

# Notes of the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council, 5 Quay Street Whakatāne, on Wednesday 17 March 2021 commencing at 10am

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**Chair:** Councillor Bill Clark

**Advisory Group:** Bernie Clark, Boots McNaught, Brian Power, Councillor Andrew Iles (WDC), Geoff Mercer, Glenn Cooper (WDC), Scottie McLeod

**BOPRC Councillors:** Councillor Toi Kai Rākau Iti

**BOPRC Staff:** Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Asset Manager), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Paula Chapman (Project Manager), Geoff Stone (Area Engineer), Hemi Barsdell (Asset Management Specialist), Mereana Toroa (Finance Support Team Leader), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments), Laura Albrey (Communications Partner), Tony Dunlop (Area Engineer), Cleo Hanlon (Rivers and Drainage Coordinator)

**Public:** Councillor Lesley Immink (WDC), Julie Gardyne (WDC), Phil Wardale (Whakatāne Boat Harbour Project)

**Apologies:** Fraser McGougan

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## 1 **Welcome**

Councillor Clark welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Councillor Lesley Immink and Julie Gardyne from Whakatāne District Council. Chris Ingle introduced Laura Albrey, the new Communications Partner.

Chris Ingle opened the meeting with a karakia.

## 2 **Apologies**

Apologies received as recorded above.

## 3 **Notes of previous meeting held 16 September 2020**

**Resolved**

**That the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:**

- 1 **Confirm the notes of the meeting held 16 September 2020 as a true and correct record.**

**McNaught/McLeod  
CARRIED**

## 4 Matters arising from previous meeting

Action Item 1 - Information relating to NERMN report recommendation for gravel management was sent to Richard Holmes.

Action Item 2 - Charles Harley connected Janie Stevenson (NZ Landcare Trust) with Fraser McGougan regarding establishment of a care group for the Whakatāne Catchment, and potential funding options for a coordinator. Funding may become available through Council's community fund to support the establishment of Catchment Groups (subject to Long Term Plan approval).

## 5 Engineering update

Mark Townsend spoke to the agenda report and delivered a presentation focusing on the Whakatāne River Project Future Proof:

### Key points:

- Project Future Proof brings together a number of work streams (stopbank raising, seepage controls and floodwall assessments) with the objective of providing agreed levels of service within urban Whakatāne (stopbanks currently provide a 1% AEP level of service). The project covers the area from Kakaharoa Drive to the Whakatāne Boat Ramp. Seepage under the concrete floodwalls is a priority issue.
- Climate change projections indicate that peak river flows in 100 years' time will be significantly higher than present. These projections are being built in to the options being considered which include:
  - **Raising stopbanks.** This would mean a larger stopbank footprint and impacts on neighbouring properties. Stopbank raising is also high cost, and as stopbanks get higher the consequences of stopbank failure are greater.
  - **Higher and longer floodwalls with associated geotechnical seepage controls.** Floodwalls would need to be moved landward and could potentially be 600-800 mm higher than the current floodwalls. This option is in conflict with Whakatāne District Council's Town Revitalisation Project which through public consultation has a focus on connecting the town with the river.
  - A wider catchment solution being considered as part of the River Scheme Sustainability Project is to **slow flood flows in appropriate upstream areas.** This would involve constructing a system of low bunds where water would build up behind the first bund before overtopping that bund and then building up behind the next bund and so on, with the result of flood water taking longer to flow through the river system.

### Discussion:

- Mark Townsend advised members that the timeframe for the project is three years and it is currently still in the early investigative stage. He assured members that Regional Council is working collaboratively with Whakatāne District Council and Ngāti Awa, and that there will be ongoing information provision and engagement with the community through the various stages of the work.

- Councillor Iti advised that he was involved with a project walk around with members of Ngāti Awa Rūnanga. They are aware of the project's focus and project information is being shared and discussed with them, including their aspirations for the old Army Hall site.
- Crown Infrastructure Partners (CIP) shovel ready project funding was awarded to Whakatāne District Council for various projects (e.g. Whakatāne Boat Harbour and Town Wharf remediation) and is to be spent in stages. Regional Council has also received CIP funds (\$4 million) to be spent in stages, the majority for remediation of seepage issues.
- Whakatāne District Council has undertaken significant consultation as part of its town revitalisation project and both councils are now considering how best to incorporate community aspirations with Regional Council's flood protection improvements works. The councils will work together on the second phase of consultation, with Regional Council responding to flood protection questions and feedback.

## 6 Gravel management

Paula Chapman spoke to the agenda report:

### Key points:

- A consent permitting gravel extraction is being sought for an area upstream of Ohotu Bridge. The original hearing date has been postponed, with a new hearing date still to be set.
- Applications for gravel extraction are assessed by Engineering staff to determine whether there is adequate material to be taken and if extraction will benefit management of the river. If an application is unsuccessful, an alternate location can be suggested if extraction is necessary for river management. Applications are managed on a first-in-first-served basis.

## 7 Operations update

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the agenda report and Geoff Stone delivered a presentation.

### Key points:

- Fly tipping continues to be an issue, particularly at the Kope-Orini pump station.
- Some grazing licenses within urban Whakatāne have been retired. As a result there is more vegetation maintenance (pest plant control, mowing) required in these areas.
- Concrete and steel work remediation is being undertaken on the Kope-Orini floodgates. Contech were engaged to undertake the work after staff saw what was being achieved at the Whakatāne Wharf.
- Central government funding enabled high risk trees to be removed from the stopbank along Arawa Road, near Trident High School. The stumps are still to be removed and the stopbank appropriately remediated.

## 8 April 2017 Flood Repair Project update

Paula Chapman spoke to the agenda report provided and delivered a presentation showing progress with the April 2017 Flood Repair Project:

### Key points:

- Repair project is now over 90% complete, and forecasted to be 98% complete by 30 June 2021.
- The Whakatāne-Tauranga scheme has 17 repair sites remaining.
- The projected budget for the Whakatāne-Tauranga scheme at the start of the project was \$11.5 million. Current forecast to completion is \$9.5 million. Some low priority sites have self-healed or the erosion has stabilised. Some other sites were re-evaluated prior to work commencing and the repair method changed to a lower cost method. \$6.5 million has been spent on repairs to date, and \$3 million has been recovered from central government and insurance.
- The majority of the remaining work is upstream of Rūātoki Bridge. Fourteen sites had been identified in this area, however there has been access issues and conversations with hapū are continuing. A drone survey will be undertaken within the next few months to determine if any sites can be removed from the programme.
- The Te Rahu pump station work did not go to open tender because was awarded to a construction company that had undertaken similar work on Canal 109. A contract price was negotiated, with Council taking on some of the risk.

## 9 Finance report

Kirsty Brown provided an overview of the scheme's revenue and expenditure for the six months ending 31 December 2020:

### Key points:

- Total operating revenue - \$2000 higher than budget
- Total operating expenditure - \$294,000 higher than budget, due to maintenance works being ahead of schedule.
- Resulting in an operating deficit of \$291,00
- Total capital revenue was \$271,000 lower than budget, due to delays in formalising central government funding.
- Total capital expenditure was \$916,000 lower than budget, but is expected to be close to budget at year end.
- Total reserve funds - \$606,000 available
- Loan balance at 31 December 2020 - \$7.2 million
- Scheme asset value at 1 July 2020 - \$82.5 million.

## 10 River scheme planning (AMP and LTP)

Hemi Barsdell delivered a presentation on the Asset Management Plan and the Long Term Plan:

### Key points:

- Additions have been made to the proposed Long Term Plan capital budget. The 10 year total has changed by \$1.34 million.
- At the Advisory Group workshop in September 2020 a 10-20% increase in rates was suggested. This has improved due to a reduction in loan interest rates.
- Submissions to the Long Term Plan close on 22 March.
- A rates calculator that estimates the rates for individual properties, based on the proposed Long Term Plan, is available on the Council website.
- There is landowner concern about seepage through the stopbank along Eastern Drain. Investigations are underway to identify a solution. The site is complicated by a road, with associated drainage and culverts, located next to the bank.

## 11 Co-governance/community group updates

Charles Harley provided a verbal update on community care groups working within the catchments:

### Key points:

- Fraser McGougan has been working with Janie Stevenson (NZ Landcare Trust) on catchment care groups. Fraser has recently been appointed as a Dairy NZ Environmental Ambassador.
- The Waiotahi group has been active for a couple of years, with 90% of the catchment's landowners involved. There is also a focus group from the Nukuhou catchment. Ideally there would be one care group for each catchment, providing a forum for farmers and landowners to discuss issues with Council and vice versa.
- Regional Council are responsible for implementing new regulations resulting from the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management. One of these regulations is a stock exclusion from waterways rule. Council will be working with landowners with stock crossings through rivers and streams to achieve solutions in line with regional and national policy. There are big implications, particularly for properties split by a river. Council are also working collaboratively with Dairy NZ and Fonterra on this issue.
- Council has begun a review process of the Regional Natural Resources Plan to ensure consistency with the updated national policy and environmental standards. Changes will be notified in 2024.

## 12 **Whakatāne boat harbour update**

Phil Wardale (Project Management – Whakatāne Boat Harbour Project) delivered a presentation on the project:

### **Key points:**

- Funding for the project had been received from the Provincial Growth Fund.
- Whakatāne needed more berthage, with wait lists for berths in town, at the marina and the yacht club. Maintenance and servicing was moving out of Whakatāne and there were constraints on marine tourism, along with trailer boat ramp demands.
- Land downstream of the Landing Road bridge, between Keepa Road and the river stopbank, has been selected as the site for the harbour.
- Dredging will be required in some areas of the river. There will be a provision for maintenance dredging. Flood events will be the biggest risk for this project, however this risk already exists at the existing wharf.
- There is some loss of high value wetland, however there is an opportunity for remediation of wood waste sites within wetland areas. No dioxin has been located from the testing that has been undertaken.
- New harbour infrastructure will be designed and built to provide the appropriate level of flood defence.
- There are currently 78 berths in the selected option, however this will be refined in the detailed design. There will also be covered maintenance sheds.
- The site has been split in two – Stage 2 is the second half of the site, to include recreational berths and car and trailer stores.
- There will be public access to the harbour, with logical navigation through the property.
- DHI are undertaking the modelling, with input from Tonkin & Taylor. All options have been considered, including sedimentation rates and flood levels. The access channel to the proposed harbour presents the biggest risk to maintaining flood protection.
- Concern was expressed by some advisory group members of the potential future likelihood that scheme ratepayers would incur additional costs as part of this development.

## 13 **General business**

Kirsty Brown took the agenda report as read.

Boots McNaught had been asked by a member of the public why there was tree removal at the end of Eivers Road, who responded it was planned works. It was also noted that foaming has been observed at the pump station at the rose gardens. This effect is often caused by aeration created in the discharge process.

## 14 **Public forum**

- Members sought an update on remediation of the Kopeopeo West extension (extending remediation of the Kopeopeo Canal to the west of SH2). Bruce Crabbe responded that investigations are ongoing, and an options report would be going to Council in June. Members noted that a consequence of a flood from this canal could result in dioxin being washed across neighbouring properties.
- A new sand bar is forming in the Whakatāne River near the Board Mills. Mark Townsend responded that Council are in the process of undertaking a capacity review of the river using electronic models and data from ground based surveys. This review will highlight if there are any capacity issues that would warrant management of the sand bar.

Hemi Barsdell ended the meeting with a karakia.

**Meeting closed at 12:34pm**