

Section 16 – Development and Growth

16.1 Background

There are many small settlements in the Thames-Coromandel District. This has been the case since the earliest arrivals of people to Te Ika a Maui (the North Island). Māori villages and pā occupied land near resource-rich beaches, bays, harbours and estuaries. European settlers established settlements around resources such as kauri and gold and later cleared land for agricultural purposes. More recently new holiday settlements have established on popular beaches.

Today the District's settlements vary in size and function and each has its own unique character, culture and history. The larger settlements provide for employment, essential services and are where most of the District's permanent dwellings are located. There are also many holiday settlements where non-permanent residents come during the summer period. The long-term viability and vibrancy of all of these settlements is dependent on retaining their unique characteristics while providing for appropriate economic development.

A number of the District's settlements have had significant housing growth since notification of the previous District Plan and in many cases this has led to the Council investing in new utilities infrastructure, including expensive wastewater, water, and stormwater systems. There are also settlements on the Coromandel Peninsula that have stayed largely the same in recent years, retaining their original size and character.

This Plan seeks to provide for development and growth where it uses capacity in existing or planned water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. Outside of these areas, development is enabled where it is self-sufficient.

The Plan prioritises protection of [RMA Section 6](#) 'matters of national importance' by using overlays (refer to [Part II of this Plan](#)). The Coastal Environment of the District is highly valued for residential, commercial and recreational use. There is a balance that needs to be maintained between development and coastal values with many of the District's settlements located in the sensitive Coastal Environment.

This section applies to all aspects of the development and growth of settlements (i.e. the settlements that are named or grouped together in Policies 10a to 10v in this Section). Any discretionary or non-complying resource consent activity, or plan change, that relates to subdivision, land use development or settlement growth should take this section into account.

16.2 Issues

1. The small dispersed nature of the District's settlements and demand on the Council to provide infrastructure, and infrastructure upgrades.
2. Settlement development and growth in the Coastal Environment can threaten its natural character, historic heritage, ecology, landscape and amenity values.
3. A lack of diversity in the built environment and limited lifestyle options for both current and future generations.
4. Incompatible land uses can result in reverse sensitivity issues with restrictions on commercial and industrial opportunities and on the efficient operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of strategic infrastructure.
5. Poorly planned development can degrade the special values of an area by diminishing biodiversity, natural character, disrupting ecological corridors between ecosystems, restricting access to water bodies, compromising landscapes and degrading historic heritage features and amenity values.
6. Poorly planned development can reduce connectivity between existing and new areas and activities and impede the efficient operation of strategic infrastructure (such as roads, wharves, airfields, and energy transmission corridors).
7. Inappropriately located development and growth in areas subject to natural hazards can exacerbate the long-term risk and increase their effects.
8. A need to recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga, including incorporating Māori perspectives and approaches into urban and residential design and development.
9. Tangata whenua lack papakāinga and Māori residential development options.

16.3 Objectives and policies

Objective 1

Settlement development and growth uses capacity in existing or planned water, wastewater, stormwater and roading infrastructure.

Policy 1a

Settlement development and growth should make use of opportunities for consolidation and redevelopment of existing settlements.

Policy 1b

Water, wastewater and stormwater reticulation required for a development shall be within existing or planned network capacity. Development outside the Rural Area should connect to the existing stormwater, water and wastewater reticulation where it is available.

Policy 1c

High density development shall be encouraged within the Commercial Area, the Industrial Area, the Extra Density Residential Zone and the Waterfront Zone.

Policy 1d

Low density development should only occur in areas with infrastructure and/or other development constraints, where appropriate.

Policy 1e

Development outside of existing settlements that are unable to be serviced by existing or planned Council water, wastewater, stormwater and roading infrastructure shall be self-sufficient and not reliant upon public infrastructure and investment, including any road upgrades servicing the development.

Policy 1f

On-site water tanks and stormwater minimisation and retention should be encouraged to supplement existing infrastructure.

Policy 1g

Industry shall be located where there is good access to regional road corridors shown in Section 18 Figure 1 Road Hierarchy, provided adverse effects on the road corridors are remedied or mitigated.

Policy 1h

Settlement development and growth should maintain the efficiency and safety of the District's existing and planned key infrastructure including the transportation network (including roads, wharves, marinas and airfields), water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity and telecommunications. Particular regard should be given to the protection of regionally significant infrastructure, including the national electricity grid.

Policy 1i

Growth, intensification and consolidation of Thames, Whitianga and Whangamata should be encouraged.

Objective 2

Settlement development and growth provides for a thriving economy and viable communities.

Policy 2a

Business and industrial activities that increase social benefits, boost local services, infrastructure and employment and lead to economic growth should be encouraged and provided for.

Policy 2b

Business and industrial activities should locate in either the Industrial Area or the Commercial Area (as appropriate) where existing and planned infrastructure use can be optimised provided that:

- a) adverse effects on the transport network are remedied or mitigated; and
- b) adverse effects on residential, farming and forestry activities are minimised.

Policy 2c

New commercial development in settlements should not detract from the vitality and viability of existing Commercial Areas.

Policy 2d

Settlement development and growth should not limit access to and operation of existing activities and other lawfully established activities (such as quarries).

Policy 2e

Land uses should not be located where they cause or worsen reverse sensitivity effects, particularly adjacent to Industrial Areas, regionally significant infrastructure, existing mining activities, and significant mineral resources and their access routes identified on a publicly available map held by the Council.

Objective 3

Settlement development and growth maintains the Coastal Environment's special values.

Policy 3a

Growth outside of the Rural Area, in the Coastal Environment shall be clustered in, around or adjacent to existing settlements.

Policy 3b

Land use that supports marine industries should be provided for in the Coastal Environment where appropriate.

Policy 3c

In the Coastal Environment settlement development and growth shall:

- a) preserve natural character and landscape values; and
- b) ensure sufficient development setbacks to protect coastal natural character, public access, indigenous biodiversity, natural physical processes, amenity, and natural hazard mitigation functions of the coast; and
- c) protect hydrological processes and natural functions of back dune areas; and
- d) have regard to local coastal character; and
- e) allow for the potential effects of sea level rise, including allowing for sufficient coastal habitat inland migration opportunities; and
- f) protect the natural characteristics of remaining undeveloped or largely undeveloped coastal environments; and
- g) ensure adequate water, stormwater and wastewater services will be provided for the development; and
- h) avoid increasing natural hazard risk associated with coastal erosion and inundation; and
- i) have regard to the potential effects of a tsunami event and take appropriate steps to avoid, remedy or mitigate that risk; and
- j) avoid ribbon development along coastal margins; and
- k) not compromise the function or operation of existing or planned coastal infrastructure; and
- l) provide for safe and efficient connectivity between activities occurring in the coastal marine area and associated land-based infrastructure; and
- m) maintain and enhance public access to the coast and existing public areas; and
- n) provide infrastructure that supports marine-based industries and sea transport
- o) enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being and their health and safety.

Objective 4

Settlement development and growth provides for a diverse range of land uses and living choices.

Policy 4a

Consistent with existing residential character and potential environmental constraints, a range of residential densities, lot sizes and dwelling forms shall provide for a variety of living choices.

Policy 4b

Commercial buildings should be designed to accommodate potential future changes of use to support the viability of Commercial Areas.

Policy 4c

Higher density development should be planned and designed for future demographic changes such as the housing needs of the elderly.

Policy 4d

Rural lifestyle development in the Rural Lifestyle Zone on the fringes of settlements or in areas with lower quality soils shall provide opportunities to enjoy rural living while enhancing existing or degraded biodiversity.

Policy 4e

Mixed land use should be encouraged where it supports vibrant settlements and does not result in undue reverse sensitivity effects.

Policy 4f

Māori should be able to use their land according to their traditions.

Objective 5

Settlement development and growth maintains and enhances amenity values, character, historic heritage, transport connectivity, environmental sustainability and the vitality of individual settlements and their centres.

Policy 5a

Settlement development and growth including commercial, housing and subdivision design should be consistent with the existing character and context of the built environment and with the landscape character, historic heritage and amenity values of the area.

Policy 5b

Settlement development and growth should integrate and connect with other areas of employment, residences, open space, community focus points, existing infrastructure and the surrounding road network including pedestrian, bicycle and mobility scooter traffic.

Policy 5c

Settlement development and growth shall not add to existing road safety risks and where possible should reduce such risks through incorporating network infrastructure improvements and upgrades.

Policy 5d

Settlement development and growth should be designed to:

- a) Minimise the need for large-scale excavation and erosion mitigation measures; and
- b) Avoid an increase in stormwater runoff e.g. detention ponds, permeable surfaces; and
- c) Encourage natural ventilation and sunlight into buildings and outdoor spaces; and
- d) Increase water and energy efficiency e.g. rainwater harvesting and solar panels; and
- e) Enhance indigenous biodiversity (e.g. through the choice of landscape and garden plantings); and
- f) Reduce the level of contaminants in water, air and soil e.g. non-toxic building materials; and
- g) Encourage multi-modal transport options (e.g. walking and cycling infrastructure).

Policy 5e

The protection of historic heritage shall be recognised, buildings re-used and integrated into settlement development and growth.

Objective 6

Areas of natural character, indigenous biodiversity, outstanding natural features and landscapes, high class soils, and historic heritage items are recognised and protected.

Policy 6a

Settlement development and growth should not develop areas with high natural character, outstanding natural features and landscapes, potentially erodible slopes, and high class soils, and should take into account indigenous biodiversity, existing natural character and historic heritage items in the development's scale, density and design.

Policy 6b

Stormwater infrastructure shall limit surface flooding and adverse effects on water quality.

Policy 6c

Settlement development and growth, including subdivision, shall avoid adverse effects on areas of outstanding natural character of wetlands, rivers, lakes and their margins. Resource consent applications shall also be assessed against Section 8 Objective 1 and its policies and Objective 2 and its policies, even if the site is located outside of the coastal environment.

Policy 6d

Settlement development and growth, including subdivision, shall avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects on areas of high natural character of wetlands, rivers, lakes and their margins. Resource consent applications shall also be assessed against Section 8 Objective 1 and its policies and Objective 2 and its policies, even if the site is located outside of the coastal environment.

Objective 7

Opportunities for public access to streams, rivers and the coast are realised.

Policy 7a

Settlement development and growth should provide access to rivers, streams and the coast; these should be incorporated into reserves where practicable.

Policy 7b

Esplanade reserves or strips shall be required to provide access to the coast at subdivision stage.

Policy 7c

Where appropriate esplanade reserves or strips shall provide access to streams and rivers at subdivision stage.

Objective 8

Iwi authorities can exercise kaitiakitanga in the development and growth of settlements in their rohe.

Policy 8a

The relationship of tangata whenua with their ancestral lands and water shall be recognised and provided for (e.g. by incorporating Māori place names, protection of and appropriate access to sites of significance to Māori, planting indigenous plants in public spaces).

Policy 8b

Iwi authorities should be involved when planning for settlement development and growth and its potential impacts on the natural environment, water bodies, the coastal marine area, and sites of significance to Māori.

Policy 8c

Kaitiakitanga and mātauranga Māori should guide development of papakāinga and Māori residential development where it provides for Māori to continue their relationship with their ancestral lands.

Objective 9

Integrated planning guides and coordinates settlement growth across multiple land parcels.

Policy 9a

Rezoning and/or subdivision and consent conditions for settlement development and growth across multiple land parcels should be supported by information (e.g. a structure plan) which identifies, as appropriate to the scale and potential effects of development, the following:

- a) the type and location of land uses (including residential, industrial, commercial and recreational land uses, and community facilities where these can be anticipated) that will be provided for and the density, staging and standards;
- b) the location, type, scale, funding and staging of infrastructure required to service the area;
- c) multi-modal transport links and connectivity, both within the area of new urban development and to neighbouring areas and existing transport infrastructure; and how the safe and efficient functioning of existing and planned transport and other regionally significant infrastructure will be protected and enhanced;

- d) how existing values and valued features of the area (including amenity, landscape, natural character, ecological and heritage values, water bodies and high class soils) will be protected;
- e) potential natural hazards and how the related risks will be managed;
- f) potential issues arising from the storage, use, disposal and transport of hazardous substances in the area, and any contaminated sites and identified methods of how related risks will be managed;
- g) how stormwater will be managed having regard to a total catchment management approach and low impact urban design and development (LIUDD) methods;
- h) any significant mineral resources identified in an RMA plan in the area and any provisions (such as development staging) to allow their extraction where appropriate;
- i) how the relationship of tangata whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga has been recognised and provided for;
- j) anticipated water requirements and sources of water for public water supply; and
- k) how any locations identified as likely renewable energy generation sites will be managed.

Objective 10

The unique constraints and opportunities of each settlement are recognised and guide settlement development and growth in the District with future urban development focused in and around Thames, Whitianga and Whangamata.

Policy 10a – Cooks Beach, Flaxmill Bay

Cooks Beach and Flaxmill Bay should retain their existing rural character backdrops and the beach-village built form. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for unplanned water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10b – Ferry Landing

Ferry Landing should retain its existing natural character backdrop and its beach-village built form.

Policy 10c – Land around the Moehau Range (north of Whangahehi Bay/Waikawau Bay to Cape Colville)

Land around the Moehau Range should retain its undeveloped, remote character. Development and growth shall not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure. This does not apply in the Coastal Living Zone at Port Charles.

Policy 10d – Coromandel Town

Commercial, industrial and marine service growth in Coromandel Town should be encouraged. Settlement development should retain the town's heritage. Residential growth with wastewater reticulation should be located between Whangapoua Road and Rings Road.

Policy 10e – Hahei

Hahei should retain the existing rural character of the surrounding land, and the beach-village built form. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for unplanned water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure. Any intensification and growth should address Hahei's infrastructure requirements and constraints with community input. Natural character restoration should be encouraged as part of any low-density subdivision.

Policy 10f – Hikuai, Coroglen, Whenuakite

Commercial, industrial and commercial services should be provided for, however multi-lot settlement-scale subdivisions should not be established. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10g – Hikutaia, Matatoki, Puriri, Colville

A diversity of small-scale community, commercial, industrial and residential activities should be encouraged.

Policy 10h – Hot Water Beach

Hot Water Beach should have no industrial, residential or commercial expansion except for home businesses, self-serviced lots of a rural character and small-scale retail activities servicing beach visitors. Development and growth shall not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10i – Kennedy Bay and Tuatēawa

Kennedy Bay and Tuatēawa should retain existing rural and natural character values. A sustainable community, with a mix of activities, should be allowed provided these activities do not increase demand for water and wastewater network infrastructure.

Policy 10j – Kuaotunu

Kuaotunu should retain a mix of small-scale community and commercial activities that add to the settlement's low-key, beach-village built form, but should avoid larger-scale activities. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10k – Manaia

Development and growth that is good for the wider community shall be provided for (e.g. employment, education, self-sufficiency, environmental enhancement, health and safety, affordable housing).

Policy 10l – Matarangi

Matarangi's growth should be consistent with Section 28.3 Matarangi Structure Plan, and any intensification of residential, community, commercial or industrial activities should be near the existing Commercial Area.

Policy 10m – Onemana

Onemana should retain the existing rural and natural character backdrops and the low-key, beach-village built form. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10n – Opito, Otama, Matapau Bay

Opito, Otama and Matapau Bay should retain the existing rural and natural character backdrops and the low-key, beach-village built form. Commercial and industrial activities shall not establish unless they are mobile or part of residential buildings. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10o – Opoutere and Ohui

The natural character areas, key vistas, built form nestled among trees and unbroken skylines shall be retained and the settlement shall not be intensified. Development or growth shall not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10p – Pauanui

Development and growth should maintain Pauanui's existing built character, particularly building height, lot size, site coverage, few impermeable surfaces, pedestrian connectivity and public open space.

Policy 10q – Tairua and Paku (south of Pumpkin Hill)

The scale and design of development and growth should retain the existing beach-village built form, particularly by locating multi-dwelling buildings away from the coast and retaining views of and access to the coast.

Policy 10r – Thames Coast (Whakatete Bay to Wilson Bay)

Thames Coast settlements should retain their existing rural and natural character backdrops and their low-key, small coastal village built form. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10s – Thames (Tararu to Kopu)

Settlement development and growth should be encouraged. Innovative higher-density mixed-use development of residential, commercial, community and light industrial activities should be provided for. Greenfield development and growth should be consistent with Section 28.2 Kopu to Thames Structure Plan.

Policy 10t – Whangamata (south of the road to Onemana (Whitipiroua Road/SH 25 intersection))

Settlement development and growth should be encouraged. Concentrated development through intensification and consolidation should be directed to the Extra Density Residential Zone and Commercial and Industrial Area to retain the existing beach-village built form in other zones.

Policy 10u – Whangapoua, Te Rerenga

Any development or growth should enhance natural character, particularly on headlands and along the Pungapunga River and should not stretch along the coastline. Development and growth should not occur where it increases demand for additional water, wastewater, stormwater and roading network infrastructure.

Policy 10v – Whitianga (including Wharekaho)

Settlement development and growth should be encouraged. Whitianga should retain the existing rural and natural character backdrops and should not develop and grow south of the Mercury Bay Golf Club. Concentrated development through intensification and consolidation should be directed to the Whitianga Commercial Area and Waterfront Zone.

Policy 10w – Waikawau Bay/Little Bay

Development at Waikawau Bay shall retain or enhance the existing natural and rural character, bush clad hills and spurs from the ocean to ridgetop to ensure the landscape and visual amenity of Waikawau Bay is

maintained or enhanced and the settlement of Little Bay is contained within the visual catchment of Little Bay.

Note:

1. Also refer to the [Waikato Regional Policy Statement APP 11: Development principles](#).
2. Refer to Appendix 4.4 of [the Plan](#) to determine those qualities and characteristics that constitute the values of amenity landscapes.