

Informal Workshop Notes

Strategy and Policy Committee Workshop

- Held:** 10.45am, Tuesday 19 March 2024
- Venue:** Council Chambers, Regional House, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga, and via Zoom (audio visual meeting)
- Chairperson:** Cr Kat Macmillan
- Present:** Cr Malcolm Campbell
Cr Stuart Crosby
Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti (via Zoom)
Chairman Doug Leeder
Cr Matemoana McDonald
Cr Jane Nees
Cr Ron Scott
Cr Ken Shirley
Cr Paula Thompson (via Zoom)
Cr Lyall Thurston
Cr Andrew von Dadelszen
Cr Te Taru White
Cr Kevin Winters (via Zoom)
- In Attendance:** Staff: Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive; Namouta Poutasi – General Manager, Strategy and Science; Chris Ingle – General Manager, Integrated Catchments; Kataraina O’Brien – General Manager – Strategic Engagement (via Zoom); Julie Bevan – Policy and Planning Manager; Nicki Green – Principal Advisor, Policy and Planning; James Low – Team Leader Policy (Freshwater); Stephanie Macdonald – Community Engagement Team Leader; Jenny Teeuwen – Committee Advisor
- Apologies:** Cr Paula Thompson (for early departure)

As Chairperson Cr Paula Thompson was unable to attend the workshop in person, the Deputy Chairperson Cr Kat Macmillan, **assumed** the Chair.

1. Introduction

Chairperson, Cr Kat Macmillan, welcomed those present and noted that the workshop was open to the public, but would not be livestreamed or recorded.

2. Workshop Purpose

- To discuss the Freshwater Policy Programme timeline to meet the September 2025 notification date for the proposed Regional Policy Statement Change 7 (Freshwater) and proposed Regional Natural Resources Plan Change 19 (Freshwater).
- To discuss which policy topics should be progressed in light of pending changes to national freshwater policy and regulations.

3. Workshop Paper

3.1 Freshwater Policy Programme - Progressing draft Regional Policy Statement Change 7 (Freshwater) and draft Regional Natural Resources Plan Change 19 (Freshwater)

Presentation: Freshwater Policy Programme: Objective ID A4625159 [↗](#)

Presented by: Namouta Poutasi – General Manager, Strategy and Science
Nicki Green – Principal Advisor, Policy and Planning
James Low – Team Leader Policy (Freshwater)

3.1. Timeline

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Key Points – Staff

- Presented proposed timelines for 2024 and 2025.
- Outlined draft plan change release options:
 - Recommended - targeted release in July 2024
 - Alternative - targeted release November/December 2024, which would enable staff to have earlier informal discussions with tangata whenua and key stakeholders about draft text.

11.00am – Cr Thompson **withdrew** from the workshop.

In Response to Questions

- The draft plan change would clearly state that it was not final policy position and could include questions to seek focussed feedback on specific topics/areas.
- The renewal of resource consents for water quantity was more part of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) process, rather than Freshwater plan change process.
- An example where there had been improved/better science was for water quantity and allocation – ground water/surface water limits.
- Staff were comfortable that either of the draft plan change targeted release date options could work.
- Targeted stakeholder consultation when the draft plan change was released would include the rural/farming sector, environmental groups, iwi/hapū groups already engaged with, and Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) within the region.

Key Points - Members

- Needed to have a clear understanding of the direction of the new government before releasing the draft plan for targeted engagement.
- Preferred to wait for as long as possible, whilst being adaptable and flexible.

Guidance Provided

- Preference was for the alternative targeted key stakeholder engagement release date of November/December 2024.
- Supported that staff hold informal conversations/discussions with key stakeholders.
- Care was needed when defining targeted stakeholders to ensure all sectors were covered.
- The engagement needed to be meaningful.
- Economic considerations/impact as well as environment/science to be a priority topic for the upcoming strategic sessions.

3.1. Policy options to be progressed

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Key Points - Staff

- Provided explanation for the four categories assigned to policy topics that had already been considered by Councillors at informal briefings during 2023.
- Topics that fell into Categories 1 to 3 were recommended to be carried forward into the draft plan change to be released for feedback.
- Identified four key policy topics in Category 4 that may need to be revisited/discussed further, prior to finalising the draft:
 - Te Mana o te Wai hierarchy of obligations
 - Vision, outcomes and targets
 - Wetlands and rivers controls
 - Farming provisions.

In Response to Questions

- Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) was required to implement the operative National Policy Statement (NPS) of the day. Matters put forward in the draft plan must comply with the operative National Policy Statement - Freshwater Management (NPS-FM).
- The hierarchy of obligations under Te Mana o te Wai was not dissimilar to the current content of RMA, section 5. How BOPRC might interpret this could be a topic for discussion.
- Acknowledged that the farming provisions would provide the most conundrums to work through.

Key Points - Members

- The six principles that sat beneath the hierarchy of obligations of Te Mana o te Wai also needed to be included in the conversation on this topic, particularly in terms of the roles that tangata whenua would play.
- From an iwi perspective, irrespective of any changes which may come from central government regarding Te Mana o te Wai, it would not change how tangata whenua thought about water or how they interpreted Te Mana o te Wai.

- Whilst BOPRC was bound to comply with the legislation of the day, it was how that was applied on the ground that would matter.

Guidance Provided

- Te Mana o te Wai – discussion to include principles, not just hierarchy of obligations, and a focus on implementation and how to make this work on the ground.
- Farming provisions - important to better understand where things were going to land on the spectrum. Find practical solutions.
- Proceed with categories 1 and 2, proceed but go carefully with category 3, and further discussion was required for the identified topics under category 4.

4. Next Steps

- Seek approval of revised timeline at the 9 April 2024 Strategy and Policy Committee meeting.
- Revisit options for the four identified key policy topics at the 21 May 2024 Strategy and Policy Committee workshop. Further workshops may be required.

11.53am - the workshop closed.