

Direction to use Streamlined Planning Process

The Minister Responsible for RMA Reform received notice from Auckland Council on 2 October 2025, pursuant to clause 5(1) of Schedule 3C and clause 75A of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), seeking direction to use a streamlined planning process (SPP) to prepare Proposed Plan Change 120: Housing Intensification and Resilience as an Auckland Housing Planning Instrument. The Minister of Conservation received equivalent notice on 3 October 2025. Proposed Plan Change 120 includes proposed plan provisions relating to natural hazards as provided for by clause 5(2) of Schedule 3C and section 80C of the RMA.

In accordance with clause 78 of Schedule 1 of the RMA, the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and Minister of Conservation direct that the following streamlined planning process is used for Proposed Plan Change 120: Housing Intensification and Resilience (Plan Change 120).

	Step	Timeframes
1	Publicly notify Plan Change 120, in accordance with clause 5 of Schedule 1 of the RMA. Auckland Council shall publish the information provided to the responsible Ministers under clause 75A(3) of Schedule 1 at the same time as its public notification of Plan Change 120.	No later than 3 November 2025.
2	Provide an opportunity for written submissions under clause 6 of Schedule 1 of the RMA.	3 November – 19 December 2025
3	Give public notice of a summary of decisions requested in submissions in accordance with clause 7 of Schedule 1 of the RMA (to the extent applicable under this direction).	
4	Auckland Council may provide an opportunity for further submissions in accordance with clause 8 and 8A of Schedule 1 of the RMA (to the extent applicable under this direction).	
5	Auckland Council to undertake a further evaluation under section 32AA of the RMA in respect to obligations identified in iwi participation legislation.	
6	The SPP panel may undertake resolution of disputes in accordance with clause 8AA of Schedule 1 of the RMA.	
7	The SPP Panel shall conduct public hearings under Clause 8B of Schedule 1 of the RMA (to the extent applicable under this direction). The SPP panel may permit cross-examination.	
8	SPP panel to prepare a report(s) showing how submissions and evidence presented at the hearing have been considered and the changes (if any) recommended to the Plan Change 120.	

	Step	Timeframes
	The report(s) must state how the SPP panel has had particular regard to the statement of expectations in this direction and the section 32 and 32AA evaluation reports, including any report prepared as part of the resolution of disputes under Step 6.	
9	The preparation of evaluation report(s) on the proposed planning instrument under section 32 or 32AA, as may be relevant. The report(s) may be prepared as part of the SPP panel's reports at step 8, if relevant. Decision makers must give particular regard to section 32 or 32AA report(s).	
10	Auckland Council must consider and decide on the recommendations of the SPP panel on Plan Change 120, in accordance with clause 86 of Schedule 1 of the RMA (to the extent applicable under this direction).	
11	Auckland Council must publicly notify its decisions on the SPP panel recommendations no later than 20 months from the date that the direction notice in the New Zealand Gazette takes effect, in accordance with clause 86 of Schedule 1 of the RMA.	
The maximum total time period within which Steps 1-11 of the streamlined planning process for the proposed Plan Change 120 to the Auckland Unitary Plan must be completed is 20 months after the direction notice in the <i>New Zealand Gazette</i> takes effect. The process is complete when Auckland Council gives public notice of its decisions on Plan Change 120: Housing Intensification and Resilience in accordance with clause 86(5) of Schedule 1 of the RMA.		

In accordance with clause 78(4B) of Schedule 1 of the RMA, the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and the Minister of Conservation direct that the SPP panel convened to hear submissions under Step 7 must include no fewer than eight members and no more than nine members.

In accordance with clause 78(4B) and 78(4C) of Schedule 1 of the RMA, the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and Minister of Conservation will appoint four members of the SPP panel.

Statement of expectations

The expectations of the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and the Minister of Conservation in respect of the Plan Change 120 are that:

- (a) Consideration is given to whether Plan Change 120 provisions (including rules and activity status) unduly frustrate development
- (b) When ensuring that Plan Change 120 meets the requirement in clause 4(1)(a) of Schedule 3C of the RMA, consideration is given to testing the appropriate distribution of housing capacity, including enabling greenfield development
- (c) When ensuring that Plan Change 120 gives effect to policy 3(c)(i) of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, consideration is given to whether all planned rapid transit stops have been identified (including Te Ara Hauāuru – the proposed Northwest busway)
- (d) When ensuring that Plan Change 120 meets the requirement in clause 4 of Schedule 3C of the RMA, consideration is given to ensuring building heights and/or densities are only made less enabling than required where necessary to accommodate a qualifying matter in that area, and only where the requirements of section 32, and/or clause 8 of Schedule 3C of the RMA are met (as applicable), including for the following qualifying matters:
 - i. Built Form Standards in the Residential - Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings and relevant business zones
 - ii. Special Character Areas Overlay - Business, Residential, and General
- (e) While Auckland Council is undertaking the Streamlined Planning Process, it will continue to consult and engage with iwi authorities through existing work programmes.

Notes

This direction must be complied with.

- S80B(2)(a), (b) and (ba) of the RMA specify the mandatory Schedule 1 requirements for the Auckland Housing Planning Instrument's use of the streamlined planning process (to the extent they are applicable to the particular planning instrument).
- Clause 80 of Schedule 1 of the RMA provides the responsible Ministers with the ability to amend this direction including statement of expectations on their own initiative or following a request from the local authority.
- The local authority, in accordance with clause 81 of Schedule 1 of the RMA, may apply in writing to the responsible Ministers for an extension of timeframes.

Dated at Wellington this _____ day of _____ 2025



Hon Chris Bishop

Minister Responsible for RMA Reform



Hon Tama Potaka

Minister of Conservation