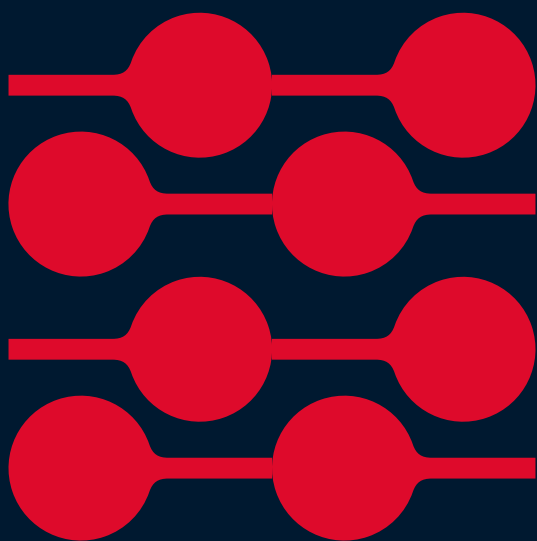


**AUCKLAND COUNCIL**



Te Aroturukitanga o  
te Mahere ā-Wae ki  
Tāmaki Makaurau

**Auckland  
Unitary Plan  
Section 35  
Monitoring:  
Overview  
document**



Version: 22 September 2022



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# Te Aroturukitanga o te Mahere ā-Wae ki Tāmaki Makaurau

## Background

Under Section 35(2)(b) of the Resource Management Act (1991), every local authority is required to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies, rules or other methods in its policy statement or plan, and to publish the results every five years. The Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) became operative (in part) for five years in November 2021.

A Monitoring Strategy was developed by the Plans and Places Department in 2018, with work progressing from 2020. This monitoring programme is the first time the AUP has been monitored. It is divided into 34 topics from the AUP's Regional Policy Statement (RPS). These 34 topics have been grouped into four tranches, with reports completed from 2022 through to 2024. An outline of tranches, topics, and timelines can be found below (as at 22 September 2022, subject to change).

<b>Tranche 1 Topics (2020-22)</b>
B2.2 Urban growth and form
B2.3 A quality built environment
B2.4 Residential growth
B2.5 Commercial growth (not industrial, see Tranche 2)
B2.6 Rural and coastal towns and villages
B5.2 Historic heritage
B7.3 Freshwater systems
B7.4 Coastal Water, freshwater and geothermal water
B10.2 Natural hazards and climate change
<b>Tranche 2 Topics (2022-23)</b>
B2.7 Open space and recreation facilities
B4.3 Viewshafts
B4.4 Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area
B6.2. Recognition of Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnerships and participation
B6.3 Recognising Mana Whenua values
B6.4 Māori economic, social and cultural development
B6.5 Protection of Mana Whenua cultural heritage
B7.2 Indigenous biodiversity
B2.5 Industrial growth (not commercial, see Tranche 1)
<b>Tranche 3 Topics (2023-24)</b>
B2.8 Social facilities
B3.2 Infrastructure
B3.3 Transport
B3.4 Energy
B4.2 Outstanding natural features and landscapes

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B4.5 Notable trees
B5.3 Special character
B7.5 Air
B7.6 Minerals
B8.2 Coastal - Natural character
B8.3 Coastal - Subdivision, use and development
B8.4 Coastal - Public access and open space
B10.4 Land - contaminated
B10.5 Genetically modified organisms
<b>Tranche 4 Topics (2024)</b>
B9.2 Rural activities
B9.3 Land with high productive potential
B9.4 Rural subdivision

## Data and limitations

The key steps in the programme are shown in Figure 1 below.

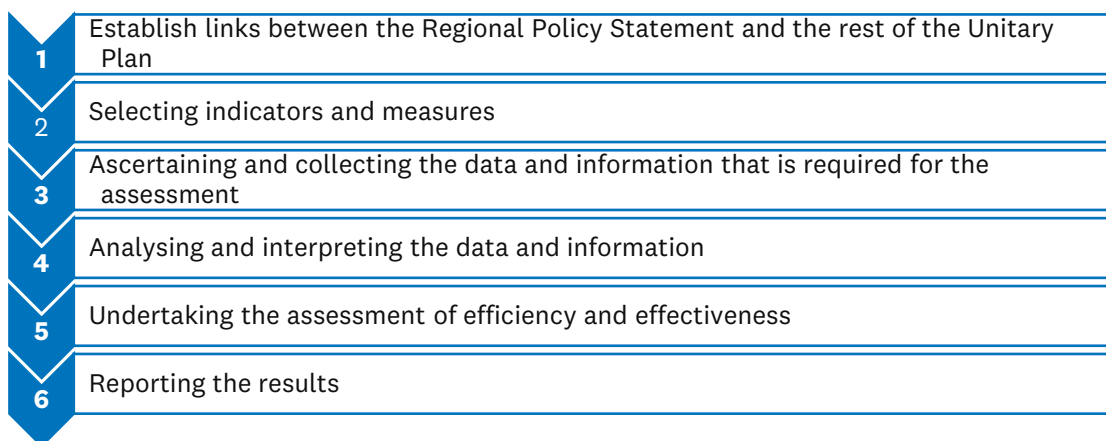


Figure 1 Monitoring steps for each topic

Indicators and measures assess the progress toward achieving the objectives and outcomes intended by the RPS. They are qualitative or quantitative gauges that assess changes and help diagnose potential issues.

The terms ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ are not explicitly defined in the RMA. For the purposes of the monitoring programme the terms are generally interpreted as:

*Effectiveness* is the contribution that the provisions make towards achieving the objective, and how successful they are likely to be in solving the problem they were designed to address when compared with alternatives. The difficulty when assessing effectiveness is to be able to answer the question ‘how do we know that implementing the policy, rule or method led or contributed to the outcome?’

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*Efficiency* is an assessment of whether the provisions will be likely to achieve the objectives at the lowest total cost to all, or achieves the highest net benefit relative to cost to all.

The primary data source used for the reports is the Plans and Places Department resource consent decisions database. Other data sources include building consent data, geospatial information, among others. Due to the large volume of consents for some topic matters, sample sizing or case studies were used, where appropriate. The data period used varies between topics. Generally, the data collection period is November 2016 through until 2020-21, providing an approximate four-year period of data. Challenges have been highlighted regarding the availability of data and the ability to sort data meaningfully and with statistical confidence.

Reporting on findings must be read and understood within the parameters of any limitations stated by a topic's report. Data is imperfect, and limitations are present across many sources used. Often a sample size is applied to alleviate this issue. Where qualitative analysis is undertaken, subjectivity is minimised and identified in the findings. A principle of this monitoring work is that it is important to be transparent about any data limitations, and to not form firm conclusions and recommendations if the information available does not support this.

Findings may show that outcomes cannot necessarily be attributed to the AUP, or there is uncertainty around the analysis, this may be because:

- there are other factors that can affect outcomes, beyond the influence of the AUP
- there is insufficient data - the sample size may be small, or a greater monitoring time period is required.
- there are matters that may have been under appeal, and resource consent decisions were weighted to the legacy planning document for those matters (rather than the AUP)
- there are data errors or missing information (known and unknown)
- (for resource consents) the database used does not record instances where a pre-application meeting took place, where a proposal may have been amended or not lodged based on pre-application advice, or instances where an application was lodged but later withdrawn
- (for building consents) the database can capture development that occurred post-November 2016, however resource consent may have been granted prior to the AUP being made operative.

The monitoring programme highlights the importance of data and the shortcomings of the council's current systems – how, and if, information is collected, accessed, and analysed.

It is acknowledged that a consequence of having topics staggered in the delivery of findings is that data and information analysis cannot be undertaken comprehensively alongside all other topics that make up the RPS.

# Te Aroturukitanga o te Mahere ā-Wae ki Tāmaki Makaurau

## Monitoring reports

The reports consider how effective and efficient the objectives, policies, rules and other methods of the AUP have been in meeting the outcomes intended by the RPS. Key outputs include:

- discussion on findings on how the AUP is progressing to deliver the outcomes sought by the RPS
- recommendations based on those findings.

Two reports are produced for each topic's monitoring findings, being:

- *A Technical Report*: background to the topic, indicators and measures, data and methodology used, indicator findings, and recommendations.
- *A Summary Report*: a companion report to the more detailed and longer *Technical Report*, providing condensed discussion.

These are uploaded on to the webpage as they are finalised.

Recommendations for improvement can relate to the AUP text, and/or plan implementation processes (e.g. changes to regulatory guidance, policy interpretation, geospatial, other). Recommendations in some instances are for ongoing monitoring work to be undertaken, as it is too early to determine conclusions on the plan's effectiveness.

While recommendations have been provided, consideration and prioritisation of these recommendations forms a separate piece of work.

Topic findings will contribute to an evidence base for plan changes, including in response to national direction (e.g. the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020), and the 10-year review of the AUP (anticipated to commence in 2026). Additionally, plan processes or guidance may be updated where appropriate.

Recently there has been significant central government planning direction and responses required from the council to implement this direction, for example the National Policy Statement for Urban Development, and the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020. With the monitoring focused on the existing AUP text, some recommendations, particularly in relation to the built environment topics, have been superseded by subsequent mandatory amendments via plan change. However, the findings and recommendations are still considered relevant as they offer a point-in-time analysis of environmental outcomes seen, and provide evidence to inform RMA Section 32 analysis where relevant, while meeting the obligations of RMA Section 35(2)(b). Findings can also be relevant to process improvements, as opposed to changes to plan text.

## Next steps

The monitoring programme will continue to progress, with topic reports published online as they are finalised.

As Section 35 topic reports get finalised, staff within the Plans and Places Department will evaluate the recommendations to determine whether they are a high, medium or low priority.

