

WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL'S MISSION

Working together to build a Waikato region that has a healthy environment,
a strong economy and vibrant communities

**Waikato Regional Council
West Coast Catchments Committee Addendum**

Date: Thursday, 23 May, 2019

Time: 10:00 am

Location: Council Chamber
Waikato Regional Council
401 Grey Street
Hamilton East

Members: W Maag - Chair (Maniapoto Maori Trust Board)
T Brough - Deputy Chair (Local Community Representative)
Cr F Lichtwark (Waikato Regional Council)
L Thomson (Waikato District Council)
D Pilkington (Otorohanga District Council)
Cr A Williams (Otorohanga District Council)
Cr S Smith (Waitomo District Council)
N Hayward (Department of Conservation)
C Holland (Local Community Representative)
T Mandeno (Local Community Representative)
M Moss (Local Community Representative)
J Reeves (Local Community Representative)
S Reid (Local Community Representative)
K Van Houte (Local Community Representative)
K Taylor (Maniapoto Maori Trust Board)
W Jensen (Maniapoto Maori Trust Board)
M Moana-Tuwhangai (Waikato-Tainui)
Cr S Kneebone (Joint-Chair Integrated Catchment Management Committee South)
A Livingston - ex officio (Waikato Regional Council)
T Mahuta - ex officio (Waikato Regional Council)

Notice of Meeting:

I hereby give notice that an ordinary Meeting of the West Coast Catchments Committee will be held as detailed above.

VRJ Payne
Chief Executive Officer

9. Plan Change One - Healthy Rivers Update

*9.1 Plan Change 1 – Healthy Rivers update

Report to West Coast Catchment Committee

Date: 20 May 2019

Author: Jolene Francis, Zone Manager – West Coast and Central Waikato Catchments.

Authoriser: Brendan Toohey, Manager Lower Waikato West Coast Catchments

Subject: **Plan Change 1 – Healthy Rivers update**

Section: A (Committee has delegated authority to make decision)

Purpose

1. To provide the West Coast Catchment Committee with an update on the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 – Healthy Rivers.

Executive Summary

2. The Healthy Rivers: Wai Ora (Proposed Plan Change 1) is currently in the Hearings Phase (or First Schedule Process) where submitters are invited to present their evidence to a panel of independent hearings commissioners.
3. The implementation of Healthy Rivers is taking place whilst this is all going on and includes a number of different activities spread throughout the implementation project team, which is made up of 5 workstreams.
4. The West Coast Catchment is not subject to any of the provisions of Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1. However, being in such close proximity to catchments that are has seen activity increase around the West Coast catchment to respond to any potential pending legislative requirements.

Staff Recommendation:

That the report Plan Change 1 – Healthy Rivers update (West Coast Catchment Committee 23 May 2019) be received.

Background

5. Healthy Rivers: Wai Ora (Proposed Plan Change 1) is currently in the Hearings Phase (or First Schedule Process) where submitters are invited to present their evidence to a panel of independent hearings commissioners. The point of this process is for the commissioners to hear different perspectives of the plan and how it impacts different landowners, sectors and stakeholders in different ways. Waikato Regional Council (**WRC**) has various roles in this process. These are;
 - As a submitter on the current plan,
 - As the proponent of the current plan,
 - Supporting the hearings commissioners drafting up recommendations and answering questions related to points of science or technical aspects of the plan.
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Implementation Update

6. The implementation of Healthy Rivers is taking place whilst this is all going on and includes a number of different activities spread throughout the implementation project team. This project team is made up of 5 different work streams whose job is to implement the plan as it current stands (and provide advice as to how the new plan might work better). The work streams in this team include:
 - Information systems

- Plan effectiveness monitoring
 - Regulatory and Industry Schemes
 - Farm and sub-catchment planning
 - Communications
7. The Information systems team is looking at building the architecture and processes for capturing data around registration of properties, nitrogen reference points and farm environment plans. At present a process is underway to identify the most suitable vendor for this type of tool.
 8. The Plan effectiveness monitoring work stream is looking at how we might model or account for the changes created by Proposed Plan Change 1 (**PPC1**). It plans to look at both the impact of land-use now and in the future and the links between this information and the effectiveness of the plan. This will be a key function to explain how well Plan Change 1 has gone in meeting its 10 year targets.
 9. The Regulatory and Industry Schemes work stream is focussed on the regulatory aspects of PPC1, ensuring that the necessary systems, processes and resources are in place to support implementation. They are providing resources and developing systems and processes for: the registration of farms; the lodgement of nitrogen reference points (**NRP**) or inputs; the certification of rural professionals; the certification of industry schemes; consent processing; compliance monitoring and auditing. To support these activities this work stream will also develop and deliver training for staff regarding consenting and compliance under PPC1 and prepare guidance for certified rural professionals who wish to become involved in the practical delivery of (**FEP**) and auditing of such.
 10. The Integrated Catchment Management lead Farm and sub-catchment planning work stream is responsible for the work with communities and landowners in increasing their understanding of Plan Change 1. As well they are working at creating templates and guidelines for FEPs which both meeting the regulatory requirements as well as being able to be used as engagement tools.
 11. The team spend a lot of time working with industry groups and community groups to get a good understanding around what they need from WRC and where we can provide support to empower communities.
 12. Another shorter-term task for this work stream is to develop understanding of sub-catchment planning and how it fits into PPC1 or could be used to improve community buy-in as well as compliance of landowners. This role aims to have a well-defined process and template for supporting these groups by March 2020.
 13. At present it is learning from the other groups that have been set-up around the region and wider regions. Sub-catchment planning as a basic concept looks to identify the risks pertinent to the sub-catchment and provide both mitigations from these and also the priority for undertaking these works in comparison to water quality or community buy-in. This role has been done throughout council for a while and is the way our prioritisation has worked in catchment planning in the past. The key difference now is the community wanting to take some ownership of this process and drive some of the conversations which is a space which is somewhat new to WRC.
 14. The communications work stream is a key function of all of the above work streams and helps to ensure that we have consistent and reliable information available for landowners and communities around the region.

West Coast catchment context

15. The focus for engagement in the West Coast has very much been based on community demand. With PPC1 being notified, areas such as the lower West Coast decided to take action to combat any future legislative requirements. The Land Management Advisory Services (**LMAS**) team has been responsive to this and with the catchment management team has engaged with community through running field days, supporting

industry workshops, providing landowners with maps and also keeping internal staff up to speed with the PPC1 conversation.

16. The focus in the West Coast is very much dominated by drystock. For this reason, we have utilised the relationships that we have with Beef and Lamb NZ to ensure farmers in the West Coast are supported with FEP workshops as well as other field days and learning opportunities to better understand both the potential impending changes and the communities we will need to be working with. We have also recently started working with catchment groups such as King Country River Care to promote Risk and Mitigation workshops which get farmers working together to identify risks on their farms and we believe this is a great first step to providing good FEPs.

Because the West Coast is not subject to PPC1 requirements, we have noted the understanding about what PPC1 is or what it aims to do is very varied. Part of our role has been alleviating some of the concerns that farmers in particular have about PPC1 and another has been correcting some of the misinformation that seems to have become more and more common.

17. One of the key aspects for the LMAS team over the past 12 months, has been the work that has been done with community groups which are being set-up around the region. These include sub-catchment groups in the West Coast catchment and in particular King Country River Care. We are still trying to refine what WRC's role is with these groups, but what has been really encouraging to see is their willingness to have WRC help out and run workshops and engagement with the communities in these areas.
18. The sub-catchment planning aspect of the PPC1 implementation plan has been directly informed by the groups in the Whangape sub-catchment (Lower Waikato) and this group is working with their coordinator to now start building a more robust sub-catchment plan which highlights important parts of the catchment which require protection or mitigation to ensure the water quality of the tributaries into the lake is improved which should in-turn improve (over time) the overall quality of Lake Whangape. Other sub-catchment planning exercises that WRC is aware of and supporting to various degree's include Upper Puniu sub-catchment and potentially looking at Whirinaki sub-catchment in the Upper Waikato

References

Further information is available online on Waikato Regional Council's website:

Information regarding the Hearings - <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/council/policy-and-plans/plans-under-development/healthy-rivers-plan-for-change/the-hearings/>

Frequently asked questions and fact sheets - <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/council/policy-and-plans/plans-under-development/healthy-rivers-plan-for-change/infosheets/>