



Creating homes and neighbourhoods
that work well into the future
and don't cost the Earth

Sustainable building: what can local councils do?

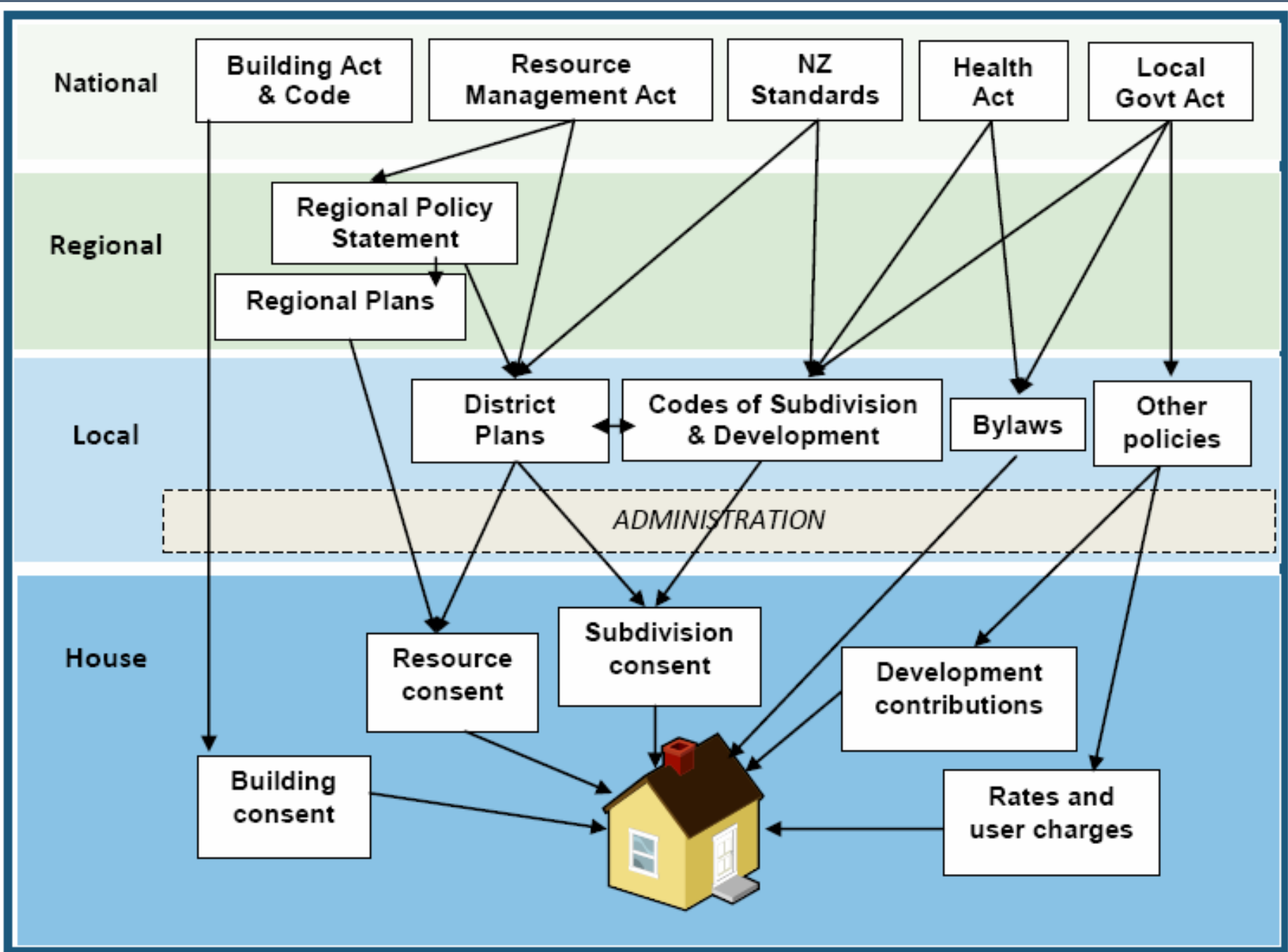
Beacon Symposium 2008

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Sustainable building: a role for local government?

- Responds directly to council responsibilities under the LGA, RMA and Building Act.
- Can help to deliver council objectives, such as healthier, more resource efficient communities.
- Consequences for key infrastructure – roads, carparking, parks, 3 waters infrastructure, waste management services.
- There is a clear need to improve council practices.



Beacon research to date



- **Barriers and Incentives for Sustainable Building Case Studies**
 - Auckland City Council
 - Hamilton City Council
 - Kapiti Coast District Council
 - Christchurch City Council
- **Current Incentives for Sustainable Building**
 - Surveyed 20 largest Councils
 - Overseas best practice
- **Incentive Programmes for Energy and Water Efficiency**

Barriers

Measures to address...

Energy

passive solar design, thermal mass, generation

Water

rainwater tanks, efficient fitting, dual flush toilets, landscaping

Indoor environment quality

ventilation, moisture, VOCs

Stormwater

green roofs, swales, tanks

Waste

construction waste, recycling, composting

Wastewater

greywater, blackwater

Materials

life cycle cost, innovation

General sustainability

community, ecology, transport

Come up against...

Regulation and administration

Lack of reliable information

Lack of industry expertise

No consumer demand

No incentives

Cost

Aesthetics

...and the process is too hard



Local government barriers

- Administration of the Building Code by making it hard to do things differently (e.g. retrofit double glazing, solar hot water, atrium assisted ventilation)
- District Plan provisions (e.g. Building envelope, Yard, Height in relation to boundary, building coverage rules)
- Codes of Practice & Infrastructure Requirements – requiring traditional infrastructure solutions over more sustainable approaches

Local government barriers (continued)

- Council processes often mean building sustainably costs more and is a lot more effort.
- Comments: only the most committed and tenacious people would do these things. The average punter would be put off at the first hurdle.



Beacon's response

- Develop best practice local government policy mechanisms which will support the greater uptake of sustainable new and retrofitting of homes; and
- Confirm that these are effective in supporting and promoting these outcomes at a local level.



Five areas of focus



Incentive area	Possible policies
Regulation	District Plan provisions – policies, rules, assessment criteria, height bonuses
Standards	Codes of Practice and Engineering Standards
Financial	Development contributions, rates remissions, rebates on fees
Process	Officer training, processing, guidelines, practice notes
Education	Advice, assessment, guidelines, etc

Interview results



- Strong interest in sustainable building, but almost all Councils felt they were at the beginning of the journey.
- Main drivers are social, environmental and long-term financial benefits, and political drivers.
- Efforts characterised by limited resources, knowledge gaps, and a generally piecemeal approach to policy initiatives.
- Some uncertainty as to the parameters of possible interventions.

Incentives for sustainable building in local councils

- **Some councils already have incentives and many plan to introduce some in the future**
- **Main current incentives are:**
 - Fee waivers (e.g. solar hot water systems)
 - Direct grants (e.g. rainwater tanks)
 - Advice and information (e.g. Eco Design Advisors and Sustainability Guidelines)
 - Also, a lot of demonstration projects (Council buildings, parks, Eco Houses)



Survey (continued)

- Main areas of activity are District Plans and education/ advocacy (e.g. eco design advisors).
- Little in terms of Financial Incentives, with low uptake on rebates where offered.
- Other opportunities may exist in partnering with the private sector.
- High level of interest in the proposed Resource Manual. Would be a useful tool for them. Requests that it be taken around to Councils and promoted.



Key findings: Current incentives

- **Many incentives are unsuccessful**
 - Uptake is low
 - Awareness is low
 - Difficult to access (paperwork, cost, eligibility)
 - Low level of incentive is often provided
 - Little outcome achieved for often quite high investment and expectation
- **However some programmes are doing REALLY well (e.g. Ecan's Clean Heat)**



Common success factors



- Targeted and marketed at what motivates the consumer
- Streamlined process with very little effort required by the consumer
- Good quality control and project management (e.g. people turn up and do what they are supposed to on time)
- Multiple ways to access incentive, means that there is something that suits all target groups
- Incentive is set at a level where it IS an incentive – not just a reward for people who would already undertake the action

Council incentives preferred by home renovators [From Alison Hall, 2007]



Preferred Council Incentives	%
Financial incentives	29%
Discount on products and services	26%
In-house advice	16%
Education	12%
Demonstration	10%
Regulation	7%
TOTAL	100%

Conclusions

- Local government processes often act as a barrier to sustainable building
- Incentives can address this but need to be thought through from a consumer perspective
- Councils are increasingly seeing a role for themselves in promoting sustainable building, but most are choosing regulation and education as main approaches
- Financial and process incentives being applied in some instances – but generally ad hoc and poor linkages to wider programmes

Next steps for Beacon



- Draft Resource Manual in preparation
- Workshops August/September 2008
- Period for testing and feedback
- Final Manual released mid-2009