The Waitomo District Plan (the plan) has been prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA/the Act). The Act provides the regulatory framework which manages the use, development and protection of land and other natural and physical resources in New Zealand. The purpose of the plan is to achieve the purpose of the Act and to assist Waitomo District Council to fulfil its functions under the RMA.

The purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Sustainable management is defined as:

"managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety while -
   (a) sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
   (b) safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and
   (c) avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment."

As a territorial authority, the functions of Waitomo District Council are described in section 31 of the RMA. The key function is integrated management of the use, development, or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources of the district. This includes managing the adverse effects of land use activities, natural hazards, the subdivision of land, noise, activities on the surface of waterbodies, and maintaining indigenous biodiversity. Waitomo District Council must also ensure that there is sufficient development capacity in respect of housing and business land to meet the expected demands of the district.

Accordingly, this plan contains objectives, policies, and rules about how land can be used, developed and subdivided, so that the community's aspirations and national policy outcomes are achieved, and environmental qualities and values are safeguarded for future generations.