

10. MATTERS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

10.1. Progressing Options for Priority Catchments Using an NPSFM Framework

Prepared for: Policy Committee
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PURPOSE

- [1] This paper seeks to progress the options for undertaking a full NPSFM process and addressing water allocation for the three priority minimum flow catchments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] Options for progressing the three priority minimum flows catchments have been discussed by Council and the community.
- [3] Preferred options have been narrowed down and will be taken back out for further discussion and refinement to the community and stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1) *The Policy Committee narrow the preferred options to three, as follows:*
 - a. *(to be inserted on the day)*
 - b. *(to be inserted on the day)*
 - c. *(to be inserted on the day)*
- 2) *A community engagement meeting is scheduled to further narrow the preferred option.*

BACKGROUND

- [4] At the Council meeting in September 2018, a resolution was confirmed that required the three minimum flow priority catchments (being the Arrow, Cardrona and Manuherikia) follow a full NPSFM process to determine a minimum flow, and that any such plan change include water allocation limits. The full resolution is outlined below:
1. *That any proposed minimum flow change follow the full process outlined in the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management. This to include identifying appropriate Freshwater Management Unit's (FMU's), catchment management objectives, environmental flows and allocation limits;*
 2. *That water allocation limits for the above catchments also be included in any proposed plan change.*

- [5] Options on how to progress the three priority catchments in accordance with the resolution were taken to Council in November, with a recommendation for Council to identify a preferred option and then undertake consultation on that preferred option.
- [6] Instead the decision by Council was to undertake a community engagement session to discuss the options and provide an opportunity for additional options to be explored.
- [7] The community engagement session took place in Cromwell in December 2018, at which the options were debated, and new options promulgated. Representatives from iwi, the Department of Conservation, Fish and Game, Central Otago Environmental Society, Irrigation NZ, rural land users, the territorial authorities, irrigation companies and local consulting firms were all in attendance.
- [8] No clear preference for one option emerged as a result of the meeting however there was clarity that whichever option was progressed, every party was looking for certainty and clarity going forward.

ISSUE

- [9] A workshop with Councillors and iwi was held on 30 January 2019 to further discuss the options for progressing the three priority catchments.
- [10] As a result of the workshop, three options were identified as the preferred options to take back to another community/stakeholder meeting for further refinement.

CONSIDERATIONS

Policy Considerations

- [11] Some options are more aligned with the NPSFM and the Progressive Implementation Programme that has been adopted by Council.
- [12] All options will be required to be consistent with the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014(amended 2017).

Financial Considerations

- [13] Each option will incur expenditure however there are existing budgets currently for progressing a Minimum flows priority catchment plan change, and for general water planning. It is anticipated that any costs associated with the preferred options be funded from the general water planning project.
- [14] The Minimum Flows Plan Change project is already significantly overspent due to costs associated with the hydrological model construction, and assistance from external consultants.

Significance and Engagement

- [15] Each option would trigger the Significance and Engagement Policy as they affect a large number of people and potentially to a significant degree.

- [16] Because the options involve a Schedule 1 RMA process in some aspect, they will comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act in terms of consultation and are therefore considered consistent with the SEP.

Legislative Considerations

- [17] Any Plan Change process undertaken is required to not be inconsistent with the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014. The options above all require consideration of the NPSFM 2014 to ensure they are not inconsistent.

NEXT STEPS

- [18] The three preferred options will be taken back to a community/stakeholder meeting to be further refined, with the aim of having a clear option identified for approval at the 21 March Council meeting.

Attachments

Nil