

Report 13.198  
Date 14 May 2013  
File WO/02/02/01

Committee Environmental Wellbeing  
Author Mark Hooker, Acting Team Leader - Investigations, Strategy and Planning

## **Waiohine River Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) - Recommendation from Advisory Committee**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Environmental Wellbeing Committee of recent work on the Waiohine River FMP, the next steps to be taken in the FMP process, and to present a recent recommendation of the Waiohine FMP Advisory Committee for consideration.

### **2. The decision-making process and significance**

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matter requiring a decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

#### **2.1 Significance of the decision**

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

This decision does not commit GWRC to additional expenditure or a work programme, and funding is allowed for within the Waiohine Stopbank project within the LTP. Future decisions to be made on the FMP, such as approving stopbank alignments or approving the completed FMP will be made at a later date.

### **3. Background**

In September 2008, work commenced on the development of a Floodplain Management Plan for the Waiohine River. The Waiohine River drains the eastern watershed of a section of the Tararua ranges linking with the Ruamahanga River in the main Wairarapa Valley. The river passes through pastoral farmlands, to the north of Greytown, which sits on the river's floodplain. The protection of Greytown from flooding is a key focus in the development of the FMP.

There are strong associations between the river and Tangata Whenua, as well as colonial settlers. These people's shared links with the river give a rich historical background for the work.

There have been several schemes run on the river, funded both locally and with monies from central government. The current scheme is managed by the Waiohine Floodplain Management Advisory Committee (the Advisory Committee) and funded in accordance with the Council's funding policy of 50% Regional funding and 50% from the local community.

Flood Protection has been introducing a FMP approach into the Wairarapa, in line with the LTP. This FMP approach has been successful in the western part of the region, and this model is now being used in the Wairarapa. While similar works have been completed in the recent past in the Wairarapa, they focused more on how to address the flooding by building structures. From experience, we recognise that there are four components to any long term vision for managing the flood risk in the river, being:

1. How we work in the river (river channel management). This is critical to the long term viability of the river scheme.
2. What structures might be used to address the significant portion of flood risk, do we build stopbanks?
3. What planning methods are appropriate to promote sensible new development that avoids the hazard, and how do we ensure that existing development recognises the remaining risk?
4. What do we do about the remaining risk from the hazard? Emergency management measures form a key component in achieving this.

In 2009, the Advisory Committee was formed to develop and consider options for floodplain management on the Waiohine River – primarily to reduce the flood risk to Greytown during a large flood. The Advisory Committee consists largely of the existing scheme committee, with additional stakeholders invited to join the committee in order to consider the full range of floodplain management issues.

Prior to 2008, when the FMP process began, the Advisory Committee and GWRC had developed a stopbank proposal along the true right bank of the Waiohine River to protect Greytown from a 100-year flood. Funding had been identified in the LTP and a designation put in place along the proposed alignment in the Combined Wairarapa District Plan. This stopbank proposal was deferred when the project was brought into the FMP process but there remains an expectation from some of the community that a stopbank along the river will still be an outcome of the process.

#### **4. Recent Work**

Option combinations have been in development from 2009 until early 2013. During this time, the options have been developed, refined and narrowed down. There has also been consultation with stakeholders and the community during this time. A key tool that has been used is multi-criteria analysis (MCA) – a system for scoring options across a range of criteria with weightings that reflect the relative importance of each criterion. A total of seven options were considered as part of this process.

At an Advisory Committee meeting on 15 October 2012 a recommendation was made to take Options 4 and 7 forward for consideration during Phase 3 of the FMP, with the intention that within six months there would be sufficient information available to make a recommendation on a single preferred option. This recommendation was endorsed by the Environmental Wellbeing Committee in November 2012.

The two combinations of options to be further investigated differed in how the river channel is to be managed and how flood risk is dealt with by structural measures.

The Flood Protection department developed further information on the two options combinations and these were considered by the Advisory Committee at a meeting on 22 April 2013. At that meeting, the Advisory Committee recommended Option 7 as the option to be selected for detailed consideration in Phase 3 – that is, it would be the preferred option to be taken forward.

Further detail on the process to date, and the various option combinations that were considered, was provided in Report 12.559 to this Committee in November 2012. The plan in Attachment 1 to this report shows the overall location of the stopbanks in each option.

#### **5. Key differences between Options 4 and 7**

Key differences between Options 4 and 7 are:

- Option 7 has stopbanks close to both banks of the Waiohine River, protecting Greytown and rural land on both banks to between a 50 and 100-year standard. Option 4 has lower-standard stopbanks close to both banks, protecting rural land to a 20-year standard (50-year in limited

locations) and a second stopbank, further from the river, protecting Greytown to a 100-year standard.

- Option 4 provides greater flexibility in river management methods, potentially allowing options with improved environmental outcomes. Option 7 commits us to a management approach similar to existing methods, and potentially requiring much more rock protection than at present.
- Option 4, due to the need for a second stopbank and a flood gate on State Highway 2, would be more difficult to consent/obtain landowner agreement to and would be more expensive. It may also take longer to implement.
- Option 4 pushes the flood water away from Greytown and increases flood depths mainly in the Ahikouka Road area. Option 7 pushes floodwaters onto the left bank of the river mainly in the Matarawa Road area (south of Carterton). Both options increase flood depths for a distance downstream of the State Highway.
- Option 4 is considered more sustainable by the Flood Protection officers, in relation to long-term issues which will affect the river and floodplain development. Option 7 reflects a more traditional approach to floodplain management.

## **6. Recent consultation**

As part of the further investigations carried out between 15 October 2012 and 22 April 2013, community meetings and statutory stakeholder meetings were held. Stakeholders/partners consulted included iwi (Kahungunu ki Wairarapa and Rangitane o Wairarapa), the Department of Conservation, the Fish and Game Council, and GWRC's Environmental Science department.

The main focus of consultation with the statutory stakeholders and iwi was the river management approach. While the river management approach associated with Option 7 is consentable, most of the stakeholders would prefer an approach that allows a more natural channel. Option 4 is more flexible in this regard.

The main focus of the consultation with members of the community was on how the options affect flood water distribution. Strong representation was made by people from the Ahikouka Road area on this matter and two further members from this area were co-opted onto the Advisory Committee to represent this community.

Most members of the community who attended public meetings opposed Option 4 (1 supporting; 7 opposed) and supported Option 7 (9 supporting; nil opposed). Four people supported neither option and one person advocated a "do nothing" approach.

## 7. Next steps

Council officers recognise the recommendation of Option 7 by the Advisory Committee and the community support for this approach, however do not feel there is sufficient information for officers to be able to recommend Option 7 as it stands. We recommend that further work be done on the Option 7 approach to develop a sustainable combination of stopbank alignments, river management works and planning measures.

Further investigations will provide answers these key questions:

- How close can the stopbanks be located to the river to ensure the safety of the stopbanks, and be confident the design standard of protection can be achieved in the long-term?
- How close can the stopbanks be located to the river to allow for river channel management needs, without committing the community to high ongoing costs in the future?
- What implications will confining flood flows have for long-term river morphology, especially gravel transport?
- What planning controls are needed to manage the flood risk behind the stopbanks?

It should be noted that the stopbank alignments and levels have not been finalised, and this work may result in the stopbanks being located on a different alignment to the current designation. It may even be necessary, for the security and river management issues noted above, to retreat existing stopbanks in some locations. This issue has not been explicitly addressed in earlier investigations or consultation.

It had been the intention to proceed with consenting and design of the preferred option in parallel with the development of the FMP during Phase 4 of the FMP process. With some significant issues around Option 7 still to be resolved, it is considered that we can not proceed with a consent application or detailed design work at this stage. Addressing the issues detailed above will provide key information needed for future consenting and detailed design.

## 8. Communication

A press release will be prepared, reporting the decision of this committee and the next steps in the process.

## 9. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

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

3. *Notes the recommendation of the Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan Advisory Committee that the Option 7 combination be selected as the preferred option for further development under Phase 3 of the FMP.*
4. *Endorses officers commencing further investigations and planning of Option 7 as part of Phase 3 of the Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan.*
5. *Notes the sustainability issues listed in section 7 of the report which will have to be considered as part of the more detailed evaluation of Option 7.*

Report prepared by:



**Mark Hooker**  
Acting Team Leader  
Investigations, Strategy and  
Planning

Report approved by:



**Graeme Campbell**  
Manager  
Flood Protection

Report approved by:



**Wayne O'Donnell**  
General Manager  
Catchment Management

**Attachment 1**      Waiohine River FMP outline plan of option 4 and option 7  
Concept Stopbank Alignment and Existing 100 year Flood Spread