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Can collaboration between local authorities enable efficient and effective environmental management?

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

Local authorities in New Zealand are under increasing pressure from central government and the public to deliver efficient and effective local government. Local authorities are required to operate in a fiscally efficient manner while also undertaking a range of local government functions effectively. Local authority collaboration has been identified as a useful approach to the delivery of local government functions that can achieve efficiencies while also providing for effective local government. Local authority collaboration has also been identified as an alternative or complimentary approach to local authority amalgamation. Regulatory functions associated with environmental management are a key responsibility of local governments in New Zealand. This research evaluates the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management. The primary research method was a case study of a Southland example of local authority collaboration in environmental management. The secondary research method was a documentary analysis of eight other New Zealand examples of inter-council collaboration in environmental management. The theory and practice of collaboration between local governments was also analysed through a review of relevant literature. This research has shown that collaboration between local governments can be fiscally efficient, whilst also providing an effective approach to the management of environmental issues. The research has also shown that local authority collaboration in environmental management can be effective across a range of environmental issues. The research concludes that local authority collaboration is a valuable and efficacious approach that can enable effective and efficient environmental management.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARGS	Auckland Regional Growth Strategy
ARGF	Auckland Regional Growth Forum
CDEM	Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002
CMF	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
CWMS	Canterbury Water Management Strategy
ECan	Environment Canterbury (Canterbury Regional Council)
ES	Environment Southland (Southland Regional Council)
GDC	Gore District Council
GDP	Gore District Plan 2006
GCUDS	Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy
HPUDS	Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy
ICC	Invercargill City Council
ICDP	Invercargill City District Plan 2005
LAWF	Land and Water Forum
LGA	Local Government Act 2002
LGNZ	Local Government New Zealand
MfE	Ministry for the Environment
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RPS	Regional Policy Statement
SGSC	Smarter Government - Stronger Communities
SRPS	Southland Regional Policy Statement 1997
SRPS/SDP	Southland Regional Policy Statement/Southland District Plan
SDC	Southland District Council
SDP	Southland District Plan 2001
SRC	Southland Regional Council (Environment Southland)
SSSF	Southland Shared Services Forum

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Introduction

In his address to the 2010 Local Government New Zealand Annual Conference, the Minister of Local Government Rodney Hide stated;

I am not a fan of amalgamation for amalgamation's sake. . . It's not about bigger. It's about better (Hide, 2010, p. 2).

Mr Hide was responding to concerns about pressure for further local authority amalgamations following the 2010 amalgamation of seven local authorities into the single Auckland Council.

Local authority amalgamation in Auckland has been linked to proposals for local government change in the Waikato, Northland and Wellington regions with interest in similar proposals elsewhere including the Bay of Plenty, Palmerston North and the West Coast (Reid, 2011). In Hawke's Bay, debate on proposals to amalgamate Napier City and Hastings District Councils are ongoing (Carpinter, 2011) while similar debates relating to local government in the Nelson City and Tasman Districts are also occurring (Piper, Bull, & Kirby, 2011). Many of the key drivers for local government change identified in review proposals or discussions on local government arrangements are similar. Changes in technology, globalisation, central government reform and increasing public participation are all factors cited as drivers of the need for change. Pressure for change is not restricted to local government in New Zealand as was emphasised in a recent Australian report on local government reform;

Local government is under continuing pressure to evolve and reform in order to address challenges such as financial sustainability, changing community needs and expectations, metropolitan growth, shifting relationships with central governments and so on (Aulich, Gibbs, Gooding, McKinlay, Pillora & Sansom 2011, p.8).

Local government reviews focussed on proposals for local authority amalgamation can be linked to what some have argued is an enduring belief that "bigger is better" (Allan, 2003). Counter arguments to amalgamation identify and promote alternatives that can enable efficient and effective local governance within existing local government arrangements (Dollery & Johnson, 2005). Collaboration between local governments can be characterised as one of these alternative approaches. Collaboration between local authorities may well fit within the meaning of Mr Hide's "better" as opposed to "bigger".

Mr Hide went on in his 2010 Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) speech to outline central government's 'Smarter Government - Stronger Communities' local government review project (the SGSC review). While questions have been raised as to why the SGSC review is taking place barely a decade since the last major review of local government in 2002 (Cheyne, 2011; Reid, 2011), it clearly signals that further changes to local government arrangements are likely in the near future. It also appears as though this review process could significantly change local government (Clifton, 2012). In 2012 the new Local Government Minister Nick Smith reinforced the bigger is not necessarily better message, but at the same time emphasised the government's views on the need for further change to local government arrangements. Mr Smith asserted that communities needed to start thinking about how their areas can do better and the future structure of councils that will best assist their regions' prosperity and growth (Maxwell, 2012).

The SGSC review began in 2011 and is scheduled for completion in 2014 (Sharpe, 2012). It has been argued that ongoing change in local government is unavoidable (Aulich C et al., 2011a). Given that it has only been a decade since the last major review of local government there appears to be merit in this argument. It has been noted that international research on local government efficiency casts significant doubt on the view that efficiency in the delivery of local government services requires larger local authorities (McKinlay Douglas Limited, 2010). Others have argued that there is little evidence that local authority amalgamation can give rise to substantial economies of scale (Aulich C et al., 2011a). In regard to the current review of local government, this appears to give rise to the question; if bigger is not better, what is? Dollery and others (2007) link the current scepticism over the efficacy of local government consolidation as a means of improving municipal operational efficiency to the search for other methods of enhancing council effectiveness.

This makes it a useful time to examine the extent to which collaboration between local authorities can enable efficient and effective local government as an alternative or complementary tool to amalgamation. Local authority collaboration across a broad range of local government activities is known to be an approach that can be advantageous. Local authorities in New Zealand have implemented numerous inter-council projects across a wide range of local government functions in order to achieve efficiencies and better outcomes (Paulin & Edgar, 2009). Local authority collaboration is also an approach that some have argued is becoming more common.

Strategic and collaborative arrangements are now regularly used across the spectrum of local government activities, where alliances and partnerships between local authorities and with other agencies and organisations can bring about more effective policy-making (Schofield, 2003, p. 3).

Collaboration between local authorities can develop within existing local government structures without the need for consolidation of local governments. The value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in enabling efficient and effective local government needs to be assessed. The specific area of local government that this research is focussed on is local authority collaboration in environmental management.

Environmental management is a key function of local government, and given the cross boundary nature of many natural and physical resources, it is an area that perhaps lends itself to collaboration. It has been argued that complex policy and planning issues require cooperation and collaborations among public organisations (Local Futures Research Project, 2006). Environmental management functions of local authorities were recently a focus of investigations into local government in Auckland and Canterbury. Dysfunctional relationships between local authorities and a lack of integration in the undertaking of their respective resource management functions were highlighted as problems in both of the Auckland and Canterbury governance reviews.

Problems with overlaps in jurisdiction, the number of plans and rules, different plan styles and presentations and the number of resource consents required to authorise development of land were all cited as factors adding to the unnecessary complexity of the planning system in Auckland (Salmon, Bazley, & Shand, 2009). In regard to regional governance in Canterbury it has been argued that the absence of an over-arching planning and policy framework for the Region has resulted in a piecemeal, fragmented and inefficient approach to the management of freshwater (Creech, Jenkins, Hill, & Low, 2010). Issues relating to a lack of integrated regional governance have also been raised in relation to the Nelson City and Tasman Districts. The appropriateness of having a separate Regional Policy Statement (RPS) for both Nelson City and Tasman Districts given the role of an RPS under the RMA in providing for integrated management of regions has been questioned (Piper et al., 2011). These examples appear to highlight a lack of coordination, cooperation and integration between local authorities in undertaking their environmental management functions. They may also highlight circumstances where collaboration between local authorities may have provided for more efficient and effective environmental management.

The 'Planning Under a Cooperative Mandate' (PUCM) research programme has produced a series of research reports focussed on plan quality and governance under the RMA. One such report identified weak inter-organisational relations between regional and district councils and resulting variations in policy direction as a problem in many first generation planning documents (Ericksen, Crawford, Berke, & Dixon, 2001). The cooperative mandate of the RMA was identified as requiring regional and district councils to work in partnership in order to ensure effective implementation.

The report identified weak partnerships and a disconnection between regional and district councils as problems hindering plan quality. May (1996) also argues that the RMA has established a framework for partnership among regional and local governments for environmental planning and management. Local authority collaboration can be viewed as consistent with the cooperative mandate of the RMA and the concept of partnership between councils. It can also be viewed as being implicit within the key RMA concept of integrated environmental management. For integrated environmental management to occur effectively there is a requirement for local authorities to work closely together and perhaps where environmental problems or issues arise that warrant it, collaborate.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to assess the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management. In order to achieve this aim the research has the following objectives;

- Review the theory and practice of collaboration between local governments and describe the institutional context in which local authority collaboration in environmental management occurs in New Zealand.
- Develop a framework for assessing the value and efficacy local authority collaboration in environmental management.
- Assess the value of local government collaboration in enabling efficient and effective environmental management by undertaking a documentary analysis of examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management in New Zealand and applying the framework to the Southland Region as a case study.

1.3 Limitations

While local authority collaboration in environmental management is defined in the Theory and Practice Chapter it is useful to clarify the focus of this research at an early stage. The research is focussed on formal collaboration between two or more local authorities where there is agreement for the collaborators to participate in a specific environmental management project. Local authorities cooperate in many formal and informal ways in undertaking their day to day functions. What could be termed general 'every day' cooperation between local authorities is not the focus of this research. The research is focussed on formal local authority collaboration in environmental management at local government level. Collaboration between local governments and central government or 'vertical' collaboration is of limited relevance.

Wider examples of collaboration between local governments, the public, stakeholders and other agencies such as the Land and Water Forum (LAWF) and Dairy and Clean Streams Accord are also not directly relevant. It should be noted that some of the examples of collaboration discussed in this research have involved central government agencies and other groups including tangata whenua. Although agencies outside of local government have been involved in some examples they are predominantly local government initiatives. In all examples discussed regulatory responsibility for the environmental issue sits with the relevant local authorities or they have predominantly been initiated, developed and led by local governments. This research is focussed on local government collaboration in New Zealand. Overseas literature is evaluated in Chapter 2 and again in the desk top study in Chapter 3. The types and applications of local authority collaboration examined in the research are predominantly New Zealand based examples as is the Southland Case Study in Chapter 6.

1.4 Report outline

The theory and practice of collaboration between local governments is the focus of chapter 2. The theory and practice chapter defines key terms relevant to the research, discusses types and applications of collaboration between local governments and an analysis of benefits and costs of collaborative approaches. The discussion then turns to how the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration can be measured. Chapter 2 concludes with the establishment of a set of criteria and a framework for assessing local authority collaboration in environmental management. Chapter 3 details the research methods used to analyse local authority collaboration in environmental management. Chapter 4 'Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand' provides a documentary analysis of five examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management in New Zealand. The document analysis utilises secondary sources of information discussing the five examples. Chapter 5 'Collaboration in Southland' provides background for the Southland case study. The focus of the case study is the Southland Regional Policy Statement/ Southland District Plan collaborative review project (SRPS/ SDP project). Environment Southland (the Southland Regional Council) and the Southland District Council were the two collaborating local authorities. This chapter begins by detailing geography, legislative boundaries and key local authority statistics for the region. Institutional arrangements for local government are then discussed including the role of the Southland Shared Services Forum (SSSF). Chapter 6 details the results of the Southland case study and Chapter 7 discusses the results of the primary and secondary research methods. Finally Chapter 9 concludes the research project and answers the research question; can collaboration between local authorities enable efficient and effective environmental management?

2 THEORY AND PRACTICE

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the research topic of local authority collaboration in environmental management. This chapter critically evaluates the theory and practice of local authority collaboration in environmental management through a review of relevant literature. Manalo and Trafford (2004) define a literature review as an extensive detailed account of the theory and research on a specific topic. The chapter begins with definitions of key terms relevant to the research. Contested ideas and concepts are then discussed before the strengths and weaknesses of local authority collaboration in environmental management are analysed. The theory and practice chapter concludes with the establishment of a framework of criteria for use in assessing the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management.

2.2 Defining local authority collaboration

Interagency collaboration has been defined as those activities by agencies intended to increase public value by having the agencies working together rather than separately (Bardach, 1998). Selin and Chevez (1995) frame collaboration as a joint decision-making approach to problem resolution where power is shared and stakeholders take collective responsibility for their actions and subsequent outcomes from those actions. These definitions refer to wider concepts of collaboration between various agencies and stakeholders. They are relevant to this research topic in that they help to frame the concept of local authorities working collaboratively in the management of environmental issues. Local authorities can potentially increase public value by working together, jointly making decisions and collectively taking responsibility for collaborative environmental management and its outcomes. Innes and Booher (1999) identify collaborative planning as a strategy for dealing with conflict where other practices have failed. Innes and Booher's failed other practices could be linked to situations where local authorities unsuccessfully implement environmental management independently. Increased awareness that environmental issues often span geographic, organisational and institutional boundaries has been identified as a factor in acceptance of collaboration as an appropriate management option (Koontz et al., 2004). Environmental issues that cross the geographic, organisational and institutional boundaries of local authorities are also likely to require collaborative responses.

Conley and Moote (2003) use the term collaborative natural resources management to refer to a range of multiparty natural resource management projects, programs, or decision-making processes using a participatory approach. Conley and Moote (2003) argue that;

Collaborative approaches to natural resource management are becoming more widespread and are being promoted as promising ways to deal with complex and contentious natural resource issues (p. 371).

Conley and Moote's focus on natural resource management can be expanded and applied on a wider basis. Collaborative approaches can be applied to environmental issues relating to the physical or built environment as well as natural resources. As noted by Koontz and others (2004) above collaboration often develops in response to environmental issues that extend beyond the geographic boundaries of local authorities. Common examples of environmental issues that cross the geographic boundaries of local authorities include those associated with urban growth (the physical environment) and water management (a natural resource). Local authority collaboration may be an appropriate approach whenever environmental issues cross local authority boundaries and an effective response requires a coordinated response. This is irrespective of whether the issues relate to natural resources or the physical (built) environment.

A trend of increasing collaboration between a range of agencies and stakeholders in environmental management related projects can be identified in New Zealand. Wider examples of collaborative projects include the Land and Water Forum (LAWF) (Land and Water Forum, 2010) and the Dairy and Clean Streams Accord (Ministry for the Environment, 2003). Within this wider trend of inter-agency environmental management, collaboration between local authorities can be identified as a distinctive subset. The majority of the literature appears to be focussed on collaborative initiatives involving a wide range of stakeholders and interest groups such as the LAWF and the Dairy and Clean Streams Accord. This is also reflected in the international literature where there is limited focus on collaboration between local governments. This can be viewed as a gap in the research on collaboration.

Various terms are used in relevant literature to describe different forms of collaboration in environmental management including collaborative planning (Healey, 2006), collaborative resource management (Coughlin, Hoben, Manskopf, & Quesada, 1999) and collaborative environmental management (Koontz et al., 2004). While these terms broadly encompass the focus of this research a more specific definition of local authority collaboration is needed. Collaboration between two or more government agencies has been characterised as 'public - public' where it involves only government institutions and 'horizontal' where it refers to agreements between two or more government agencies at the same level of government (Majumdar, 2006). The focus of this research can be characterised as both 'public - public' and 'horizontal' as it is focussed on inter-council collaboration at local government level.

This research therefore has a relatively narrow focus on collaboration between local governments. Other forms of collaboration involving public-private partnerships and collaborative governance involving agencies and groups outside of local governments are of limited relevance. Central government has recently had a focus on 'joined up government' or 'whole of government' approaches aimed at increasing co-ordination and alignment between central government agencies. Collaboration between central government agencies has been identified as a valuable approach for the achievement of desired outcomes in complex policy cases (Ryan, Gill, Eppel, & Lips, 2008). Ryan and others (2008) note that central government agencies working together effectively can be a beneficial but complex process. In terms of the relevance of these approaches to this research it is worth noting that central government agencies are single purpose authorities in contrast local governments are multipurpose. As a result 'public – public' collaboration at central government level is of limited relevance to research on local governments.

For the purposes of this research local authority collaboration in environmental management is defined as a form or model of local government developed between two or more local authorities and implemented to manage a particular environmental issue.

Generally collaboration takes the form of a project or strategy that has a specific end goal or is limited to a set time frame. Collaborative environmental management can be either statutory or non-statutory in nature. In some cases what may initially start as non-statutory collaboration can develop into a statutory or regulatory response as formal approaches to a particular issue or problem are developed. Before moving on to discuss the theory and practice of local authority collaboration in more detail the term environmental management also needs to be defined.

2.3 Institutional context

Local authority collaboration needs to be considered in light of the specific roles and responsibilities of local government in environmental management within New Zealand's devolved and decentralised governance arrangements. Central government established an intergovernmental framework for environmental management in New Zealand through local government and resource management reforms in the early 1990's (May et al., 1996). The reforms consolidated regional governance through the creation of regional councils and local government through the establishment of city and district councils. The reorganisation of national environmental administration established a comprehensive new framework for management of water, land, and other resources (Bührs & Bartlett, 1993). The framework has been characterised as a devolved environmental management regime (McNeill & Holland, 2007). Decentralisation refers to the transfer of competences from the central level to elected authorities at the sub-national level (Charbit, 2011).

New Zealand has a decentralised model of governance with the sub-national level predominantly occupied by local authorities made up of regional and territorial local authorities¹ (city and district councils).

Theories highlighting the benefits of decentralisation often emphasise the importance of the role of local government in addressing environmental issues at regional and local levels. Koontz and Thomas (2006) link the emergence of collaborative environmental management to changing environmental and social conditions and argue that many environmental problems are not amenable to central government solutions. Mann and Gennaio (2010) in discussing environmental policy identify the importance of what they term the push of centralisation in order to institutionalise a prevailing social norm. They argue that environmental policy should then be organised de-centrally to account for regional differences. They use the example of air quality to emphasise how central government policy can institutionalise public views and acceptance of the need to respond to a particular environmental issue. Effective implementation of air quality policies are then identified as best occurring at the regional level to account for local differences. Mann and Gennaio (2010) argue that a first phase of centralisation followed by a second phase of decentralisation, are critical factors for the success of further efficient development of the policy. This argument is relevant to this research topic as it recognises the importance of local government for effective implementation of environmental policies at regional and local levels.

Charbit (2011) critiques debates focussed on questions of whether to decentralise or not and also questions discussion on the merits of specific models of decentralisation. Charbit argues instead for a focus on improving capacity and co-ordination among public stakeholders at different levels of government to increase efficiency, equity and sustainability of public spending. Local authority collaboration in environmental management can potentially be characterised as one way of improving capacity and coordination at local government level. This may in turn enable improvements in efficiency of public spending.

Fiscally, governments have used decentralisation as a means to improve public spending effectiveness based on the idea that sub-national governments have better information on local spending needs and preferences, and are better positioned to deliver public goods (Charbit, 2011, p. 14).

¹ There are currently six unitary authorities in New Zealand. These local authorities combine the functions of regional councils and territorial local authorities. This research is focussed predominantly on the more common regional council /territorial authority model of local government.

Regulatory change and devolution have been identified as contributing to increased collaboration in environmental management (Koontz et al., 2004). An advantage associated with decentralised environmental management is the ability of local authorities to collaborate when addressing environmental issues if they choose to do so. 'Top down' or centralised environmental management arrangements may not be as effective in facilitating opportunities for collaboration.

2.4 Drivers for collaboration

Local governments have been driven to investigate collaboration between councils for several reasons. These include greater demands for efficient performance, greater effectiveness, exacerbated by increased legislative requirements with intersecting policy goals. The other key driver for collaboration is the environmental issue or problem that local authorities are endeavouring to resolve or manage.

2.4.1 Demand for efficiencies and higher expectations

A 1999 Parliamentary Commissioner investigation into models and outcomes of local authority environmental management noted the likelihood of increasing pressure on local government's environmental management responsibilities. Including demands for greater efficiencies in service delivery and improvements in environmental quality (Williams & Macdonald, 1999). Ten years later Edgar and Paulin (2009) in a review of collaboration among councils in New Zealand identified the two key drivers of collaboration as being fiscal constraints (the requirement to achieve more with fewer resources) and higher expectations (of citizens, customers and the councils themselves relating to council services). The higher expectations identified in the second piece of research can be viewed as incorporating improvements in environmental quality through local authority environmental management functions. Both pieces of research identify the two key drivers for local authority collaboration in environmental management as being cost effectiveness (demand for efficiencies) and effective environmental management (demand for improved environmental quality). However, in regard to environmental management two additional key drivers can be identified in environmental legislation and the environmental issue itself. These additional environmental management drivers are discussed in further detail below.

Edgar and Paulin's 2009 research identified three important motivating factors for local authority collaboration. Firstly to reduce or contain the costs of council services (as the most important motivating factor for collaboration), secondly to improve council services and the third factor was to meet higher expectations in line with implementation of new legislation and setting higher standards. Although they do highlight the implications of the implementation of new legislation their research was focussed on local government generally and was not specific to environmental management.

The purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 for example, is the sustainable management of natural and physical resources (Resource Management Act, 1991). Local authorities undertaking environmental management functions under this Act need to do so in a manner consistent with its sustainable management purpose. The RMA could therefore be viewed as a driver for local authority collaboration that sits at a higher level above cost efficiencies and higher expectations.

The other important driver not detailed in Edgar and Paulin's research if it is applied to environmental management is the environmental issue or problem itself. Environmental issues are often not neatly confined within the geographic boundaries of one local authority. Where cross boundary environmental issues arise, local authority collaboration may be required for effective environmental management. Emerging water quality issues in the Waituna Lagoon Catchment in Southland provide an example of a cross boundary environmental issue relating to water management (Edlin, 2011). In response to water quality issues in the Waituna catchment Environment Southland have indicated that a collaborative approach involving the Southland District Council is one management option that could be developed (Timms, 2011). Environmental issues relating to water management often relate to larger geographic areas and fall within the boundaries of a number of local authorities. Local authorities can find that they need to work together collaboratively in order to develop an effective response.

Examples of local authority collaboration in New Zealand have been identified across a wide range of local government functions (Controller and Auditor-General, 2004), (Paulin & Edgar, 2009). While there is a significant amount of literature relating to wider examples of collaboration there is little focussed on collaboration between local authorities in environmental management. Literature that is focussed on local authority collaboration generally rather than being specific to environmental management is considered relevant to this research. A 2004 report of the Office of the Auditor General noted a number of benefits that could be achieved through local authorities working together.

Working together can bring significant benefits that may not always be in the form of cost savings. For example, co-ordinating services, providing affordable access to expertise, strengthening organisational capability, and better alignment of council policies are all valid reasons for local authorities to work together (The Office of the Auditor-General, 2004, p. 3).

All these significant benefits are applicable to local authority collaboration in environmental management. The important role local governments have in addressing environmental issues in an efficient manner was recently reinforced in the Ministry for the Environment survey of the performance of local authorities 2010/ 2011. This report observed that local authorities are under pressure to deliver more for less;

Councils have a central role to play in the environmental management system, which - like every other major system in New Zealand if not the world - is under pressure to deliver more for less (Ministry for the Environment, 2011., p. iii).

This pressure can be linked to the higher expectations of the public and other key stakeholders in relation to local authority environmental management. If collaboration in environmental management can achieve cost efficiencies and enable local authorities to meet higher expectations it can be viewed as a beneficial and worthwhile approach.

2.4.2 Effective environmental management

McKinlay Douglas Limited (2006) note the importance of councils themselves creating or facilitating structures that fit the issue they are seeking to address. An ability to develop collaborative approaches to environmental issues that cross local authority boundaries is consistent with the idea of designing or arranging management responses around the environmental issue of concern. While local authority collaboration may be appropriate in some cases it is important to note that it should not be viewed as some sort of panacea (Koontz & Thomas, 2006). There will also be many situations where it will not be warranted or needed. Erickson (2001) argues that New Zealand's wide variety of physical geographies and its very uneven population distribution make it unlikely that any one model of environmental governance will suit every circumstance. This reinforces the importance of local authorities having a certain amount of flexibility in regard to how they undertake their environmental management functions. This need for flexibility can also be applied to the manner in which local authorities develop responses to environmental issues.

The existence of a range of environmental management issues and diversity between communities within New Zealand has also be linked to the importance of flexibility within local government to deliver environmental outcomes (Williams & Macdonald, 1999). It has been argued that coercive intergovernmental regulatory programmes can result in distrust and implementation consisting of reluctant compliance marked by delay and half-hearted efforts (May, 1995). Models and arrangements for local government that allow or facilitate collaborative environmental management between local authorities where appropriate and warranted can have an influence on the development of these approaches.

2.4.3 Legislation

As identified above, another important driver of local authority collaboration in environmental management is the requirements of legislation. The two key pieces of legislation relevant to local authority environmental management are the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). Local authorities in New Zealand are generally free to develop collaborative responses to environmental issues under both pieces of legislation. There is no compulsion or requirement under either piece of legislation for local authority collaboration. The RMA and LGA highlight how intersecting policy goals can arise through different pieces of legislation.

A 2009 report into the possible combined Plan options for Northland notes that there does not appear to be anything in the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) that would prevent combined planning documents (Northland Regional Council, 2009). This comment does not perhaps adequately recognise the enabling nature of the LGA. Leonard and Memon (2008) observed that the community governance mandate in the LGA 2002 opened a window of opportunity for intergovernmental collaboration to an extent not seen before in New Zealand. Paulin and Edgar (2009) argue that while the LGA does not direct councils to collaborate it encourages them to do so where appropriate. The principles of the LGA (Section 14 (e)) encourage local authorities to collaborate and co-operate as they consider appropriate to promote or achieve their priorities and desired outcomes, and in order to make efficient use of resources (Local Government Act 2002). The principles of the LGA can also be linked to the environmental management responsibilities of local authorities which require prudent stewardship and the efficient and effective use of a district's or region's resources. The LGA can be viewed as encouraging local authority collaboration in environmental management firstly where to do so would be an effective approach to achieve desired environmental priorities and outcomes and is also consistent with prudent environmental stewardship. Secondly the LGA encourages collaboration where it is efficient or cost effective. Paulin and Edgar's (2009) research into collaboration among councils found that opinion was divided on the extent to which the LGA influenced the development of collaborative initiatives. The provisions of the LGA were rated as being of low importance as an initiating factor of collaboration.

Section 80 of the RMA allows local authorities if they choose to do so to prepare, implement, and administer combined regional and district planning documents (Resource Management Act, 1991). Provision for combined planning documents under Section 80 can be viewed as recognition that local authority collaboration under the RMA is an appropriate environmental management approach. To date there has been limited use of Section 80 with the Wairarapa Combined District Plan 2006 the only combined RMA planning document (Quality Planning, 2010). Limited use of section 80 does raise questions about its usefulness.

However the Wairarapa Combined Plan was the first second generation District Plan to become operative and combined Plans could become more common as more second generation Plans are formulated. It may be a case of other local authorities taking a 'wait and see' approach. The optional nature of section 80 could be viewed as a positive. Local authorities who do choose to collaborate on a voluntary basis are likely more to have good inter-council relationships and a commitment to any collaboration.

2.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of collaboration

While local authority collaboration in environmental management can be an advantageous approach it can give rise to problems and disadvantages. A 2004 report of the Controller and Auditor-General entitled 'Local Authorities Working Together' notes that while local authorities have many common functions, responsibilities, and challenges, they can also differ in many respects, such as size, culture, resources, systems, and service standards. The report goes on to argue that these factors may be barriers to councils working together. Selin and Chevez (1995) have also noted that there are often institutional and situational obstacles to collaboration in the environmental management field. They note that these barriers can pull parties apart and also identify the institutional culture within many agencies as a factor that often hinders collaboration (Selin & Chevez, 1995). How local government organises and responds to any particular environmental issue and the potential for collaboration to be promoted as a management option will therefore be influenced by a range of factors. Local circumstances, institutional arrangements, inter-council relationships and the nature of any specific environmental issue are all factors that are likely to have an influence.

Although a particular environmental problem may appear to be best addressed by collaboration between local authorities it does not automatically follow that a collaborative response will develop. Local authority collaboration is unlikely to develop if there is resistance to it within institutions at staff level or political barriers. Paulin and Edgar (2009) identified the two top barriers to inter-council collaboration as being council leadership not supporting or promoting collaboration followed by councils operating in an insular way and taking a parochial approach. Institutional resistance and poor inter-council relationships are themes that appear throughout relevant literature.

From our investigations it appears that successful models of local authorities working together to improve environmental management seem to depend to a large extent on the commitment of the individuals who developed the initiative and the encouragement they instil in others to be involved in working towards common goals (Williams & Macdonald, 1999, p. 47).

Other writers (May et al., 1996) identify additional problems that can arise when multiple agencies share responsibility for policy implementation. These include conflicts over jurisdiction, concern about turf, differences in policy interpretations leading to variation across agencies in implementation effort and style.

Northland Regional Council produced a report in 2009 that assessed the advantages and disadvantages of a number of 'combined plan' options for Northland (Northland Regional Council, 2009). This report included discussion on various resource management planning documents in the region including those of the three territorial authorities. The report found that the best option from a resource management perspective was the development of a combined 'One Plan' for the region. The report emphasised the importance of all four councils needing to have 'buy-in' to the journey, particularly at a political level (Northland Regional Council, 2009). A year later Northland's three territorial authorities examined local government arrangements in the Region and identified future options in a consultant's report (McKinlay Douglas Limited, 2010). The report notes that the Northland Regional Council was invited to participate in the study but declined to do so. This appears to indicate that there are underlying 'institutional barriers' between local authorities in Northland and perhaps lower levels of cooperation in comparison to other areas. The Northland example may highlight a disadvantage of local authority collaboration. Where there are poor inter-council relationships collaborative approaches may be unlikely to succeed. Allan (2003) highlights the implications of poor inter-council relationships. Allan argues that like any shared resource arrangements between local authorities they are generally voluntary agreements between local authorities and as such can be easily modified or terminated.

The need for good relationships between collaborating local authorities can be characterised as a weakness. Potentially they can have an impact on the success and environmental outcomes of a collaborative project. While these differences may well have an influence on the manner in which councils work together classifying them as barriers may be overstating the differences. Many of these issues could potentially be addressed through effective management of collaborative projects.

As approaches to collaborative environmental management evolve and mature, governmental agencies and representatives will face new and emerging challenges. Perhaps the greatest contemporary challenge is that such collaboration requires governmental institutions to share, and perhaps relinquish, control over environmental management (Koontz et al., 2004).

Although theorists have identified the risks poor inter-council relationships pose to collaborative projects there does not appear to be as much recognition of the potential for beneficial relationships developing.

As collaborative projects develop and local authorities work together improved institutional relationships may emerge. The development of positive inter-council relationships through collaboration could also therefore, be viewed as a positive.

Local government restructuring in late 1980's significantly reduced the number of local authorities in New Zealand through a process of local authority amalgamations. This resulted in local governments administering larger geographic areas and larger populations. This has been linked to greatly reduced representation. New Zealand now has one of the highest ratios of residents to elected members of any developed country (McKinlay Douglas Limited, 2010). It has been noted that this period of local government restructuring generally succeeded from a perspective of enhancing administrative capability and operational efficiency (Dollery et al., 2007). At the same time however, problems relating to disenfranchised communities and an absence of coherent political identity particularly for smaller rural communities have been noted (Dollery et al., 2007). It has been argued that one of the advantages of local authority collaboration is that it can enable the retention of existing local authorities and arrangements for political representation. Amalgamation of local governments has been linked to adverse effects on local democracy with some arguing that it can diminish the vibrancy of local democracy and reduce participation by the citizenry (Allan, 2003).

It has been argued that collaboration in natural resources management and in government generally should not be viewed as a panacea (Koontz & Thomas, 2006), (Majumdar, 2006). Literature on collaboration in environmental management indicates that it should not be seen as a simple or easy approach to the resolution of environmental issues. As discussed above there are a number of potential disadvantages associated with it. The literature also indicates that it should not be discounted as a useful approach that has a number of potential advantages. The potential value and usefulness of local authority collaboration in any given situation will be dependant on a number of factors. These are likely to include the nature of the particular environmental issue or problem, regional and local geography, legislative requirements, the number of local authorities involved and relationships between these local authorities.

In summary the literature and practice of local authority collaboration indicates that it is generally driven by a need for an effective response to a particular environmental issue that can't be resolved by a council acting on its own. However, as with all local authority functions there is also pressure for fiscal efficiency in undertaking environmental management responsibilities and local authorities may be able to achieve cost advantages by jointly addressing a particular environmental issue in a collaborative manner.

Higher expectations from the public and key stakeholders in the resolution of environmental issues can also be listed as a driver. Finally the implications of legislation can also have an influence on the development of collaborative approaches.

2.6 Evaluating collaboration

Conley and Moote (2003) argue that an “idealised narrative” of collaborative natural resources management has developed and are unnerved by the ways in which collaborative approaches have been portrayed as a cure-all. They note that a number of critiques of collaborative natural resources management have emerged but argue against knee-jerk criticisms of the principle of collaborative approaches. They emphasise the importance of evaluation of the specific processes and outcomes of collaboration:

Despite their popularity, efforts to evaluate the “success” of collaborative approaches in general and to develop cookbooks for collaboration are likely to be less useful (Conley & Moote, 2003, p. 282).

For the purposes of this research no ‘cookbooks’ have been identified that outline a specific approach for the evaluation of local authority collaboration in environmental management. As a result three existing evaluation frameworks have been adapted for use in this research.

2.6.1 Existing evaluation frameworks

Koontz and Thomas identify a number of measures for assessing what they characterise as the environmental outputs and environmental outcomes of collaborative environmental management (Koontz & Thomas, 2006). In the context of this research the environmental output of any collaboration is the written policy, plan, project or strategy that the collaborating agencies have jointly written and agreed to. Koontz and Thomas (2006) also identify the environmental outcomes of collaborative environmental management as the end result of the collaborative policy, plan or strategy i.e. improved environmental conditions. Conley and Moote in discussing the evaluation of collaborative natural resources management have identified a typical evaluation criteria (Conley & Moote, 2003). Their typical evaluation criteria, brings together evaluation measures from a number of authors and incorporates a range of different perspectives and backgrounds. McNeill (2008) developed a framework for assessing the overall public value of the regional council institution for managing the environment. Some of the evaluation criteria for assessing the public value of regional councils as identified by McNeill (2008) can be applied to the evaluation of local authority collaboration. These criteria include geographic span, jurisdictional fit, leadership by councils and maintenance and improvement of environmental quality.

2.6.2 Framework for assessing the efficacy of local authority collaboration

Relevant parts of the three frameworks established by Conley and Moote (2003), Koontz and Thomas (2006), McNeill (2008), can be merged into a new framework for assessing the value of collaboration. The framework for assessing the value and efficacy of collaboration in environmental management incorporates three key categories of evaluation criteria; process and process value, policy outcome achievements and organisational benefits. Measures for assessing collaboration within these categories have been identified through the discussion of the theory and practice of collaboration earlier in this chapter and are detailed below.

2.6.3 Process and process value

The presence of a common goal or shared vision between collaborating local authorities is considered to be an important process measure. Local authorities need to be committed to effective management or resolution of the environmental issue through collaboration. Feasible goals, consensus based and just decision making are also identified as important process measures. The commitment of individuals has been identified as having an influence on the success of collaborations (Williams & Macdonald, 1999). As already noted in this chapter there are often institutional barriers to collaboration (Selin & Chevez, 1995). A common feasible goal and arrangements for joint and equitable decision making are important counters to institutional barriers and the ability of individuals to negatively influence collaborative projects. Consistency with legislation is another consideration and in a New Zealand context for the purposes of this research relevant legislation includes the LGA 2002 and the RMA 1991. Jurisdictional and geographic fit were also identified as important process related criteria. As discussed earlier in this chapter environmental issues often span geographic, organisational and institutional boundaries (Koontz et al., 2004). Collaboration in environmental management collaboration is unlikely to develop unless issues span jurisdictions and geographic boundaries.

2.6.4 Policy outcome achievement

Koontz and Thomas (2006) identify a distinction between the outputs and outcomes of collaborative environmental management. They define outputs as the plans, projects, and other tangible items generated by collaborative efforts while the outcomes are the effects of outputs on environmental and social conditions. For the purposes of this research the outputs and outcomes of collaborative environmental management are grouped together as policy outcome achievements. This provides for consideration of a wide range of examples of collaboration. Policy outcome achievement has been broadly defined to include a range of outputs from local authority collaboration in environmental management. Outputs will be dependant on the goals or aspirations of any environmental management project involving local authority collaboration.

Evaluation measures for policy outcome achievement include effective implementation of the project, achievement of project aims and objectives, improved management of cross boundary environmental issues, integrated environmental management, aligned policy and plan frameworks, development and implementation of environmental management tools and techniques, and enhanced environmental quality.

2.6.5 Organisational benefits

One of the key drivers for local authority collaboration identified in this chapter is fiscal constraints and the potential for local authority collaboration to enable efficiencies. Measures relevant to fiscal pressures include the ability for collaborations to deliver cost, time and resourcing efficiencies (Paulin & Edgar, 2009). Potential benefits of collaboration are not confined to cost efficiencies with a number of what could be termed wider organisational benefits also identified. Increased knowledge and understanding, skill development and capacity building within local authorities have also been identified as potential outcomes (The Office of the Auditor-General, 2004) and have been identified as assessment measures for use in this research. Building or strengthening of inter-council relationships, increased trust, strengthening of local democracy and local authority leadership have also been included as organisational measures. Finally community and stakeholder support for collaborations are also identified as an evaluation measure and a potential benefit that can emerge from collaborative environmental management.

2.7 Summary

This chapter began by defining key terms relevant to research on local authority collaboration in environmental management. The institutional context for local authority collaboration was then discussed before the drivers of collaboration in environmental management identified and examined. The advantages and disadvantages of local authority collaboration in environmental management were then discussed. This chapter has concluded with a set of criteria for use in evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of local authority collaboration in environmental management. The next chapter introduces the primary and secondary research methods to be used to assess the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods selected for evaluating local authority collaboration in environmental management. An example of local authority collaboration in Southland has been selected as a case study, the primary research method. A secondary research method will also be undertaken through documentary analysis of eight other New Zealand examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management. This chapter firstly outlines the research strategy and justification for the primary and secondary research methods. The data collection strategy for the case study is then discussed before a framework for assessing the Southland example of local authority collaboration is introduced. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethics of undertaking a survey as part of the primary research method. Before discussing the research strategy in more depth it is worth noting that this research may have relevance beyond the environmental management functions of local authorities.

3.2 Research focus

Local authorities undertake a wide variety of statutory and non-statutory activities and functions and these tend to vary between different regions and districts. Variations may be influenced by a range of factors including population, geography, land area, and different models of local government. Smaller rural councils may prioritise quite different activities and functions in comparison to larger metropolitan councils and vice versa. Environmental management functions however are undertaken by all local authorities, irrespective of the level or model of local government or characteristics of a particular area. Unitary authorities, regional, district and city councils all have environmental management responsibilities. As a result environmental management provides a strong institutional base for research on local authority collaboration. The findings of this research may be of wider relevance and applicable to a range of local authority activities and functions not just environmental management.

3.3 Defining environmental management

Local authority environmental management predominantly relates to responsibilities under New Zealand's key piece of environmental legislation the RMA 1991. However, local authorities also have environmental management functions under other legislation for example the Biosecurity Act 1993. Local authorities can also be involved in non-statutory environmental management programmes and initiatives. Local authorities involved in environmental management irrespective of its statutory or non-statutory nature must operate within the scope of the LGA 2002.

For the purposes of this research environmental management is defined as any local authority functions undertaken under the LGA 2002 associated with environmental management responsibilities. The definition is intentionally broad in order to encapsulate a variety of local authority environmental functions whether statutory or non-statutory in nature.

3.4 Research strategy

Qualitative research methods have been selected as the most appropriate for this research. Bouma and Ling (2004) identify the aim of qualitative research as being to describe in detail what is happening between groups in order to answer the question; what is going on here? This research is focussed on the process and outcomes of interaction between local authorities in collaborative environmental management. A qualitative survey focussed on a Southland case study of local authority collaboration has been selected as the primary data collection method.

Bouma and Ling (2004) argue that in-depth interviewing provides the best opportunity to find out what someone else thinks or feels, enabling the researcher to get a 'window' on reality. While Creswell (2009) argues that the use of open-ended questions in interviews can elicit views and opinions from participants. The views and opinions of key participants involved in the Southland project have been sought through a survey in order to find out what they 'think' and 'feel' about the process and outcomes of the collaboration. The survey seeks to provide a 'window' on the reality of local authority collaboration in environmental management.

Yin (1994) argues that a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence and converging lines of enquiry. For the purposes of this research three lines of enquiry will be utilised. The first is the survey of participants involved in the Southland collaboration which is the focus of Chapter 5. The second line of enquiry is the documentary analysis undertaken in Chapter 4 and the third is the theory and practice of collaboration as discussed in the preceding Theory and Practice Chapter.

3.5 Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand

The document analysis examined the wider New Zealand experience of local authority collaboration in environmental management. This was undertaken through analysis of documentation relating to eight examples. The eight examples selected focus on a range of environmental issues and involve a variety of local authorities at both regional and local levels of local government. The intention was to look at a broad cross section of examples of local authority collaboration rather than provide a definitive list. A document analysis was selected in order to widen the research beyond the Southland case study example. Flowerdew and Martin (2005) identify the usefulness of secondary data as a general guide to a topic area and also in terms of providing context for primary research.

The document analysis will provide context for the Southland case study through analysis of different types and applications of local authority collaboration in environmental management. The range of environmental issues and key drivers behind each example of collaboration can be ascertained and the environmental and organisational benefits examined. The processes that gave rise to these collaborations and through which they were implemented can also be analysed. The document analysis will focus on information contained within local governance reviews, local authority documentation, newspaper articles, central government reports and other relevant literature. Examples analysed encompass a range of projects and strategies both regulatory and non-regulatory in nature. They also cover a range of environmental issues with a mix of regional, city and district councils involved. Collaborations have been characterised into examples relating to integrated environmental management, water management, urban growth management and other forms of local authority collaboration.

3.6 Southland case study

One of the strengths of a case study is that it provides an opportunity for in depth study of a particular aspect of the research problem (Bell, 2005). Creswell (2009) identifies case studies as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The purpose of the Southland case study is to explore in depth an example of local authority collaboration in environmental management. In depth study of the Southland collaboration will enable the value and efficacy of this example of environmental management to be determined. The findings of the case study can then be assessed and compared with the two additional streams of data contained within the 'Theory and Practice' and the 'Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand' chapters.

The example of local authority collaboration that has been selected for the case study is a collaborative RMA plan review project involving a regional council and a territorial authority. The Southland collaboration has been selected as the focus of the primary research method on account of the researcher's involvement in the collaborative project as a staff member of one of the participating councils. This involvement provided an introduction to the research topic and generated an interest in local authority collaboration in environmental management. Participation in the Southland collaboration also facilitated access to a number of key people involved in the project who were then selected as potential survey participants.

The Southland case study provides a good useful example for research on environmental management as it involved local authorities at different levels of local government. As a regional council and a territorial authority are collaborating the research is considered relevant to regional and territorial local authorities. As the research has involved local authorities at both levels of local government in New Zealand it may also be relevant to unitary authorities. Unitary authorities are a model of local government that combines the functions of regional councils and territorial authorities. The research findings are likely to be applicable to a wide range of local authorities. Another reason why it is a useful case study is the involvement of only two local authorities. Other examples of local authority collaboration discussed in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand chapter have involved three or more local authorities. Focussing on a collaboration involving only two local authorities simplifies the research process. The findings of the case study are still likely to be valid when applied to collaborations involving three or more local authorities. In terms of this research the difficulty of researching collaborations is likely to increase exponentially with the number of local authorities involved. A focus on a collaboration involving only two local authorities simplifies the research process.

Critics of case studies often highlight risks associated with the uniqueness of single events, difficulties in cross checking information and the risks of generalisations (Bell, 2005). These criticisms are relevant to this research as the case study is focussed on what can be viewed as a unique example of local authority collaboration. As will be highlighted in the next chapter applications of local authority collaboration in environmental management vary. They tend to emerge from a range of different circumstances and can develop with quite different aims and objectives and also through varying methods of implementation. However as noted above, this research is focussed on environmental management, a function undertaken by all local authorities. The research findings are therefore likely to be of relevance to a wide range of local authorities, irrespective of processes, policy outcome achievement and organisational benefits. Risks associated with the uniqueness of single events are limited by the general nature of environmental management and the fact that all local governments have environmental management responsibilities.

3.7 Survey

Conley and Moote (2003), in discussing evaluation of collaborative natural resource management, note that perhaps the most common data-gathering method used to evaluate collaborations is to ask participants about them. They characterise the typical research approach as being one in which participants are asked to identify and assess the outcomes of the collaboration, the factors that led to those outcomes, and the appropriateness of the processes used (Conley & Moote, 2003). Research focussed on the Southland case study is consistent with the approach outlined by Conley and Moote.

People with a direct involvement in the Southland project were considered to be best placed to answer questions relating to the outcomes of the collaboration, the factors that led to those outcomes, and the appropriateness of processes used.

Survey participants were chosen on the basis of their involvement in the Southland collaboration and were made up of a mix of local authority staff, councillors and resource management consultants. Only two of Southland's four local authorities were directly involved in the collaboration. However, the two remaining local authorities Gore District Council and Invercargill City Council were involved indirectly through project workshops. They also received draft policy and plan provisions arising from the collaboration throughout 2010 and 2011. The views of these indirect participants were therefore considered useful in that they could provide a different perspective from the 'outside'. Senior planning staff members from the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils' were therefore invited to participate in the survey and interviews.

Members of the public and key stakeholders were not identified as potential survey participants. The main reason for this was that neither of the Councils involved in the collaboration at the time the research was undertaken had publicly notified their respective RMA documents. The final outcomes of the collaboration, the second generation Southland Regional Policy Statement and Southland District Plan were therefore not in the public domain. At the time the research was undertaken local authority staff, councillors and resource management consultants were considered to be only people with detailed knowledge of the Project. The survey used a Likert scale (Likert, 1932) with respondents asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a range of statements relating to processes, process value and the environmental and organisational benefits of the Southland case study.

3.8 Evaluation framework

The aim of this research is to assess the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management with the primary question being;

Can collaboration between local authorities enable efficient and effective environmental management?

Yin (2004) notes that case studies are often a preferred form of research where "how" or "why" questions are being posed. In regard to the Southland case study this can be translated into how and why did the collaboration develop? The application of the 'how' and 'why' questions to the Southland case study will help determine the reasons for the development of the collaboration and the efficiency and effectiveness drivers behind it.

The survey and questionnaire will then seek to determine from key participants the process value, and the environmental and organisational benefits of the collaboration. To answer the research question and provide an assessment of the value and efficacy of the collaboration an evaluation framework has been formulated as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Framework for assessing the value and efficacy of collaboration in environmental management

Measures	Evaluation Criteria
Process Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision • Feasible goals • Consensus based decision making • Consistent with legislation • Jurisdictional fit • Geographic fit • Innovation/flexibility • Equity • Just decision making
Policy outcome achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective implementation of project • Achievement of project aims and objectives • Improved management of cross boundary environmental issues • Integrated environmental management • Aligned policy and plan frameworks • Development and implementation of environmental management tools and techniques • Enhanced environmental quality
Organisational benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost efficiencies within council budgets • Time and resourcing efficiencies • Increased knowledge and understanding • Skill development and capacity building • Building or strengthening of inter-council relationships • Increased trust • Strengthening local democracy • Local authority leadership • Community/stakeholder support for collaboration

Sources: Conley and Moote (2003), Koontz and Thomas (2006) , McNeill (2008)

The framework is based on the criteria identified in the preceding theory and practice chapter and is adapted from evaluation tables used by three other researchers (Conley & Moote, 2003), (Koontz & Thomas, 2006), (McNeill, 2008). The value and efficacy of the collaboration will be assessed by application of the framework through a survey of participants involved in the Southland case study. The three assessment measures in the framework are based around process and process value, policy outcome achievement and organisational benefit categories.

Evaluation criteria for assessing process and process value were selected for their relevance to inter-council arrangements for local authority collaboration in environmental management. A shared vision, feasible goals and consensus based decision making were all viewed as key factors for any successful collaboration.

Equity between agencies, whereby collaborating local governments have equal standing with suitable arrangements for just decision making were also identified as important process related factors. Partnership and equal standing within collaborations were considered to be important process measures. Consistency with legislative requirements and jurisdictional and geographic fit were also identified as evaluation criteria. Finally the ability for innovation and flexibility within projects was seen as important to any process in order to address any project related issues that arise within collaborative projects.

In regard to policy outcome achievement criteria identified include effective implementation and achievement of the environmental management projects aims and objectives. This encompasses a wide variety of potential policy outcome achievements from local government collaboration in environmental management. Improved management of cross boundary environmental issues, integrated environmental management, aligned policy and plan frameworks and the development and implementation of environmental management tools and techniques provide a range of criteria for the evaluation of policy outcome achievements. Finally enhanced environmental quality provides a road evaluation measure for the assessment of collaboration.

Evaluation criteria within the organisational benefits category recognise the additional benefits outside of those relating to the achievement of processes and environmental policy outcomes. These include the achievement of cost, time and resourcing efficiencies through collaboration. Other benefits identified include increased knowledge and understanding between local governments, skill development and capacity building and the strengthening of inter-council relationships. Increased trust between local governments, strengthening of local democracy and enhanced local authority leadership were also identified as organisational benefits that can arise from collaboration in environmental management. Finally community and stakeholder support for collaboration between local authorities was also identified as an evaluation measure.

3.9 Ethics

All research participants were either employees or Councillors of local authorities in Southland or planning consultants contracted to work for these local authorities. All research participants have been involved either directly or indirectly in the collaborative project which is the focus of the case study. All research participants are familiar with the focus of the research as the collaborative environmental management project has been or is part of their professional life. The research process has been peer reviewed and assessed as low risk and consistent with Massey University guidelines for low risk notifications. The Massey University screening questionnaire has been completed and this process has determined that preparation of a low risk notification is appropriate.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research design for evaluating the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management. A case study focussed on a Southland example of collaboration in environmental management is the primary research method. A set of criteria for evaluating the case study was established in the preceding theory and practice chapter. Three key criteria measures have been incorporated into an evaluation framework in this chapter and this will now be applied through a survey of case study participants in Chapter 5. Before moving onto the case study the next chapter ‘the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand’ details the secondary research method focused on document analysis relating to other examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management.

4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION IN NEW ZEALAND

4.1 Introduction

This chapter uses documentation relating to eight examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management to assess the extent and effectiveness of local government collaboration. Examples of local authority collaboration detailed in this chapter provide a snapshot of collaborative environmental management related projects in New Zealand (see Table 2).

Table 2 - New Zealand examples of collaboration in environmental management

Environmental Management Project	Local Authorities	Type of Collaboration
Wairarapa Combined District Plan Project	Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Council	Statutory - RMA 1991
Southland Regional Policy Statement/ Southland District Plan Review Project (Case study example)	Environment Southland & Southland District Council	Statutory - RMA 1991
Canterbury Water Management Strategy	Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Selwyn & Waimakariri District Councils	Non-statutory & statutory - RMA 1991
The Strategy for the Lakes of the Rotorua District	Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Rotorua District Council (& Te Arawa Trust Board)	Non-statutory strategy & statutory - RMA 1991
The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy	Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Selwyn and Waimakariri District Councils (& the New Zealand Transport Agency)	Non-statutory strategy & statutory - RMA 1991
The Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy	Napier City, Hastings District & Hawke's Bay Regional Councils	Non-statutory strategy & statutory - RMA 1991
Auckland Regional Growth Strategy	Auckland Regional Council, North Shore, Waitakere, Auckland & Manukau City Councils, Rodney, Franklin & Papakura District Councils.	Non-statutory strategy
Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012	Nelson City & Tasman District Councils	Statutory Biosecurity Act 1993
Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA)	Auckland Council, Bay of Plenty, Northland & Waikato Regional Councils, Hamilton & Tauranga City Councils & Whangarei District Council	Non-statutory

4.1.1 Integrated environmental management

Two examples of collaboration from the Wairarapa and Southland regions have been characterised as having a focus on integrated environmental management under the RMA. The Southland example is the focus of the case study research and is discussed in more detail in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.1.1.1 *The Combined Wairarapa District Plan 2006*

The combined Wairarapa District Plan has been cited as a best practice example of collaboration between local authorities in environmental management. The combined district plan project involved three territorial authorities (Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils) and was recognised by a planning practice award from the New Zealand Planning Institute in 2010 (Quality Planning, 2010). The award recognised the achievement of the three councils in effectively working together to prepare a single planning document to provide an integrated management framework for the three districts (New Zealand Planning Institute, 2010). The combined Wairarapa District Plan 2006 is the first combined Plan in New Zealand and was also the first second generation district plan to become fully operative under the RMA (Masterton District Council, 2011). A Northland Regional Council report noted the following advantages developed through the combined Wairarapa District Plan project (Northland Regional Council, 2009);

- Reduced plan preparation costs
- Maximising limited internal resources for policy development
- Reduced plan administration costs
- Reduced costs for submitters
- Maximising effectiveness and
- Maximising effectiveness and efficiency for people working across a whole area.

While the combined plan has been recognised as best practice, criticisms have emerged in relation to its complexity and the manner in which specific plan provisions for each district have been addressed (McShane, 2009). These criticisms would appear to mainly relate to Plan content and planning approaches generally rather than the combined plan process or the process of collaboration between the three councils. Similar criticisms can be found in relation to most district and regional plans and can perhaps be linked to the regulatory nature of plans and perceptions of unnecessary 'red tape'.

Another report referring to the combined Wairarapa Plan notes that the process appears to have been reasonably successful and to have achieved significant efficiencies (Halligan & Swinney, 2011).

This report also notes that there have been difficulties associated with variation in interpretation, implementation and administration of the Plan's provisions across the Wairarapa councils. Despite these criticisms, generally, it appears as though the Wairarapa combined Plan process has been a relatively successful example of local authority collaboration in environmental management.

To date the combined Wairarapa District Plan 2006 is the only example of a combined planning document formulated under Section 80 of the RMA. Given that only one combined RMA planning document has been formulated over the 20 year lifespan of the RMA questions could be asked about the usefulness and value of this form of collaborative environmental management. It is worth noting however, that potentially the use of Section 80 could become more common as the number of second generation planning documents increases. In addition as noted in the Chapter 2 one of the strengths of collaboration under the RMA and LGA is that it is optional. This flexibility enables collaboration to develop where a particular environmental issue or problem warrants it. Similar circumstances to those that gave rise to the Wairarapa collaboration may not have arisen elsewhere to date. It is worth noting here that local authority collaboration under the RMA can also occur without it progressing to the extent of a combined RMA plan document. A different form of local authority collaboration in RMA plan development has developed in Southland. As with the Wairarapa example a key driver for the Southland project was integrated environmental management. In contrast to the Wairarapa the Southland example involved a regional council and territorial authority and was focussed on the reviews of an RPS and a District Plan. The two Southland local authorities collaborated through key stages of the RMA plan review process but did not combine the two documents. The Southland collaboration project is discussed in more detail in later chapters.

Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils had also previously collaborated with the relevant regional council on another project with an environmental management focus. The three Wairarapa district councils' collaborated with the Wellington Regional Council and local iwi to undertake a coastal planning exercise (Controller and Auditor-General, 2004). These agencies through the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Group jointly developed the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy 2004. The strategy provided a long-term vision for the Wairarapa coast and recommended actions that the community could take to achieve that vision (Wellington Regional Council, 2012). The coastal strategy is an example of local authority collaboration in environmental management which is non-statutory. Other non-statutory examples of collaboration have been undertaken elsewhere have been focussed on the management of water.

4.1.2 Water management

Examples of local authority collaboration in the management of water have taken place in the Canterbury region and the Rotorua Lakes area of the Bay of Plenty region. The Canterbury example relates to the management of water generally within the region while the Rotorua example is focussed on water quality in a specific group of lakes.

4.1.2.1 Canterbury Water Management Strategy

The development of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy 2009 (CWMS)² involved all local authorities in Canterbury and was driven through the Canterbury Mayoral Forum. It provides an interesting example of collaboration given a history of tensions between local authorities in the region and recent central government intervention in local governance in Canterbury (The Timaru Herald, 2010). The strategy, once completed, will be considered by the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury) for inclusion into the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, the Natural Resources Regional Plan and the Environment Canterbury Long Term Plan (Rennie & Lomax, 2010). Although the CSWS began as a non-statutory process it will eventually be given effect to via these statutory documents, two of which the RPS and the regional plan are RMA plan documents. In 2008 the Chairman of Environment Canterbury noted that these statutory measures were needed to confirm the CWMS, give it legal effect and to commit public funding to the strategy (Environment Canterbury, 2008).

The CWMS was initiated by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum which is a grouping of the Canterbury territorial authorities and Environment Canterbury. The strategy has emerged from a background of community concern about water and tensions between territorial authorities and the regional council in regard to water management. Relationships between Environment Canterbury and the region's territorial authorities have historically been difficult with tensions going back to the local authority amalgamations of 1989 (Creech et al., 2010). The Investigation of the Performance of Environment Canterbury under the RMA and LGA (2010) notes that the CWMS has been driven by the Mayoral Forum out of frustration with a lack of progress in advancing water management issues in the Region. The report does point out on a positive note that the CWMS had been endorsed by all the Regions local authorities. It then further notes that regular meetings of the chief executives from Environment Canterbury and each territorial authority in the region that seek to improve collaboration and resolve issues are now occurring (Creech et al., 2010).

² Early phases of the CWMS were known as the Canterbury Strategic Water Study (CSWS) and focussed on large scale storage potential. The CSWS was broadened in early 2008 to encompass a wide range of environmental and social values and the name changed to CWMS (Horn, 2010).

The Auditor General recently released a report on regional council management of freshwater quality in New Zealand. The report argues that an integrated approach is required and encourages collaboration at all levels including collaboration across the local government level (Controller and Auditor-General, 2011). The CWMS can perhaps be seen as an example of local authorities in Canterbury moving beyond barriers associated with poor inter-council relationships. The need for positive inter-council relationships in the provision of effective environmental management is not a new argument.

The achievement of environmental outcomes is more likely to occur through adopting an integrated approach to environmental management than through confrontation or litigation within or between agencies (Williams & Macdonald, 1999, p. 72).

The CWMS and Canterbury Mayoral Forum provide an example of a collaborative approach to regional water management that contrasts with a history of inter-council tension and a resulting lack of integration in environmental management of water in the region.

4.1.2.2 Rotorua Lakes

Environmental management issues relating to water have also given rise to a collaborative environmental management approach in Bay of Plenty. The Strategy for the Lakes of the Rotorua District is another example of local authority collaboration in water management. The strategy is an overarching policy document that gives a vision for the future of a group of twelve lakes, along with practical steps to achieve that vision (Bay of Plenty Regional Council, 2012). The collaborating local authorities are the Rotorua District Council and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. The Te Arawa Lakes Trust is the third agency involved in this collaboration and represents Te Arawa, the local iwi. This collaboration is also an example of co-management between local authorities and Māori.

The local authorities and Te Arawa are working collaboratively through the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Group to implement the strategy for the lakes. The strategy relates to issues and sets goals for the protection, use, enjoyment and management of the Rotorua Lakes. As with other examples discussed in the chapter this example of local authority collaboration in environmental management began as a non-statutory strategy with the intention that the strategy will eventually be given effect through statutory RMA processes. In this case the strategy will be given effect to by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Proposed Regional Water and Land Plan. The Strategy has been commended as a good example of partnership between local authorities and Māori in the management of lakes (Hamilton, 2003).

The Rotorua lakes example also highlights the financial costs of addressing some environmental issues. Central government funding of \$72.1 million was announced in 2008 to support the implementation a clean up and restoration programme under the Strategy (NZPA, 2008). In 2008 this amount of funding was half the expected cost of the clean up and restoration programme with the two local authorities paying the remainder.

4.1.3 Urban growth

Examples of local authority collaboration aimed at effective environmental management of urban growth can be found in the Auckland, Canterbury and the Hawke's Bay regions.

4.1.3.1 Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy and Action Plan 2007

Another Canterbury example of local authorities collaborating in environmental management is the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy and Action Plan 2007 (GCUDS) (Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy, 2012). The GCUDS is a non-statutory strategy and action plan focussed on urban growth management on the periphery of Christchurch. The strategy partners include Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency. The strategy was created in response to rising concerns over the lack of collaborative planning and leadership in managing growth in the greater Christchurch area in a sustainable way (Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy, 2012).

Urban growth issues have been a recurrent theme in Christchurch and surrounding areas (P. A. Memon, 2003). Memon notes that urban growth issues tend to cross geographical jurisdictions of local authorities and argues that local government fragmentation necessitates the need to provide a forum for strategic planning at the sub-regional metropolitan level. Memon (2003) argues that a poorly defined relationship between district and regional councils had resulted in responsibility for metropolitan regional planning strategies becoming diffused. The looming changes to the LGA at this time were seen by Memon as likely to provide a new institutional framework for addressing urban growth issues in which district and regional council decisions could be made in a collaborative manner. The GCUDS was developed after Memon made these observations and it may now provide the appropriate forum for strategic planning at the sub-regional level that he argued was needed. The GCUDS webpage notes that the Strategy was initiated in 2004 due to rising concerns over the lack of collaborative planning and leadership to manage growth in the area in a sustainable way (Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy, 2012). The GCUDS is an example of local authority collaboration driven by a need for more effective environmental management of urban growth issues.

4.1.3.2 Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy

The Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy (HPUDS) provides another example of local authority collaboration in urban growth management. Two of the Hawkes Bay's territorial authorities, Hastings District Council and Napier City Council are involved along with the Hawkes Bay Regional Council. The HPUDS is a combined effort by the three local authorities to plan for urban growth in the region. Hastings District and Napier City both have existing Urban Development Strategies and as such the HPUDS is focussed from the year 2015 onwards (Hastings District Council, Napier City Council, & Hawke's Bay Regional Council, 2012). The future focus of the strategy from 2015 onwards does perhaps raise questions as to why these local authorities have not previously collaborated in the management of urban growth issues.

As noted in the introduction chapter a proposal for the amalgamation of Hastings District Council and Napier City is currently generating debate in this region. The current debate follows the failure of a formal proposal for amalgamation of the two local authorities in 1999. The current Mayors of the two local authorities have very different views on the merits of amalgamation. Napier Mayor Barbara Arnott who is opposed to amalgamation emphasises the benefits of shared services between the two local authorities in order to achieve efficiencies (Carpinter, 2011). Mayor Arnott cites the HPUDS as an example of the two councils collaborating and working together for the region along with a joint economic development strategy, regional roading strategy and the possibility of developing a combined Hastings and Napier District Plan (Sharpe, 2011b). In contrast, Hastings City Mayor Yule argues that the councils have worked in an 'ad hoc manner' and refers to problems in the establishment of the regional approach to economic development as an example (Sharpe, 2011b).

The HPUDS is still in the formative stages having only been adopted in August 2012 with a focus from 2015 onwards and as such it is too early to evaluate its success. It does however provide a useful example of local authority collaboration that highlights some of the underlying tensions and arguments relating to a proposal for local authority amalgamation. The HPUDS can be characterised as local authority collaboration aimed at effective and efficient environmental management of urban issues in the Hawke's Bay region.

4.1.3.3 Auckland Regional Growth Strategy

The Royal Commission report on Auckland governance argued that prior to amalgamation local authorities in the region lacked a sense of purpose, constitutional ability, and momentum to address issues effectively for the overall good of Auckland (Salmon et al., 2009).

The report refers to several examples where territorial authorities and the Auckland Regional Council opposed each other in appeals to the Environment Court over policy matters (Salmon et al., 2009). Paulin and Edgar (2009) also identified barriers to local authority collaboration in the Auckland region prior to amalgamation. These included a lack of collective sense of purpose, constitutional ability and momentum to address issues effectively for the overall good of the region (Paulin & Edgar, 2009).

Despite these criticisms local authorities did collaborate in environmental management prior to amalgamation and some of these collaborations have been identified as successful examples. The Auckland Regional Growth Forum (ARGF) is one such example. The Forum was established to develop strategies to address issues of concern to both the regional council and territorial authorities, and generally to improve relationships between the two arms of local government in the Auckland region (Williams & Macdonald, 1999). The forum resulted in the development of the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy (ARGS). The development of the strategy has been linked to strong regional leadership and collaboration between local authorities aimed at addressing urban growth management in an integrated way (Salmon et al., 2009). While the Royal Commission identified the ARGS as a useful example of local authority collaboration there were perhaps too few examples. The Commission observed that the region's history in managing to implement what are, in the end, voluntary joint recommendations is one of missed opportunities with few tangible results (Salmon et al., 2009, p. 105).

4.1.4 Other examples of collaboration

Other examples of collaboration in environmental management have been identified in biosecurity in the Tasman and Nelson Districts and strategic collaboration on a wider basis across the upper North Island.

4.1.4.1 Pest Management Tasman and Nelson

The Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012 is another example of local authority collaboration in environmental management. Nelson City and Tasman District Councils formulated a joint Regional Pest Management Strategy under the Biosecurity Act 1993. The purpose of the combined pest management strategy is to provide a framework for efficient and effective pest management in the Tasman-Nelson region (Nelson City Council, 2012). The pest strategy provides an interesting example given current debates around a proposal for amalgamation of the Nelson City and Tasman District Councils (Goodger, 2010). The Mayors of each council have diverging stances in regard to the appropriateness of amalgamation (Goodger, 2011). Similar arguments to those in relation to the Hastings District and Napier City amalgamation proposal feature in the Nelson City and Tasman District debate.

Tasman District Council argues that shared services and collaboration can provide for more effective and efficient services delivery (Tasman District Council, 2010). In contrast Nelson City argues that the existing situation does not encourage the community to see the region as a common area of interest for important activities such as long term planning, resource planning, and the potential to share infrastructure (Nelson City Council, 2010). The joint development of the pest strategy shows the councils have collaborated in the past when undertaking local authority environmental management functions. Dependant on the outcome of the amalgamation process this could potentially be an example of local authority collaboration in environmental management that is complementary to amalgamation. As was noted in the introduction Nelson City and Tasman Districts currently have separate Regional Policy Statements. The appropriateness of having a separate RPS for each of these closely connected districts has been questioned (Piper et al., 2011). The collaborative approach taken in the development of the pest management strategy highlights the advantages of this form of environmental management. The two local authorities are able to collaborate in undertaking their environmental management functions where warranted irrespective of the outcome of the amalgamation proposal.

4.1.4.2 Strategic collaboration

The Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA) is an emerging example of wider collaboration between local authorities. Seven local authorities in the upper North Island are involved in the collaboration. It appears that environmental management responsibilities will be a focus of the alliance amongst a range of wider inter-regional issues (Russell, 2011). The newly formed group will collaborate on cross-boundary resource management issues (Auckland Council, 2011). The scale of this collaboration does perhaps raise questions about the ability of seven local authorities involved to achieve effective and efficient environmental management. Although only a recent development the emergence of the UNISA highlights an increasing trend of wider local authority collaboration. It also highlights that collaboration can occur at different scales with the seven participating local authorities representing a large proportion of the New Zealand population across a large geographic area.

4.2 Summary

The Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter has identified nine local authority collaborations in environmental management focussed on variety of environmental issues. It has shown that many non-statutory strategies tend to develop into statutory responses at a later date. The environmental management collaborations discussed have involved regional, city and district councils located throughout New Zealand. The key driver for these collaborative projects has been the need for efficient and effective management of cross boundary environmental issues.

The chapter has also highlighted the tensions that can exist between local authorities in regard to environmental management functions and also in local government generally. This is particularly evident in those regions where proposed amalgamations are currently being debated. Failure to effectively collaborate in environmental management can also be seen as a factor in recent government intervention in local governance in the Auckland and Canterbury regions. In saying this there are or have been successful collaborations between local authorities in environmental management in both of these regions. The next chapter provides a more in depth analysis of local authority collaboration in the Southland region of New Zealand.

5 COLLABORATION IN SOUTHLAND

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background to the Southland case study and context for this example of local authority collaboration in environmental management. It describes Southland's geography, legislative boundaries and local authorities. Institutional arrangements for local government in the region are then detailed along with similarities and differences between the region's local governments. The role of the Southland Shared Services Forum (SSSF) is then introduced with four examples of local authority collaboration developed through the SSSF briefly discussed. This is followed by discussion of how local authority collaboration relates to the existing model of local government in the Southland region. The legislative framework for environmental management in Southland is then examined with a focus on the relationship between a Regional Policy Statement and District Plans. The Chapter concludes with an overview of the key stages of the SRPS/SDP Project.

5.2 Southland geography

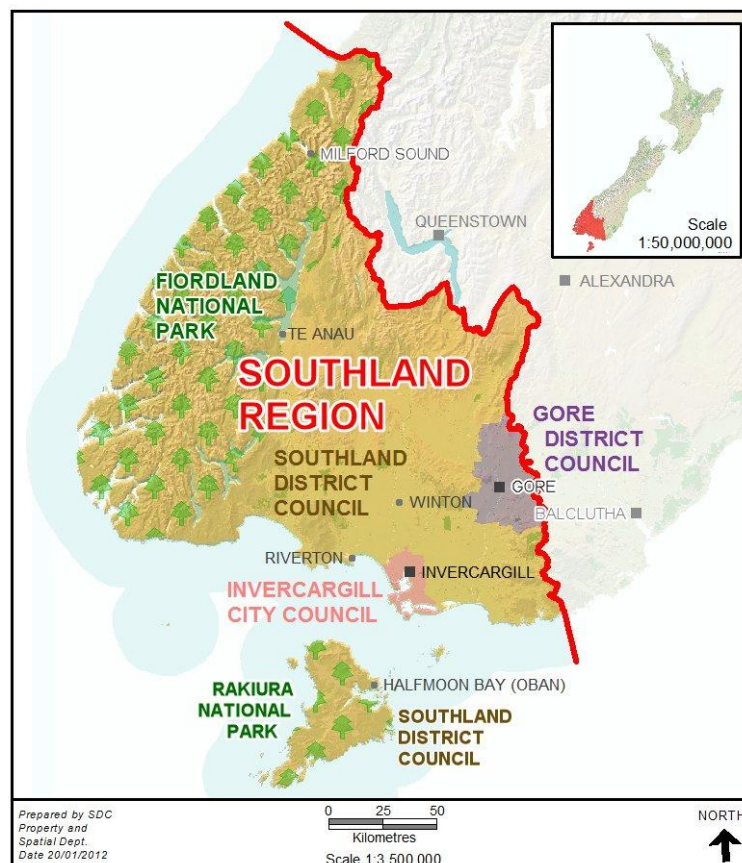


Figure 1 - Southland region

The Southland region has a resident population of approximately 94,200³ with over half of the population (52,400) resident in Invercargill City, the region's largest urban settlement (Statistics New Zealand, 2012) . The region encompasses a total land area of approximately 32,000 sq km which equates to around 12% of the land area of New Zealand (New Zealand Government, 2012). Southland has 3,400 km of coastline, more than any other region in New Zealand (Our Way Southland, 2005). There are two National Parks located within Southland, Fiordland National Park and Rakiura National Park which is located on Stewart Island/Rakiura.

5.3 Institutional arrangements

Prior to the 1989 reform of local government there were 12 territorial and district authorities in the Southland region made up of a mix of borough, county and city councils (Table 2).

Table 3 - Southland local authorities' pre-1989 restructuring

Borough councils	County councils	City councils
Riverton Borough Gore Borough Bluff Borough Winton Borough Mataura Borough	Wallace County Southland County Stewart Island County	Invercargill City

(Boyle, 2000)

The 1989 local government reforms reduced the number of councils from nine to four. In addition to the 11 local authorities in existence prior to 1989 other local government agencies in Southland were also restructured. These included the Southland Catchment Board, Southland United Council and the drainage, pest and noxious plant boards. These agencies were amalgamated to form the Southland Regional Council in 1989. Local authorities currently governing within the Southland region are comprised of three territorial local authorities being the Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council and the Southland District Council. The fourth local authority is the Southland Regional Council (Environment Southland).

Table 4 - Southland local authorities' post-1989 restructuring

Southland Regional Council		
Gore District Council	Invercargill City Council	Southland District Council

³ The population of the Southland Region was 90,873 in the Statistics New Zealand 2006 Census data. As the 2011 New Zealand Census was cancelled the 2010 Subnational Population Estimates from Statistics New Zealand have been used throughout this research.

Local government in Southland went through a period of consolidation following the 1989 reforms with the number of local authorities reduced from nine down to four. As a result the region's existing territorial local authorities incorporate a number of communities that previously had stand alone councils. The Southland District Council which is an amalgam of five of the councils shown in Table 2 currently administers a diverse range of communities across a large land area. Southland District Council promotes local input into decision-making through 12 Community Boards and 16 Community Development Area Sub-Committees (Southland District Council, 2012a). Local input and decision making through community boards and sub-committees, needs to be balanced against the cost of providing this level of community involvement. This example highlights the tension between effective (a high level of community input and involvement) and efficient (cost effective) local government. It also reinforces the concept that institutional arrangements for local government in Southland should be influenced by the region's unique characteristics. In the case of Southland District Council this amounts to a high number of smaller communities dispersed throughout the largest geographic area administered by a territorial authority in New Zealand.

The importance a defined community of interest was asserted recently by the Far North District Council Mayor Len Brown. Mr Brown noted that the Far North District has 42 towns and villages and highlighted this as a key difference between his district and other district's incorporating larger towns and cities in the Northland region (Clifton, 2012). Issues relating to community of interest and appropriate local government representation have also been raised in relation to the recent amalgamation proposal for Nelson City and Tasman Districts. Tasman District Council in its submission to the Local Government Commission emphasised the smaller, diverse and unique communities of interest associated with its rural hinterland and argued that Nelson City had a very different urban based community of interest (Tasman District Council, 2010).

5.3.1 Legislative boundaries

The administrative boundaries of Southland's local authorities are shown in Figure 2. The Gore District is located inland in the east of the region. Invercargill City District is located on the southern coastline and largely comprises the city of Invercargill. The Southland District encompasses the remaining land area including Stewart Island/Rakiura. Southland Regional Council administration incorporates the boundaries of all three territorial authorities and out to the 12-mile (19.3 km) New Zealand territorial limit.

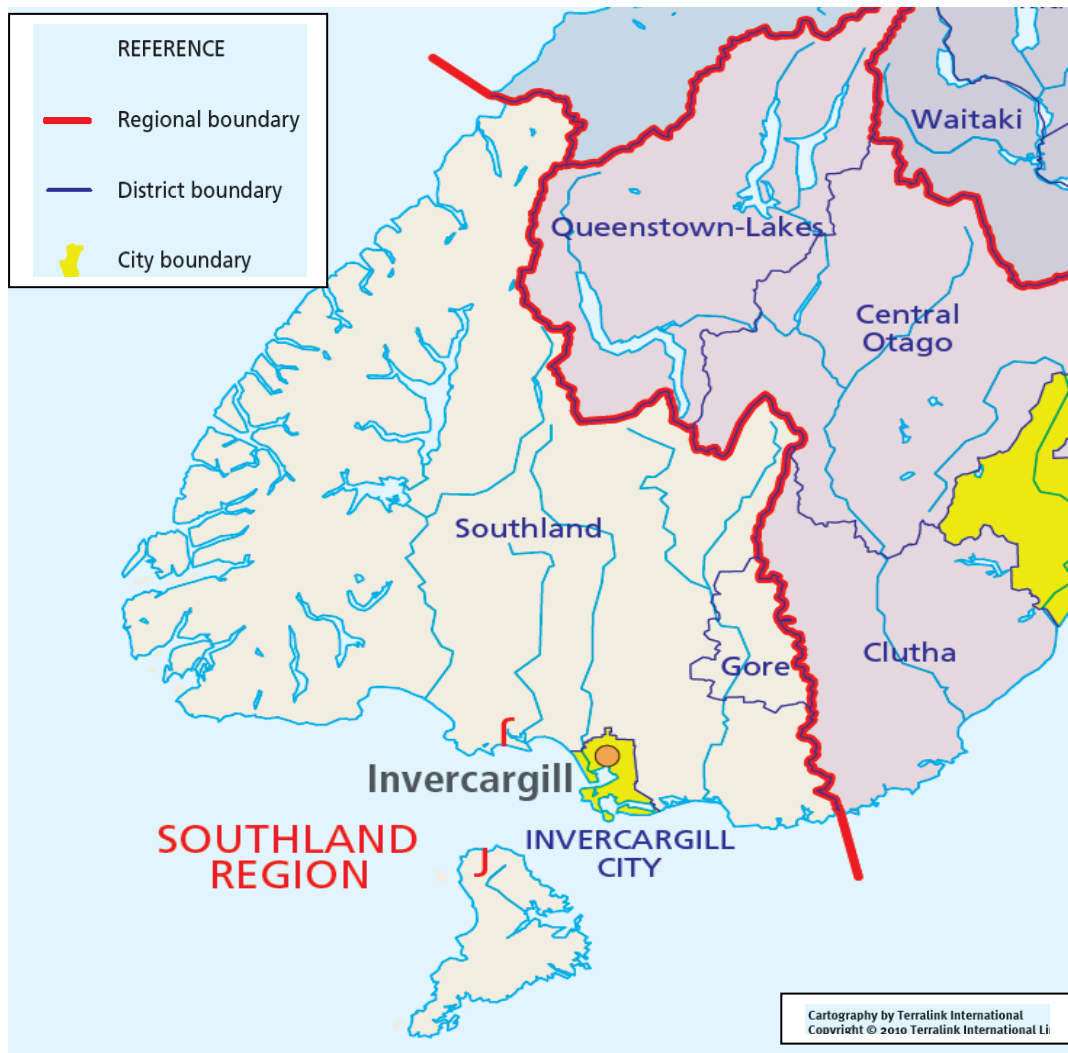


Figure 2 - Southland local authority boundaries

(Local Government New Zealand, 2012)

5.3.2 Southland’s local authorities

Table 5 shows key statistics for each of the four local authorities in Southland and provide context for the nature of local government in the region.

Table 5 - Southland local authorities

Local Authority	Type	Land Area (sq km ²)	Population (2010 estimates)	People Per km ² (2006)
Gore District Council	District (Rural)	1,252	12,300	9.7
Invercargill City Council	City (Provincial)	491	52,400	102.4
Southland District Council	District (Provincial)	30,979	29,500	0.9
Environment Southland	Regional	32,722	94,200	1.7

(Department of Internal Affairs, 2012)

The Southland District is a large local authority in terms of land area administered and has a highly dispersed population with a density of 0.9 people per square kilometre.

The Southland District's three largest townships (Te Anau, Winton and Riverton/Aparima) all have a population of less than 3,000.

In contrast Invercargill City District contains the region's only city, Invercargill, which is home to over half of the Southland regions population. The Gore District is the smallest of the three territorial authorities in terms of population and has the region's second largest urban settlement, Gore Township. The region's large land area and relatively low population has an influence on the manner in which local authorities can govern. Southland's distinct regional identity, history and geography and the implications of low population density can be viewed as key factors in the development of the Southland Shared Services Forum.

5.3.3 Southland Shared Services Forum

The SSSF⁴ was formally established in 2000 as a Joint Committee of Environment Southland, Clutha District, Gore District, Invercargill City and Southland District Councils. The Forum Councils have committed to act collaboratively for two key reasons:

To ensure matters in common are determined inclusively and avoid unnecessary duplication and; to advance the sharing of local government services in Southland (Southland Shared Services Forum, 2010, p. 2).

The establishment of the Forum can be viewed as a response to ongoing pressure for efficient and effective local government and a counter to calls for further local authority amalgamations in the Southland region. Local authorities in Southland explored several alternative local government arrangements prior to the 1989 reforms (Local Futures Research Project, 2006). It has been noted that there was a period of friction and political misunderstanding between local authorities in Southland following the reforms; this has since been replaced with an increased level of inter-council understanding and cooperation (Local Futures Research Project, 2006). Within this period of friction a proposal for the establishment of a unitary authority in the region emerged. Southland District Council's CEO and others referring to the establishment of the SSSF in 2004, noted that;

The initiative was a significant step for all our councils - following a sporadic and largely unpopular flirtation throughout the 1990's with the idea of setting up a unitary authority. By late 2000 there was a wary acceptance that if the councils could cooperate, we could achieve some of the desirable outcomes of amalgamation without loss of sovereignty (Ross M et al., 2004, p. 4).

⁴ The Clutha District Council is the only member whose administrative boundaries fall outside of the Southland region. Clutha joined the Forum in recognition of a significant community of interest with Southland in many areas (Ross M, Cunningham J, & Orange J, 2004).

The SSSF has been characterised as a successful initiative with an ability to provide linkage and sharing of services in varying combinations across five units of local government (Local Futures Research Project, 2006).

In the 12 years since the Forum was established a wide range of collaborative initiatives and projects have been advanced. The Southland Shared Services Forum's 'Memorandum of Understanding 2010' lists 48 inter-council collaborative projects (see Appendix 4). Projects listed incorporate a wide variety of local government functions ranging from road safety and information technology to tender evaluations and rural fire administration⁵. In order to provide context for the development of the SRPS/SDP Project it is worth briefly examining four collaborative local government projects developed through the SSSF.

5.3.3.1 Venture Southland

Venture Southland delivers enterprise, tourism, promotion, events and community development services on behalf of the Gore District, Invercargill City and Southland District Councils (Venture Southland, 2012). Venture Southland was established in 2001. Venture Southland was formed through the SSSF and operates as a special joint committee of Gore District, Invercargill City and Southland District Councils and is jointly funded by the three councils.

5.3.3.2 Our Way Southland

Our Way Southland is another example of local authority collaboration in Southland and was another initiative developed through the SSSF. The project has involved all four of Southland's local authorities and was developed in response to the LGA 2002 requirement for all local authorities to undertake community outcome processes for their areas. The development of regional approaches to the identification of community outcomes has been noted as advantageous in terms of addressing issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries, involving external stakeholders and also in the improvement of internal capacity (Reid, Scott, & McNeill, 2006).

5.3.3.3 WasteNet

Gore District, Invercargill City and Southland District Councils jointly formed WasteNet Southland in 2000 with an initial focus of joint procurement of a regional waste facility and a regional focus on waste minimisation initiatives (Wastenet Southland, 2010). WasteNet is administered by a the Waste Advisory Group which is made up of representatives of each participating local authority (Gerken, 2011b).

⁵ Shared service approaches between local authorities in the Southland region appear to have a history extending back some time. A 1977 Local Government Commission report proposing the establishment of a Southland Region and a Southland United Council notes that Invercargill City Council was providing town planning assistance to the Winton and Matura Boroughs at that time (Local Government Commission 1977).

5.3.3.4 Emergency Management Southland

Emergency Management Southland (EMS) is another example of local authority collaboration in Southland. EMS is an inter-council organisation that provides civil defence and emergency management services across the Southland region and fulfils the regions local authority responsibilities under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The proposed establishment of the EMS in 2010 did highlight that differences of opinion and tensions between the participating local authorities in the SSSF can emerge from time to time. A difference of opinion emerged between Chief Executive Officers of local authorities relating to the appointment of the regional coordinator of EMS (McKnight, 2010). Collaborative approaches to civil defence management between local authorities have also been proposed recently in the Wairarapa at district level (Hickland, 2011).

5.3.3.5 SSSF collaboration

These four examples of local authority collaboration developed through SSSF provide an indication of how the region's local authorities have come together to collaborate effectively. Collaboration has occurred across a variety of local authority functions including in community development, community outcomes, waste management and emergency management. It is worth considering how and why local authority collaboration has developed in the Southland context.

5.3.4 Collaboration and Southland's model of local government

Commenting on the boundary of responsibility between regional and territorial authorities under the then proposed LGA in 2002 Hutchings argued that;

The opportunity for councils to come together to deliver functions and services is positive and will provide for administrative efficiency, economy of scale and good use of specialist skills. It will also allow progress to be made on the tricky issues that know no boundaries, such as those related to community safety or economic development or biodiversity (Hutchings, 2002, p. 7).

Examples of local authorities coming together to address some of the 'tricky issues' highlighted by Hutchings can perhaps be seen in the Southland examples developed through the SSSF. Venture Southland provides an example in terms of economic development and the Our Way Southland project incorporates wider community outcomes, including community safety. The reference to the resource management issue of biodiversity can also be linked to the development of the SRPS/SDP collaboration. This Project was focussed on environmental management of a range of cross boundary resource management issues including biodiversity.

The SSSF can possibly be viewed as an adaption to the existing model of local government in Southland. A 1999 report examining models of local government environmental management in New Zealand compared the unitary and regional council/territorial models. A key message of this report was;

The actual model adopted by local government to achieve effective environmental management needs to reflect the diversity of environmental issues of the regions and the socio-economic, cultural and bio-physical outcomes desired by the communities involved (i.e. one size does not fit all) (Williams & Macdonald, 1999, p. 7).

The 'one size does not fit all' message highlighted in this report can be linked to the recent amalgamation of local authorities in the Auckland region. Reid (2011) argues that amalgamation in Auckland signals a departure from the principle that governance structures should be consistent throughout New Zealand and an acceptance that different governance models are required to address diversity. This does not appear to be a new argument. Ten years earlier Erickson (2001) argued that New Zealand's wide variety of physical geographies, high level of biodiversity and uneven population distribution made it unlikely that any one model of local governance would suit every circumstance (Erickson et al., 2001). In Southland, local government has adapted the model of local government by increasing levels of inter-council cooperation and collaboration. The establishment of the SSSF and development of a number of collaborative initiatives across a variety of local government functions can be viewed an adaption of the model of local government in response to issues and circumstances unique to the Southland region.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, not all regions of New Zealand appear to have a similar history of positive inter-council cooperation or the presence of effective institutional arrangements such as the SSSF. A 2004 report of the Controller and Auditor-General focussed on local Authorities notes that at the time there were few council Long Term Plans listing opportunities for local authorities to work together, with the only examples cited in the Southland, Wairarapa and Taranaki regions (Controller and Auditor-General, 2004). The same report identifies and discusses two formal shared service arrangements between councils with these being the SSSF and the Auckland Shared Services Representatives Group (ASSRG).

The two shared service initiatives are identified as examples of regional forums focussed on encouraging and facilitating of joint arrangements between local authorities. A key difference noted in the report between these two forums was their composition, with the Auckland forum made up of senior managers and the Southland forum chief executives and Councillors. Another difference between the two forums can perhaps be seen in output.

As noted above a significant number of collaborative projects have emerged through the SSSF. Outcomes for the Auckland forum appear to have been more limited, with two cited in this 2004 report, one in regional traffic management and one in library services. As discussed in earlier chapters the recent review of local government in Auckland highlighted a trend of poor inter-council relationships. Barriers to council collaboration in Auckland were also identified by Paulin and Edgar (2009) prior to amalgamation. These included a lack of a collective sense of purpose, constitutional ability and momentum to address issues effectively for the overall good of the Auckland region.

The formation of a unitary authority to govern the Auckland region can perhaps be seen as an indication that the ASSRG enabled a limited amount of local authority collaboration. The SSSF involves five local authorities including one that is located within another region (Clutha District Council) in comparison the ASSRG involved seven. Given the similar number of local authorities involved in each collaborative forum it would appear unlikely that this was a key reason for differences in the output of the two forums. Other arrangements for regional collaboration between local governments exist that are not as specific in terms of shared services goals with the Canterbury Mayoral Forum being one example. As discussed in Chapter 4 local authority collaboration through the Canterbury Mayoral Forum has enabled the development of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

Possibly a key difference between local government in Southland and other regions is that logistically it may be easier for smaller entities to collaborate. It may be a case of the more people and agencies that are involved the higher the likelihood of problems arising. Another difference between Southland and regions with larger metropolitan councils could be the financial and resourcing pressures that arise with relatively low and dispersed populations and smaller rating bases. Collaboration with adjoining local authorities may be more a necessity for smaller councils like those in Southland. This theme is recognised in the *Our Way Southland* community outcomes document which notes that:

Councils in Southland already have an excellent record of working together, sharing information and successfully completing joint projects. This relationship has sometimes come from a necessity but most often from a willingness to use limited resources better and to concentrate on the things we have in common - not what makes us different (*Our Way Southland*, 2009, p. 9).

It has been argued that collaborative approaches to local governance are a particularly useful way for smaller sized local authorities to achieve efficient and effective local government (Allan, 2003).

Evidence of this trend can be seen in local government in Australia where it has been argued (Dollery et al., 2007) that acute financial stress has galvanised regional, rural and remote councils to spontaneously invent numerous new forms of local service delivery.

Efficacious local governance requires a coherent political identity representing distinct communities, but there also needs to be a structure for managing regional common interests. This can be achieved in one of two ways: from the “bottom up” or from the “top down” (Dollery et al., 2007, p. 59).

It is worth making a comparison of the role of the SSSF with that of Regional Organisations of Councils (ROC's) in Australia. ROC's comprise groupings of neighbouring local authorities seeking mutual benefits from joint action (Marshall, Dollery, & Witherby, 2003). The SSSF appears to fulfil a similar role to that of ROC's in Australia. ROC's have been recognised as one of a range of alternative models that can enhance efficiency of local government in Australia (Dollery & Johnson, 2005). Local authority collaboration in Southland has developed as a variation of the existing model of local government for the region. It can be viewed as an alternative approach to local government aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness of local government, which has been developed within the region or from the ‘bottom up’. Initiatives such as the SSSF provide a New Zealand example of a similar form of local service delivery to ROC's in that it has developed from the ‘bottom up’.

Examples of local authority collaboration involving smaller provincial councils exist in New Zealand. Examples include regional approaches to waste management that have been developed in the Taranaki, Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions (Quality Planning 2012). Collaborative approaches to community outcomes have also been developed in Taranaki while the combined Wairarapa District Plan provides an example in environmental management. As highlighted in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter there is some evidence to indicate that examples of collaboration between larger metropolitan councils tend to be focussed on non-regulatory projects and strategies initially.

5.3.5 Collaboration and environmental management in Southland

Local authorities in Southland have considered or developed three other forms of collaboration in environmental management through the SSSF. The possibility of a joint planning policy function was considered by the SSSF not long after it was formed in 2002. More recently, there have been discussions in regard to the feasibility of a combined planning document. A collaborative approach was also developed by Environment Southland and Southland District Council in the commissioning of two landscape studies in 2006 (Environment Southland, 2012).

5.3.5.1 The planning (policy) function

A proposal for a shared services approach to environmental management was developed through the SSSF in 2002. The SSSF commissioned a planning consultancy to undertake a feasibility study focussed on a regional shared service approach to planning policy (Southland District Council, 2002). The study considered the planning policy function of the four councils as a candidate for shared services (MWH Ltd, 2002) and presented four shared service options;

1. Informal Co-operative Arrangements;
2. Project Specific Co-operative Arrangements;
3. Formalised Co-operative Arrangements;
4. Contracting Out Services

The SSSF resolved at this time to implement the ‘Informal Co-operative Arrangements’ and ‘Project Specific Co-operative Arrangements’ immediately (Southland District Council, 2002). The SRPS/SDP collaboration can be viewed as an environmental management project developed through the Project Specific Arrangements and Informal Co-operative Arrangements approaches identified in this 2002 report. This indicates that the SSSF councils identified and examined the potential for local authority collaboration in environmental management not long after the Forum came into existence. The SRPS/SDP collaboration has then developed through the informal and project specific arrangements identified in the 2002 shared service planning (policy) feasibility study.

5.3.5.2 A combined plan

More recently the SSSF considered the possibility of the formulation of a combined planning document for the Southland region. The paper concluded that;

In summary one combined plan for Southland is legally possible, and we consider it is achievable subject to all councils agreeing in principle and working towards an agreed timetable as outlined above. However, it needs to be recognised that such a project would be a major undertaking (Halligan & Swinney, 2011, p. 6).

The report suggested that a combined planning document for Southland would be a third generation document under the RMA given the current status of second generation plan reviews in the region. While this paper is a relatively brief document focussed on the feasibility of a combined plan, it can be viewed as an indication that collaborative approaches to RMA policy and plan documents are still being considered and promoted at a political and senior staff level in Southland.

5.3.5.3 Landscape reports

Southland District Council and Environment Southland jointly commissioned Boffa Miskell Limited to assess the landscape values along the Southland Coast and within the Te Anau Basin in 2006. This resulted in the production of two landscape reports that recommended a range of planning approaches for managing landscape values in these areas (Southland District Council, 2012c). The joint commissioning of these two landscape reports provides another example of collaborative environmental management in the region. The reports are to be used to help inform future planning and policy decisions (Southland Regional Council, 2012a). The commissioning of the coastal landscape report perhaps highlights an advantage of informal and project-specific collaborative arrangements. Local authorities can choose not to be involved in a collaborative project where it is not relevant. Gore District for example does not have a coastline and as such there is no reason for them to be involved in a coastal landscape study. There are also four other examples of what could be classified as forms of collaboration in environmental management undertaken through the SSSF. These include the Southland Biodiversity Forum, Te Rōpū Taiao (a political iwi liaison forum), the Southland Wetlands Working Party, the Southland Coastal Heritage group and the Southland Regional Heritage Committee (Southland Shared Services Forum, 2010).

5.4 Legislative framework Southland's RMA planning documents

There are 10 RMA planning documents currently operative in the Southland region (table 5) administered by four local authorities.

Table 6 - List of Southland RMA planning documents⁶

Local Authority	RMA Planning Document	Year Operative
Environment Southland	Regional Policy Statement	1997
	Regional Water Plan	2010
	Regional Coastal Plan	2008
	Regional Air Quality Plan	1999
	Regional Solid Waste management Plan	1996
	Regional Effluent land Application Plan	1998
	Transitional Regional Plan	1999
Southland District Council	Southland District Plan	2001
Invercargill City Council	Invercargill City District Plan	2005
Gore District Council	Gore District Plan	2006

The existing SRPS became operative in 1997 and the Southland District Plan in 2001. It is worth noting that the Gore District and Invercargill City Council's District Plans became

⁶ In addition to the local authority plan documents listed in Table 5 Southland's RMA framework also includes the Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku Natural Resource and Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2008, 'The Cry of the People Te Tangi a Tauira'.

operative in 2005 and 2006. In 2007 when the SRPS/SDP collaboration first began the Gore and Invercargill Councils had only recently completed their respective first generation RMA Plan reviews. It was noted at this time that the recent adoption of the GDC and ICC District Plans meant that there was little merit or incentive in these councils beginning another plan review process (Halligan, 2007).

5.4.1 Regional Policy Statements and District Plans

The RMA has established a hierarchy of planning documents in which a Regional Policy Statement (RPS) acts as the overarching policy document for each region. The responsibility for the preparation, implementation and administration of an RPS sits with the relevant regional council⁷. The responsibility for the preparation, implementation and administration of district plans sits with the territorial authorities located within that region. District Plans sit under the RPS in the hierarchy of the RMA (figure 3) and must 'give effect' to the RPS under section 75 of the RMA. This means that regional councils and territorial authorities have intersecting responsibilities and an interest in the policy-making plan processes of each other. In the case of the regional councils and the RPS it is an interest in ensuring that district plans address the significant resource management issues of the region and 'give effect' to the RPS. In regard to territorial authorities and district plans it is an interest in the policy implications of the RPS and their obligation to 'give effect' to it.

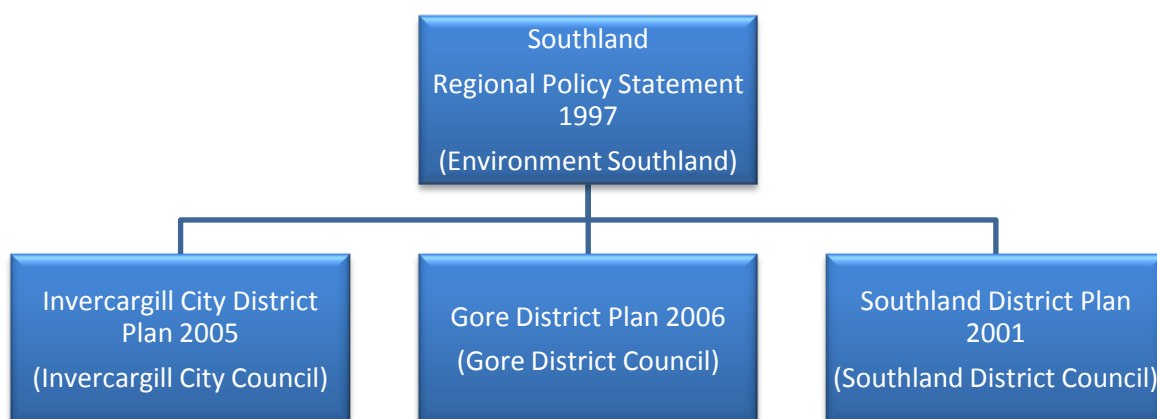


Figure 3 - Southland RPS/District Plan hierarchy

⁷ In regions where unitary authorities have been established RPS responsibilities sit with the unitary authority. This research is focussed predominantly on the more common regional council/territorial authority model of local governance.

Early Ministry for the Environment (MfE) guidance on regional policy statements indicated that collaboration between regional councils and territorial authorities was likely to be a key requirement of integrated management. This guidance noted that synergies were possible in the complementary roles of the regional policy statements and district plans which should be taken advantage of. The guidance further noted that while remaining the regional council's responsibility, the Regional Policy Statement should be the statement of regional policy owned by all local authorities in the region (Ministry for the Environment, 1993). The extent to which local authorities other than regional councils have felt a sense of 'ownership' for the relevant RPS within their respective regions is perhaps questionable. This MfE guidance published not long after the RMA had been enacted may have been optimistic in its outlook. Similar arguments were made by other writers at this time;

The promotion of the sustainable management of natural and physical resources would not be possible without the integrating influence of Policy Statements. The development of Policy Statements has, therefore required that a partnership be established between organisations with resource management responsibilities (Hutchings, 1993, p. 90).

The RMA concept of integrated management can be viewed as requiring policy alignment and integration between local authorities. The RMA does not specifically define integrated environmental management (Frieder, 1997). As noted by the MfE (1993) and Hutchings (2002) above it can, however, be viewed as a concept that requires inter-council collaboration at different levels of local government. This theme has also been picked up by other writers and May (1996) argues that consultation, cooperation, and sharing between regional councils and their constituent local councils on matters of mutual concern is a requirement for successful integrated and sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The SRPS/SDP collaboration can be viewed as an attempt to better align and integrate the two planning documents. Better integration and alignment of these documents may increase the likelihood of the district plan 'giving effect' to the RPS. The project would appear to be consistent with concepts of integrated environmental management and also with the general concept of regional and local authorities cooperating and working in partnership. It may also enable these documents to more effectively address environmental issues that require cross jurisdictional policy responses. It has been argued that collaboration between local authorities is more likely to enable positive environmental outcomes.

As identified in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand chapter Williams and McDonald (1999) argued that the achievement of environmental outcomes was more likely through an integrated approach to environmental management than through confrontation or litigation within or between agencies. Environment Southland and the Southland District Council could perhaps be viewed as having adopted an integrated approach to the review SRPS/SDP Project. As will be outlined below in discussion on the key steps of the Project both councils have shared draft policy provisions with the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils and invited them to participate at project related workshops.

5.5 SRPS/SDP Collaborative Review Project

The Southland collaboration was based around three key stages. The main steps in each stage are detailed in figures 4, 5 and 6 below. The two councils decided to work together in the initial consultation stages of the reviews of the two planning documents to avoid inconsistencies between the two planning documents, to engage with the public and key stakeholders in a focussed manner, to minimise duplication and to achieve time and cost efficiencies (Southland District Council & Southland Regional Council, 2010b).

5.5.1 Stage 1

The first stage of the Project involved public consultation and was known as the 'Issues and Options' stage (Southland Regional Council, 2012b). This stage did not constitute formal consultation under the RMA rather an informal pre-consultation phase. Thirteen issues and options papers were publicly released with the intention of engaging with the community and key stakeholders. These papers were focussed on a range of resource management related topics relevant to Southland (Southland District Council, 2012b).

A series of nine public meetings were then held throughout Southland and the public and key stakeholders were encouraged to write in and provide feedback on the issues and options papers. A joint Councillor workshop was then held and this stage was completed with the release of a *Summary of Community Feedback Document* (Southland Regional Council, 2012b). This document summarises feedback from the Southland community on the 13 Issues and Options papers. A combined planners' workshop was then held with representation from planning staff from the four Southland Local Authorities, with the purpose of working through the feedback received and discuss the best way to incorporate those matters raised through the consultation into a community feedback document (A. Leith, personal communication, February 29, 2012). The joint pre-consultation stage undertaken as part of the Southland project has been cited as a good example of the value of entities taking a collaborative approach and working together to address freshwater quality issues at local authority level (Controller and Auditor-General, 2011).

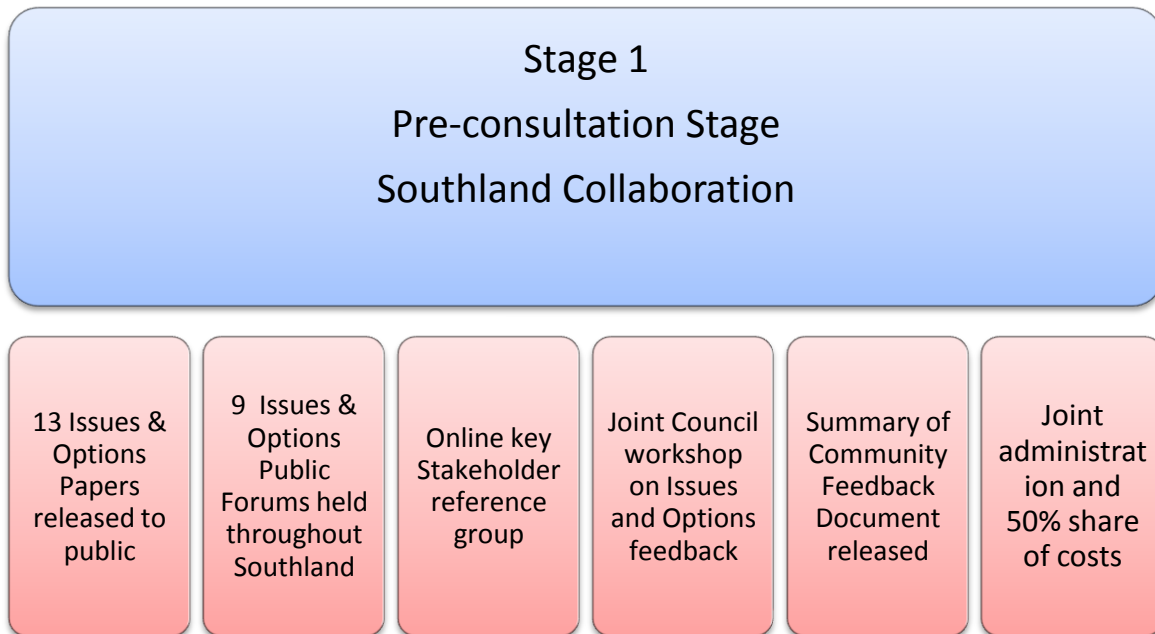


Figure 4 - SRPS/SDP collaboration stage 1

5.5.2 Stage 2

The second stage of the collaboration was focussed on the joint drafting of issues, objectives and policies for the SRPS and the SDP and was undertaken through 2010 (Southland District Council, 2011b). Another series of workshops was scheduled as part of this stage of the Project. These workshops involved Councillors from Environment Southland and Southland District Council along with iwi representatives and invitations made to other territorial authorities of the region. The purpose of the workshops was to seek Councillor and iwi feedback on draft policy for the two planning documents (Southland District Council & Southland Regional Council, 2010a).

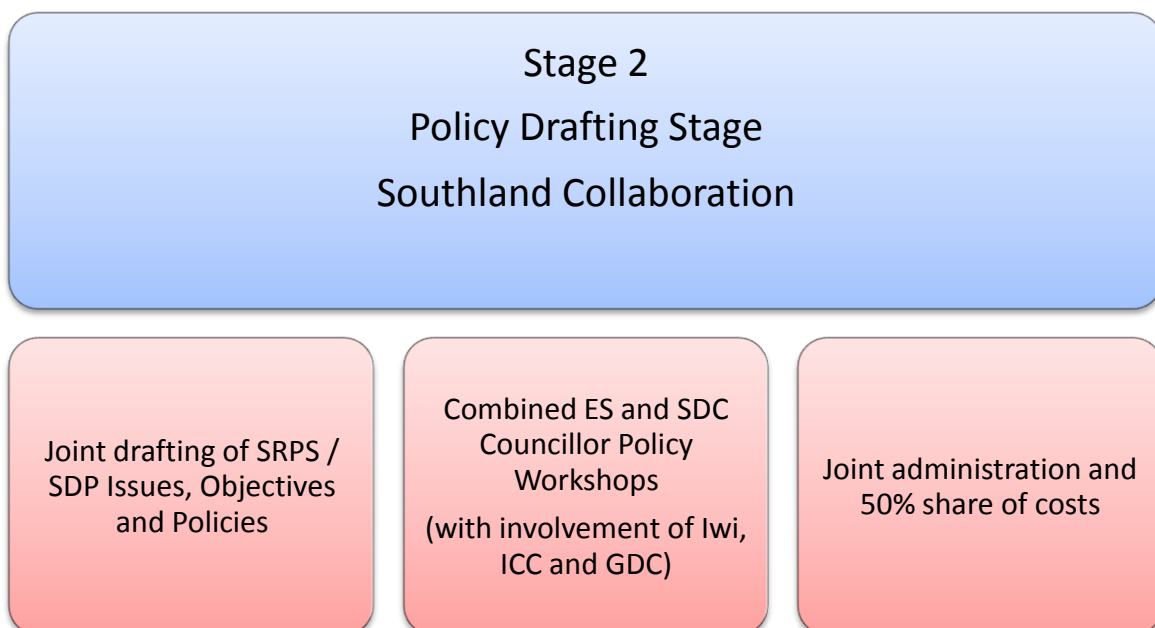


Figure 5 - SRPS/SDP collaboration stage 2

5.5.3 Stage 3

Stage 3 of the collaboration was focussed on methods drafting and took place through 2011. This stage of the Project involved the joint procurement of consultants to assist in RPS/SDP methods drafting work. As with the earlier stages of the collaboration joint Councillor workshops were also held. Iwi representatives, council staff and Councillors from the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils also invited to attend the policy drafting workshops in stage 3.

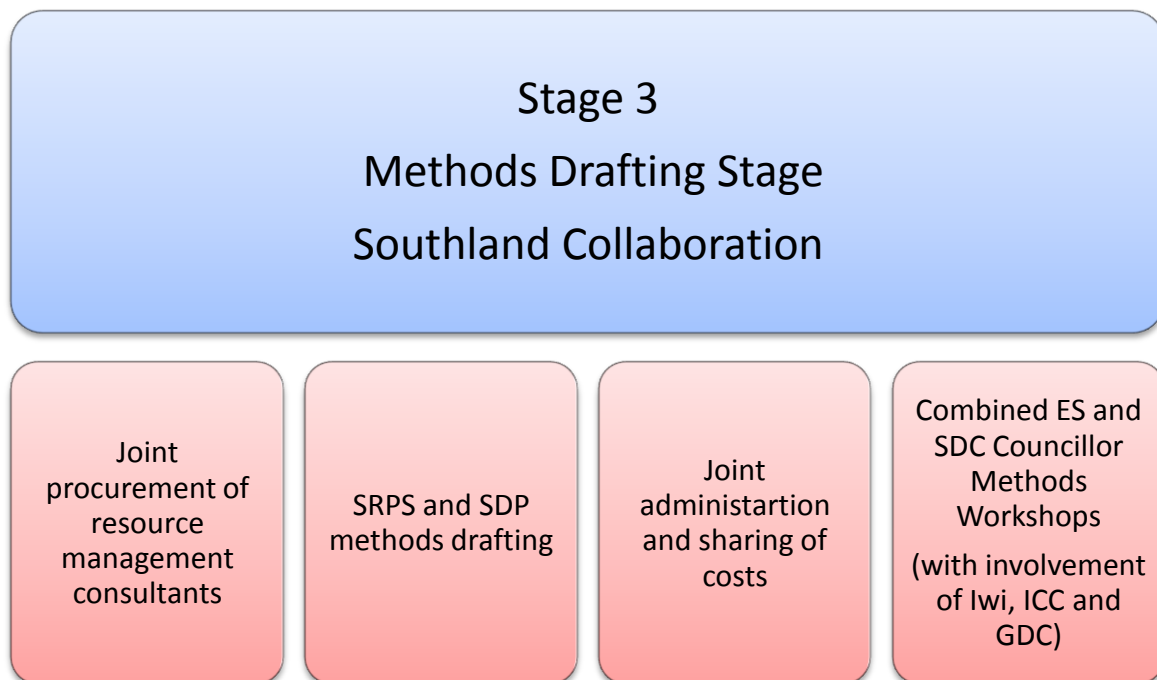


Figure 6 - SRPS/SDP collaboration stage 3

Following completion of the third and final stage of the SRPS/SDP collaboration both councils intended to progress the completion of their respective plan documents through the First Schedule RMA process separately in 2012 (Southland District Council, 2011a). However, collaboration and communication is still occurring between the Councils at a staff and Councillor level, including consultation pursuant to the Southland Regional Triennial Agreement 2010-13.

5.6 Summary

Local authorities in Southland have collaborated across a range of local government functions. The Southland Shared Services Forum has been the key catalyst for increasing levels of local authority collaboration in the region from 2002 onwards. Successful examples of collaboration have been developed in community outcomes planning, waste management, economic development and emergency management. Local authorities in Southland have increasingly used collaboration as a mechanism for effective and efficient local government. The latest example of local authority collaboration in the region is focussed on the review of

two RMA planning documents. This chapter has outlined the how the RMA concept of integrated environmental management and the requirement for district Plans to 'give effect' to the relevant RPS have led to local authority collaboration in the region. Environment Southland and the Southland District Council have also collaborated in order to achieve efficiencies in the reviews of the SRPS and SDP. The development of a collaborative approach in the reviews of these two planning documents can be seen to have been driven by an aspiration for both efficient and effective environmental management. The SRPS/SDP collaboration is the focus of the case study research discussed in further detail in the next two chapters.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The case study research sought perceptions of key participants in the Southland collaboration on the efficacy of the Project. Survey participants included staff, councillors and resource management consultants directly and indirectly involved in the Project. Survey participants were asked to assess and respond to 46 statements relating to the collaboration. The survey questions (see Appendix 2) were based on process and process value and the environmental and organisational benefits established in the evaluation framework in Chapter three.

6.2 Survey Response

Sixteen people were identified as potential research participants, sent background information and invited to complete the survey. An 88 % response rate was achieved with 14 out of 16 surveys returned. As a limited number of people were asked to participate in the survey and there was a high response rate, the desired range of respondents was achieved. The two non-respondents were indirectly involved in the collaboration. This meant that 10 of the 14 survey respondents were directly involved in the collaboration and the remaining 4 were indirectly involved. All respondents answered the 46 survey questions. Survey responses were analysed and the results are presented in this chapter.

6.3 Process criteria

The survey sought participants' perceptions of the value to the collaborating councils of the Project. Respondents were also asked to assess if the Project was beneficial and advantageous for each Council in relation to policy alignment.

6.3.1 Pre-consultation stage

Respondents' perceptions of the efficacy of the pre-consultation stage of the collaboration clearly indicate that they thought that it did enable cost effective and efficient engagement of the public through the combined pre-consultation stage (Q.1 and Q.4). All respondents except one agreed with Q.1 and Q.4 and the one remaining response was ambivalent. Respondents also clearly considered that the Project reduced unnecessary duplication through the combined pre-consultation stage (Q.8) with 100% agreement.

1. The collaborative Project provided for cost effective engagement of the public and key stakeholders through the combined pre-consultation 'Issues and Options' stage.
4. The collaborative Project provided for efficient engagement of the public and key stakeholders through the combined pre-consultation 'Issues and Options' stage (i.e. one consultation process rather than two).
8. The collaborative Project reduced unnecessary duplication in RMA policy and plan review processes.
6. Both Councils would have engaged the public and key stakeholders more effectively through separate concurrent RPS and District Plan pre-consultation stages.

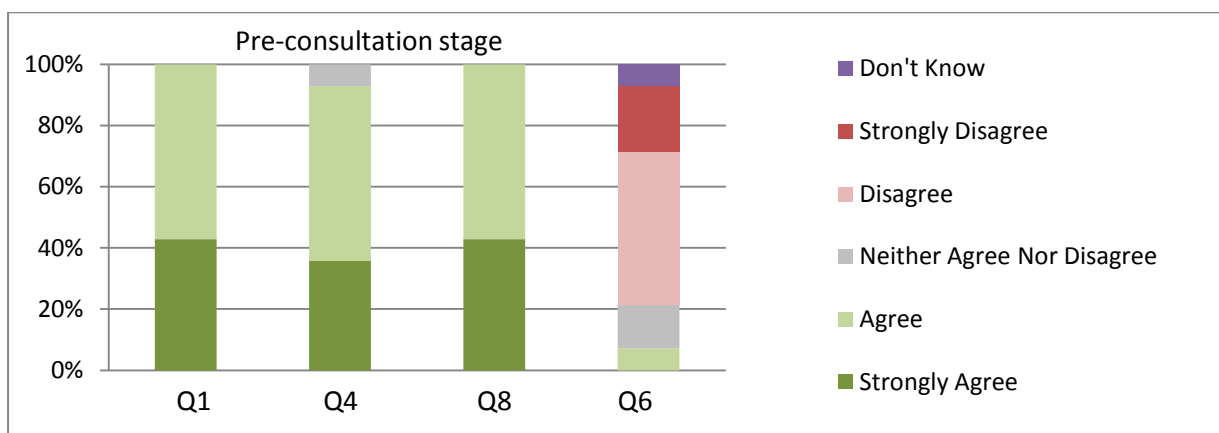


Figure 7: Perceptions of value of combined pre-consultation stage

Responses to Q.6 which asked respondents if the collaborating councils would have engaged the public and key stakeholders more effectively through separate pre-consultation phases were not as definitive. While the majority of respondents were in disagreement with the statement that separate pre-consultation stages would have been more effective there were a number of other answers. Nine out of the ten respondents that disagreed with Q.6 were directly involved in the Project. Responses to Q.6 from the four people indirectly involved in the Project varied. Two of these respondents answered 'neither agree nor disagree' (both planning consultants), one agree (a Councillor) and one disagree (a council planner). Possibly the reason for variations in some of these answers can be linked to the respondents indirect involvement in the Project. Some respondents may have felt that they were not in a position to answer due to their indirect involvement. The variation in answers to Q.6 and one ambivalent answer to Q.4 may also reflect the value based nature of these questions. Some respondents may of felt that they were not in a position to definitively answer Q.6 in particular.

When considered along with the results for Q.1, Q.4 and Q.8 given only one respondent agreed with Q.6 the results indicate that generally respondents did consider the pre-consultation stage of the Project as more effective and efficient than separate processes would have been. Focussed engagement of the public and key stakeholders was identified by the collaborating councils as one of the reasons for the development of the Project (Southland District Council, 2009). The survey results indicate that the development and use of the combined 'Issues and Options' pre-consultation stage enabled both Councils to meet this process objective.

6.3.2 Drivers for collaboration

Survey participants were asked to answer a number of questions relating to drivers of the Project. Questions were based on the councils stated reasoning for the development of the collaboration which included policy alignment, avoidance of consultation duplication and the achievement of time and cost efficiencies (Southland District Council, 2009). Of the drivers put before them all respondents agreed that the Project was initiated to improve the existing environmental management framework for the region (Q.9). Although this question did not directly refer to policy alignment as a driver for the project it can be linked to results of other questions. The policy alignment theme was picked up in questions focussed on the effectiveness of the Project including Q.15 and Q.17. The results for these two questions clearly indicate that the Project was seen as more likely to enable consistency in environmental policy across the Southland region and to provide for aligned RPS and District Plan documents than separate plan review processes. Both of the questions had a high proportion of respondents in the 'strongly agree' category (9 for Q.15 and 10 for Q.17) with all remaining answers in agreement. When considered along with results for Q.9 this can be interpreted as indication that respondents considered policy alignment as both an important outcome and driver of the Project.

9. The collaborative Project was initiated to improve the existing environmental management framework in the Southland Region.
10. The collaborative Project was initiated and developed in response to RMA process requirements.
11. The collaborative Project was initiated to save money.
12. The collaborative Project was initiated to avoid duplication in RMA consultation

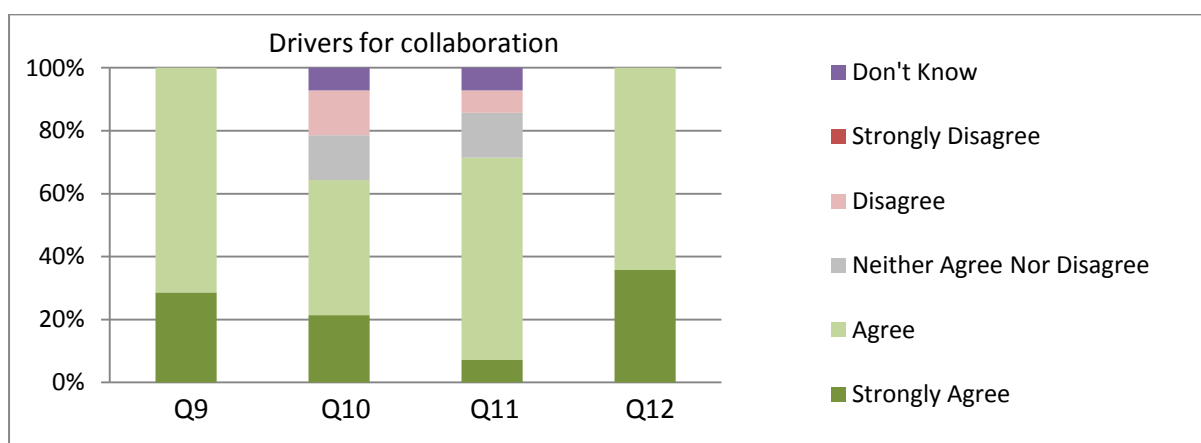


Figure 8: Perceptions of Drivers for the Project

All respondents also agreed that the avoidance of duplication in RMA consultation was a key reason for the development of the project (Q.12). This can be linked to the results for questions focussed on the efficacy of the pre-consultation stage discussed above. In particular Q.8 with all respondents agreeing that the Project reduced unnecessary duplication in consultation. Results were not as definitive for Q.11 and Q.10. The majority of respondents (10) agreed that cost savings were a driver of the Project. A similar number of respondents (9) agreed that the Project was initiated and developed in response to RMA process requirements (Q.10).

The survey results indicate that respondents considered policy alignment, an improved environmental management framework and the avoidance of duplication in RMA consultation as key drivers of the Project. Cost savings and RMA process requirements were also drivers but were of less importance.

6.3.3 Benefits and advantages

All respondents considered that the Project offered benefits that would not have been realised if the Councils had undertaken the review processes separately (Q.26). Although this survey question was fairly general it does indicate that respondents thought that the collaboration was a positive and worthwhile undertaking. Questions 27 and 28 sought respondent's feedback in regard to specific advantages for each of the collaborating councils. All respondents except one considered the project advantageous for Environment Southland in terms of opportunities for local authority feedback and comment on draft RPS provisions during the initial drafting stages (Q.27).

26. The collaborative Project offered benefits that would not have been realised if the Councils had undertaken the policy and plan review processes separately.
27. The collaborative Project was advantageous to Environment Southland in that it provided opportunities for local authority feedback and comment on draft RPS objectives, policies and methods during the initial drafting stages.
28. The collaborative Project was advantageous to Southland District Council in that it provided opportunities to align the Southland District Plan with the policy direction of the RPS outside of formal consultation requirements.

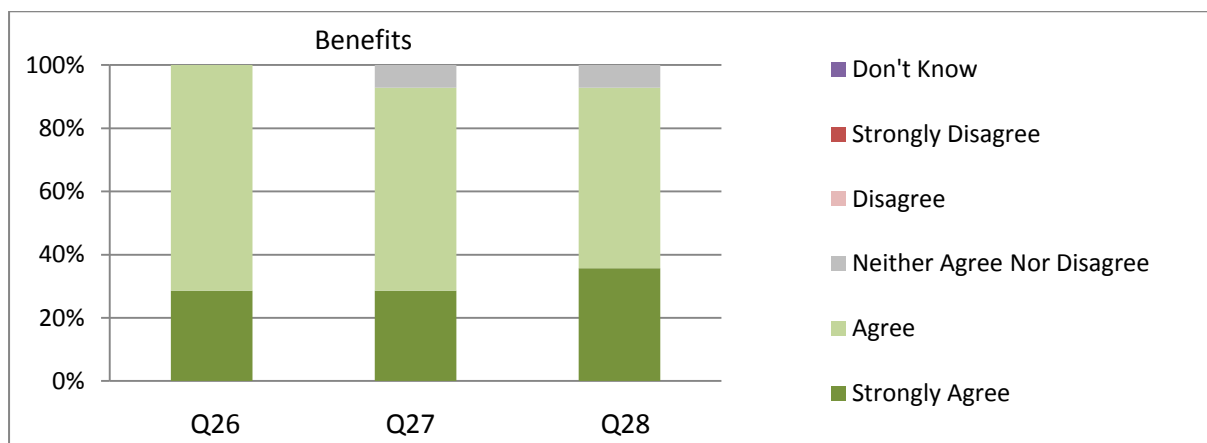


Figure 9: Perceptions of benefits and advantages of the Project

As noted in Chapter 5 the key stages of the SRPS/SDP collaboration involved joint workshops involving all the regions local authorities. This provided an opportunity for early engagement on draft RPS policy outside of formal RMA consultation processes. From a Southland District Council perspective 13 out of 14 respondents thought that the Project was advantageous as it provided opportunities to align the Southland District Plan with the policy direction of the SRPS outside of formal consultation processes (Q.28). These results indicate that the opportunity for early engagement between local authorities was viewed as a beneficial outcome. They further indicate that this would have been unlikely to occur had the councils not been involved in a collaborative project.

6.4 Policy outcome achievement

The survey sought participants' perceptions of environmental policy outcomes resulting from the collaboration. These questions focussed on Southland's environmental management framework, local authority implementation of the SRPS/SDP and the influence each local authority had on the policy direction of the other through the collaboration.

6.4.1 Environmental management

Most survey respondents (12) considered the Project as more likely to improve the existing environmental management than would have been achieved through separate review processes (Q.13). Most respondents (13) also considered the Project as more likely to provide for an improved environmental management framework for the Southland region than separate review processes (Q.19). Questions 13 and 19 were similar and responses were consistent the only difference being an additional answer in the 'neither agree nor disagree' category. Results for Q.13 and Q.19 indicate that respondents thought that positive policy outcome achievements were likely to be achieved through the collaboration.

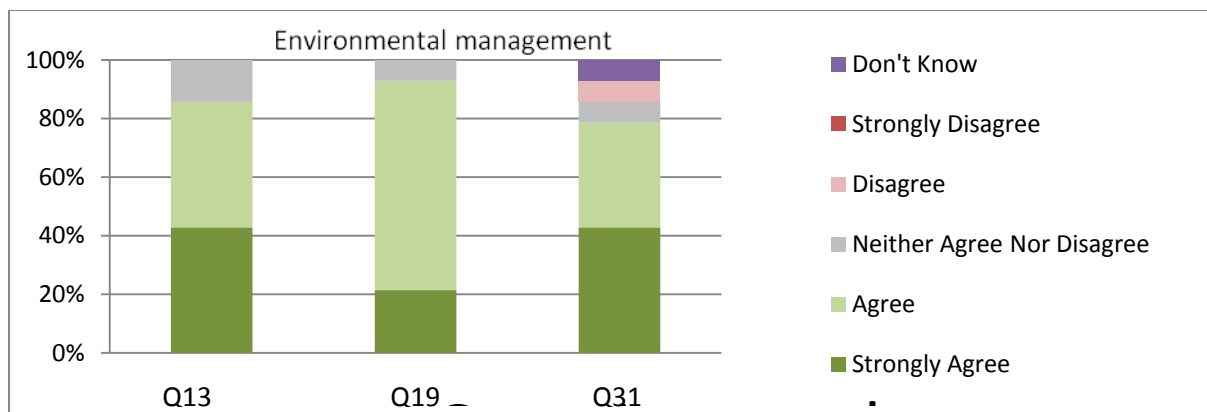


Figure 10: Perceptions of environmental management outcomes of the Project

13. The collaborative Project is more likely to improve the existing environmental management framework in the Southland region than would have been achieved through separate review processes.
19. The collaborative Project is more likely to provide for an improved environmental management framework for the Southland region than separate review processes.
31. The collaborative Project has increased the likelihood of further local authority collaboration in environmental management in the Southland region.

Results for Q.31 indicated that most respondents (11) thought that the Project would increase the likelihood of further collaboration in environmental management in the region. Answers did include a 'disagree', a 'neither agree nor disagree' and a 'don't know'. This indicates that one person may have felt that there were some problems with the Project that could perhaps influence future relationships between the local authorities. Increased likelihood of further local authority collaboration in environmental management can be viewed as a positive outcome of the collaboration and results indicate that this is likely to occur. However the disagree answer does perhaps highlight that the likelihood of further collaboration in the future could be influenced by a range of factors and can't be taken as a given.

The ambivalent and the 'don't know' answers to Q.31 may also indicate that two other respondents were unsure. As the second generation SRPS and SDP move through the formal consultation stages of the RMA outcomes of the Project are likely to become clearer. These outcomes are likely to have a bearing on the likelihood of further local authority collaboration in environmental management in Southland.

6.4.2 Effectiveness

All respondents agreed that the project enabled the councils to carry out their respective policy and plan review processes in a more effective manner than would have been achieved through separate processes (Q.14). This indicates that that generally respondents thought that the collaboration was advantageous and a worthwhile undertaking.

- 14. The collaborative project has enabled both Councils to carry out their respective policy and plan review processes in a more effective manner than would have been achieved through separate processes.
- 5. The collaborative Project through the combined 'Issues and Options' pre-consultation stage provided a useful and appropriate forum for public feedback on cross boundary resource management issues in Southland.
- 15. The collaborative Project is more likely to enable consistency in environmental policy across the Southland region than separate review processes.
- 17. The collaborative Project is more likely to provide for aligned RPS and District Plan documents than separate plan review processes.
- 18. The collaborative Project is more likely to enable the formulation of policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the Southland region than separate plan review processes.
- 29. The Southland District Plan is more likely to 'give effect' to the RPS through the collaborative Project than if the documents had been reviewed separately.

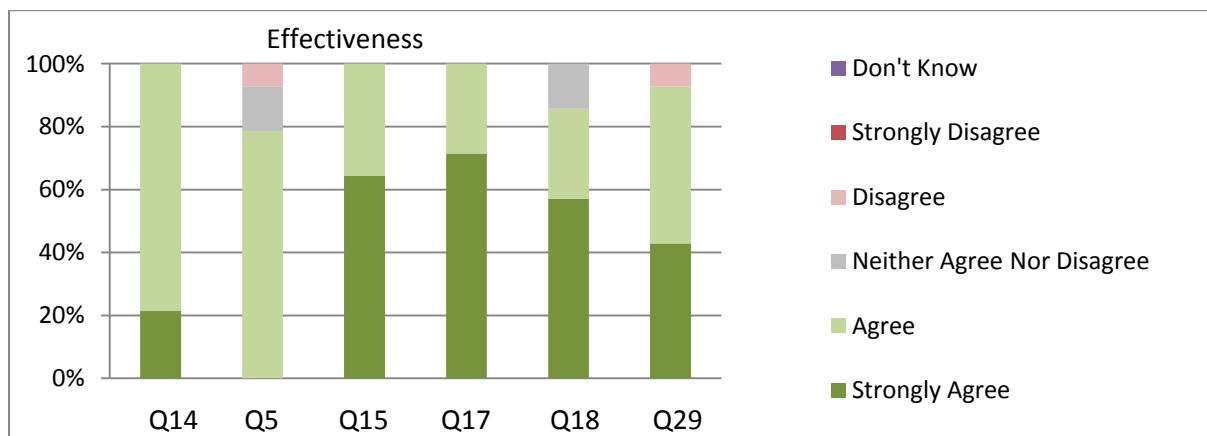


Figure 11: Perceptions on effectiveness of the Project

The majority of respondents (11) considered that the combined pre-consultation stage provided a useful and appropriate forum for public feedback on cross boundary resource management issues (Q.5). Remaining answers for this question included two ambivalent and one 'disagree' indicating that generally the Project was effective in engaging the public on cross boundary resource management issues.

Two survey questions focussed on the effectiveness of the Project in terms of consistency and alignment of environmental policy (Q.15 and Q.17)). Both of the questions had a high proportion of respondents strongly agreeing (9 for Q.15 and 10 for Q.17). These questions had the highest number of 'strongly agree' answers out of all questions in the survey. All remaining responses to the two questions were 'agree'. Respondents clearly considered that the Project was more likely to enable consistency in environmental policy and to provide for aligned RPS and District Plan documents than separate plan review processes. The survey results indicate that respondents considered the collaborative Project as an effective approach in terms of enabling policy consistency and alignment within Southland.

The majority of respondents (13) thought that the Project was more likely to enable the formulation of policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources than separate plan review processes (Q.18). There was two 'neither agree nor disagree' answers to this question one each from a person directly and indirectly involved. These answers may reflect the value based nature of the question and these respondents may not have felt they were in a position to definitively answer this question.

An Environment Southland report predating the Project highlighted the influence of the 2005 amendments to the RMA as a factor encouraging local authority collaboration (SREGC 2005). The amendments require regional and district plans to 'give effect to' the relevant RPS where previously the wording was 'have regard to'. The majority of respondents (13) agreed that the Southland District Plan is more likely to 'give effect' to the RPS through the collaborative Project than if the documents had been reviewed separately (Q.29). The one remaining answer to this question was a 'disagree' and this came from a respondent indirectly involved in the Project. These results indicate that most respondents consider the Project as an effective approach for ensuring the District Plan 'gives effect to' the RPS.

Results for Q.15, Q.17, Q.18 and Q.29 indicate that collaboration between local authorities in the review of RMA plan documents can enable the formulation of aligned and integrated planning documents.

6.4.3 Influence

Results for the survey questions relating to influence (Q.20 and Q.21) varied with a similar number of respondents agreeing with both statements (9 for Q.20 and 10 for Q.21) and all remaining answers in the 'neither agree nor disagree' category.

20. Environment Southland was able to positively influence the environmental policy direction of the Southland District Council through the collaborative Project.

21. Southland District Council was able to positively influence the environmental policy direction of Environment Southland through the collaborative Project.

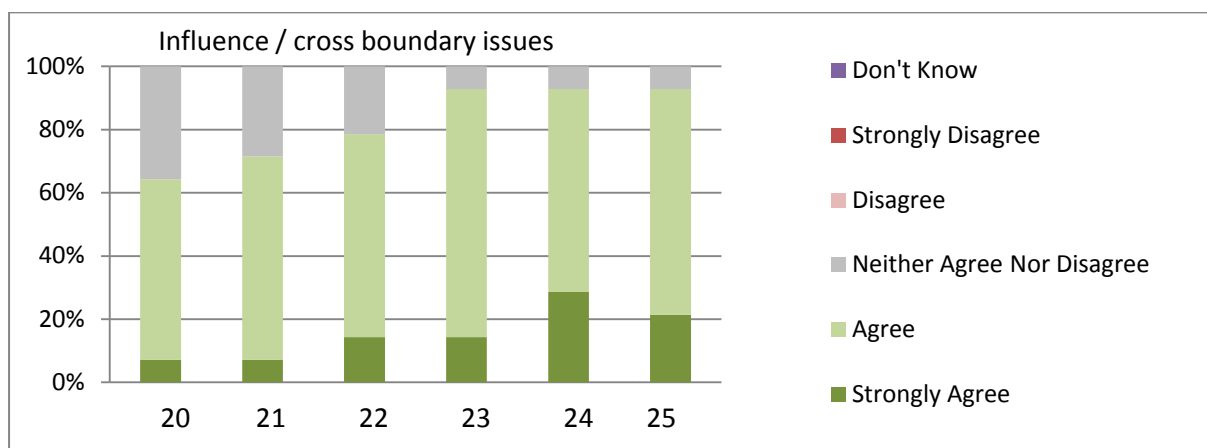


Figure 12: Perceptions of inter-council influence and management of cross-boundary issues

These results indicate that both councils were able to positively influence the policy direction of the other to a similar extent. The relatively high level of ambivalence in these answers may indicate that respondents may have felt that it was too soon for an assessment. The consistency in the answers to these questions could be taken as an indication that one council did not have more of a positive influence on the other. Results for these two questions can indicate that some positive policy outcomes did arise through each council influencing the other. A positive influence on policy direction would have been more difficult for each council to achieve if the plan review projects had been progressing separately.

6.4.4 Management of cross boundary issues

22. In comparison to separate RMA policy and plan review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of water within the Southland region.
23. In comparison to separate review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of biodiversity within the Southland region.
24. In comparison to separate review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of natural hazards within the Southland region.
25. In comparison to separate review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of outstanding natural landscapes within the Southland region.

All respondents except one considered that in comparison to separate RMA review processes the Project was more likely to enable improved environmental management of biodiversity, natural hazards and landscapes (Q.23, Q.24 and Q.25). Remaining answers to these three questions were ambivalent and each answer came from a different respondent. This indicates that while they had different views on management of these specific resources they generally agreed with the intent of this grouping of questions. The number agreeing decreased to 11 for the water question (Q.22). Again remaining answers were ambivalent again indicating that they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the questions in terms of management of water. The Project was therefore generally seen as more likely to enable improved environmental management of these cross boundary issues than separate plan review processes. This can be viewed as a positive environmental policy outcome for the Project.

6.5 Organisational benefits

The survey sought participants' perceptions of organisational benefits resulting from the collaboration.

6.5.1 Time and cost

Most respondents disagreed with questions Q.2 and Q.3 which asked if they thought that each council would have developed a draft RPS or DP more cost effectively outside of the collaboration. Results for these two questions were consistent with 12 respondents disagreeing with each question. Remaining answers were one 'don't know' and 'neither agree nor disagree' for Q.2 and two 'don't knows' for Q.3. There were no agree answers for these two questions.

Results for these two questions indicate that most respondents considered that the collaboration was a more cost effective approach for the participating local authorities than separate concurrent RMA plan review projects.

2. Environment Southland would have developed a draft Regional Policy Statement more cost effectively outside of the collaboration.
3. Southland District Council would have developed a draft District Plan more cost effectively outside of the collaboration.
7. The collaborative Project enabled both councils to achieve time and cost efficiencies throughout the collaboration.
16. The collaborative project has enabled both Councils to carry out their respective policy and plan review processes more efficient manner than would have been achieved through separate processes.
30. The collaborative Project enabled both councils to achieve time and cost efficiencies through the sharing of workloads throughout the collaboration.
41. The collaborative project enabled both Councils to achieve costs savings through joint procurement of resource management consultants.

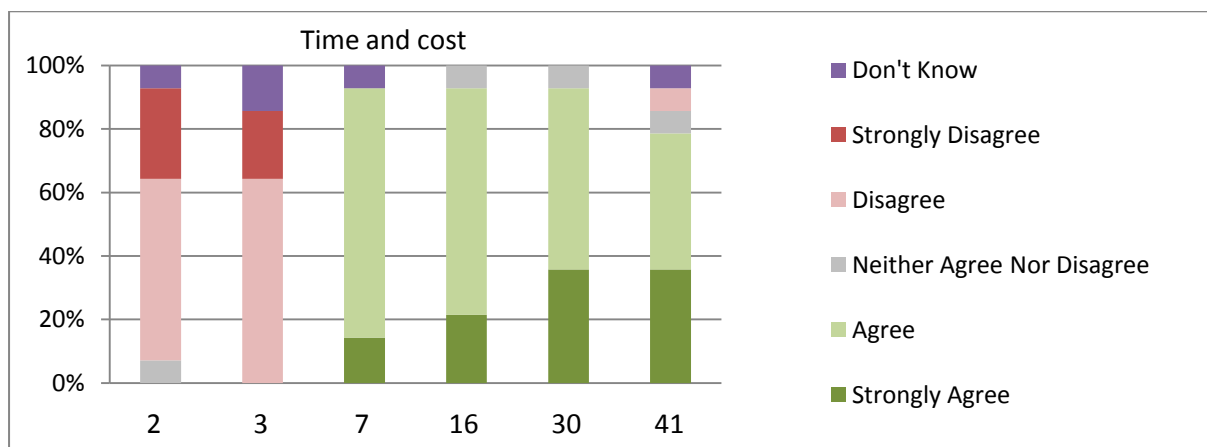


Figure 13: Perceptions of time and cost effectiveness

The majority of respondents (13) considered that the Project enabled the participating councils to achieve positive organisational benefits through the achievement of time and cost efficiencies (Q.7). Results were similar for Q.16 with 13 respondents agreeing that the Project enabled both Councils to carry out their respective policy and plan review processes more efficient manner than would have been achieved through separate processes. The same proportion of respondents also agreed that the Project enabled both councils to achieve time and cost efficiencies through the sharing of workloads throughout the collaboration (Q.30). There were no 'disagree' answers to questions Q.7, Q.16 and Q.30. This indicates along with the high proportion of agreement that the project enabled time and cost efficiencies with both councils were able to undertake their respective plan reviews more effectively than they would have been able to through separate processes.

A high proportion of respondents (11) agreed that the Project enabled both Councils to achieve costs savings through joint procurement of resource management consultants. Remaining results for this question were one 'don't know, one 'neither agree nor disagree' and one 'disagree'. The mix of answers to this question is likely to reflect the level of involvement that respondents may or may not of had in the procurement process. Three of the resource management consultants involved in the project strongly agreed with this question which is interesting as the question relates to the procurement of their services. They would therefore be in a good position to assess the cost savings the councils achieved in the procurement process. The results for this question indicate that the project gave rise to cost advantages in procurement of consultant services.

6.5.2 Skill and knowledge development

Survey respondents were asked a number of questions relating to the influence of the Project on skill and knowledge development and increased levels of knowledge and understanding.

32. The collaboration has increased staff knowledge and understanding of the other participating council's environmental management functions and responsibilities.
33. The collaboration has increased Councillor knowledge and understanding of the other participating council's environmental management functions and responsibilities.
34. The collaborative Project has positively contributed to Councillor skill development and capacity building within my council.
35. The collaborative Project has positively contributed to staff skill development and capacity building within my council.

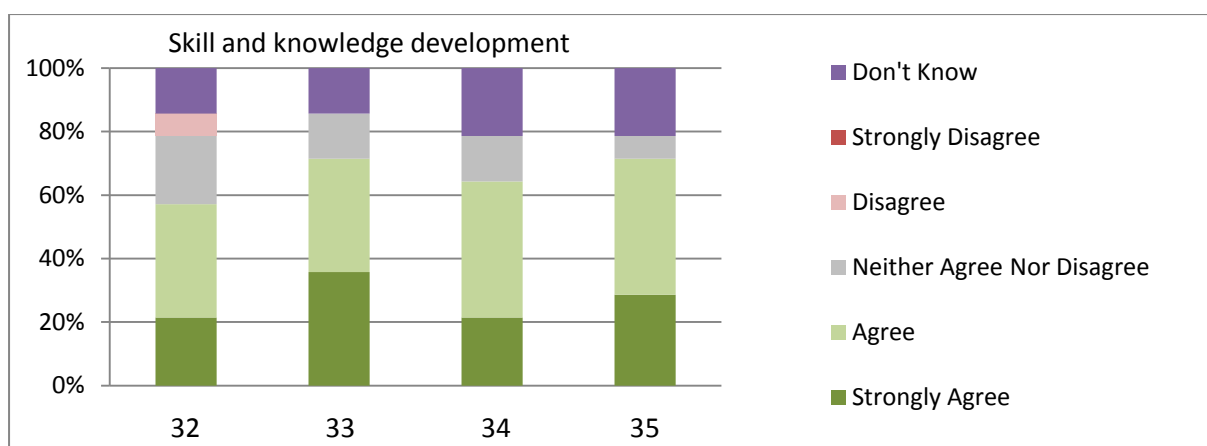


Figure 14: Perceptions of skill and knowledge development outcomes of the Project

Although these factors were not identified by the collaborating councils as key driver for the Project they were identified as assessment criteria in the evaluation framework discussed in Chapter 3. As a result Q.32 to Q.35 focussed on the extent to which the Project had given rise to these outcomes if any.

A high proportion of respondents (8) agreed that the Project increased staff knowledge and understanding of the other participating council's environmental management functions and responsibilities. This increased to 10 respondents for the equivalent question relating to staff (Q.33). One respondent disagreed with Q.32 while all remaining responses for each question were in the 'don't know' category or ambivalent. The results indicate that the project did increase staff knowledge and understanding of the other Councils environmental management functions to a certain extent. Results also indicate that this outcome was not viewed as significant as others that arose through the Project and was more of an additional benefit.

Most respondents (10) agreed that the Project had positively contributed to staff skill development and capacity building (Q.35). Slightly less (9) agreed that the Project positively contributed to Councillor skill development and capacity building within each council. There were no disagree answers for these two questions but all remaining answers were in the 'don't know' category or ambivalent. Results indicate the Project did contribute to Councillor and staff skill development and capacity building. Results also indicate that this outcome was not as important or significant as others arising through the Project and was an additional benefit.

6.5.3 Inter-council relationships

As discussed in Chapter 5 the key stages of the Project involved a number of joint Councillor and staff workshops focussed on the SRPS and SDP. These workshops involved Councillors and staff from all four of Southland's local authorities. Three questions were put to respondents focussed on inter-council relationships. A high proportion of respondents (11) considered that the Project had built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating council (Q.36). Remaining responses were ambivalent (2) with one 'don't know'.

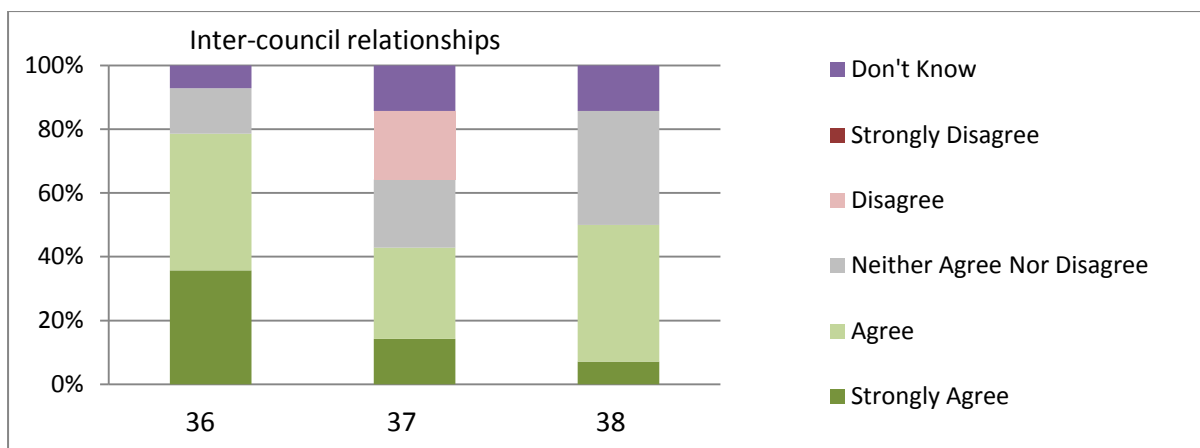


Figure 15: Perceptions of inter-council relationship outcomes of the Project

36. The collaborative Project has built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating councils.
37. The collaborative Project has built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating councils and the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils.
38. The collaborative Project has increased levels of trust between participating local authorities.

Results were not as definitive when respondents were asked if the Project had built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating councils and the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils (Q.37). Less than half of respondents agreed and three disagreed. Results for Q.37 are perhaps not that surprising given that these two councils were indirectly involved in the Project. However in relation to Q.38 half of the respondents (7) agreed that the collaboration increased levels of trust between participating local authorities (Q.38) with no respondents disagreeing. One unexpected outcome of the project is the use of draft policy provisions formulated through the collaboration in the current review of Invercargill City District Plan 2006 (Invercargill City Council, 2012), (Pokoney & Fallow, 2011). When the results for all three questions (Q.36, Q.37 and Q.38) are considered together there is an indication that the Project built and strengthened inter-council relationships and increased levels of trust to a certain extent.

6.5.4 Democracy and leadership

A high proportion of respondents (10) considered that the Project had strengthened local democracy through combined Councillor Workshops (Q.39). One respondent disagreed with Q.39, one was ambivalent and two answered 'don't know'.

A high proportion of respondents (11) also considered that the project had provided a forum for enhanced local authority leadership (Q.40). The results for Q.39 and Q.40 may indicate that combined Councillor Workshops were seen as positive forums for local democracy and leadership.

39. The collaborative Project has strengthened local democracy through combined Councillor Workshops involving Councillors and staff from all local authorities in Southland.

40. The collaboration has provided a forum for enhanced local authority leadership through combined Councillor Workshops during the pre-consultation, policy drafting and methods drafting stages of the collaboration.

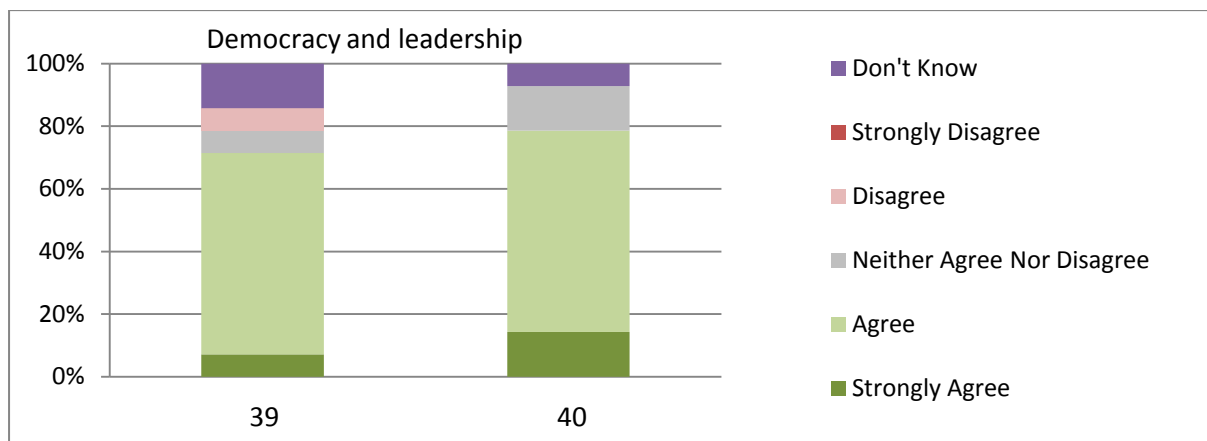


Figure 16: Perceptions of democracy and leadership outcomes of the Project

6.5.5 External support

Five survey questions focussed on external support for the project (Q.42 - Q.46). Over half of respondents (8) considered that the Project had been supported by the wider Southland community (Q.42) with remaining answers in the 'don't know' or 'neither agree nor disagree' categories. Results indicate that most respondents thought there was support from the Southland community for the Project.

42. The collaborative Project has been supported by the Southland community.

43. The collaborative Project has been supported by the Invercargill City Council.

44. The collaborative Project has been supported by the Gore District Council.

45. The collaborative Project has been supported by tangata whenua.

46. The collaborative Project has been supported by key stakeholders.

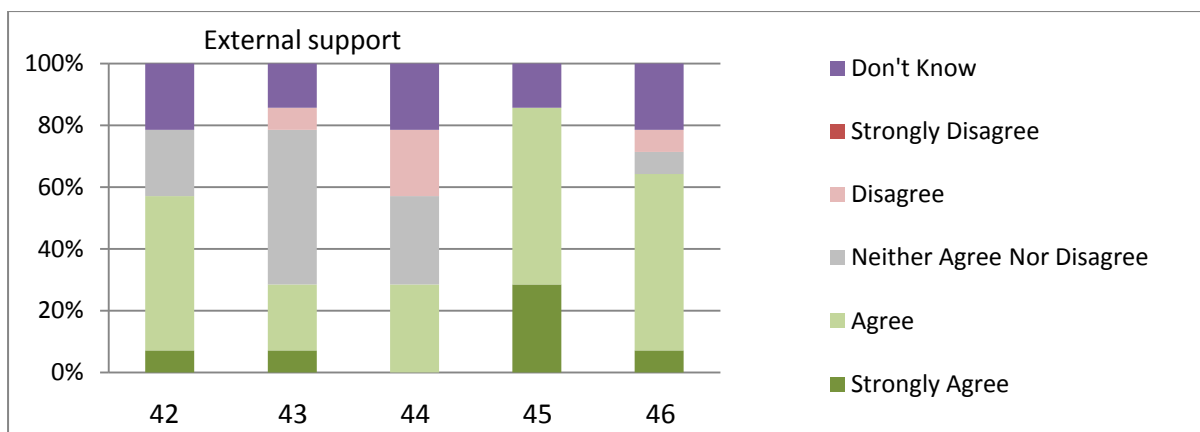


Figure 17: Perceptions of external support for the Project

There were mixed results for Q.43 and Q.44 with some support, some disagreement and the highest proportion of answers being ambivalent. A number of respondents also answered don't know'. Only four respondents agreed that the Project had been supported by Gore District and Invercargill City Councils. One respondent disagreed with the Invercargill question while three disagreed with the Gore question. These results indicate that most respondents were unsure of the extent to which the Project was supported by these two councils. It appears as though there was more doubt in regard to the level of support from Gore District Council than Invercargill City Council.

A high proportion of respondents (12) considered that the Project had been supported by tangata whenua (Q.45). As noted in Chapter 5 tangata whenua participated in all the Councillor Workshops held during the three key stages of the Project. Nine respondents considered that the Project had been supported by key stakeholders (Q.46). Remaining respondents for Q.46 either disagreed (1) were ambivalent (1) or did not know (3). Results indicate that most respondents thought there was support from key stakeholders for the Project.

6.6 Summary

This chapter has presented the results of the survey of participants involved in the Southland case study. In regard to process and process value survey results indicate that respondents considered the pre-consultation was generally a beneficial and advantageous approach in comparison to separate concurrent consultation processes. In terms of policy outcome achievement survey results indicate that respondents considered that the Project was likely to improve the Southland region's environmental management framework. Survey respondents generally considered that the collaborative Project gave rise to positive organisational benefits particularly in relation to cost efficiencies. Key themes from the survey are analysed further in Chapter 7 where the results are discussed in more detail.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses results of the survey of participants involved in the Southland case study in more detail. The chapter incorporates results from the secondary research method focussed on other New Zealand examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management. Discussion in this chapter is divided into three sections focussed on process and process value, policy outcome achievement and organisational benefits. The Chapter assesses of the extent to which the Southland Project and other New Zealand examples of collaboration have enabled efficient and effective environmental management.

7.2 Process and process value

7.2.1 Pre-consultation stage

Respondents' perceptions of the efficacy of the pre-consultation stage of the Southland collaboration clearly indicate that they thought the Project enabled cost effective and efficient engagement of the public. The majority of respondents considered the pre-consultation stage of the Project as more effective and efficient than separate processes would have been. Focussed engagement of the public and key stakeholders was identified by the collaborating councils as one of the reasons for the development of the Project (Southland District Council, 2009). The survey results indicate that the development and use of the combined 'Issues and Options' pre-consultation stage enabled both Councils to meet this objective. These results can be linked to the Wairarapa example of collaboration discussed in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter. It was noted that the three local authorities involved in this project reduced plan preparations and administration costs through the collaboration and achieved significant efficiencies (Northland Regional Council, 2009), (Halligan & Swinney, 2011). The potential benefits of collaboration in local government generally have been well documented (Paulin & Edgar, 2009), (Controller and Auditor-General, 2004). The Wairarapa and Southland examples highlight the benefits and value of collaborative processes in RMA related environmental management.

In Southland and the Wairarapa local authorities have collaborated in RMA plan and policy reviews in quite different ways. While similar drivers in the form of a desire for integrated environmental management led to the development of the collaborations the end results were quite different. The two examples contrast in that the Wairarapa example resulted in the formation of a combined district plan while the Southland example focussed on collaborative process itself. The Southland and Wairarapa examples indicate that collaborative processes in RMA plan development can enable efficient environmental management, irrespective of the format of the final documents.

In the Southland example local authorities utilised a collaborative process to achieve efficiencies without progressing to the full extent of a combined plan /policy document. They were able to reduce plan preparation and administration costs in the early stages of RMA plan review through a similar approach to the Wairarapa example. It is worth noting that a combined plan may have been more difficult in the Southland example given differences between an RPS and a district plan.

The other advantage of local authority collaboration that these two examples highlight is flexibility. Williams and MacDonald (1999) identified the importance of local authorities being able to respond in ways that reflect the range of environmental issues they face and also in a manner that reflects diversity between different communities. The Wairarapa and Southland examples provide an example of different responses to collaboration in the review of RMA plan documents. Within both regions local authorities were able to adopt collaborative approaches that reflected regional and local circumstances.

7.2.2 Drivers for collaboration

Four key drivers of local authority collaboration were identified in the Theory and Practice Chapter; fiscal constraints, higher expectations, legislation and the environmental issue itself. The results of the survey of participants in the Southland case study indicate that respondents considered policy alignment, an improved environmental management framework and the avoidance of duplication in RMA consultation the as key drivers of the Project. Cost savings and RMA process requirements were identified as being of less importance. The Wairarapa example of collaboration in RMA plan formulation had similar drivers to the Southland project with its integrated environmental management focus. Other examples of collaboration identified in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter can be characterised as having been primarily driven by the cross boundary nature of the environmental issues they focussed on. Integrated and effective management of water was the key driver for the CWMS and the Rotorua Lakes examples. The cross boundary nature of environmental issues associated with urban growth, were clearly the main factor giving rise to the Christchurch (GCUDS), Auckland (ARGS) and Hawke's Bay (HPUDS) examples. The main drivers of the Nelson and Tasman collaboration can also be identified as the environmental issue, in this case pest management. The upper North Island example of wider strategic collaboration through UNISA can be characterised as being driven by a mix of higher expectations and environmental management issues. It is worth noting that environmental issues are only part of the focus of this example of local authority collaboration and it is a very recent example.

7.2.3 Benefits and advantages

All survey respondents considered that the Southland project offered benefits that would not have been realised if the Councils had undertaken the review processes separately. Although survey questions in this section were relatively general in nature it does indicate that respondents thought that the collaboration was a positive and worthwhile undertaking. Results also indicate that the opportunity for early engagement between local authorities was viewed as a beneficial outcome. The results further indicate that this would have been unlikely to occur had the councils not been involved in a collaborative project. As noted in Chapter 5 the key stages of the SRPS/SDP collaboration involved joint workshops involving all the regions local authorities. This provided an opportunity for early engagement on draft RPS and Southland District Plan policy outside of formal RMA consultation processes.

7.2.4 Structures for collaboration

McKinlay Douglas Limited (2006) note the importance of councils themselves creating or facilitating structures that fit the issue they are seeking to address. The Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand and Collaboration in Southland chapters have detailed examples of local authorities developing collaborative approaches to environmental management through local government structures with a focus on collaboration. Examples include the development of the SRPS/SDP project through the SSSF and the Canterbury Mayoral Forum facilitating the management of water through the CWMS. In Auckland prior to amalgamation the Auckland Regional Growth Forum focused on the management of urban growth issues within the region through the ARGs. In each of these examples local authorities have chosen to collaborate in the management of these environmental issues and developed these approaches through structures focused on inter-council cooperation. Differences in the success of these collaborative structures and the number of projects that they have produced have been noted in earlier chapters.

The voluntary nature of these collaborative structures can be viewed as a positive, in that local authorities can choose to collaborate where warranted and needed. May (1995) argues that coercive intergovernmental regulatory programmes can result in distrust and implementation consisting of reluctant compliance marked by delay and half-hearted efforts. Where local authorities collaborate by choice they may be more likely to implement projects effectively. However, a negative side to voluntary arrangements can be seen in the Canterbury and Auckland examples. As noted in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter the CWMS project emerged from a history of poor local authority relationships and a lack of integrated management of water in the Canterbury region. The Auckland example of the ARGs can also be linked to a history of dysfunctional relationships between local authorities in this region and a lack of integrated management urban growth related issues.

Local government structures that can facilitate collaboration in environmental management fulfil an important role in enabling collaborative processes between local authorities.

7.3 Policy outcome achievement

7.3.1 Environmental management

The research on the Southland example of collaboration sought survey participants' perceptions of environmental policy outcomes resulting from the collaboration. These questions focussed on Southland's environmental management framework, local authority implementation of the SRPS/SDP and the influence each local authority had on the policy direction of the other through the collaboration. Results indicate that respondents considered the Southland project as more likely to provide for an improved environmental management framework for the Southland region than would have been achieved through separate review processes. Results also indicate that respondents thought that positive environmental policy outcomes were likely to be achieved through the collaboration and that there was an increased likelihood of further local authority collaboration in environmental management in the future.

The ability of local authority collaboration to contribute to improvements in environmental management is supported by the findings of the secondary research method. The Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter discussed a range of examples of collaborative environmental management. The eight projects discussed focussed on a variety of environmental issues and took various forms. Generally they are all seen as effective approaches to dealing with environmental issues. Examples of collaboration relating to water management and urban growth appear to highlight problems that arose through a lack of integration between local authorities prior to collaboration. Innes and Booher (1999) identify collaborative planning as a strategy for dealing with conflict where other practices have failed. These examples could be classed as failed approaches that have then developed into collaborative environmental management projects as an alternative approach to effective environmental management.

The value of local authority collaboration in environmental management was noted in the Theory and Practice Chapter. Conley and Moote (2003) have argued that collaborative approaches are becoming more widespread and are being promoted as promising ways to deal with complex and contentious issues. Management of water and urban growth related issues can be classified as complex and contentious environmental management issues. The documentary analysis of New Zealand examples highlights a number of examples of situations where local authorities have had to collaborate to provide for effective responses to water and urban growth related issues.

As the second generation SRPS and SDP move through the formal consultation stages of the RMA, environmental policy outcomes of the Project are likely to become clearer. This could be an area for further research. The long term environmental policy outcomes of other examples of local authority collaboration discussed in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter could also be researched in the future as many of these processes are also still in the implementation phase.

7.3.2 Effectiveness

Results from the Southland case study indicate that the Project enabled each council to carry out its respective policy and plan review processes in a more effective manner than would have been achieved through separate processes. This again indicates that generally most respondents thought that the collaboration was advantageous and a worthwhile undertaking. Respondents clearly considered that the Project was more likely to enable consistency in environmental policy and to provide for aligned RPS and District Plan documents than separate plan review processes. The survey results indicate that respondents considered the collaborative Project as an effective approach for consistency and alignment of environmental policy within Southland.

The majority of respondents thought that the Project was more likely to enable the formulation of policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources than separate plan review processes. As discussed in the Collaboration in Southland Chapter the RMA concept of integrated environmental management and the requirement for district Plans to 'give effect' to the relevant RPS appear to encourage regional and district councils to work in partnership. The SRPS/SDP project can be seen as an example of inter-council cooperation or partnership in the review of these two planning documents. A report predating the start of the Southland project highlighted the influence of the 2005 amendments to the RMA as a factor encouraging local authority collaboration (Halligan, 2007). The amendments require regional and district plans to 'give effect to' the relevant RPS where previously the wording was 'have regard to'. Results indicate that respondents considered the Southland District Plan as more likely to 'give effect' to the RPS as a result of the collaborative Project than if the documents had been reviewed separately. Collaboration in the reviews of regional policy statements and district plans could provide an effective approach for ensuring that District Plans 'give effect to' the relevant RPS.

It is worth noting here that in terms of effective environmental management results from the Southland case study are only indicative. Neither of these RMA planning documents has gone through the Schedule 1 public consultation process of the Act. As one survey respondent noted in regard to questions on alignment between the two planning documents;

The jury is still out. It is too early to confirm whether the RPS and District Plan are suitably aligned. Hopefully if suitable alignment is achieved, then these documents will make clear statements to our communities and customers about our collective desired environmental outcomes and will set clear environmental bottom lines (survey respondent, 2012).

Assessing the effectiveness of the other examples of local authority collaboration discussed in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter is also difficult. The secondary research method focussed on analysis of documents relating to these eight examples. There are a number of environmental outputs from these collaborations in the form of the CWMS, GCUDS, HPUDS ARGS, the Strategy for the Lakes of the Rotorua District and the Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy. Each of these outputs can be viewed as effective examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management. For each output local authorities have successfully collaborated to produce a joint strategy focused on the management of a cross boundary environmental issue. As already noted the actual policy outcome achievements of these collaborations or lack of them may not become apparent until some time in the future. Again as with alignment of the two Southland documents this could be an area for further research.

7.3.3 Influence

Survey results indicate that through the Southland collaboration the councils were able to positively influence the policy directions of the other council to a certain extent. The survey questions relating to influence were focussed on the particular relationship between an RPS and district plans. As detailed in the Collaboration in Southland Chapter, collaboration in the review of these plan documents appears to be uncommon. No other examples of collaborative RPS /district Plan projects have been identified. These results indicate that there was some influence in the policy drafting stages of the Project. A positive influence on policy direction would have been more difficult for each council to achieve if the plan review projects had been progressing separately.

7.3.4 Management of cross boundary issues

Results from the Southland Project indicate that it was generally seen as more likely to enable improved environmental management of a range of cross boundary issues than separate plan review processes. This can be viewed as a positive environmental policy outcome of the Project. Questions relating to specific cross boundary environmental issues focused on the effectiveness of the Southland Project. The effectiveness of the collaborations discussed in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter has been discussed above.

7.4 Organisational benefits

7.4.1 Time and cost

Survey results of the Southland Project relating to time and cost efficiencies indicate that both local authorities were able to achieve time and cost efficiencies through the joint 'Issues and Options' pre-consultation stage, procurement of consultants and through joint administration of the project. Results indicate that most respondents considered that the collaboration was a more cost effective approach for the participating local authorities than separate concurrent RMA plan review projects. Results also indicate that the councils were able to undertake their respective plan reviews more effectively than they would have been able to through separate processes. Reduced plan preparation and administrations costs were also noted as positive outcomes of the Wairarapa collaboration. Costs efficiencies of other forms of collaboration were not detailed in documents analysed as part of Chapter 4. However, it was noted that the Rotorua collaboration had received extensive central government funding indicating that cost efficiencies were unlikely to be a key focus of this project. Potentially administration costs would be one area where all collaborations are able to achieve efficiencies depending on specific arrangements between collaborating councils.

7.4.2 Skill and knowledge

Survey respondents were asked a number of questions relating to the influence of the Project on skill and knowledge development and increased levels of knowledge and understanding. As noted in the Theory and Practice Chapter it has been argued that collaboration can give rise to a range of benefits including those associated with the co-ordination of services, provision of affordable access to expertise and strengthening of organisational capability (The Office of the Auditor-General, 2004). These factors were not identified by the collaborating councils as key driver for the Southland project but were identified as assessment criteria in the evaluation framework discussed in Chapter 3. A high proportion of respondents agreed that the Project increased staff knowledge and understanding of the other participating council's environmental management functions and responsibilities. This level of support increased for the equivalent question relating to staff. The results indicate that the project did increase staff knowledge and understanding of the other Councils environmental management functions. Results also indicate that this outcome was not viewed as significant as others that arose through the Project and was more of a bonus or additional benefit rather than a key driver.

7.4.3 Inter-council relationships

As discussed in Chapter 5 the key stages of the Southland project involved a number of joint Councillor and staff workshops focussed on draft SRPS/ SDP provisions. These workshops involved Councillors and staff from all four of Southland's local authorities.

A high proportion of respondents considered that the Project had built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating councils. One survey respondent provided additional comment in regard to this point;

Working together in the manner that has occurred here will have significant benefits for the environmental quality of the Southland Region. Each Council will now have a better understanding of the issues faced and the outcomes sought by the other. This will lead to Councils working constructively together rather than the current approach which has generally been to fob off certain problems as not within their area responsibility (survey respondent, 2012).

Results were not as definitive when respondents were asked if the Project had built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating councils and the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils. Less than half of respondents agreed and three disagreed. These results are perhaps not that surprising given that these two councils were indirectly involved in the Project. However, one perhaps unexpected outcome of the project is the use of draft policy provisions formulated through the collaboration in the current review of Invercargill City District Plan 2006 (Invercargill City Council, 2012). Invercargill City Council has also indicated that the Council intends to align the rural provisions of the Invercargill District Plan, where possible, with the Southland District Plan provisions, with the ICC plan review process is being conducted concurrently with the Southland District Plan Review (Invercargill City Council, 2012). The Invercargill City Council has also used the draft issues, objectives and policies formulated through the SRPS/ SDP collaboration in the review of the rural sections of its District Plan (Pokoney & Fallow, 2011). In contrast there was some concern from the Gore District Council in regard to a lack of involvement in the SRPS/SDP collaboration (Gerken, 2011a).

7.4.4 Democracy and leadership

The results for questions relating to combined Councillor Workshops of the Southland project were seen as positive forums for local democracy and leadership. It has been argued that collaborative environmental management will result in governmental agencies and representatives having to face new and emerging challenges with perhaps the greatest contemporary challenge being that such collaboration can require governmental institutions to share, and perhaps relinquish, control over environmental management (Koontz et al., 2004). The Southland project through the use of joint Councillor workshops and the involvement of all the regions local authorities provided a forum for political discussion on the environmental management approaches of the two RMA plan documents. Similar examples of high level discussion of environmental issues across local authorities can be seen in the Canterbury Mayoral Forum involvement in the CWMS.

It is likely that all of the collaborative projects discussed in the Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter would have also involved forums for open discussion and eventually agreements on approaches to environmental issues.

7.4.5 External support

The survey on the Southland collaboration asked respondents a number of questions about external support for the Project. Results indicate that most respondents thought there was support from the Southland community for the Project. There were mixed results in regard to the extent that the Project was supported by the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils. Only four respondents agreed that the Project had been supported by Gore District and Invercargill City Councils. These results indicate that most respondents were unsure of the extent to which the Project was supported by these two councils. It appears as though there was more doubt in regard to the level of support from Gore District Council than Invercargill City Council. The extent to which the Southland collaboration had an effect on inter-council relationships has been noted above. The Invercargill City Council's use of draft policy provisions formulated through the collaboration appears to indicate that this council has obtained some benefit from the Project. The Gore District Council in contrast appears to have concerns about its level of involvement in the Project. A high proportion of respondents considered that the Project had been supported by tangata whenua. As noted in Chapter 5 tangata whenua participated in all the Councillor Workshops held during the three key stages of the Project. The definitive response to this question may reflect the high level of involvement that tangata whenua had during these workshops. Results also indicated that most respondents thought there was support from key stakeholders for the Project.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the results of the primary and secondary research methods with references to relevant discussion from the theory and practice of collaboration detailed in Chapter 2. The research results from the Southland Project and other New Zealand examples indicate that local authorities have been able to achieve efficient and effective environmental management across a range of environmental issues through collaboration.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Local authority collaboration in environmental management can be linked to wider debates around models and arrangements for local government. Local government reform is currently a key work area for central government and pressure for local authorities to undertake their functions in an efficient and effective manner is ongoing. Collaboration between local governments was introduced in Chapter 1 as an alternative or complementary approach to local authority amalgamation. Local authority collaboration in environmental management was then identified as the focus of this research. Environmental management provides a useful research focus for local authority collaboration as it is a function undertaken by all local governments. This research has examined the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management. This final chapter concludes the research and answers the primary research question; can collaboration between local authorities enable efficient and effective environmental management?

8.2 General Observations

The research results relating to the Southland case study have shown that local authority collaboration can enable efficiencies in RMA plan and policy review processes. This outcome compares favourably with similar advantages that arose out of the combined Wairarapa District Plan project. A key difference between these two examples is that the end result of the Southland collaboration was not a combined plan document as provided for under Section 80 of the RMA. The case study has shown that local authorities can collaborate in RMA plan review processes without needing to proceed to the extent of a combined plan. Potentially Environment Southland and Southland District Council may have avoided some of the difficulties and complexities that can arise in drafting a combined document while still achieving efficiencies through a collaborative process. Another outcome of the SRPS /SDP project is that it has shown that local authorities at different levels of local government can collaborate in RMA plan and policy review processes. In the Southland region the timing of the plan review projects, a desire to achieve efficiencies, the requirement for district plans to 'give effect to' the relevant RPS and the RMA concept of integrated environmental management can be viewed as factors that gave rise to the collaboration. The Southland case study has shown that local authorities are able to collaborate effectively in the reviews of RMA plan and policy documents across different levels of local government.

Research results from the Southland case study indicate that the collaborative project has provided for efficient and effective environmental management. Analysis of documents relating to other New Zealand examples of local authority collaboration supports this finding.

The secondary research has also shown that collaboration between local governments can provide an efficacious approach to environmental management across a range of environmental issues. Local authorities have collaborated successfully in a number of regions across a variety of environmental management related projects and strategies. Research results have shown that collaborations often begin as non-statutory strategies before developing into regulatory responses at a later date. The environmental management collaborations discussed have involved regional, city and district councils located throughout New Zealand. A key driver for these collaborative projects has been the need for efficient and effective management of cross boundary environmental issues. Examples of collaboration between local governments have arisen in response to environmental issues associated with water management and urban growth in Canterbury, Auckland and Hawke's Bay. The other key environmental driver of collaboration between local governments identified was a desire for integrated environmental management as outlined in examples from the Wairarapa, Southland and Nelson/ Tasman regions. The theory and practice chapter of this research has shown that collaboration between agencies can facilitate effective management of environmental issues. It has been noted that environmental issues often span geographic, organisational and institutional boundaries (Koontz et al., 2004). The cross boundary nature of many environmental issues appears to point towards a need for local authorities to collaborate for effective management where these circumstances apply.

This research has shown that the extent of local authority collaboration in environmental management varies considerably between regions and there are a number of reasons for this level of variance. The circumstances which give rise to local authority collaboration tend to vary and be shaped by a range of factors including the environmental issue, geography, local body politics and the state of existing inter-council relationships. The research has shown that local authorities are free to develop collaborative responses to environmental problems or issues whenever they choose. Local authority collaboration can be viewed as being implicit in the RMA 1991 concept of integrated environmental management and is encouraged under the LGA 2002. The Southland case study research has shown that local governments are able to collaborate across a broad range of local authority functions not just those related to environmental management. The Collaboration in Southland chapter discussed four other examples of collaboration between local authorities in Southland and noted that this was only a small representation of the number of collaborative projects developed through the Southland Shared Services Forum (SSSF). The SSSF was identified as a key factor in the successful development of collaborations between local governments in the Southland region. More recently Canterbury Mayoral Forum appears to have played a similar role in facilitating local authority collaboration in the management of water and urban growth issues in Canterbury.

A common theme that emerged through both the primary and secondary research methods was the underlying tensions that exist between local authorities. In some cases these tensions appear to be linked back to the local authority amalgamations of 1989. These tensions are heightened in regions where proposals for amalgamation are currently being debated. The value of local authority collaboration as an alternative to amalgamation has been used by both sides of these debates, as a reason for or against amalgamation. Irrespective of the outcomes of proposals for amalgamation or central governments current local government reform process, collaboration between local authorities can be viewed as a valuable and useful approach to local government. Tensions between local governments with differing views on the benefits and costs of amalgamation may discourage the consideration of collaboration as a management option in some situations. This research has shown that local authority collaboration in environmental management may be required for effective management of cross boundary environmental issues and integrated environmental management. If effective environmental management requires a cross boundary response then local governments should collaborate or at least consider it as an option.

The Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand chapter identified a range of examples of local authority collaboration both regulatory and non-regulatory in nature. Examples relating to water management and urban growth were predominantly driven by a need to for an integrated approach in the resolution of these cross boundary environmental issues. Examples in the region's of Auckland and Canterbury can be linked to recent central government reviews on local governance. These reviews highlighted a lack of collaboration and integration between local authorities. They also noted that better relationships between local authorities and effective collaboration could have improved environmental management. The governance reviews did cite successful examples of local authority collaboration in environmental management in both the Canterbury and Auckland regions but it appeared as though it may have been a situation of "too little, too late". As established in the introduction local authority collaboration can provide an alternative or complimentary approach to local government amalgamation. Irrespective of whether or not amalgamation will or does occur local authority collaboration can be a valuable and efficacious approach to environmental management and local government functions generally. Local governments should consider collaboration as an approach to the management of specific environment issues and environmental management generally at an early stage.

There are limitations to this research that are acknowledged, including a need for further research and assessment of the cost effectiveness of the New Zealand examples discussed in Chapter 4. The Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter analysed secondary sources of information through a document analysis and as such did not involve

in-depth research on the examples of collaboration that were discussed. Most of the environmental projects discussed in this research are still progressing. The value of these collaborations and their final outcomes should ideally be assessed once they have been completed. In regard to the Southland case study it is also acknowledged that the final value of this collaborative process, its policy outcomes and organisational benefits needs to be assessed over longer timeframes. A number of the outcomes of the Southland collaboration are likely to become clearer as the two planning documents progress through the RMA plan and policy review process and become operative.

8.3 Recommendations

As noted in Chapter 3 environmental management is a function undertaken by all local authorities in New Zealand irrespective of the model of local government in place in any region. Successful collaborations in environmental management may therefore provide a template for collaboration between local authorities generally irrespective of local government functions. It is noted that the success of a number of the collaborations outlined in this research needs to be assessed over the longer term. However, value in collaborative processes and the positive environmental and organisational benefits of the collaborations researched indicate that it is a valuable and efficacious approach that could be utilised more regularly. It is noted that collaboration may not always be appropriate and local authorities will be able to undertake most of their environmental management functions independently. Where cross boundary environmental issues arise that warrant it or a need or opportunity for integrated environmental management is identified it should be considered. A key advantage of collaboration is its optional nature and the ability for local authorities to collaborate within existing models of local government. Collaborative projects can be developed on an as needed basis where cross boundary environmental issues arise or there is the will and need for integrated environmental management.

This research examined the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management through a Southland case study. Chapter 5 provided background to the case study and discussed collaboration between local governments in Southland across a range of functions. This chapter highlighted the role of the Southland Shared Services Forum (SSSF) and noted that generally there was a high level of collaboration between local governments in Southland. Central government through the 'Smarter Government - Stronger Communities' (the SGSC review) is intending reform local government in the near future. This makes it a useful time to examine the role of the SSSF and the value and efficacy of collaborative processes developed through it.

An independent review of the SSSF and its role in enabling efficient and effective local government in Southland could potentially be a useful study that could inform discussions about the future of local government in Southland.

8.4 Conclusion

This research has shown that collaboration between local governments can be fiscally efficient, whilst also providing an effective approach to the management of environmental issues. The research has also shown that local authority collaboration in environmental management can be effective across a range of environmental issues with local authorities free to collaborate within existing models of local government. The cross boundary nature of many environmental issues has been identified as a key driver of collaboration between local authorities. Collaboration may be required for effective environmental management of an environmental issue. Integrated environmental management was also identified as a driver of collaboration in environmental policy and plan development processes. As with all local government functions another key driver of local authority collaboration is demand for efficiencies. Collaboration can also be viewed as being implicit in the requirements of legislation including the LGA 2002 and RMA 1991. Local authority collaboration in environmental management can be viewed as a valuable and efficacious approach that can enable effective and efficient environmental management.

The research results can also be applied on a wider basis beyond environmental management to local government generally. Local authority collaboration can be viewed as an efficient and effective approach to local government and a worthwhile approach for local governments to consider across a range of functions. Local authority collaboration can also be viewed as an alternative to amalgamation. It is a useful time to consider alternatives given current proposals for further local government reform and calls for further council amalgamations. This research has shown that collaboration between local authorities is consistent with the concept of “better” as opposed to “bigger” local government.

8.5 Further research

Future research on the value and efficacy of the SRPS /SDP collaborative project could be undertaken once both planning documents have been through the RMA first schedule public consultation process. The extent to which the Southland Project has enabled policy outcome achievements such as improved management of cross boundary environmental issues and aligned policy and plan frameworks will become clearer once the two RMA plan and policy documents become operative.

There is some evidence to indicate that levels of local authority collaboration may have increased. The Local Government Collaboration in New Zealand Chapter and the chapters relating to the Southland case study detailed examples of local authority collaboration across a range of council functions. Most examples emerged after the enactment of LGA 2002. Further research could be undertaken on the extent to which the LGA 2002 has had an influence on levels of local authority collaboration. Potentially this could involve comparisons to levels of local government collaboration prior to the LGA 2002. This could show the extent to which the LGA 2002 has enabled inter-governmental collaboration and cooperation which is a principle of the Act.

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Appendix 1 - Information sheet and consent form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Can collaboration between local authorities enable efficient and effective environmental management?

INFORMATION SHEET

Hello

My name is Luke McSorley and I am currently undertaking thesis research as part of my studies for the Masters of Resource and Environmental Planning degree at Massey University. The focus of the research is collaboration between local authorities in environmental management.

Project Description

As part of the research I will be conducting a number of interviews and a survey to assess opinion on the value and efficacy of local authority collaboration in environmental management. I would like to invite you to participate in the interview and complete the attached survey. Your experience in local authority collaboration could provide valuable insights relevant to my research and your opinions could make an important contribution. Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project at any time without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Participants

Potential research participants have been identified as a result of their involvement in the Regional Policy Statement for Southland /Southland District Plan collaborative review project. This project is being used in the research as a case study example. Potential research participants will include council staff, elected representatives and resource management consultants that have been directly or indirectly involved in the Southland project.

Data will be collected through a survey initially and possibly through follow up interviews. The interview questions will be sent to you prior to the interview if these are needed. An audio tape and transcription of the interviews will be collected and stored securely in accordance with university policy. Participants' responses will be collated to retain anonymity.

It is expected that the interview will take no more than 60 minutes.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s).

Data Management

Data collected as part of the case study will only be used for the purposes of this research, will be destroyed when the research is completed and will not be released to third parties. The survey and interview results will be used in a way that individual respondents cannot be identified. A short summary of results will be made available to respondents.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;

Te Kūnenga
ki Pūrehuroa

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AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Project Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this research please contact me at lukemcsoriley@hotmail.com
Tel: 03 214 2150 Cell: 021 0403856.

The supervisor for this research is Dr Jeffrey McNeill, Massey University, who can be contacted:
J.K.McNeill@massey.ac.nz Tel: 06 356 9099 ext 2507.

Thank you for your time.

Regards

Luke McSoriley
Masters Student
School of People, Environment & Planning
Massey University
Tel: 03 2142150
Cell: 021 0403856
lukemcsoriley@hotmail.com

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s) please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics) telephone 06-350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

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TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Can collaboration between local authorities enable efficient and effective environmental management?

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name - printed

Appendix 2 - Survey

1

Background information

Which of the following describes your position in local government and your involvement in the Southland example of local authority collaboration in environmental management?

Organisation Type	Tick <input type="checkbox"/>	Position in Organisation	Tick <input type="checkbox"/>	Involvement	Tick <input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Council		Senior Manager		Staff member or Councillor of Environment Southland or Southland District Council	
Territorial Authority		Senior Staff		Staff member or Councillor of Gore District Council or Invercargill City Council	
Resource Management Consultant		Elected Representative		Resource management consultant directly involved	
		Consultant		Resource management consultant indirectly involved	

Local authority collaboration in environmental management – Southland case study survey

Instructions

For each question, circle the number that best describes the extent to which you agree with the following statements using the key below.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know

Do not think too long about your answers – your first, quick response is often the best. Rather, try and work through the questions at a steady pace. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

The following questions relate to the Regional Policy Statement for Southland /Southland District Plan Collaborative Review Project (the collaborative Project).

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know

1. The collaborative Project provided for cost effective engagement of the public and key stakeholders through the combined pre-consultation 'Issues and Options' stage.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. Environment Southland would have developed a draft Regional Policy Statement more cost effectively outside of the collaboration.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. Southland District Council would have developed a draft District Plan more cost effectively outside of the collaboration.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The collaborative Project provided for efficient engagement of the public and key stakeholders through the combined pre-consultation 'Issues and Options' stage (i.e. one consultation process rather than two).

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. The collaborative Project through the combined 'Issues and Options' pre-consultation stage provided a useful and appropriate forum for public feedback on cross boundary resource management issues in Southland.

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. Both Councils would have engaged the public and key stakeholders more effectively through separate concurrent RPS and District Plan pre-consultation stages.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7. The collaborative Project enabled both councils to achieve time and cost efficiencies throughout the collaboration.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. The collaborative Project reduced unnecessary duplication in RMA policy and plan review processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

9. The collaborative Project was initiated to improve the existing environmental management framework in the Southland

1 2 3 4 5 6

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know

10. The collaborative Project was initiated and developed in response to RMA process requirements.

1 2 3 4 5 6

11. The collaborative Project was initiated to save money.

1 2 3 4 5 6

12. The collaborative Project was initiated to avoid duplication in RMA consultation.

1 2 3 4 5 6

13. The collaborative Project is more likely to improve the existing environmental management framework in the Southland region than would have been achieved through separate review processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

14. The collaborative project has enabled both Councils to carry out their respective policy and plan review processes in a more effective manner than would have been achieved through separate processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

15. The collaborative Project is more likely to enable consistency in environmental policy across the Southland region than separate review processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

16. The collaborative project has enabled both Councils to carry out their respective policy and plan review processes more efficient manner than would have been achieved through separate processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

17. The collaborative Project is more likely to provide for aligned RPS and District Plan documents than separate plan review processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

18. The collaborative Project is more likely to enable the formulation of policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the Southland region than separate plan review processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know

19. The collaborative Project is more likely to provide for an improved environmental management framework for the Southland region than separate review processes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

20. Environment Southland was able to positively influence the environmental policy direction of the Southland District Council through the collaborative Project.

1 2 3 4 5 6

21. Southland District Council was able to positively influence the environmental policy direction of Environment Southland through the collaborative Project.

1 2 3 4 5 6

22. In comparison to separate RMA policy and plan review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of water within the Southland region.

1 2 3 4 5 6

23. In comparison to separate review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of biodiversity within the Southland region.

1 2 3 4 5 6

24. In comparison to separate review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of natural hazards within the Southland region.

1 2 3 4 5 6

25. In comparison to separate review processes the collaborative Project is more likely to enable improved environmental management of outstanding natural landscapes within the Southland region.

1 2 3 4 5 6

26. The collaborative Project offered benefits that would not have been realised if the Councils had undertaken the policy and plan review processes separately.

1 2 3 4 5 6

27. The collaborative Project was advantageous to Environment Southland in that it provided opportunities for local authority feedback and comment on draft RPS objectives, policies and methods during the initial drafting stages.

1 2 3 4 5

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know

28. The collaborative Project was advantageous to Southland District Council in that it provided opportunities to align the Southland District Plan with the policy direction of the RPS outside of formal consultation requirements.

1 2 3 4 5 6

29. The Southland District Plan is more likely to 'give effect' to the RPS through the collaborative Project than if the documents had been reviewed separately.

1 2 3 4 5 6

30. The collaborative Project enabled both councils to achieve time and cost efficiencies through the sharing of workloads throughout the collaboration.

1 2 3 4 5 6

31. The collaborative Project has increased the likelihood of further local authority collaboration in environmental management in the Southland region.

1 2 3 4 5 6

32. The collaboration has increased staff knowledge and understanding of the other participating council's environmental management functions and responsibilities.

1 2 3 4 5 6

33. The collaboration has increased Councillor knowledge and understanding of the other participating council's environmental management functions and responsibilities.

1 2 3 4 5 6

34. The collaborative Project has positively contributed to Councillor skill development and capacity building within my council.

1 2 3 4 5 6

35. The collaborative Project has positively contributed to staff skill development and capacity building within my council.

1 2 3 4 5 6

36. The collaborative Project has built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating councils.

1 2 3 4 5 6

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know

37. The collaborative Project has built and strengthened inter-council relationships between the two participating councils and the Gore District and Invercargill City Councils.

1 2 3 4 5 6

38. The collaborative Project has increased levels of trust between participating local authorities.

1 2 3 4 5 6

39. The collaborative Project has strengthened local democracy through combined Councillor Workshops involving Councillors and staff from all local authorities in Southland.

1 2 3 4 5 6

40. The collaboration has provided a forum for enhanced local authority leadership through combined Councillor Workshops during the pre-consultation, policy drafting and methods drafting stages of the collaboration.

1 2 3 4 5 6

41. The collaborative project enabled both Councils to achieve costs savings through joint procurement of resource management consultants.

1 2 3 4 5 6

42. The collaborative Project has been supported by the Southland community.

1 2 3 4 5 6

43. The collaborative Project has been supported by the Invercargill City Council.

1 2 3 4 5 6

44. The collaborative Project has been supported by the Gore District Council.

1 2 3 4 5 6

45. The collaborative Project has been supported by tangata whenua.

1 2 3 4 5 6

46. The collaborative Project has been supported by key stakeholders.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix 3 - Ethics low risk notification letter



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

24 November 2011

Luke McSoriley
53 Fulton Street
Gladstone
INVERCARGILL 9810

Dear Luke

Re: Can Collaboration between Local Authorities Enable Efficient and Effective Environmental Management?

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 1 November 2011.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research."

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. O'Neill".

John G O'Neill (Professor)
**Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)**

cc Dr Jeff McNeill
School of People, Environment and Planning
PN331

Mrs Mary Roberts, HoS Secretary
School of People, Environment and Planning
PN331

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Appendix 4 - SSSF Memorandum of Understanding 2010

Inter Council Collaboration Projects

1.	WasteNet/Waste Advisory Group	SDC, GDC, ICC
2.	Wastebusters Group	ICC, GDC, SDC, ES
3.	Southern Rural Fire Authority	ICC, GDC, SDC
4.	Road Safety Co-ordination (joint employment)	ICC, GDC, SDC
5.	Road Safety Southland Trust	ICC, GDC, SDC
6.	Road Safety Committee	ICC, GDC, SDC
7.	Waiau River Working Party	SDC, ES
8.	Snow Pole Route Closure	SDC, CODC
9.	Southern Scenic Route Signs	SDC, CDC, ICC, DCC
10.	Maintenance of Boundary Roads and Bridges	SDC, ICC, GDC
11.	Riverton Harbour Committee	SDC, ES
12.	GIS Data Sharing	SDC, ES, GDC, CDC
13.	Election Returns	SDC, GDC, ICC, ES
14.	Laboratory Testing and Monitoring	SDC, ICC, ES
15.	Specification/Policy Sharing and Development	SDC, ICC, GDC, CDC
16.	Assistance with WINZ System	SDC, GDC
17.	Barberry Control	SDC, ES
18.	Spartina Control	SDC, ES
19.	Tender Evaluations	SDC, CDC, GDC
20.	Hazardous Waste Group	SDC, ICC, ES
21.	Southland Emergency Management Office	SDC, ICC, GDC, ES
22.	Southland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group	
23.	Co-ordinating Executive Group	SDC, ICC, GDC, ES
24.	SEMO Operational Sub Committee (OSC)	SDC, ICC, GDC, ES
25.	Hazardous Waste Response Group	SDC, ICC, GDC, ES
26.	Civil Defence Welfare Group	SDC, ICC, GDC, ES
27.	Rakiura National Park Report	SDC, ES

28.	Milford Community Trust	SDC, ES
29.	Gravel Management	SDC, CDC
30.	Information Technology	ICC, SDC, CDC
31.	Southland Rural Heritage Trust	SDC, ICC, GDC, ES
32	Stock Truck Effluent Working Group	ES, SDC, GDC, ICC
33	NZAA Register Update	ES, ICC, SDC, GDC
34	Urban Fire Risk	ES, SDC, ICC, GDC
35	Invercargill Peri-urban Sewage	ICC, ES
36	Wetlands on Private Land	ES, SDC, GDC, ICC
37	Te Roopu Taiao	ES, ICC, SDC, GDC
38	Regional Transport Committee	ES, SDC, ICC, GDC, et al
38	Regional Advisory Group (Transport)	ES, ICC, SDC, GDC, et al
39	Our Way Southland	ES, ICC, SDC, GDC
40	Southland Heritage Building Preservation Trust	ES, ICC, SDC, GDC
41	Venture Southland	SDC, GDC, ICC
42	Public Information Management Team (SEMO)	SDC, ICC, GDC, ES
43	Review of the Southland Regional Policy Statement	ES, SDC, ICC, GDC
44	Review of the Southland District Plan	SDC, ES
45	Southland Coastal Landscape Study	ES, SDC
46	Te Anau Basin Planning Study	SDC, ES
47	Representation Review projects	ES, SDC
48	Southland Regional Heritage Committee	SDC, ICC, GDC