

5 MONITORING AND REVIEW

CONTEXT

The Council's responsibilities under the Act include the monitoring and review of how well it is achieving sustainable management of the natural and physical resources of the District. These responsibilities are identified particularly in s31, s35 and s75 of the Act. Section 79 of the Act also requires a review of the Plan at least every 10 years.

Monitoring and review is part of an ongoing planning process of which the Plan forms a large part, including periodic surveys of the state of the environment of the District, the identification of issues of concern, the identification of objectives relating to those issues, the adoption of policies which indicate how objectives will be met and the imposition of rules and the other methods which guide and control development so that it accords with the policies. Also important in setting priorities and funding allocations for resource management are the Annual Plan and Strategic Plan.

The planning process is circular and therefore continuous. It is shown in **Figure 5.4**. The diagram shows that there is a logical link between the different elements of the circle and that all the information must be available for the system to work properly. The "State of the Environment Report" is a particularly important part of the process, because it provides a benchmark against which changes can be measured. While some data and information on various issues was available at the time of writing this plan, no comprehensive State of the Environment report had been prepared. The Council will begin this work as soon as the aerial photography is done and, in conjunction with the Northland Regional Council, will set up a framework for regular reporting.

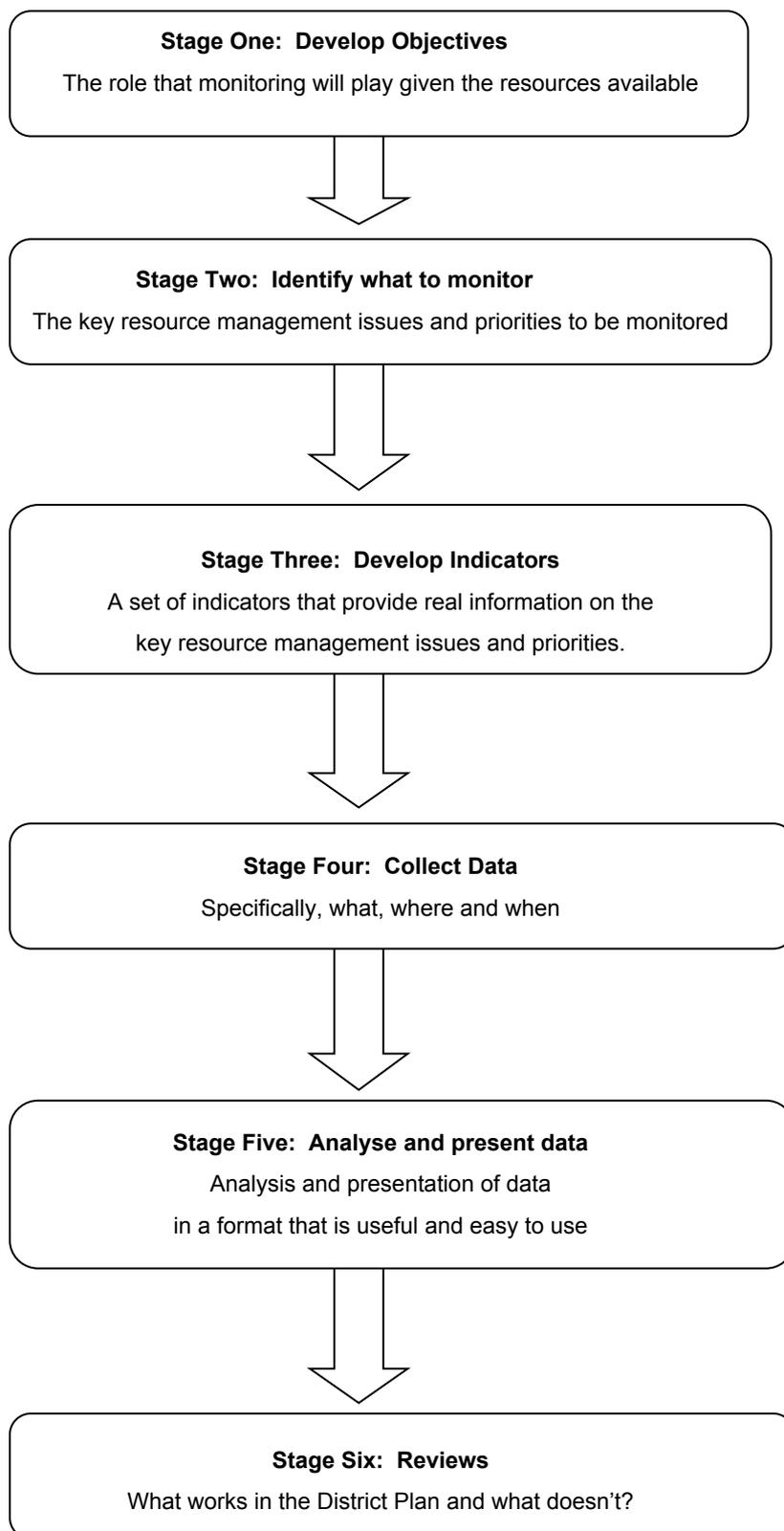
The Regional Council has similar responsibilities for monitoring and review of its objectives and policies and methods and is also required to survey the state of the environment of the Region. There is potential for some overlap of functions and activities between the Regional and District Councils. This will need to be borne in mind in planning and implementing the monitoring and review programmes of the two Councils.

Monitoring is an essential mechanism for feedback for the Council to review and refine the Plan. It requires the gathering of information and the maintenance of records in respect of plan administration, current resource management issues, the state of the environment, and compliance with the Plan's standards and resource consents granted by the Council. To be effective, the monitoring system must deliver appropriate, accurate and sufficient information to enable evaluation of the extent to which the Plan's resource management objectives and policies, and the anticipated environmental results, are being achieved. This in turn enables more informed decisions to be made about the changes which are needed in any review of the Plan or parts of the Plan.

As this Plan includes voluntary approaches for achieving the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna monitoring is particularly important because it enables comparisons to be made between the effectiveness of regulatory and non-regulatory methods. Similarly, the use of incentives such as the granting of development bonuses for bush and landscape protection requires monitoring. Both non-regulatory approaches and bonuses are untried methods in the Far North and therefore their environmental outcomes must be assessed carefully over time.

The monitoring framework is illustrated in **Figure 5** below. It has six steps and begins with objective setting. The key resource management issues or priorities are identified (see **Issue 5.1.2**) and indicators developed (see **Section 5.6**). Data is then collected and analysed in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan's objectives and policies. This process may lead to a review of the Plan's provisions and/or the monitoring task itself. Thus, a process of continuous improvement is implemented. This framework is the basis on which a detailed monitoring programme will be developed by the Council, requiring co-ordination with the Department of Conservation, Northland Regional Council, adjoining local authorities and other statutory agencies, as well as conservation groups, landowners and private sector interests. As a first step, the Council has begun collecting baseline environmental data on the four priority issues.

Figure 5: MONITORING FRAMEWORK



Reference: Ministry for the Environment, "District Plan Monitoring: A guide to getting started" (June 2000) p10.

Local authorities are made responsible by the Resource Management Act for the monitoring of resource consents, effectiveness of the plans, such as district plans and policy statements and the overall state of the environment.

Enforcement of the District Plan is a responsibility of the Council under s84 and Part XII of the Act. The Council is also required to observe its own Plan and it is also required to enforce observance by others. Consistent and even-handed enforcement action demonstrates the Council's commitment to achieving sustainable management. Council funding for District Plan monitoring will be determined through the LTCCP and Annual Plan processes. Council can also impose a monitoring fee on any resource consents granted to ensure compliance with any conditions of consent, unless the consent holder is required to undertake the monitoring. Reference should also be made to Council's Monitoring Strategy 2008, which is publicly available.

5.1 ISSUES

- 5.1.1 Inadequate information makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan.
- 5.1.2 The limited availability of financial and technical resources requires that monitoring is targeted primarily to the significant resource management issues of the District. These are: tangata whenua concerns; preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development; the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna; and managing urban growth.
- 5.1.3 Environmental outcomes need careful monitoring and assessment in order to compare the effectiveness of regulatory methods to non-regulatory approaches and development bonuses.
- 5.1.4 The Council and the Northland Regional Council have overlapping responsibilities for state of the environment monitoring that need to be managed to avoid inefficiency.

5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES EXPECTED

- 5.2.1 A Plan that allows significant resource management issues to be addressed in a manner consistent with the Act.
- 5.2.2 A monitoring and review regime that ensures the Plan is administered in an effective and efficient manner.
- 5.2.3 The development of an environmental database.

5.3 OBJECTIVES

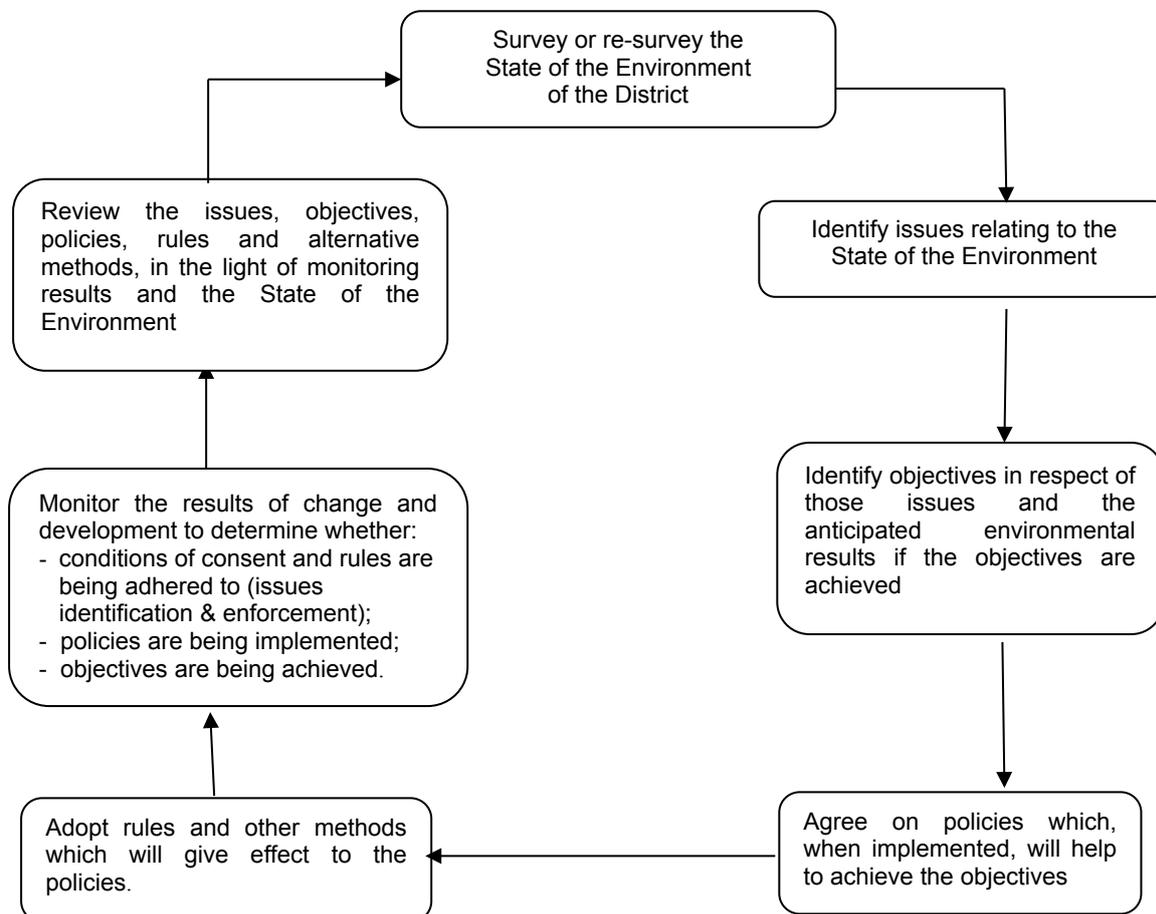
- 5.3.1 To ensure that the Plan addresses significant issues and concerns consistent with sustainable management of natural and physical resources and that its provisions are effective in achieving it.
- 5.3.2 To ensure that the Council's administration of the Plan is carried out effectively and efficiently.
- 5.3.3 To ensure that the effects of activities on land and on the surface of lakes and rivers are consistent with the provisions of the Plan and the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.
- 5.3.4 To compile an environmental database and to develop an understanding of the state of the District's environment, with a particular focus on environmental degradation and any significant changes or trends.
- 5.3.5 To ensure that monitoring and enforcement of the Plan is carried out consistently and effectively.

5.4 POLICIES

- 5.4.1 That the Council monitor and report on those indicators of the state of the environment which are within Council's responsibilities under the Act.
- 5.4.2 That the results of environmental monitoring be related to the anticipated environmental outcomes expressed in the Plan as a means of determining whether the Plan is achieving its intentions and the results also be used, where possible, to monitor compliance with conditions of resource consents.
- 5.4.3 That the Council undertake monitoring of the compliance of activities with the conditions of resource consent and that the results of this monitoring be reported regularly.

- 5.4.4 That where resource consent is granted for an activity which has the potential to cause ongoing or cumulative adverse effects on the environment, the Council requires monitoring of relevant environmental indicators as a condition of consent.
- 5.4.5 As a matter of best practice, consent holders will be encouraged to monitor compliance with the conditions of their consent as far as practicable.
- 5.4.6 That records be kept of all alleged or actual breaches of the Act, the Plan’s rules or conditions of resource consents, and information as to how each was dealt with.
- 5.4.7 That the Council use enforcement powers where appropriate to act on breaches brought to the attention of the Council by the general public or by its monitoring programme.
- 5.4.8 That the Council undertake consultation with the public and tangata whenua in relation to monitoring and review procedures as a means of gaining a better understanding of public perceptions of the quality of the environment and of resource management issues.
- 5.4.9 That the Council co-ordinate with the Regional Council, adjacent territorial authorities and other monitoring bodies to achieve efficient, effective and mutually beneficial monitoring.
- 5.4.10 That the consistency of the Plan with regional and national policy statements be monitored, together with its effectiveness in implementing the relevant objectives and policies of those policy statements.
- 5.4.11 That new resource management issues and inappropriate Plan provisions be reviewed and dealt with by way of a Plan Change where necessary.
- 5.4.12 That the Council advise the public as to the costs of monitoring.
- 5.4.13 That the Council monitor and report on the effectiveness of non-regulatory methods of protection for areas of significant indigenous vegetation and habitats of significant indigenous fauna as provided for in **Section 12.2**.
- 5.4.14 That the Council monitor and report on the effectiveness and cumulative environmental effects of development bonuses for the protection of outstanding landscapes, areas of significant indigenous vegetation and habitats of significant indigenous fauna, and heritage (refer to **Sections 12.1, 12.2, 12.5 and 18.3**).

Figure 5.4: PLANNING PROCESS



5.5 METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Policies will be implemented through a programme which has the following elements:

- 5.5.1 Monitoring of compliance with conditions of resource consents and with the objectives and policies of the Plan.
- 5.5.2 Monitoring and follow-up of complaints.
- 5.5.3 Requiring as-built plans of permitted development to be forwarded to Council in appropriate cases.
- 5.5.4 Sampling by field inspection of permitted development and assessment against objectives and policies of the Plan.
- 5.5.5 Stock take of environmental data collected and held by the Council and its review in relation to its usefulness for monitoring of the state of the environment of the District.
- 5.5.6 Commissioning specific studies from time to time on aspects of the environment on which further information is required, in order to determine whether sustainable management of the natural and physical resources of the District is being achieved.
- 5.5.7 Preparation of reports on the state of the environment every five years as required to support changes to, or reviews of, the Plan.
- 5.5.8 The Council ensures that measures are undertaken to address breaches of the rules in the Plan or of conditions of resource consents when these are detected.
- 5.5.9 Preparation of education/publicity material and publicity aimed at communicating the state of the environment to the community, ensuring that the public is involved in the review of the Plan, and is aware of the results of such review aimed at encouraging good resource management practices in the District.

5.6 ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS FOR PRIORITY ISSUES

With respect to the four priority issues set out in **Issue 5.1.2** the effectiveness of the Plan will be measured in terms of environmental indicators: Several of these indicators are useful for measuring performance in several areas and, taken together, various indicators enable evaluation of cumulative effects. The State of the Environment Report, anticipated to be published every 5 years, will evaluate these issues in terms of their significance to the District. In the preparation of the report, some or all of the indicators will be used.

Council has an approved District Plan Monitoring Strategy that sets out what will be monitored and why, including issues, indicators, data collection and management, reporting and review procedures - refer to **Council's Monitoring Strategy 2008**.