

Report 2017.256
Date 17 July 2017
File CCAB-10-352

Committee Environment
Author Kat Banyard, Project Advisor and Suze Keith, Project Advisor

Whaitua Programme Update - August 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 that reflect local aspirations.

The region has been divided into five whaitua or catchments. Whaitua committees, consisting of community members, iwi representatives, partner representatives, and GWRC representatives will make recommendations to the Council through a Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) report. A WIP will contain strategies and actions that will form a programme of work for the management of land and water in that catchment.

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.

3. Ruamāhanga Whaitua

3.1 Committee membership

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee Terms of Reference provide that one elected and one appointed member of Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resources Plan Committee be appointed to the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee.

On 14 June 2017, Council agreed to leave the appointed Te Upoko Taiao role on the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee vacant as the process is almost complete.

3.2 Progress since last quarter

In the last three months, the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee has been communicating and socialising its preferred policy approach to managing discharges with the community and stakeholders. A survey has been developed to capture feedback, receiving approximately 60 responses to date. The Committee has been meeting with stakeholders, presenting at primary industry field days and talking with those in their local community.

In recent workshops the Committee has been developing their draft policy approach to water allocation. They are developing policy around permitted activities and re-allocation of water upon expiry, and are currently reviewing minimum flow and allocation limits. To do this, the Committee is bringing together the water allocation modelling results (completed separately from the integrated modelling) with their own knowledge and community values to make decisions.

Several key themes are starting to emerge from the Committee's overall work to date. These are good management practice, effective implementation ('stick ability') and efficient use. These themes will run through the recommendations in the WIP. Officers are starting to think beyond the WIP to implementation of the recommendations. A small group has been set up to investigate how a sub-catchment approach could be implemented. This also builds on the approach discussed by Jamie Falloon of the Wairarapa Federated Farmers at a previous Environment Committee meeting.

Engagement with stakeholders and partners is ongoing. An update to both Carterton District Councillors and Masterton District Councillors occurred in the last month, with an update to South Wairarapa District Councillors being planned.

The Collaborative Modelling Project has delivered the first set of results for the business as usual (BAU) scenario. Work is being done to consider how best to feed these results into the Committee's work. An assessment on the impact of climate change on inflows to the Ruamahanga groundwater management zone from NIWA has also been received. It shows flow will be affected by climate change, with low flow reductions up to 40% by the end of the century. The Committee will use this information in their decision making.

3.3 Key work in the coming months

In the coming months the Committee will complete work on their preferred policy approach to water allocation and begin to consult with the community and stakeholders about it. They will also work on a draft policy approach to river management. This will cover any activity within the river or its corridor.

The Committee will continue consulting on their draft policy approach to managing discharges. This includes hosting a workshop on 14 August with stakeholders who have raised concerns about the Committee's non-allocation approach to managing nitrogen discharges within sub-catchment limits. The workshop will look to address the primary concern that a non-allocation approach in effect grandparents nitrogen discharge rights and that this will disadvantage those with low leaching rates.

Once the preferred policy approaches are complete, the Committee will move into their next phase of work drafting their freshwater objectives for each freshwater management unit. As current state and scenario modelling results continue to be received they will be weaved into the Committee's decision making.

It is expected that all major decisions for the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) will be made before the end of 2017, with a WIP presented to Council early in 2018. The Committee continues to put in a significant time commitment to this work and shows leadership when taking their ideas to the community.

4. Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua

4.1 Committee membership

Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee welcomed Hikitia Ropata as the new appointed Te Upoko Taiao representative, replacing Naomi Solomon, on June 14, 2017.

4.2 Progress since last quarter

During this quarter, the Committee has begun to explore policy management options with a view to identifying draft policy preferences and places to maintain or improve water quality. Via a subgroup, the Collaborative Modelling Project (CMP) has stayed in touch with the Committee to ensure transparent interpretation of their scenarios material. This process has worked to retain the trust between the Committee, project team and CMP members, and to reassure the CMP members that they continue to reflect the aspirations of the Committee.

Fieldtrips have been undertaken to the Porirua Wastewater Treatment Plant and a number of Porirua streams to provide on the ground examples of the issues that the Committee are attempting to address through their recommendations. These have been hosted by staff from Wellington Water Ltd (WWL) and Porirua City Council, with support from Wellington City Council.

The Committee has identified the importance of the institutions involved in the implementation of the Whaitua recommendations better aligning their practices

and as such work to build stronger connections with the territorial authorities, WWL and Ngāti Toa, with regular and ongoing dialogue happening at Councillor and officer levels.

4.3 Key work in the coming months

The next phase of work for the Committee is to sign off on their draft policy preferences and begin to explore objectives and limits for each location in their catchment.

As modelling results begin to arrive, the project team will be working to ensure that they are delivered to the Committee in a way that aids their decision-making to the point of finalising objectives, limits and policy approaches late in 2017.

5. Wellington Harbour and Hutt Valley Whaitua

Effort in this project continues to be on community and partner engagement. The engagement aims to inform the community and partners about the whaitua process, canvas for appropriate committee members, and gain an understanding of community issues. Having common stakeholders between this process and Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua process, particularly Wellington Water, provides opportunities to have a wider policy conversation about wastewater and stormwater.

The intention is to create more engagement opportunities from October onwards to generate a good pool of community applicants for the Committee. It is intended that the Committee process will commence in March 2018. To enable this time-frame to be met, Committee appointees will need to be identified by December 2017. Wellington City Council has advised that their nominee for the Committee will be Councillor Gilberd.

Officers are looking to improve the design of the Wellington Harbour and Hutt Valley Whaitua process. A consortium has been contracted to work with officers to review how community engagement and science can be better integrated with the Committee process. An initial design meeting is being held on 3 August and will be followed by targeted interviews and workshops. A new process will be confirmed ahead of the Whaitua Committee being appointed.

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.

Officers have considered the effect of the matter on the climate.

Officers note that the matter currently does not affect the Council's interests in the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) or the Permanent Forest Sink Initiative (PFSI). However, recommendations made by the Whaitua Committees could provide a co-benefit of mitigating climate change. For example, the retirement and planting of erosion-prone land could give effect to sequestering carbon, however this will not be able to be further analysed until the Committee make their recommendations. Officers involved in this work will ensure this is considered in the final WIP report.

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.

Consideration of climate change adaption has been built into the collaborative modelling projects which support each whaitua project.

Climate change impacts on rainfall and catchment hydrology are being modelled and will be applied to the scenarios developed by the Committees. This information will allow for analysis of changes in contaminant generation, water allocation and flow, and the effectiveness of mitigations (such as stormwater treatment, erosion and sediment control) on a catchment-by-catchment basis.

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 whaitua projects.

7.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Environment Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

Kat Banyard
Project Advisor

Report approved by:

Matthew Hickman
Manager, Environmental
Policy

Report approved by:

Nigel Corry
General Manager
Environment Management
Group