

## PROACTIVE RELEASE COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon David Parker	<b>Portfolio</b>	Environment
<b>Name of package</b>	Advice provided to ministers in the process of developing the first set of national planning standards	<b>Date of issue</b>	5 April 2019

<b>List of documents that have been proactively released</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
March 2019	Cabinet paper - National Planning Standards: Report back on consultation, changes, approval and implementation	Minister for the Environment
February 2019	19-B-05213 Final decisions on the National Planning Standards	MfE & DOC
February 2019	2019-B-05325 National Planning Standards – Consultation with Ministers	MfE & DOC
February 2019	2019-B-05262 National Planning Standards - Confirming approach to coastal matters and rural zones	MfE & DOC
December 2018	2018-B-05142 National Planning Standards: main briefing to confirm drafting	MfE & DOC
November 2018	2018-B-04984 Implementation timeframes for the first set of National Planning Standards: submissions and some recommended variations	MfE & DOC
October 2018	2018-B-04860 National Planning Standards - spatial layers and zone framework	MfE & DOC
September 2018	2018-B-04923 Update on submissions and upcoming briefings	MfE & DOC
April 2018	2018-B-04385 National Planning Standards-approval for consultation	MfE & DOC
March 2018	Cabinet paper - National Planning Standards: Approval to Consult	Minister for the Environment
March 2018	18-B-04172 National Planning Standards — implementation timeframes and support for implementation	MfE
January 2018	18-B-04175 Agreement sought on the scope of the first set of national planning standards and a formal consultation process	MfE
December 2018	17-13 -03953 Update on progress towards developing the first set of national planning standards	MfE

**Information withheld**

Some parts of this information release are not appropriate to be released and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act that would apply have been identified and are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

<b>Section of the Act</b>	<b>Reason for withholding</b>
<i>s9(2)(g)(ii)</i>	<i>The protection of Department of Conservation officials from improper pressure or harassment</i>

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## In Confidence

### Office of the Minister for the Environment

### Chair, Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee

## National Planning Standards: Report back on consultation, changes, approval and implementation

### Proposal

1. This paper reports on the recommended final first set of National Planning Standards (planning standards), the high-level policy decisions the Minister of Conservation and I have made as a result of submissions, the process for approving the planning standards, and details and costs of an implementation programme.

### Executive summary

2. The planning standards are a new national direction tool under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) designed to address unnecessary and costly variation across local governments' resource management policy statements and plans (policy statements and plans).
3. On 28 May 2018, Cabinet agreed to release the *Draft National Planning Standards Consultation Document* for consultation, and invited me to report back by March 2019 with the final proposed planning standards, including any changes proposed as a result of submissions; and on the details of an implementation programme and associated costs [ENV-18-MIN-0023 refers].
4. In preparing the planning standards the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) engaged with local councils, industry groups, iwi authorities, technical advisory groups, and members of the planning and legal professions. Most submissions supported the planning standards in principle, but also requested changes to them. This paper presents the recommended final planning standards, which include changes that the Minister of Conservation and I have directed in response to submissions.
5. Once gazetted, these planning standards will have the potential to create greater consistency across policy statements and plans, and across the implementation of other national direction. This will make plan-making more efficient and policy statements and plans easier to navigate, reducing costs to councils and plan users.
6. As Minister for the Environment, I am primarily responsible for the development and approval of the planning standards, while the Minister of Conservation must approve planning standards matters that relate to the coastal marine area. The notice of approval of the planning standards needs to be gazetted by 19 April 2019<sup>1</sup>. We will approve the planning standards when we are satisfied that they meet their purposes in Section 58B of the RMA<sup>2</sup>.
7. Councils will need to implement the planning standards either as part of their next plan review, or by a specific deadline date, whichever is earlier. We intend to extend the deadline date for some councils so they are better able to make changes as part of full plan reviews. This will reduce the costs for councils to align existing policy statements and plans. Small councils are also given more time to build their ePlans, given the relative costs per ratepayer and low existing resources for these councils.
8. To be implemented in a timely and efficient way, the planning standards will need implementation support from MfE, such as guidance material, sharing best practice, engaging with councils and helping with training courses. The level of this implementation support is subject to MfE's funding constraints.

### Background

#### *Unnecessary variation in council policy statements and plans*

- 1 Required under Section 58G of the Resource Management Act 1991.
- 2 The purposes of national planning standards are set out in paragraph 11 of this paper.

9. Under the RMA, councils create policy statements and plans to manage natural and physical resources in their areas. Councils have the ability to tailor their individual policy statements and plans to reflect their particular local circumstances and community needs.
10. To date, individual councils have developed their policy statements and plans independently of each other. While it is important that councils retain the ability to respond to and reflect their local communities in the RMA plans, it has long been recognised that too little consistency has led to undesirable consequences, such as:
  - unnecessary variation in core structural elements of policy statements and plans such as format, structure, and definitions
  - a lack of alignment and integration among policy statements and plans, both regionally and nationally
  - each council spending time and resources developing the structure, form and common content of each plan
  - plan users facing additional time and costs navigating and interpreting different policy statements and plans.

*The planning standards aim to make policy statements and plans more standardised*

11. The planning standards are a new form of national direction in the RMA. The Minister of Conservation and I are required to approve the first set of planning standards by 19 April<sup>3</sup> 2019. The purposes of the planning standards are to assist in achieving the purpose of the RMA, and to set requirements on structure, format, or content of policy statements and plans to address matters that:
  - require national consistency
  - are required to support the implementation of a national environmental standard, a national policy statement, a New Zealand coastal policy statement, or regulations made under the RMA
  - are required to assist people in complying with the procedural principles of the RMA.<sup>4</sup>

*Standardised policy statements and plans will improve the planning system*

12. The planning standards are an opportunity to address the undesirable consequences outlined in paragraph 10, and to work towards the following outcomes:
  - less time and fewer resources to prepare and use policy statements and plans
  - easier access, understanding and use of relevant plan content
  - more consistent implementation of national direction in policy statements and plans, with chapters and spatial layers providing locations and tools for government objectives such as urban planning, housing and water quality
  - good planning practice shared and applied quickly across councils.
13. This first set of planning standards focuses on standardising the structure, form and delivery of policy statements and plans, and other matters that do not need local variation. They will allow councils to continue to reflect local circumstances in planning outcomes, and will not change the effect of local provisions in policy statements and plans. Councils can use these planning standards as they organise policy statement and plan content to address local planning issues.

*The Minister for the Environment and the Minister of Conservation must approve the planning standards*

14. As Minister for the Environment, I have primary responsibility for the development and approval of the planning standards, while the Minister of Conservation is responsible for matters relating to the coastal

<sup>3</sup> Section 58G of the RMA.

<sup>4</sup> In short, these principles are: use timely, efficient, consistent, cost-effective and proportionate processes, keep plans to relevant RMA matters, use clear and concise words, and collaborate on common issues (RMA Section 18A).

marine area<sup>5</sup>. The Minister of Conservation has been consulted and agrees with the recommendations in this paper.

## **Development of the planning standards**

15. The planning standards have had a thorough development process with considerable engagement with councils, iwi representatives and interest groups.

### *Research and initial engagement*

16. MfE commissioned numerous reports on planning practice within New Zealand and overseas to identify best practice, and pinpoint unnecessary variation which can be standardised. This research was published on the MfE website.

17. MfE officials engaged with other ministries and departments, the planning and legal fraternities, interest groups and council staff, set up technical working groups to discuss the direction and content of the draft planning standards and organised 15 regional workshops around New Zealand to discuss options for the planning standards with plan users and the general public.

### *Drafting and testing*

18. While drafting the planning standards, MfE staff continued to check drafts with council staff and continued engaging with a wide range of agencies and groups. Early drafts were tested with 25 'pilot councils' that included large, small, regional, city and district councils.

### *Submissions and planning standards refinement*

19. The draft planning standards were publicly notified on 8 June 2018 for a 10-week submission period. During this period, officials held meetings with council staff and workshops with plan users. Most of the 201 submissions received on the planning standards were from business and industry groups (68) and councils (56). Approximately two-thirds of submissions stated some support for the planning standards and approximately 10 per cent opposed them.

20. Councils generally provided in-principle support. Their main concerns included the complexity of applying the planning standards to their policy statements and plans, whether the changes could be made without the need to use the RMA Schedule 1 plan change process, and whether implementation of the planning standards could be combined with upcoming plan reviews.

21. Business and industry groups expressed support for the consistency and efficiencies the planning standards would bring. Their most common concern was the potential for established provisions for their activities to be re-litigated through the RMA Schedule 1 plan process.

22. Iwi groups generally supported the planning standards and the proposed location of tangata whenua provisions. Their most common concern was ensuring that Māori values and perspectives would be included and integrated throughout policy statements and plans.

### *Consultation with iwi and incorporation of Māori perspectives*

23. As part of the consultation process, officials drafted tangata whenua-related standards and a separate consultation document with a Māori Advisory Group, consisting of eight Māori planning practitioners with a range of planning experience. Iwi groups were invited to hui in 14 locations across New Zealand. Eight hui were held, and iwi representatives in other locations chose to participate in other planning standards workshops and meetings. This provided iwi with an opportunity to gain an understanding of how the standards would affect them, prior to making submissions.

24. The Māori Advisory Group tested the draft planning standards relevant to tangata whenua in light of the submissions received. Their recommendations were incorporated into the draft recommendations report.

## **Our directions on changes to the draft planning standards**

<sup>5</sup> Section 58B of the RMA.

25. With advice from our officials, the Minister of Conservation and I have directed the following changes to be made to the draft planning standards. Officials prepared their final recommendation reports and the final planning standards to reflect these directions, which were to:

- amend the structure of policy statements and plans to better provide for integrated management across domains and topics, and reduce duplication of provisions
- consider how the planning standards can provide for plans to be more streamlined and less verbose
- replace the draft combined plan structure with two new plan structures to better suit regional and unitary council functions
- ensure that provisions relating to the coastal marine area are grouped together
- require coastal environment provisions to be within a coastal environment chapter, with some flexibility to cross-reference to other chapters
- include an urban form and development chapter in regional policy statements, district plans and combined plans
- amend zone descriptions and add four new zones to accommodate the needs of rural districts and large cities such as Auckland and Christchurch, and to provide for prisons and other corrections facilities
- ensure that zone provisions manage the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in accordance with Part 2 of the RMA
- extend the implementation timeframes for some councils and for some individual standards for existing policy statements and plans, while retaining the requirement for any new plan to align with the planning standards (the final implementation timeframes are described later in this paper)
- clarify how councils can use consequential amendments to align existing policy statements and plans to the planning standards
- add seven new definitions of terms, remove 18 definitions of terms, and amend the definitions of most of the 92 remaining terms to reflect points raised in submissions and further testing
- remove the rule format tables from the planning standards and replace these with guidance.

### **Scope of the planning standards following consultation and testing**

#### *Standards in the first set of planning standards*

26. The Minister of Conservation and I propose that the first set of planning standards cover the following matters. They are informed by the early consultation meetings, written submissions, council testing, the policy directions listed above, and technical changes to improve clarity.

#### **Foundation standard:**

- interpretation of terms used by the planning standards
- directions and application of directions that apply across all the individual standards.

#### **Standards for the structures of policy statements and plans:**

- regional policy statement structure
- regional plan structure
- district plan structure

- combined plan structure, which includes structures for a combined plan (regional policy statement–regional plan–district plan) and a combined plan (regional policy statement–regional plan)
- these policy statement and plan structures separated into parts, chapters and sections
- mandatory headings, and headings to use if relevant to plan content
- how to organise plan content within these policy statement and plan structures.

**Introduction and general provisions standard:**

Matters to include, some mandatory text, and the layout of chapters and chapter content, for:

- plan introduction
- how the plan works
- plan interpretation
- national direction instruments
- tangata whenua/mana whenua background information and plan processes.

**District-wide matters standard:**

Matters to include, some mandatory text, and the layout of chapters and chapter content, for:

- strategic direction
- natural environment values
- hazards and risks
- historic and cultural values
- energy, infrastructure and transport
- subdivision
- general district-wide matters.

**Zone framework standard:**

- a set of zones which district and city councils must select from to apply in district and unitary plans
- zone descriptions that zone provisions must be consistent with.

**Designations standard:**

- designations table and standard content required for each designation
- unique identifiers for common requiring authorities.

**Format standard:**

- order of and grouping of provisions within chapters and sections
- labelling status and type of provisions
- titles and numbering.

**Spatial layers standards (regional and district):**

- regional spatial layers: zone (coastal only), overlay, precinct (coastal only),

<p>specific control, freshwater management unit, airshed, area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• district spatial layers: zone, overlay, precinct, specific control, development area, designation, heritage order</li> <li>• additional regional spatial layers can be used, but not additional district spatial layers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mapping standard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• colours for zones in the zone framework</li> <li>• symbols for common overlays and specific controls, and for designations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Definitions standard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• definitions of common terms used in policy statements and plans</li> <li>• directions on use of synonyms and subcategories of defined terms and how terms are shown and relate to each other</li> <li>• directions on defining or translating te reo Māori terms in rules.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Noise and vibration metrics standard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parts of the <i>New Zealand Standards</i> on noise and vibration measurement and assessment methods for plan rules to be consistent with.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Electronic accessibility and functionality standard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• electronic accessibility and functionality requirements for all policy statements and plans</li> <li>• online interactive plan (ePlan) requirements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation standard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementation timeframes for different types of policy statements and plans</li> <li>• timeframe extensions for councils that have recently been through a full plan review</li> <li>• timeframe extensions for small councils to adopt ePlans.</li> </ul>

*The first set will provide locations for plan content developed with tangata whenua*

27. This first set of planning standards integrates the requirements to support the recognition of tangata whenua values and interests throughout the planning standards, in particular:

- a location for Treaty settlement-related information and how RMA Part 2 Māori matters are addressed in policy statements and plans
- a chapter for tangata whenua background information and how tangata whenua are involved in policy statement and plan processes
- a Māori cultural zone that can be used, as well as providing for activities such as marae and papakāinga in other zones
- a chapter on sites and areas of significance to Māori
- locations to address resource issues of significance to iwi authorities
- a direction for Māori perspectives to be incorporated throughout policy statements and plans.

28. Treaty of Waitangi Settlement Acts that include directions and content for policy statements and plans have precedence over these planning standards. However the planning standards' structure and format may be useful when councils are applying Settlement provisions into their policy statements and plans.

## Cost-benefit assessment of the planning standards

29. Castalia Strategic Advisors carried out a cost-benefit assessment of the planning standards, which gave a cost-benefit ratio of 1.53 for a 3 or 5 year implementation timeframe, and 2.1 for a 10 year timeframe. The cost-benefit ratio sensitivity range is 0.61–2.79. Most of the direct benefits calculated in this assessment come from less time and resources needed to make and use policy statements and plans. To reduce costs to councils and increase the cost-benefit ratio, I intend to extend some implementation timeframes so that more councils can align planning standards implementation with their upcoming plan reviews.
30. There are also likely to be other benefits from the proposals not valued in the cost-benefit ratio, including environmental benefits from more consistent application of national environmental standards and flow-on effects from direct cost savings to the rest of the economy. These benefits were not included in the Castalia cost-benefit assessment.

## Implementation of the planning standards

*Planning standard directions are almost all mandatory, but some councils will implement them as part of plan reviews*

31. Almost all directions in the planning standards must be applied to policy statements and plans without using a public consultation process (RMA Schedule 1). Councils must also make consequential amendments as necessary to avoid duplication or conflict. This is appropriate because these standards amend the framework and structure of policy statements and plans, not content or outcomes. Council decisions on local content through engagement with communities is still needed and important. Because of this I expect most councils will comply with the planning standards as part of broader plan reviews and plan changes that use a public consultation process.
32. The zone framework standard requires a public consultation process when councils amend the configuration or content of zones (beyond just changing the names and colours of existing zones), as this may have impacts on people and property rights.

*Implementation timeframes are extended for some councils and some individual standards*

33. While the planning standards present significant efficiency and cost savings for councils and plan users, attempting to implement them too quickly might result in policy statements and plans that do not work as intended and cause significant up-front implementation costs.
34. Implementation timeframes were the main concern raised by councils in submissions, letters, and meetings with officials. Councils wanted implementation requirements to better align with their upcoming plan reviews. Small councils were concerned about upgrading to ePlan software, given the higher proportional cost and lower benefits when compared with medium and larger councils.
35. After considering these concerns, the Minister of Conservation and I have given direction on the following timeframes for councils to implement the planning standards.
- 35.1. New policy statements and plans, and policy statements and plans undergoing a full plan review must implement the planning standards when they are notified for public submissions (ie, the proposed versions are released).
- 35.2. Existing policy statements and plans must implement planning standards within:
- regional policy statements – three years
  - regional plans – ten years
  - district plans (excluding definitions) – five years for most councils, and seven years for councils that have been through a recent full plan review
  - definitions in district plans – seven years for most councils, and nine years for councils that have been through a recent full plan review
  - unitary plans (ie, a combined regional policy statement, regional plan and district plan by a unitary authority) – ten years.
- 35.3. Baseline electronic accessibility and functionality directions must be met within one year.

35.4. Online interactive plan (ePlan) directions must be met within:

- territorial authorities with under 15,000 residential ratepayers (as at 2018), and regional and unitary councils – ten years
- territorial authorities with more than 15,000 residential ratepayers (as at 2018) that have been through a recent full plan review – seven years
- all other territorial authorities – five years.

35.5. The Department of Internal Affairs and the Department of Conservation (as local authorities for outer islands) and the Chatham Islands Council are exempt from the ePlan standard.

#### *Implementation support for councils*

36. Implementation support for the planning standards is fundamental to realising their benefits to councils and plan users. Experience with the National Policy Statement for Urban Development Capacity showed that working with councils on implementing new national direction gives more rapid and more effective results.

37. The planning standards are standardising some planning methods for policy statements and plans. Some council staff and plan users will be unfamiliar with the new terms, structures, tools, and how they work. MfE officials intend to address this through implementation support such as:

- guidance material and best practice published online
- engaging with workshops, local government forums, and training courses
- collating and sharing information on how councils are applying the planning standards
- specific assistance for local authorities that are applying the planning standards early, and in the longer term, targeted support for smaller councils with fewer resources
- input to potential legal declaration proceedings.

38. Officials may also need to work with council staff directly, to provide knowledge and skills on how to implement the planning standards correctly and efficiently. Councils that are applying the planning standards early would benefit most from this assistance.

#### *Support for smaller councils to use ePlans*

39. The planning standards require councils to start using online interactive plans (ePlans). ePlans make it easier for people to see how plan methods and rules apply to their land and neighbourhood, and to be involved in the planning process. ePlans also allow councils to be creative digitally as they plan and engage with communities. This aligns with our Government's Budget 2019 priority to support a thriving nation in a digital age through innovation, social and economic opportunities. However, this will mean a step change in skill level and investment for some councils, particularly small councils. Implementation support to small local authorities will be important to transition document-based policy statements and plans to working within ePlans.

#### *Cost and resourcing of implementation support*

40. The level of implementation support is dependent on the Ministry for the Environment's 2019 Budget bid, which includes funding for planning standards implementation. MfE currently has only residual funding from the 2015 budget allocation for planning standards, which is too small to cover any implementation support.

41. If no funding is provided, MfE could only provide nominal support to councils as part of other funded programmes. MfE would not be in a strong position to check compliance and provide advice. This would undermine the Government's ability to ensure the requirements are met and, in the long term, to ensure the effectiveness of the planning standards.

#### **Next steps: Ministerial decisions and publishing planning standards**

42. The Minister of Conservation and I have received the recommended planning standards and recommendations report from officials. We are considering these documents as we make final changes and approve the planning standards.

43. Officials have drafted a further evaluation report on changes made to the draft planning standards. This evaluation must be completed to account for our changes. We will have particular regard to this report when deciding to approve the planning standards.<sup>6</sup>
44. The first set of planning standards must be approved by 19 April 2019, and must at a minimum include:<sup>7</sup>
- a structure and form for policy statements and plans, including references to relevant national policy statements, national environmental standards, and regulations made under the RMA
  - definitions
  - requirements for the electronic functionality and accessibility of policy statements and plans.
45. Our approval of the final planning standards and the further evaluation report must be published in the *New Zealand Gazette*, given public notice, and published on the MfE website. We will also provide copies of the planning standards to all councils.<sup>8</sup> The officials' recommendations reports and related documents will be made available on the MfE website.

### **Consultation**

46. I have consulted with the Minister of Conservation. She has agreed with the content of this paper.
47. The following agencies have been kept informed as the planning standards were developed and were consulted on this draft Cabinet paper: Department of Corrections, Department of Internal Affairs, Land Information New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Primary Industries, Ministry of Transport, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Transport Agency, Te Arawhiti, Te Puni Kōkiri and Treasury.
48. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has been informed of the proposals in this paper.
49. Many councils, organisations and members of the public have been involved in developing the planning standards, as described earlier in this paper.

### **Financial implications**

50. The implementation of the planning standards, including costs of upgrading to ePlans and ongoing technology and upskilling costs, is expected to cost approximately \$40.8 million over the next 10 years. The majority of this cost will be borne by councils, particularly the cost of meeting ePlan requirements. A small amount will be borne by Government in the form of implementation support as discussed in paragraphs 40-41. The benefits exceed these costs as discussed in the cost-benefit assessment in paragraphs 29-30.

### **Human rights**

51. There are no inconsistencies between this paper and the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 or the Human Rights Act 1993.

### **Legislative implications**

52. A planning standard is a disallowable instrument, but not a legislative instrument, for the purposes of the Legislation Act 2012. This means that the planning standards must be presented to the House of Representatives and the House may, by resolution, disallow it or any provisions of it.

### **Regulations Review Committee**

53. We consider that there are no grounds for the Regulations Review Committee to draw the planning standards to the attention of the House under Standing Order 319.

6 Required by Section 58E(1) of the RMA.

7 Required by Section 58G of the RMA.

8 This process is set out in sections 58E and 58F of the RMA.

## Regulatory impact analysis

54. The Cabinet regulatory impact analysis requirements apply to the proposals in this paper. No further comment from Treasury's Regulatory Impact Analysis Review Panel is required where the quality assurance is undertaken by MfE's Regulatory Impact Analysis Panel (Panel).
55. The Panel has reviewed the Regulatory Impact Summary (RIS) produced by MfE and considers that the RIS meets the quality assessment criteria.
56. The RIS is written clearly and concisely and makes the case for the recommended option with the elements of the proposal being clear and the potential impacts having been identified. The problem definition is clearly articulated and the analysis and advice is commensurate with the issue of delivering the mandatory first set of National Planning Standards. The RIS convincingly explains the likely impacts and costs of the preferred option, above and beyond the minimum statutory requirements.
57. The RIS draws from the significant engagement undertaken to date with potentially affected parties, including local government. The input and feedback received on the proposal and its potential impacts has been reflected in the analysis, including substantial feedback on the implementation issues and risks identified by councils. In particular this feedback identified that the current timeframes for implementation, and therefore the associated costs, would be too onerous for many councils and their ratepayers, and the timeframes have been amended accordingly.

## Gender implications

58. There are no gender implications for this paper.

## Disability perspective

59. The planning standards will include a requirement for councils' policy statements and plans to be hosted on the councils' webpages and to have keyword search functionality. This enables people with visual impairment to use computer reading machines.
60. My officials have considered the implications for people with colour-blindness of the planning standard for mapping colours and symbols for zones and overlays. Councils may label colours and symbols so that zones and overlays can be differentiated without needing to use colour.

## Publicity

61. In addition to the gazettal and publication of the planning standards set out in paragraph 45, I plan to publicise the planning standards at the New Zealand Planning Institute's annual conference on 5 April 2019. My officials will also publicise the planning standards through various local government, planning, legal, industry, interest group and community sectors.

## Recommendations

The Minister for Environment recommends that the Committee:

### *Statutory requirements*

1. **Note** that under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the first set of National Planning Standards (planning standards) must be approved by 19 April 2019, with the minimum requirements of:
  - 1.1. a structure and form for local authority resource management policy statements and plans (policy statements and plans), including references to relevant national direction and regulations
  - 1.2. definitions
  - 1.3. the electronic functionality and accessibility of policy statements and plans.
2. **Note** that I am responsible for the overall approval of the planning standards, but that where a matter relates to the coastal marine area, the Minister of Conservation is the responsible Minister, as per section 58B(2) of the RMA.

### *Planning standards outcomes and content*

3. **Note** that the planning standards are expected to work towards the following outcomes:
  - 3.1. less time and fewer resources will be required to prepare and use policy statements and plans
  - 3.2. relevant plan content easier for people to access, understand and use
  - 3.3. national direction will be more consistently incorporated in policy statements and plans
  - 3.4. good planning practice can be shared and applied quickly across councils.
4. **Note** that the planning standards, when implemented, will:
  - 4.1. present significant efficiency and economic benefits for the resource management system
  - 4.2. make policy statements and plans easier to access, understand and use, and
  - 4.3. contribute to the delivery of broader government objectives and priorities, such as urban, housing and water outcomes, through more consistent plan provisions and a framework for implementation of current and future national direction within policy statements and plans.
5. **Note** that it is my intent and the Minister of Conservation's intent to approve the following individual planning standards, after changes from our consideration of officials' reports and consultation with our colleagues, and after giving particular regard to a further evaluation report:
  - 5.1. Foundation standard
  - 5.2. Regional policy statement structure standard
  - 5.3. Regional plan structure standard
  - 5.4. District plan structure standard
  - 5.5. Combined plan structure standard
  - 5.6. Introduction and general provisions standard
  - 5.7. District-wide matters standard
  - 5.8. Zone framework standard
  - 5.9. Designations standard
  - 5.10. Format standard
  - 5.11. Regional spatial layers standard
  - 5.12. District spatial layers standard
  - 5.13. Mapping standard
  - 5.14. Definitions standard
  - 5.15. Noise and vibration metrics standard
  - 5.16. Electronic accessibility and functionality standard
  - 5.17. Implementation standard.

### *Implementation support*

6. **Note** that the Ministry for the Environment has no budget for planning standards implementation support, and has requested \$5.1 million over four years in the Ministry's 2019 Budget bid for assisting and monitoring council implementation of a range of national direction.
7. **Note** that, subject to the outcome of the Ministry for the Environment's 2019 Budget bid and government priorities, support for local authorities to implement the planning standards will include:
  - 7.1. guidance material and best practice published online
  - 7.2. engaging with workshops, local government forums, and training courses
  - 7.3. collating and sharing information on how councils are applying the planning standards
  - 7.4. specific assistance for local authorities that are applying the planning standards early
  - 7.5. input to potential legal declaration proceedings
  - 7.6. support to small local authorities that are transitioning to online interactive ePlans.

*Next steps*

8. **Note** that Cabinet's requirement that regulations must not come into force until at least 28 days after they have been notified in the *New Zealand Gazette* will also apply to the planning standards.
9. **Note** that in accordance with section 58E(4) of the RMA the planning standards must be presented to the House of Representatives.
10. **Note** that the implementation costs of the planning standard (including upgrading to ePlans), are expected to be approximately \$40.8 million over the next 10 years. The majority of this cost will be borne by councils with a small amount borne by Government. The benefits exceed these costs.

Authorised for lodgement.

Hon David Parker

**Minister for the Environment**