



Urgent Reports Agenda

**Notice is hereby given of
an Open Workshop**

Tuesday 6 August 2024

9:30am

**Function Room
Waimate Event Centre
15 Paul Street
Waimate**

www.waimatedc.govt.nz

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REPORTS

1 GENERAL BUSINESS

1.1 CANTERBURY REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT - OFFICER FEEDBACK

Author: Emma Bush, Planner

Authoriser: Dylan Murray, Regulatory and Compliance Group Manager

Attachments: Nil

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this brief is to update councillors on the draft Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (RPS), and ongoing staff engagement with Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury/ECan).

BACKGROUND

2. ECan are currently reviewing the operative RPS and intend to formally notify a replacement RPS in December 2024.
3. Waimate District Council (Council) has been provided with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on a draft RPS in accordance with the provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Council officers have reviewed the draft RPS and have identified several issues that we recommend providing feedback to ECan on.
4. These topics are:
 - a. The timing and process ECan is intending to follow,
 - b. The provisions around infrastructure, particularly on-site wastewater, and
 - c. The approach to managing urban growth and highly productive land.
5. There will be further opportunities to engage during the process. Officers can support Council in engaging with ECan councillors and continue to engage at a staff level.
6. Once the RPS is formally notified, officers will work with Council prepare a formal submission.

Environment Canterbury has commenced a review of the Regional Policy Statement

7. An RPS is a regulatory tool developed under the RMA. An RPS provides an overview of resource management issues and sets the policy direction towards the integrated and effective management of natural and physical resources in a region.
8. The RMA requires regional councils to commence a review of their RPS every 10 years. The current Canterbury RPS became operative in 2013, so ECan commenced a review in early 2023. As part of this review, they are required to engage with some parties, including council and tāngata whenua. They have also undertaken initial public engagement.
9. At this stage, ECan intend to formally notify the proposed RPS in December 2024. That will commence a submission and hearing process.
10. Once complete, the Waimate District Plan is required to give effect to the RPS, and staff are required to consider the RPS when making consent decisions.

There are several key topics which Council should engage on prior to Notification

11. Council officers have undertaken an initial analysis of the RPS and recommend focussing on several key issues at this stage:

- a. Timing and process for engagement:

Recommend formal notification of the proposed RPS is delayed until February 2025. This enables more time to resolve issues prior to notification and avoids consulting over the Christmas and New Year period.

- b. Infrastructure, particularly wastewater:

As drafted, the RPS has a range of potential challenges. One policy would prevent wastewater disposal (new and existing) from sites on less than 4ha. This would prevent use of existing systems and new development in the townships of St Andrews, Makikihi, Morven, Glenavy and Hakataramea. There are other options, including grandfathering existing discharges (either partially or totally), applying the policy only in areas of particular risk, or ECan improving monitoring and compliance of existing systems.

- c. There may also be challenges for Council's infrastructure. The RPS imposes a stronger effects management hierarchy, including requiring some effects be avoided, or that any effects are offset.

- d. Enabling growth and development:

While the draft RPS does encourage development, officers are concerned that the policy direction places too much weight on design and urban form and does not adequately recognise economic and social considerations, particularly for Waimate. A more nuanced approach for some rural districts may be appropriate.

- e. The provisions for lifestyle development and highly productive land need to be considered carefully. Currently the combined effect of the draft RPS and the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land appear to prevent lifestyle and rural residential development across the district, not just on highly productive land.

12. Officers are still undertaking a detailed review of the draft RPS, and will inform Council of any issues identified, and work toward preparing a formal Council submission on the RPS once it is notified.
13. At this stage, officers have not undertaken a detailed review of provisions relating to freshwater and biodiversity, given the significant change Government has signalled in these areas. A delay in notification of the RPS would enable greater understanding of how Central Government intends to approach these issues and enable officers to provide more useful feedback.

OUTCOME

14. That Council give direction to Council planning officers to provide feedback on the draft RPS.