

Notes of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Edgecumbe War Memorial Hall, on Wednesday 11 March 2020, commencing at 10am

Chair: Councillor Bill Clark

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

BOPRC Councillors: Councillor Toi Kai Rākau Iti

BOPRC Staff: Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Hemi Barsdell (Asset Management Specialist), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Andrew Pawson (Area Engineer), Tony Dunlop (Flood Repair Project Engineer), Paula Chapman (Flood Repair Project Manager), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments)

Apologies: Maurice Warbrick

1 **Welcome**

Councillor Clark welcomed everyone, and Councillor Iti opened the meeting with a karakia.

Councillor Clark introduced Councillor Iti, the new councillor for the Kōhī Constituency replacing Tiipene Marr. With a new Council elected in October 2019, Councillor Clark and Councillor Iti are the Regional Council representatives on the advisory group.

Kirsty Brown introduced Hemi Barsdell and explained his role as Asset Management Specialist with the Rivers and Drainage Assets team.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3 **Notes of previous meeting held 11 September 2019**

Resolved

That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

- 1 **Confirm the notes of the meeting held 11 September 2019 as a true and correct record.**

**Law/Askey
CARRIED**

4 **Matters arising from previous meeting**

There were no matter arising from the previous meeting.

5 **Performance assessment of critical assets**

Kirsty Brown advised that Roger Waugh (RiverSpace Ltd) had been contracted to undertake a performance assessment of Regional Council's critical flood protection assets.

Key points included:

- As part of Council's asset management improvement focus a risk-based framework, developed by the New Zealand Rivers Managers Group, has been implemented to assess the performance of critical flood protection assets.
- Critical assets are those that have a high consequence, but not necessarily high probability, of failure e.g. stopbank networks through urban areas. For the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Scheme the framework has been used to assess assets in the Edgecumbe urban area.
- The performance assessment process has three stages – risk identification, risk management and risk communication. The risk identification stage is complete and now staff are working through the risk management and risk communication stages.
- The main issue affecting the risk profile for the critical Rangitāiki River assets is soil type e.g. sand layers that are prone to seepage and piping.
- A full outline of the risk profile will be presented to advisory groups at the September meetings.

Attendance: Linda Virbickas joined the meeting at 10:10 am.

6 **River scheme planning**

Hemi Barsdell spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack. Council staff are seeking feedback from the group as to what involvement they would like in Asset Management Plan and Long Term Plan (LTP) processes. Staff want to engage with advisory groups early in the process to look at budgets, and discuss long-term implications and options.

- Members felt a workshop involving all members would be appropriate.
- They wanted to be well prepared to get the best value out of the workshop and requested that draft figures be circulated well in advance and that they are provided with current LTP information.
- Current LTP information is available on the Council website together with quarterly performance monitoring reports which have been circulated to group members as they are published. The Long Term Plan 2018-2028 and supporting documents can be found at <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/your-council/plans-and-policies/plans/long-term-plan/>. The latest performance monitoring report *Arotake Tuarua – July to December 2019* can be found at <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/your-council/documents-and-publications/reports/>

ACTION:

A planning workshop with advisory group members to be scheduled for April/May with draft budget information circulated well in advance of the workshop. (NB this was pre-Covid)

7 Operations update

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

Key points included:

- The 2019-2020 maintenance budget is \$1.3 million, including \$200,000 allocated for annual flood damage. Bruce reported that the maintenance work programme is currently on track and within budget.
- Members commented that the works programme report is very confusing and difficult to make sense of. Bruce agreed and advised that he is currently working to improve and simplify the reporting, supported by the new asset management system.
- Even with proactive poisoning programmes, rabbits have continued to be an issue on stopbanks. Finding that controlled areas are quickly repopulated from the surrounding area and that rabbits like hiding out in shelter belts. The main issue is when a rabbit warren develops within a stopbank. In these cases gas is used to eradicate the warren, the sites are excavated to track the holes back to solid ground, and then the stopbank is rebuilt. Landowners are encouraged to contact Council if they see any rabbit activity along stopbanks.

Andrew Pawson delivered a presentation on a range of operational and scheme maintenance work.

Key points included:

- A small, mobile, hydro-seeder has recently been purchased to help speed up revegetation of disturbed sites. Once sites have been repaired and top-soiled they are hydro-seeded with a suitable vegetation seed mix, including native carex and rush species.
- Willows are quick and easy to grow and are a cost effective erosion control tool in most low river velocity sites. Andrew explained the advantages of the various ways willows are grown to achieve bank stabilisation and provide wildlife habitat. The methods include: pole planting, layering, trenched willows, and transplanting live willows. Willow maintenance is a large part of the Operations teams work and willows perform best when their height is maintained by topping and mulching.
- New Zealand has depended on willows for erosion control and soil conservation for decades and has a wealth and depth of knowledge about the performance of the different varieties.
- Alternatives to willows were discussed and Bruce advised that Bay of Plenty Regional Council is leading the way in trialling alternatives. The main need is for vegetation that is fast growing, handles wet feet, has a wide spreading root system and is not prone to toppling. A number of native species have been trialled and have found that generally natives are slow growing, require a lot of management, and most are better used as buffer plantings behind erosion protection plantings or rock edge protection. Toi toi can be used as river edge protection as it has a good stabilising root system and bends over in a flood situation. Flax is not suitable as it becomes top heavy, the clumps get washed away in flood events leaving a hole in the bank, and they become an issue within the river channel.
- A parasitic wasp (*Pauesia* sp.) has been released at two sites in Galatea as part of a Scion led project to control Giant Willow Aphid. Sites are being monitored to assess the effect of the wasp on the Giant Willow Aphid population. The wasps lay their eggs inside the aphids, the eggs hatch, and as the pupae develops the aphid dies.
- Staff have been trialling eel tubes (a series of metal tubes formed into a triangular prism) placed into areas of new rock work to provide habitat for eels. They have been very successful with eels moving in soon after installation.

- Currently the major floodgates have been open to enable tidal flushing of canals to help with weed control and to reduce stagnation. The process also allows for fish passage in and out of the canal system.

8 April 2017 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:

- As at end of February 2020, 61% of repair sites across the region have been completed.
- 100 sites, from a total of 224, in the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme have been completed to date (41%).
- Work on 78 Rangitāiki-Tarawera sites is programmed in 2019-2020, and 26 have been completed to date.
- Progress in this scheme has been hampered due to constrained rock supply in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The availability of suitable rock material continues to remain a concern. Currently have two suppliers providing as much material as they can and still need to stockpile rock over a number of weeks before having enough to start a job.
- As a result of the constrained rock supply the project's forecasted expenditure to June 2020 is \$3m lower than budget and it is likely that the completion date for this project will go beyond the initial four year programme period.
- Council has initiated a rock procurement strategy project looking at different supply options to enable the creation of a supply chain for the next 20-50 years. Investigations have also taken place identifying the quality of rock throughout the region. A recent Request for Information process has resulted in interviews with local quarry operators and a number of options have been suggested for consideration.
- Total recoveries received from central government (Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management) is close to \$7m. Have also received two insurance progress payments totalling \$3m.
- Development of the community open space on College Road, Papa Taonga, is complete and the site was officially opened at a ribbon cutting ceremony on 21 December 2019. Members expressed disappointment that the site is not being looked after. The grassed areas are overgrown and weedy, and many of the newly planted trees have died.

9 Engineering update

Mark Townsend took the Engineering agenda report as read and responded to questions.

- Mark explained that the draft Cardno report is currently with Trustpower for consideration and comment, and an initial meeting is scheduled for the end of next week.
- Peter Askey asked for a timeframe for when the Rangitāiki spillway design would be shared with affected landowners. Mark explained that only a high level philosophy was required for the resource consent application and the detailed design is still in progress.

Mark delivered a presentation focusing on the River Scheme Sustainability Project and Stage 6 of the Rangitāiki Floodway Project.

9.1 River Scheme Sustainability Project

- The River Scheme Sustainability Project's vision is to have a 100 year sustainable river management strategy which achieves: a reduction in flood risk, environmentally and

economically sustainable land use practices, adaptation to climate change, stakeholder support and engagement, and affordability.

- The project is currently in the analysis phase (Phase 3). For the Rangitāiki catchment this involves the analysis of 33 mitigation options, grouped into 11 themes, determined during the optioneering phases. The 11 themes are: retention and detention, ponding areas, flow diversion, making room for the river, converting pasture to wetlands, land use control, managed retreat, ecological corridors, farm management practices, sediment management, and gravel management.
- The presentation showed retention scenarios utilising Matahina and Aniwhenua dams and taking into account climate change. Two scenarios were described:
 - Scenario 1 – continue like we currently are, carbon footprint continues to increase and global average surface temperatures continue to increase.
 - Scenario 2 – globally we make changes that have a positive effect on global average surface temperatures.
- Currently the dams play an important role in managing floods in the Rangitāiki River and the presentation showed that future climate change effects could be managed by retention in the dams up to an average surface temperature increase of 1.64°C, which under Scenario 1 is predicted to be around the year 2050.
- Options post a 1.64°C temperature increase were also discussed.

9.2 Rangitāiki Floodway Project – Stage 6

- Stage 6 involves increasing stopbank heights along the section of the floodway immediately downstream of SH2/Awakeri Road at Edgecumbe. A total of 6.5 km of stopbank is proposed to be raised, along with associated drainage and infrastructure changes.
- The East Bank Road ponding area option has been dropped. East Bank Road is not high enough to make this option viable without also having to raise stopbanks, and therefore this option does not result in any cost savings.
- New modelling for Stage 6 has shown that stopbanks will need to be raised by 750 mm. This is more than initially proposed and consequently the cost of the work is going to be substantially more than the current budget of \$2.6m.
- The impact on rates is yet to be determined. Mark had hoped to be able to present the financial implication figures to the group however the finance team is still working through the implications. A request was made for the information to be provided as \$/hectare so farmers can calculate the financial impact on a per hectare basis.

Attendance: Charles Harley, Paula Chapman and Tony Dunlop left the meeting at 12:53 pm.

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 six months ending 31 December 2019.

Key points included:

- The scheme currently has a total surplus of \$691,000.
- Total capital expenditure is currently lower than budget as work on the Rangitāiki Floodway has not yet started and the April 2017 Flood Repair Project is underspent.
- Flood Repair Project expenditure is forecast to be lower than budget due to limitations with rock supply. This will impact on total capital expenditure at year end.
- Total reserve funds available of \$2.4m. Annual depreciation goes into the Asset Replacement Reserve.
- Since 1 July 2019 the internal loan balance has increased by \$1.7m to \$35m.

- The scheme's assets as at 1 July 2019 are valued at \$105m. This is an increase of \$7m from the 1 July 2018 valuation.
- Members questioned whether there were any limits on borrowing with the scheme debt about 30% of valuation. Level of scheme debt is a concern.

11 Co-governance/community group updates

The March meeting of the Rangitāiki River Forum was postponed and has been rescheduled to Friday 3 April. These are public meetings, and meeting dates and agendas are available on the Council website <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/your-council/council-and-region/committees/rangitaiki-river-forum/>

Alison Silcock reported on a recent Rangitāiki River Forum field trip which included the eel transfer programme at Matahina Dam.

12 General business

12.1 Aniwaniwa delta gravel update

Bruce Crabbe provided an update on Aniwaniwa delta gravel issues and the work being undertaken to identify options and solutions.

Key points included:

- Modelling has been carried out by WSP to assess the benefits of gravel extraction from the delta. This work was joint funded by Southern Generation and the scheme. Results show there is some benefit if a significant amount of gravel is extracted.
- The plan is to put out a Request for Proposal to see if there is a market for the gravel and what the cost of extraction will be. The intent is that such extraction is cost neutral to the scheme. One option is extracting the gravel and stockpiling it for future use.
- Gravel extraction at this site is logistically challenging because of the type and size of machinery required, and there are concerns about machinery security. Also cannot operate from May to October when fish are migrating and spawning.
- Anne Tolley, MP for the East Coast, organised a meeting on 17 February with the Chairman and Chief Executive of Bay of Plenty Regional Council and the Chair of Southern Generation to discuss the issues. The two organisations will meet quarterly from now on. Southern Generation is committed to working with Regional Council to find a solution and have committed resources to achieve this.

12.2 Gravel management update

Mark Townsend spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack.

Most of the gravel extraction occurs in the Horomanga River. Historically there has been too much extraction in the upper reaches. To remedy this extraction has been suspended, from the confluence with the Ohutu River, to enable bed level recovery. In contrast there is too much gravel in the lower reaches, with the river bed perched in some places. Important to encourage gravel extraction from the right areas to return perched bed levels to acceptable levels. For extraction to be a successful management tool there also needs to be a market for the gravel. Currently the primary extraction is by Timberlands for forestry roading work.

12.3 **Review of Floodway and Drainage Bylaw 2008**

Kirsty Brown provided an update on the Floodway and Drainage Bylaw review.

Key points included:

- Informal consultation occurred in October and November last year and feedback from these sessions has been considered, and where appropriate included in the proposed bylaws. Staff appreciated the involvement of advisory group members in the workshop held in Whakatāne.
- A Statement of Proposal and proposed bylaws document are being presented at a Council workshop seeking approval to commence the formal consultation phase of the review.
- Proposed consultation timeline is: formal consultation 4 April to 4 May, hearings 26-28 May, deliberations 9 June, and adoption by Council 25 June.
- Formal consultation will include a mail out to affected landowners and a series of drop-in sessions around the region.

12.4 **Infrastructure insurance**

In 2009 Council moved away from the LAPP (Local Authority Protection Programme) to the BOPLASS shared service insurance programme to cover the 40% local government share of infrastructure replacement costs for natural disaster cover. A steady increase in premiums has been observed over the ensuing years. It is predicted that this pattern of increasing premiums will raise affordability issues.

The Rangitāiki-Tarawera scheme's infrastructure premium for 2019-2020 was \$228,000.

A review is proposed to look at alternative insurance options and determine the best way forward. Results from the review will be presented to advisory groups at the September meetings.

12.5 **Advisory group membership**

Kirsty Brown advised that the current members' three year appointment to the advisory group ends in September 2020. Council staff are pleased with how the advisory groups are working and are recommending that current members continue in their roles for a further three years (to September 2023). Members were advised that an email will be circulated seeking whether they wish to continue for another term or not. Any vacancies will then be advertised.

Hemi Barsdell closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting closed at 1:35pm