



October
2018

Piha Glenesk Flood Management

Frequently asked questions



Two significant flooding events occurred in the Glenesk catchment area of Piha this year (February and April 2018) prompting Auckland Council's Healthy Waters team to prepare a flooding assessment report and consideration of options.

The report has been shared with homeowners and occupiers in the catchment area, impacted organisations or businesses, and local stakeholders. A follow up community clinic and meetings with some affected landowners is underway during October.

Glenesk Road Flooding Assessment report

What is the purpose of the report?

The report summarises the recorded rainfall and modelled flow rates, depth and water levels associated with the two recent flooding events at Piha on the West Coast of Auckland on 3 February and 28 April 2018.

Primarily, it is an assessment of each of the contributing factors to flood risk, bringing together information available to us today. While it also identifies a range of options for further consideration, no recommendations or decisions have been made by the council at this time.

This is a large catchment area (1,100 hectares) and is relatively steep. During rainfall events this creates large flows that exceed the existing stream capacity causing the Glenesk Valley to flood frequently with unsafe depths and water speed.

Flooding in the Glenesk catchment

Could the impacts of the flooding be solved through widening of the stream?

We have looked at a number of options to address flood risk in the area, including what an engineered or structured option to divert or carry flood water might look like. Widening the stream would require a 40m wide, 2.5m deep and 1.1km long channel to be constructed – not to mention the need to move buildings and reconstruct bridges. This option is not in keeping with the style of infrastructure in Piha and would likely not be permitted under the planning regulations and the provisions within the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act.

What has caused this problem to be more frequent?

There is no evidence to indicate that flooding is more frequent today than in the past; however formal records are not comprehensive. Modelling work predicts the frequency of unsafe flooding to be around once a year (on average) although climate change impacts are generally expected to cause more intense and frequent heavy rain events.

Is riparian planting potentially slowing down water getting away?

No, the sand dunes down-stream of Seaview Road bridge have no impact on the height or velocity of flooding along Glenesk Road.

What is being done to improve road access during floods?

Auckland Transport is placing signage to warn motorists of depth of water on roads. All culverts and swales are cleared on a regular basis and also before large storm events (if they are forecast). Changing the height of the road will not resolve or prevent any flooding issues.

Planning and building in the Glenesk catchment

Why was consent granted to build in this area?

Development in this area is well established, with some buildings even dating back to the 1940s. Much of this development would have been consented under previous District Plans (not the current Auckland Unitary Plan). This means consents may have been issued under different consenting requirements set down under national legislation.

What information is on property Land Information Memorandum (LIM) reports?

Flood notations have been on LIMs since 2000 for some properties and since 2009 for all properties.

What will happen if the council issues an insanitary or dangerous building notice?

Any notices issued will identify why we believe the building is dangerous or insanitary and will set out what actions the owner needs to take. This may include ensuring the property is not inhabited or that building works are undertaken to make the building safe. In the case of split level buildings, where lower levels are affected, a notice may apply to one part of a building only.

Am I safe?

Is it safe for residents to stay in their property?

This will need to be assessed on a case by case basis – each property will have different factors contributing to safety and the long-term future of any buildings on the site. The council has plotted the depth and velocity at each site to inform and assess building stability under flood conditions. This information is being provided to residents to enable them to decide whether they feel safe to stay.

What are the options for residents who don't feel safe in their homes but don't want to leave?

We recommend that households have response plans to monitor weather forecasts and have a safe exit strategy.

For some properties it might be appropriate to consider habitable floor changes or other mitigations to reduce risk (normal consenting processes need to be followed).

What does this mean for the people who get cut off when it floods (but their property does not flood)?

Even if your property is not at risk of flooding it is important to have a household response plan in place. This means you can shelter in place (stay at your property) until a safe exit is possible. It is critical that people do not try to evacuate when flooding is occurring – waters may be deep and fast moving.

What do I do if my property floods again?

Contact emergency services immediately and shelter in place until flood waters recede. It is critical that people do not try to evacuate when flooding is occurring – waters may be deep and fast moving. Contact your insurer as soon as possible after the flooding event.

What are my responsibilities if I'm leasing or renting a property to someone else?

There is legislation relating to health and safety and landlord duties. We suggest you seek legal advice if you are unsure of your legislative obligations as a landlord.

Warning and response systems

What warning systems have been investigated (e.g. sirens, monitoring)?

Auckland Emergency Management is working with emergency services to look at potential options for alerting residents. Any alerting system relies on getting advance warning of the hazard, which is not always possible in fast-moving environments like the wider Piha catchment during heavy rain. Upstream monitoring of rainfall or river levels is not considered suitable by itself as the warning times are too short.

Secondly, a good alerting system needs the right technology and systems in place to deliver timely information. This can often be difficult in remote communities where telecommunication technology is affected by some of the hazards the community experiences.

What additional warning processes and systems is the council considering?

The council is trialling a rain radar that may provide quicker and more accurate rain forecasting than current forecasting. We expect to work through the most suitable types of warnings we develop the community resilience plan.

Getting help

What options are there for support?

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) provides support to anyone (you don't need to be on a benefit). Some of the supports available to you are assistance with emergency accommodation and financial support. The letter from the council, about the property you live in or own, will provide the background for any discussions with MSD or Work and Income.

Visit www.msd.govt.nz for a range of fact sheets and useful information on housing support, emergency assistance and tenancy advice.

How will my insurance be affected?

The council's report on your property may affect your insurance. We recommend you contact your insurer as soon as possible. You will also need to talk to your insurer if a notice is placed on your property under the Building Act and if another storm event occurs and/or your property is damaged further.

Useful links

Emergency Management

- Auckland Emergency Management.....aucklandcivildefence.govt.nz
Sign up for region-wide Auckland Emergency Management alerting platforms
- Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management.....civildefence.govt.nz
Check whether your phone will receive national emergency mobile alerts
- Get Ready, Get Thru.....happens.nz
Make a plan for your household to respond in an emergency situation

Government assistance

- Ministry of Social Development.....msd.govt.nz
- Earthquake Commission.....eqc.govt.nz
- Tenancy Services (MBIE).....tenancy.govt.nz
- Building code.....mbie.govt.nz

Other

- Insurance Council of New Zealand.....covered.org.nz
- Citizens Advice Bureau.....cab.org.nz

Need to talk to us?

Auckland Council has made every effort to contact each land owner or resident in the Glenesk Road catchment. This isn't always easy in a remote community that is characterised by its mix of permanent, occasional and tenant residents.

If you haven't received a copy of the *Glenesk Road Flooding Assessment* report or a report for the property you own or occupy or you just want to talk to us about flood risk in your community, please get in touch.

You can email us at HWdevelopment@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or phone 09 301 0101 and request to speak to the Healthy Waters Customer Service Team.

Auckland Emergency Management will continue working with the community on its resilience plan. Look out for opportunities to get involved via local networks.