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19 July 2023

Plan Change 9 – Historic Heritage and Natural Environment Hearings Panel, and
Plan Change 12 – Enabling Housing Supply Hearings Panel
Hamilton City Council

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Attn: Steve Rice, Hearing Administrator
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Dear David Hill (Chairperson),

Waikato Regional Council response to Direction 9 for Hamilton City Council's Plan Change 9 – Historic Heritage and Natural Environment and Direction 18 for Plan Change 12 – Enabling Housing Supply

Introduction

1. This letter responds to Direction 9 on Hamilton City Council's (HCC) Plan Change 9 (PC9) – Historic Heritage and Natural Environment and Direction 18 on HCC's Plan Change 12 (PC12) – Enabling Housing Supply which seek comments on how the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (NPS-IB) should be managed in these plan change hearing processes.
2. Both Directions have been addressed in this letter given both are HCC plan changes and there may be crossover between the two regarding the NPS-IB.
3. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) agrees that both PC9 and PC12 must give effect to the NPS-IB.
4. As the NPS-IB is newly released, we do not yet fully understand the implications for plan changes.

Plan Change 9

5. It seems clear that there is a relationship between the NPS-IB and PC9, which has a key focus on Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) and indigenous biodiversity. As such, we consider that the NPS-IB needs to be addressed in the hearing process for PC9.
6. However, we recognise that the SNAs aspect of PC9 has already been addressed at the May 2023 hearing, and the remaining hearing set for November 2023 has a heritage focus.
7. Therefore, we suggest that the NPS-IB should be addressed as a separate topic alongside the heritage topic in November. It may be that Council's and submitters' evidence and recommendations for PC9 change as a result of the NPS-IB, and there should be an opportunity to re-address matters raised as part of the SNA topic at the May hearing.

Plan Change 12

8. The link between the NPS-IB and PC12 is less clear. SNAs identified in the notified version of PC9 were recognised as a qualifying matter in the notified version of PC12. Therefore, any changes to PC9 as a result of the NPS-IB may also have implications for PC12.
9. While PC9 is HCC's plan change process which predominantly addresses matters contained in the NPS-IB, we understand that the scope of PC9 is largely limited to SNAs and does not address indigenous biodiversity outside of identified SNAs. Given the NPS-IB has requirements for indigenous biodiversity which extend outside of SNAs, it may be that the NPS-IB has additional implications for PC12, which relates to intensification across the city.
10. Given the hearing timetable for PC12 is currently unconfirmed, we suggest that the NPS-IB is addressed as part of evidence and hearings alongside other PC12 topics, whenever that is scheduled to occur.

Conclusion

11. We agree that the NPS-IB should be considered and addressed in both PC9 and PC12.
12. Whether expert conferencing on the topic is required would likely depend on the number of submitters with an interest in the matter.
13. Should you have any queries regarding the content of this letter please contact either Katrina Andrews on (07) 859 0929 or by email katrina.andrews@waikatoregion.govt.nz or myself directly on (07) 859 2831 or by email hannah.craven@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely,



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