

# Notes of the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Ōpōtiki District Council Chambers, Opotiki, on Wednesday 25 September 2019, commencing at 10:30am

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- Chair:** Councillor Bill Clark
- Advisory Group:** Dean Petersen, Dave Wilson, Tania Te Whenua (part of meeting), Jessica Wiseman, Ari Erikson (Ōpōtiki District Council), Councillor Ken Young (Ōpōtiki District Council)
- BOPRC Councillors:** Chairman Doug Leeder, Councillor Norm Bruning, Councillor Marr
- BOPRC Staff:** Kirsty Brown (Acting Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Tony Dunlop (Flood Repair Project Engineer), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Chris Ingle (General Manager, Integrated Catchments), Tim Senior (Land Management Officer), Hemi Barsdell (Asset Management Specialist)
- Public:** Tracey Hillier (Ngāi Tamahaua), Tim Herewini (Ngāi Tamahaua)
- Apologies:** Barry Hennessy, Robbie Petersen
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## 1 Welcome

Councillor Clark welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Kirsty Brown introduced Hemi Barsdell who as has been appointed as Asset Management Specialist within the Rivers and Drainage Asset Management team.

## 2 Public Forum

Tim Herewini (Ngāi Tamahaua) addressed the meeting and expressed iwi concerns with river management, gravel extraction and resource consents. He summarised discussions between Ngāi Tamahaua and Regional Council and indicated that iwi want a joint river management agreement where Council achieves river scheme works through joint decision making that meets iwi/hapū priorities.

## 3 Apologies

Apologies received as recorded above.

## 4 Notes of previous meeting held 3 April 2019

### Resolved

#### That the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

- 1 Confirm the notes of the meeting held 3 April 2019 as a true and correct record.

Clark/D Petersen  
CARRIED

## 5 Matters arising from previous meeting

Kirsty Brown ran through the actions from the previous meeting:

- 10-year financial projections for all river schemes were provided to members following the April meeting and members were also referred to the Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan, Section 10.3 pp199-210  
[https://cdn.boprc.govt.nz/media/786843/rivers-and-drainage-asset-management-plan-2018\\_2068-final-print.pdf](https://cdn.boprc.govt.nz/media/786843/rivers-and-drainage-asset-management-plan-2018_2068-final-print.pdf)

There were no other matters arising.

## 6 Review of the Floodway and Drainage Bylaw 2008

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

### Key points included:

- The Floodway and Drainage Bylaw is the key tool Council has to protect its flood protection and drainage assets from damage and misuse.
- Staff are currently reviewing the bylaw rules and assessing what changes will need to be made to ensure the rules, and supporting science and technical information, are still relevant and fit-for-purpose.
- Workshops with advisory group members will be organised for October/November, and proposed variations to the bylaw will be presented in detail.
- Two potential controversial changes will be: the possible extension of the bylaw applicable areas to ensure specific geotechnical issues are managed appropriately; and restrictions on ploughing, cropping and fencing in close proximity to stopbanks.

*Attendance: Mark Townsend joined the meeting at 10:51 am.*

## 7 Operations update

Tony Dunlop delivered a presentation on scheme maintenance work – showing a range of operational and maintenance work and Bruce Crabbe spoke to the Works Programme report provided in the agenda pack.

### Key points included:

- There has been a couple of decent annual flood events in the last 12-18 months and there are 12 flood damaged locations requiring significant repairs at an estimated cost of \$800k. This work is funded through the annual maintenance and operating budget and we are forecasting an overspend of \$700k at the end of 2019-2020. This will be funded through a loan.
- Most of the sites are high priority from a scheme perspective i.e. areas protecting stopbanks and we don't really have a choice but to do the work. Important to spend scheme money where there is the highest level of risk.

### Discussion:

- Rivers naturally want to move and meander, and bank erosion is a natural process that is accelerated by flood events. Erosion is only a concern because we have developed the land for production and want to artificially restrain the river to utilise as much land as possible.

- Concern expressed that the longer sites are left unrepaired the worse they get and the repair cost increases.
- Councillor Young raised the question of at what stage do we stop trying to control nature and let the river have the room it needs. Suggested that the money used for erosion repair could go to purchasing land along the river.

**Attendance:** Tania Te Whenua joined the meeting, and Councillor Young left the meeting, at 11:15am.

- The effects of climate change were discussed. With climate change there are a lot of unknowns and the concept of retreat is very much a key philosophy of action for climate change. Council's River Scheme Sustainability project is looking at the sustainability of the river schemes over the next 100 years and considering various options for the future.
- Suggestion made to have sacrificial areas all along the river where in times of flood the river flows over farm land. The silt left behind is beneficial to soil health, it's just the debris and rubbish that is an issue. From a river management perspective this is a good solution – making room for the river - however we don't see many landowners volunteering their land as a flood flow path and there is always the expectation of compensation.

## 7.1 Assessment of river management methods

Tony Dunlop explained that Council contracted Gary Williams (G & E Williams Consultants) to undertake an assessment of river management methods in the Whakatāne-Tauranga and Waioeka-Otara schemes. Tony briefed the group on what Gary's assessment covered and the key findings.

### Key points included:

- The Bay of Plenty Region is markedly affected by changes in climatic conditions, with a strong correlation with the Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation (IPO) cycle resulting in periods of generally quiescent conditions followed by periods of larger and more frequent flood events. The IPO is a 20-30 year cycle and we are currently leaving a flood intensive phase that started in 1998.
- River management needs to adapt to changing climatic drivers of river processes, and a more flexible and responsive approach that takes account of natural trends is recommended.
- A more resilient approach to river management, which is less constraining of river processes and provides more management options and flexibility, is needed. Gary is suggesting a model with a number of zones:
  - River corridor - the outer boundary demarcating the area that is river from land that is managed for productive human activities or for fixed assets. It includes reserve land for a more extensive vegetated buffer and forested river margin. This area provides space for the river to move within or expand as climatic conditions vary or become more intense with globally driven climate changes.
  - River management zone – the active river zone incorporating vegetated areas that will come and go, with erosion and re-establishment, acting as a buffer of flood flows.
  - Flexible fairway activity area – a moveable activity area within the river management zone where active channel management will be undertaken. Guidelines for management will indicate a width and general alignment of an activity area, within which the river processes of flood flows and sediment transport can take place.

## 8 Flood Repair Project update

Kirsty Brown 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:

- Two years through the four year project and 50% of sites across the region have been completed.
- Good progress has been made in the Waioeka-Otara scheme due to the security of suitable rock supply from Matawai.
- 55 sites from a total of 61 sites in the Waioeka-Otara rivers scheme have been completed (90%). The six remaining Waioeka-Otara sites will be completed by 30 June 2020.
- Overall programme budget is on track. Expenditure at end of 2017-2018 was overspent and the programme was ahead of programme. Expenditure at end of 2018-2019 was underspent due to rock supply constraints.
- Cost recoveries are on track with \$9m recovered to date from local authorities, NZTA, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, and insurance progress payments. The repair work is being undertaken in a way that optimises recoveries to off-set cost to the schemes and ratepayers. Expecting to recover approximately \$16m of the \$45m project.

## 9 Engineering update

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

### 9.1 Duke Street pump station

Modelling results indicated that the level of service is not being met and a number of options have been considered with Option 3, create more storage adjacent to Duke Street Pump Station, being determined as the most beneficial. This option does require a change to the level of service as some areas will have water ponded on them for longer than 30 hours (i.e. the existing level of service). A change to the level of service does require consultation and a review of the Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan.

### 9.2 Waioeka-Otara rivers capacity review

This work involves the 10-yearly review of the flood protection infrastructure to determine whether the accepted levels of service are being met. This capacity review has multiple components over a period of 4-5 years. The hydrological assessment scheduled for 2018-2019 was rescheduled to 2019-2020 as staff were diverted onto the Ngongotahā Flood Response project. Work will be undertaken in the first half of 2020.

## 10 Finance report

Kirsty Brown spoke to the finance report provided in the agenda pack and gave an overview of the scheme's revenue and expenditure for the 2018-2019 financial year, noting that the figures are draft until approved by Audit New Zealand and adopted by Council at their meeting on 26 September.

### Key points included:

- Total revenue was \$1,483,000 - \$45,000 higher than budget.
- Total operating expenditure was \$1,370,000 - \$341,000 higher than budget.

- Capital revenue - made up of Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management claim for flood repairs and a portion of insurance recoveries – was \$51,000 higher than budget reflecting the flood repair project being ahead of schedule in this scheme.
- Capital expenditure was \$1.3m higher than budget. This is due to the April 2017 Flood Repair Project completing more repair sites than planned because of a secure rock supply while other schemes are struggling to get suitable rock in the required volumes. The 2019-2020 Waioeka-Otara budget has been reduced accordingly.
- The scheme's flood damage reserve has been fully allocated.
- The scheme's works reserve has \$849,000 available.
- Outstanding loans of \$6.5m at the beginning of the year have been reduced to \$6.2m.
- Asset valuation increased by \$9.4m to \$44.7m due to higher construction costs and new assets created under the April 2017 Flood Repair project.

## 11 General business

### 11.1 Gravel management update

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

Analysis of survey data undertaken post the April 2017 flood events has been completed. Overall in the Waioeka system there has been a net volume gain of 31,000 m<sup>3</sup> (2014-2018). The quantity of gravel considered sustainable in the Waioeka is being reduced from 30,000 m<sup>3</sup> to 20,000 m<sup>3</sup> per annum.

Overall in the Otara system there has been a net volume gain of 61,000 m<sup>3</sup> (2013-2108). There has been a noticeable build-up of gravel over the last five to six years and future extractions should be considered for river management purposes (e.g. overflow cuts), particularly where high beach armoured areas exist. It is recommended that gravel extraction in this river be increased to keep the river at a desirable bed level.

Kirsty Brown updated members on the renewal of the consents for gravel extraction from the Waioeka and Otara rivers. The consents expired last year and we have been operating under Section 124 of the Resource Management Act which allows work to continue under the existing consent conditions until a new consent is issued. The consent applications were notified and five submissions have been received. Two of the submissions were opposed to the granting of the consents. Meetings are underway with the submitters to understand and address their concerns.

### 11.2 Stopbank damage from grazing

Kirsty Brown delivered a presentation on damage to stopbanks over winter. Presentation showed several examples of stopbanks that had been overgrazed to the extent that there was no grass cover, and the stopbank and batters were muddy, pugged and rutted from stock and vehicle movement.

#### **Key points included:**

- This year has been particularly bad with stock and vehicle damage to some of our stopbanks.
- Exposing the stopbank like this weakens its integrity, making it vulnerable to slumping and failure.
- Council relies on landowners to proactively manage stopbanks on their property and it is disappointing to see our community assets in this state.
- Damage to stopbanks is covered by the Floodway and Drainage Bylaw 2008.

- Remediation of the Rangitāiki Plains cases shown was paid for by the landowners and was achieved by immediately removing the stock, blading the ruts, re-seeding the exposed areas and covering the area with hay.
- Vehicle damage of the Waioeka River stopbank by Tarawa Creek is yet to be remediated as staff are waiting for the site to dry out to enable appropriate repair.
- A brochure '*Stopbanks – a community asset*' has been produced and copies were provided to advisory group members.
- Staff recently discovered an extensive rabbit warren inside a section of Rangitāiki River stopbank. The maze of tunnels presented a significant risk to the integrity of the stopbank and the area (approximately 40 metres long) was repaired immediately.

### 11.3 Essential Freshwater

- Chris Ingle advised that staff are currently working through the implications for river scheme management as a result of the government's Essential Freshwater package released on 5 September. Anticipating that there will be a greater focus on water quality management, habitat management, and ecosystem health. The river schemes are not currently funded these areas of work.
- Scope of package includes – setting and clarifying policy direction, raising the bar for ecosystem health, supporting delivery of safe drinking water, better managing stormwater and wastewater, and improving farming practices.
- There will be funding implications for Regional Council and ratepayers.
- Tight submission timeframe with submissions closing 31 October. Regional Council will be making a submission.

### 11.4 River Scheme rating classification review

- Council is looking at the fairness of the current rating system and is scoping and prioritising schemes for a possible rating review.
- Process is about identifying areas of inequality and ensuring that those who get benefit from the flood protection and land drainage schemes are contributing appropriately.

**Meeting closed at: 12:42pm**