

**3 FEBRUARY 2021, 7-9PM – ROTARY LOUNGE, UPPER HUTT LIBRARY**

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**Introduction**

Council officers welcomed everybody and began with an overview of the timeline for Plan Change 50 (PC50). Members enquired as to whether the proposed timeline was realistic, with Officers confirming they expected the proposed deadlines to be met. Officers indicated that draft provisions and zoning were expected to be consulted on in the middle of 2021. The Focus Group terms of condition state that the group has agreed to continue meeting until October 2021, reflecting the development programme of PC50.

**Consultation Responses Discussion**

Members enquired about the nature and number of enquiries that Council had been receiving relating to PC50, with Officers replying that Council had seen a general rise in enquiries relating to development which would be within the scope of PC50. Members also enquired about the whether there had been a rise in the number of consent applications which Council were receiving. Officers stated that the Consents team had been busy recently, and factors such as the Residential Stimulus Policy resulting in an increase in development applications, although this was only focused in the urban than the rural area. Members also enquired about whether there were developers who were waiting for PC50 to take effect to utilise the new rules, with Officers confirming this to be the case.

There was a brief discussion amongst the group regarding the language used within the material which has been circulated for consultation, and that the terminology and sentence structure can hinder peoples understanding. Members requested that additional guidance, including in the form of visual representations of how any new rules would affect the development potential or land use activities for different zones, saying that this would be beneficial to ensure the public would understand how PC50 would directly affect them. Furthermore, members stated that there were a lot of ambiguous statements, which without a defined definition are less clear and may result in unintended consequences from Policy implementation.

Officers explained that the adoption of the National Planning Standards meant District Plans across the country would have a more uniformed structure and should be more user friendly. This includes the use of the E-Plan, a tool which displays District Plan provisions at a site level. Upper Hutt City Council will be adopting an E-Plan in the near future, but this project is at the early stages. Officers confirmed their intent to provide a guidance document alongside the provisions to assist Plan users in understanding the rule framework.

One member enquired about the Guildford Timbre Companies proposal to develop within Pinehaven as being included within PC50, as opposed to a Private Plan Change. Officers indicated that this was likely due to costs and timing.

Officers continued by providing an overview of the District Plan review schedule, including the status of other Plan Changes and how they interact with PC50. This included a brief overview of how Private Plan Change 51 would correlate with PC50 based on zoning changes.

Officers provided a brief overview of the feedback which was received during the Objectives and Policies consultation which was undertaken from 30 September to 2 November 2020. This included a review of the number of submissions, which was low in comparison to the population of Upper Hutt, but a high number for a Plan Change consultation.

The feedback received for Maymorn was briefly summarised. Members enquired about the section sizes to recap. Members also mentioned that flexibility in the ability to subdivide was important, to be able to cater to different needs. Members also highlighted that with the mix of zones within Maymorn, there was a wide variety for such a small area.

Members also asked how the feedback raised during the consultation would be responded to by Council. Officers stated that the feedback received would be taken into consideration during the development of the provisions.

The impact of the National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL) was also discussed. Officers explained how the current mapping of productive soils was somewhat dated, but that the categorisation of soils into classes 1, 2 and 3 under the HPL was currently proposed to be carried out by Regional Council. Information shared thus far could therefore be seen as an indicator and means to help set expectations in the community. Members mentioned that it was important to protect the productive areas of Upper Hutt to protect self-sufficiency and align with the Sustainability strategy. The relationship of the NPS-HPL with PC50 will depend on the gazettal schedule for the NPS, which was anticipated prior to the next public engagement.

Members also discussed the differences between land which has been labelled as productive, and land which is being used productively, and how Council would enforce that land classified as productive would actually be used in such a fashion.

Feedback received on Rural Hill development and identified intensification areas was discussed, as was the feedback received on rural business and visitor accommodation, with some discussion on how the rural business and accommodation rules would be addressed to ensure rural businesses are reflective of rural character, and how this would be managed (e.g Noise limits, traffic controls, size of buildings).

### **Proposed Updates**

Officers explained that as a result of the consultation process a number of updates were being proposed for the draft Objectives and Policies. This includes:

- A refinement of Objectives and Policies where overlapping was identified
- The addition of new objectives and policies based on issues raised by submitters
- Rural-residential intensification extents and management policy update
- Reviewing some areas where development was proposed over rural production areas

## Rural Zoning

Officers provided an overview of how National Planning Standards set the format for District Plans, including the specific zones and their definitions which can be used for the rural area. It was also detailed how National Planning Standards allow for the use of precincts, overlays, and development areas to control specific land uses and development types, with the underlying zone remaining.

The four rural zones that were identified within the National Planning Standards as being applicable to what had currently been proposed were:

- General Rural Zone
- Rural Production Zone
- Rural Lifestyle Zone
- Settlement Zone

Officers also detailed the below peri-urban zones:

- Large-lot residential zone
- Future Urban Zone
- Neighbourhood Centre Zone

Although the National Planning Standards provides a definition for each zone, Officers presented to members a localised definition for each of the 4 rural zones, which had been tailored to the rural Upper Hutt context. This sought to act as an outcome statement for what activities and development would be anticipated within each zone. Officers asked for feedback from the focus group members on the proposed local definitions for these zones, noting that Planning Standards also allowed for the use of precincts overlays to denote unique areas or activities that did not align with the underlying zone and were therefore worthy of additional protection.

Members mentioned that the proposed zones were an improvement on the existing rural zones, although they incorporate similar typographies to the existing zoning descriptions. One member mentioned that the use of the word residential in the context of 'rural-residential living' for a number of definitions was superfluous. However, several members mentioned the word was a good descriptor for how rural areas were intending to largely be used in a residential capacity, distinguishing itself from primary production areas.

Members mentioned that the definitions were potentially too long, and could be trimmed, or split into separate sentences to provide clarity. Officers mentioned that the wording of the definitions structure was a result of the District Plan setting and legal precedent, and the single-sentence was unlikely to be changed.

A few members queried the description for Rural Lifestyle Zone, which allows for primary production or rural industry at a scale secondary to rural-residential lifestyle living. Some were uncertain about how the scale could be defined, and the complexities of how this would relate to any living activities occurring on site, as well as preventing Lifestyle areas to be used for productive means. It was noted that examples had been provided within the focus group of productive use of 1ha allotments and that the zone descriptor should reflect this. Officers explained that established productive use would be protected via existing use rights, or may be enabled via resource consent. However, officers noted that the current approach may be too forceful and that wording could be altered to 'generally' expect that Lifestyle areas would predominately be used for residential means to allow for some form of primary production.

In consideration of areas where a precinct overlay may be suitable, members provided the following examples:

- Staglands
- Equestrian Areas
- Gliding Club
- YMCA (Kiwi Ranch Road)
- Black Stump Youth Hostel
- WWII memorial site on Bulls Run Road

Officers noted that some of these areas would be protected via Designations or Heritage protections within the District Plan. In these cases, an overlay would not be appropriate as they were already protected. The forthcoming Heritage Plan Change may also seek to further protect areas with heritage value. Officers would seek to review the areas noted by focus group members and ensure there were no other forms of protection.

#### **Next Session**

Officers explained that the next Focus Group session would involve identifying where these different zones would most suitably apply within the rural area of Upper Hutt. Officers also mentioned that when the focus groups were completed, a session would be provided on making an effective submission on a Plan Change.