

Report 15.99
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Committee Strategy and Policy Committee
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Floodplain Management Planning - Principles

1. Purpose

To seek the Committee's approval of four principles which represent current floodplain management planning practice.

2. Background

Floodplain management planning is an internationally recognised approach to managing flood risk, and one that generally comprises the following phases:

- Investigating and understanding the probability and consequences of flooding, and the economic, social, cultural and environmental values within a defined catchment;
- Identifying, evaluating and selecting a range of appropriate management options, with community input, to reduce flood risk; and
- Implementing a preferred option(s) for managing the flood risk in a way that ensures a co-ordinated response by relevant agencies and/or individuals.

The outcome of this process is a Floodplain Management Plan (FMP), a high-level strategic planning document prepared in collaboration with key local decision-makers and the community within a catchment area to identify agreed policies and options to manage flood risk.

The floodplain management approach described above was introduced in the mid 1990s and endorsed by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). Since that time 5 FMPs have been finalised, two are nearing completion and work on a further two is currently underway.

The floodplain management planning approach adopted by GWRC to manage flood risk has evolved to achieve an effective response that reinforces and

complements the objectives and policies in the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (RPS) and the floodplain management guidelines that have been prepared previously by GWRC.

3. Development of Principles

3.1 Introduction

At its workshop on the 28 October 2014, the Committee discussed the report that this paper is based on. The workshop covered:

- The four principles that underlie GWRCs approach to floodplain management in the region;
- The rationale behind the introduction and application of these principles; and
- Examples of relevant national and international research, guidance and policy directives that support their application.

The report *Floodplain Management Planning – Principles* is included as **Attachment 1** to this report.

The principles contained in this report reflect current practice and have been developed over time as part of the outcomes of the FMPs completed to date. These principles are not the final word on these issues, but they represent a baseline that would not be compromised in an individual FMP without re-examining the principles as a whole. How the principles are applied in detail will vary within each FMP.

3.2 Principles

Principle 1: Avoid building in areas at high risk of flood hazard

Avoiding the construction of residential and other buildings vulnerable to flooding in undeveloped urban and rural areas (i.e. a ‘greenfields’ situation) exposed to a high level of flood hazard is the most effective way of managing flood risk in these locations in the long-term. In areas subject to a lesser degree of flood hazard, activities and development should be appropriate to the circumstances and should not exacerbate flood risk.

Principle 2: Only consider new flood protection infrastructure where existing development is at risk

Where existing urban or rural land use and/or development (e.g. dwellings, irrigation infrastructure, dairy sheds) is subject to an unacceptable degree of flood risk the construction of new structural protection measures (e.g. stopbanks, elevating existing buildings) will be considered¹.

¹ The presence of property or infrastructure in an area subject to a 1 in 100 year flooding does not necessary justify intervention. Such intervention is only appropriate where there is an “unacceptable level of risk.”

Principle 3: Establish standards of flood protection relative to the degree of risk

In developing and implementing structural and non-structural measures within areas subject to flood risk, the following standards are to be applied by GWRC and, where relevant, city/district councils:

- Protection of all habitable buildings and urban areas
 - A minimum 1 in 100 year flood standard to floor levels for habitable buildings and new development within existing urban areas, along with provision of safe access.
- Stopbank protection
 - Where required to protect existing urban areas and associated land use, stopbanks will be constructed to achieve a minimum 1 in 100 year flood standard.
 - Where required to protect rural areas and associated land use, stopbanks are generally constructed up to a 1 in 20 year flood standard to alleviate frequent or nuisance flood events.

Principle 4: Plan for climate change in assessing the degree of flood hazard risk and in determining an appropriate response

GWRC will use the following allowances for climate change predicted to occur over the next 100 years in the design criteria for its flood hazard investigations.

The current allowances are:

- Increase in rainfall intensity 20%
- Sea Level Rise 0.8m

4. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

4.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council to consider the significance of the decision. The term ‘significance’ has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance and engagement policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

The decision is of low significance as the Committee, by approving this paper, is confirming the Greater Wellington Regional Council's current practice for the delivery of its flood protection responsibilities.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

4.2 Engagement

In accordance with the significance and engagement policy, no engagement on the matters for decision is required.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. **Receives** the report.*
- 2. **Notes** the content of the report.*
- 3. **Agrees** that the four principles detailed in section 3.2 of the report are representative of Greater Wellington Regional Council's current practice in its delivery of floodplain management planning in the region and **approves** the continued application of these principles in future floodplain management planning in the region.*

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Attachment 1: Floodplain Management Planning – Principles