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Report to Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Helen Marr, Resource Advisor, Policy and Planning

End of Year Summary – Policy and Planning Section

1. Purpose

To provide a brief summary to the Committee of the subdivision and land use consent applications commented and submitted on by the Policy and Planning Section for the 2000-2001 financial year.

2. Background

Part of the work of the Policy and Planning Section is to comment on non-notified subdivision and land use consent applications that are lodged with the three Wairarapa district councils. This is not a statutory responsibility, but has been a long-standing agreement between the Regional Council and the district councils. The Section also makes submissions on notified subdivision and land use consent applications on behalf of the Regional Council.

The comments and submissions made, relate to the Regional Council's responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991, and are generally guided by the objectives, policies and methods in the Regional Policy Statement and the Regional Plans.

3. General application trends

The number of applications received from each District is shown in Chart 1. A total of 121 applications were received by the Regional Council for comment in the past year. South Wairarapa, as expected, has seen a higher number of subdivisions and land use applications compared to the other two districts. This trend is consistent with that shown in previous years. The number of applications received from the Masterton District is less than the other two councils and down on previous years. This figure is probably due to the fact that the Masterton District Council no longer requests Regional Council comment on all non-notified applications.

As illustrated in Chart 2, the number of notified applications has increased, and they are now making up a higher percentage of the total applications received.

Chart 1: Applications received per month (cummulative) 2000-01

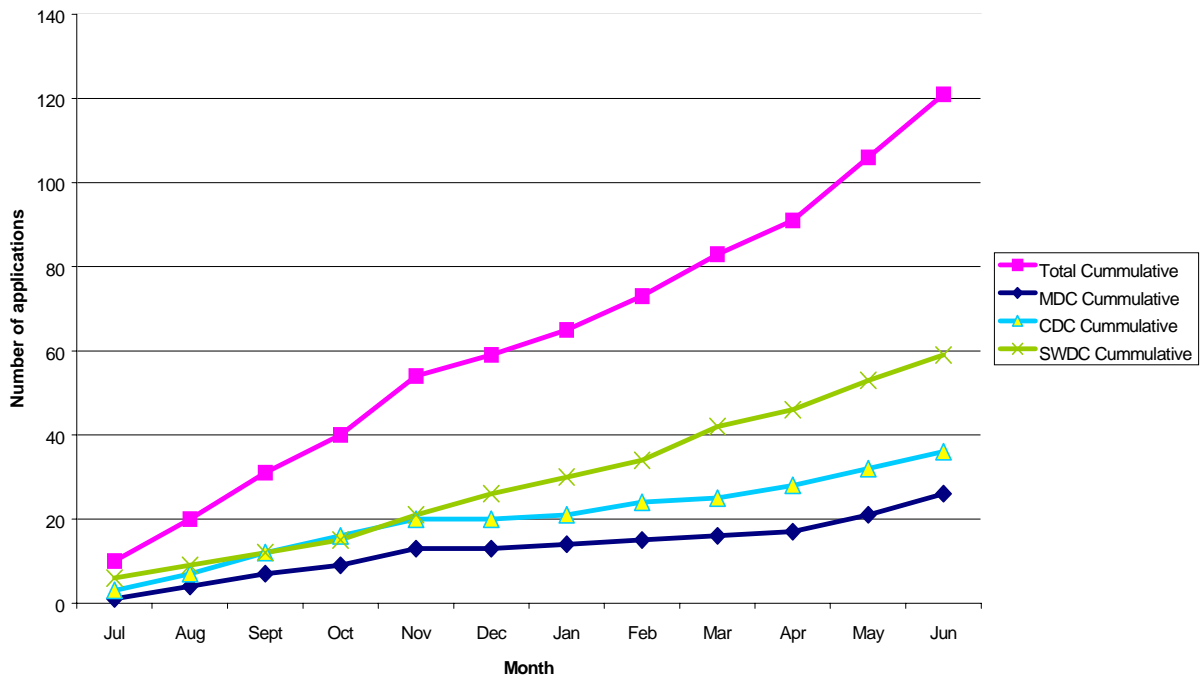
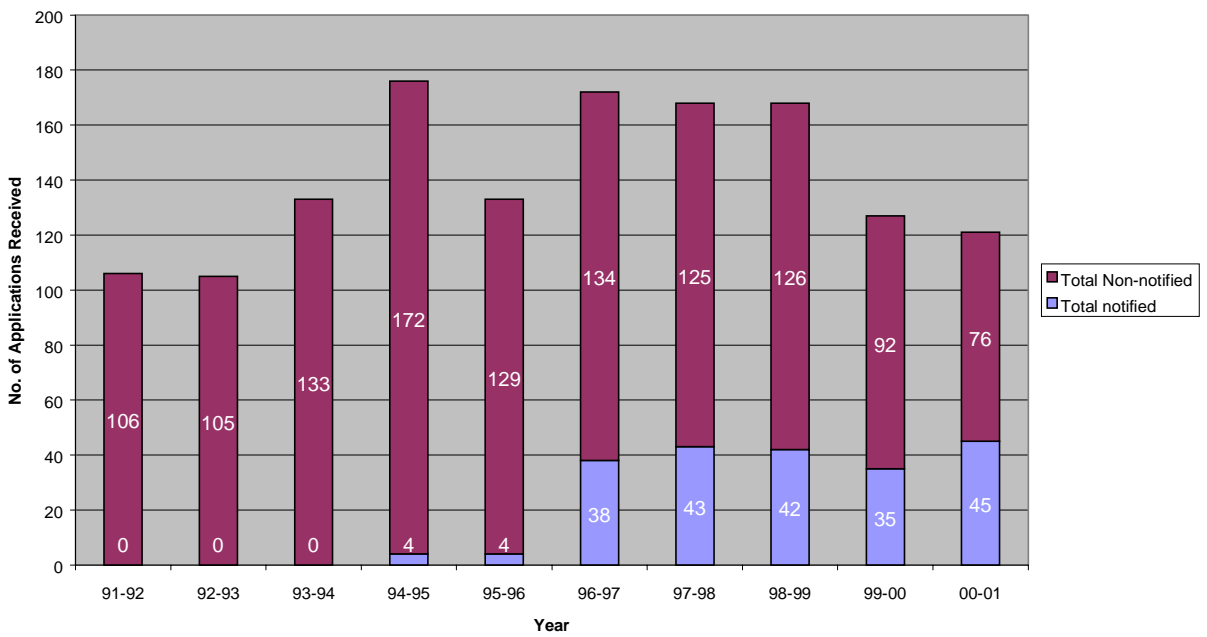


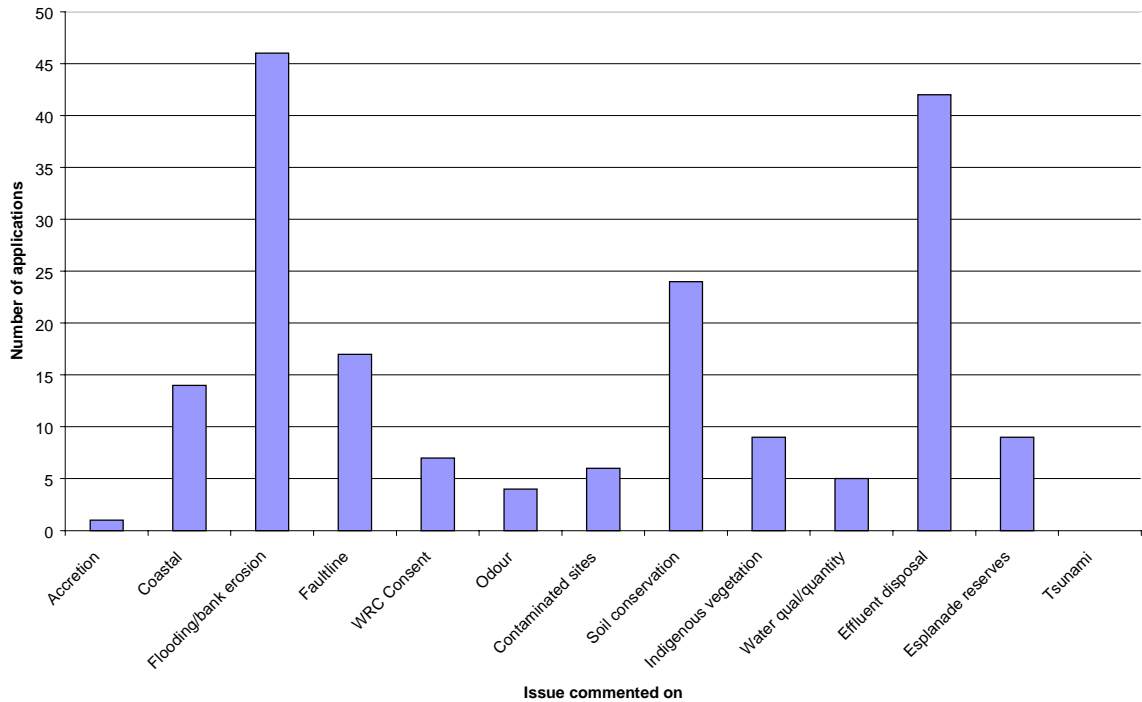
Chart 2: Total Applications Received



4. Policy and Planning Activity

The large majority of applications are for rural subdivisions. Areas in which comments were made are shown in Chart 3, and discussed below.

Chart 3: Issues commented on



4.1 Effluent Disposal

One of the most common areas for comment and submission over the past year has been effluent disposal (42 comments/submissions). Policy and Planning often checks to ensure that adequate provision has been made in the design of new subdivisions and developments for adequate on-site effluent treatment and disposal. This checking and feedback has often meant that a higher standard of effluent treatment and disposal, that meets the permitted activity standards in the Regional Discharges to Land Plan, is implemented, than that initially proposed.

4.2 Flooding/Bank Erosion

Natural hazard comments are also common, particularly in relation to flooding or bank erosion. Recommendations are made, in consultation with the Engineering section of the Operations Department, on the areas that are likely to be subject to inundation or erosion and are therefore inappropriate for buildings or require building restrictions. In the future, it is planned to strongly encourage the gathering of this information as part of pre-application consultation, and for it to form an integral part of the subdivision/landuse application.

4.3 Coastal Developments

Fourteen new applications for coastal subdivisions or developments were received for comment. The section also continued to be involved in the ongoing process of applications received and commented on in the previous year. Coastal applications are generally notified and the submission, pre-hearing, hearing and possible appeal stages of the process can take some time. The Regional Council has a clear responsibility in the Regional Policy Statement to ensure that subdivision and development do not adversely affect the natural character of the coast. This responsibility is being actively met via the subdivision and land use consent processes. This issue is also being addressed proactively through the Regional Council's involvement in the Coastal Strategy Group.

4.4 Biodiversity

Policy and Planning has taken a more pro-active approach in advocating for the protection and preservation of indigenous vegetation. Recently we have written directly to landowners following receiving an application for comment, and included information on protection mechanisms and people/organisations to contact should they be interested in formal protection. An example of success in this approach is the formal protection of an area of native bush adjacent to Fensham Reserve.

4.5 Contaminated Sites

Identification and recommendations are made in conjunction with Resource Quality officers (Wellington), regarding potentially contaminated sites. This has included noting the potential contamination on Certificates of Title (to alert future owners), suggesting alternative water supplies and in one instance requiring site investigations to ascertain the degree of contamination and off site effects.

4.6 Odour

Policy and Planning are currently reviewing our involvement in making comments on odour and reverse sensitivity issues, primarily in relation to subdivisions near existing piggeries. All piggeries in the Wairarapa now have discharge to air consents in accordance with the Regional Air Quality Plan, which should adequately deal with these effects.

4.7 Other areas of comment

- Soil Plan provisions for soil conservation, roading and tracking, and vegetation clearance;
- Freshwater Plan Provisions and Regional Council consent requirements relating to groundwater abstraction, discharges, or activities in or near waterbodies;
- Promotion of esplanade reserves and other mechanisms to provide public access and protection of riparian vegetation.

- Noting proximity of faultlines and subsequent recommendations for building setbacks.

5. Communications

No additional communication is necessary.

6. Recommendation

That the information be received.

Report prepared by:

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