



# HDC NEWS



## PROGRESS - ON THE DISTRICT PLAN

Now that the Long Term Plan is out of the way we now can give our full attention towards completing the review of the District Plan. The District Plan details the activities that can be carried out as of right in each zone, the standards to be met in carrying them out, and the basis for assessing applications to carry out other activities or depart from the standards. The Resource Management Act (RMA), as it stands at present, says we must review our District Plan every ten years. While this may be necessary as many things can change in a ten-year time frame, proposals to amend the RMA may amend this. Councils would then expect to do small changes from time to time when they are considered necessary and this may well be an improvement as a total review is very time-consuming and costly.

We have been working on this review for about four years now and are at last at the point where most of the draft Proposed Plan has been written and councillors are going through it to see if our consultants have got what we envisaged into appropriate objectives, policies and rules.

When councillors have finished going through this, staff and consultants will go out to affected land owners and interest groups to tell them what we have in mind and to see how they feel about the proposals and to modify them if necessary. This should occur within the next few months.

When this is signed off, the Proposed Plan will go out into the public domain (be formally publicly notified) for everyone to read and to make submissions on - in support or opposition. It is hoped to be at this stage by the end of this year. For those members of the public who put in written submissions, there will also be an opportunity to have your say by speaking at a hearing of submissions in front of councillors who will make the final decision on whether any further changes should be made.

If nobody appeals to the Environment Court it is hoped to have the final plan in place before the next Local Body elections, which are due to be held in October 2010.



## Elected Members Diary

Meetings for the week: Wednesday 17th to Tuesday 23rd June 2009

- Wednesday 17th June – District Plan Presentation to Council



## Whiritoa Beach Stormwater Outfalls

At the time of granting Comprehensive Stormwater Discharge Consents in May 2003, Environment Waikato (Waikato Regional Council) had identified that the stormwater discharges to the Whiritoa Beach front required remediation.

Specifically, the consent conditions required Council to investigate and implement solutions to remedy the adverse scouring and erosion of sand dunes and sand at Whiritoa Beach which was being caused by the stormwater discharge pipes located along the beach frontage.

Consultation was undertaken with Te Ruunanga A Iwi O Ngati Tametera and the Whiritoa Beach Care Group, and EW's Coastal Engineers and consent monitoring team to agree on an acceptable solution. All parties identified that the discharge on the seaward side of the reserve south of the surf club as the main outlet required remedial work. The other minor discharges were either not evident on the beach, were in an acceptable condition or have been recently improved.

The construction of a detention/soakage structure in the reserve dune area was recently completed allowing the new structure to intercept the runoff and divert it to soakage trenches and pits within the dunes. The outlet remains on the beach to cater for occasional overflow from runoff in excess of the soakage capacity in exceptional events.



## Tree Problems

It is good to hear of the scheme in Waihi where the youth of the town are collecting leaves from the deciduous trees on Council reserves to make compost. Help for the project has come from Waihi Gold in the form of land and materials for compost bins. The main point here is that young people are being taught that leaves are a valuable resource not just a nuisance.

Every year some people apply to Council to remove trees from grass verges etc because the leaves clutter up their gardens and clog gutters. Trees have huge amenity value and the collecting of leaves should be regarded as an annual harvest not a chore. Mixed with lawn clippings and other organic matter they make superb compost that will grow beautiful flowers or succulent vegetables.

Generally, Council does not look favourably on requests to remove trees unless the tree is diseased or in some way dangerous to the public. If overhanging branches are a problem the tree will be pruned but leaves from deciduous trees are not rubbish and you may use them if they fall on your property. Happy composting!

## Fees\$ and Charges\$

*For those who did not read the Long Term Plan or its summary, we thought it might be a good idea to mention again here that as from the 1st of July many of Council's fees and charges are changing.*

While going through the Long Term Plan process, Council has done a full review of how everything should be paid for and has been very careful to try to get a balance between things that should be paid for by the user and those that need to have a rating component. Sometimes, while we may feel that an item really should be paid for solely by the user, the cost of collecting that fee may be prohibitive or a higher fee may stop people from using the service. For example, while it may be reasonable that sports fields, parks and public toilets should be paid for by those who use them there is difficulty in collecting fees for these things, short of putting up fences and gates and having someone collecting at the entrance. I'm sure no one wants that. It is far more efficient to allow free entry for all who want to use them and to charge everyone on their rates. The service is available to all even though you may choose not to use it.

On the other hand, for the more precise services like those of Planning and Environmental, it is much easier to charge those who use these services. Although many of these fees have increased it is because the cost of providing the service has increased. We can only charge what is reasonable for the work that is done. Council does not make a profit from these services.

Hall fees have changed to simplify the system and to make them the same throughout the District.

Refuse Transfer Station fees have also risen to reflect the actual costs incurred by Council in transporting and disposing of your rubbish. We are trying to get to the point where there is no subsidisation of those people who take refuse to the transfer stations by the other ratepayers who do not. This is particularly important where our transfer stations are close to a district boundary where neighbouring councils charges are higher. Our ratepayers do not want to be subsidising people from outside the District to dump their rubbish in our District.

The schedule of fees and charges is due to be adopted by Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June and a list of the new fees and charges will be available to the public by 1<sup>st</sup> July. You can check these out by either logging onto Council's website ([www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz](http://www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz)) or if you do not have a computer please give our friendly customer service staff a call on (07) 868 8609 or freephone 0800 734 834 (from within the district).

