
REPORT 4
1215/52/IM

ASSESSMENT OF WATER AND SANITARY SERVICES

1. Purpose of Report

To obtain approval of the draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services and to release it for consultation using the special consultative procedure.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree to the statement of proposal for the draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services (attached as Appendix 1), and the summary of the information contained in the statement of proposal (attached as Appendix 2).*
3. *Note that the special consultative procedure to adopt the draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services will run concurrently with the special consultative procedure on the 2005/06 Draft Annual Plan.*
4. *Recommend that Council*
 - (a) *approve the statement of proposal for the draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services (Appendix 1)*
 - (b) *initiate a special consultative procedure to be combined with the consultation on the 2005/06 draft Annual Plan.*
5. *Agree that officers will report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee on the results of the consultative process.*

3. Background

The Local Government Act 2002 requires that territorial authorities must assess water and sanitary services within their district by 30 June 2005. Water Services comprises water supply, wastewater services and stormwater drainage. Sanitary Services comprises cemeteries, crematoria, public conveniences and waste disposal. The Assessments' focus is primarily on public health risks, as these services are deemed vital to public health and welfare.

The Assessment captures much of what is contained in the relevant Asset Management Plans but is not limited to Council services or reticulated urban areas. It covers services in both the urban and rural areas and assets that are not owned by Council. There are no

national standards or regulatory requirements to monitor the quality and risks of these systems; therefore they are potentially more exposed to public health issues.

The Assessment takes a snapshot of the current population, the demands on infrastructure and identifies present risks. It also looks at the likely future situation; at estimated population growth and demand, risks associated with this growth and Council's proposed methods to meet these demands and reduce risks to the communities. It focuses on the quality and adequacy of the future water supply, wastewater and stormwater discharges and the public health and environmental impacts associated with these.

The Liquid Waste Plan currently under preparation gives the direction for the future of the wastewater and stormwater services whereas the Asset Management Plans provide detail of the provision of these services. There is some overlap in the content of all these plans as they deal with the same services but with different perspectives.

4. Discussion

4.1 Draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services

The draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services is attached to this report as Appendix 1. As required by the LGA, the Medical Officer of Health has been consulted in making this Assessment and the Makara, Ohariu, Horokiwi and South Karori communities have also contributed to providing information on their water collection methods and disposal of wastewater.

4.2 Key Findings

Significant public health issues and risks identified in the Assessment for water, wastewater, stormwater, public conveniences and cemeteries are identified below.

Water

Reticulated areas: Recent Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) research has stated that if the recent rate of population growth continues, as from 2007, they would be unable to supply sufficient potable water during 50-year drought conditions. This has prompted the call for the preparation of a Regional Wellington Water Management Plan to identify the possible options to provide solutions.

Non-reticulated areas: At present there is no long term monitoring data on the quality of water collected for domestic purposes from roof, bores or streams. This means the Assessment cannot determine whether these water supplies meet current Ministry of Health guidelines.

Proposed actions relating to water are to:

- Contribute to the Wellington Water Management Plan proposed by GWRC to consider water demand issues and water conservation
- Seek to gather information on the quality of the non-reticulated water supplies
- Undertake education regarding safe drinking water

- Consider introducing a code of practice for private rainwater systems for use as a building compliance guidance document under the potable water requirement of the Building Act
- Consider applying the proposed Ministry of Health/ Ministry for the Environment national environmental standard for human drinking-water sources to smaller individual drinking-water supplies via mechanisms that would ensure regular monitoring and maintenance of collection systems.

Wastewater

Reticulated areas: Parts of the wastewater system (some pipes, treatment plants and pump stations) lack sufficient capacity to meet Council's current levels of service during wet weather.

Non-reticulated areas: It is not possible at this time to accurately comment on the performance of the non-reticulated wastewater systems. This is due to the lack of information and regulation on the ongoing operation of these systems.

Proposed actions relating to wastewater are to:

- Continue with current Council projects to reduce sewage overflows and improve performance of wastewater network.
- In conjunction with GWRC seek to gather information on the operation and maintenance of septic tanks and on-site wastewater disposal systems.
- Consider mechanisms that would ensure septic tanks and on-site wastewater disposal systems are installed and maintained in a manner that prevents their failure and ensures effective operation.
- Consider implementing the forthcoming MfE guidelines for the safe and clean operation of septic tanks.

Stormwater

More buildings, gardens and roads are being flooded more frequently than Council's agreed current levels of service and those implied in the Building Act 1991.

There is also a lack of information on what level of stormwater quality and treatment is acceptable to the public before it enters the receiving environment (natural waters, streams, south coast, harbour).

Proposed actions relating to stormwater include:

- Continue completing catchment management plans and subsequent upgrade works under the Flood Protection Project to reduce the flooding risk in the City.
- Maintain investigations in conjunction with GWRC to determine appropriate water quality standards related to stormwater across the region. Monitor the effects and investigate ways to reduce the effects. This will assist in determining what level of treatment may be required on future stormwater discharges.
- Consult with the community on stormwater quality and the potential ways to mitigate environmental impacts.

Cemeteries

Makara Cemetery is one third full and there is a need to consider plans for opening new areas for burial within the cemetery, which take into account planting, road access and services.

Expansion is planned to occur within 5-15 years.

Public Conveniences

No significant issues were identified with the current provision of public conveniences.

Waste Disposal

Waste disposal is covered by Council's Solid Waste Management Plan and therefore does not need to be covered by this assessment.

4.3 Data to be obtained for the next Assessment

The LGA requires territorial authorities to complete their assessments "from time to time". Officers propose that the next Assessment be completed in four years time to coincide with the Long Term Council Community Plan, but notes that not all services will necessarily be assessed at the same time.

Given the lack of available information on several of the services, it is recommended additional information be collected for the next Assessment. This should include:

- Non-reticulated potable water source, treatment and quality.
- The number and type of non-reticulated wastewater treatment facilities and their efficiency.
- The usage level of public conveniences.

Due to this lack of information it is not possible to clearly define the level of public health risk some of these services pose, based on the lack of any significant outbreaks of disease and reported sickness they have been assessed as presenting minimal public health risks. In future when these data gaps have been filled, especially the data on water quality, there may need to be a review of the public health risk.

4.4 Consultation

The LGA states that Council can adopt their Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services using the special consultative procedure. As part of that process a statement of proposal must be provided (in this case, the draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services). A summary of the proposal must also be provided and this is attached in Appendix 2.

It is proposed that consultation to adopt the Assessment be undertaken concurrently with the 2005/06 Draft Annual Plan. The Statement of Proposal will also be placed on Council's website and in all libraries and copies of the summary will be sent to the Ministry for the Environment, Wellington Regional Environmental Agency and relevant local environmental and community groups.

Any oral submissions will be heard by this Committee. The draft plan, revised to take into account submissions (if appropriate) will be brought back to this Committee for final consideration.

5. Conclusion

A draft Assessment of Water and Sanitary Services has been provided for the Committee's consideration. It sets out a series of issues and actions for the next five to ten years relating to the long-term management of water and sanitary services.

The report seeks approval to proceed with consultation to be carried out concurrently with the 2005/06 draft Annual Plan.

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Supporting Information

1) Fit with Strategic Objectives/Strategic Outcomes

Wellington City Council already has a commitment to waste reduction and sustainability as set out in *Strategic Directions 2001*.

Outcome:

6.3 Reducing Waste

Reducing quantities of waste entering the waste stream where an increasing volume is reused, recycled or recovered.

6.4 Sustainable Disposal

All waste is disposed of in an environmentally sustainable manner ensuring the protection of people and ecosystems

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

N/A.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

Water and Sanitary services are an area of high interest, in particular in relation to receiving waters, wastewater treatment, cemeteries and crematoria

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Consultation will follow the special consultative procedure in conjunction with the draft Annual Plan (see section 4.4 of this report). The Medical Officer of Health has been consulted in making this Assessment and the Makara, Ohariu, Horokiwi and South Karori communities have provided information on their water collection methods and disposal of wastewater.

b) Consultation with Maori

Formal consultation will be carried out as part of the special consultative procedure (see section 4.4 of this report).

6) Legal Implications

None.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The Assessments look to support existing policy. These policies include the Solid Waste Management Plan, Asset Management Plans, Sewage Pollution Elimination Project and proposed Liquid Waste Management Plan.