



**KAIPARA
DISTRICT**
PLAN REVIEW

AUGUST 2021



Kaipara District Plan Review
Discussion Document

Natural Character

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BACKGROUND

From the rugged beauty of Ripiro beach, the powerful Kaipara Harbour through to the idyllic Mangawhai on the East Coast, the Kaipara District proudly contains many areas that have high or outstanding natural character. It is vital to maintain and enhance these areas as these environments undoubtedly contribute towards our District's distinct identity.

The Resource Management Act 1991(RMA) requires protection of the natural character of coastal and freshwater areas from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The Regional Policy Statement for

Northland (RPS) provides criteria to use when assessing natural character in Northland (these criteria are listed in Appendix 1 of this discussion document).

Natural character areas are not mapped in the Operative District Plan. However, the RPS includes maps of high and outstanding natural character areas for the coastal environment. Accordingly, the new District Plan needs to include these maps.

KEY ISSUES

The Operative District Plan does not give effect to the natural character provisions in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and the Regional Policy Statement for Northland.

IWI INTERESTS AND IWI MANAGEMENT PLANS

Te Uri o Hau Kaitiakitanga o Te Taiao 2011

Chapter 31 of the Iwi Management Plan discusses the use and abuse of the marine and coastal areas, harbours, and estuaries within the statutory area of Te Uri o Hau has been an ongoing concern.

Nga Ture mo Te Taiao o Te Roroa 2009

Increasing desire for coastal lifestyles, the northward expansion from Auckland, increasing awareness of the value and importance of our beautiful environment and increasing tourism are all factors in the development explosion witnessed in the past decade.





SUMMARY OF THE OPERATIVE DISTRICT PLAN PROVISIONS

The Operative District Plan recognises the unique characteristics of several different coastal environments in the Kaipara District but does not identify the full extent of the coastal environment, as defined in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) and the RPS. However, Objective 6.5.4 relates to protection of the natural character of the coast. For further detail of the Operative District Plan provisions, refer to Appendix 1.

NEXT STEPS

As discussed in the previous sections, identification (and mapping) of any additional natural character areas need to be in accordance with the RPS assessment criteria.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

The content of a district plan ranges from fulfilling legal requirements made by Central Government and regional councils to proposing specific provisions that meet the needs of our District and its communities. This list includes any changes required to meet legal obligations as well as some ideas Council wants to explore further with our communities.

The policy framework and protective rules relating to natural character need to be developed in order to avoid significant adverse effects on outstanding natural character areas.

APPENDIX 1

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND NATIONAL DIRECTION

Resource Management Act 1991	
Part 2 – Sections 6(a) and 7(d)	Natural character is identified as a matter of national importance, that decision makers must have particular regard to. It is a district function to control the effects of activities on land that might affect the natural character of the coastal environment.
New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010	
Objective 2	Refers to protection of the natural character of the coastal environment.
Policy 13	Relates specifically to the preservation of natural character.
Policy 14	Relates specifically to the restoration of natural character.

REGIONAL GUIDANCE

Regional Policy Statement for Northland	
Issue 2.8	Natural character, features/landscapes, and historic heritage
Objective 3.14	Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes, and historic heritage
Objective 3.15 Active management	Maintain and/or improve: (a) The natural character of the coastal environment and freshwater bodies and their margins
Policy 4.5.1	Identification of the coastal environment, outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes and high and outstanding natural character
Method 4.5.4	Statutory plans and strategies (2) The coastal environment, and areas of high and outstanding natural character within the coastal environment, and outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes as shown in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps may be changed, provided the changes are: (i) Undertaken using the attributes and criteria listed in Appendix 1 of the RPS; and (ii) Shown in the regional or district plan.
Policy 4.6.1	Managing effects on the characteristics and qualities natural character, natural features, and landscapes
Appendix 1	The natural character assessment criteria include the following matters, to identify a range of natural character from pristine to modified: a) Natural elements, processes, and patterns; b) Biophysical, ecological, and geomorphological aspects; c) Natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs, and surf breaks; d) The natural movement of water and sediment; e) The natural darkness of the night sky; f) Places or areas that are wild or scenic; and g) Experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and their context or setting. As a guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding natural character generally means entirely natural (such as near to pristine indigenous land cover, negligible human features e.g., buildings, structures, paved surfaces, roading or vehicle tracks) and a very strong experience of naturalness. • High natural character generally means a high proportion of indigenous vegetation cover, visually unobtrusive land management (e.g., low intensity pasture), few and visually subservient human features and a strong experience of naturalness. • Areas where natural character is less than high generally means one or more of the following: Mostly modified land cover (e.g., pasture, plantations), limited remnant indigenous vegetation, obvious land management patterns, obvious or prominent human structures, and a modest experience of naturalness.

Regional Policy Statement for Northland continued	
Northland Regional Council Northland Mapping Project	Natural Character Methodology includes a full copy of the assessment worksheets and methodology used for evaluating coastal natural character. This information is available from Northland Regional Council.
Proposed Regional Plan for Northland	
C.1.1.21	Structure in General
C.1.1.22, C.1.1.23	Hard protection structures (Marine Zones)
C.1.1.27	Fresh water structures
C.2.1.10	Flood defences
C.2.1.12	Dams
C.3.1.2	Rivers
C.3.1.10 and specifically D.2.15	Managing the effects on natural character areas and land-based activities
D.2.17	Managing adverse effects on natural character, outstanding natural landscapes, and outstanding natural features

OPERATIVE KAIPARA DISTRICT PLAN 2013 – RELEVANT PROVISIONS

Policy 3.5.6	By requiring new residential and business development to comprehensively consider (on a catchment wide basis) potential: Adverse effects on the natural character of the coastal environment, lakes, rivers, wetlands, or their margins
Chapter 4 – Overlays	This chapter recognises the natural character of the coastal environment and notes: The Regional Policy Statement includes mapping of natural character and natural features of the coastal environment. As noted above, the mapping of Overlays in the District Plan is based on existing available information and there is still work required to bring more detailed mapping of values into the District Plan (e.g., those features that contribute to natural character of the coastal environment). Once the Regional Policy Statement is operative Council will review the defined Overlay areas, particularly for the West and East Coast Overlays, and other plan provisions to ensure the District Plan gives effect to the Regional Policy Statement.
Objective 6.5.4	There are a number of objectives and policies that refer to protecting natural character and retaining amenity values, including Objective 6.5.4: To protect the natural character of the coast, rivers and lakes and their margins within the District by avoiding, remedying, or mitigating the adverse effects of surface water activities.
Rural Chapter 12 Residential Chapter 13 Commercial Chapter 14 Māori Purpose land Chapter 15A	Assessment criteria for a range of rules or subdivision rules include the effects on natural character such as for the non-rural or non-residential uses, setbacks, traffic intensity, benefit, and amenity lots, integrated developments, esplanade areas.



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