

11. Submission on Draft Auckland Plan

Reporting officer David Coleman (Senior Strategic Planner)

Date 26 October 2011

Vision, mission and values

This item is in accord with Council's vision, mission and values statement as the development of high quality inter-regional relationships and relationship are important to the Council vision of being the ultimate living environment, due to the significant influence of the Auckland Plan on growth and development in the upper North Island.

Local Government Act 2002 – The four well-beings

Cultural *The Auckland Plan may have an influence on the district's cultural well-being, due to the considerable linkages between Whangarei and Auckland, including the rohe of several hapu and iwi that extend across the different regions.*

Economic *Auckland has extensive economic connections with Whangarei and the implementation of the Auckland Plan will be an important contributor and driver of economic well-being in Whangarei District.*

Environmental *Auckland and Whangarei are geographically linked, especially through the Kaipara Harbour and the eastern marine environment and many of the same issues around biodiversity and biosecurity are shared. Efforts to mitigate environment issues in either location will be of importance to both.*

Social *The development on Auckland will have some influence on the social well-being of Whangarei District, due to the strong inter-regional flow, the sharing of health services, and cross-over in the labour market.*

Background

Auckland Council released the Draft Auckland Plan on 20 September 2011, with submissions due by 31 October 2011 at 4pm. This is a relatively short time-frame within which to make a submission but it is considered necessary to enable Auckland Council to finalise the Auckland Plan by December 2011, with the Council adoption planned for February 2012. These timeframes will allow Auckland Council to include material from the Auckland Plan into the 2012-2022 Long Term Plan for Auckland. Public hearings on the Draft Auckland Plan will occur during November and December 2011.

The Auckland Plan is a mandatory plan that is required under section 79 of the Local Government Act (Auckland Council) Amendment Act 2010. In essence, the Draft Auckland Plan is a thirty year spatial plan that sets out the 'blueprint' for the growth and development of the Auckland region, similar to the Whangarei Growth Strategy.

This is the second step in the preparation of the Auckland Plan. In April 2011, Auckland Council released 'Auckland Unleashed' which was the discussion document for the Auckland Plan. Whangarei District Council gave some feedback on Auckland Unleashed in May 2011. The feedback emphasised the many important linkages between Whangarei District and Auckland Regions, and the need to collaborate on a number of issues.

Examples of such linkages include:

Economic connections such as specialised and niche shops, goods, and services that are available in Auckland; dependence of Northland on Auckland transport networks; local offices of Auckland-based firms, collaboration and competition in terms of the marine industry; shared dependence on energy networks and the availability of industrial land.

Environmental connections such as shared biodiversity and climatic characteristics (terrestrial, freshwater, and marine); shared biosecurity issues; and grouping together within the North-eastern Biogeographic Region (and the corresponding influence on the management/development of marine protected areas, aquaculture, and fisheries quotas).

Social connections such as strong inter-regional migration between Whangarei District and Auckland Region and vice versa; use of premier tertiary institutions (especially universities) in Auckland by Whangarei District school leavers, and the use of specialised health services in Auckland by Whangarei District residents

Cultural connections such as the support and use by Northland residents of the entertainment and cultural facilities on offer in Auckland; the use by Auckland residents of the leisure facilities in Whangarei District; and the many Iwi and Hapu rohe boundaries cross the territorial authority boundaries of Auckland, Kaipara District and Whangarei District; and the planning documents prepared by Iwi that are applicable to both regions.

Following the feedback on the discussion document, Auckland Council then prepared the Draft Auckland Plan and has notified it for public submissions.

Draft Auckland Plan Themes

The Draft Auckland Plan is a substantial document that addresses a number of issues relating to the growth and development of Auckland, and its communities economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing. At the heart of the Draft Auckland Plan is a vision to be *"The World's Most Liveable City - Te Pai me Te Whai Rawa o Ta-maki"*.

The document is broken down into a number of chapters and sections:

Section A of the Draft Auckland Plan outlines the background and purpose to the Auckland Plan and how it 'fits' with legislation and documents that are prepared by Auckland Council.

Section B provides information on the present state of Auckland as well as key drivers on growth and development, including global megatrends.

Section C outlines the overall strategic direction for Auckland and revolves around developing a quality compact Auckland. This includes themes such as a green Auckland; an Auckland of prosperity and opportunity; a well connected and accessible Auckland; a culturally rich and creative Auckland; and the principles that Auckland will use to achieve preferred outcomes. To address these themes, Auckland has identified five key strategic levers (or *transformational shifts*) where wholesale changes in focus will enable the Auckland vision to be attained. The *transformational shifts* or levers are:

Dramatically accelerate the prospects of Auckland's children and young people

Strongly commit to environmental action and green growth.

Move to outstanding public transport within one network

Radically improve the quality of urban living

Substantially raise living standards for all Aucklanders and focus on those most in need.

These transformational shifts are then used to guide both the high level development (spatial) strategy and the rest of the document.

Section D addresses Auckland's *high-level development strategy*, which uses spatial planning to outline the key areas of urban population and business growth, roles for different settlements, and an overall regional form for Auckland. The core components of the development strategy are *making a compact city work* (including new rural urban boundary, interconnected towns and villages, less is more approach that prioritises actions, clear direction and sequencing of growth); *key structural shapers and enablers* (e.g. provision of critical infrastructure, land use and transportation integration, green and blue environments and gateways such as the downtown port and Auckland Airport); *Two Big Initiatives* (Auckland's City Centre and Southern Initiative); and *Working and Delivering with Others*.

The *strategic direction* and *high-level development strategy* is then used to inform the rest of the Draft Auckland Plan. There are thirteen chapters that range over a number of areas, including *Auckland's people*, *Auckland's economy*, *Auckland's Environment*, *Auckland's response to climate change*, *Rural Auckland*, *Auckland's housing*, and *Auckland's transport*, amongst other topics. These chapters contain a large number of *targets*, *priorities*, *directives* and *actions*. *Targets* are the outcomes that Auckland Council and its partners will set out to achieve within given time-frames and support the strategic direction. *Targets* are set in a wide range of areas including educational attainments, export orientated economy, access to health and housing, crime levels, GDP levels, water consumption, biodiversity, housing stock, roles for rural communities and so on. *Priorities* are the issues where the Auckland Council will concentrate its effort on. *Directives* are the guiding principles used in the decision-making process.

It is still unclear as to the exact status of the directives, but it seems clear that these directives will feed into the other statutory and non-statutory documents prepared by Auckland Council. These directives are in turn supported by a series of stated *actions*.

Overall the Draft Auckland Plan contains a quite different policy framework to which Council is familiar with, and it is difficult to evaluate what impact this approach will have in terms of other statutory and non-statutory documents that are prepared by Auckland Council, and what legal status they may hold. However, directives may provide policy direction, which will likely filter through the Auckland Councils statutory and non-statutory documents, whilst targets and priorities are likely to be the starting point for negotiations between Auckland Council and other collaborative parties, including through the Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA).

Chapter 12 Implementation Framework is important as it outlines the different processes that Auckland Council (financial and otherwise) will use to implement the plan. It also sets out the important infrastructure projects that Auckland Council (or its partners) needs to undertake over the next thirty years, including timing, costing, and location. These projects include the North Auckland and Northland Grid Upgrade (2011-2015), Puhoi to Wellsford Road of National Significance (2011-2025), and an additional Marsden to Auckland fuel pipeline (2021-2025).

Council staff have prepared a draft submission to the Draft Auckland Plan for Councils approval. This submission has provided more detail around the themes raised in the initial feedback to *Auckland Unleashed* (rather than simply re-iterating them) as well as responses to new material outlined in the Draft Auckland Plan.

Themes that have been developed within the draft submission include implications that emerge from the implementation of Auckland/s high-level development strategy, relationships between Auckland Council and Maori, Art and lifestyle connections, potential complementary linkages between Auckland and Whangarei especially in terms of the provision of industrial land, skilled worker attraction and green growth opportunities (including conservation of natural capital via ecosystem markets, inter-regional recreational trails), marine environment linkages, and infrastructure (including roading, rail and port). These themes are presented to Auckland for consideration in terms of the Auckland Plan, but more direct requests for collaboration and discussion are likely to be raised through the UNISA forum.

The draft submission does not directly address the strategic direction of the Auckland Plan, the high-level strategy, targets, priorities, directives or actions or their appropriateness. Instead it raises issues that are important to Whangarei that would benefit from an inter-regional approach, and should be considered by Auckland Council in the long term implementation of the Auckland Plan.

Recommendation

- 1 That this report and attachments be received
- 2 That Council adopt this submission and that it be submitted to Auckland Council for their consideration in the Auckland Plan process.

Attachment

[Whangarei Council's Submission on the Draft Auckland Plan](#)

Tabled

Copy of the Draft Auckland Plan and the Draft Economic Development Strategy