

**QLDC Council
24 July 2014**

Report for Agenda Item: 7

Department:

Planning and Infrastructure

7. District Plan Review: Strategic Directions Chapter

Purpose

- 1 To present the Section 32 report and proposed plan provisions for the Strategic Directions Chapter of the District Plan review, for Council's endorsement.

Recommendation

- 2 That Council:
 - a. **Note** the contents of this report and in particular:
 - i. The issues associated with the existing policy approach.
 - ii. The proposed policy response to address these issues, and the resulting benefits.
 - b. **Agree** to endorse the Strategic Directions Chapter: Section 32 report and associated provisions, setting the direction for the balance of the District Plan review process.
 - c. **Note** that as the District Plan review progresses, Strategic Directions may require adjustments based on policy development for individual chapters, and that this will be brought to the attention of Council as individual chapters are presented.
 - d. **Note** that the Strategic Directions Chapter will be brought back for Council's final approval along with other chapters forming Stage 1 of the District Plan Review, prior to public notification anticipated in May 2015.
 - e. **Authorise** officers to make further minor changes to the Section 32 report and provisions without further recourse to the Council, where this is necessary to:
 - i. Ensure consistent numbering and formatting of the proposed district plan text; and
 - ii. To fix identified minor errors and / or omissions.

Prepared by:



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9/07/2014

Reviewed and Authorised by:



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9/07/2014

Background

- 3 The Strategic Directions chapter is a critical plank of the District Plan review. It sets the strategic scene for the policy development that follows. In addition to setting new directions, it incorporates key strategic policy contained in a number of Council policies and strategies including:
 - The Growth Management Strategy
 - Wanaka Structure Plan
 - Urban Design Strategy
- 4 Several workshops have been held with elected members. A workshop was held on 3 December 2013, where a preliminary draft chapter was presented. This was preceded by community consultation on the draft provisions.
- 5 A Business Zones Capacity Report prepared by consultants McDermott Miller formed a strong basis for Goal 1 of the draft policy that was consulted on and presented to elected members in late 2013. Since then, a peer review of that report has been completed by Dr Phil McDermott. Dr McDermott supported the analysis and considered the report to be robust. However, he differed in opinion in terms of the best policy response with regard to town centre planning approaches.
- 6 Whilst McDermott Miller proposed a planning policy framed around a “Centres Hierarchy”, Dr McDermott considered there to be limitations with such an approach. Instead, he advocates for policy to enable optimal development and economic outcomes in each centre; building on their existing functions and strengths, along with diversification.
- 7 Dr McDermott’s approach is preferred and this has informed the objectives and policies of Goal 1.
- 8 Subsequently, the draft Strategic Directions chapter has been further work shopped at the following forums:
 - May 2014 workshop with the Resource Management Focus Group

- 5 June 2014 Elected member workshop on Strategic Directions
 - 17 June 2014 Elected member workshop.
- 9 Following these forums feedback from elected members was incorporated into the draft Strategic Directions chapter. The draft chapter was attached to feedback to the Otago Regional Council on its 'Issues and Options' paper on the Regional Policy Statement review.
- 10 As the detail of the District Plan review progresses, the Strategic Directions chapter may require adjustments. If this is required, it will be brought to the attention of elected members as each draft chapter of the District Plan review is presented.

Comment

- 11 The Strategic Directions chapter forms the strategic backbone of the District Plan review. Its equivalent in the Operative District Plan is Chapter 3: Sustainable Management. This chapter suffers from the following issues:
- It lacks impact and fails to set a clear direction
 - It relies too heavily on generic Resource Management Act language
 - It lacks specificity with regard to the District
 - It serves little meaningful function in terms of administration and decision making under the Resource Management Act, and is largely irrelevant.
- 12 By contrast the Strategic Directions chapters seeks to:
- Be clear and direct in outlining the District's goals
 - Be district-specific as opposed to generic in its language
 - Provide a relevant framework which administrators and decision makers can and should refer to in performing their duties under the statute.
- 13 One alternative policy option to the Strategic Directions chapter that has been considered is having no lead strategic chapter. Other than an ever so slightly smaller District Plan, there is considered to be no benefits associated with this option. The cons of this option are:
- The District Plan review process will lack direction
 - The final District Plan will lack a clear strategic direction and lack a chapter that brings all the disparate policy issues together
 - There will be a less robust policy context for administration and decision making under the District Plan.

- 14 The Strategic Direction chapter commences by defining some of the District's key special qualities. It then proceeds to state 7 goals, each of which are followed by objectives and policies.
- 15 The Section 32 assessment forming Attachment B assesses the costs and benefits of the proposed provisions. It concludes that the benefits far outweigh the costs. Furthermore, it concludes that the proposed provisions will create a policy framework that best helps Council achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act in Queenstown Lakes District.

Financial Implications

- 16 There are no budget or cost implications resulting from the decision. The work is accounted for in already approved budgets.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions

- 17 The Proposed Strategic Directions chapter is considered to be consistent with the LGA purpose provisions (ss10, 11, 11A) summarised as:
 - Activity (local democracy, infrastructure, local public services or performance of regulatory functions);
 - Quality (efficient, effective and appropriate to present and future circumstances); and, or
 - Economic (most cost-effective for households and businesses).
- 18 The process that has been followed in developing the policy is consistent with democratic local decision making. Consultation on the draft policy occurred in 2013, and the policy has been considered and debated at three Council workshops. The policy will help the District meet the current and future needs of communities by setting a strong strategic planning direction. It forms the platform for a proposed District Plan that will be streamlined and more cost-effective for households and businesses.

Council Policies

- 19 The following Council Policies were considered:
 - Growth Management Strategy
 - Wanaka Structure Plan
 - Queenstown Lakes District Council 10-Year Plan – 2012/2022
 - Annual Plan 2014/15
- 20 Council's Policy on Significance was considered. The District Plan Review is considered to be of significance due to its district-wide significance across a range of economic, environmental and social matters.

Consultation

- 21 Consultation on a draft Strategic Directions chapter occurred in October 2013. A number of responses were received and assessed. Some changes were made where appropriate, noting that some submissions could not easily be translated into a planning framework.

- 22 Further iterations were work shopped with Councillors on 3 December 2013, and twice in June 2014. Elected members noted the need to carry through and integrate Shaping our Future objectives. In addition, the policy was work shopped with the Resource Management Focus Group in May 2013.
- 23 The draft policy has been sent to the Ministry for the Environment, Otago Regional Council, and iwi – in accordance with the statutory requirements in preparing District Plan policy.
- 24 The chapter will be publicly notified together with all of Stage 1 of the District Plan review in May 2015.

Publicity

- 25 No media statement or public communication is required. Communication was undertaken following Council's decision to formally commence the District Plan review in April 2014.

Attachments

- A Proposed Strategic Directions Chapter
- B Section 32 evaluation