

Notes of the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Ōpōtiki Golf Club, Opotiki, on Wednesday 22 September 2021, commencing at 10:30am

Chair: Councillor Toi Iti

Advisory Group: Barry Hennessey, Dave Wilson, Jessica Wiseman, Kim Douglas, Robbie Petersen, Nathan Hughes (Ōpōtiki District Council – standing in for Stace Lewer), Councillor David Moore (Ōpōtiki District Council)

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), Tony Dunlop (Area Engineer), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Laura Albrey (Communications Partner), Paula Chapman (Contract Project Manager)

Public: Maude Maxwell (Otara River Mana Whenua Collective)

Apologies: Stace Lewer (Ōpōtiki District Council technical representative), Councillor Steve Nelson (Ōpōtiki District Council)

1 **Welcome**

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

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

Nathan Hughes (Ōpōtiki District Council) introduced himself and advised he was attending on behalf of Stace Lewer who was unable to attend today.

Councillor Iti introduced Kim Douglas who had recently been appointed to the group to represent Ngāti Ira.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies received as recorded above.

3 **Notes of previous meeting held 24 March 2021**

Resolved

That the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirm the notes of the meeting held 24 March 2021 as a true and correct record.

**Wilson/Wiseman
CARRIED**

4 **Matters arising from previous meeting**

The following actions from the previous meeting are to be addressed during the agenda.

- Future flood protection options will be covered in Item 6
- Cross-section survey information will be presented in Item 6
- Memo on historic scheme expenditure and loan balances for discussion (p9 of Agenda Pack)

There were no other matters arising.

5 **Scheme annual report 2021-2021**

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

Key points:

- The 2020-2021 Waioeka-Otara maintenance programme was delivered generally on budget and to programme.
- Several 2020-2021 Waioeka-Otara capital projects were placed on hold to enable time for negotiations with iwi and landowners. Any project slippage has been provided for through budget carry forward funding recommendations.
- All 61 Waioeka-Otara sites identified during the April 2017 flood event are now complete, or have been re-inspected and assessed as no longer required.
- **Operating revenue** was \$11,000 higher than budget of \$1,923,000
- **Operating expenditure** was \$262,000 lower than budget of \$1,610,000
- This resulted in an **operating surplus** of \$273,000
- **Capital revenue** was \$149,000 lower than budget of \$200,000 - due to some capital works with insurance recoveries not progressing
- **Capital expenditure** was \$236,000 lower than budget of \$477,000 - with one project on hold and proposed carry forwards into 2021-2022
- Total **reserve fund** opening balance of \$455,000 and closing balance of \$947,000 (increased by \$491,000)
- **Loan** opening balance of \$5,063,000 and closing balance of \$4,974,000 (decreased by \$89,000)
- **Asset valuation** as at 1 July 2020 of \$50.4 million - with the 2021 annual valuation currently underway.

6 **Capital work programme**

Mark Townsend spoke to the agenda pack report and delivered a presentation focusing on climate change resilience for the Waioeka-Otara scheme.

Key points:

- The climate change resilience programme has four phases prior to any physical works starting – capacity review, geotechnical investigations, looking at options, engaging with stakeholders and communities.

- A capacity review is an investigative process that informs whether any flood protection assets need to be upgraded to provide the agreed level of service. Final modelling is currently underway and the capacity review will be completed in the next few months.
- Geotechnical investigations are also being undertaken, with testing on the Otara River completed in July 2021 and testing on the Waioeka River scheduled for October 2021. The geotechnical investigations focus on gaining a better understanding of the ground beneath stopbanks/floodwalls, and investigating any known seepage issues.
- Proposed timeline for the project is as follows:
 - November 2021 – optioneering and geotechnical findings workshops, and engagement and communication planning.
 - December 2021 to February 2022 – option modelling and assessment.
 - March to April 2022 – early engagement with key stakeholders and preliminary design.
 - May to September 2022 – wider engagement with stakeholders and communities, detailed design and consent drafting.
 - October 2022 to January 2023 – consenting and construction procurement.
 - February to June 2023 – construction.

Discussion:

- Question raised as to whether Regional Council have confidence that the Ōpōtiki Harbour development would not increase river levels. Staff responded that this is a condition of the consent and at this stage of the development Council is happy with the project.
- The importance of affordability of any proposed options for the Ōpōtiki flood defences was discussed.
- The 'Making Room for the River' philosophy is being considered in the optioneering process, including factoring in how the rivers work. Mātauranga Māori and local knowledge will also be very important.

Mark Townsend also presented river survey cross-section data for the Otara and Waioeka rivers. Cross-section surveys are undertaken every three years and show how the river bed changes over time. The data shown covered the period from 1966 to 2021.

Key points:

- The cross section surveys form part of the capacity review process.
- Although the upper reaches of the Otara River are relatively stable there is aggradation of gravel and silt in the lower reaches.
- The Waioeka River is relatively stable with expected fluctuations, but overall not any significant change to bed levels.

7 Maintenance work programme

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the agenda pack report, and Tony Dunlop delivered a presentation highlighting a range of operational and maintenance work being undertaken within the scheme.

Key points:

- Numerous smaller flood events have resulted in a number of erosion sites that need repairs, and the annual flood damage budget is now already fully committed.
- A significant number of defects have been identified during a condition assessment of the stopbank network. The defects have been prioritised and staff will progressively undertake the high priority repairs.
- Staff continue to implement the 'Making Room for the River' philosophy where appropriate. This can be challenging when both rivers are quite constricted. The philosophy does mean that not all bank erosion will be repaired and the reality is that some landowners will lose land to the rivers.
- Habitat enhancement continues to be included in the maintenance programme with native species being planted in conjunction with rock erosion protection, the creation of fish habitat, and enhancement of banded dotterel (tuturiwhatu) habitat during river beach maintenance.

8 Members forum

Kim Douglas introduced herself and expressed her pleasure in being a part of the group, and the opportunity it provides to kōrero about the awa and look after the awa.

Members sought clarification about a comment earlier in the meeting that the stopbanks are not meeting the current level of service. Mark confirmed that this is the case.

There was general discussion around the need to increase community knowledge about flood protection, the level of protection it provides, what happens when an event is larger than the flood protection assets design level, and risks associated with this. The challenge is changing 'engineering speak' into general language and the Communications Team is working on this.

Members provided feedback that there needs to be greater education on the river flow and rainfall data available on the website. Mark Townsend commented that a lot of work is happening in this area and he will demonstrate the new look data portal later in the meeting. Staff are also working with neighbouring council's (Gisborne and Hawke's Bay) to access and share their data.

Nathan Hughes spoke about a couple of Ōpōtiki District Council projects. The Tarawa Creek stormwater pump station is being replaced to increase ability to manage urban stormwater issues. Also looking at the interface between rural and urban catchments with stormwater modelling about to be commissioned.

9 General business

9.1 General business report

Kirsty Brown spoke to the agenda pack report.

Key points:

- A review of river scheme infrastructure insurance is currently underway to look at ways of reducing annual premium costs. Stage 1 of the review is complete and involved assessment of the data. Stage 2 is in progress and involves risk identification, analysis and evaluation. 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.
- A project called *Safeguarding our Stopbanks* started on 1 July 2021 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 has an urban focus and looks at situations where landowners have developed land beyond their legal property boundary in areas where there are stopbanks and floodwalls.
- It has been four years since the current advisory group format was implemented and a member survey will be circulated soon seeking feedback on how members feel the group is going and whether any improvements can be made.

9.2 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.

9.3 Gravel management update

Paula Chapman took the agenda report as read and there were no questions.

9.4 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>

Feedback was provided that this sort of information may better be suited to an app than a webpage.

10 Public forum

No members of the public attending the meeting chose to raise any issues with the Advisory Group.

Meeting closed at: 12:25pm