



## District Growth Committee

### Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the District Growth Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, 156 High Street, Dannevirke on **Wednesday 18 March 2026** commencing at **9:30am**.

Corin Haines  
Chief Executive

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### Agenda

- 1. Welcome and Meeting Opening**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Public Forum**

A period of up to 30 minutes shall be set aside for a public forum. Each speaker during the public forum section of a meeting may speak for up to five minutes.

Standing Orders may be suspended on a vote of three-quarters of those present to extend the period of public participation or the period any speaker is allowed to speak.

With the permission of the Chairperson, members may ask questions of speakers during the period reserved for public forum. If permitted by the Chairperson, questions by members are to be confined to obtaining information or clarification on matters raised by the speaker.

- 4. Notification of Items Not on the Agenda**

Major items not on the agenda may be dealt with at this meeting if so resolved by the Committee and the Chairperson explains at the meeting at a time when it is open to the public the reason why the item was not listed on the agenda and the reason why discussion of the item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

Minor matters not on the agenda relating to the general business of the Committee may be discussed if the Chairperson explains at the beginning of the meeting, at a time when it is open to the public, that the item will be discussed at that meeting, but no resolution, decision or recommendation may be made in respect of that item except to refer it to a subsequent meeting.

- 5. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest in Relation to this Meeting's Items of Business**
- 6. Reports**
- 6.1 Regulatory Services Report - 1 November 2025 to 28 February 2026 3**
- 6.2 State of the Nation - Growth Planning Changes under Legislative Reform 13**
- 7. Items not on the Agenda**
- 8. Closure**



## Report

Date : 12 March 2026

To : Chairperson and Committee Members  
District Growth Committee

From : James Single  
Regulatory Services Manager

Subject : **Regulatory Services Report - 1 November 2025 to 28 February 2026**

Item No : **6.1**

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### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 *That the report from the Regulatory Services Manager dated 04 March 2026 concerning the Regulatory Services Report - 1 November 2025 to 28 February 2026 be received.*

## Executive Summary

This Regulatory Services Update report includes updated statistical information for the period, 1 November 2025 to 28 February 2026.

### **2. Reason for the Report**

- 2.1 This report is a regular update of the statistical information provided by Regulatory Services, for Council information purposes only.

### 3. Staffing

3.1 The Building, Planning and Monitoring and Compliance teams are at full strength, however we are currently in the process of advertising for an additional LIMs officer to allow for repositioning of roles in other parts of the business and to help with the increased number of LIM applications being received.

### 4. Building Services

#### 4.1 Accreditation

In November 2024, IANZ conducted the biennial audit of our building control authority (BCA). Our next audit will be in November this year.

We received official certification to continue our accreditation as a building control authority (BCA) for a further two years and are assessed as low risk.

#### 4.2 Building Consents

*Table – Applications for Dwellings by Location*

Location (Valuation Area)	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
<b>Dannevirke</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Rural</i>	14	12	6	6	2
<i>Urban</i>	5	4	3	2	3
<b>Woodville</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Rural</i>	4	2	3	-	6
<i>Urban</i>	3	2	2	3	10
<b>Pahiatua</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Rural</i>	4	8	3	1	4
<i>Urban</i>	10	2	1	2	0
<b>Eketahuna</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Rural</i>	0	2	0	1	2
<i>Urban</i>	1	1	0	-	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>

**Table – Building Consent and Inspection Statistics**

Category	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
No. of Applications Received	386	351	287	260	192
No. of Applications Processed	357	350	281	247	188
% Processed within Time	76%	93%	95.7%	96%	97.34%
Total Value	\$42.7M	\$46.5M	\$31.8M	\$17.05M	\$32.5M
No. of Inspections Requested	1,517	1670	983	1147	589
No. of Inspections Performed	1,784	2,018	1561	1240	906

4.3 **Table – Applications for Relocated Dwellings by Location**

Location (Valuation Area)	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
<b>Dannevirke</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Rural</i>	9	10	6
<i>Urban</i>	1	7	1
<b>Woodville</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Rural</i>	6	2	1
<i>Urban</i>	2	-	3
<b>Pahiatua</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Rural</i>	5	3	3
<i>Urban</i>	1	-	3
<b>Eketahuna</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Rural</i>	0	-	2
<i>Urban</i>	0	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>

4.4 **Table - Building Packet and Lim Requests**

	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
<b>Building Packets</b>	353	138	141	129	51
<b>LIMs</b>	163	157	194	229	174

4.5 **Earthquake Prone Buildings (EPB)**

104 properties which are still considered earthquake prone, have been sent a new EPB notice which includes the new remediation deadline to include the 4-year extension.

In total, 138 Properties have been sent EPB letters and of those, 28 of those properties are confirmed as not EPBs.

A Cabinet policy announcement on the 29th of September 2025 outlined the Government’s intent to change the EPB system and introduce legislation through Parliament.

The Government is proposing a reduction in EPB system scope, to focus mandatory mitigation requirements on building typologies with higher risk characteristics (e.g. heavy buildings of three or more storeys and unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings) in high and medium seismic hazard areas only.

Priority building status will no longer apply to government agencies (for example hospitals or fire stations), unless they have buildings on designated priority routes.

EPB owners will be able to apply for seismic work deadline extensions subject to conditions.

The review has highlighted that the current system is capturing significantly more buildings than intended – i.e. going well beyond the ‘worst of the worst’ original intention for mandatory mitigation.

It has also noted that too much emphasis is placed on seismic assessments, in contrast to other countries with seismic regulations for existing buildings (where there is more focus on the retrofit program itself).

Many owners of earthquake-prone buildings are unable to access funding to undertake strengthening due to finance sector lending policies.

Some buildings are being vacated or strengthened due to perceptions of their risk, which in many cases are being driven by the Health and Safety at Work Act.

The proposals are still required to be passed into law. This process will occur through 2026.

An implementation (commencement) date of mid-2027 is anticipated.

Under the new proposals, multi-storey URM buildings in rural centres and one and two storey URM buildings in urban centres, securing of facades and walls facing onto public spaces or above adjacent properties would be required.

For one and two storey URM buildings in rural centres, EPB status would only be required to be recorded on the national EPB Register (but would not be required to display a physical notice on the building). They would be removed from the register if they chose to voluntarily undertake façade securing.

	Priority Building	Non-Priority	Total
Potentially EPB Letters Sent	103	35	138
Confirmed Not EPB	17	9	28
EPB Notices Issued	73	16	107
Extensions Granted	42	31	73

#### 4.6 Other Building Control matters

Building Control is currently prosecuting the owners of a swimming pool for failing to adequately fence their swimming pool.

### 5. Animal Control

#### 5.1 Annual Dog Registration

Out of a total of **6261** (known) dogs in the Tararua District, 6183 (**98.64%**) have been registered to date. Owners of all remaining unregistered dogs may be issued infringements as appropriate. To date, **206** infringements have been issued for a variety of dog control offences.

#### 5.2 Dog Attacks

We have recently successfully prosecuted 2 dog owners for serious attacks on people and stock and one dog owner for a serious attack causing significant injury to a person.

Dog Control Officers are also assisting a Police prosecution involving dog offences, assault on staff and burglary (dog theft from the pound).

**Table – Reported Dog Attacks by Type and Location: Totals From 1 July 2025**

Location/Attacks on	Dogs	Poultry	Stock	Cat	People
Rural	4	1	3	0	2
Road or No Property Address	0	0	0	0	0
Urban	3	2	3	1	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>

The latest dog attacks on people occurred in the following areas:

1 x Eketahuna

3 x Dannevirke

1 x Woodville

1 x Pahiatua

## 6. Environmental Health and Licensing Totals From 1 July

<b>Food</b>	<b>Task</b>
New Registration	7
Food Verifications	63
Registration Amendment	6
Site Inspection/Educational visits.	31
<b>Health Complaints</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
Complaints, Investigations/Advice	20
Nuisance Order Letter	5
Cleansing Order	2
<b>Health Licences</b>	<b>Task (Completed in June 2025 next inspection is due in June 2026)</b>
Hairdresser	13 existing, 1 new, Total = 14 (Exempted as of 31/07/25)
Funeral Homes	3 - done annually in June

Camping Grounds	5 - done annually in June
Offensive Trade	6 - done annually in June
Site Inspection for Health Licences	22 - done annually in June

## 7. Alcohol Licensing

To date, no licensing applications have required a public hearing. All licensed premises have been inspected during the year. Work has begun on developing a Local Alcohol Policy for our district.

The following alcohol licensing applications have been received:

**Table – Alcohol Licensing Totals**

Category	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
New Manager Cert	57	50	16	23
Renewal of Manager Cert	41	76	35	23
Special Licences	75	74	48	34
Temporary Authority	18	15	7	0
On/Off/Club New applications	12	15	7	0
On/Off/Club Renewal applications	23	27	27	9
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>89</b>

## 8. Illicit Dumping

**Table – Reported Illicit Dumping by Location**

Location	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
Ind/Com Nth Ward	8	19	9	0
Ind/Com Sth Ward	13	17	5	0
Non Rateable	20	12	12	9
Rural North Ward	6	7	23	25
Rural South Ward	22	31	37	21
Road or No Property Address	15	6	5	2

Location	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
Urban North Ward	18	5	21	32
Urban South Ward	33	17	14	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>101</b>

### Infringements

To date, officers have issued 2 x \$400 infringements and 6 x \$300 infringements for litter offences. Infringements can only be issued when there is an evidential basis to do so.

## 8.1 Other Complaints

	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
Noise	635	474	382	314
Abandoned Vehicles	71	97	57	39

## 9. District Planning

### 9.1 Resource Consents

The planning team has exceeded their KPI's and processed 100% of all non-notified land use and subdivision consents in 20 working days or less. Tararua District Council was recently acknowledged as being one of 13 Councils in the country that has achieved meeting 100% of their processing timeframes and these results are a credit to the commitment and dedication of the team.

The planning reform and landscape continues to evolve, and our team continues to prepare for these changes. The planning team process a wide range of applications across our district including designations, land use, subdivision and right of way consents under the Local Government Act and comments on Fast Track applications. Most applications lodged are for rural subdivisions across the district, predominantly in Dannevirke and Pahiatua areas.

### 9.2 *Table – Applications for Subdivision by Location*

Location (Valuation Area)	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
Dannevirke	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>30</b>

Location (Valuation Area)	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
<i>Rural</i>	51	47	45	39	26
<i>Urban</i>	19	23	22	12	4
<b>Woodville</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Rural</i>	22	13	13	11	2
<i>Urban</i>	8	8	12	7	4
<b>Pahiatua</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Rural</i>	28	18	19	27	8
<i>Urban</i>	5	5	3	3	1
<b>Eketahuna</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Rural</i>	10	18	5	17	6
<i>Urban</i>	3	4	5	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>51</b>

9.3 **Table – Resource Consent Statistics**

Category	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/25	From 1 July 2025
No. of Applications Received	184	<b>191</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>83</b>
<i>Subdivision</i>	146	126	124	83	51
<i>Land Use</i>	14	26	18	24	15
<i>Other</i>	24	39	20	27	17
No. of Applications Processed	192	<b>178</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>90</b>
<i>Subdivision</i>	158	124	103	71	60
<i>Land Use</i>	7	21	13	19	13
<i>Other</i>	27	33	18	21	17
% Processed within Time	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Attachments**

Nil.



## Report

Date : 12 March 2026

To : Chairperson and Committee Members  
District Growth Committee

From : Aimee Charmley  
Planning Services Manager

Subject : **State of the Nation - Growth Planning Changes under Legislative Reform**

Item No : **6.2**

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### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 *That the report from the Planning Services Manager dated 10 March 2026 concerning the State of the Nation - Growth Planning Changes under Legislative Reform be received.*
- 1.2 *Notes that the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025 has suspended the requirement under s79 of the RMA to review the District Plan every 10 years under s79(4) of the RMA, until 31 December 2027.*
- 1.3 *Notes the Planning team have submitted Plan Change 1 exemption application to enable rezoning of residential and industrial land to facilitate growth and provide for housing across our four main town centres to the Minister for approval. Decision from Minister Bishop anticipated mid-late April 2026.*
- 1.4 *Notes that Plan Change 2 exemption application to provide for designations for requiring authorities is currently being drafted and will be submitted to Minister Bishop for approval before 20th March 2026.*
- 1.5 *Notes Resource Management reform is underway with the Planning and Natural Environment Bills.*
- 1.6 *Notes the proposed policy and planning work programme that results from Planning and Natural Environment Bills initially includes giving effect to Clause 14, preparing for Regional Spatial Plan and keeping up with legislative changes and national direction.*

## Executive Summary

Tararua District Council's planning environment is undergoing significant transformation as a result of ongoing national reforms to New Zealand's resource management system. This report outlines how these changes affect Council's statutory obligations, the forward work programme, and the delivery of key planning initiatives.

Despite substantial legislative uncertainty, the Council is continuing to implement the **TDC Growth Strategy 2023–2053**, with the new planning work programme realigned to ensure its core recommendations remain on track. Over the next 36 months, Council faces an intensive period of statutory planning activity, driven by national reform requirements such as **Clause 14 obligations**, preparation for the **Regional Spatial Plan**, and the potential commencement of two major plan changes—pending ministerial approval.

The report provides a status update on **Plan Change A** and **Plan Change B**, highlighting the significant workload generated when Schedule 1 processes are triggered under the Resource Management Act. These processes will require substantial resourcing and careful sequencing to meet statutory milestones.

Finally, the report identifies emerging risks, challenges, and opportunities associated with this rapidly shifting regulatory landscape. These include managing capacity pressures, responding to central government direction, and ensuring Tararua's long-term growth needs are safeguarded through proactive and well-integrated planning.

### 1. Reason for the Report

This report provides a clear overview of the planning environment Tararua District Council is now operating within, and how national reforms are reshaping our statutory responsibilities.

Specifically, the report:

- Shows how the recommendations TDC Growth Strategy 2023–2053 is being implemented through our new work programme, despite major legislative changes.
- Describes how national reform impacts what Council must deliver over the next 36 months, including requirements associated with Clause 14, preparing for the Regional Spatial Plan, and managing two major plan changes (if ministerial approval is granted).
- Provides an update on Plan Change A and Plan Change B, with a focus on the significant Schedule 1 workload triggered when an exemption is granted.
- Highlights the risks, challenges, and opportunities facing Tararua in this rapidly evolving environment.

## 2. What is changing nationally

### 2.1 Major Reforms

- **Plan Stop (2025–2027)** – pauses most plan-making unless exemptions granted.
- **Planning Bill** – introduces Clause 14, Regional Spatial Plans, and future combined plans.
- **Natural Environment Bill** – sets environmental limits (water, soil, air, biodiversity).
- **Stronger National Direction** – tighter rules through NPS/NES.

#### 2.1.1 Why it Matters

- Less local control over land use and amenity
- New regional planning structures
- Higher legal and workload pressures
- Increasing need for coordinated regional decision-making

### 2.2 Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025

This Act took effect on **21 August 2025**. It:

- Pauses most council-led plan changes until 31 December 2027, and
- Suspends the 10-year District Plan review requirement, except where exemptions are granted.

The Government's intention is to prevent councils from investing heavily in plan-making that may soon be replaced by the new planning system.

### 2.3 Plan Stop and Exemptions

Under the Plan Stop: Some work can continue automatically (e.g., private plan changes, natural hazard work).

Other work may proceed only if Council applies for a **Ministerial exemption** and meets specific criteria such as:

- Growth or intensification needs
- Infrastructure requirements
- Natural hazard management

- Treaty obligations
- Tararua has applied for exemptions for two essential plan changes.

## 2.4 Tararua's Exemption Applications and Associated Workstreams

### 2.4.1 Plan Change A – Growth Zoning

- **Submitted:** 17 December 2025
- **Purpose:** Enable residential and industrial growth in Dannevirke, Pahiatua, and Woodville
- **Status:** Ministry sought clarifications in February 2026. Recommendation due **late March**, with a Ministerial decision expected **mid-late April 2026**.

### 2.4.2 Plan Change B – Designations Update

- Submission date: 20 March 2026
- Purpose: Update designations for requiring authorities so infrastructure projects remain legally protected and can proceed smoothly through the transition to the new planning system.

### 2.4.3 Schedule 1 Workload Generated by Exemptions

2.4.4 If Ministerial plan change exemption is approved, Council must run a full **Schedule 1 RMA process**. This is labour-intensive, technical, and costly. It includes:

- Drafting the plan change and gathering evidence
- Consulting with iwi, affected parties and stakeholders
- Preparing a comprehensive Section 32 evaluation report
- Public notification and submissions
- Further submissions
- Hearings led by qualified independent commissioners
- Decisions and responding to appeals
- Making the plan change operative once appeals are resolved

2.4.5 This is a **significant workload** for a small planning team and will require resourcing, budgeting, and careful sequencing.

## 2.5 The New Planning System: Planning Bill & Natural Environment Bill

2.5.1 The Government is replacing the RMA with two new Acts:

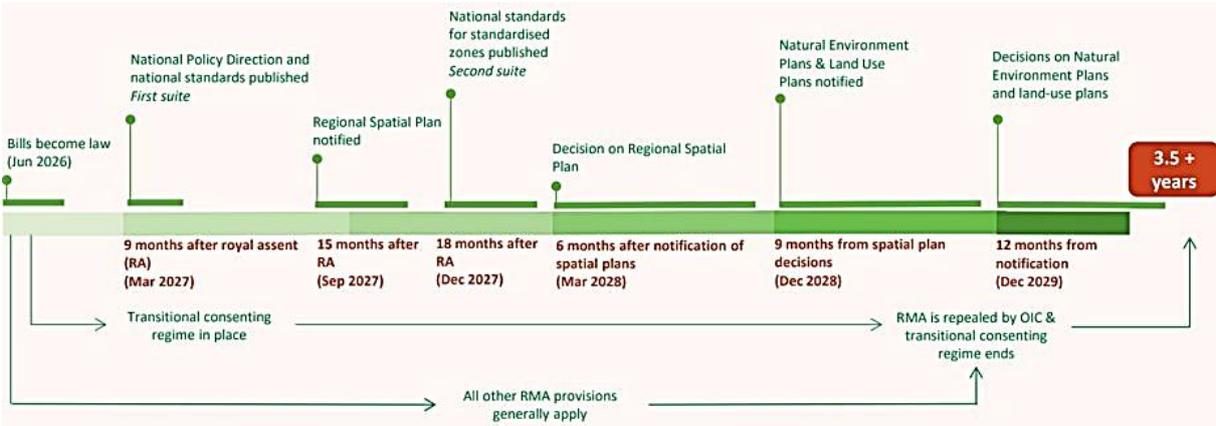
- The **Planning Bill** (land-use planning)
- The **Natural Environment Bill** (environmental management)

2.5.2 Key elements of the new system include:

- Stronger and more prescriptive **national direction**
- **30-year Regional Spatial Plans (RSPs)** that integrate growth, infrastructure, hazards, and environmental outcomes
- **Two combined plans per region:**
  - Land Use Plan
  - Natural Environment Plan
- New **environmental limits** for land, air, water, and biodiversity
- **Standardised zoning** across the country
- A new **Planning Tribunal** to resolve disputes more quickly

2.5.3 Timeframes:

Assuming the Planning Bill is passed mid-2026 RSPs are to be notified by September 2027 (15 months after royal assent or 6 months after the first national directions). Lawyers Simpson Grierson have outlined the key dates for the transition below:



2.5.4 Bill becomes law in June 2026 Council must give effect to Clause 14

## 2.6 **Clause 14: “Effects Outside the Scope of This Act”**

### 2.6.1 **Clause 14**

- Defines which effects Council is *not allowed* to consider under the Planning Bill.
- Its purpose is to narrow the scope of regulation to effects that materially impact others or the environment.
- **Effects Council Can No Longer Consider**

### 2.6.2 Under Clause 14, Council **cannot decline or restrict** activities based on:

- Visual amenity
- Retail distribution or economic competition
- Internal site layout or building design
- Minor or less-than-minor adverse effects (unless cumulative)

### 2.6.3 This is a major departure from the RMA, where Councils could consider a wide range of environmental and amenity effects.

## 2.7 **What Does This Mean in Practice for Tararua?**

- All rules and policies in the District Plan relating to these excluded effects must be **removed or rewritten**.
- This will require legally robust analysis and will be open to challenge.
- Council will have fewer tools to manage local character, land use conflicts, or poor-quality development.

## 2.8 **Risks for Tararua from Clause 14**

### 2.8.1 **Loss of Local Control Over Built Form & Amenity**

Tararua will have limited ability to manage:

- Town character
- Rural village identity
- Poor-quality or incompatible development
- Sensitive interfaces (e.g., industrial next to residential)

### 2.8.2 **Reduced Ability to Manage Cumulative Impacts**

Examples include:

- Infrastructure capacity overload
- Rural fragmentation
- Hazard exposure
- Growth inconsistent with the Growth Strategy or PC A

### 2.8.3 **Constraints on Protecting Town Centres**

Because Councils can no longer regulate:

- Retail distribution
- Out-of-centre commercial impacts

There may be:

- More edge-of-town or scattered commercial development
- Harder implementation of compact growth patterns

### 2.8.4 **Higher Litigation and Compensation Risks**

The new system includes regulatory relief/compensation where landowners' "reasonable use" is restricted.

If Council inadvertently regulates an "excluded effect," it may be exposed to:

- Legal challenge
- Compensation claims

This is a major financial risk for a small district.

### 2.8.5 **Pressure on Infrastructure**

More permitted activities = more unplanned growth.

### 2.8.6 **Community Dissatisfaction**

Residents may expect protections that Council is no longer legally allowed to provide.

## **3. Regional Spatial Plan Deliverable**

By September 2027, 15 months after royal assent the Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) must be notified

### 3.1 What is a Regional Spatial Plan?

Under the Government’s new planning system—created through the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill—a Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) is a mandatory 30-year strategic plan that every region in New Zealand must prepare.

The RSP will guide where and how a region grows, how infrastructure is delivered, how natural hazards are managed, and how environmental priorities are integrated. It is one of the most important components of the new system.

**3.1.1 The purpose of an RSP is to:**

- Set a long-term, region-wide strategy for land use, infrastructure, transport, and environmental outcomes.
- Identify growth areas, infrastructure corridors, and areas needing protection (e.g., high natural values, hazards).
- Integrate planning across councils to deliver “one regional direction” rather than each district operating separately.
- Provide the strategic foundation for the two new regional plans:  
  
Land Use Plan (LUP)  
  
Natural Environment Plan (NEP)
- The Government describes RSPs as key tools to simplify the system and ensure long-term integrated planning.

**3.1.2 While the Bills set the framework, regulations will define the specifics however, RSPs are expected to include:**

- 30-year growth pattern (housing + business land)
- Infrastructure sequencing (transport, 3 waters, energy, community facilities)
- Natural hazard mapping and resilience planning
- Environmental priorities and areas that must be protected
- Corridors for regionally significant infrastructure
- Spatial representation (GIS map layers)
- These functions align with the Government’s direction for fewer plans, stronger national direction, and more integrated regional planning.

Whilst our growth strategy will help inform this, new calculations for 30 year growth will need to be understood across the region and in a local context.

## 3.2 What the RSP Requires

3.2.1 The Planning Bill requires every region to prepare a **30-year Regional Spatial Plan** through a:

- Joint RSP Committee
- Regional secretariat
- Independent Hearings Panel

## 3.3 Council Roles

3.3.1 Mayors, Chief Executives, General Managers, and Planning Staff each have specific responsibilities, including:

- Forming the Joint RSP Committee
- Establishing a secretariat
- Preparing evidence and technical inputs
- Engaging with iwi and stakeholders
- Aligning LTPs, AMPs, and infrastructure planning

## 3.4 Pre-RSP Action Plan (Draft)

To meet deadlines, the region must:

1. Formalise the Planners Working Group
2. Appoint an independent project coordinator
3. Begin forming an interim Joint Committee
4. Begin formal discussions with mana whenua

Currently the Planners Working Group meet bimonthly to prepare for the Regional Spatial Plan, this will be informed by the regulations which have not yet been released. Currently this is about relationship building and creating an effective working group.

3.4.1 Why RSPs Matter for Councils?

- Become the **highest-level spatial plan** for a region.
- Directly guide the new **Land Use Plan** and **Natural Environment Plan**.
- Influence infrastructure funding via LTPs, AMPs, and government investment.

- Require significant **staff time, evidence gathering, GIS mapping, iwi engagement,** and political coordination.

3.4.2 They are a major shift away from district-by-district planning.

### 3.4.3 **What Does This Mean for Tararua?**

3.4.4 For Tararua District (within the Manawatū–Whanganui region):

- The region **does not currently have** the governance or technical structures required by the Bills.
- Councils must begin forming **proto-committees, a regional secretariat,** and working groups.
- Tararua’s early involvement is crucial to ensure:
  - Growth areas (e.g., Dannevirke, Pahiatua, Woodville) are correctly reflected
  - Infrastructure needs are prioritised
  - Natural hazard constraints are understood

3.4.5 This aligns with the proposed pre-RSP actions described in the legal guidance and planning sector papers

## 3.5 **Risks, Challenges and Opportunities**

### 3.5.1 **Risks**

- Very high workloads and compressed timeframes
- Policy and operational gaps during transition
- Uncertainty until national direction and environmental limits are released
- Possible financial exposure from compensation regimes
- Delivery risks if plan change exemptions are declined

### 3.5.2 **Opportunities**

- Plan Change A can unlock new housing and business land
- Plan Change B secures infrastructure delivery pathways
- Tararua can influence Regional Spatial Planning early
- Long-term benefits from a more standardised national planning system

#### 4. Overall Planning and Policy Work Programme

Priority	What is it	Why it matters
Plan Change A	Growth zoning	Unlocks new housing & industrial land, informs RSP gives effect to TDC Growth Strategy
Plan Change B	Designations Update	Protects infrastructure corridors
Clause 14 Implementation	Remove re-draft district plan rules and policies	Ensures Councils stay legally compliant
Regional Spatial Plan (RSP)	30-year strategic plan for Region	Secures Tararua's growth needs in regional strategy
Hazard & Infrastructure Work	Flooding, faults, network capacity	Informs Plan change A and RSP
Transition to New Planning System	LUP/NEP combined plans	Rewrites all planning documents long term

The transition to the new planning system will require Council to continuously track and respond to reform updates, evolving national direction, and new regulatory requirements.

To remain compliant and avoid legal or operational risk, Tararua District Council will need to maintain an active monitoring programme for all Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill regulations, updated NPS and NES instruments, environmental limits, and future government guidance. This includes regularly reviewing District Plan provisions to ensure they align with Clause 14, preparing evidence and spatial data that meet the expectations of the Regional Spatial Plan, and ensuring infrastructure, hazard, and growth information remains up to date.

Ongoing engagement with central government, neighbouring councils, iwi, and the regional secretariat will be essential, alongside internal capability building so staff can interpret and implement rapidly changing rules. Keeping pace with reform is not a one-off task—it is a sustained governance and operational commitment over the next several years as the new system beds in and national direction continues to evolve.

#### 5. Conclusion

Tararua District is operating in an unprecedented period of planning system change. National reforms—the 2025 Amendment Act, the Planning Bill, and the Natural Environment Bill—are reshaping the statutory environment, constraining plan-making, and introducing new requirements that will fundamentally alter how councils manage

growth and environmental outcomes. Despite the constraints of the Government's Plan Stop, Council has positioned itself proactively by advancing Plan Change A and Plan Change B, ensuring that essential housing, industrial land, and infrastructure corridors continue to progress.

Over the next 36 months, Council must navigate a complex work programme that includes responding to Clause 14, preparing for the Regional Spatial Plan, and managing two significant Schedule 1 plan changes should exemptions be granted. These tasks will require careful sequencing, additional resourcing, and strong governance oversight. Although the reforms introduce risks—such as reduced local control, infrastructure pressures, legal uncertainty, and compressed timeframes—they also create opportunities to influence regional spatial planning early, secure long-term growth areas, and transition to a more standardised national planning system.

Overall, Tararua District is well-placed to respond to the challenges ahead. By continuing to plan proactively, strengthening regional collaboration, and aligning growth planning with the emerging legislative framework, Council can ensure that development remains coordinated, resilient, and aligned with the district's long-term strategic priorities.

## **Attachments**

Nil.