

# Notes of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Whakatāne office, on Wednesday 20 March 2019, commencing at 10am

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**Chair:** Councillor Norm Bruning

**Advisory Group:** Alan Law, Linda Virbickas, Maurice Warbrick, Peter Askey, Shona Pedersen, Jim Finlay (Whakatāne District Council), Councillor Alison Silcock (Whakatāne District Council)

**BOPRC Councillors:** Councillor Bill Clark

**BOPRC Staff:** Kirsty Brown (Acting Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Kerry Smith (Area Engineer), Tony Dunlop (Flood Restoration Project Engineer), Paula Chapman (Flood Repair Project Manager), Andy Dixon (Accounting Team Leader), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Chris Ingle (General Manager, Integrated Catchments), Kay Boreham (Marketing and Communications Advisor), Mieke Kapa (Land Management Officer)

**Apologies:** Chairman Leeder

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## 1 Welcome

Councillor Bruning welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chris Ingle outlined some key staff changes. Roger Waugh resigned and finished work in January. Currently recruiting for the position and Kirsty Brown is Acting Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager in the interim. 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 Mieke Kapa who is representing the Coastal Catchments Team at the meeting.

## 2 Apologies

Apologies were received as recorded above.

## 3 Notes of previous meeting held 12 September 2018

### Resolved

**That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:**

- 1 **Confirm the notes of the meeting held 12 September 2018 as a true and correct record.**

**Askey/Pedersen  
CARRIED**

## 4 Matters arising from previous meeting

Progress on the actions from the previous meeting regarding finding solutions to flooding issues at Kopuriki was discussed:

- Ongoing discussions with Southern Generation to find a practical solution to flooding issues at Kopuriki.
- Regional Council carried out a trial gravel extraction in the Aniwaniwa delta channel, downstream from Rabbit Bridge, to determine whether the extracted material is suitable for commercial use and to determine associated processing costs. Early feedback is that the product is unlikely to be economic. Resource consent will be required if any commercial extraction is to go ahead.
- Regional Council, District Council, and Southern Generation are working in partnership to develop a five-year plan for weed control.
- The local Member of Parliament has raised the flooding issues with Southern Generation.
- Questioned whether the flooding issue had been raised with the Rangitāiki River Forum and what that forum's position is on the issue. Chris Ingle responded that the issue had not been raised yet.

## 5 River Scheme governance/continuous improvement

Chris Ingle reminded group members that at the September 2018 meeting Nic Newman (Principal Advisor) had sought feedback from members on how the Advisory Group was working. A report was presented to Council on 13 December 2018 with findings and recommendations. This report was circulated to advisory group members on 12 February 2019 and feedback on the recommendations was now being sought.

### Discussion:

- Concerned that group members are not communicating well enough with the wider community and providing ratepayer representation.
- Need for a 'no surprises' policy. For example advisory group members living in Galatea were not aware of the gravel extraction trial being undertaken at Kopuriki. Suggested adding advisory group members to work notification email groups.
- Group is not really functioning as an advisory group, more an information receiving group. Suggested looking at workshopping Long-Term Plan and Asset Management Plan reviews with advisory groups.
- Members need to understand the area and the issues more fully. This could be achieved with more field trips. Suggested one focusing on the Tarawera River and one on the upper Rangitāiki.
- The Chair is happy with how the group is functioning and appreciates the suggestions and dialogue that occurs during the meetings.

### ACTIONS:

- **Add advisory group members to the works notification email group to receive weekly notification of river and drainage scheme works being undertaken across the region.**
- **Add advisory group members to the gravel allocations email group to receive notifications of gravel allocations issued across the region.**
- **Provide a flowchart of key planning input points for advisory group members.**

## 6 Operations update

### 6.1 Work programme update

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack and Kerry Smith delivered a presentation focusing on scheme maintenance activities.

#### Key points included:

- Rangitāiki Drainage representatives met last month. Working closely with this group on Rangitāiki Drainage Scheme specific issues has been valuable.
- Operations team meeting with the 34 communal pump scheme groups on an annual basis to agree on budgets.
- Maintenance works are on track with some work being undertaken in conjunction with April 2017 Flood Repair Project work. This has proven to be cost effective because of economies of scale.
- Stopbank realignment project underway on the Smit property behind Edgecumbe township. The new configuration will provide better protection to Edgecumbe township and remove the current need to manually close floodgates.
- Seepage issues have been identified at the Old Rangitāiki Canal floodgates and geotechnical investigations are underway to help understand the issue and inform possible solutions.

### 6.2 Lowland Drainage Scheme Water Quality and Ecology Report

Kirsty Brown spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack.

#### Key points included:

- National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management is a direction from Central Government to Regional Councils to set objectives for fresh water bodies in their region and to develop policy to meet these objectives.
- In the Bay of Plenty work is currently progressing in the Rangitāiki and Kaituna/Pongakawa/Waitahanui Water Management Areas to develop water quality and quantity objectives and limits. This work will result in Plan Change 12.
- To support this work, and to help fill knowledge gaps about the ecosystems in the Rangitāiki and Kaituna Plains drainage networks, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Science Team undertook a 17-month water quality, ecology and fish monitoring survey. The study showed that overall water quality in the drains is poor and water quality, ecology and drain discharge issues will need to be addressed by Bay of Plenty Regional Council. The report (Environmental Publication 2018/05 *Ecological and water quality conditions of drains and land drainage canals in the Rangitāiki and Kaituna Plains*) has been circulated to members and is available on Council's website [https://www.boprc.govt.nz/media/2920/2018-05-drains-report-13\\_final-word\\_version2.pdf](https://www.boprc.govt.nz/media/2920/2018-05-drains-report-13_final-word_version2.pdf)
- There could be significant implications for management of the river schemes. Currently not funded to manage water quality and ecological values and there is also the potential for all scheme drainage discharges to water requiring resource consent.
- Regional Council is in a challenging situation where they are a provider of flood protection under legislation and as a regulator of these activities under the Resource Management Act 1991.
- Council is working with local landowners on identified hot spots, progressively addressing fish passage issues at prioritised sites, and supporting innovative drain management trails.

**Discussion:**

- Suggested that water quality testing at pump outlets and also on farm would be useful. Kirsty Brown advised that a consultant is currently engaged to do water quality testing at all the lower Kaituna pump station sites, testing in the drain above the pump station and in the receiving waterway. Nothing planned for the Rangitāiki at this stage.
- Questioned whether Regional Council would subsidise the cost of farm drain water quality testing. Staff agreed to investigate this.
- Need to gather and share information like this so farmers can be ahead of the game in terms of methods to improve water quality.
- Every farmer is aware of water quality issues but very difficult to develop a plan, and move with confidence in a direction, when you do not know where you need to be heading.
- Council's Land Management Team has identified focus catchments and are working with landowners and industry to develop best farming practice to achieve improved water quality.

**ACTION:**

***Investigate whether Council can subsidise testing to assist farmers in gathering information about water quality on their properties.***

**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.

- 56 Rangitāiki-Tarawera sites completed as at 31 March 2019. Thirteen more sites planned for completion by 30 June 2019.
- The programme of desilting and drain bank repairs across the Rangitāiki Drainage Scheme is approximately 80% complete.
- Progress in this scheme has been constrained by lack of a secure rock supply. Local sources of suitable rock are not available. Blue Rock unable to produce the graded rock required. No access to Matahina rock currently, and not looking promising in the near future. Currently investigating alternatives with rock currently being carted from outside the Eastern Bay of Plenty for repair work that is covered by insurance.
- Manawahe quarry has been investigated, and the rock used at a number of sites. Unfortunately the rock is slabby, does not knit well together, and is not suitable in areas with high velocities.
- Work on Tarawera River repair sites (18) has not started. Some of these are high priority sites.
- Work in the Rangitāiki-Tarawera scheme expected to take the full four years of the project. Completion by June 2021.
- Get a lot of criticism about the amount of rock rip-rap used to repair flood damaged sites and the effect of this on the natural character of the river. Softer engineering solutions are used when possible, however some sites need rock protection e.g. where other erosion protection measures have failed in the past or there are conditions requiring hard engineering measures (e.g. site is subjected to high flood velocities or added pressures due to river channel alignment).
- Advised that willows are often used and are the preferred species for erosion protection and river edge stabilisation. Native plantings are not useful for quick stabilisation of riverbanks but can be planted behind erosion protection plantings.

## 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 Provincial Growth Fund

- Government fund to promote regional economic development in the provinces and to promote regional economies that are sustainable, inclusive and productive.
- River Managers Group has been asked to put forward four projects that are 'spade ready' and proposals were put forward from Whanganui, Gisborne, Kaitaia and Bay of Plenty.
- Bay of Plenty Regional Council's proposal includes; flood repair work not covered by either Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management or insurance, an asset management assessment tool, overlay and stopbank raising in the lower Rangitāiki, and Rangitāiki Floodway work including land purchase. Proposal valued at \$26.5m with Council providing 50% of the costs.

### 8.2 Rangitāiki Floodway

#### Spillway consent variation

- Information day held 24 November 2018 to consult on preferred spillway option.
- December 2018 Council meeting approved the lodging of a consent variation for a fixed crest weir with contingency gates. They also noted that additional funds will be required to complete the remaining stages of the Rangitāiki Floodway Project.
- NorConsult engaged to design the spillway.

#### Stage 5 works

- Hearing held 30 November 2018 regarding the proposed consent variation to enable the bifurcation to proceed. Consent variation was granted.
- Tracks Concrete Limited awarded the contract for Stage 5 works involving:
  - Bifurcation canal to provide a second outlet into the lower Rangitāiki River.
  - Overlays to prevent piping failures.
  - New bridge over bifurcation canal and associated road realignment.
  - Road rehabilitation, seal widening, drainage improvements and bridge widening associated with existing Whakatāne District Council roading assets.

#### **Discussion:**

- Reasons for Rangitāiki Floodway Project cost over-runs were discussed. Many contributing factors i.e. weather related delays, need for consent variations, landowner compensation, unexpected archaeological site management costs, tender prices coming in at 30% above the engineers estimate.
- Questioned whether the community will have opportunity to provide feedback on spillway design. Mark responded that he would share the detailed design with advisory group members when it was available.

### 8.3 Rangitāiki River Scheme Review

- Final report was delivered to Audit and Risk Committee on 28 November 2018.
- Majority of review recommendations are complete. Those not complete are longer-term workstreams which are now embedded into Council's 'business as usual' work as follows:
  - River Scheme Sustainability – Matahina and Aniwhenua Dams
  - Rangitāiki River floodwalls
  - Trustpower consent renewal and Cardno report
  - Trustpower flood management plan

- Rangitāiki Floodway

#### 8.4 Rangitāiki River flood wall rebuilds/remedial works

- Floodwalls are located at West Bank Road (near Grieg Road), East Bank Road by Thornton School and within Edgecumbe urban area.
- Geotechnical report has been produced and reviewed. Design is in progress and due by end of financial year.
- Construction planned for 2019-2020.

#### 8.5 Cardno report/Trustpower consent renewal

- Modelling is complete and the Cardno report is due at end of March 2019.
- Once report received it will be reviewed internally and then shared with Trustpower for their comment.
- Final report will be shared with the advisory group.

#### 8.6 Canal 109 culvert renewal

- Contract price agreed with Draintech to do the upgrade.
- Work has been deferred to next financial year.

#### 8.7 Upper Rangitāiki cross-section surveys

- Surveys on the Horomanga are 60% complete.
- Preparation work being undertaken for surveys upstream of Rabbit Bridge. The area is very rugged and clearing the survey lines takes time. Survey should be complete in about eight weeks.

**ACTION:**

***Share upper Rangitāiki cross-section survey information when completed.***

#### 9 Communications update

Kay Boreham updated members on recent communications activities and spoke about the website upgrade. Work progressing with best ways to deliver information to communities and Kay always keen to hear from advisory group members about how our communications can be more effective.

#### 10 Finance report

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

**Key points included:**

- Depreciation costs are higher than budgeted due to the annual valuation of scheme assets. Scheme assets are now valued at \$98,527,000 (up from \$86,718,980).
- Insurance premiums have increased and infrastructural insurance is higher than budgeted.
- The scheme has outstanding loans of \$35.5m. Had budgeted for interest rates increases but indications from the Reserve Bank are that interest rates will stay low for at least the next 12 months.

- Capital expenditure is higher than budgeted due to additional costs associated with Rangitāiki Floodway capital work. Capital budget is being brought forward from the 2019-2020 budget to enable contract work to continue.

**Discussion:**

- How Council manages organisational efficiencies was discussed. Work programmes and budgets are set through long-term and annual planning processes and there is quarterly performance monitoring with reports produced to demonstrate; that we are doing what we said we would do, whether we are on track to meet Key Performance Indicators, and what has been done to achieve the four Community Outcomes. The Chief Executive has a Key Performance Indicator to deliver \$1m in efficiency savings and there is an expectation that staff will strive to work as efficiently as possible.
- Suggestion made that Council should demonstrate to ratepayers that there is a robust systems in place to efficiently manage council activities. Performance Monitoring Reports are available on the website <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/your-council/documents-and-publications/reports/>

## 11 General business

### 11.1 Gravel management update

Mark Townsend spoke to the 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.
- Gravel extraction in the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme only occurs in the Rangitāiki River upstream of Matahina Dam.
- Principal extraction occurs in the Horomanga River but is currently suspended in the upper Horomanga, from the confluence with the Ohutu River, to enable bed level recovery.
- Current extraction occurring in and around Galatea Road where the river is becoming perched.

### 11.2 Bylaw and policy reviews

Chris Ingle briefly spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack giving members a heads up that the Floodway and Drainage Bylaw 2008 is being reviewed and that Council is scoping and prioritising schemes for a rating review.

### 11.3 Other general business

Bruce Crabbe delivered a quick update on the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project:

- Dredging is working well but is taking longer than anticipated and project is behind schedule. Fifty-five percent of dredging has been completed.
- Have moved from Containment Site 1 on SH30 to Containment Site 3 on Keepa Road.
- New dredging completion date is June 2019 with remediation work to follow.
- Access for whitebaiters is going to remain an issue as Containment Site 3 is where the public access used to be.

**Meeting closed at 12:50pm**