
NOTES FROM LGNZ CONFERENCE WORKSHOP ON RM REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

Q1: What do the RM Reform changes mean for your area?

General concerns that were discussed and noted down included:

- // The loss of local voice in the new system and lack of clear and meaningful ways for communities to participate in the new planning process. Related to this, there were also concerns about the removal of councils' role in supporting placemaking and community input into decision-making.
- // The impact of RM reform on other reforms (e.g., Affordable Water and the Future for Local Government) and existing local government processes, including wellbeing priority setting, long-term planning etc.
- // The impact of this reform on council budgets, workforce capacity and the already stretched capacity and capability of iwi and hapū.
- // Smaller councils/districts at risk of being left out and unable to fund participation in the new system.
- // Concerns about how to manage opposing council views.
- // Uncertainty about transition arrangements and impacts this will have on councils and communities.
- // Some were optimistic that the reforms will lead to more development/infrastructure.

Questions for the Ministry for the Environment:

What role will council staff play in the new system?

How will Regional Planning Committees engage with iwi/Māori especially when their rohe extends out of the region and there are many iwi/hapū in the region?

Q2: What can your council be doing now to get ready for transition/implementation?

Attendees generally agreed it would be useful to start:

- // Relationship building, to support collaboration and planning across regions, and the formation of and decision-making by Regional Planning Committees.
- // Increasing community awareness of the reform.
- // Thinking about how existing community priorities could feed into the new RM system and what additional community priorities might need developing.
- // Incorporating the reform into LTP/budgeting processes, including to build capacity and capability.
- // Undertaking scenario testing to understand how the reform will impact on developments that are consented and funding through consents and development contributions.
- // Understanding how existing strategies and plans can contribute to the new system and think about what changes might be needed to existing plans and spatial strategies so they can be rolled up into the new system.
- // Building relationships with central government agencies.
- // Having conversations with hapu/iwi including how to transition existing arrangements.
- // Building a clear understanding of the new system including council roles and the benefits of the new system to support building community awareness.

Questions for the Ministry for the Environment:

How can councils maintain momentum in the existing system and work towards implementing the new system?

What funding support will be available to support councils to implement the reforms?

What will Hearings Commissioners do? And how?

What is the purpose of the Ministerial representative that will be appointed to the Regional Planning Committee and how will their views be moderated?

What are the opportunities for private (and public) industries to participate in the new system?

Q3: What additional resources/support/planning will be needed to do the above?

Key feedback on the additional resources, support and planning that will be needed included:

- // Advice, guidance, and training, including processes for sharing best practice.
- // Clarity around transition and implementation milestones and timeframes.
- // Plain English communications and awareness raising of the reform both for elected members and the public.
- // Funding and help to build the capacity and capability of iwi and hapū to participate in the process.
- // Guidance on how to engage the community in developing outcomes for the regional plan.
- // Guidance to support the establishment of Regional Planning Committees.
- // Support with planning for workforce changes including understanding the impacts on planning staff workloads and resourcing, assessment of budgets, availability of skilled staff, and mandating of work within councils.
- // Guidance on how existing plan changes fit within the transition to the new system.
- // Guidance on how councils can resource the new processes/system.

Questions for the Ministry for the Environment:

How will planning/tertiary education be adapted to provide the expertise required to implement the new system?

How will we fund implementation beyond setting up initial processes? Are all councils expected to provide funding through their long-term plans?

How will planning committees balance or ensure rural/urban perspectives?

How will the distinctive characteristics within a region be reflected in the single RSS?

How do existing standards and planning work fit into the new system?

What will the reforms mean for council staff?