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# Drinking Water Assessments Under the Local Government Act – A Hawke's Bay Case Study



WSP New Zealand Ltd



**water**  
NEW ZEALAND  
CONFERENCE & EXPO  
17-19 OCTOBER 2023  
Tākina, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington

# Water Services Act 2021

- Expanded definition of a drinking water supplier (anyone other than a self-supplied domestic house)

Number of drinking water supplies expected to increase from 2,000 to over 75,000

- All drinking water supplies must register by Nov 2025 and comply with Water Services Act by 2028
- Amended Local Government Act (LGA) requirement for councils to assess water and sanitary services

# LGA – Drinking Water Assessments

- Identify and describe each community that receives a drinking water service:
  - Council supplies
  - Community supplies
  - All other types, including unserved communities
- Assess the sufficiency, safety and quality of their drinking water
- Assess the consequences if they lost access to their drinking water service
- Outline a plan for providing ongoing access to drinking water

First assessment due by 1 July 2026, must be done at least every 3 years

# LGA – Requirements following drinking water assessments

- Make its drinking water assessment publicly available
- Provide a copy to Taumata Arowai
- Notify Taumata Arowai about:
  - Any suppliers failing to meet statutory obligations or at risk of doing so
  - Other matters of concern including potential risks
    - Absence/deficiency in a drinking water supply
    - A drinking water supplier at risk of ceasing to provide a service
- Consider the findings in its Long Term Plan, Infrastructure Strategy, District Plan

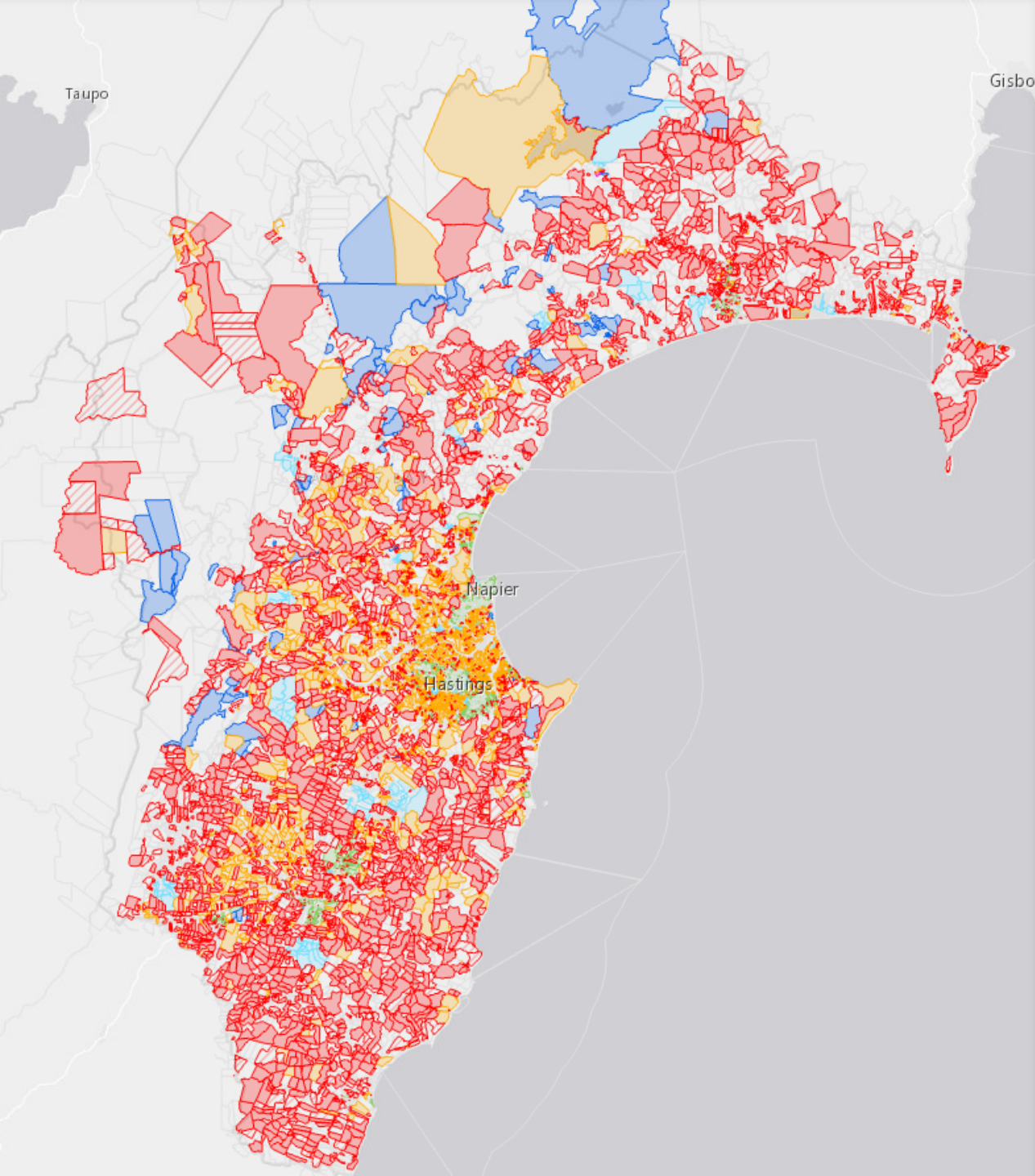
# LGA – Duty to ensure communities have access to drinking water

If a private water supplier is facing a significant problem, Taumata Arowai may direct the council to:

- Work collaboratively to identify a solution
- Ensure drinking water is provided to customers on a temporary/permanent basis
- May involve taking over the drinking water supply

# Hawke's Bay Private Water Supplies Project Goals

- Understand how best to assess private water supplies when undertaking their drinking water assessments
- Support their communities to provide safe drinking water
- Influence the way these assessments are carried out across the rest of New Zealand
- Understand their potential liability with under-performing private water supplies



**Legend**

**PWS Classification**

WS Classification

Parcels

- Excluded
- Council Supplied
- Registered Supplier
- Identified PWS
- Identified Sole Supply
- Assumed PWS
- Assumed Sole Supply
- Potential Sole Supply
- Potential PWS

# Identifying private water suppliers

Previous sanitary surveys

GIS analysis

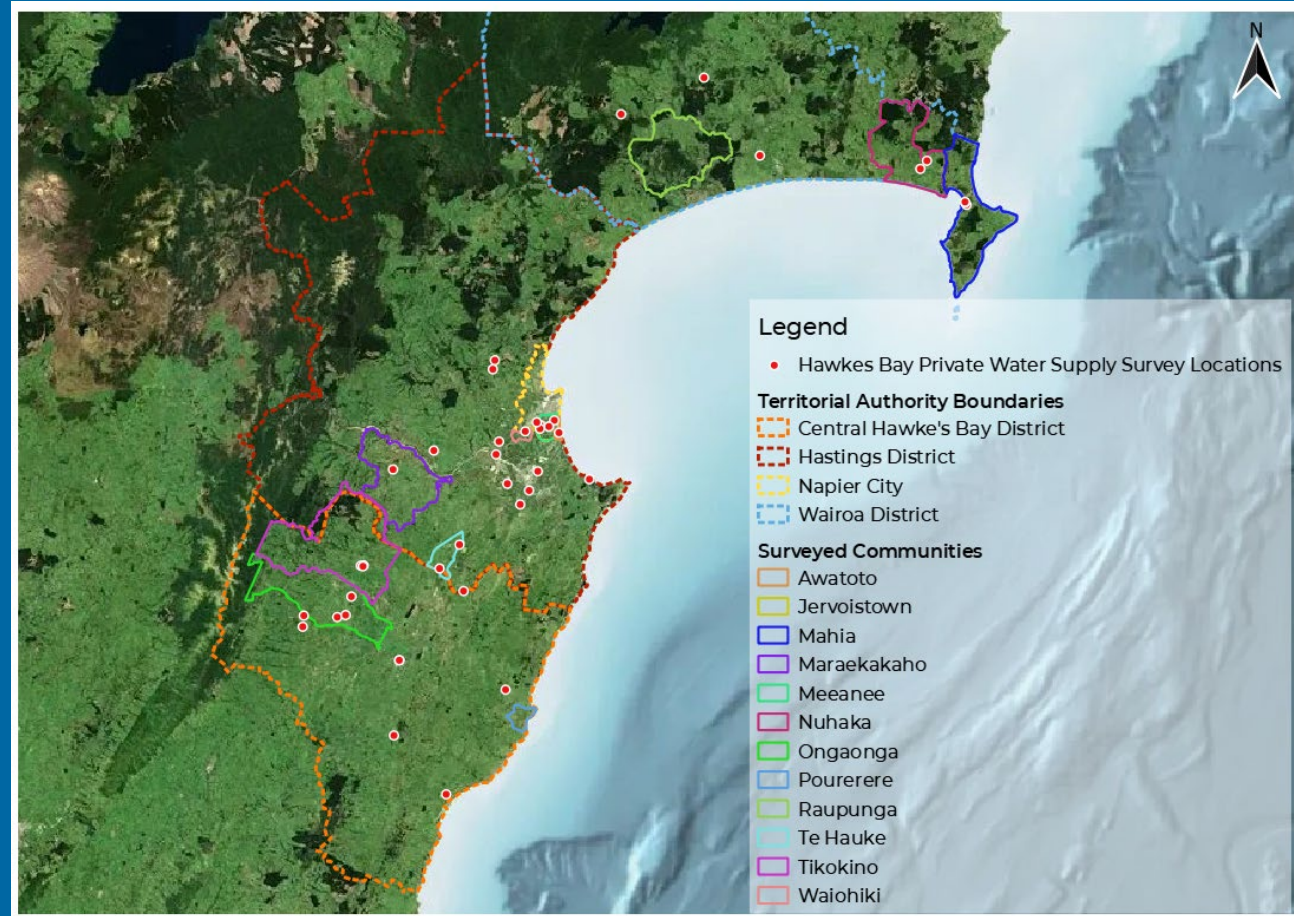
Local knowledge

Estimated 3,900 - 6,600 private water supplies in Hawke's Bay



# Engaging with private water suppliers

- Identified three communities in each district
- Visited 50 private water suppliers:
  - Interview
  - Site visit to water supply
  - Captured info in Survey123 app





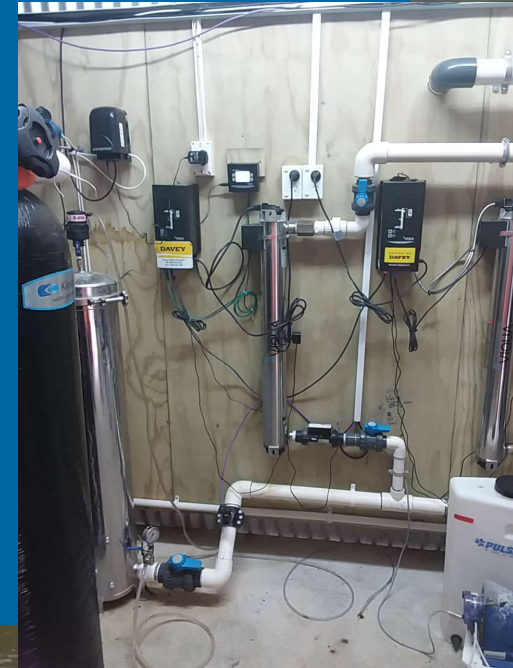
# Results

- Almost all supplies were very small (<50 people) or small (50-500 people)
- 70% used bore or spring water, most of remainder used roof water
- 42% had no alternative supply they could connect to
- 67% did not treat the water
- Most common treatment – cartridge filtration and UV

Estimated 2,600 - 4,600 private water supplies with untreated water in Hawke's Bay

# Raupunga water supply

- Drinking water scheme installed in 2017
- Supplies 40 households - about 300 people
- Surface water take, treated with filtration, UV and chlorine
- Operator has an excellent understanding but works on a voluntary basis
- Funding for operations and maintenance costs is a challenge
- Has been life changing for the community



# Multi-property farm business

- Untreated bore water - supplies packhouse, farm, admin block, workshop
- Also have 50 other properties around Hawke's Bay, with 50 wells for irrigation, some also supply more than one house
- Opportunity to cover off multiple supplies at once in future assessments
- Use AsureQuality for compliance including water quality monitoring
- Opportunity to link AsureQuality to Taumata Arowai's reporting system



# Results – Engagement Approach

- Political context around 3 Waters Reform influenced project delivery
- Private water suppliers generally hesitant to participate
- Most suppliers did not understand the changes being proposed and the new obligations for them and councils
- Almost all suppliers found the experience useful and had a greater understanding



# Suggested approach for drinking water assessments

OBJECTIVES

## ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

*BUILD TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS OVER TIME*

### Meaningful engagement

→ To provide tools for meaningful and effective engagement and communications with all stakeholders to build trusted relationships.

### Mutual understanding

→ To develop mutual understanding between private drinking water suppliers and councils around their responsibilities under the Water Services Act 2021.

### Assessments

→ To support the delivery of water services assessments for councils, and compliance requirements for private drinking water suppliers, to meet their obligations under the Water Services Act 2021.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

→ Uphold a Treaty Partnership Framework.

→ Empower communities to solve problems and create solutions together.

→ Focus on the kaupapa of the Water Services Act 2021.

PHASES

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

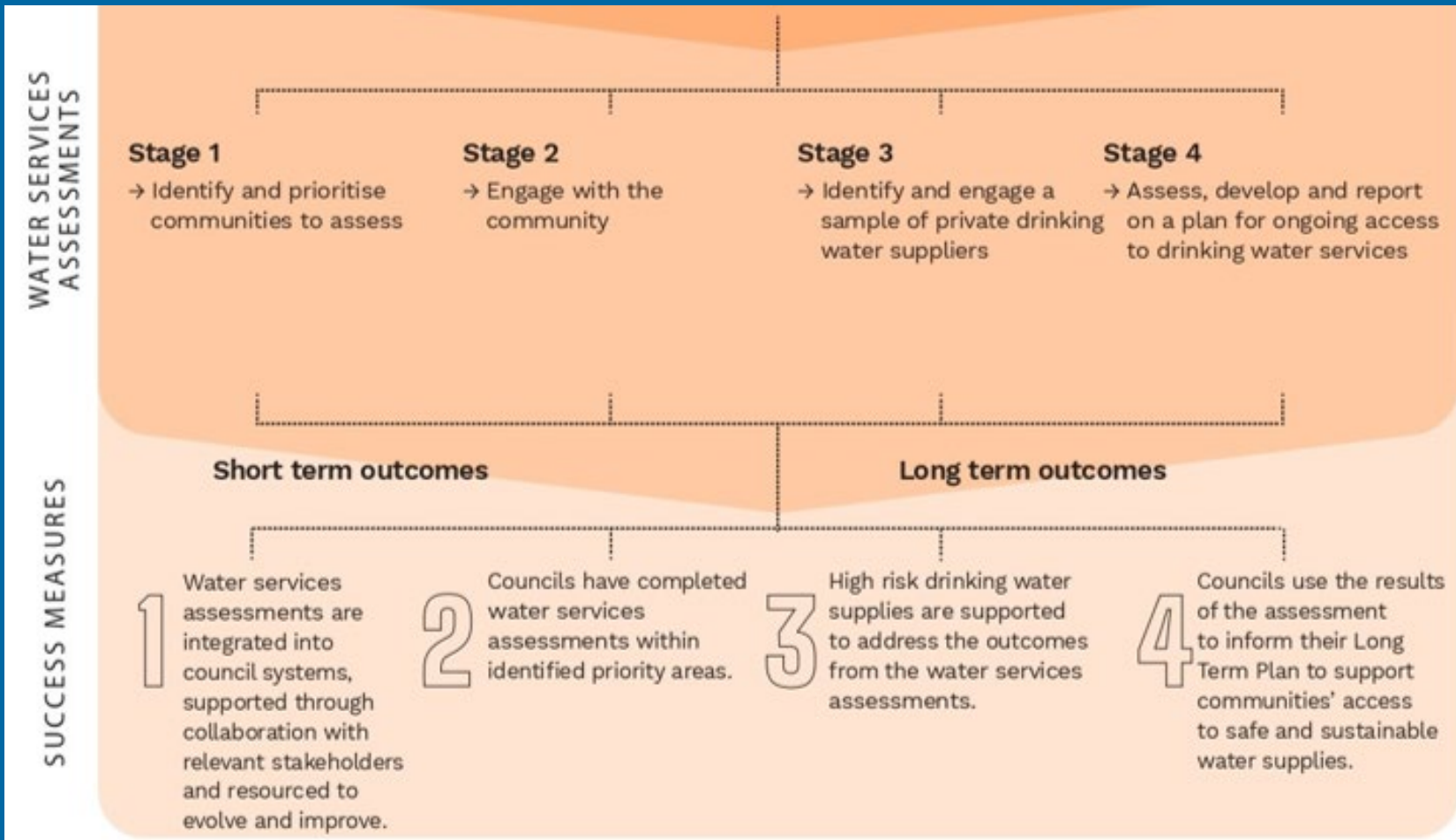
Stage 4



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# Suggested approach for drinking water assessments



# Step 1 – Identify and prioritise communities to assess

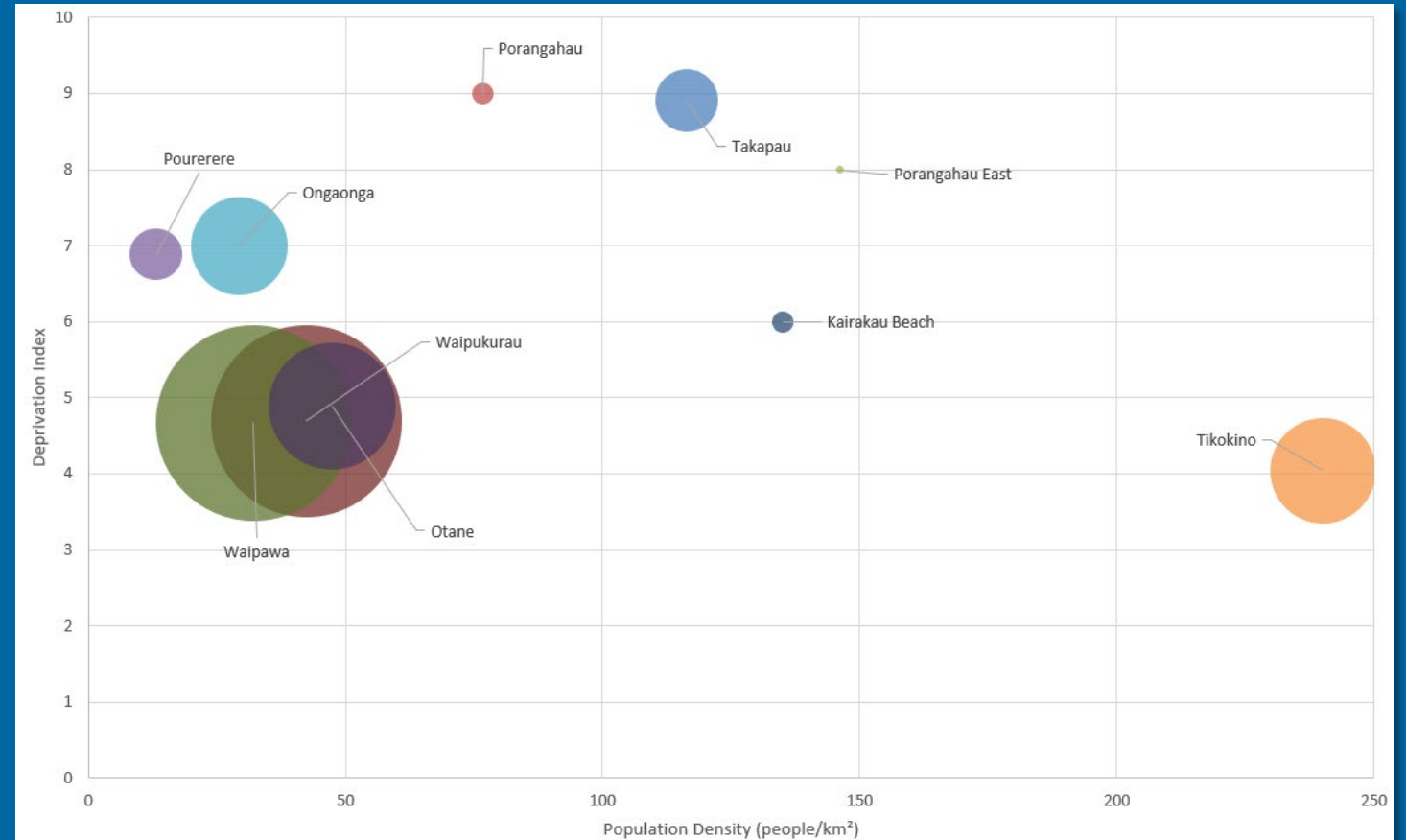
- Local Government Act defines community:
  - *The boundaries of a community must coincide with the boundaries of the statistical meshblock areas determined by Statistics New Zealand and used for parliamentary electoral purposes.*
- Can therefore use and group statistical meshblocks



# Step 1 – Identify and prioritise communities

Prioritise communities based on need:

- Local knowledge
- Previous sanitary surveys
- Census data
  - Deprivation
  - Population
  - Household density



# Step 2 – Engage with the community

- Develop a communications and engagement plan
- Engagement could be town hall/community hall style
- Breakout groups to discuss the characteristics of their community and their drinking water supplies
- Encourage discussions about drinking water safety and access
- Opportunity to register to participate in next stage (sample of private water suppliers)

# Step 3 – Engage with a sample of private water suppliers

- Important to obtain more detail about drinking water supplies in the community
- Suggested approach as for this project – interview and site visit to water supply



# Step 4 – Assess, develop and report on a plan

- Understand communities' access to safe and sufficient drinking water
- Identify options for supporting communities with drinking water risks
- Partner with communities and stakeholders to develop solutions
- In some cases, may be more cost-effective to extend the council water supply or provide a community water supply scheme
- Report back to the community on the results of the assessment
- Include in Long Term Plan, Infrastructure Strategy

# Summary

Suggest councils take a strategic approach to drinking water assessments:

1. Identify and prioritise communities
2. Engage with communities
3. Engage with a sample of private water supplies
4. Assess, develop and report on a plan

# Any questions?

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