

20 February 2026

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-47795

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### Request for information 2026-027

I refer to your request for information dated 26 January 2026, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 26 January 2026. You have requested the following:

*“By email of 11 December 2025 [REDACTED], GWRC's Kapiti Area Engineer, advised a decision not to straighten the Waimeha Stream mouth unless (inter alia) "erosion or flooding directly threatens residential homes.." (the Decision). My request is for all information considered by GWRC when making the Decision.”*

To clarify, I understand the email you refer to was sent to two other people, not directly to you by Greater Wellington officers.

In addition, on 6 February 2026 you responded to an email from [FloodOperations@gw.govt.nz](mailto:FloodOperations@gw.govt.nz) with the subject 'Upcoming work at Waimeha Stream on Monday 9 February'. Your email stated:

*“I refer to GWRC's unattributed email below. The Waimeha Stream as it now is, was formed in about 1920 by cutting through the dunes to enable residential development of the area behind. It has been managed since then for the same purpose.*

*Greater Wellington's position when seeking resource consent for management works recognised the importance of the dunes as one of the **buffer areas protecting nearby housing development**. Those words are not mine: they come from GWRC's expert evidence: see extract attached from Tonkin & Taylor. T&T's evidence went on to say that **the outlets...are to be cut when upstream river water levels reach a certain point or when the mouth has migrated beyond certain pre-set trigger points...***

*GWRC's case for consent, and the consent itself, was substantially based on that evidence.*

*It is entirely inconsistent for GWRC to now "clarify" the triggers and contend that it need act only when the stream "backs up and places habitable buildings at significant risk of flooding" or there is "imminent risk of the stream mouth eroding directly into residential homes (or public infrastructure that cannot be easily moved)" – [REDACTED] email of 11 December 2025. Either GWRC was misleading when seeking consent or it is misleading now.*

*Worse, by acting on this new contention GWRC and allowing the destruction of a section of the foredunes north of the Waimeha Stream – part of the buffer area protecting nearby houses – GWRC discloses it is acting wilfully. That there are potential legal consequences is obvious.*

*What is required from GWRC is that it revert to its management of the Waimeha Stream by cutting the outlet as it said it would when seeking the consent. Put simply the man-made Waimeha Stream cannot be left to nature but must be managed as GWRC said it needed to be or the development behind the dunes will be put in unnecessary and avoidable jeopardy."*

As the concerns you raised in this email are similar in nature to your original request, this has been included in this response.

### **Greater Wellington's response**

Greater Wellington is changing its approach to the management of river mouths across the region to ensure it is consistently acting within the scope of its mandated powers, which are to protect communities from riverine flooding and erosion risks. We will no longer be intervening at the mouth of rivers to protect foredune planting or dunes themselves.

The level of service for this activity focuses on reducing flood risk to houses and infrastructure, rather than maintaining an open mouth at all times. At the beach, natural stream behaviour is generally allowed to occur, including changes to the stream alignment and dune erosion, where this does not create an unacceptable flood or erosion risk to residential homes.

This approach is supported in national and regional policy statements and the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (NRP), which controls this activity under the Resource Management Act 1991. This is consistent with Greater Wellington's region-wide commitment to giving awāroa room to move and allowing natural processes to occur.

Greater Wellington and Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) have different responsibilities and are working together in consultation with mana whenua to clarify roles and decision making around stream mouth interventions. We are working towards the development of a new joint operational plan for mouth cutting.

River, stream and lake mouth cutting and related interventions can be carried out as a permitted activity under rule R214 of the NRP, provided specific conditions can be met. These include that the activity is undertaken by a local authority for the purposes of flood protection and/or erosion protection and the channel outlet location and/or water level must have equalled or exceeded the relevant thresholds set in Schedule T of the NRP. This rule does not

require action from a local authority if the conditions are met; rather it provides a permissive pathway for the activity.

As you identified, Waimeha Stream mouth management was included in the consent application Greater Wellington lodged in 2013 and revised in 2016 for the Waikanae River and Waimeha Stream (reference WGN130303). This suite of resource consents relating to the Waikanae River and Waimeha Stream has not yet been granted. Progressing this application including a revised application, is a priority for Greater Wellington.

Therefore, currently Greater Wellington must rely on compliance with the permitted activity rule R214 and the region-wide Code of Practice for River Management Activities (COP) to carry out any Waimeha Stream mouth cutting activity.

The consent application document that you refer to also states (refer to the same Tonkin & Taylor document 2016 revision, page 2):

*“Updating GWRC’s existing Environmental Code of Practice for flood protection works forms another key component of the work being undertaken to support all of the resource consent applications. The new COP will be region-wide and will inform all activities undertaken by GWRC. A working draft of the Code has been prepared and is included as Annex 1 to this application. Initial comment from iwi and some key stakeholders has been sought and considered in the development of this draft, and it is anticipated that further development of the Code will continue in response to on-going consultation throughout the processing of the resource consent applications, and beyond.”*

The draft COP was publicly notified as part of the WGN130303 consent application and indicated Greater Wellington’s change in approach generally to river management. Since the 2016 version of the consent application Greater Wellington’s river management has continued to evolve and be updated via the COP.

Compliance with the COP is not yet linked to resource consent conditions in Kāpiti, as it already is for Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River for example. However, the COP is intended as a region-wide standard operating procedure and was proactively adopted in Kāpiti in mid-2025.

An updated COP, certified in 2019, is available on Greater Wellington’s website at this link: [www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2022/03/Code-of-Practice-for-River-Management-Activities.pdf](http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2022/03/Code-of-Practice-for-River-Management-Activities.pdf). Future updates to the COP will also be available on the website.

The 2019 COP includes six key interrelated principles of river management (refer Section 1.2) which require Greater Wellington to sustainably and effectively manage rivers and streams to be dynamic, natural and given room to move. Section 10.4.30 of the COP relates to river mouth cutting and provides further decision-making guidance, specifically that the purposes of mouth cutting is “to maintain channel capacity by facilitating the discharge of flood waters at river mouths” and that “the mouth is only cut as a last resort and then only to avoid flooding and erosion risk to residential homes”.

In summary, Greater Wellington shall continue to monitor the Kāpiti river mouths regularly and will intervene when necessary to avoid riverine-related flooding and erosion risks to homes and infrastructure. Decision making on mechanical intervention will consider the NRP permitted

activity rule and the region-wide COP. Future actions will be guided by the operational plan and based on assessment of flood and erosion risk to houses and infrastructure, rather than to sand dunes. While this plan is in development, we will keep interested residents informed through Greater Wellington's website.

### Documents attached

The following internal documents provided to support Greater Wellington's response are included in **Attachment 1**:

- Leadership team briefing memo dated 13 January 2026
- Draft report: Waimeha Stream Mouth Cut - Considerations for an Operational Management Plan, dated 12 January 2026 (this is a work in progress and is likely to be superseded by a Greater Wellington/KCDC Operational Plan for the cutting of the Waimeha mouth)
- Meeting notes with KCDC from 4 December 2025 (email from Hamish Fenwick)
- Drawings with aerials showing changes in dunes (1940 to 2025).

In these attachments, we have withheld the mobile numbers of Greater Wellington officers under section 7(2)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) in order to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

When withholding information under Section 7 of the Act, the public interest test must be performed to determine if the public interest in the requested information outweighs Greater Wellington's need to withhold the information. In this case, we do not deem public interest outweighs Greater Wellington's need to withhold this information.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Act.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, ā



**Lian Butcher**

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Rōpū Taiao | Group Manager Environment