

**Title:** Environmental Monitoring Framework

**Adopted by Council:** 13.4.99

**Committee/Date:** Regulatory and Environment 6.4.99

**File Reference:** RM15-12-01

**Generated By:** Environmental Policy & Approvals Division

**Policy:**

That Council endorses the following Environmental Monitoring Framework in order to meet Council's legal responsibilities:

Environmental Monitoring Framework

Co-ordinated by the Environmental Policy Team, Environmental Policy and Approvals Division, Customer Services Group.

**GOALS**

1. To monitor that part of the environment of the City of Lower Hutt as is appropriate to enable the Hutt City Council to effectively carry out its functions.
2. To assess the suitability and effectiveness of the provisions of the District Plan – City of Lower Hutt.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 35 (2) (a), (b) and (d) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act).
2. To enable the Hutt City Council (the Council) to make more informed decisions about managing the environment of the City of Lower Hutt (the City), by detecting changes or trends in the state of the environment that relate to its functions.
3. To enable the Council to determine whether the Anticipated Environmental Results (AER's) in the District Plan have been achieved and enable the Council to make more informed decisions in preparation of the review of the District Plan and any variations or plan changes.

4. To enable the Council to identify any new or emerging environmental issues in the City which should be addressed by the Council (eg. through the District Plan).
5. To enable the community to become better informed about the state of the environment of the City and changes or trends over time and the suitability and effectiveness of the provisions of the District Plan, in order to participate effectively in local environmental issues.

## **POLICIES**

1. To undertake environmental monitoring in accordance with the approach described in Chapter 18 of the Proposed District Plan.
2. To implement both State of the Environment monitoring and District Plan monitoring simultaneously.
3. To monitor the parts of the environment that relate to the functions of Council and are collected by Council.
4. To report monitoring information about parts of the environment that relate to the functions of Council that are collected by other organisations where relevant and appropriate.
5. To give priority to monitoring those issues requested by the District Plan Subcommittee as a result of hearings to the Proposed District Plan.
6. To monitor the state of the environment in the City and the suitability and effectiveness of the District Plan by developing indicators for selected issues, which meet a defined set of criteria and are developed using the pressure-state-response framework.
7. To use the procedures and methods developed in the Sustainable Management Fund Project: *District Plan Monitoring: Towards Suitability and Effectiveness* (Opus Consultants).
8. To implement the indicators developed in the national Environmental Performance Indicators Programme, Ministry for the Environment, as appropriate and where they relate to the functions of Council.
9. To make use of findings of environmental monitoring, including preparation of the district plan review or plan change.
10. To report the monitoring information bi-annually as specified in the Draft Annual Plan and evaluate the Framework to analyse output against existing policies to determine if policy review is required.

## **BACKGROUND**

Section 35 (2) of the Act states:

*Every local authority shall monitor—*

*(a) The state of the whole or any part of the environment of its region or district to the extent that is appropriate to enable the local authority to effectively carry out its functions under this Act; and*

*(b) The suitability and effectiveness of any policy statement or plan for its region or district; and*

*(c) The exercise of any functions, powers, or duties delegated or transferred by it; and*

*(d) The exercise of the resource consents that have effect in its region or district, as the case may be,—*

*and take appropriate action (having regard to the methods available to it under this Act) where this is shown to be necessary.*

## **METHOD**

The following three issues are being addressed in the District Plan Monitoring Project (Opus Consultants):

- Residential amenity values (incorporating the request from the District Plan Subcommittee to monitor yard requirements)
- Rural character and amenity values
- Hazardous facilities (as requested by the District Plan Subcommittee)

From April 1999, the following additional environmental issues will be monitored, relating to the functions of the City Environment Group:

### **DISTRICT PLAN ISSUES:**

- Retail/commercial activity
- Car-parking/servicing
- Signs
- Open space and recreation
- Trees
- Interface issues (business - residential)
- Earthworks
- Noise
- Natural Hazards
- Non-residential activities (such as schools and community care facilities) in residential areas

### **INSPECTIONS & ENFORCEMENT ISSUES:**

- environmental complaints and compliance monitoring of resource consents
- noise
- dangerous goods
- trade waste and hazardous substances/waste

- cleaner production
- swimming beach and swimming pool water quality
- dogs

From April 2000 the Framework will extend to monitoring data collected by divisions within the Asset Management Group, while continuing to monitor the selected issues within the Customer Services Group. To ensure there is adequate data available from this point in time, it would be appropriate to set up an inter-division working group from August 1999 to determine what type of information will be required from other divisions in 2000. The issues will be determined by the working group but will include environmental monitoring relating to aspects of the asset base.

In the case of District Plan issues, procedures and methods developed in the Sustainable Management Fund Project: *District Plan Monitoring: Towards Suitability and Effectiveness* (Opus Consultants) will be used.

For other selected issues, the following procedure will be used:

1. Use the Pressure-State-Response Framework to develop indicators for each issue and prioritise these indicators.
2. Confirm methods for monitoring the selected indicators.
3. Undertake a baseline assessment of these indicators including collation/formatting of data and data analysis.
4. Report on the findings as appropriate.
5. Collect trend data as appropriate for each indicator depending on the chosen monitoring frequency.

This Framework will be monitored and reviewed in April each year and reported to the Regulatory and Environment Committee.