

20 Questions on Water: Response from Planning re Unitary Plan monitoring

How are the environmental monitoring provisions in the Auckland Unitary Plan undertaken?

Under Section 35(2)(b) of the Resource Management Act 1991 the council is required to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies, rules or other methods in a policy statement or plan, and to publish the results every five years. A monitoring programme for the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) is currently underway (the AUP having been made operative in part in November 2016). Monitoring is intended to show what the AUP is achieving, how it is being implemented, and how efficient and effective the AUP provisions are. Monitoring also identifies issues that may need to be addressed, and provides recommendations on how this can be done. The reporting date for the monitoring findings is not confirmed at this time.

Natural resources is a significant and complex topic area. Workstreams within the council that focus on coastal and freshwater management issues are supporting the co-ordination of data gathering for the AUP monitoring programme. We will be using the State of Environment monitoring data that council regularly collects (see <https://www.knowledgeauckland.org.nz/report-cards/>) but will also review other data such as how many consents have been granted for different activities, how water quality has been taken into account in planning for development in new areas and how many community groups have been supported in stream restoration works.

The pressure on water resources is also a key focus of national direction, with the updated National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 coming into force on September 2020 (having implications for the Auckland Unitary Plan).