



AGENDA

City Future Committee Workshop Monday, 7 September 2026

**I hereby give notice that a City Future Committee Workshop will be held
on:**

Date: Monday, 7 September 2026

Time: 1:00 pm - Regional Spatial Plan

**Location: Tauranga City Council Chambers
L1, 90 Devonport Road
Tauranga**

**Marty Grenfell
Chief Executive**

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1.1 Regional Spatial Plan Pre-enactment Process Update - Briefing Paper 4

1 BUSINESS

1.1 Regional Spatial Plan Pre-enactment Process Update - Briefing Paper

File Number: A20668041

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Workshop Information

Note: This briefing paper has been updated since its original circulation for the 18 August 2026 workshop, which was subsequently deferred. All updates are highlighted in grey.

Purpose of the Workshop

1. The purpose of the workshop is to update the Committee on:
 - a. Preparations for regional spatial planning ahead of the new legislation coming into effect
 - b. Anticipated updates to the new planning legislation based on the Environment Select Committee recommendations released on 20 July 2026 and Amendment papers to the Bills released in mid-September 2026
 - c. Identification, for informal feedback, key issues / drivers for growth and change to be considered during the preparation of the RSP
 - d. Seek informal feedback on key matters that will inform development of the process agreement and the establishment and decision-making arrangements associated with a Spatial Plan Committee (SPC) for the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan (RSP).
2. Regional spatial planning matters are also being considered by the Bay of Plenty Regional Mayoral Forum. At the time of writing this report, Bay of Plenty Regional Council is preparing a report for the Mayoral Forum meeting on 10 September 2026 that seeks ~~is expected to seek~~ feedback and direction on options for the process agreement and SPC. To support alignment across partner councils and forums, this briefing paper reflects key matters ~~also currently proposed~~ for consideration by the Mayoral Forum. The Mayoral Forum report will be circulated to Elected Members prior to the Mayoral Forum meeting and will include feedback from councils on the topics covered by this briefing paper.
3. Feedback from the Committee will assist officers and regional partners to continue developing options for the process agreement and SPC. Further reports seeking decisions on these matters are anticipated later in 2026, following enactment of the legislation and completion of additional engagement and regional collaboration.

Background and Context

4. The Planning Bill (PB) and Natural Environment Bill (NEB) are intended to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and introduce a requirement for each region to prepare an RSP. Preparation of the RSP is expected to commence in 2027, following enactment of the legislation.
5. During the pre-enactment period, staff have worked with regional planning partners to progress preparatory workstreams, consistent with the City Future Committee resolutions of 31 March 2026. This work has focused on process and governance matters, including options for a process agreement and the establishment of a Spatial Planning Committee (SPC).

6. On 20 July 2026, the Environment Select Committee released its report and recommendations on the PB and NEB. The Committee has recommended several amendments relevant to regional spatial planning, including changes to the matters required to be addressed in an RSP, the content and requirements of the process agreement, and provisions relating to the SPC. These matters are discussed further in this memorandum.
7. Following the release of the Environment Select Committee's report, the Bills have progressed through their second reading and Amendment papers to the draft Bills have been released and published. To enable enactment before the general election, the Bills must be passed by 24 September 2026, which is understood to be the Government's intention. Further amendments may still be made as the Bills continue through the legislative process.
8. A progress update on the pre-enactment workstreams was provided to the City Future Committee on 30 June 2026 through the City Planning and Growth Quarterly Report. An elected member workshop on the RSP and associated pre-enactment workstreams was also held on that date.

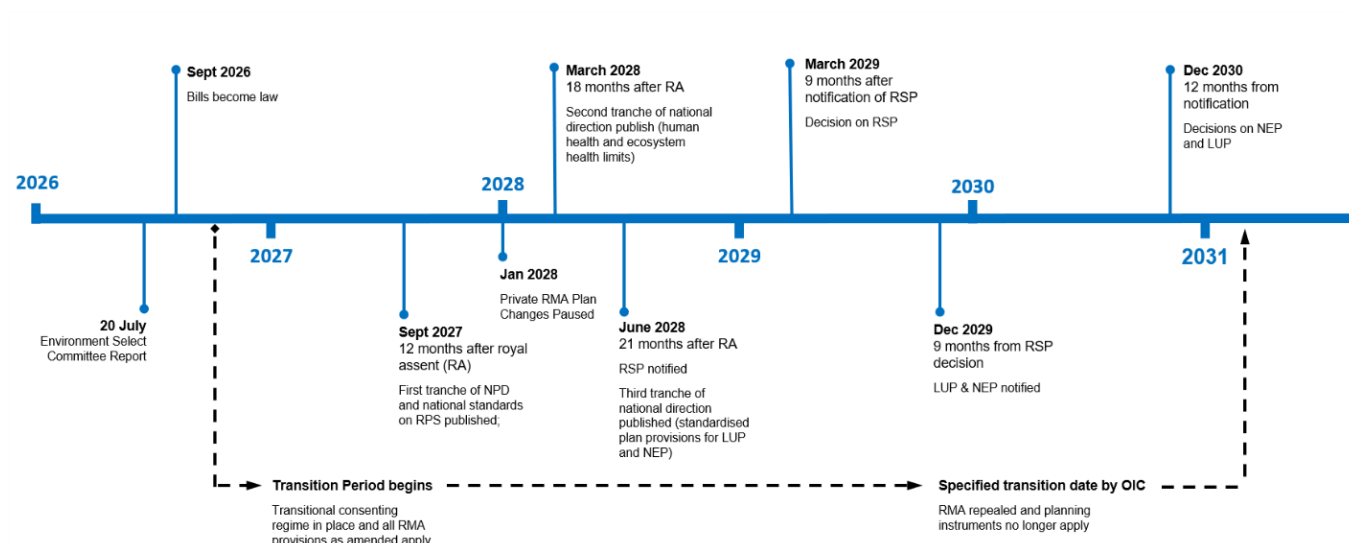
Environment Select Committee Recommendation Report and Amendment Papers

12. The Environment Select Committee report recommends a range of amendments to both Bills and is accompanied by marked-up versions to assist in understanding the proposed changes. In addition, Amendment papers have been released which propose amendments for consideration of the Committee of the whole House. ~~At the time of preparing this report, staff were continuing to review~~ Staff have reviewed the Environment Select Committee recommendations and the Amendments papers together ~~work~~ with regional planning partners to understand their implications. ~~However, in~~ In relation to RSP matters, key recommended amendments relate to:
 - a. The timeframe for preparing the RSP within the broader transition to the new legislative framework.
 - b. The core matters that must be addressed when preparing and deciding a RSP.
 - b. The process agreement, which is to confirm how regional partners will work together to prepare and decide the RSP.
 - c. The SPC, which is required to lead the development of the draft RSP.
13. These matters are discussed below.

Transition Timeframe

14. The Environment Select Committee has recommended extending the transition timeframe for implementing the new planning system by nine months, recognising the scale and complexity of establishing the new planning framework.
15. For RSPs, the recommended timeframes would require notification of the first draft RSP approximately 21 months after Royal Assent, with adoption required within 30 months of Royal Assent. If the legislation is enacted in late 2026, notification of the draft RSP would be expected in mid-2028, reflecting the extended transition period.
16. The transition timeline to the new planning system including the RSP timeline as recommended by the Environment Select Committee is set out in Figure 1 below. It should be noted that the precise timing will depend on the final legislation, the timing of the preparation and notification of the relevant planning instruments, and any further amendments to the Bills.

Figure 1: Environment Select Committee Transition Timeline



Core matters that must be addressed when preparing and deciding a RSP

17. In the Environment Select Committee report, the former list of “mandatory matters” has been recommended to be replaced with the following “core obligations” that must be addressed when preparing and deciding a RSP. The core obligations may also change because of Amendment papers, but overall, the focus remains the same, and relate to:
 - a. The broad spatial layout of the region over at least 30 years, including:
 - priority locations for growth and change
 - existing and future infrastructure significant to the district, region or nation
 - significant constraints on the use or development of land or the coastal marine area
 - priority locations for climate-change adaptation planning.
 - b. The key drivers of growth and change in the region.
 - c. Map or otherwise record the following in the region
 - Designations, including:
 - existing designations for projects of district, regional or national significance
 - specified transitioning designations
 - indicative locations and details of future designations.
 - Māori and Treaty-related spatial matters, including:
 - statutory acknowledgements
 - sites of significance to Māori
 - customary marine title areas
 - protected customary rights areas
 - aquaculture settlement areas.
18. The RSP must also:
 - Implement relevant national instruments under both the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act

- Be consistent with applicable water conservation orders
 - Comply with regulations
 - Support resolution of potential conflicts between Planning Act and Natural Environment Act national instruments
 - Support alignment between planning and infrastructure investment decisions.
19. The SmartGrowth Strategy, the Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plans along with related technical evidence e.g., Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment are expected to be able to provide substantial content and strategic direction on the 'core obligation' matters to inform the first RSP. However, a detailed review of existing plans is needed to confirm the content, and direction meets the requirements of the new legislation, as well as other matters such as current elected member views, outcomes of recent planning initiatives, and future RSP engagement processes. The review of the SmartGrowth Strategy 2024, which is required as part of the Western Bay City and Regional Deal is expected to be integrated with RSP development and contribute to this assessment.

The RSP, the SmartGrowth Strategy and Our Direction

20. The current SmartGrowth Strategy provides a long-term growth strategy for the western Bay of Plenty sub-region, establishing a shared vision and direction for sustainable growth and development over the next 50 years that seeks to enhance the four wellbeings. Developed through a partnership between local government, tāngata whenua and central government, it provides a coordinated framework to guide growth, infrastructure and land use across council boundaries, including the Future Development Strategy required under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD).
21. Like the SmartGrowth Strategy, the RSP is intended to provide a long-term strategic framework, looking at least 30 years ahead, to guide the coordinated planning of growth, infrastructure, environmental management and investment across the region. However, it will differ from the SmartGrowth Strategy in its statutory role, scope and geographic area. While the SmartGrowth Strategy is a non-statutory growth strategy for the western Bay of Plenty sub-region, the RSP will be a statutory document prepared under the Planning Act. Similar to a City Plan, it will include objectives, and may include policies, both of which carry statutory weight for future decision making.
22. The legislative framework of the PB is focused around achieving a clear set of goals which are narrower in scope than has been provided for in the SmartGrowth Strategy. These goals are focused on achieving the purpose of the PB which is to "provide for the enjoyment of land by establishing a framework for planning and regulating the use and development of land". This includes responding to significant issues, opportunities and priorities as they relate to urban and rural development, housing and business land needs, infrastructure provision, environmental limits, and climate change adaptation. Many of the broader wellbeing outcomes promoted by SmartGrowth, particularly those relating to social infrastructure, community development, transport performance, biodiversity enhancement and economic aspirations, are either addressed only indirectly or are intended to be delivered through other strategies.
23. Going forward, the RSP will be an important tool for delivering Council's *Our Direction* strategic framework alongside wider strategies, together providing for the four wellbeings. In particular, the RSP will provide the long-term regional spatial direction needed to support the *Tauranga Tātai Rua – A well-planned city* outcome by identifying future urban growth areas, strategic infrastructure networks, transport corridors, and other regionally significant spatial priorities.
24. While the RSP has a strong focus on land use, infrastructure and growth, *Our Direction* has a broader remit, encompassing all four wellbeings through Council's community outcomes, approaches and supporting strategies. The RSP represents one component of the wider strategic framework, complementing Council's other strategies and action and investment plans (AIPs).

Key Issues, Opportunities and Strategic Priorities for growth and change across the region

25. The framework recommended by the Environment Select Committee does not require the key issues and opportunities within the region to be identified within the process agreement, as proposed in the draft PB. Instead, the RSP itself (rather than Process Agreement) would require the key drivers of growth and change to be described, and a range of options for delivering the region's strategic growth and change priorities to be identified and assessed through the Options Report. Developing and evaluating these options will require a clear understanding of the region's issues, opportunities, and growth challenges. A review of existing sub-regional spatial plans and regional planning documents has identified the following emerging issues and opportunities as an initial foundation for this work. These are expected to evolve as further direction is provided by Elected members and as greater certainty emerges through the enactment of the legislation and the release of national policy direction and other guidance.

Western Bay of Plenty: draft issues and opportunities

- **Opportunity to build off SmartGrowth Strategy settlement pattern and related work subject to critical review such as the balance between intensification and greenfield development**
- **Population and employment growth and demographic change**
- **Limited housing choice and a shortage of development-ready land for housing and business**
- **Opportunities to provide for intensification within those areas where supporting infrastructure and amenities exist and/or are being invested in**
- **Limited transport choice and growing congestion on key routes**
- **The need for successful centres and business areas to support communities and job growth**
- **Infrastructure level of service constraints, including closing the infrastructure deficit**
- **Insufficient funding and financing to deliver planned growth (and the need to consider wider options)**
- **Increasing pressure from development on the natural environment**
- **Supporting tāngata whenua to realise their development aspirations**
- **The need to adapt to, and mitigate against the impacts of climate change and hazards**
- **The need to manage incompatible activities.**

The Process Agreement

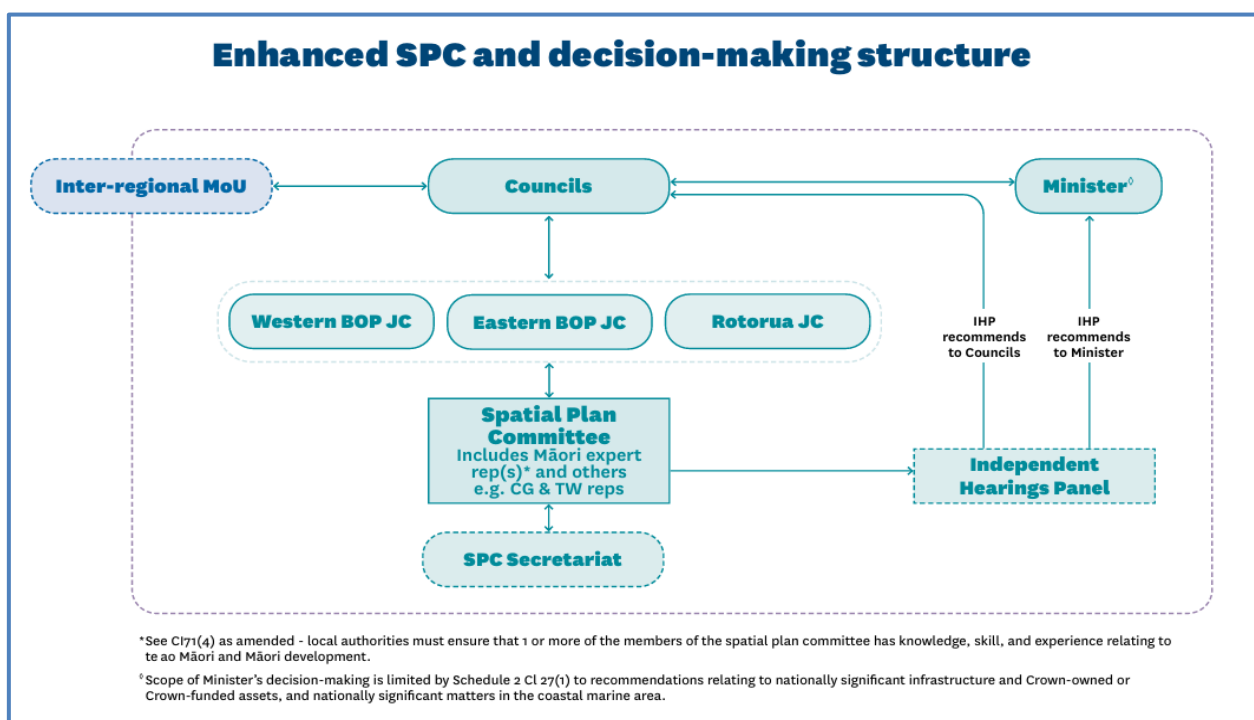
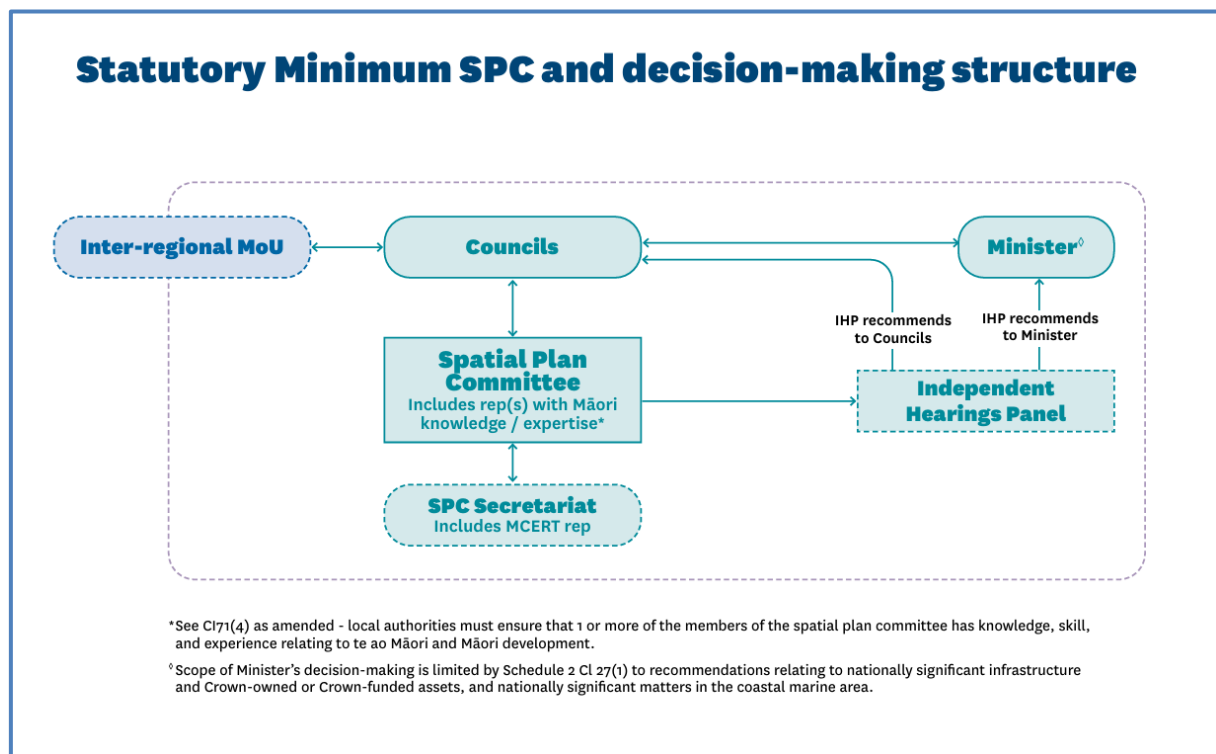
26. The PB, together with the Environment Select Committee's recommended amendments, require all local authorities within a region to agree on a range of matters relating to the preparation of a RSP. In the Environment Select Committee report, the matters that the process agreement must confirm relate to:
- a. How local authorities work together and with the SPC
 - b. Decision-making responsibilities, including whether there will be any division of responsibilities between local authorities on certain matters or parts of the draft RSP (e.g. if a territorial authority will be the sole decision-maker on certain content for its district or if decisions are made unanimously)

- c. How the SPC must carry out consultation
 - d. How the RSP secretariat for the draft RSP will be established and managed
 - e. Processes to ensure that each local authority complies with any obligations under iwi participation legislation.
27. The SPC is responsible for preparing the draft RSP, appointing a secretariat to provide it with technical and administrative support, recommending to local authorities its public notification, providing advice on independent hearings panel recommendations, and preparing and maintaining an implementation plan.
28. A SPC must be a joint committee of the local authorities and appointed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002. In terms of SPC representation:
- a. Each local authority is entitled to appoint at least one member;
 - b. One or more of the members of the SPC must have knowledge, skill, and experience relating to:
 - i. te ao Māori; and
 - ii. Māori development.
 - c. The Minister may appoint one member, and one or more members if the local authorities of the region agree to that additional number of members.
 - d. The SPC must appoint a secretariat to provide it with technical and administrative support.
29. The Environment Select Committee recommendation provides for what is effectively a 'statutory minimum' SPC and decision-making structure, with opportunity provided within the provisions to further tailor the SPC to reflect local decision making and governance preferences (i.e. an 'enhanced' SPC and decision-making structure).
30. Principles to help evaluate and guide decision-making on the establishment of the SPC have been developed by staff from all BOP councils, they are:

SPC Principles:

- **Tāngata whenua representation - Ensure the governance arrangement provides for tāngata whenua representation, so that Māori interests, perspectives, and responsibilities are meaningfully reflected in decision-making**
- **Collaborative - Set up to share knowledge and expertise and constructively address issues early to achieve outcomes**
- **Simple, practical, effective and efficient - Have as few governance layers as possible, with a clear purpose and delegations, supporting timely decision-making at the lowest level possible and minimising bureaucracy**
- **Capability - Ensure the governance arrangement has access to the resources needed to discharge its role effectively, e.g., the possibility of an Independent Chair and specialist advisors to support evidence based and expert informed approach**
- **Future-proofed / adaptable - Able to evolve in response to legislative change, project phases, and changing partner or stakeholder needs**
- **Legally recognised - A SPC that meets statutory requirements and observes tikanga and principles of Te Tiriti.**
- **Te Tiriti - observes tikanga and principles of Te Tiriti**

26. As set out in the draft Mayoral Forum report (Attachment 1) the evaluation undertaken by regional planning partner staff has identified a 'statutory minimum' and 'enhanced' SPC and decision-making structure, which are illustrated below.



27. Key features of the 'enhanced SPC' include:

- a. Provides for existing sub-regional joint committees eg the SmartGrowth Committee.
- c. Provision for Māori representation (requires work with iwi to create the preferred option)
- d. Provides for 1 x Ministerial appointment with discretion for more (if requested and agreed by local authorities)

- d. Council, refers to the decision-making processes of each council, this could be direct to council or through a committee
28. The number of SPC members would be dependent on representation per local authority plus provision for a named alternate (ensures quorum can be met). Based on one representative per local authority this is approximately 12-14 members; Based on two representatives per local authority this is approximately 18-20.
29. Key matters for Elected member consideration and feedback in relation to the above relate to the following (and are also set out in the draft Mayoral Forum report provided as Attachment 1):

Key matter for consideration	Considerations
The most appropriate way to provide for tangata whenua representation.	Input is required from tangata whenua representatives to advance this consideration. Further engagement is under way in this regard. To date, and consistent with approaches on similar processes, it is understood that tangata whenua interests are best provided for when representation is provided for at all levels of governance and project inputs. Representation within the SPC would: • Better reflect Treaty partnership principles and the intent of the Planning Bill • Bring mātauranga Māori and local cultural knowledge into strategic decision making from the outset • Help identify issues and opportunities earlier Align governance with existing collaborative planning approaches used across the Bay of Plenty.
Providing for sub-regional working arrangements in the structure.	The existing sub-regional spatial planning arrangements like SmartGrowth are expected to be retained in some form. Consistent with work undertaken to date, much of the preparation of the RSP is expected to occur at the sub-regional level through these committees and associated structures, which include elected member and tangata whenua and/or elected Māori representation to some extent depending on the sub-region. Providing a sub-regional level provides for stronger connections or delegations to sub-regional Joint Committees via SPC Terms of Reference, hence any changes at this level will influence options for scale of the SPC. Terms of Reference for existing Joint Committees (e.g., Sub-regional Joint Committees and the Regional Transport Committee) may need to be reviewed to reflect roles and responsibilities of the new SPC and the legal weight of the RSP across the planning system to provide clarity.

	Providing for sub-regional working arrangements in the structure: • Builds on well-established structures, relationships and governance arrangements already operating across the region • Reflects the sub-regional nature of matters to be addressed • Allows issues to be resolved closer to where they arise before escalation to the SPC • Makes better use of existing technical work, institutional knowledge and local relationships • Maintains local ownership while supporting regional consistency • Allows detailed place-based planning while the SPC focuses on regional strategic issues.
Whether one or two representatives for each local authority are provided on the SPC (and assume named stand-in).	Consideration needs to be given to maintaining a SPC that is simple, practical, effective and efficient, while being appropriately representative. The enhanced SPC option provides a layered governance approach. This ensures local and sub-regional perspectives are considered alongside the regional and statutory roles of the SPC with significant elected member involvement at the sub-regional level. Advantages of one representative include: a potentially smaller and more efficient committee, streamlined decision-making, lower governance costs, and a stronger regional focus. Advantages of two representatives include: potentially broader representation and expertise, improved continuity and resilience. SPC representation is only one mechanism for local authority input in the RSP development with broader Council involvement including elected member workshops, committee reporting, council engagement processes, and councils role in approving the draft RSP for notification and adoption as well as via SmartGrowth.

30. Other matters that the process agreement must confirm relating to decision-making responsibilities and how the SPC must carry out consultation will be considered in due course.

Summary

31. A summary of the matters staff is seeking informal feedback on are:

- a) Key issues / drivers for growth and change to be considered during the preparation of the RSP.
- b) Key matters that will inform development of the process agreement relating to the establishment of a SPC including:

- i. The principles used to evaluate and guide decision-making on the establishment of the SPC.
- ii. The considerations that will guide decisions on the SPC and decision-making structure, particularly:
 - 1. More than 1-2 members per local authority.
 - 2. Flexibility for the SPC to appoint an independent chair.
 - 3. Flexibility for the SPC to co-opt voting and non-voting members from time to time to support the SPC on specialist matters.
 - 4. Flexibility for the SPC to appoint more than the default option of one Ministerial representative.
 - 5. The use of existing SmartGrowth structures at a sub-regional level.

Te Ao Māori Approach

33. The PB, together with the amendments recommended by the Environment Select Committee, requires engagement with iwi authorities and consideration of Māori interests throughout the spatial planning process. The process agreement will need to outline how local authorities will work collaboratively with iwi and Māori during the preparation of the RSP, ensuring opportunities for early, meaningful, and ongoing involvement.
34. The Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Te Amorangi team has initiated discussions with the Māori Policy Advisor teams across each council and the SmartGrowth Tū Pakari advisor for the western Bay of Plenty, to explore potential approaches to Māori representation. The Te Amorangi team has also undertaken preliminary engagement with a range of groups, including co-governance forums and iwi representatives across each sub-region, to discuss Māori representation options. To date, the Te Amorangi team have described their engagement as 'light touch' and noted that further engagement will be required to inform the development of options and development of an agreed approach. Engagement with the Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana partnership at the Tauranga City level is yet to occur.

Consultation / Engagement

34. The pre-enactment Communication and Engagement Plan is being implemented, noting that there is a limited focus on stakeholders beyond project partners during the pre-enactment phase and any comms are for information only. The preparation of the RSP will be supported by statutory consultation and engagement processes which is it understood will be set out in the final legislation.

Next Steps

35. Next steps are associated with:
 - a. Feedback elected members views from this workshop session to our regional spatial planning partners to assist in developing options further
 - b. Continued work with regional spatial planning partners on the development of options:
 - a. To address the matters required for the process agreement;
 - b. To support the establishment of the SPC.
36. Reporting for decision-making on the process agreement and establishment of the SPC is anticipated later in 2026 once the legislation has been enacted.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil