

Notes of the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held in Opotiki Golf Club, 14 Fromow Road, Opotiki, on Wednesday, 24 March, 2021 commencing at 10.30 am

Chair: Councillor Bill Clark

Advisory Group: Barry Hennessy, Councillor David Moore, Councillor Steve Nelson, Dave Wilson, Dean Petersen, Robbie Petersen, Jessica Wiseman

BOPRC Councillors: Councillor Toi Kai Rakau Iti, Chairman Doug Leeder

BOPRC Staff: Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Cleo Hanlon (Coordinator, Rivers and Drainage), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Tony Dunlop (Area Engineer), Paula Chapman (Project Manager), Laura Albrey (Communications Advisor), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments) Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager) Hemi Barsdell (Asset Management Specialist), Sam Stephens and Shane Hona (Biosecurity Officers)

Apologies: Tania Te Whenua

1 **Welcome**

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

Councillor Clark introduced Laura Albrey (Communications Partner) and Cleo Hanlon (Rivers and Drainage Coordinator).

2 **Apologies**

Apologies received as recorded above.

3 **Notes of previous meeting held 23 September 2020**

Resolved

That the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

- 1 **Confirm the notes of the meeting held 23 September 2020 as a true and correct record.**

**Moore/Iti
CARRIED**

4 Engineering update

Mark Townsend spoke to the agenda report and delivered a presentation.

Key points:

- The Waioeka-Otara capacity review calibration has been completed and the review is expected to be completed by June 2021. Analysis of the calibration fits in with reported levels at various monitoring sites. There are 103 model runs to be completed, looking at different scenarios, which will take approximately six weeks.
- An engineering assessment has been undertaken of the Otara River stopbanks and floodwalls to inform future upgrade work. Some seismic and seepage issues have been identified. The final report on this work is currently being reviewed.
- There are storm water issues in Ōpōtiki township and Ōpōtiki District Council are considering increasing the storm water discharge to Duke Street Drain and increasing the pump capacity. Because of this the proposed change in level of service for the Duke Street Pump Station is on hold.

Discussion:

- Commented that there is an island forming in the river near the Duke Street Drain outlet. There has been river bank erosion problems in that area, and over the last ten years the riverbank has been lined with rock. Aggregation is encouraged here to avoid erosion reoccurring. Maintenance of the island is part of the maintenance programme.
- The River Scheme Sustainability Project was discussed, and it was suggested that Ōpōtiki District Council need to ensure they are asking the right questions of Regional Council. Mark Townsend advised that guidance had been given to Ōpōtiki District Council four years ago, which they have been following. Once the capacity review and stopbank/floodwall engineering assessments have been completed there will be some clear options for the future of flood protection in Ōpōtiki. A report on these options will be provided at the September 2021 meeting.

Action: A report on future flood protection options for Ōpōtiki to be provided at the September 2021 meeting.

5 Gravel management

Paula Chapman spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack.

Discussion:

- Cross section surveys have recently been undertaken on the Otara River to determine the sustainable volume appropriate for extraction.

Action: Results of the Otara River cross section surveys to be circulated to Advisory Group members.

- There has been more demand for gravel in the last 12 months. Applications for gravel extraction are only approved if extractions support positive river and flood management.

- Where gravel banks are forming, council often shapes the beaches, but leave the gravel in the river, so that more material will transfer downstream during a flood. Members expressed concern this could create problems downstream.

6 Operations update

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack and Tony Dunlop delivered a presentation on scheme maintenance work.

Key points:

- River management work has an emphasis on 'making room for the river' and continued open communication with local hapū.
- Collaboration with Ōpōtiki District Council and Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai* through the recent Provincial Growth Fund project that focused on removing pest plants along the rivers. Funding was only for a short timeframe and not all pest plants were able to be removed. Regular control of regrowth is programmed within the scheme maintenance area.
- There are some large trees growing close to, and on, stopbanks within the Ōpōtiki urban area that have been identified as a possible risk to stopbank security (tree roots can weaken the structure of the stopbank, they can damage the stopbank if they topple, and trees close to stopbanks can increase the seepage risk). The trees will be assessed and some may need to be removed.

7 April 2017 Flood Repair Project update

Paula Chapman spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack.

Key points:

- All Waioeka-Otara Scheme April 2017 flood repair work is now complete. Total of 61 sites completed (including 12 sites assessed as self-healed or no longer needing repair).
- The cost of the Waioeka-Otara repairs was \$5.5m. With recoveries to date of \$2.2m.
- For the whole project, across all river schemes, 471 sites have been repaired from a total programme of 520 sites.
- An independent review of the Flood Repair Project is to be undertaken by Kyle Christensen.

8 Finance report

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

Key points:

- Operating revenue is \$31,000 higher than budget.
- Operating expenditure is \$15,000 lower than budget.
- Operating surplus of \$46,000.
- Capital revenue is \$53,000 lower than budget.
- Capital expenditure is \$70,000 higher than budget.
- Reserve funds of \$722,000 available.
- Internal loans closing balance is \$4.8 million.
- Asset valuation at 1 July 2020 is \$50 million, up \$1.6 million from 1 July 2019.

9 River scheme planning

Hemi Barsdell delivered a presentation.

Key points:

- There has been no change to the capital programme since it was previously reported at the September 2020 meeting.
- Reductions in interest rates on loans and reduced insurance costs have had a positive effect on the proposed Long Term Plan budget.
- Every five years a major flood event is provided for in the budget.
- The scheme's loan balance is forecast to initially increase as a result of capital expenditure in Long Term Plan years 1 (2021/2022) and 2 (2022/2023) then gradually reduced with no capital work planned in Long Term Plan years 3-8 (i.e. Year 3 = 2023/2024 and Year 8 = 2028/2029).
- Councillor Clark asked if historical expenditure is taken into account when future budgets are being considered.

Action: Hemi Barsdell to obtain further clarification from Councillor Clark, to assist in reporting at the September 2021 meeting.

Discussion:

- Currently scheme costs are covered 80% by targeted rates, with the remaining 20% from general funds. A significant proportion of general funding comes from investment income that is not guaranteed. There is risk if investment income is reduced, or removed. Scheme ratepayers should proactively advocate for the continuation of this funding model.

10 Coastal Catchments update on Alligator weed

Biosecurity staff Sam Stephens and Shane Hona spoke to the report in the agenda pack and delivered a presentation.

Key points:

- There has been a recent discovery of Alligator weed, a serious pest plant, at an Ōpōtiki property that connects to the Otara River. The original source of this infestation is being investigated.
- Alligator Weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) is known as one of the world's worst weeds. It grows on both water and land, and is very difficult to eradicate. Any fragments that break off can start new infestations. It can also survive in salt water for several months.
- Alligator weed is managed under the Bay of Plenty Regional Pest Management Plan. This plan classifies Alligator weed as a "progressive containment" species in the Ōpōtiki area.
- There are currently 22 Alligator weed sites in the Bay of Plenty region, with 13 in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The Rangitāiki River has the biggest area of infestation in the region, started from a terrestrial site below Matahina Dam. There are strong links between infestations and past kūmara growing operations.
- In the Ōpōtiki the weed has also been found in an old kūmara plot on Hikurangi Road and in a kiwifruit orchard.
- It is not poisonous to stock and grazing can lead to spread.
- Best control method is to reduce the infestation with 6-weekly sprays through summer and then mechanically remove the last fragments of the plant, including rhizomes and roots. There is a biological control, however it doesn't work well on every site and isn't suitable for every situation.

11 General Business

11.1 General business update

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

Key points:

- A review of how Regional Council insures flood protection and land drainage assets is in progress and Advisory Group members will be kept up-to-date on the review as it develops.
- Following a comprehensive review of the Floodway and Drainage Bylaws 2008, the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws were formally adopted by Council on 17 December 2020 (operative 1 February 2021).
- The Bylaws require members of the public to engage with Council in a number of situations and to apply for a bylaw authority for certain activities within bylaw applicable areas. For example, in the Waioeka-Otara Scheme a bylaw authority is required for structures and plantings within 12 metres of the stopbank and earthworks within 40 metres of the stopbank.

- Landowners can check if their property is within a bylaw applicable area, and apply for a bylaw authority, by submitting an online enquiry form <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/do-it-online/request-or-enquire/flood-protection-and-drainage-bylaw-authority>
- A solution focused approach is taken by Council in working with applicants. There is no application fee and applications are processed within 20 working days.

Hemi Barsdell closed the meeting with a karakia whakamutunga.

Meeting closed at 12:30pm