

PROPOSED FAR NORTH DISTRICT PLAN:
HEARING TOPIC 16 SUBDIVISION
Andrew Kantor Summary Statement for Chorus (s278)

1. Chorus is New Zealand's largest telecommunications infrastructure company. We build and maintain the country's largest fixed line telecommunications network, working with retail service providers to deliver high-speed broadband to homes and businesses across the country.
2. Chorus opposes the proposed removal of the requirement to provide telecommunications services in new subdivisions. We strongly recommend the inclusion of a subdivision standard that requires open-access fibre where reasonably practicable.
3. Fibre is recognised in the Far North District Council's Digital Strategy – Nothing But Net as the fastest and most reliable form of connectivity. Removing telecommunications requirements risks deepening the digital divide and undermines Council's goals around digital equity, community wellbeing, and future-proofed infrastructure.
4. Without clear subdivision standards, developers may exclude fibre or install closed-network systems, limiting service options and competition. Retrofitting fibre after development is costly, disruptive, and often unviable.
5. Residents often assume fibre will be available and direct complaints to Council when it is not. This creates reputational risk and public pressure for Council to intervene or fund retroactive fixes.
6. Poor connectivity can impact education, health access, and economic development. It also undermines national investment in the Ultra-Fast Broadband programme to provide world-class connectivity throughout New Zealand.
7. Telecommunications infrastructure is regulated under the Telecommunications Act 2001, which mandates service quality standards and empowers the Commerce Commission to monitor provider performance. This ensures reliability, accountability and protection for consumers.

8. We recommend the District Plan retain and strengthen the subdivision standard to require open-access fibre to each allotment, with exemptions only where installation is not reasonably practicable. This will ensure fair access, efficient infrastructure delivery, and long-term benefits for residents and Council.