

Notes of the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Whakatāne, on Tuesday 16 April 2019, commencing at 10am

Chair: Councillor Bill Clark

Advisory Group: Bernie Clark, Boots McNaught, Brian Power, Fraser McGougan, Geoff Mercer, Scottie McLeod, Tom Pyatt, Jim Finlay (Whakatāne District Council), Councillor Andrew Iles (Whakatāne District Council)

BOPRC Councillors: Councillor Tiipene Marr

BOPRC Staff: Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Geoff Stone (Area Engineer), Tony Dunlop (Flood Repair Project Engineer), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Chris Ingle (General Manager, Integrated Catchments), Kay Boreham (Marketing and Communications Advisor), Nancy Willems (Eastern Catchments Team Leader), Debbie Hyland (Finance and Corporate Planning Manager), Loris Hastie (Management Accountant)

Public: Richard Holmes

Apologies: Chairman Leeder, Councillor Bruning

1 Welcome

Councillor Clark welcomed everyone to the meeting and Councillor Marr opened the meeting with a karakia.

Chris Ingle outlined some key staff changes. Roger Waugh resigned and finished work in January. Kirsty Brown has been appointed as the Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager. There has also been an across organisation fit-for-purpose review and Simon Stokes' position (Eastern Catchments Manager) was disestablished. The Eastern Bay of Plenty Land Management staff are now part of the Coastal Catchments Team (covering Tauranga catchments, Kaituna catchments and the Eastern catchments) and the new manager is Pim de Monchy. Chris introduced Nancy Willems (Eastern Catchments Team Leader) who will be attending the advisory group meetings on behalf of the Coastal Catchments team.

Councillor Clark congratulated Fraser and Katherine McGougan on winning the Supreme Award of the 2019 Bay of Plenty Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

2 Apologies

Apologies received as recorded above.

3 Notes of previous meeting held 19 September 2018

Resolved

That the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

- 1 Confirm the notes of the meeting held 19 September 2018 as a true and correct record.

Clark/Iles
CARRIED

4 Matters arising from previous meeting

Kirsty Brown ran through the actions from the previous meeting:

- Geoff Stone has spoken with Fraser McGougan regarding the planting of erosion sites and site preparation work is underway for winter planting.
- Richard Holmes has been added to the gravel notification email list.
- Roger Waugh did not speak with Richard Holmes regarding the questions he raised at the September 2018 meeting because subsequently Richard had submitted a number of Official Information Requests.

Richard Holmes commented that he was pleased that progress was being made in the areas he had concerns about.

5 River Scheme Governance/Continuous Improvement

Chris Ingle spoke to the River Scheme/Continuous Improvement agenda item. At the September 2018 meeting Nic Newman (Principal Advisor) had sought feedback on how the Advisory Group was working. A report was presented to Council on 13 December 2018 with findings and recommendations. The Council report was circulated to Advisory Group members on 12 February 2019 and feedback on the recommendations was now being sought.

Discussion:

- Supportive of an annual forum of river scheme advisory groups, river authorities and freshwater futures community groups. Need to be working collaboratively and future focused.
- Members did not see the need for mileage payments for attending meetings.
- Important for members to understand the scheme and current and future issues. Field visits should be a priority.

ACTION:

Schedule a field trip prior to the September 2019 meeting.

6 Operations update

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the Works Programme report provided in the agenda pack.

Key points included:

- Rangitāiki Drainage representatives met last month and it has been valuable working closely with this group on Rangitāiki Drainage Scheme specific issues.

- Operations team meeting with the 34 communal pump scheme groups (ten meetings held to date).
- Good summer construction season and good progress made with annual flood repair and general maintenance work.
- Annual flood repair expenditure is behind budget as some work is being undertaken in conjunction with April 2017 Flood Repair Project works.
- Pumps are being checked and refurbished in preparation for winter.

Geoff Stone delivered a presentation on scheme maintenance work.

Discussion:

- Making pumps fish-friendly was discussed. There are approximately 100 pumps across the region's river schemes. The approach being taken is that all new pump stations, or replaced pumps, will be fish-friendly. The national River Managers Group is funding research and development into an add-on propeller modification to reduce damage to fish.
- Concern was raised about ratepayers paying for the repair of stopbank damage caused by stock.
- Private occupation of urban Whakatāne stopbanks was discussed e.g. fences, dog kennels, platforms along Riverside Drive. Regional Council is concerned about this issue and an assessment of property owner encroachment onto the stopbank was undertaken by a student over the previous summer.
- Whakatāne District Council wanting to extend the stopbank cycleway (metalled) through to the water treatment plant. The Councils are working together on a plan to remove property encroachment material from the stopbank to achieve flood management priorities as well as allow for cycleway development.

7 Flood Repair Project update

Paula Chapman and Tony Dunlop spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack and delivered a presentation showing progress with the April 2017 Flood Repair Project.

Key points included:

- 34 Whakatāne-Tauranga sites completed as at 31 March 2019. Seven more sites planned for completion by 30 June 2019. 48% of the high priority sites in this scheme have been completed.
- Progress in this scheme has been constrained by lack of a secure rock supply. Local sources of suitable rock are not available and currently carting rock from Matawai.
- Work in the Whakatāne and Tauranga rivers expected to take the full four years of the project. Completion by June 2021.
- Currently reviewing lower priority sites to identify any changes. Some sites need reprioritising and others no longer needing repair can be removed from the programme.
- Although willow aphid has been an issue in the area in recent years, willows used in the repair works are growing well with no sign of willow aphid damage.

Discussion:

- Issues with local rock supply discussed. Council working hard to get a reliable supply that meets the required specifications. Locally, Matahina rock is the best for the type of repair work being undertaken but the quarry has closed due to a dispute between the operator and the owner. Council are currently supporting several landowners to develop new quarries, and are also joining Ōpōtiki District Council to investigate options to meet the significant demand for rock for the harbour development.

Manawahe quarry has been investigated, and the rock used at a number of sites, however the rock is slabby, does not knit well together, and is not suitable in areas with high velocities.

- Concern was expressed regarding unrepaired sites getting worse. Reassurance given that the sites are being monitored and reprioritised as necessary and that Operations staff are also working on annual flood damaged sites.
- Japanese walnut trees have been an issue and staff are trying to eradicate them. They are shallow rooted so do not provide any bank stabilisation benefit, rather they are prone to falling over and causing erosion issues. They also seed very readily.

8 Engineering update

Mark Townsend spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack and delivered a presentation covering the following key topics:

8.1 Whakatāne River capacity review

- During a capacity review the river is modelled to assess how much water can flow down the river. This informs whether upgrades are required to meet the agreed level of service.
- Modelling is underway for the Whakatāne River but it's not yet complete.
- Rating curve review is used to determine 1% AEP (Annual Exceedance Probability) flows for flood management purposes. The Valley Road gauging site is owned by NIWA and they are contracted to provide river rating information at that site. Council have also undertaken a rating review using NIWA's information and have produced a different result. Discussions are continuing with NIWA.

8.2 Whakatāne urban stopbank raising

- The design level for urban Whakatāne stopbanks is 1% AEP + 800mm freeboard. The criteria for initiating stopbank raising is if the existing stopbank level is within 50% of the freeboard level. A number of areas from the Heads to McAlister Street met the criteria and need raising.
- No construction will be undertaken this financial year and any unspent funds will be transferred to 2019-2020. It is highly likely that additional budget will be required for this work.

8.3 Kakaharoa Drive and Quay Street seepage issues

- To control seepage observed along Kakaharoa Drive and Quay Street during the 2011 and 2017 flood events, a series of seepage trenches are proposed to intercept the flow.
- Geotechnical assessments are complete and detailed design is about to commence.
- 2018-2019 budget contained \$270k for design and construction. No construction will be undertaken this year, and any unspent funds will be transferred to 2019-2020. It is highly likely that additional budget will be required for this work.

8.4 Floodwall Assessments

- A recommendation of the Rangitāiki River Scheme Review was for all concrete floodwalls in the region to be assessed.
- Three sections along the Whakatāne River are protected by floodwalls – upstream of Landing Road Bridge, Yacht Club to Main Wharf, and waka shelter to boat ramp playground. Assessments on these sections are progressing and include a visual check, geotechnical investigations (to assess foundations), and an engineering assessment (recommend options).

- Assessments to date indicate that: some floodwalls will need raising to meet freeboard requirements; some floodwall foundations will need to be modified; some areas will need seepage trenches and pressure relief valves; and some of the expansion joints will need remedial work.
- Work is planned for 2019-2020 and will include a communications plan and community consultation.

Discussion:

- The importance of early and transparent communication with the community regarding urban stopbank and floodwall raising was discussed. Input was sought from members on how best to engage with the community. Need to start socialising the proposal now and link with climate change conversations that are happening. Communications need to clearly explain why this work is needed and the options that are being considered.
- The geotechnical investigations were featured in the Beacon and any results should be fed back to the public. The report has not yet been finalised but results will be shared with the group.

ACTION:

Share floodwall assessment geotechnical report findings with members at the September meeting.

9 Finance report

Debbie Hyland spoke to the finance report provided in the agenda pack and gave an overview of the scheme's revenue and expenditure to 31 January 2019.

Key points included:

- Capital expenditure is lower than budgeted. This is due to the April 2017 Flood Repair Project completing fewer repair sites than planned because of constraints with rock supply.
- Depreciation costs are higher due to the annual July 2018 valuation of scheme assets. Scheme assets are now valued at \$70,360,000.
- The Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme works reserve is in deficit.
- The scheme has outstanding loans of \$6.5 m.
- Excellent relationship with Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, and flood repair insurance claims are progressing well.

10 Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project update

Bruce Crabbe provided an update on the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project.

Key points included:

- Dredging completed on 3.6 km of the total 5.2 km (69% complete). New completion date of mid-June 2019.
- Sediment is now being pumped to Containment Site 3 on Keepa Road.
- The area past Kopeopeo-Orini flood pump will soon become available again for flood control.
- Current Ministry for the Environment funding is for containment only. Regional Council needs to fund the remediation.
- Kopeopeo Canal Project webpage has a lot of information about the project and bioremediation <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/our-projects/kopeopeo-canal-remediation-project/>

- The Community Liaison Group meetings are publically notified and open to the public. Scotty McLeod is a representative on the Community Liaison Group and the Project Steering group.

Discussion:

- Concern expressed at the amount of toxin within the containment sites, the possibility of concentrated areas of toxin, and the effectiveness of bio-remediation.
- One of the top ten wood waste sites in the country is on the Orini Canal and Whakatāne District Council is currently working on getting resource consent to undertake containment at that site. The situation is different to the Kopeopeo Canal – in the canal the dioxin is contained within the sediment, the Orini Canal site is an area where wood waste was dumped on land.
- Contaminant has also been found in the canal to the west of SH30. This is not part of the initial project and at this stage the focus is on completing the initial project objectives. The Kopeopeo West area will be investigated, the extent of the contamination determined, and best options for remediation considered. External funding options will need to be investigated.

11 General business

11.1 Gravel management update

Mark Townsend spoke to the gravel management update provided in the agenda pack.

Key points included:

- In the past gravel management was shared across the Rivers and Drainage and Engineering teams. With recent staff changes this has been re-assessed and gravel management is now an Engineering team responsibility.
- In November 2018, a halt was placed on all commercial extraction from the Whakatāne and Tauranga Rivers (and also the Waioeka and Otara Rivers) until the relevant technical analysis was available through the NERMN report (Natural Environmental Regional Monitoring Network – river and stream channel monitoring). This report was in the process of being completed when the April 2017 floods occurred. The floods dramatically changed the rivers making a lot of the information in the draft report invalid and requiring cross-section surveys to be repeated.
- Following the halt on commercial extraction there has been push back from contractors who have extracted gravel in the past. There has been a delegation from NZTA and contractors have been contacting Chairman Leeder.
- Cross-section surveys of the river beds are carried out every 2-3 years and analysis of this information is presented in the NERMN report. The NERMN report makes comment on the river reaches, highlights where there is aggradation (build-up) and degradation (loss), and provides recommendations for where gravel can be extracted and at what volume.
- Analysis is showing there is no gravel available for extraction in the Whakatāne River. Currently the only extractions allowed will be for river management purposes, specifically where flood repair work is being carried out and overflow cuts are recommended to relieve pressure on eroded banks.

Discussion:

- The charges for extracted gravel were discussed. Regional Council charges a management fee of 90 cents per cubic metre. In some areas landowners have been charging for access through private property. This is a third party agreement between the contractor with the gravel allocation and the landowner.

11.2 Bylaw and policy reviews

Chris Ingle spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack.

Key points included:

Floodway and Drainage Bylaw Review

- Floodway and Drainage Bylaw 2008 due to be reviewed (required to be reviewed every ten years).
- Most aspects of the review will be technical, ensuring that rules are up-to-date with best practice drain management and current engineering requirements.
- The revised Bylaw will be open for public consultation and the river scheme advisory groups will be a key component of this.
- Public consultation is intended to commence early in 2020 with the new Bylaw adopted in June 2020.

River Scheme Rates Review

- Council is looking at the fairness of the current rating system and is scoping and prioritising schemes for a rating review.
- First review to start next financial year.

11.3 Communications update

Kay Boreham updated the group on communications activities across the Eastern Bay.

- Members were advised that the Council website had been upgraded and were encouraged to register for Project Page updates.
- A suggested action from the Rivers Scheme Governance report was to increase communication with advisory groups between meetings and the concept of a six-monthly electronic newsletter is being worked on to update Advisory Group members on key issues.
- Whakatāne stopbank raising plans will have a high level of public interest and a communications and engagement plan will be in place. Media coverage of the geotechnical drilling was the first step in signalling to the public that stopbank raising is likely to occur in the near future.

Jo Heath demonstrated the geospatial Story Map that when complete will be available on Council's website. The Story Map provides background information about the April 2017 weather events, shows pictures of flooding across the region and allows users to search a map of the flood repair sites to find out basic information about each site and when it is scheduled for completion.

11.4 Other

Richard Holmes asked when the bed levels for the Tauranga River will be available. Mark Townsend responded that they are on the work plan for next financial year.

Councillor Marr closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting closed at: 12:30pm