

26 July 2024

File Ref: OIAPR1274023063-28742

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe

### **Request for information 2024-141**

I refer to your request for information dated 29 June 2024, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 29 June 2024. You have requested the following:

*“Under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), I am formally requesting detailed information regarding flood protection measures for the Porirua Stream. This inquiry is particularly pertinent given recent flooding on the East Coast of the North Island, where the Hawke's Bay Regional Council has faced significant criticism for their management of local river levels, which is alleged to have contributed to residential flooding.*

*In light of these events and the heightened public concern, it is essential to ascertain what proactive measures the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has in place to mitigate the risk of a similar situation occurring along the Porirua Stream as it flows through Tawa and Porirua.*

*Upon reviewing the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Long Term Plan 2021-2031, it is apparent that there is a considerable focus on the Hutt River. The RiverLink project, for instance, is a partnership between Hutt City Council, Greater Wellington, and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, working together with Mana Whenua partners – Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o Te Ika. RiverLink is expected to safeguard residents from large flood events that could affect up to 3,000 homes, five schools, and 600 businesses, potentially causing an estimated \$1.1 billion worth of damage across the community. The project includes significant transport improvements, such as a new Melling interchange, relocating the Melling train station, and enhancing walking and cycling links, with construction expected to be completed by 2026. This extensive focus contrasts with the apparent lack of specific plans for flood protection for the Porirua Stream.*

*Given Wellington City's expectation of population growth by 50,000 – 80,000 people over the next 30 years, the Council's strategy includes intensification in the central city and around existing town centres, and developing new urban areas in Lincolnshire Farm, Upper Stebbings, and Glenside West. Specifically, the Upper Stebbings and Glenside West area is planned to accommodate approximately 6,000 new homes, which is expected to bring an additional 16,000 to 20,000 people to the area. This development heightens the urgency for effective flood protection measures for the Porirua Stream, which runs through these regions upriver from Tawa.*

*I am requesting the following information:*

- 1. What flood protection measures are currently implemented by GWRC for the Porirua Stream to address extra heavy rainfall events?*
- 2. What specific adaptations or changes has GWRC undertaken in response to the increasing likelihood of extreme weather events due to climate change?*
- 3. What long-term strategies does GWRC have in place to address the evolving challenges of flood risk management for the Porirua Stream through Tawa and Porirua, and how do these strategies integrate with broader regional and national climate resilience plans?*

*A swift and comprehensive response to this request is necessary for assessing the success of existing flood management strategies and the region's preparedness for future extreme weather events.*

**Greater Wellington's response follows:**

- 1. What flood protection measures are currently implemented by GWRC for the Porirua Stream to address extra heavy rainfall events?*

The "scheme" to manage flood risk in the Porirua stream was developed in the 1980's following severe flooding in 1976. The Scheme, signed off in August 1989 agreed to provide the following levels of service:

1. 50-year level of service from flooding of houses from the Porirua Stream down to Linden Park
2. 100-year level of service to property from Linden Park to the mouth of the stream.

For clarification, the flooding considered by Greater Wellington is in relation to the Porirua Stream and not for the stormwater effects as it flows into the Porirua Stream. This is a matter for Wellington City Council (WCC).

The core elements of the scheme that provide the above levels of service comprise:

1. Seton Nossiter Detention Dam
2. Stebbings Detention Dam
3. Takapu Rd detention area
4. Channel works, floodwalls, and stopbanks from Linden park to the mouth
5. Maintaining a clear channel from Glenside to Linden Park

Further works involving widening the stream and concrete lining sections above Linden Park have not yet been done and given the passage of time and a change of community values since that scheme was developed, are unlikely to be completed in the original form proposed without further review involving engagement with the community. A copy of the components of the scheme that were signed of in an August 1989 report to the Environment and Planning services committee is attached – **Attachment 1**.

2. *What specific adaptations or changes has GWRC undertaken in response to the increasing likelihood of extreme weather events due to climate change?*

Greater Wellington has updated its flood modelling over the years, including allowing for the more extreme weather events being experienced in New Zealand. This information is used by Greater Wellington to provide flood hazard advice and for any emergency planning. The information was also used to inform updates to Wellington City and Porirua City Councils' District Plans.

Greater Wellington has also been progressing a regional programme of improvements to warning and response. This programme is looking at capability across the Region and incorporates the following:

- **Flood Response** – In 2022 Greater Wellington adopted new flood response procedures covering all catchments managed by Greater Wellington Flood Protection Department. These procedures were developed collaboratively with the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO) and are regularly reviewed and updated. To support the new procedures, we implemented a comprehensive training and exercise programme for flood duty officers in flood warning and response which runs annually.

Following the July 2021 event we have reviewed the current procedures for the Porirua Stream with Civil Defence and added an additional trigger level to ensure flooding of the Kenepuru Reserve is proactively captured.

We are currently reviewing and updating the emergency action plans for the flood detention dams in the Catchment.

- **Flood Monitoring Network Improvements** – In 2021 we commenced a programme to upgrade the flood monitoring network across the region. In 2023, following Cyclone Gabrielle we developed a new set of ‘Resilience Standards’ for the network covering key aspects such as power, infrastructure, data, and communication. We are now developing a long-term improvements programme to bring our network up to this standard. This will include key flood warning sites on the Porirua Stream.
- **Flood Forecasting** – Since 2020 we have been progressing a programme to improve our flood forecasting capability. This has entailed global system reviews and market sounding, optioneering and now system piloting. Once operational this system will have flood forecast models in place for all catchments managed by Greater Wellington’s Flood Incident Management Team including the Porirua Stream.

3. *What long-term strategies does GWRC have in place to address the evolving challenges of flood risk management for the Porirua Stream through Tawa and Porirua, and how do these strategies integrate with broader regional and national climate resilience plans?*

The recently approved 2024-34 Long Term Plan (LTP) (<https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-reports/long-term-plan/>), contains our regional plan and direction to develop flood hazard models for Wainuiomata River, Porirua Stream, Ōtaki River, Waitohu Stream, Mangaone Stream, Waikanae River, Donalds Creek and Lower Wairarapa Valley to help us predict and assess the risk and impact of flooding. Greater Wellington is not aware of any current national climate resilience plans.

We are currently proposing the next update of the flood hazard information for the Porirua Stream in the 2025/26 financial year. If new modelling work proposed for 2025/26 shows a significant increase in flood risk, then a review of the scheme will be triggered.

The table below shows the LTP work programme for the Porirua Stream.

2025-2026	2026-2027	2028-2034	2028-2034
Commence Porirua Stream Flood Hazard Modelling	Complete Porirua Stream Flood Hazard Modelling	Major dams maintenance	Major dams maintenance
Submit and implement Dam Safety Assurance Programme (DSAP)	Implementation of DSAP	Porirua Floodplain Management Plan ((FMP) or similar) implementation commenced	Porirua Stream FMP implementation completed

We will also develop flood forecast models, improve our flood monitoring network, and carry out flood response planning to improve our ability to predict and recover from flooding.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



**Lian Butcher**  
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