17 August 2018

Ministry for Environment
National Planning Standards
PO Box 10362
Wellington 6143

Email: planningstandards@mfe.govt.nz

Dear Madam/Sir

SUBMISSION ON MFE’S DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING STANDARDS 2018

Waipa District Council appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on the Ministry’s Draft National Planning Standards 2018 document. Please find attached a copy of the submission electronically submitted on 17 August 2018. The Draft National Planning Standards were discussed at a Council workshop on 31 July 2018 and the Council’s submission will be confirmed at the Council’s meeting on 31 August 2017.

You are welcome to make contact with Waipa District Council with regards to any of the points made in our submission. In this regard and in the first instance David Totman can be contacted either via email at [redacted] or telephone at [redacted]

Yours sincerely

Garry Dyet
Chief Executive

Attachment: Waipa District Council Submission on the Draft National Planning Standards 2018
SUBMISSION FROM WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. Introduction
Waipa District Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the draft National Planning Standards. As indicated in our feedback on the 2017 discussion papers on National Planning Standards in July 2017, the Council is generally supportive of the introduction of National Planning Standards to guide the structure, format and content of district and regional plans in New Zealand. Much of the proposed standardisation is regarded as sensible.

More specific comments are provided below. As with the feedback provided on the 2017 discussion papers on National Planning Standards, these comments are drawn from a collaborative contribution from a small team of staff members in the Council.

2. Draft District Plan Structure Standard and Content
The Council’s preliminary view is that there is already a fairly good fit between the structure of the Waipa District Plan and the proposed District Plan Standard. Staff are supportive of the intention to rationalise the core suite of zones used in District Plans. The inclusion of special zones and provision for precincts will help address local context variations but there is a question as to whether these will be sufficient to show specific local character areas.

3. Draft Electronic Accessibility and Functionality Standard
The E Plan provisions are generally supported. This is an area which the Council believes should yield a significant improvement in the accessibility of district plans. There is a question though as to who or what would determine that E Plan is done correctly. Will MfE consider having a list or schedule of ‘approved’ suppliers for councils to use?

Point 11 in Table 18 of the draft standards requires all versions of the current plan since first becoming operative must be available from the Council’s website is challenged for practicality purposes. This Council’s view is that there should be the current operative plan up on the website and other versions available on request. There is also a question as whether policy maps should be kept separate to the zone maps?

4. Timing and Cost Implications
As a number of councils indicated at the MfE regional workshop held in Hamilton on 3 July 2018, the cost implications of implementing the National Planning Standards within a 5 year time period will be significant and will lie on top of any other costs incurred as the result of other RMA related changes to the District Plan. The reality of costs has to be carefully considered in term of what is feasible and practical.
The scheduled timing for the introduction of National Planning Standards should be considered together with other nationally led changes to the local council planning realm. These include currently for this Council, the National Policy Statement for Urban Development Capacity, National Environment Standard for Telecommunications and Plan Change 2 to the Waikato Regional Plan under the National Planning Standard for Freshwater Management.

Any long term financial benefit of having National Planning Standards to local councils is rather intangible at this stage. There should be good guidance and support from MfE to enable the step wise introduction of National Planning Standards. It is recommended that serious consideration be given to using the existing RMA plan review cycle period of 10 years for introducing planning standards rather than the 5 year period specified in the draft standards.

5. **Consequential Amendments**

Again, as was discussed at the Hamilton regional workshop on 3 July 2017, and as included in the LGNZ submission on National Planning Standards, there is considerable uncertainty regarding what changes would be accepted as ‘consequential amendments’ under section 58I. As the LGNZ submission points out RMA processes are often very litigious and resorting to using the Schedule 1 process for consequential changes opens the process to appeal to the Environment Court.

**Conclusion**

The Council supports the LGNZ submission. Certainly if MfE is to proceed with rolling out National Planning Standards then a number of amendments to timing and scope should be made to make the introduction more sensible. The definition of ‘consequential amendment’ needs consideration in the next amendments of the RMA. The length of time for introduction of the standards should be extended to 10 years to coincide with the RMA plan review cycle.

Another important consideration that should be taken into account is the review of the RMA itself and a future framework for spatial and urban planning in New Zealand.