

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

of Submissions and Further Submissions
on the Proposed Hutt City District Plan

Minute 14

Proposed District Plan – Hearing Stream 5 – Requests for modelling

24 August 2026

Introduction

1. The Hutt City Council (HCC) Proposed District Plan (PDP) Hearings for Hearing Stream 5 – Natural Hazards commenced on Tuesday, 18 August 2026. Proceedings continued through Thursday, 20 August and are now adjourned pending receipt of further information from various parties.
2. The Panel will be issuing a detailed minute outlining the specific information we requested during the hearing proceedings in due course along with associated timetables for receiving that information. In the meantime, however, we address a procedural matter here that we have been asked to consider as previously discussed in Minute 12¹.
3. Namely, the purpose of this Minute is to provide the Panel’s preliminary view on the need for updated flood modelling, and the associated process to be followed as a result.

Context for the Panel’s request for updated modelling

4. As noted in Minute 12, HCC’s reporting Planner, Mr Davis, recommended that the model used to generate the flood hazard maps in the PDP be updated with lower allowances for rainfall and sea level rise associated with climate change². Mr Davis advised that the Panel should hear all evidence at the hearing before deciding whether or not to seek the model to be re-run with the revised settings.
5. The Panel has since tested this recommendation in the following respects:
 - a. we have sought a preliminary view from HCC regarding the likely nature and magnitude of change to the flood hazard overlays if the model is updated as recommended;
 - b. we have received legal advice from Mr Stephen Quinn relating to the extent to which the Panel has scope to make changes to the overlays based on that anticipated change;
 - c. we have questioned various experts at the hearing on the matter of consistency in the assumptions used to inform the respective models for flooding, tsunami and coastal inundation – both in terms of their relative consistency and their comparative consistency with assumptions in models used to derive hazard overlays in adjoining districts;

¹ Minute 12, dated 11 August 2026

² From Page 173 of his Section 42A Report.

- d. we have raised the prospect of updated modelling with each of the submitters appearing at the hearing who sought changes to the flood hazard overlay maps;
 - e. we sought the view of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) representatives, whose submission was originally in general support of the PDP approach to flood hazard management;
 - f. we asked questions of various experts about the relevance of the National Policy Statement on Natural Hazards and Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement³, including their shared direction regarding risk-based and proportionate approaches to natural hazard management; and
 - g. we tested the merits of also updating the flood model with more recent LiDAR⁴ data from 2025 with Mr Freeland, who provided expert engineering evidence for Submitter #448.
6. Several submitters also drew our attention by to a letter sent to all local authorities from Hon Simon Watts (Minister of Climate Change), which outlines the government’s expectations of Council’s regarding the use of a range of credible climate scenarios when assessing infrastructure and planning decisions. That letter underpinned many of the above-mentioned responses from the participants at the hearing regarding the approach to modelling.
7. In substantive terms, the view expressed by *all* relevant parties to the hearing was unanimous that the climate change assumptions in the model should be updated in the manner generally recommended by Mr Davis. The anticipated impact this will have on the flood hazard overlays as voiced by Mr Davis is a *‘reasonably significant reduction in the areas covered by each of the high, medium and low’* overlays⁵.
8. On the understanding that the remodeling will result in reduced spatial extent only (and no instance of increased extent or flood hazard category), Mr Quinn’s advice was clear that the Panel has scope to make such changes to the flood hazard overlays⁶.
9. The Panel reserves its final position on the appropriateness of new flood overlay maps generated

³ As amended by the Environment Court Consent Order cited in Minute 12.

⁴ Light Detection and Ranging remote sensing technology

⁵ Davis Rebuttal, para 4.12

⁶ Quinn letter dated 14 August 2026, *Proposed district plan advice – hearing paned advice on natural hazards*, at para 8

by the remodeling exercise recommended by Mr Davis; however, the evidence before us at this stage is sufficient to justify a re-running of the model with revised parameters for climate change.

Panel Request

10. Therefore, we formally record the request for HCC to re-run the flood models as recommended by Mr Davis and set out the proposed process to be followed by relevant parties below.

Proposed process and timeframes for updated modelling

11. We propose a sequential approach to the remodeling exercise with the following general steps:
 - a. HCC and GWRC planning and modelling staff meet with a view of recommending all relevant parameters for the model re-run – to be provided in a brief memorandum to Ms Shetty **by 3pm on Friday 4 September**. The memorandum is to be uploaded to the Hearing Stream 5 webpage by **close of business Friday 4 September**;
 - b. all submitters with a relevant submission relating to the flood hazard overlays, effects of climate change, or related provisions in the PDP may provide written comments on the recommended parameters for the Panel’s consideration – to be provided to Ms Shetty **by 3pm on Friday 11 September**; and
 - c. the Panel will confirm final parameters to be applied to remodeling by **Friday 18 September**.
12. In the latter respect, we will also take the opportunity to set out an indicative timetable for the completion of the modelling exercise, the approach to reporting and the process for sharing the results with submitters. The Panel may also provide opportunity for submitters with relevant submissions to provide further comment on the model results.
13. When the HCC and GWRC staff and their respective experts provide their memorandum with recommendations on updated parameters, we also ask that they provide an indication of the likely time required to calibrate the model, to run it, to analyse the results and conduct quality assurance checks and to report on the corresponding changes arising to the flood hazard overlays in the PDP.
14. While we ultimately will be guided by the modelling experts as to final parameters to be applied, we make the following preliminary points to assist with their initial planning exercise:

- a. our understanding of the starting point for climate change settings is that increased rainfall allowance will be reduced from the levels applied in the PDP mapping to a level of 20%, and sea level rise will be reduced to a maximum of 1m;
 - b. the model re-run will not incorporate Mr Osborne’s recommendations relating to errors omitting stream corridor locations as these are outside scope – the Panel will need clear assurances following the remodeling exercise that no such instances are arising where the extent or typology of any flood hazard category is increased relative to the notified maps;
 - c. the model re-run will also include an audit of the resulting flood hazard overlays generated, and standard quality assurance measures will be applied as outlined by Mr Osborne in his evidence and hearing presentation⁷.
15. There are two further preliminary matters to address regarding the initial parameters for the remodeling exercise.
16. Firstly, we understand that the HCC model relies in part upon GWRC modelling for certain parts of the district. In order for the remodeling exercise to be worthwhile, we also understand that the GWRC component will need to be recalibrated to align with the balance of the HCC model. Given this interdependency and given the view expressed by GWRC experts at the hearing that rerunning the model with a less conservative climate change scenario has merit, the Panel respectfully requests, and expresses its gratitude in advance for, assistance from the GWRC modelling team with this exercise.
17. Second, we are grateful for the evidence of Mr Freeland and for his recommendation that the Panel consider incorporating more recent LiDAR data into the model re-run. We see the clear benefit in enhancing the accuracy of the model’s topographic parameters; however, Mr Freeland also helpfully advised that this improved accuracy would almost certainly result in scenarios where the model predicts *increased* hazard levels in some parts of the district and *reduced* levels in others. On that basis, the Panel is concerned that using the updated LiDAR in the remodeling exercise would, for some properties, result in a similar outcome to Mr Osborne’s recommendation regarding the stream omissions – and by extension result in prejudice to parties who have not had an opportunity

⁷ For example, to manually disregard any outliers of a particular hazard overlay where it is small and isolated, to account for smoothing errors or other minor inaccuracies extant in the model output.

to consider and test that information through a public process. Unless the modelling experts can otherwise provide the Panel with assurances that no such outcomes could be anticipated through adoption of the updated LiDAR data, we are minded to retain the data in the existing model for the upcoming remodeling exercise.

18. Those points aside, we will otherwise be guided by the modelling experts as to the most appropriate parameters to be applied in the first instance.

Closing remarks and further communication

19. The Panel appreciates the attention to this matter already given by the parties, and will greatly benefit from the further scrutiny we have sought to be applied as set out above.
20. Parties can expect further communications from us on this matter over the coming weeks, but if any preliminary matters are arising from this Minute, please address those to Ms Shetty in the first instance.



DJ McMahon - Independent Commissioner

Deputy Chair

For, and on behalf of, the Hutt City Proposed District Plan Hearing Panel for Hearing Stream 5

24 August 2026