Dear Sir/Madam,

NPS-HPL Submission

1. Introduction

Horowhenua District Council (HDC) appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the Proposed National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD). This submission was adopted by the Horowhenua District Council and its meeting on 2 October 2019.

HDC recognise that enabling growth and providing for quality urban environments is critical to community wellbeing. HDC are therefore supportive of the proposed NPS-UD in principle. In particular, HDC support the focus on enabling growth both up and out and the focus on quality urban environments.

However, HDC seek a number of amendments to improve the clarity of the proposed NPS-UD as well as to improve the NPS-UD’s alignment with other national direction, including the proposed NPS-HPL and the Essential Freshwater programme. HDC want to express concern that the NPS-HPL and NPS-UD are being described as companion documents, yet appear to be subject to different review and gazettement processes (i.e. NPS-UD is to go through an independent review panel, while the NPS-HPL will not). HDC recommend that if the Ministry continues with both NPS, they should be subject to the same process.

HDC also wish to raise concern about the short timeframes imposed by Government to provide feedback on this and other important documents. Not only have the short timeframes affected our ability to provide detailed feedback, but also the timing alongside local body elections has affected our ability to canvass community opinions.

As stated above, HDC support the focus on the proposed NPS-UD on ‘quality urban environments’. However, HDC believe the NPS-UD does not clearly articulate what a quality urban environment is. The wording contained within the proposed NPS-UD is vague and has a metropolitan focus, yet applies to all urban settlements, including provincial towns. HDC believe it is important that the NPS-UD acknowledge and understand the range of urban settlements that exist within New Zealand and the important roles they play in the overall urban resource of New Zealand. For example, provincial towns stand a better chance of providing affordable housing than large urban centres and provide a different living option – with choice in living options being a priority identified in the proposed NPS-UD. HDC wish to emphasise that this diversity should be celebrated and that this should be recognised and provided for within the proposed NPS-UD.

HDC wish to express a concern about the costs of compliance associated with the proposed NPS-UD. The proposed NPS-UD focuses heavily on increasing development capacity beyond what is feasible and likely to be taken up. HDC understand the rational of taking this approach to reduce the effects of market competition on land supply markets. However, where this relies on increased provision of infrastructure, this needs to be balanced against what is affordable for ratepayers.

Horowhenua Context

Horowhenua District is currently experiencing significant growth. In the absence of any census data since 2013, HDC commissioned Sense Partners to prepare growth projections for the District. These forecast the District’s population to grow by 33% to 41,000 by year 2040 (medium growth scenario). For
the past three years, the District’s population has grown at a faster rate than the Sense Partners projections, suggesting that growth pressures may be even more significant than currently anticipated.

The recent release of initial Census 2018 data confirms that the District is growing rapidly (most rapid growth the Manawatu-Whanganui Region) and at a higher rate than even our initial projects forecast.

*Figure 1 – Horowhenua Projected Growth vs Actual Growth*

A number of factors are driving this growth, but significantly:

- Roading improvements south of the District improving accessibility to Wellington;
- Dramatically increasing house prices in urban areas forcing people to look to places such as Horowhenua, which are relatively cheaper;

Central Government have also recently identified Horowhenua as a refugee resettlement area by 2020. This may further accelerate growth in our District.

Population growth, along with increasing unaffordability in major urban areas, is having a ‘spill over’ effect on Horowhenua. Horowhenua has recently experienced significant increases in housing costs, resulting in housing reaching the point of ‘severely unaffordable’ within our local context.

- Median house price increased from $264k in September 2017 to $345k in March 2019 (+31%)
- As of March 2019, the housing affordability index for Horowhenua was 7.5. This is ‘severely unaffordable’

Transitional, social and emergency housing in the District are all full and the Horowhenua Housing Register has grown from six applicants in 2014 to 93 applicants in 2019. These indicators all reflect the pressure for additional housing within our District.

Based on the above, HDC are well aware of the challenges associated with providing for growth and are eager to ensure we provide the right opportunities to accommodate and enable growth. HDC have already taken a number of steps to address this, including a recent plan change to increase residential intensification opportunities, prepared a Growth Strategy, established a Housing Forum and are in the process of drafting a Housing Action Strategy.

However, HDC is caught in the middle of many competing tensions, many of which are out of HDCs control. For example, many of our identified growth areas are constrained by capacity issues at State
Highway intersections. In addition, the proposed NPS-HPL has the potential to undermine the growth planning work we have undertaken to date and unduly constrain opportunities for our community. The NPS-FWM may also affect Councils ability to provide for growth. The NPS-UD does not address this potential conflict.

**Level of Directive Intervention**

HDC want to make a specific, upfront response to the Ministry’s question as to whether there would be support for more directive national direction on urban development that controlled aspects such as a height, density/subdivision standards, and site coverage.

While HDC is not entirely dismissive of this as an option, HDC wish to express concern about this for the following reasons:

- The discussion document does not provide any detail on the process that would be followed to identify such standards;
- The sheer complexity of developing a set of metrics and standards that would be appropriate across the variety of urban settlements present within New Zealand (for example, Levin would require a different approach than Wellington);
- The risk of perverse planning outcomes, resulting from ‘one size fits all’ approach that does not take into account local environments and contexts;
- That this approach does not acknowledge the value of local knowledge in planning and decision making processes;
- That this approach could run counter to the diversity and choice principles contained within this NPS;
- That this approach could result in homogenous urban environments that do not represent the values of local communities;
- That this approach would represent a further chipping away of the public participatory and devolved decision making elements of the RMA.

**Other Considerations**

HDC also point out that the proposed NPS-UD does not address climate change and does not provide any direction on how urban environments should consider and respond to this. Given the potential impacts of climate change on urban environments, HDC are concerned that the NPS-UD has not addressed this.

Land and housing development processes are highly complex. While having a planning regime that enables and encourages quality urban environments and provision of affordable housing is an important component, many other factors influence whether or not urban development and affordable housing are delivered (for example, cost of infrastructure). Provision of affordable housing and quality urban environments are a key priority for HDC, as they are for the Government. Therefore, HDC urge the Government to consider other mechanisms to support the NPS-UD to ensure these objectives are achieved.

**Alternative Approaches**

HDC believe there are a number of alternatives the Ministry should consider further, including:

*Combined NPS-UD and NPS-HPL*

A combined NPD-US and NPS-HPL would help to reconcile the clashes that exist between the two proposed documents. The NPS-HPL seems to duplicate work that many Councils are already doing through their District Plans and strategic growth planning. Incorporating objectives and policies into a
combined NPS that specify how HPL must be considered when providing land for urban expansion would make explicit that this needs to occur for Councils that are not already doing this, without requiring Councils to duplicate work that is already occurring effectively at a local level.

**National Planning Standards**

HDC ask whether a national planning standard was considered as part of the process of preparing the proposed NPS-UD. While HDC would advise the Ministry to be cautious in issuing prescriptive direction (further addressed above), the discussion document does not indicate whether the Ministry considered this option.

2. National Direction or National Confusion?

The proposed NPS-HPL and the proposed NPS-UD have conflicting priorities and are weighted towards different outcome biases. HDC foresee potential implementation issues where parties involved in plan making and/or resource consent processes could use either of the NPSs to justify totally opposite outcomes. This will result in confusion of the strategic outcomes sought, NPSs being ‘cherry picked’ to support particular priorities, and increased risk of appeal which altogether could result in poorer management of the very issues these NPS are trying to provide direction on. The following paragraphs highlight some of the potential conflicts between these two documents.

The proposed NPS-UD proposes to remove unnecessary restrictions on development and directs Councils to enable growth to occur both upwards and outwards. The proposed policy framework places significant focus on quality urban environments, enabling choice (both housing type and location), and on providing sufficient land supply to ensure demand is met.

The NPS-UD also directs that plans limit, as much as possible, the effects of competition on land development, that Councils consider the positive impacts of urban development and that Councils consider plan changes for urban development that are out of sequence or outside of areas already identified for urban development.

This focus appears to be in direct contrast to the NPS-HPL which states that uncoordinated expansion onto highly productive land should be avoided, that highly productive land should be prioritised for primary production, and that urban growth should be directed away from highly productive land except where:

- There is a shortage of development capacity,
- There are no other feasible options
- The benefits of urban expansion outweigh the benefits of primary production.

Neither the proposed NPS-HPL nor the proposed NPS-UD provide sufficient direction on how to rationalise their competing interests, let alone how to balance theses against wider resource management priorities.

To give a specific example, the town of Levin has existing land identified for urban development (zoned deferred residential) near to Lake Horowhenua. However, since this land was identified for urban expansion Council has become aware of constraints associated with developing this land (in particular, stormwater management). The land is also very close to Lake Horowhenua (culturally significant waterbody) and near to Levin’s wastewater treatment plant. Due to these factors, Council has more recently directed its growth planning elsewhere to an area known as ‘Gladstone Green’ which is immediately east of Levin. Gladstone Green is LUC 3 and would therefore be captured under the definition of HPL (though, due to a stony surface layer, has constraints on its ability to be utilised productively).
Gladstone Green is now Council’s primary growth area for Levin because:

- The size and scale enables an quality urban environment with open space, services, amenities, and choice to be provided;
- Directs development away from a sensitive environment;
- Has ideal conditions for servicing, particularly stormwater.

Under the current NPS-UD, this development area would appear to be the preferred option. However, the NPS-HPL would seem to direct HDC to prioritise the existing identified urban expansion area near Lake Horowhenua. HDC have discussed this conflict with other Councils and have had differing feedback on which NPS ‘trumps’ the other and in what circumstance. This emphasises HDCs concern that the proposed NPSs do not provide sufficient clarity on the outcomes sought.

3. **Assessment of Proposed Objectives and Policies**

Below is an assessment of the proposed objectives and policies most relevant to the Horowhenua context. In the right hand column, text proposed for deletion is shown in strikethrough and proposed additions in **bold underline.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective/Policy</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Suggested Changes</th>
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</table>
| **Objective 1**  | HDC do not have any high level concerns about this objective. However, HDC note the policies associated with this objective only apply to major urban centres (MUCs).  
As such, HDC seek guidance from the Ministry on how non-MUCs should implement this objective. HDC is concerned that in the absence of sufficient guidance, non-MUCs will be coaxed into preparing a Future Development Strategy (FDS) in accordance with the full list of policies contained within the NPS-UD despite the Ministry acknowledging that the level of work associated with doing so is such that it is not expected of non-MUCs. It is important this guidance is balanced with other national direction (from both a process and outcomes point of view).  
HDC also wish to acknowledge that Government have a role to play in infrastructure planning, such as providing transport infrastructure. Within the Horowhenua context, under investment in transport infrastructure (namely State Highways and public transport) is constraining our ability to enable development in growth areas. As such, it is important that this objective is met by a commitment by Government to do their part to ensure this can occur. | Provide direction on how non-MUC should implement this policy. |
| **Objective 2**  | HDC support the principle of this objective, which is to put focus on delivering quality urban environments.  
However, this objective is unclear in terms of what a ‘quality’ urban environment is and has a metropolitan focus, despite the fact that many urban settlements across the country are of provincial scale yet still play an important role.  
As stated above, the Ministry should amend this objective so it clearly articulates both what ‘quality’ is and reflects variety of urban settlements.  
It is important this clarity is provided through objectives and policies, rather than preamble or supporting material. This is | Reword objective to clearly articulate what a quality urban environment is, for a range of urban settlements. |
| Objective 3 | HDC support this objective in principle, subject to the NPS-UD being amended to clearly articulate what a ‘quality urban environment’ is.  
HDC also seek clarification on how this objective should be balanced against the objectives of the NPS-HPL, where development would make a positive contribute to quality urban environments, but involves land captured under the NPS-HPL definition of ‘highly productive land’. | Provide direction on how this objective should be balanced against competing objectives in the NPS-HPL. |
|---|---|---|
| Policy 2A | HDC are supportive in principle of policies that direct planning documents to give specific consideration as to how to enable urban development, including providing opportunities for a variety of dwelling types and locations.  
However, as previously referenced HDC are concerned about local authorities’ ability to deliver on ‘limiting the possible adverse effects’ of the competitive operation of land and development markets.’  
The extent of infrastructure provision to enable urban development and reduce the adverse effects of competitive operation of land and development markets needs to be balanced against what is affordable to ratepayers. HDC is concerned that this policy creates expectations that will not be able to be fulfilled.  
Further, HDC wish to point out that Government have a role to play in whether or not this policy can be implemented – within the Horowhenua context there are several examples where | Provide clarification on how the NPS-UD should be balanced against competing national direction. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 3</th>
<th>To enable development in locations and in ways that maximise its positive contribution to, and minimise its negative impact on, quality urban environments.</th>
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</table>

b) providing businesses with economies of scale, with access to many consumers, suppliers, skilled people and sources of innovation  
c) using land, energy and infrastructure efficiently  
d) responding to changing needs and conditions. | because it is the objectives and policies that have statutory weight. |  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When making decisions on consent applications that affect urban development, and the way and rate at which development capacity is taken up, decision-makers must have regard to the need, consistent with this NPS, to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>c) provide a range of dwelling types and locations, working environments and business locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) limit as much as possible the adverse impacts on the competitive operation of land and development markets.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Government’s underinvestment in national infrastructure, such as State Highways, has constrained HDCs growth planning work.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Land rezoning and intensification plan changes need to be balanced against competing resource management priorities, including protection of highly productive land, recognition of protection of amenity values (noting that this can change over time), and freshwater quality. This policy does not acknowledge these competing interests and does not provide direction on how to balance this policy with other national direction.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy 2B</th>
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<tr>
<td>When making or updating policies, plans and strategies, local authorities must have particular regard to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) the positive impacts of urban development to contribute to a quality urban environment as described in O2</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) the benefits and costs of urban development at national, inter-regional, regional and district scale, as well as locally.</td>
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<tr>
<th>HDC seek clarification on how this policy is to be implemented.</th>
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<tr>
<td>In relation to points a) and c), HDC seek clarification on how to rationalise this policy against the policies contained within the NPS-HPL which state that highly productive land must be prioritised for primary production purposes. As referenced in HDCs submission on the NPS-HPL, HDCs urban settlements are surrounded by HPL meaning these two NPS could create significant uncertainty for our community if these conflicts are not addressed.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Provide clarification and guidance on how to balance competing pieces of national direction.</th>
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<tr>
<td>In relation to points b) and d), HDC believe the requirement that regard be had to the benefits and costs of urban development at a national scale is unreasonable – particularly for smaller local authorities and urban areas such as Horowhenua.</td>
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| Remove the need to consider national level costs and benefits. |
## Objective 4

Urban environments provide for the diverse and changing amenity values of individuals and communities.

| HDC support the objective in that it acknowledges that amenity values change over time. However, HDC is concerned that the objective does not provide any guidance on how to determine what aspects of amenities communities’ value and how to provide for this in Plans. |

## Policy 3A

In making planning and consent decisions, decision-makers must recognise that amenity values:

| HDC seeks further clarification from the Ministry on what is expected to implement this policy, specifically whether it is expecting frequent and detailed reassessment of bulk and location provisions, and the extent to which this is expected to enable intensification while ensuring quality urban environments. HDC also question whether this policy confuses amenity with character. HDC consider ‘amenity’ values to be closely aligned with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory, with ‘amenity values’ sitting towards the bottom of the hierarchy (i.e. physiology and safety) as basic expectations (for example, safe living environment, privacy, access to sunlight). While character can certainly change over time (e.g. transition from quarter acre sections to medium density development) without creating adverse effects, these basic amenity expectations such as those listed above generally remain constant over time. Therefore, HDC recommend that this policy be reworded to focus on how ‘character’ changes over time, yet can still deliver high quality amenity. |

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<tr>
<th>In making planning and consent decisions, decision-makers must recognise that amenity character values:</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) vary among individuals and communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) change over time;</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) require basic amenity expectations (such as safety, privacy, and solar access) to be provided for.</td>
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</table>
| **Objective 5**  
To ensure local authority policies, plans and strategies enable enough opportunities for development to meet diverse demands for housing and business land. | HDC support this principle in theory, but have some concerns about implementation as explained in relation to Policy 4A below. | Amend associated policies to provide clarity. |
|---|---|---|
| **Policy 4A**  
Local authorities must ensure at all times their plans enable at least enough development capacity that is feasible and likely to be taken up to meet the demand for dwellings (in terms of location, typology and price) and business land (in terms of location, floor area and extent of land) over the short, medium and long term.  
A local authority meets these obligations by ensuring:  
  a) Short term – that the development capacity is enabled by resource management plans and serviced with development infrastructure  
  b) Medium term – that the development capacity is enabled by resource management plans and either: | HDC support this in principle, but seek guidance from the Ministry on how local authorities who are not required to prepare Housing Business Assessments should implement this policy.  
As previously referenced, HDC also raise concern about whether this is achievable. In some cases, the costs of providing infrastructure to enable the development capacity desired in Policy 4A will be unaffordable under existing local government funding arrangements. HDC also want to reiterate that in some cases, national level infrastructure local authorities are not responsible will constrain local authorities’ ability to implement this policy. | Provide implementation guidance for local authorities who do not need to prepare an HBA.  
Establish means of supporting local authorities with the affordability of implementing this policy. |
a. is serviced with development infrastructure, or  
b. the funding for the development infrastructure required to service that development capacity must be identified in a Long Term Plan required under the Local Government Act  
c) Long term – that:  
   a. the development capacity is identified in all relevant plans and strategies (including the FDS)  
   b. the development infrastructure required to service it is identified in the relevant Infrastructure Strategy required under the Local Government Act 2002.  

**Policy 4B**  
As soon as a local authority determines that it cannot provide the required  

| HDC seek clarity on what action the Minster will take in the event this occurs. Without any direction or detail on what tools are available to the Minister, this policy is superfluous.  

| Amend policy to detail what actions will be available to the Minister, or remove.  

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<th><strong>Policy 4C</strong></th>
<th>HDC support this in principle, but raise concern about whether this is affordable under existing local government funding arrangements. HDC also want to reiterate that is some cases, national level infrastructure local authorities are not responsible will constrain local authorities’ ability to implement this policy.</th>
<th>Establish means of supporting local authorities with the affordability of implementing this policy.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 4G</strong></td>
<td>HDC seek clarification on whether this policy applies to non-MUCs. Page 10 the discussion document indicates that this applies to all local authorities, while page 32 indicates it only applies to MUCs. Given this policy refers to Future Development Strategies, which currently is not required for non-MUCs, HDC’s assumption (and preference) is that this does not apply.</td>
<td>Amend NPS-UD to address inconsistency and reflect whether this policy applies to all local authorities, or just MUCs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 6</strong></td>
<td>HDC seek clarification on whether this objective applies to non-MUCs. Page 10 of the discussion document indicates that this applies only to MUCs, while page 34 states it applies to all urban environments.</td>
<td>Amend NPS-UD to address inconsistency and reflect whether this policy applies to all local authorities, or just MUCs.</td>
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the best available evidence
b) respond promptly to evidence about changing demands for housing and business land
c) identify the evidence on which decisions about urban development are made.

None of the policies listed under this objective apply to non-MUCs (i.e. policies relating to Future Development Strategies and Housing and Business Assessments). Therefore, HDC assume (and prefer) this objective does not apply to non-MUCs. However, if it does HDC ask the Ministry to provide guidance to non-MUCs on how to implement this objective.

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<th>Objective 7</th>
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<tr>
<td>To provide for the benefits of urban intensification by allowing for increased density in areas where those benefits are best realised.</td>
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<td>HDC support this objective in principle and already provide for intensification in most suitable areas through its District Plan.</td>
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| Policy 6A |
| Enable higher-density development, especially in areas where there are one or more of the following |
| a) proximity to many employment opportunities |
| b) urban amenities and services are easily accessible by existing or planned active transport and public transport networks |
| c) high demand for housing |
| d) best use can be made of existing or planned infrastructure, services and facilities. |
| HDC seeks clarification on what is meant by higher density development. The Horowhenua District Plan already provides for medium density housing in identified areas, as well as recently increasing opportunities under general infill subdivision opportunities. While HDC support the intent of the policy, we believe it may provide limited benefit as the majority of District Plans already apply this approach. Provide clarity on the definition of higher density development. HDC recommend this is defined as ‘higher’ that the ‘general residential zones’ (or other similar term used in District Plans). |

| Example Policy |
| HDC do not support the direction that Councils must consider urban development in areas not identified for growth. |
| Remove this policy and rely on the remaining policies of the NPS-UD and the direction provided in the RMA. |
When considering a plan change that enables urban development that is not otherwise enabled in the plan, local authorities must provide for urban development when all of the following apply:

a) Development enabled by the plan change would contribute to a quality urban environment, including access to transport choice.

b) Development enabled by the plan change would not have adverse effects on protected areas or areas identified for restoration.

c) Development under the plan change can occur in a way that is appropriate, safe, and resilient in the long term in respect of natural hazards and the effects of natural hazards.

d) Reverse sensitivities are appropriately managed within and adjacent to the location or locations that are the subject of the plan change.

| HDC consider that applying a ‘business as usual’ approach to unplanned, uncoordinated expansion is highly inappropriate. |
| In order to achieve quality urban environments, it is important that a carefully considered, integrated approach be followed. The RMA already provides flexibility for this to occur, subject to the appropriate level of planning and assessment occurring. Including policies that increase the presumption of appropriateness of uncoordinated expansion is considered inappropriate and likely to result in poor planning outcomes that could undermine the purpose of the RMA. |
| Furthermore, this has the potential to undermine the investment Councils make into growth planning and infrastructure provision, as well as run counter to evidence based approach advocated for elsewhere in NPS-UD. |
| It would also directly conflict with the approach detailed in the NPS-HPL. |
e) Infrastructure to enable the long-term development of the land can be provided.

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<th>Objective 8</th>
<th>HDC support this objective in principle, but as indicated in the assessment of Policies 8A, 8B, and 8D recommended clarification and refinement.</th>
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To ensure every local authority with an urban environment has a robust, comprehensive and frequently updated evidence base about its urban environments.

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<th>Policy 8A</th>
<th>HDC support this policy.</th>
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Local authorities must use evidence and information about the land and development markets for dwellings and business land, and reflect this in their section 32 reports.

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<tr>
<th>Policy 8B</th>
<th>HDC support monitoring and report of housing indicators. HDC already monitor a number of growth indicators and report on this on a regular basis. However, HDC do not believe quarterly monitoring to the extent required by this policy is achievable or beneficial. This due to both the administration time cost and, from a logistical perspective, because the release of required information does not allow for this to occur. As such, HDC request this policy to be amended to require annual monitoring and reporting.</th>
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Local authorities must monitor a range of indicators, including the following, on a quarterly basis, to ensure they are well-informed about their markets for housing and business development capacity, and urban development activity and outcomes:

- a) prices and rents for housing, residential land, and business land by location and type, and changes in these over time
- b) the number of dwellings receiving resource or building consents

| Policy 8B   | Local authorities must monitor a range of indicators, including the following, on a quarterly annual basis, to ensure they are well-informed about their markets for housing and business development capacity, and urban development activity and outcomes:
- a) prices and rents for housing, residential land, and business land by location and type, and changes in these over time
- b) the number of dwellings receiving resource or building consents relative to the growth in households
- c) the type and location of dwellings receiving resource or building consents
- d) the housing price to cost ratio |
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<td>relative to the growth in households</td>
<td>e) indicators of housing affordability</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) the type and location of dwellings receiving resource or building consents</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) the housing price to cost ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) indicators of housing affordability</td>
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<td>f) available data on business land.</td>
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**Policy 8D**
Local authorities must assess demand for housing and business land, and the development capacity required to meet that demand in the short, medium and long term.

HDC support this policy in principle, but seek guidance on how to implement it.

Provide implementation guidance for local authorities who do not need to prepare an HBA.

Establish a means of supporting local authorities with the affordability of implementing this policy.

**Objective 9**
Urban development occurs in a way that takes into account resource management issues of concern to iwi and hapū.

HDC support in principle objectives and policies that seek to improve opportunities for iwi and hapū input in the planning process, as HDC are committed to working with our Treaty partners to understand their aspirations.

However, due to the short consultation timeframes imposed by the Ministry, HDC have been unable to engage with iwi and hapū and therefore cannot provide specific comment on these objectives and policies.

HDC do however, ask the Ministry what level of engagement they undertook with iwi and hapū in preparing the NPS-UD.

**Policy 9A**
When preparing a proposed policy statement, plan or strategy that affects how development capacity is provided for in urban environments every local authority must:

a) provide iwi and hapū with opportunities to identify the resource management issues of concern to them relating

HDC support this policy in principle, but seek guidance on how to implement it.
to urban environments; and
b) indicate how those issues have been or will be addressed in the proposed policy statement, plan or strategy.

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<th>Policy 9B</th>
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<tr>
<td>When preparing a proposed policy statement, plan or strategy that affects how development capacity is provided for in urban environments every local authority must:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) provide hapū and whānau with opportunities to identify their aspirations for urban development on whenua Māori within their rohe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) take into account their aspirations for urban development on whenua Māori within their rohe.</td>
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</table>
4. Consultation Questions

Many of the consultation questions relevant to HDC would have be answered by the submission points above, but brief answers to each of the question key relevance to HDC are set out below:

1. Do you support a National Policy Statement on Urban Development that aims to deliver quality urban environments and make room for growth? Why/Why not?
   a. Are there other tools under the RMA, other legislation or non-statutory tools that would be more effective in achieving a quality urban environment and making room for growth?

   - HDC support the NPS-UD in principle, but as indicated by the above submission points, the wording of objectives and policies creates significant uncertainty.
   - HDC believe that there is significant conflict with the NPS-UD and the NPS-HPL which could be addressed by combining the two documents.

4. Do you support the proposed approach of the NPS-UD providing national level direction about the features of a quality urban environment? Why/why not?
   a. Do you support the features of a quality urban environment stated in draft objective O2? Why/why not?
   b. What impacts do you think the draft objectives O2–O3 and policies P2A–P2B will have on your decision-making?

   - HDC are supportive of the NPS-UD providing direction on the features of a quality urban environment, so long as this direction is clear and recognises the range or urban settlements in New Zealand.
   - Refer to the assessment against O2-O3 and policies P2A-P2B provided in the table in Section 3 of this submission.

5. Do you support the inclusion of proposals to clarify that amenity values are diverse and change over time? Why/why not?
   a. Do you think these proposals will help to address the use of amenity to protect the status quo?
   b. Can you identify any negative consequences that might result from the proposed objective and policies on amenity?
   c. Can you suggest alternative ways to address urban amenity through a national policy statement?

   - HDC recommend that ‘character’ replace the word ‘amenity’.
   - HDC support the notion that character can change over time (e.g. intensify) and still deliver good ‘amenity’. However, HDC believe many basic amenity values (e.g. safety and privacy) remain consistent over time.
   - It is also important any resulting approach provides sufficient flexibility to take into account local context.

6. Do you support the addition of direction to provide development capacity that is both feasible and likely to be taken up? Will this result in development opportunities that more accurately reflect demand? Why/why not?

   - HDC support the intention, but question whether this is achievable and affordable.
8. Do you support policies to enable intensification in the locations where its benefits can best be achieved? Why/why not?
   a. What impact will these policies have on achieving higher densities in urban environments?
   b. What option/s do you prefer for prescribing locations for intensification in major urban centres? Why?
   c. If a prescriptive requirement is used, how should the density requirements be stated? (For example, 80 dwellings per hectare or a minimum floor area per hectare).
   d. What impact will directly inserting the policy to support intensification in particular locations through consenting decisions have?

- HDC support enabling intensification in locations where benefits can be best achieved, but do not support a prescriptive approach. It is important that ‘higher density’ is relative and appropriate to local context, including the infrastructure capacity available.
- HDC also question the benefit of this policy, as many District Plans already take this approach.

9. Do you support inclusion of a policy providing for plan changes for out-of-sequence greenfield development and/or greenfield development in locations not currently identified for development?
   a. How could the example policy better enable quality urban development in greenfield areas?
   b. Are the criteria in the example policy sufficiently robust to manage environmental effects ensure a quality urban environment, while providing for this type of development?
   c. To what extent should developers be required to meet the costs of development, including the costs of infrastructure and wider impacts on network infrastructure, and environmental and social costs (recognising that these are likely to be passed onto future homeowners and beneficiaries of the development)? What impact will this have on the uptake of development opportunities?
   d. What improvements could be made to this policy to make development more responsive to demand in suitable locations beyond areas already identified for urban development?

- As referenced in the table in Section 3 of this submission, HDC do not support this approach.
- HDC believe this approach has significant risks associated with it and conflicts with other national direction as well as other aspects of the NPS-UD.
- HDC believe the RMA already provides sufficient direction and opportunity for this to occur, where it achieves the purpose of the Act.

11. Do you think that central government should consider more directive intervention in local authority plans?
   a. Which rules (or types of rules) are unnecessarily constraining urban development?
   b. Can you identify provisions that are enabling higher-density urban development in local authority plans that could be provided for either nationally or in particular zones or areas?
   c. Should a minimum level of development for an individual site be provided for across urban areas (for example, up to three storeys of development is a permitted activity across all zones)?
   d. Given the potential interactions with the range of rules that may exist within any given zone, how could the intent of more directive approaches be achieved?

While HDC is not entirely dismissive of this as an option, HDC wish to express concern about this for the following reasons:

- The discussion document does not provide any detail on the process that would be followed to identify such standards;
- The sheer complexity of developing a set of metrics and standards that would be appropriate across the variety of urban settlements present within New Zealand (for example, Levin would require a different approach than Wellington);
- The risk of perverse planning outcomes, resulting from ‘one sizes fits all’ approach that does not take into account local environments and contexts;
- That this approach does not acknowledge the value of local knowledge in planning and decision making processes;
- That this approach could run counter to the diversity and choice principles contained within this NPS;
- That this approach could result in homogenous urban environments that did not represent the values of local communities;
- That this approach would represent a further chipping away of the public participatory and devolved decision making elements of the RMA.

12. Do you support requirements for all urban environments to assess demand and supply of development capacity, and monitor a range of market indicators? Why/why not?

- HDC support this intention, but reiterate that this needs to be set at a level that is appropriate to local context and that clear guidance to support implementation of this is important.

13. Do you support inclusion of policies to improve how local government works with iwi, hapū and whānau to reflect their values and interests in urban planning?
   a. Do you think the proposals are an appropriate way to ensure urban development occurs in a way that takes into account iwi and hapū concerns?
   b. How do you think local authorities should be directed to engage with Māori who do not hold mana whenua over the urban environment in which they now live?
   c. What impacts do you think the proposed NPS-UD will have on iwi, hapū and Māori?

- As stated above, HDC are supportive of this intention, but without sufficient time to engage with our Treaty partners cannot provide specific comment on the policies proposed.

16. What kind of guidance or support do you think would help with the successful implementation of the proposed NPS-UD?

- Clear policy wording that recognises and provides for the important role different types of urban settlements play in the overall urban resource of New Zealand.
- Inclusion of supportive mechanisms to implement the requirements of the NPS-UD (e.g. support to fund infrastructure, central government to commit to investing in national level infrastructure) and clear guidance material.

17. Do you think there are potential areas of tension or confusion between any of these proposals and other national direction? If so, please identify these areas and include any suggestions you have for addressing these issues.

- As discussed, HDC believe many parts of the NPS-UD conflict with the NPS-HPL.
- HDC are also concerned the freshwater programme will constrain Councils’ ability to provide for either greenfield growth of residential intensification.

5. Summary of Changes Sought

HDC has summarise the changes sought throughout this submission, ordered by the submission heading they appear under first. The requested changes appear below only once, even if they appear multiple times through the submission above.
**Introduction**

1. HDC request that the existing conflict between national direction be addressed. This could occur through combining the NPS-HPL and the NSP-UD, or at least by putting the NPS-UD and NPS-HPL through the same review and gazettal process.

2. HDC request that the objectives and policies of the NPS-UD be amended to recognise the variety of urban settlement types that exist across New Zealand and the important role these each play.

3. HDC request that the NPS-UD be amended to provide clear direction on what a quality urban environment, including recognition of diversity in urban type as referenced above.

**Level of Directive Intervention**

4. While HDC are not completely dismissive of the option of more directive intervention for urban development, however we do have a number of concerns about the potential impact of this, as explained in Section 1 of this submission.

**Other Considerations**

5. HDC request that the NPS-UD be amended to provide direction on how to consider climate change when planning for urban development.

6. Enabling planning regimes are just one component of delivering urban development and affordable housing. Many of these other factors fall outside the role of local government. HDC urge the Government to consider other mechanisms need to support implementation of NPS-UD in order to address these issues.

**Alternative Approaches**

7. As stated above, HDC request the Ministry to consider a combined NPS-HPL and NPS-UD.

**Assessment of Proposed Objectives and Policies**

8. The table contained within Section 4 of this submission contains a number of suggested changes to the content and wording of objectives and policies.

**Consultation Questions**

9. HDC do not support the direction regarding urban expansion on land not areas not identified for growth. The RMA already provides sufficient scope for this to occur.

10. HDC support this intention of improved monitoring of housing indicators, but reiterate that this needs to be set at a level that is appropriate to local context (i.e. both frequency and detail) and that clear guidance to support implementation of this is important. Refer to Section 3 of this submission for further information.

**6. Conclusion**

HDC once again thank the Ministry for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed NPS-UD though want to express concern about the short timeframes provided to give feedback, particularly taking into account the other pieces of national direction open for feedback at the same time.

HDC would be more than happy to discuss any of the submissions points above further. HDC invite Ministry to come and visit our district to better understand our local context and the potential impact of this NPS and other pieces of national direction currently proposed.
If you have any questions about this submission, please contact us via email at

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]