

# In the ZONE

## Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of In the Zone, where we keep you informed about key updates related to the Planning and Land Development processes at Selwyn District Council. Feel free to share this newsletter, and if you'd like to be added to our mailing list or provide feedback, please get in touch at [planning.technician@selwyn.govt.nz](mailto:planning.technician@selwyn.govt.nz).

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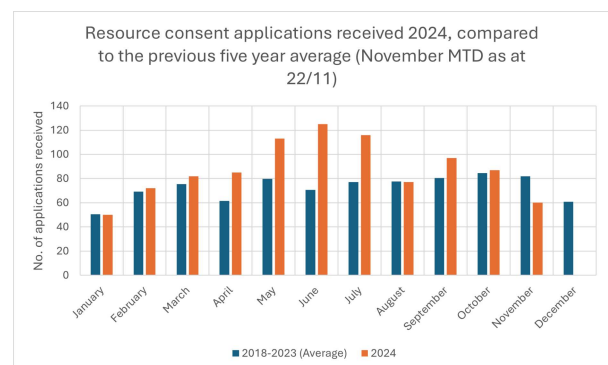
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## Workload

The number of applications we've received in recent months has largely returned to expected levels. We've passed 1000 applications and have issued 796 decisions so far this year, which is 42% above the five-year average.

We are also improving our recruitment, resourcing, processes and systems to ensure we meet statutory timeframes and enhance customer service.

We recognize that delays have been a frustration for many, and we want to assure you that we are committed to making continuous improvements in this area. Our teams are focused on implementing changes that will lead to more efficient processes and better outcomes for everyone.



## Multi-unit Development Process Reminder

A reminder that as of 1st November 2024, all residential, commercial, and industrial multi-unit or minor residential unit developments must have Engineering Acceptance **before** applying for building consent or resource consent.

Please ensure this requirement is met before submitting your applications. See [Selwyn District Council - Urban Development: Multi-units and Minor Residential Units](#) for more information.

## Medium Density Residential Standards Workshop

On 16th October 2024, the Council hosted a workshop on Medium Density Residential Standards with industry partners. The goal was to identify process improvements in areas like bylaws, approval sequencing, and engineering/planning/building requirements.

The workshop was well attended, and several process improvements were identified. Two initial tasks include:

1. Developing a global approval for multiple connections under the Bylaw.
2. Reviewing the number of connections that can be made to the Council's 100mm lateral.

We will keep you updated on this work.

## Returning incomplete applications

As many of you know, the Council may return an application if it is deemed incomplete (under s88(3A)), and we only get one opportunity to request additional information without using up our processing time.

We return incomplete applications to avoid extended delays and confusion. It is not a reflection on your professionalism or a personal issue. If we don't return incomplete applications at the start, it delays the process with weeks of back-and-forth emails and makes it hard to keep track of documents.

When we were behind in processing consents, we didn't return incomplete applications as a gesture of goodwill. Now that we are caught up, we will be returning incomplete applications where necessary, to help you and us in speeding up applications. If your application is returned, please review it objectively, gather the required information, and resubmit it when you're ready.

Thank you for your understanding.

## District Plan Appeals

It's been a year since 26 appeals were lodged on the plan. So far, seven appeals have been fully resolved, and one has been partially resolved, with the new Partially Operative District Plan (PODP) updated accordingly.

Excluding a few outstanding rezoning appeals, all plan provisions, except three, have reached agreement in principle between the Council and appellants. While we may not fully transition to the new PODP before Christmas, we expect to have all necessary paperwork with the Environment Court for review by then.

We are looking forward to the New Year, where nearly all plan users will be able to rely solely on the new PODP, without needing to reference the old Operative District Plan.

## Updates from the Planning Technicians Desk

Following up on our last newsletter and your feedback, here are some additional tips to help you with building consent compliance:

### 1. Elevations and Boundary Information

Make sure all elevations show the height in relation to the boundary/recession planes. This helps us confirm compliance easily and accurately. Also, include site levels on the site plan near the relevant boundaries. The reference point is measured from the lower ground level of the site or the ground level of the site on the other side of an internal boundary.

### 2. Shed/Accessory Building Applications

When submitting applications for sheds or other accessory buildings, please let us know the intended use of the shed and whether it will be used for:

- Non-rural or non-residential activities.
- Commercial or industrial use (including rural-based).

- Human occupation.
- Housing animals.
- Storing hazardous substances.

### 3. PLG 1 Form: Changing Land Use

When filling out the PLG 1 form, note that "changing the use of land" refers to the specific area of land where there's no building, not the entire site. In most cases, the answer to question 1 will be "yes."

If you have any questions, feel free to contact our team or the Duty Planner.

## Development Contributions

The Development Contribution Policy had a full review as part of the Long Term Plan, with the new policy adopted on 3rd July 2024. As the District continues to experience growth, the Development Contributions Policy has been reviewed to ensure that Council is able to collect a fair, equitable and proportionate contribution to partially fund the projects Council is planning to deliver to accommodate this growth. The new Development Contribution Policy is on Council's website and the development contribution team are happy to provide an estimate on development contributions for any new residential development. [SDC\\_LTP24-34\\_DC-Policy\\_July24.pdf](#)

Please email [development.contributions@selwyn.govt.nz](mailto:development.contributions@selwyn.govt.nz) should you have any questions or require an estimate.

## Changes to Urban, Commercial and Industrial Flood Assessment Certificate Requirements

We are moving to a new Flood Model in 2025, which will use NZVD2016. As a result, from 1 December 2024, any Flood Assessment Certificate applications for Urban or Commercial and Industrial developments must include a site-specific difference in levels between LVD1937 and NZVD2016, certified by a Licensed Cadastral Surveyor.

## Landscaping Planting Season and Maintenance over Summer

### New Planting Season:

Due to tree losses from late plantings in 2023, SDC is adjusting the planting season to run from *1st April to 30th September*. Previously, planting was accepted until 30th October. This change aligns us more closely with CCC, who have a shorter planting window.

### Landscaping Maintenance Reminder:

As we approach a potentially hot and dry summer, we want to remind you of your responsibility to maintain landscaping assets, as specified in SDC ECOP Section 10.6, from planting through to handover. Trees and plants that are not properly maintained will fail to establish. If this happens, Council will not accept the plants, and the cost of remediation will be the developer's responsibility, along with an extended defects period until the plants are established.

### Watering Requirements:

-Trees: The soil should maintain an average water content of 20-30%. This equals about *30-40 litres of water per application* to fully saturate the root ball and surrounding soil. Larger trees require more water.

-Shrubs and Groundcover: Each should receive *5 litres of water per application* to saturate the root ball.

Watering may need to be done three times per week from spring through autumn (typically September – April). In dry conditions, like those we're currently experiencing, more frequent watering may be necessary.

## Construction Activities and Bulk Water Extraction

A reminder that extracting water from Council's supply for construction activities (e.g., earthworks, dust suppression, landscaping) must only be done at an approved bulk water extraction location.

Non-compliance may result in prosecution under the Water Supply bylaw, with fines of up to \$20,000.

For more details on these options, please visit:

[Selwyn District Council - Bulk Water Extraction](#)

[Selwyn District Council - Engineering Code of Practice](#)

## Services over the holiday period

With the holiday season approaching, please note that the Council will be closed between Christmas and New Year. However, a Duty Planner will still be available on all open days.

### Important Dates:

- Resource Consent Processing: Timeframes for processing Resource Consents under the RMA are suspended from 20th December to 10th January 2025.
- Development Engineering Team: The team will be approving s224 sign-offs until Friday 20th December and will return to business as usual on Thursday 9th January 2025.
- Planning Technical Advisory Team: The team will process s223 and s224 applications until 24th December and will return on Friday 3rd January 2025.

**We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**



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