

In the ZONE

Introduction

Welcome to the next edition of In the Zone, where our goal is to provide you with up-to-date information and keep you informed about key issues relating to the Planning and Land Development processes at Selwyn District Council.

Please feel free to share our newsletter and get in touch on planning.technician@selwyn.govt.nz if you'd like to be added into our mailing list or send us feedback.

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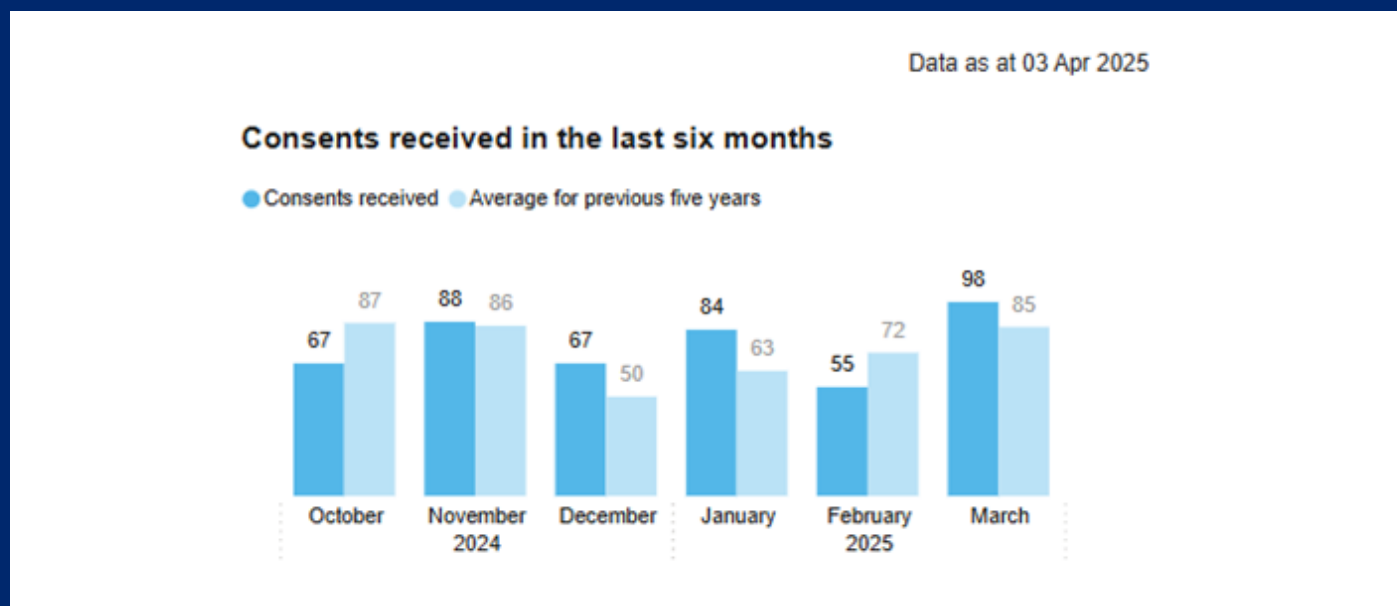
Resource Consents Dashboard

We have launched a new online Resource Consents dashboard that shows comprehensive data on our total workload, on how we are tracking and how that compares to previous years. This innovative tool gives residents access to near real-time updates on application progress and historical data on completed consents. As part of the 2024–2034 Long-Term Plan, the Council is transforming paper-based processes into efficient digital solutions to meet the demands of New Zealand's fastest-growing district.

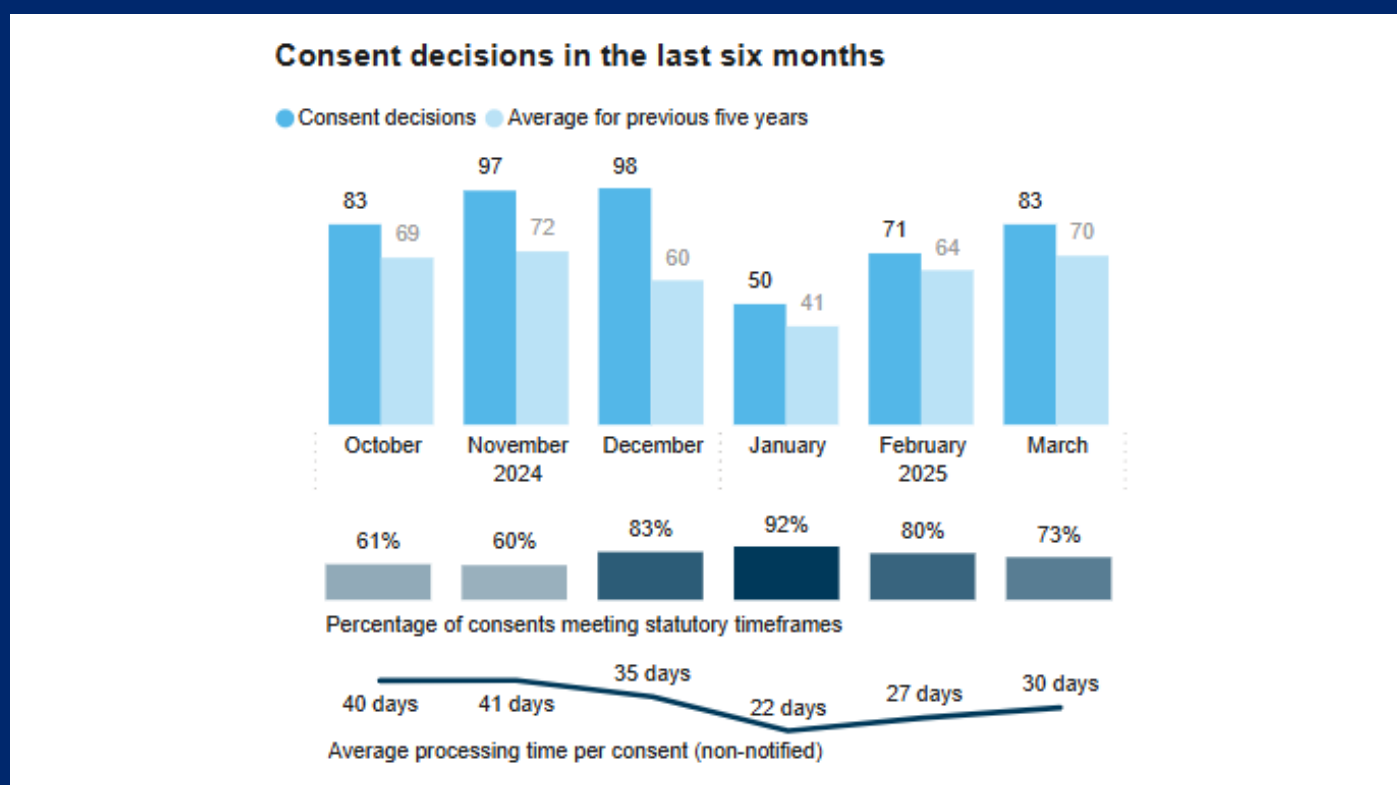
The dashboard aims to streamline operations, provide transparency and improve customer satisfaction, paving the way for future interactive features where residents can lodge and track applications directly. This marks a significant step toward modernising services while preparing for continued growth. You can find it here: <https://www.selwyn.govt.nz/property-and-building/resource-consent/resource-consents-dashboard>

Workload

The council is managing a high volume of resource consent applications, but we are keeping pace and despite the high volume of incoming applications, we are issuing more decisions than the number of applications received.



We are still seeing statutory timeframe compliance much lower and average working days much higher than we would like. However, this is due to the backlog from mid-last year, and we expect there to be fluctuations in these metrics over the coming months as the team works through the remaining backlog of applications and decisions are issued. We are keeping an eye on the stats for applications lodged since 1st November, which are showing much improvement



Minor Residential Units

The prior-Engineering Acceptance (prior-EA) system came into being on 1 November 2024, and, despite some expected teething problems in the transitional phase, it is now providing more certainty for all. Having seen five months of operation now, we are looking at refinements. The first to be introduced relates to minor residential units, and it will be effective from Monday 7 April 2025. The details are as follows:

Refinement 1:

In all residential zones, except MRZ, minor residential units no longer require prior-EA.

Minor residential units are defined in the District Plan, but, in summary, they are essentially small secondary units of no more than 70m² that are held in common ownership, and share servicing connections, with the main residential unit on the site.

(This does not apply in MRZ because there are no minor residential units in that Zone; they are all main units.)

Process Reminders

Confirming water and wastewater capacity/connection for multi-units

Just a reminder that an applicant needs prior-Engineering Acceptance issued before lodging building consent or resource consent. Find out more here:

[Selwyn District Council - Urban Development: Multi-units and Minor Residential Units](#)

Multi-unit development in MRZ

Finding the process challenging to navigate? Follow the steps here for the easy way through: [Selwyn District Council - Multi-unit Development in MRZ](#)

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Resource consent applications returned incomplete

The RMA does not allow us to 'not accept' incomplete applications; we are required to accept them and then return them if incomplete. If an application is missing important information, we return it instead of issuing a Request for Information (RFI) because in most cases we're only allowed to issue one RFI that stops the clock and we want to save it for addressing more complex issues rather than basic details that should already be included in applications. This helps us assess applications more efficiently without adding unnecessary delays.

Returning incomplete applications allows us to start processing applications as quickly as possible once they're received, reduces risk of timeframe overruns, gives us a more accurate view of our workload and capacity and keeps our system running smoothly.

When preparing your application, please include an assessment of effects and consider the relevant objectives and policies based on the application's complexity. If you need any help or have questions about your application, our Duty Planner is here to assist you.

Subdivisions - Telecommunication and electricity capacity confirmation

There's a shift in how the council is handling capacity confirmation for telecommunication and electricity connections in subdivision applications. Here's a summary of the change:

- In the past, confirmation of capacity for utilities was required at the s224 Certificate stage (which typically happens after subdivision).
 - Now, the council will require a letter from the relevant network utility operator confirming capacity at the time of the subdivision application itself, rather than waiting until the s224 Certificate stage.
 - This update is based on the District Plan, which includes an assessment matter requiring the council to consider the design and construction of telecommunication and electricity connections in their reports for subdivisions.
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Earthworks Assessment Guidance

EW-R1 and NH-REQ4 -

When a building consent application is submitted, the Council is required to consider earthworks under EW-R1 of the Partially Operative District Plan (PODP). One of the rule requirements (NH-REQ4) within this rule means that the Council needs to confirm that the earthworks within the Plains Flood Management Overlay will not exacerbate flooding on any other property by displacing or diverting floodwater onto surrounding land. The majority of the Plains in the District (including the larger townships) are located within this flood overlay.

What this means for you:

- **Site Scrape or Building on Piles:**
If a project only includes a 'site scrape' or is a building established on piles, it will comply with the relevant rule. The Council will be able to conclude that there is no 'net fill' of a site and consequently, the proposal will comply with EW-R1/NH-REQ4. This applies irrespective of the size of the building slab/foundations, which may or may not cause displacement within the flood plain.
- **Filling and Earthworks for Building Platforms:**
If a project includes any filling and earthworks to establish a building platform (e.g., for Geotech or flood mitigation) – noting this is uncommon for any recently developed residential zone – the Council may seek confirmation that NH-REQ4 will be complied with if there is insufficient information (e.g., a cut/fill plan with supporting calculations) and/or no statement confirming compliance within the building consent plans. The existing PLG1 form has been amended to provide a means of confirming compliance ([Form-PLG-1-NES.pdf](#))

Planning Technicians Update

The Planning Technicians team is expanding and focusing on providing more support for building consent assessments and the Duty Planner service, with an aim to provide consistent advice and improve your customer experience.

Remember that submitting complete information with building consent applications will help streamline the process and ensures that the team can accurately assess applications in line with the District Plan provisions.

Have a look through our previous editions of In the Zone for handy tips, and note the following reminders:

- Provide copies of Consent Notices registered on your Record of Title.
 - Provide a current up to date Record of Title (no older than 6 months).
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Area Plans

The Strategy Team is focused on developing Area Plans for the district, building on the work from the Waikirikiri Ki Tua Future Selwyn initiative. The team is eager to collaborate with developers and other stakeholders involved in the district's development, focusing on growing well. If you're interested in learning more or getting involved, you can reach out by emailing futuretown@selwyn.govt.nz. They also encourage people to keep an eye out for options engagement later in the year, which will likely provide opportunities to participate in the planning process.

Development Engineers

Duty Engineer

There's a new way to easily reach out to the Duty Engineer for assistance. Here's a quick breakdown:

- New Duty Engineer Phone Line: You can now call 0800 SELWYN (735 996) and ask for the Duty Engineer if you need to discuss something related to your application process.
- Existing Applications: If you have an application already in progress and know who the processing Engineer is, it's best to contact them directly for updates or questions.

This new phone line should make it easier to get quick assistance for general inquiries.

Engineering Website Update

The Development Engineering team is working to improve accessibility and provide more up-to-date resources online:

- New Landing Page: There's now a dedicated landing page for Engineering on the Selwyn website: www.selwyn.govt.nz/Engineering
- Updated Content: The page includes more detailed and current information, with more updates

and content to be added regularly.

This should make it easier for developers, engineers, and the community to find the information they need quickly. It's a great resource to keep an eye on for any changes or updates related to development engineering.

Multi-unit developments

To support multi-unit developments, a range of servicing options have been developed:

Wastewater Connections:

1. Approval is provided to connect up to three connections to a 100mm dia sewer lateral via. Connection shall be via a 1050mm dia MH protected by easement. This approval is subject to Engineering Acceptance. (refer to SDC ECoP drawing number DR 1.2 and DR 1.3).
2. As an alternative, connections to the Councils wastewater system for each principal residential unit or principal building in an urban multi-unit development within the Medium Density Residential Zone (MRZ) are approved for the purposes of the Selwyn District Council Wastewater Bylaw 2016 (Wastewater Bylaw) subject to Engineering Acceptance.

Water Connections :

1. Council has developed a standard connection detail for urban multi-unit developments, (refer to SDC ECoP drawing number WS 4.0)

The detail consists of a DN50/63mm OD PE connection to the Council's watermain, reducing down to a standard SDC water meter manifold in an Acuflex Jumbo toby box (which will be the Council point of supply until future subdivision occurs) before tapering back up to a DN50/63mm OD PE pipe. Each unit will then have a connection to this DN50 pipe downstream of the jumbo toby box (using 25mm OD PE laterals for front sections and 32mm OD PE pipe for back sections) with a standard SDC water toby on each lateral (without water meters). All water tobies will be situated in the road reserve as per the standard detail. Should the development wish to subdivide in the future the existing SDC point of supply manifold and meter would be replaced with a DN50 spool and the individual water meters would be required to be installed in each of the water tobies serving each valuation.

2. As an alternative, for those who intend to subdivide (as some may not), approval is provided pursuant to the Selwyn District Council Water Supply Bylaw 2008 (Water Supply Bylaw) for a connection to the Council's water supply system for each principal residential unit or principal building in an urban multi-unit development within the Medium Density Residential Zone (MRZ). This approval is subject to Engineering Acceptance and on condition that subdivision of the principal residential unit or building is given effect to within 5 years (or as agreed) of the connection being made. This is the only connection option that is subject to subdivision. The Council aims to minimise the number of properties with multiple water meters per valuation number to reduce invoicing complexities and to align with long term infrastructure planning.

Standard details are now located on the Development Engineers Code of Practice page on our website - [Selwyn District Council - Engineering Code of Practice](#).