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Committee Environment
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Whaitua Programme update – May 2017

1. Purpose

To provide information to the Environment Committee on the status of the three active whaitua projects and any key upcoming work.

2. Background

The whaitua process is a community-led, collaborative planning process to address a number of land and water management issues and carry out our obligations under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM). The programme aims to improve the integration of activities and achieve better resource management practices which reflect local aspirations.

The region has been divided into five whaitua or catchments (see Figure 1). Whaitua Committees, consisting of community members and partner representatives, will make recommendations to the Council through a Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) report. These Committees are a partnership between the regional council, iwi, territorial authorities and the community.



Figure 1: Whaitua catchments.

A Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) will contain strategies and actions that will form a programme of work to implement the NPS-FM in the catchment area of the Whaitua Committee. It will include both regulatory provisions and non-regulatory programmes. The regulatory provisions will be included progressively into the Natural Resources Plan by way of plan changes into the whaitua specific chapters. The recommendations from WIPs aren't being considered as part of the current Proposed Natural Resources Plan Schedule 1 process.

There are currently two established committees, the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee and Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee. Planning is underway to set up the Wellington Harbour and Hutt Valley Whaitua.

A Collaborative Modelling Project supports each Whaitua Committee by feeding knowledge into their decision-making process. Experts in the various topic areas (for example ecologists, economists, social scientists) work collaboratively to ensure information and data is up to date and to provide expert advice to the Whaitua Committee when required. The project involves partnering with mana whenua as well as having significant iwi and community input, as well as input from relevant stakeholders.

The current modelling projects for Ruamāhanga and Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua provide collective scientific, cultural and community knowledge, data and information to describe the current state of each catchment. The Whaitua Committee will ask questions about what could happen in the future under certain conditions, such as different land management practices, and how the catchment would respond to those. These are called scenarios. The models will be used to forecast the potential environmental, social, recreational, cultural and economic consequences of these scenarios. The Whaitua Committee will use this information, alongside their own knowledge of community values, agriculture, biodiversity, mana whenua, recreation, urban and economic interests in setting freshwater objectives and limits.

The experience gained as the Ruamāhanga Whaitua modelling evolved has shaped the process for Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua. From these processes, we learnt that each whaitua is distinct and each process requires a design that suits the whaitua individual needs.

3. Ruamāhanga Whaitua

3.1 Update to overall timeline

It is expected the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee will provide their WIP to Council in late 2017. Technical complexities in the modelling for the Ruamāhanga Whaitua have slowed down the delivery of the management scenario outputs which have impacted on the overall timeline.

It has taken the modellers much longer than expected to complete the mathematical translation of the Committee's selected management options, and the Proposed Natural Resource Plan rules and policies into the modelling scripts. The scenario outputs are now expected at the end of August. These outputs, along with all the other information the Committee has gathered over

the last three years will inform development of the draft freshwater objectives, limits and policies.

3.2 Progress since last quarter

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee has been developing their preferred policy approach to managing discharges to test with the community and stakeholders. The Committee sees change as necessary to maintain or improve water quality and achieve their vision and outcomes. They will look to set limits (a form of regulation) at a sub-catchment scale for all contaminants, combined with a non-regulatory approach for landowners to achieve those limits, particularly through sub-catchment groups and farm planning. The Committee may recommend that more regulation is used in the future if this approach doesn't achieve the desired outcomes.

The Committee has begun to engage with the community about this preferred approach, presenting at a field day on dairy effluent on 20 April. Engagement will continue in the coming months and may lead to changes in their preferred approach.

The Committee met with TeamAg (a primary industry stakeholder group) in early April and agreed a process for how to engage with farmers from now until the end of this process.

3.3 Key work in the coming months

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee will focus on developing their water allocation discussions. The Committee will develop their preferred policy approach for water allocation, and develop their freshwater management units, draft limits and draft freshwater objectives for water quantity.

The water allocation scenarios are being modelled separately from the integrated scenarios. This will allow the water allocation modelling results to feed into the Committee discussions in the next couple of months, ahead of the integrated scenario modelling results.

4. Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua

4.1 Progress since last quarter

Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee has successfully handed over their narrative management and development scenarios to the Collaborative Modelling Project (CMP) for translation into modelling inputs for testing. A subgroup of Committee members has been established to help provide transparency and assurance that model inputs and technical assumptions reflect the intentions of the Committee's narrative scenarios and that resulting information is focused on matching the Committee's decision-making needs.

The Project Team has increased efforts to raise the understanding of the implications of the Whaitua process and build relationships amongst the key project partners; Ngāti Toa, Wellington Water Limited, Wellington City Council and Porirua City Council.

4.2 Key work in the coming months

While the CMP works with the scenarios material, the Committee will be focused on the role of policy, the options available to them in the Whaitua, and further developing their understanding of freshwater objectives and limits. Consensus decision-making will also be covered, in anticipation of final decisions being confirmed later in the year. In anticipation of testing draft policy preferences with stakeholders and the wider community early in the second half of the year, an engagement plan will be established. This work is expected to be completed by mid-year.

5. Wellington Harbour and Hutt Valley Whaitua

Effort in this project has been on community and partner engagement. This will continue, and ramp up, throughout this calendar year. The intention is to pre-load the Whaitua committee process with engagement with two purposes in mind. Firstly to inform the community of the Whaitua process and canvas the community for committee members, and secondly gain an understanding of issues of concern to the community.

Meetings are being held with partners (city councils and Ngāti Toa) and stakeholders. It was intended to set the Whaitua committee up early in the new financial year. Our ability to service the committee at this time is limited due to other Whaitua commitments. The intention is to set up the committee late in 2017 with the view to starting committee process in early 2018. The emphasis in 2017 will be on community engagement.

A review of how community engagement and science inputs into the Whaitua committee process is being undertaken. Changes in the committee process that better integrate these aspects will be undertaken.

6. Consideration of Climate Change

No decision is being sought in this report. The matters addressed in this report have been considered by officers in accordance with the process set out in the GWRC Climate Change Consideration Guide.

6.1 Mitigation assessment

Mitigation assessments are concerned with the effect of the matter on the climate (i.e. the greenhouse gas emissions generated or removed from the atmosphere as a consequence of the matter) and the actions taken to reduce, neutralise or enhance that effect.

The matters addressed in this report will have no significant effect on the climate.

6.2 Adaptation assessment

Adaptation assessments relate to the impacts of climate change (e.g. sea level rise or an increase in extreme weather events), and the actions taken to address or avoid those impacts.

An assessment of the impacts of climate change on rainfall and catchment hydrology is being undertaken by NIWA. This information will feed into

analysis of impacts on water allocation and contaminant generation and flow. Policy responses will be required to address these issues. Consideration of these is ongoing.

7. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report. This report is for Councillors to receive an update on the progress of the three whitua processes.

7.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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