

For Decision

WHAITUA IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To advise the Environment Committee on progress to date in delivering on Greater Wellington's operational non-regulatory Whaitua responsibilities, and to highlight opportunities and challenges going forward.

He tūtohu

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1 **Notes** that whaitua implementation covers multiple organisations, our partners and communities, including Greater Wellington, Territorial Authorities, Wellington Water, mana whenua and local communities.
- 2 **Notes** that regulatory recommendations of the Whaitua Implementation Programmes (WIPs) are being progressed through the Plan Change programme.
- 3 **Notes** that integration and coordination of the non-regulatory recommendations for which GW has responsibility, will be fully realised through the *Fit for the Future* programme, which brings together organisational arrangements across the Environment Management and Catchment Management groups.
- 4 **Requests** officers to prepare two reports assessing Greater Wellington's progress against Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Ruamāhanga WIPs, including current gaps.
- 5 **Requests** officers to assess the resourcing implications of fully implementing the Whaitua Implementation Programme recommendations for which Greater Wellington is responsible.
- 6 **Requests** officers to compile a schedule of Whaitua Implementation Programme recommendations across all responsible organisations, identifying progress, proposed timing and phasing, and estimated completion.
- 7 **Requests** officers to advise on the ongoing implications for Whaitua implementation of the Resource Management and Three Waters reform programmes, and the Local Government Review.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. This report builds on the Whaitua Implementation update (Report 20.343) provided to the Committee in November 2020. That report had a focus on the regulatory aspects of recommendations in the Ruamāhanga and Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Implementation programmes.
3. This report traverses some of the factors that influence the ability of Greater Wellington to implement the recommendations, particularly non-regulatory, contained in the Ruamāhanga and Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Implementation Programmes (WIPs). These factors include organisational priorities, resourcing, our ability to influence others and the role of other organisations, communities and individuals. Implementation of the WIPs is dependent on not only Greater Wellington but the whole community and, in the case of some recommendations, over a relatively long timeframe.

Where we have been

4. Since the establishment of regional councils in 1989, regional land and river management has been governed by several Parliamentary Acts. The Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941 (SCRCA) and the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) in particular have shaped the delivery of many environmental services within regional councils. The Acts focus on protecting people, property and environmental resources.
5. Recent national freshwater reform has highlighted the need for regional councils to broaden their focus beyond the historic basis for these Acts and account for the wider cultural, social, environmental and economic factors impacting freshwater outcomes. New freshwater rules take into account how catchment health drives water quality. There are also strong signals being sent by Government around meaningful involvement of mana whenua, including through the principles of Te Mana o Te Wai. For regional councils, this all amounts to a significant shift from a somewhat disjointed land, air and water management model towards an integrated, catchment-based approach.
6. Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) is responding to signals from the Government and mana whenua for a more integrated approach to land and water management. The proposed Natural Resources Plan (pNRP) and associated Whaitua processes are Greater Wellington's main methods to achieve, at a minimum, the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater 2020 (NPS-FM), as well as other policies, plans and outcomes that are more integrated. The Whaitua Implementation Programmes (WIPs) completed to date – Ruamāhanga and Te Awarua-o-Porirua along with the Ngāti Toa Rangatira Statement (NTS) – require integration of delivery across the organisation, with mana whenua partners, other agencies and the wider community.
7. The Environment Management and Catchment Management groups within Greater Wellington are learning more about integrated delivery through various internal projects and programmes. This work aims to link policy and operations more deliberately and strategically and has yielded a series of learnings and opportunities for improvement, which are detailed in this report.

Te tātaritanga Analysis

WIPs – a shared responsibility

8. WIPs represent a collective view created by community representatives on how natural resources should be managed to achieve better environmental outcomes in a specific Whaitua. The Programmes contain recommendations that fall into two categories – regulatory methods that are put in place through plan changes (effectively adding to and revising the pNRP) which are then implemented through resource consents and compliance. This is a complex and lengthy process and, while a crucial tool in delivery of freshwater outcomes, Greater Wellington’s ability to meet WIP and NTS expectations is being delayed until the statutory processes are complete. The second method is via non-regulatory actions which can include implementation through GW operational programmes and the actions of other organisations and private individuals
9. For some time Greater Wellington has (albeit in an ad-hoc manner) adapted long-standing environmental programmes in response to signals from Government and mana whenua for greater integration and delivery of environmental services. Most recently, the Mahi Waiora project has enabled Greater Wellington to implement aspects of the pNRP in a more strategic manner, through multidisciplinary teams (including mana whenua) working more cohesively and effectively together with communities. The following case studies provide a detailed account of how specific operational programmes are reorienting to better align with WIP and NTS recommendations.
10. **Case Study: Mahi Waiora**
 - a The Mahi Waiora project was established in 2015 and sought to better implement aspects of the pNRP through Greater Wellington teams working more effectively together with communities. In 2018 a concept of prototyping performance across teams to improve environmental outcomes at a catchment/Freshwater Management Unit (FMU) scale was developed. This led to the establishment of three prototypes in Waitohu (north of Ōtaki) in 2018 and in Pouewe (north of Pāuahatanui Inlet) and Parkvale in the Wairarapa lowlands in late 2019.
 - b Success for the three prototype teams started with shared agreement of local environmental issues that led to the co-design of catchment targets and actions to remedy them as defined in a catchment plan, with many of the targets being based on WIPs. An evidence based approach was taken in all design and implementation decisions made by each of the three prototype teams, and team practice was evaluated through the use of a maturity model and culture survey to baseline and improve team performance and culture.
 - c Results showed that inter-team practice has improved significantly over time, with actions and interactions becoming more focused, repeatable and strategic. This process also allowed adaptive learning to occur so adjustments could be made to prototype team decision making and actions over a short time period.
 - d Another success was that working at a Freshwater Management Unit (FMU) or Water Management Unit (WMU) scale (rather than the entire region), with two

to three year targets (rather than 20 year targets). With preference given to the top five issues in the area the scope of work became manageable and the team had a sense of purpose that united and aligned their focus and increased their engagement with the work.

- e A fourth prototype based on wetlands, rather than a spatially defined area, has developed wetland identification tools, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and other guidance which has been shared with Greater Wellington staff, land owners and reference groups. The work of this team has been picked up by Ministry for the Environment to become national guidance on technical wetland determination, pasture species information and a pasture assessment.
- f A more detailed account of the success of Mahi Waiora can be found in **Attachment 1**.

11. ***Case Study: Greater Wellington's Flood Protection Response***

- a Across the Wellington region a number of key urban areas are at risk of flooding, including the Hutt Valley; Ōtaki and Waikanae on the Kāpiti Coast; Porirua; and the principal Wairarapa towns. Greater Wellington's Flood Protection department provides services to support these communities in managing flood risk. These services range from advisory and emergency response services to maintenance of flood protection and control infrastructure as well as improving flood security and environmental enhancement.
- b The WIPs and NTS challenge us to consider the holistic management of catchments in the provision of these services. Greater Wellington must understand, recognise and reflect WIP values in the work programmes undertaken by the department. In broad terms, Greater Wellington's Flood Protection department has been adapting longstanding work processes to reflect Whaitua values right across the region and anticipate that further adaptation will be made as the remaining WIPs are developed and become operative.
- c We are seeking ways to work more closely with communities across the Region through collaborative processes with the community (Waiohine, Mangatarere, and Waipoua) and expanded riverside scheme committees (Upper Ruamāhanga Advisory Committee). We are also supporting cross-council initiatives to learn lessons and improve Greater Wellington's approach to community empowerment.
- d We are working to improve co-design practices through plan development, which will be reflected in the forthcoming Floodplain Management Planning Guidelines. Co-management and partnership have been embedded within the new River Management Consents which have recently been adopted for use in Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River. This approach is proposed to be mirrored across the wider region.
- e We recognise that rivers are only in flood for a small percentage of time and that through the work programmes of Flood Protection we can achieve a wide range of benefits across the four well-beings. This includes supporting the achievement of the Whaitua objectives in improving water quality through:

- i the Te Kāuru riparian management programme
 - ii support to the Ōtaki and Waikanae Friends Groups
 - iii the Te Awa Kairangi consent (the collection of environmental data and embedding of co-management practices)
- f We are actively exploring the challenges, set by Whaitua and the NPS-FM, with the Te Mana o Te Wai lens, to think holistically and develop integrated plans.
- g For more detail on Greater Wellington’s Flood Protection response, see **Attachment 2**.

12. ***Case Study: Greater Wellington’s Land Management Response***

- a Greater Wellington’s Land Management department provides a wide range of support services for regional landowners through programmes for hill country erosion support, nursery operations, on-farm good management practice advice and incentivised actions, and riparian and wetland protection programmes.
- b A key part of evolving the delivery methods of these support services involves connecting communities with shared objectives to drive change at a farm-level, guided by issues identified at a catchment-level. This is consistent with WIP and NTS objectives.
- c Since the completion of the Ruamāhanga and Te Awarua-o-Porirua WIPs as well as the NTS, Greater Wellington’s Land Management department has changed the grant/incentive funding criteria that supports land owners undertaking environmental enhancement or risk mitigation actions, including hill country erosion control, riparian and stock exclusion enhancements, and farm system improvements resulting in water quality or biodiversity outcomes. Incentives are now targeted by guidance provided by the WIPs and NTS. For example, with hill country erosion works and the Riparian programme, funding is now prioritised into FMUs identified with the highest sediment loads and E.coli levels.
- d We are also making significant progress in learning how to engage more collaboratively and creating more efficient and effective long term impacts for catchments. Some specific examples of where Greater Wellington Land Management staff are actively seeking to use new methods to increase the uptake of catchment mitigation actions are provided in **Attachment 3**.

What we’ve learned

- 13. While several areas of Greater Wellington’s environment management and catchment management services are working in line with direction in the pNRP, WIPs and NTS (see case studies above), we are yet to achieve fully integrated delivery of freshwater outcomes as the WIPs and NTS intended. Greater Wellington’s progress on this journey has yielded key learnings around the challenges we have faced and may continue to encounter going forward.
- 14. A significant challenge exists inherently within the assigned collective responsibility of achieving freshwater outcomes. At a high level, landowners, regional councils, local and district councils, mana whenua and industry organisations (eg, Beef and Lamb, Fonterra) all have interest in, and responsibilities for, achieving catchment-based

freshwater goals. Although Greater Wellington’s overarching interest is to improve freshwater health for the region, within this “sphere of interest” is a lesser-reaching “sphere of influence”, which limits the extent that Greater Wellington is able to effect change. Understanding the sphere of influence as it relates to Greater Wellington’s freshwater responsibilities can be helpful in prioritising work programmes and allocating resources/funding. **Figure 1** illustrates the control/influence/interest complexity below.

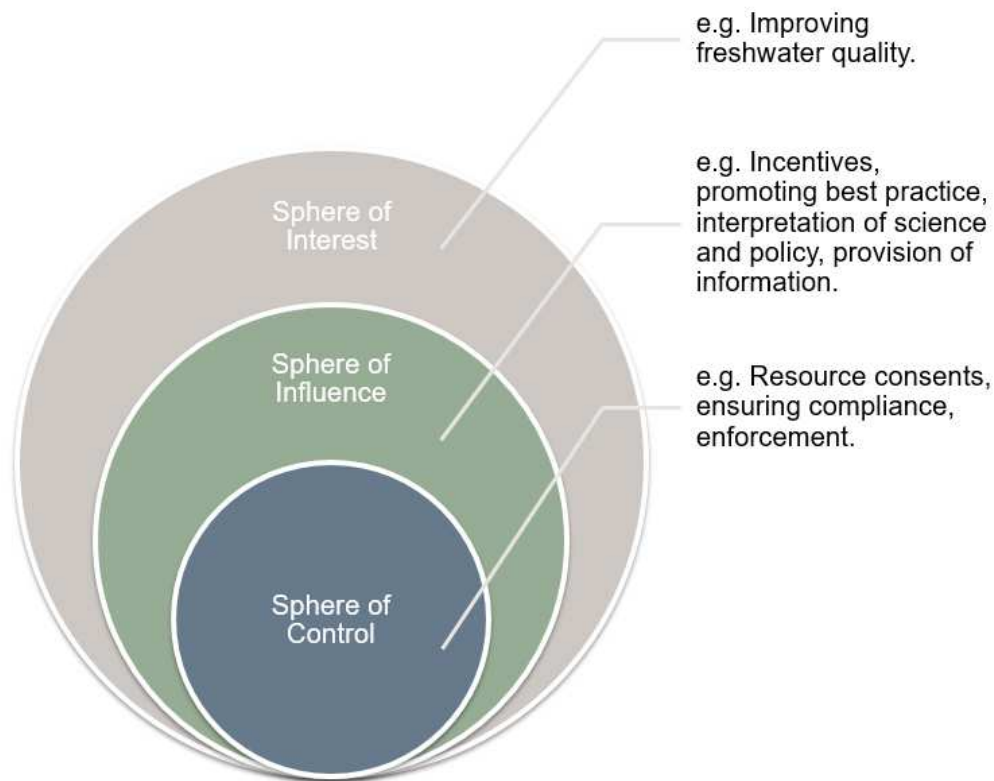


Figure 1: GW's Sphere of Control

15. This collective responsibility challenge is also reflected at a more granular level by the co-delivery requirements prescribed by most WIP recommendations. Across the WIPs and NTS there is approximately 184 recommendations, each with varying levels of joint ownership implied. This is further convoluted by the scope of the recommendations (i.e., varying from achievable via Business as Usual (BAU) to aspirational and from regulatory methods to non-regulatory methods), and the fact that each recommendation is not mutually exclusive; many need to be actioned simultaneously to account for crossover.
16. While the Whaitua process has been successful in clarifying community values and outcomes sought for freshwater, there is a lack of clarity in understanding how Greater Wellington, alongside others, must work together to achieve WIP and NTS recommendations. Critically, there are a lot of potential or perceived contradictions between the recommendations and Greater Wellington’s (and others’) responsibilities under legislation, including the RMA and SCRCA, which need to be deliberately and strategically addressed. An example of this is the inconsistency between Greater

Wellington's flood management requirements under the SCRCA which prioritises protection of people and property, versus the NPS-FM and principles of Te Mana o Te Wai which prioritise the health and well-being of water first, versus the alignment of operational work with WIP and NTS values. This is also perhaps a reflection of the WIPs to date: they do not contain a level of operational strategy that clarifies how the work is to be delivered, especially in the circumstance of some WIP recommendations that are clearly aspirational.

17. There are ongoing challenges with how Greater Wellington should effectively prioritise achieving Whaitua outcomes. At present, Greater Wellington lacks prioritisation tools to balance the achievement of WIP and NTS outcomes with continued achievement of BAU, as well as other priorities of Council such as regional resilience, safety and security. The siloed nature of our current structures means it is extremely difficult to prioritise BAU work across departments and groups, let alone how we integrate WIP and NTS objectives. Prioritisation tools and internal processes need to be matured to enable this. The Fit for the Future (FFF) change programme is key to unlocking and maturing our ability to work in an integrated way with our communities.
18. Greater Wellington has also faced difficulties in effectively managing resources to tackle WIP and NTS objectives. Internal specialist expertise, budget and information systems are not resourced in a way that supports a shift from how we have worked for decades – which includes many customer/ratepayer dependencies and expectations – to a fully integrated and holistic approach. For example, the Mahi Waiora project has encountered challenges in sharing, analysing and updating information on rural properties and their owners for the Waitohu prototype. A lack of community support in the 2020 Revenue and Financing Policy Review also meant that Greater Wellington's Flood Protection department was not able to action changes to funding arrangements in the Upper Ruamāhanga that would support the achievement of wider water quality objectives. The resourcing challenge is perhaps a symptom of Greater Wellington's lack of clarity around its "sphere of influence" and in turn its ability to prioritise work and resource allocation.
19. A gap exists in Greater Wellington's provision of external communication regarding regional freshwater objectives and WIP values. Engagement with the wider community across the region, and recently with the Te Kāuru riparian programme, has indicated a mix of understanding and support for wider environmental improvements. The principle of giving the river more room to act naturally has met with mixed reactions from riverside landowners due to the localised impact on land. In a similar context, many landowners/farmers are embracing greater expectations around kaitiaki, whereas some are questioning why change is needed. "Changing their minds" using targeted communications to increase understanding would be more efficient, and likely more successful in the long term, than utilising our regulatory tools to achieve the same outcome.
20. Perhaps one of the more powerful learnings to date is regarding Greater Wellington's desire to succeed in achieving integrated delivery and implementation of WIP and NTS recommendations, despite the shortcomings identified above. There is collective recognition that internal and external cohesiveness is the key to success in achieving regional freshwater goals. Greater Wellington's drive towards more integrated delivery

has been demonstrated by the success of the Mahi Waiora prototypes and by the high engagement in Greater Wellington's FFF phase 1 feedback process.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

Next steps

Opportunities identified

21. Greater Wellington has an opportunity to maximise its “sphere of influence” (see paragraph 14 and Figure 1, above) in achieving regional freshwater goals by being more strategic in its approach. This is a critical piece that has been missing so far and means that we are not prioritising and resourcing our work as effectively as we need to achieve WIP and NTS objectives. Suggested next steps for this are:
 - a To clarify and communicate across departments the limits of control vs influence Greater Wellington has in achieving freshwater objectives. This needs to be done in alignment with WIPs and NTS values and with a Te Mana o Te Wai lens, thereby complementing work we will need to do with our mana whenua partners to ensure its appropriate application.
 - b Complement the WIPs and NTS by carrying out an additional level of strategic planning that specifies how recommendations will be achieved operationally. This includes identifying how WIP and NTS recommendations interface with other responsibilities under overarching Acts (eg, the RMA and SCRCA) as well as how the recommendations fit with Greater Wellington's current work programmes and resources.
 - c Increase community engagement on regional freshwater objectives. This broader approach needs to be a core component of Whaitua implementation going forward in order to improve engagement and communication with external groups, other agencies and organisations to build understanding around collective responsibility - and reinforce how collaboration complements policy and regulations set at national and regional levels.
22. Greater Wellington's investment in the FFF programme is an opportunity to improve the integration of catchment and environment service delivery structures, processes and systems to better support the requirements of the WIPs and NTS and other regional policy and implementation programmes. There is a specific opportunity for the key insights of the Mahi Waiora prototype teams and its wetland group to be integrated into the FFF change programme, especially in the design and delivery of catchment based planning, prioritisation and management, which is one of the functions proposed in its operating model.

Further reporting to the Environment Committee

23. The recommendations to this report, and discussion in the sections below point to significant further reporting to the Environment Committee.
24. In particular, it is vital that the Committee be clearly informed about WIP recommendations for which GW is responsible, including our current state and existing gaps as we face up to the challenge of adjusting BAU work programmes to respond appropriately.

25. In addition the Committee will need to clearly understand implications for prioritising effort, understanding phasing, and setting completion timeframes.
26. We also must recognise that Whaitua implementation will be impacted by more significant forces including the multitude of Government national directions and reforms programmes. It will be important that the Committee is kept well abreast of the relevant associated implications and our ability to respond proactively.
27. The current effort, information needs, and arrangements proposed in this report will need to continue to be 'picked up' by the Fit for Future programme.

Nga kōwhiringa

Options

28. This report does not specifically address options. Options by way of matters such as the adjustment of work programmes and resourcing must be discussed with Council, in consideration for long term and annual planning rounds.

Ngā hua ahumoni

Financial implications

29. The report and recommendations provides some consideration of resourcing implications associated with WIP implementation, including initially for coordination of Greater Wellington's implementation efforts.
30. New resourcing is likely to be required to meet Greater Wellington's responsibilities for WIP implementation, and will need to be considered in line with current and future long term and annual planning processes.
31. There are otherwise no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi

Consideration of climate change

32. There has been no consideration of climate change in the preparation of this report. Climate change considerations are fundamental in the Whaitua processes and in preparations of the WIPs.

Ngā tikanga whakatau

Decision-making process

33. Decision-making for future implementation of WIP recommendations will require a partnered approach with mana whenua, and input from catchment communities and related organisations.

Te hiranga

Significance

34. Officers have considered the significance (as defined by Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002) of this matter, taking into account Council's Significance and Engagement

Policy and Greater Wellington’s Decision-making Guidelines. Officers consider the decision to agree to recommendations for further reporting requirements as being of low significance.

Te whakatūtakitaki Engagement

35. Whaitua implementation will require substantial engagement with catchment communities.
36. There is otherwise no immediate engagement requirements in association with this report.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

Next steps

37. Further work is required to pull together information on Greater Wellington’s delivery against the Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Ruamāhanga WIPs.
38. Many of the Greater Wellington’s BAU operational activities align with and support whaitua implementation. However it is recognised that our current delivery structures do not necessarily support a catchment approach sufficiently well and are not consistent across the region. The *Fit for the Future* programme is intended to make recommendations on how Greater Wellington’s natural resources strategy, planning and operational delivery activities can best support whaitua or catchment implementation.

Ngā āpitihanga Attachments

Number	Title
1	Achieving Whaitua Objectives through the Mahi Waiora Project
2	Achieving Whaitua Objectives through Greater Wellington’s Flood Protection Department
3	Achieving Whaitua Objectives through Greater Wellington’s Land Management Department

Ngā kaiwaitohu Signatories

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Approvers	Tim Porteous, Manager, Biodiversity Wayne O’Donnell – General Manager, Catchment Management Al Cross – General Manager, Environment Management

**He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga
Summary of considerations**

Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference

The Environment Committee has responsibility to consider changes in the legislative frameworks and the implications these changes have on Council's environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes and initiatives.

Implications for Māori

Greater Wellington, through the NPS-FM, is required to manage freshwater in a way that gives effect to Te Mana o Te Wai. The information provided in this report reflects and supports mana whenua interests through WIPs and NTS recommendations.

Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies

Implementation of the NPS-FM, pNRP and the Whaitua Committee Programme are core environmental resource management activities of the 2018 – 2028 Long Term Plan.

Internal consultation

Catchment and Environment Group Managers were consulted throughout the drafting of this report.

Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.

There is reputational risk for Council associated with the timing and phasing of implementation of WIPs and NTS recommendations.