

9 October 2013.

Dear Submitter

Re: Independent review of the Kapiti Coast Proposed District Plan (PDP)

Much has happened since our last communication with you. The purpose of this letter is to update you on important developments regarding the PDP.

Independent review

In response to public concerns Council has decided to commission a review of the Plan by an independent planning expert. His brief will be to determine whether the PDP should continue to be progressed through the hearings process, be significantly changed or be withdrawn in order to address submitter concerns. Council also wants to make pre-hearing meetings more inclusive and effective in discussing and resolving issues before the formal hearing process.

We have listened

Council is taking these steps because of concerns expressed during the formal submission process, at pre-hearing meetings and by submitters who addressed Council last week. They include claims the Plan is too complex and inaccessible and that the policies and rules are impractical. Some of you have told us the Plan has such significant problems it should be withdrawn entirely and the process started again. It is the view of Council staff that the Resource Management Act (RMA) process is flexible enough to deal with these issues and withdrawing the PDP and restarting the process would be disruptive and very costly.

However, I want to assure you that Council has heard your concerns and is taking them very seriously. That is why we have commissioned one of New Zealand's most respected planners, Leigh Auton, to undertake the review. Mr Auton is a former president of the New Zealand Planning Institute, former CEO of Manukau City Council (and Interim CEO of Tauranga City). He has decades of planning and management experience in local government and has exceptional stakeholder leadership skills. He will start immediately and have the job completed by early next year.

Revised timeline

To allow for the completion of the independent review and time to improve the pre-hearings process, Council has decided to delay the start of the formal PDP hearings until next year. This means, subject to the outcome of the review, the first of the six hearings, Living Environment, will now begin in late January/early February. A revised timeline for the rest of the hearings will be sent to you shortly.

Council is keen to make the process as inclusive as possible. As Mayor Rowan advised at last week's Council meeting, people who didn't make a formal submission are encouraged to align themselves with submitters who have raised similar concerns, to enable them to have their views represented. They may also attend pre-hearing meetings but it should be noted that, under the Resource Management Act, only people who have made a submission or further submission are legally able to take a lead role in presenting in the formal hearing process. Similarly, only they can lodge appeals once Council decisions on submissions are released.

Finally, as a newcomer to the Kāpiti Coast District Council, I would like to take the opportunity to thank those of you who have taken the time to provide valuable feedback about the PDP process, particularly those who took time out of their busy lives to attend Council last week. We got the message loud and clear that we need to look again at the Plan and our processes. I sincerely hope we can work together to develop a robust and workable blueprint for the future of our wonderful district.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen McArthur
GROUP MANAGER
STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS