

Notes of the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Whakatāne, on Wednesday 15 September 2021, commencing at 10am

- Chair:** Councillor Toi Iti
- Advisory Group:** Bernie Clark, Boots McNaught, Brian Power, Fraser McGougan, Geoff Mercer, Scottie McLeod
- BOPRC Councillors:** Councillor Bill Clark
- BOPRC Staff:** Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Geoff Stone (Area Engineer), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments), Laura Albrey (Communications Partner), Paula Chapman (Contract Project Manager)
- Public:** Brian Akurangi (Whakatāne District Council Transformation Director), Paki Nikora (Rūātoki landowner)
- Apologies:** Andrew Iles (Whakatāne District Council), Jim Finlay (Whakatāne District Council)
-

1 **Welcome**

Councillor Iti welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Paki Nikora to say a karakia.

Kirsty Brown gave a Health and Safety briefing, including a reminder of the COVID-19 requirements for the meeting, and within the Regional Council building.

Geoff Mercer advised members he had notified Council staff that he had moved outside of the River Scheme area and was happy to continue as a member of the advisory group for the rest of the term if appropriate. Council staff had supported his continued involvement and he wanted to check if members were also supportive. Members agreed to this approach.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies received as recorded above.

3 **Notes of previous meeting held 17 March 2021**

Resolved

That the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirm the notes of the meeting held 17 March 2021 as a true and correct record.

**Clark/McLeod
CARRIED**

4 **Matters arising from previous meeting**

Stock exclusion from waterways (National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management) – Charles Harley updated the group on the new stock exclusion rules. Council have submitted to Ministry for the Environment (MfE) on the rules and have asked for a clear definition of a stock crossing. Still in the process of identifying stock crossings in the region, and over the next couple of years will be reviewing the Regional Natural Resources Plan to meet the requirements of the National Policy Statement.

Kopeopeo West Canal remediation – rather than a large scale remediation project like the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project the approach with the Kopeopeo West will be based around conversations with affected landowners, as the canal is on private land. The site is not high on the Ministry for the Environment's (MfE) list of contaminated site and is unlikely to get MfE funding. The level of contamination is relatively low and at a level permitted, under the standards, for a rural lifestyle properties.

Whakatāne Boat Harbour – Brian Armstrong (Whakatāne District Council) explained that the project team is still working through the contract between the partners (two iwi groups, central government (funding) and Whakatāne District Council) before starting the project. Chris Ingle added that there are plans to follow a fast-tracked regulatory process for resource consent. Chris also assured members that there is regular contact between Regional Council and the project manager to ensure that any scheme issues are identified and addressed.

5 **Scheme annual report 2020-2021**

Kirsty Brown spoke to the agenda report.

Key points:

- The 2020-2021 Whakatāne-Tauranga maintenance programme was delivered generally on budget and to programme.
- The 2020-2021 Whakatāne-Tauranga capital programme includes large multi-year projects which are largely on track with some programme slippage provided for through budget carry forward funding recommendations.
- **Operating revenue** was generally on budget, with lower than forecast interest rates (the call rate sat at 1.5% for the year) being counteracted by higher revenue generated from grazing licenses.
- **Operating expenditure** was \$157,000 higher than budget, mainly due to additional flood damage, assets defects work, and the effects of increased asset valuation.
- This resulted in an **operating deficit** of \$170,000.
- **Capital revenue** was \$842,000 lower than the budget of \$1,400,000.
- **Capital expenditure** was \$2,057,000 lower than budget of \$3,812,000, with the Flood Repair Project significantly under budget, and carry forwards into 2021-2022 proposed for a number of the multi-year projects.
- **Total reserve fund** opening balance of \$466,000 and closing balance of \$1,099,000 (increased by \$632,000).

- **Loan** opening balance of \$7,370,000 and closing balance of \$8,141,000 (increased by \$771,000).
- **Asset valuation** as at 1 July 2020 of \$82,517,000, with the 2021 annual valuation currently underway.

Discussion:

- Members asked for an explanation for the overspend on the Te Rahu Pump Station project (actual cost was almost double the budgeted amount). Staff responded that once work started additional issues were found and these needed to be addressed as part of the repair programme.

6 Capital work programme

Mark Townsend spoke to the agenda report and delivered a presentation on the 2021-2022 capital projects. As an introduction he reminded members of the River Scheme Sustainability Project's vision of having a 100-year sustainable river management strategy.

Key points:

- The Whakatāne River Capacity Review is running a year behind schedule due to issues with calibrating the model against recorded events. Once the model is calibrated the various flood event scenarios can be modelled and any required upgrades to flood defence systems determined.
- Several locations in the upper catchment are being investigated for detention dams. The dams work by slowing the flow of water into the river system and potentially reducing the level of the peak flow.
- Investigative and option assessment work has been undertaken for the Whakatāne Future Proof project, looking at stopbank raising from McAlister Street to the Muriwai Drive boat ramp and seepage remediation along Kakaharoa Drive and Quay Street. The estimated cost to upgrade the flood defences over the 1.8 km section, to provide protection for climate change estimates to 2040, is \$20 million. Currently have \$4 million budgeted over the next three financial years, with \$3 million of additional funding coming from central government. Feedback from central government is that they need to see currently funded projects delivered before providing any further funding. All options are currently on the table including raising stopbanks/floodwalls, upper catchment options, reducing the level of service and retreat. An engagement plan is being developed.
- Currently investigating options for the upgrade of the Eastern Drain stopbanks. The stopbank is very close to the drain which runs next to the road, and is steep on the drain side. Investigating a number of options including moving the stopbank, lifting the road, moving the drain. None of the options can be funded within the amount currently budgeted for the project.

7 Maintenance work programme

The report provided in the agenda pack was taken as read, with no questions raised by members. Geoff Stone delivered a presentation highlighting a range of operational and maintenance work being undertaken within the scheme.

Key points:

- Refurbishment of cracked and delaminated concrete, and exposed steel work, at the Kope-Orini floodgate is now complete. The work has extended the structures life by 20 years, and at about a tenth of the estimated replacement cost.
- The team is trialling polyethylene flood gates as an alternative to timber floodgates with the aim to achieve longer floodgate life expectancy. The polyethylene flood gates are made in-house by members of the Operations team.
- Te Rahu Pump Station has had a face lift following the completion of the flood damage repairs. This included additional emergency pumping ports, improved drainage and resurfacing around the station.

8 April 2017 Flood Repair Project

Paula Chapman spoke to the agenda report.

Key points:

- The programme of erosion repair work is almost complete with 20 repair sites remaining across the Whakatāne-Tauranga (15 sites) and Rangitāiki-Tarawera (5 sites) schemes.
- Of the 108 sites originally identified for the Whakatāne-Tauranga scheme, work has been completed on 74 sites. A further 19 lower priority sites have been reassessed as no longer requiring work, and 15 sites remain to be reconsidered for completion by 30 June 2022.
- The 15 remaining sites are all on the Whakatāne River above Tāneatua, where there has been ongoing negotiations between Council and the iwi authority for approval to access the areas and undertake the work. Landowners are concerned about the delays undertaking the repairs and that another event could exacerbate existing areas of erosion.
- The claiming of eligible costs from central government has been ongoing as the programme has progressed, with Claim 14 recently submitted. The total amount received from central government to date is over \$10 million. There will be one final claim made in July 2022.
- Three Infrastructure Insurance progress payments have been approved totalling \$3,600,000. In the next couple of months the claim will be finalised and final payment received.
- Material Damage and Business Interruption Insurance claim for all the pump damage has been settled and a total of \$1,501,719 received.

9 Members forum

- Fraser McGougan suggested removing areas of aggradation in the lower catchment to give the river more capacity during high flows. Staff responded that all options are on the table, however the removal of sediment from the lower catchment would only be a small fix and the sources of the sediment would also need management.
- Brian Power asked what affect COVID-19 was having on the maintenance programme. Staff responded that flood protection and land drainage are considered essential services and the work programme has mostly continued as normal, with some less urgent work put on hold. Some supply chain issues has impacted some of the larger capital projects.

10 Public forum

Paki Nikora raised concerns about flood repair work on the Whakatāne River, above Tāneatua, not being undertaken because of political interference by an iwi authority. Mr Nikora asked why an iwi authority is being recognised when the flood damage is on private land, the landowners are scheme ratepayers, and the sites are identified as part of the agreed repair programme.

Councillor Iti responded that this is a complex and changing situation. Iwi and hapū are stakeholders in river management and under legislation Council must grow partnerships with iwi/hapū and acknowledge their relationship with the awa and whenua.

Councillor Iti thanked Mr Nikora for his kōrero and kaupapa and explained that the way forward is to continue listening to, and working with, all parties to agree on access to enable agreed management of the awa and repair of the flood damage sites.

11 General business

11.1 General business report

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

Key points:

Infrastructure Insurance Review

- Since the agenda report was written a draft review report has been received from Aon Ltd and will be discussed by Council at the next Risk and Assurance Committee meeting.
- Indications from the review is that the current insurance system is the best fit.
- Members commented that that scheme can't afford not to have insurance and asked how the insurance recoveries process has been for the April 2017 Flood Repair project. Paula Chapman responded that Council got to where they needed to be with the insurers, however the process was a challenge.

Safeguarding Our Stopbanks Project

- An urban focused project with the purpose of maintaining community safety by resolving situations where encroaching land use may have affected the structural integrity and performance of our flood protection assets. The project addresses situations where landowners have developed land beyond their legal property boundary in areas where there are stopbanks and floodwalls. Work is scheduled to commence along Henderson Street and Riverside Drive this financial year.
- Council will work with landowners to address the encroachment issues identified during the condition and performance assessment work carried over the last few years.
- The cost of the work will be shared between landowners and Council (including District and City Councils where their land is involved).
- Members asked how 'hardnosed' Council was going to be with the encroachments. In response members were advised that the project is a community safety project and where there is risk to the structural integrity of a flood defence the encroachments would be removed and the stopbank remediated.

11.2 River scheme website demonstration

Laura Albrey demonstrated the new look river scheme page on the Regional Council website and asked for members' feedback either after the meeting or via email/phone.

<https://www.boprc.govt.nz/environment/climate-change/flood-protection/rivers-and-drainage>

The new page pulls scheme information into one place with the aim of building knowledge about scheme management through updates on work within the scheme (news stories, videos, photos). Site will be a useful tool for advisory group members to refer members of the public to for information on capital projects in the area. A registration process is being investigated so people can receive notifications when a page is updated.

11.3 Gravel management

Paula Chapman spoke to the agenda report, advising there has been no gravel extractions from the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme since the Advisory Group meeting in March.

The updated Natural Environmental Regional Monitoring Network (NERMN) Report for River and Stream Channel Monitoring (2011-2018) is to be published this month and will be available on the Council's website <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/your-council/documents-and-publications/publications> (look under environmental publications 2021).

11.4 Environmental data portal demonstration

Mark Townsend demonstrated the new Environment Data Portal on the Regional Council website <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/environment/maps-and-data/environmental-data>

Paki Nikora closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting ended: 12:08pm