

Programme for implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management – Northland Regional Council

March 2018

Purpose

This document sets out Northland Regional Council's staged programme for implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014 (NPS-FM), pursuant to Policy E1 of the policy statement. It supersedes the council's previous implementation programmes, which were publicly notified in 2012 and 2015.

Policy E1 states that if it is impractical for a regional council to fully complete implementation of the NPS-FM by 31 December 2015 then it may implement it by a programme of defined time-limited stages by which it is to be fully implemented by 31 December 2025 or 31 December 2030 (if certain circumstances apply). It also states that any programme adopted under the 2011 and 2014 versions of the NPS-FM must be reviewed, revised if necessary, and formally adopted by the regional council by 31 December 2018, and publicly notified.

The council reviewed its previous 2015 implementation programme and remains of the view that it is unlikely to be able to fully implement the NPS-FM before 31 December 2025, and therefore has adopted a revised programme which is presented in the table below. Please note that it is not open for submissions.

Progress to date (to December 2017)

- 2013: Decisions on the Proposed Regional Policy Statement for Northland released (includes direction on freshwater management and NPS-FM implementation).
- 2013-2014: Five collaborative catchment groups established and tasked with recommending fresh and coastal water management measures to council (and additional monitoring sites added for each catchment).
- 2014: Review of operative regional plans completed (identified gaps in NPS-FM delivery).
- 2016: Regional Policy Statement made operative (in part).
- 2016: Draft regional plan released for public feedback.
- 2016: Draft catchment plans for Waitangi, Doubtless Bay, Mangere, Whangārei Harbour and Poutō catchments released for public feedback.
- 2017: Five catchment plans Waitangi, Doubtless Bay, Mangere, Whangārei Harbour and Poutō catchments adopted by council.
- 2017: Proposed Regional Plan publicly notified (includes regulatory elements of Waitangi, Doubtless Bay, Mangere, Whangārei Harbour and Poutō catchment plans - see below for more detail).

Progressive NPS-FM implementation programme 2018

	Regional planning initiatives Note: Objective and Policy references relate to the NPS-FM as amended 2017	Site specific / Catchment-specific¹ initiatives	Other non-regulatory initiatives (note: subject to 2018-28 LTP decisions)
2017	<p>Proposed Regional Plan notified under Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act. The Proposed Regional Plan (as notified) includes the following NPS-FM requirements:</p> <p>Freshwater quantity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshwater quantity management units (FMU) for rivers, lakes and aquifers (refer Policy CA1). • Freshwater quantity objectives (refer Policy B1). • Freshwater quantity limits (minimum flows and allocation) for each water quantity FMU, except for minimum levels for aquifers and allocation limits for lakes (refer Policy B1). • Policy and rules to improve and maximise the efficient allocation and efficient use of water (refer Policies B2, B3 and B4). • Policy and rules to avoid over-allocation (refer Policy B5). <p>Freshwater quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional Policy A4 of the NPS-FM. • Water quality standards for nitrate and ammonia toxicity in rivers. • Freshwater quality management units for lakes. • Water quality standards for lakes (phytoplankton, total nitrogen, total phosphorus and ammonia toxicity). • Policy to maintain overall water quality. • Provisions to manage discharges to land and water, including rules requiring the adoption of the best practicable option to manage discharges of contaminants (refer Policy A3). • Provisions to manage the disturbance to the beds of lakes, rivers and certain uses of land. • Livestock exclusion rules. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory provisions of the Waitangi, Doubtless Bay, Mangere, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment plans for Waitangi, Doubtless Bay, Mangere, Whangārei Harbour and Poutō catchment adopted by Council • Ongoing surveillance monitoring of <i>E.coli</i> at primary contact sites (in accordance with Appendix 5 NPS-FM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of non-regulatory elements of Waitangi, Doubtless Bay, Mangere, Whangārei Harbour and Poutō catchment plans. • Assistance, advice and funding for water quality improvement through Councils Environment Fund

¹ See Waiora Northland Water for more detail and function of these groups: www.nrc.govt.nz/waiora

	Regional planning initiatives Note: Objective and Policy references relate to the NPS-FM as amended 2017	Site specific / Catchment-specific¹ initiatives	Other non-regulatory initiatives (note: subject to 2018-28 LTP decisions)
	Whangārei Harbour and Poutō catchment plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisions to protect the significant values of wetlands and identified outstanding freshwater bodies (refer Objective A2a) and b) and Objective A4) Provisions for management of sites of significance to tangata whenua (in waterbodies) 		
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise draft and finalised regional targets for improving water quality for swimming (refer Policy A6). Update and implement the council's monitoring plan (refer Policies CB1, CB2, CB3 and CB4) and freshwater quality and quantity accounting systems (refer Policies CC1 and CC2) to address the 2017 amendments to the NPS-FM Develop measures to give effect to the requirements for incorporation of matauranga Maori, health of indigenous flora/fauna and macroinvertebrates into monitoring plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the need for/establish further collaborative catchment planning processes and establish groups if required. Ongoing surveillance monitoring of <i>E.coli</i> at primary contact sites (in accordance with Appendix 5 NPS-FM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine and implement targeted soil conservation programme. Freshwater Improvement Fund projects for dune Lakes and Northern Wairoa River commenced, with the focus being on water quality improvement. Assistance, advice and funding for water quality improvement through Councils Environment Fund
Circa 2021	Freshwater quality Notify a change to the regional plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify freshwater quality management units for rivers (refer Policy CA1). Include numeric freshwater quality objectives for rivers using the water quality attributes in Appendix 2 of the NPS-FM (refer Policy A1) Include in-stream concentration standards and exceedance criteria for dissolved inorganic nitrogen and dissolved reactive phosphorus in rivers for the purposes of achieving numeric freshwater quality objectives for periphyton (refer Appendix 2). Include relevant nitrogen and phosphorus criteria (instream concentrations or loads) for sensitive estuaries (refer Appendix 2). Include relevant freshwater quality limits (refer Policy A1). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional catchment plans adopted (as needed) Refine/adjust existing catchment plans (if needed). Ongoing surveillance monitoring of <i>E.coli</i> at primary contact sites (in accordance with Appendix 5 NPS-FM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing implementation of targeted soil conservation programme. Freshwater Improvement Fund projects. Progressive implementation of operational measures to improve swimming water quality. Assistance, advice and funding for water quality improvement through Councils Environment Fund

	Regional planning initiatives Note: Objective and Policy references relate to the NPS-FM as amended 2017	Site specific / Catchment-specific¹ initiatives	Other non-regulatory initiatives (note: subject to 2018-28 LTP decisions)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include methods to avoid over-allocation (refer Policy A1). • Potentially, include targets and methods to improve water quality to achieve freshwater quality objectives (refer Policy A2). • Include rules requiring the adoption of the best practicable option to manage discharges of contaminants (refer Policy A3). • Identify specified rivers and lakes and primary contact sites and associated targets/measures to improve water quality for swimming (refer Policy A5). <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify / manage priority freshwater biodiversity sites. • Any issues with/gaps in the regional plan. • Any additional catchment-specific regulatory methods. • Other requirements as a result of further changes to the NPS-FM. <p>Note: the timing of this plan change may depend on the availability of practical methods and tools for water quality management.</p>		
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory implementation complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise and implement any further catchment plans commenced in 2021. • Ongoing surveillance monitoring of E.coli at primary contact sites (in accordance with Appendix 5 NPS-FM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of operational measures to improve swimming water quality • Ongoing implementation of non-regulatory measures. • Assistance, advice and funding for water quality improvement through Councils Environment Fund

Working with the community

Council has involved tangata whenua, stakeholders and interested parties in implementation of the NPS-FM to date. This has occurred through representation of various interests on collaborative catchment planning groups and participation in the regional plan development process by industry / stakeholder liaison groups and the Te Taitokerau Maori and Council Working Party. Opportunity for wider community / landowner participation has also been provided through the release of draft catchment plans and a draft regional plan for feedback in 2016 and a proposed regional plan in 2017. Council anticipates these forms of participation (and potentially others such as Mana Whakahono a Rohe agreements) will continue to inform ongoing implementation of the NPS-FM.