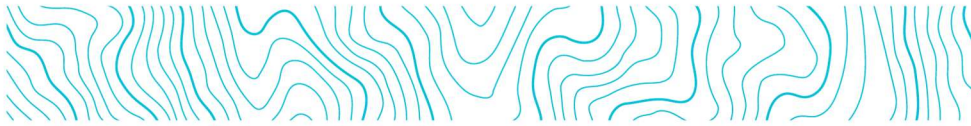
	Question	Comment
Urban development in the new resource management system		
1	What does the new resource management system need to do to enable good housing and urban development outcomes?	The Council generally supports the approach to housing and urban development in the current NPS-UD and seeks this continue. The new resource management system should also require coordinated planning of land uses and supporting infrastructure, especially three-waters and public transport but also schools and public open spaces.



Design details of Going for Housing Growth		
Housing growth targets		
3	Do you support the proposed high-level design of the housing growth targets? Why or why not?	<p>The Council has now undertaken three HBA assessments under different rules each time. It is currently in the midst of conducting the fourth, which would be the first time it has been able to reuse the methodology from the previous time. Further changes to the methodology for assessing this would come at a further cost to ratepayers and take time, pausing other streams of work for the Council. Changing methodology also limits our ability to track trends and progress over time. The Council opposes any change to the methodology of HBA assessments.</p> <p>Council has also used population projections from Sense Partners rather than Statistics NZ as the latter have not proven reliable in practice and far too conservative. We seek to continue to use these projections (as long as they remain higher than the Stats NZ scenario).</p>
Calculating development capacity		
7	How should feasibility be defined in the new system?	For the reasons outlined above we oppose any further change to the methodology of HBA assessments.
8	If the design of feasibility is based on profitability, should feasibility modelling be able to allow for changing costs or prices or both?	As above.
9	Do you agree with the proposal to replace the current 'reasonably expected to be realised' test with a higher-level requirement for capacity to be 'realistic'?	As above.
10	What aspects of capacity assessments would benefit from greater prescription and consistency?	As above.
Infrastructure requirements		
11	Should councils be able to use the growth projection they consider to be most likely for assessing whether there is sufficient infrastructure-ready capacity?	Yes – The Council does not want a national approach to managing infrastructure in a local context. The Council wants to manage this and choose how to manage this as appropriate in each context.
13	What level of detail should be required when assessing whether capacity is infrastructure-ready? For instance,	As above, this should be left to local authorities except to the extent that the



	should this be limited to plant equipment (e.g. treatment plants, pumping stations) and trunk mains/key roads, or should it also include local pipes and roads?	delivery of a particular standard of infrastructure is a legal requirement.
<b>Responding to price efficiency indicators</b>		
14	Do you agree with the proposed requirement for council planning decisions to be responsive to price efficiency indicators?	No – Requiring councils to base planning decisions on these indicators’ risks oversimplifying complex urban development challenges. This imposes a risk of undermining strategic plans. Market prices often reflect speculation and inequality, not affordability or accessibility. They are also based on theoretical models whose assumptions do not always hold – for example, rural fringe land can be undeveloped and have a low land value not because of planning restrictions but because it is undevelopable (e.g. because of topography or natural hazards).
<b>Business land requirements</b>		
15	Do you agree that councils should be required to provide enough development capacity for business land to meet 30 years of demand?	No – The Council oppose this direction. The Council would support a regional business land capacity check, however, at a local level this is not appropriate. The Council cannot zone land for business purposes without knowing where businesses want to go. The demands and needs are not the same as residential requirements. In some sectors (e.g. industry) there may also be no practical development capacity available within a territorial authority area. This is a particular concern for councils that are already built-up areas and do not have significant greenfield opportunities.
<b>Minimum building heights to be enabled</b>		
25	What are the key barriers to the delivery of four-to-six storey developments at present?	Six storey buildings are already economically unfeasible in much of the Lower Hutt Valley Floor due to the poor ground conditions; increasing the permitted building heights would therefore not have any actual effect on developments.  In the context of Lower Hutt there are natural environment restrictions from the location of the shallow aquifer below the valley. This results in foundation issues for delivering taller buildings in the key public transport corridors. This does not



		<p>necessarily need a district plan response but needs to be taken into account – increasing height limits does not always increase realisable development capacity if buildings of that height cannot be built at a reasonable cost in practice.</p> <p>There are also additional build costs from building code requirements for four-to-six storey buildings due to a lack of standardized acceptable solutions requiring specific engineering design. Government should do more work to extend the scope of acceptable solutions and reduce the compliance costs of mid-rise building work.</p>
<b>Intensification in other areas</b>		
30	<p>Is an equivalent to the NPS-UD’s policy 3(d) (as originally scoped) needed in the new resource management system? If so, are any changes needed to the policy to make it easier to implement?</p>	<p>The Council supports the inclusion of this policy. The changes to Policy 3(d) meant that while the objectives of the NPS-UD required intensification across the urban area, there was no theoretical basis in the policy to make these decisions. Returning to the original Policy 3(d) tests of demand and accessibility helps give a frame for deciding on what development intensity to plan for.</p>
<b>Other matters</b>		
36	<p>Do you have any other feedback on Going for Housing Growth proposals and how they should be reflected in the new resource management system?</p>	<p>The Council supports the requirement for councils to not set minimum car park requirements. On-street parking issues can only be effectively managed through managing on-street parking.</p>
<b>Transitioning to Phase Three</b>		
37	<p>Should Tier 1 and 2 councils be required to prepare or review their HBA and FDS in accordance with current NPS-UD requirements ahead of 2027 long-term plans? Why or why not?</p>	<p>The Council opposes any changes to the requirements given that we have already started work on the HBA for the 2027 Long Term Plan.</p>