

Report No.	18-60
Decision Required	

FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT: UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report provides an update on progress with freshwater planning.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 18-60 and Annex.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. The information contained in this report has no immediate financial impact.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. Community engagement is integral to the work described below. There will also be opportunities for community members to provide a view through the Long-Term Plan process currently underway.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. The information presented here does not represent a significant business risk.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. This report is part of a regular series of updates on progress with freshwater planning. It builds on Report 18-14, presented to this Committee in February. We are currently progressing work on two tracks. One is to address difficulties arising from the malalignment of the One Plan’s *current* management of nutrient leaching from intensive land use. The purpose of the section 35 report, in this context, is to clearly identify *problems* that need to be addressed. It will draw together, in one document, relevant analysis presented to Council over the past couple of years; it may also bring different issues to light, or cast known issues in a different light. Having the report produced externally will provide reassurance of its independence and rigour.

7. THE ONE PLAN’S NITROGEN ALLOCATION FRAMEWORK

- 7.1. Since our last update, we have engaged planning consultants Hill Young Cooper to assist us with our review of our planning framework. The first piece of work we have commissioned with them is a “section 35” report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the One Plan’s *current* management of nutrient leaching from intensive land use. The purpose of the section 35 report, in this context, is to clearly identify *problems* that need to be addressed. It will draw together, in one document, relevant analysis presented to Council over the past couple of years; it may also bring different issues to light, or cast known issues in a different light. Having the report produced externally will provide reassurance of its independence and rigour.
- 7.2. In parallel, we are investigating possible *solutions* to difficulties with the nutrient management framework, with particular attention to cumulative nitrogen leaching maxima (Table 14.2). This would inform a “section 32” report (on the efficiency and effectiveness of

a plan-change *proposal*). While the s32 report logically follows the s35, we consider it appropriate to progress work where we can to minimise delays.

- 7.3. A number of pieces of technical analysis have been commissioned to support both the s35 and s32 reports. These have been outlined in previous reporting to Council, and include:
- Work by Dr Terry Parminter and Mr Barrie Ridler (separately) on the impact of the nutrient management regime on dairy farms in the Region;
 - Analysis by the Fertiliser and Lime Research Centre of the effects of changes in OVERSEER on Table 14.2;
 - An assessment by Mr Stuart Ford of the impact of the current rule framework on Horowhenua horticulturalists; and
 - Macroeconomic analysis by NZIER.
- 7.4. This work is progressing well. A full set of reports will be made available to Councillors via the Hub well in advance of a workshop planned for 29 May.

8. OUR FRESHWATER FUTURE

- 8.1. Our longer-term freshwater planning programme now has a title (Our Freshwater Future) and a webpage (www.ourfreshwaterfuture.nz). The webpage currently contains relatively little information; we will add to it as we progress.
- 8.2. Our focus since February has been on early engagement with the community. A brochure was produced for Central Districts Field Days in March (attached as Annex A). Copies are available as required.
- 8.3. We have contacted iwi, territorial authorities, and a number of industry and environmental groups, to seek their perspectives. Some of these groups will have direct experience of collaborative planning in other regions; all will have a view on what our process needs to deliver. We have invited them to a series of workshops, which will take place in May, to discuss expectations of the process.
- 8.4. Efforts are being made to ensure that staff are informed and able to respond to questions from community members, and that there are opportunities for staff from across the organisation to contribute their own thinking and experience to the process.
- 8.5. We will take opportunities to discuss the challenge ahead of us and our plans with other groups as they arise. These include, for example, a meeting of the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum on 27 April, and of the Awa Tupua technical advisory group the same day. We believe it is important at this stage to hear a range of perspectives.
- 8.6. This engagement programme will inform further advice to Council. It might be useful to agree a set of 'operating principles' to guide work as it unfolds over the next few years. We have tentatively scheduled a workshop on 19 June for discussion. At that time, we expect to be able to provide councillors with a firmer view on:
- Whether to follow a collaborative process (and, if so, what form that might take);
 - Whether the six freshwater management units currently in place for the Region are the appropriate framework for that process (and in which order we best sequence them);
 - What the intended output of the process should be (catchment plans or One Plan amendments, for example); and
 - What governance arrangements might be appropriate.
- 8.7. Once Council has determined its approach regionally, we will aim to get the first catchment process underway promptly – ideally, before the end of 2018.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1. There has been no specific consultation on the contents of this report, beyond what it outlined above.

10. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 10.1. A councillors' workshop on possible changes to the One Plan's nutrient management framework is scheduled for 29 May. This could allow for notification in December, should Council decide to proceed in that direction.
- 10.2. A councillors' workshop on Our Freshwater Future is scheduled for 19 June. This is intended to inform decisions about our regional approach to freshwater management over the longer term. We aim to commence the first catchment planning process by the end of this year.

11. SIGNIFICANCE

- 11.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Tom Bowen
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ANNEXES

- A Our Freshwater Future Brochure