

Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity

Section 32 Report for the Proposed Waitomo District Plan

Section 32 Report – Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity Chapter

SUMMARY OF ISSUES	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991	NATIONAL DIRECTION	REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS	IWI MANAGEMENT PLANS COTINUED
<p>The ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter addresses the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use practices, subdivision and development can result in the loss and degradation of ecosystems, fragmentation of habitats, the reduction of species abundance and the loss of overall district-wide biodiversity. Waitomo district is home to rare and unique ecosystems including dune lakes, coastal wetlands and karst ecosystems. Approximately 123,000 ha or 35% of the district located within the Waikato region is identified as a significant natural area (SNA). This comprises 708 sites, with the majority (59%) being nationally significant and 22% being internationally significant. SNAs comprise of a range of vegetation and habitat types, terrestrial, coastal and karst, of which some are representative of threatened or vulnerable environments or are habitat to threatened animal and plant species. Land use change, subdivision and development can adversely and permanently affect the high biodiversity value of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna. In the Manawatū-Whanganui region part of the district it is the Regional Council's function to provide for the protection of indigenous biodiversity and SNAs. The SNA sites in this part of the district are mapped for information purposes only. 	<p>Section 5 Protecting indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous species will promote the sustainable management of natural resources in accordance with section 5(1). In addition, it will safeguard the life-supporting capacity of ecosystems in accordance with Section 5(2)(b).</p> <p>Section 6 RMA Section 6(c) the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna. Council is required to recognise and provide for section 6(c) as a matter of national importance.</p> <p>Section 7 RMA Section 7(d) Council must have particular regard to the intrinsic value of ecosystems. Section 7(f) Council must have particular regard to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment</p> <p>"Intrinsic values" comprise "those parts of ecosystems and their constituent parts which have value in their own right, including (a) their biological and genetic diversity and (b) the essential characteristics that determine an ecosystem's integrity, form, functioning and resilience)</p> <p>Section 8 RMA Mana whenua have expressed a strong interest in managing and protecting the well-being of indigenous biodiversity as part of their obligations as kaitiaki. The principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are complemented by section 7(aa) and 7(a) which requires Council to have particular regard to the ethic of stewardship and kaitiakitanga and the view of mana whenua as guardians of natural resources. The obligation of stewardship is important, with a view that indigenous biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced holistically for the wider health of both the environment and all New Zealanders.</p> <p>Relevant case law considered Council has reviewed relevant Environment Court cases regarding ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Defence Society Inc v Otago Regional Council [2019] NZHC 2278; and Soc Inc v The New Zealand King Salmon Co Ltd [2014] NZSC 38, [2014] 1 NZLR 593. R J Davidson Family Trust v Marlborough District Environmental Defence Council [2019] NZCA 57 <p>This case law is relevant to the interpretation of part 2 of the RMA and the interpretation of policy 11 and 13 of the NZCPS. The provisions of this plan have been drafted in alignment with this case law.</p>	<p>There are six National Policy Statements (NPSs) currently in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 NPS for Electricity Transmission 2008 NPS for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 NPS for Freshwater Management 2020 NPS on Urban Development 2020 NPS for Highly Productive Land 2022 <p>It is considered that the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) and the NPS for Freshwater Management 2020 are relevant to this topic. Objective 1 of the NZCPS seeks to sustain the ecosystems of the coastal environment, in part by protecting representative or significant natural ecosystems and sites of biological importance. Policy 11 (Indigenous biological diversity) and Policy 13 (Preservation of natural character) are particularly relevant to the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity in the district's coastal environment. Policy 11 establishes a hierarchy of protection where adverse effects are to be avoided on the most significant indigenous ecosystems and vegetation types, while significant adverse effects are to be avoided for indigenous biodiversity that has been identified as being not as significant.</p> <p>There are also seven National Environmental Standards (NESs) currently in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NES for Air Quality 2004 NES for Sources of Human Drinking Water 2007 NES for Telecommunication Facilities 2016 NES for Electricity Transmission Activities 2009 NES for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011 NES for Plantation Forestry 2017 NES for Freshwater 2020 NES for Storing Tyres Outdoors 2021 <p>There are no standards and associated provisions specifically relevant to this topic. However, some rules in this plan prevail over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry) Regulations 2017. Clause 6(1)(b) states that a rule in a plan may be more stringent than the regulations if the rule gives effect to Policy 11 or 13 of the NZCPS. Clause 6(2)(b) states that a rule in a plan may be more stringent than the regulations if the rule recognises and provides for the protection of significant natural areas. Where this occurs, the plan states this.</p> <p>Additionally, the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 provides a definition of natural wetlands and requires that certain activities obtain resource consent from the Regional Council. Of particular note is setbacks from natural wetlands and where this issue may arise, the plan states this.</p> <p>Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity</p> <p>The Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity identifies three major principles inherent in managing indigenous biodiversity. These principles hinge on the interrelationship between te hauora o te tangata (the health of the people) and:</p>	<p>Waikato Regional Policy Statement: (WRPS) Objectives 3.8 (Ecosystem Services), 3.9 (Relationship of tangata whenua with the environment), Objective 3.12 (Built Environment), Objective 3.16 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands). 11.1.1 District Plans must: Maintain or enhance indigenous biodiversity including by creating buffers, linkages and corridors to protect and support indigenous biodiversity values, including esplanade reserves and esplanade strips to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity values. 11.1.2 District Plans must: recognise that adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity within terrestrial, freshwater and coastal environments are cumulative and may include a variety of undesirable and irreparable outcomes. 11.1.3 District Plans must: Avoid, remedy, mitigate and offset effects (for indigenous biodiversity that is not significant). 11.2 District plans must protect significant indigenous vegetation and the significant habitats of indigenous fauna by ensuring the characteristics that contribute to its significance are not adversely affected to the extent that the significance of the vegetation or habitat is reduced. 11.2.3 District plans must assess significant indigenous vegetation and the significant habitats identify the characteristics of any area by assessing significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats prior to any modification of the area. 11.3 district plans must work collaboratively with landowners, resource managers, tāngata whenua and other stakeholders. 11.4.1 district plans must control the adverse effects, including cumulative effects, of activities within the coastal environment to protect and enhance indigenous biodiversity. 11.1.4 district plans should recognize and provide for activities having minor adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity.</p> <p>Manawatū-Whanganui One Plan: Policy 6-1(b)(i) district plans are responsible for retaining schedules of notable trees and amenity trees in their district plans or such other measures as they see fit for the purpose of recognising amenity, intrinsic and cultural values associated with indigenous biological diversity, but not for the purpose of protecting significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.</p>	<p>The Waikato Tainui Environment Management (WTEMP) Plan 2018 contains the following provisions relevant to ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity:</p> <p>Objective 15.3.1 The full range of Waikato ecosystem types found throughout the Waikato-Tainui rohe are robust and support representative native flora and fauna.</p> <p>Policy 15.3.1.1 To Ensure the full Range of Waikato ecosystem types found throughout the Waikato-Tainui rohe are robust and support representative native flora and fauna.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposed provisions take into account the above objective and policy in the WTEMP, as they seek to protect significant natural areas and provide for district-wide indigenous biodiversity.</p>
OPERATIVE WAITOMO DISTRICT PLAN			IWI MANAGEMENT PLANS	OTHER RELEVANT PLANS OR LEGISLATION
<p>The ODP includes provisions specific to the protection of indigenous biodiversity. Rule 11.5.4.5 requires assessment of significance subject to assessment criteria in 11.6.3. Where is significance is established the removal or clearance of indigenous vegetation or indigenous wetland vegetation is a discretionary activity. There is little change in the overall rule approach between the ODP and PDP, however, the PDP allows for a wider range of activities as permitted or restricted discretionary activities. The PDP also removes the burden and expense of identifying the significance of an area from landowners by undertaking and assessing the areas using criteria specified in the WRPS.</p>			<p>The Maniapoto Iwi Environment Management Plan (MIEMP) 2018 contains the following provisions relevant to ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity:</p> <p>Objective 19.3.1.1 The diversity of natural heritage areas, habitats and ecosystems are preserved in a healthy state alongside more modified ecosystems to ensure indigenous species and subspecies maintain genetic diversity and viable population densities.</p> <p>19.3.1.2 Policy: Indigenous biodiversity is maintained, restored, enhanced and protected throughout Maniapoto rohe.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposed provisions take into account the above objective and policy in the MIEMP, as they seek to protect significant natural areas and provide for district-wide indigenous biodiversity.</p>	<p>The Conservation Act 1987 promotes the conservation of New Zealand's natural and historic resources, preserves indigenous freshwater fisheries and habitat, and advocates for conservation.</p> <p>The NZ Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020 is a non-statutory document that sets national targets that take into account key initiatives such as 'Predator Free NZ 2050,' the 'Battle for our Birds,' and the 'War on Weeds.'</p> <p>Waikato Regional Plan 2010 Objective 3.1.2 relates to managing water bodies to avoid significant adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems. Policy 3.7.3(1) controls land drainage activities adjacent to and within identified wetlands of indigenous vegetation and/or habitats of indigenous fauna.</p> <p>Waikato and Wanganui Conservancy Management Strategies set out the long-term vision for each conservancy and identify a</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te hauora o te kōiora - the health of indigenous biodiversity; and • Te hauora o te taonga - the health of species and ecosystems that are taonga; and • Te hauora o te taiao - the health of the wider environment. <p>Section 3.8 Requires that every territorial authority must undertake a district wide assessment to determine if an area is significant indigenous vegetation and /or significant habitat of indigenous fauna and if it is, it must classify areas of significant indigenous vegetation and /or significant habitat of indigenous fauna as either High or Medium.</p>		<p>range of objectives relating to management of natural heritage and biodiversity within these areas. They also set out the main threats to indigenous biodiversity and those areas of habitat and natural character that are of national importance.</p>
<p>SCALE & SIGNIFICANCE s32(1)(c)</p>				<p>STRATEGIC DIRECTION</p>
<p>The assessment is based on eight factors outlined in Ministry for the Environment’s guidance on Section 32 reports. Each factor is scored in terms of its scale and significance (where 1 is low and 5 is high).</p> <p>Reason for Change:1 Problem / Issue: 2 Degree of Shift from Status Quo: 2 Who and How Many Affected, Geographic Scale of Effects: 3 Degree of Impact on or Interest from Māori: 3 Timing and Duration of Effects: 1 Type of Effect: 3 Degree of Risk or Uncertainty:2</p> <p>Total (out of 40): 17</p>				<p>The following objectives from the Strategic Directions chapter of the PDP are relevant to this topic:</p> <p>SD-02. Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato (the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River) is achieved through active measures to protect and restore the health and well-being of the Upper Waipa Catchment.</p> <p>SD-010. The buildings, structures, sites, areas, ecosystems, natural landscapes and features identified as having special qualities and values and which contribute to the district’s sense of place and identity, are protected.</p> <p>SD-011. The components of the coastal environment including outstanding landscapes and features, natural character and ecosystems, together with the cultural and spiritual values accorded by mana whenua, are recognised and protected.</p> <p>SD-012. Acknowledge that Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements may drive change and development in parts of the district that have until now, been undeveloped.</p>
				<p>UNCERTAINTIES AND RISKS s32(2)(c)</p>
				<p>The identification and protection of SNAs on private land is often contentious and subject to submissions and appeals. However, the proposed SNAs and draft provisions have been socialised with the community, landowners and key stakeholders, and as part of the community engagement process, with feedback incorporated into the Proposed District Plan as appropriate. There is a risk that landowners may clear indigenous vegetation without Council knowing and this risk could be exacerbated by the immediate legal effect of these rules. However, not acting may mean that SNAs and their values could be degraded or lost. Overall, it is considered that there is sufficient information to act, and that risks of acting outweigh those of not acting. The degree of risk and uncertainty is low due to the certainty provided by well-understood potential effects and the approach taken for their management in the proposed provisions. The SNAs have been identified using current best practice, WRPS criteria and has been undertaken by a qualified and experienced ecologist. Site visits and ground-truthing have</p>

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				been undertaken on some sites. Guidance of Good Practice Biodiversity Offsetting in New Zealand has been used to inform provisions.
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OBJECTIVES s32(1)(a)

Relevance - The proposed objectives provide for healthy and diverse ecosystems and protect ecological integrity to meet the needs of future generations (Section 5(2)(a)). The objectives safeguard the life-supporting capacity of the district’s significant indigenous biodiversity by maintaining habitats and ecosystems and therefore achieving the provisions of Section 5(2)(b). The objectives are consistent with and seek to give effect to the Waikato River Vision and Strategy and acknowledge the cultural and spiritual relationships mana whenua share with SNAs and the wider natural environment. All persons exercising powers under the RMA must have particular regard to section 7(f) of the RMA, being the ‘maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment’. Adverse effects on the environment must be avoided, remedied, or mitigated under section 5(2)(c) of the RMA. Therefore, the objectives are consistent with the purpose of the RMA.

Usefulness - The proposed objectives associated with non-significant indigenous biodiversity place emphasis on maintenance and enhancement of these areas, particularly within the coastal environment, in line with the provisions of the NZCPS. Objectives relating to areas of significant biodiversity values and indigenous ecosystems require that adverse effects of activities are avoided in accordance with Section 5(2)(c). Restoration and enhancement of ecological integrity, ecosystem health and mauri are specified to direct activities to consider restoration of areas to provide healthy habitats and ecosystems and natural processes, which enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being (Section 5(2)). Therefore, the objectives are consistent with the purpose of the RMA.

Reasonableness - The objectives do not create unjustifiably high costs on the community. In line with the requirements of the WRPS, provision is made through the objectives for identified permitted activities which have been assessed as having no more than minor adverse effects on the values of significant natural areas, to be undertaken in these areas. This is a departure from the ODP which placed the onus for SNA identification on landowners and was restrictive regarding the breadth of activities allowed in these areas.

Achievability - The identification of significant vegetation/habitats as SNAs is a standard approach across district plans within the Waikato region. It is advocated through the provisions of Chapter 11 of the WRPS and similarly encouraged by the NZCPS, the Waikato Regional Plan and the Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity. This establishes alignment between the plan’s objectives and the higher-order documents prepared under the RMA. Healthy and diverse ecosystems are necessary to meet the needs of future generations (Section 5(2)(a) of the Act). In addition, the objectives safeguard the life-supporting capacity of the district’s environment by employing the hierarchy (avoidance to offset) required by the WRPS, thereby establishing a workable mechanism to achieve no net loss (and achieving Section 5(2)(b)).

The proposed objectives are considered to meet the tests of relevance, usefulness, reasonableness and achievability. They give effect to the purpose and principles of the RMA align with higher order documents drafted under the RMA and with best practice drafting for objectives. The objectives have been examined and evaluated, in terms of the purpose of the RMA, its provisions and the hierarchy of planning documents, and are considered to be the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the RMA.

PROVISIONS s32(1)(b)

EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS s32(1)(b)(ii), 32(2)(a)(i), s32(2)(a)(ii)	ALTERNATIVES s32(1)(b)(i)
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Benefits Anticipated
For the purpose of this evaluation, the Council has considered the following potential options:

Environmental
SNAs have been identified using updated methodology, largely consistent with the criteria in the Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity and consistent with the criteria in the WRPS. Activities that are appropriate and that contribute to the values of SNA can occur without the need for resource consent. The provisions provide a framework for biodiversity offsetting and manage the maintenance and restoration of indigenous biodiversity which is not a SNA. The provisions offer benefits by identifying and protecting SNAs within rural areas and within urban areas, which are often under the greatest development pressure. The no net loss approach using blanket protection of SNAs benefits the environment by providing corridors, linkages and stepping-stones and permanent protection is incentivised through environmental benefit lot subdivision entitlements in the rural zone (see the subdivision chapter where located in the coastal environment and/or in the karst overlay). Enhancement (non-regulatory) is promoted through the policy framework. There is a clear hierarchy of protection, with offsets available only after options that avoid, remedy and mitigate effects have been explored and discounted. Kanuka and manuka receive greater protection than is available the ODP provisions which recognises the ecological values of these areas and the present threat posed by myrtle rust. Potentially inappropriate activities are managed through the resource consent process to ensure environmental effects are assessed against the impact to the identified values. The effects hierarchy is embedded into the rules framework and introduces biodiversity offsetting and restoration, and maintenance activities are encouraged within identified SNA’s as a permitted activity to improve and maintain the district’s unique biodiversity.

Economic
Economic benefits include improved water quality, varied and robust ecosystems services, erosion mitigation, and landscape, character and amenity benefits. Environmental benefit lot subdivision entitlements in the general rural zone mean that land values may increase for properties that have potential for subdivision in the specified locations (coastal environment and / or the karst overlay). Economic development of Māori Freehold Land is considered through Policy ECO-P7. The provisions also provide flexibility for some approved building platforms. Economic benefits also include the potential to provide public access to SNAs on public land, the ability to provide for some tourism and outdoor education activities within SNAs and the corresponding economic benefit that visitors bring to the district. Avoidance of unnecessary consent costs are proposed on landowners for undertaking minor trimming or pruning, removing dead and diseased vegetation, safety works, pest control, routine track and fencing maintenance and vegetation taken for cultural purposes. Operation and routine maintenance for network utilities is provided for through permitted vegetation clearance rules within the network utilities chapter therefore avoiding the cost of resource consent for these works.

Social
Indigenous biodiversity benefits personal well-being, provides recreational opportunities, and offers high aesthetic and ecological values. SNAs provide community groups and landowners with an opportunity to enhance areas, with most farming practices continuing unaffected, including the ability to graze areas of SNA and maintain tracks and fences. SNAs within urban areas and settlements provide a link with the natural environment for the majority of the district’s residents.

Cultural
The relationship of mana whenua and their traditions associated with indigenous vegetation and fauna is recognised and provided for, consistent with Sections 6(e) and 7(a) of the RMA, Policy 2 of the NZCPS, and the hutia te rito approach currently suggested to underpin decision making in the Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity. The importance of indigenous biodiversity to mana whenua is acknowledged in the policy framework. Rules protect traditional Māori customary and cultural uses and conservation activities as permitted activities. The provisions acknowledge the importance of indigenous biodiversity to mana whenua as kaitiaki.

Costs Anticipated
Environmental

- In order to identify other reasonably practicable options, the Council has undertaken the following:
- Reviewed other relevant district plan provisions for provisions relating to ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity; and
 - Waikato Regional Council (WRC) has assisted the Council in providing a data set of Significant Natural Areas (SNAs). Jointly with WRC, an ecologist was engaged to identify, map and assess the values of potential SNAs against the criteria specified in the WRPS; and
 - In October 2019 every landowner who had a potential SNA on their property was sent notification along with maps, funding sources and a link to the potential rules for SNAs. A large number of amendments were made and the majority of sites where a visit was requested, have been ground-truthed.
 - Sought feedback from stakeholder groups including the Department of Conservation, Federated Farmers, The Waikato Regional Council, Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Council, QEII Trust and other key groups; and
 - Collated feedback obtained from workshops undertaken with mana whenua representatives comprising a working group on the proposed district plan.

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<p>No environmental cost has been identified in relation to the preferred option of identifying and protecting SNAs in the living zones and urban areas. The provisions accept that some incremental loss of rural zone indigenous vegetation/habitat outside of the SNAs could occur through the permitted activity provisions such as pasture reinstatement, however some protection for non-significant indigenous biodiversity is mandated in the general rural zone provisions. Additionally, no environmental costs are anticipated as the provisions are based on protecting biodiversity and encouraging maintenance and restoration of existing SNAs. The environmental cost equation has been unbalanced over a long period of time resulting in the current environmental deficit. The relationship of mana whenua and traditional cultural practices and customary uses associated with indigenous biodiversity are provided for as a permitted activity.</p> <p><u>Economic</u> Landowners will be exposed to a regulatory cost for indigenous vegetation removal within SNAs where an activity is not expressly permitted in the proposed rules. Impacts on property values and loss of development potential is possible across properties containing the identified SNA sites. The cost of implementing and enforcing these provisions falls on both the Council and the landowners. Subdivision provisions encouraging the protection of SNAs may impact efficient subdivision layout or compromise other development opportunities. Economic costs are mitigated to some extent with the plan providing for some activities without triggering a consent requirement. Other costs include costs to council to maintain spatial database of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna and to landowners required to apply for consents and prepare consent application material such as ecological management plans and reports. The rules contain sufficient flexibility to harvest manuka and kanuka as firewood.</p> <p><u>Social</u> No direct social costs are identified given the provisions are focussed on protecting biodiversity which in turn contributes to community wellbeing. However, SNAs require regular upkeep and the provisions may restrict land from being used for other purposes. In the case of reserves in the open space and natural open space zones, it may limit that portion of the reserve from being redeveloped into active recreation spaces.</p> <p><u>Cultural</u> Large areas of land identified as SNA in the south eastern and north western part of the district is Māori Freehold Land. The policy framework provides flexibility when considering the development of land returned under Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements and multiple owned Māori land located within an SNA by evaluating the extent to which the development enables and actively sustains the relationship of mana whenua with their ancestral lands and the exercise of kaitiakitanga, the extent to which the development enables mana whenua to manage their own lands and resources for the benefit of their people and the extent to which the development achieves positive economic, social and cultural benefits for mana whenua now and into the future. This policy takes into account the requirement to mitigate or remedy, through restoration and enhancement, any adverse effects on the values and character of SNAs.</p> <p>Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities There are fewer opportunities for economic growth or employment than if the land were developed in accordance with the provisions of the underlying zone. However, there are indirect opportunities for economic growth and employment through visitor accommodation, outdoor adventure tourism activities, honey production and recreational opportunities, and limited vegetation clearance is provided for these activities.</p>	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status Quo - retain the ODP provisions: There is little change in the overall rules approach between the ODP and PDP, however, the PDP allows for a wider range of activities as permitted or restricted discretionary activities. The PDP also removes the burden and expense of identifying the significance of an area from landowners by undertaking and assessing the areas using criteria specified in the WRPS. Requiring landowners to undertake the significance assessment is an inefficient and ad hoc approach to management of significant natural areas. It does not provide the same degree of certainty that a coordinated mapping and identification process with agreed SNA criteria provides. • Alternative - the proposed provisions: This approach involves developing new policies and rules which apply to non-significant indigenous biodiversity and SNAs. This approach is consistent with the WRPS, in particular, policies 11.1, 11.2 and 11.4. Identifying and mapping SNAs provides certainty and is easier to administer and monitor. This option achieves the best environmental and cultural outcomes and is consistent with higher-order documents. The approach is likely to be the option most acceptable to the community based on consultation that has been undertaken to date. The approach is consistent with the approaches of other District Councils within the Waikato region. Excluding this approach from the Manawatū-Whanganui area of the district gives effect to the provisions in (and the integrity of) the One Plan. This approach is the most effective option to achieve the objectives. • Do nothing: This alternative does not meet the intent or direction of s6(c). Nor does it achieve the intent of the higher order policy documents including the NZCPS or give effect to the WRPS. Council would fail to achieve its regulatory function to maintain and enhance biodiversity values (s31). This option is not environmentally acceptable and opposes the policy intent of the two Iwi Environmental Management Plans.
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QUANTIFICATION OF BENEFITS & COSTS s32(2)(b)

Section 32(2)(b) requires that, where practicable, the benefits and costs of a proposal are to be quantified. Given the assessment of the scale and significance of the proposed provisions, specific quantification of the benefits and costs in this report is considered neither necessary, beneficial nor practicable in relation to this topic.

EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS s32(1)(b)(ii)	REASONS FOR PROVISIONS s32(1)(b)(iii)
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Section 32(1)(b)(ii) requires assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions in achieving the objectives:

Efficiency
This approach is efficient as it protects SNAs from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The approach is pragmatic and fit for purpose. Activities requiring resource consent are limited to those that are considered “inappropriate” and decision-makers are able to make an informed decision based on detailed policy guidance, and on the identified values of the SNA. Permitted activity standards reflect best practice and provide clarity to plan users about when a resource consent would be required. This approach is not considered to be overly restrictive for landowners. This approach addresses current issues, by providing a balance between protecting lawfully established activities and protecting the integrity of ecosystems.

Effectiveness
The proposed provisions are considered to be effective as they directly address the resource management issues and the outcomes sought through the objectives. The approach of identifying SNAs through mapping and scheduling, by applying consistent assessment criteria, reflects best practice and is a clear and consistent approach. The provisions provide the strongest regulation for those areas

The proposed provisions are considered to be the most appropriate approach to achieve the objectives of the ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter. The evaluation has been undertaken in accordance with Section 32 of the Act in order to identify the benefits, costs and the appropriateness of the proposed objectives and provisions, having regard to their effectiveness and efficiency relative to other means in achieving the purpose of the RMA. This evaluation demonstrates that the proposed objectives and provisions are the most appropriate option because they provide for the identification, recognition and protection of significant vegetation and habitats, including specific identification, direction and certainty on appropriate and inappropriate activities in relation to identified SNAs. Permitted activity rules allow for activities that are generally appropriate and/or contribute to the values of SNAs, and resource consents are required to manage the effects of activities that may be inappropriate or have adverse impacts on the values of SNAs. The policy framework provides specific recognition of the cultural values and association mana whenua have with their ancestral lands and taonga, and their kaitiaki role. Overall, it is considered that the proposed objectives and provisions are the most appropriate given that the benefits outweigh the costs, and there are considerable efficiencies gained from their adoption.

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<p>of indigenous vegetation/habitat that are deemed to be the most significant. The provisions balance the need to protect SNAs while being fair and reasonable to landowners by providing for a limited range of permitted activities where they will have minor adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity. Appendix 4 also provides clear guidance on the application of biodiversity offsets.</p>	
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