

# Notes of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Whakatāne office, on Thursday 14 October 2021, commencing at 10am

---

**Chair:** Councillor Toi Iti

**Advisory Group:** Alan Law, Heyden Johnston (via VC), Leeann Waaka, Linda Virbickas, Peter Askey, Shona Pedersen, Michael Van Tilburg (Whakatāne District Council),

**BOPRC Councillors:** Councillor Bill Clark, Chairman Doug Leeder

**BOPRC Staff:** Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Andrew Pawson (Area Engineer), Dan Batten (Works Coordinator Rangitāiki), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments), Paula Chapman (Contract Project Manager), Charlotte Jones (Communications Advisor), Stacey Faire (Senior Planner Coastal – via VC), Mark le Comte (Principal Advisor Finance – via VC), Stacey Brooks (Asset Management Information Officer), Renee Prescott (Asset Management Information Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillor Alison Silcock (Whakatāne District Council).  
For early departure - Leeann Waaka, Councillor Clark and Chairman Leeder.

---

## 1 **Welcome**

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

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

Kirsty introduced Stacey Brooks and Renee Prescott, new members of the Rivers and Drainage Assets Team attending the meeting.

## 2 **Apologies**

Apologies were received as recorded above.

### 3 Notes of previous meeting held 30 March 2021

Resolved

That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirm the notes of the meeting held 30 March 2021 as a true and correct record.

Waaka/Clark  
CARRIED

### 4 Matters arising from previous meeting

Funding of April 2017 Flood Repair Project - in response to a resolution at the 30 March meeting, the finance team circulated a memo to members explaining why a 20-year loan term was accepted for funding the April 2017 flood repairs. The memo also provided information on the scheme's capability to pay off debt earlier.

Mark Le Comte joined the meeting via VC to provide an overview of the response and answer any questions.

**Key points:**

- Long Term Plan submissions on the flood repair funding options were relatively evenly split between the proposed two options. Council decision was to proceed with Option 1 – carry out identified repairs as soon as possible with higher rates increase years one and two and then smaller increases from year three.
- The April 2017 flood damage repairs have been funded in three ways: flood damage reserves, insurances and government funding, and loans. Loan funding spreads the cost to the ratepayers over time (intergenerational equity).
- Council would normally use a 20-year loan term for rivers and drainage infrastructure, and a 10-year loan term for flood repair works. However, due to the scale of the April 2017 flood damage, Council directed staff to use a 20-year loan term for the repairs.
- To consider paying the loans off faster, Council would need to consult with ratepayers. Economic viability, affordability and equity issues would need to be considered by council before deciding to reduce the loan term.

Discussion followed on intergenerational equity, affordability, the opportunity to reduce debt while interest rates are low, the possibility of a 15-year loan term option, and the need to ask ratepayers what they want. The group made the following resolution:

***Resolution: The Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group recommends that through the next Annual Plan consultation process Council reassesses the 20-year loan term for April 2017 flood repair works.***

Law/Virbickas  
CARRIED

Rangitāiki River Erosion report (Cardno) – this will be covered in Item 6: Capital work programme.

New whitebait regulations - prior to the meeting Hayden Johnston had requested a discussion on Regional Council's liaison with other river stakeholders (e.g. Department of Conservation) particularly in relation to whitebait structures and any potential conflict with the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws. Stacey Faire joined the meeting via VC to provide background and answer any questions.

**Key points:**

- Regional Council made a submission on the new whitebait regulations during the consultation process, which included on-line workshops. The regulations are nationwide so would be difficult to match the regulations to every region's planning documents.
- Stacey presented a PowerPoint slide showing where the Regional Coastal Environment Plan and the Regional Natural Resources Plan apply on the Rangitāiki River. Under the Coastal Plan any whitebait structures would require a resource consent. Under the Natural Resources Plan whitebait structures would be a permitted activity if specific conditions are met.
- There are no known whitebait structures on the Rangitāiki River, and whitebait stands are not a traditional way of whitebaiting in the river.
- Jo Heath advised that the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws do not control structures in the river, however if a structure is connected to the riverbank in the vicinity of a stopbank it would need a bylaw authority. The application would be assessed for impacts on the riverbank, berm area and stopbank.

**Discussion/questions:**

- Members questioned if there is a monitoring programme along the river for unapproved structures. Staff are up and down the river all the time and if anything is noticed it is investigated. Council's compliance staff also monitor consented structures to ensure consent conditions are being met.
- If whitebait stands started popping up along the river it could get out of hand very quickly. Staff assured members that if whitebait stands were built Council's consenting and bylaws processes would manage any issues.

Three Waters Reform

Prior to the meeting Alan Law had asked for information on the three waters reform and an email response was provided to members. Alan asked for confirmation that flood protection and land drainage assets were not part of government's three waters reform at this time. Item was added to General Business.

5 **Scheme annual report 2020-2021**

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

**Key points:**

- The 2020-2021 Rangitāiki-Tarawera maintenance programme was delivered generally on budget and to programme.
- The 2020-2021 Rangitāiki-Tarawera capital programme includes large multi-year projects which are mostly on track with some programme slippage provided for through budget carry forward funding recommendations.

- **Operating revenue** was \$58,000 lower than budget, mainly due to lower than forecast interest rates (the call rate sat at 1.5% for the year) and reduced revenue from grazing licenses.
- **Operating expenditure** was \$409,000 higher than budget, mainly due to additional annual flood damage and asset defects work, and the effects of increased asset valuation.
- This resulted in an **operating deficit** of \$283,000
- **Capital revenue** was \$908,000 higher than budget, due to the inclusion of Flood Repair Project insurance recoveries and CIP funding for the Rangitāiki Floodway and Floodwalls projects.
- **Capital expenditure** was \$9,255 million lower than budget figure of \$21,858 million with the Flood Repair Project under budget and significant carry forwards into 2021-2022 proposed for a number of other projects.
- **Total reserve fund** opening balance of \$2,726,000 and closing balance of \$5,902,000 (increased by \$3,274,000).
- **Loan** opening balance of \$39,733,000 and closing balance of \$39,424,000 (decreased by \$310,000).
- **Asset valuation** as at 1 July 2020 of \$115.3 million with the 2021 annual valuation currently underway.

#### Discussion:

Project over expenditure was discussed, what happens when there is over expenditure on a project? Staff responded that from an operational perspective overspends are often a result of doing additional work e.g. if there is a machine onsite it is cost-effective in the long-term to undertake other work in the area. Another area that is resulting in over expenditure is the identification and repair of critical asset defects that are not in the work programme and often need to be acted on immediately.

*Attendance: Councillor Clark left the meeting at 10:45 am.*

## 6 Capital work programme

Mark Townsend spoke to the agenda pack report and delivered a presentation focusing on the scheme's capital works and the Rangitāiki River Erosion Report.

### 6.1 Capital projects

#### Key points:

- Work on the Rangitāiki Floodway progressing with Stage 7 nearing completion and Stage 6c 50% complete.
- Spillway consenting underway with construction scheduled for February/March 2023
- Stoplogs are needed at McCracken Road and McLean Road. Raising the road was considered, however the preferred option is swing gates as they don't require any major construction, are easy to operate, and don't require any machinery to put them in place during an event.
- The East Bank Road floodwall upgrade is almost complete.
- Staff are working with landowners affected by the College Road floodwall upgrade on preferred options. Some materials will be purchased this financial year with construction scheduled for 2022-2023.

- The Tarawera River left bank stopbank downstream of SH2/Matatā Road requires upgrading to achieve the 1% AEP level of service. Work this year includes consultation with landowners and geotechnical investigations.
- Planning for upgrade work on the Rangitāiki River lower left bank stopbank is underway again after this project was deferred in 2019-2020. Currently finalising design, including overlays in some areas to manage seepage issues.

## 6.2 Rangitāiki River Erosion Report (Cardno)

Mark Townsend explained that the Rangitāiki River Erosion Report prepared by Cardno has been reviewed by AECOM and various meetings have been held with Trustpower and Beca (Trustpower's consultants). The report's recommendation to the Consenting Authority was:

*The CARDNO report does not provide any new or substantive information that was not already covered during the consenting process. Both parties identified erosion as a result of the modified operation regime, an agreement was reached during the consent process, and at this stage the CARDNO report does not quantify the amount of erosion along the Lower Rangitāiki River that supports a change to the existing erosion repair contributions from Trustpower to the Rangitāiki Tarawera Rivers Scheme.*

### Discussion:

- Members are pleased that this process has finally reached conclusion, even though not necessarily what was expected.
- The project cost just under \$100,000 and as it was considered a benefit for the whole region was funded from general rates, so no cost to the river scheme.
- How Trustpower's annual contribution to the scheme was calculated was discussed. Trustpower are required to contribute to relevant costs of operating, maintaining and repairing the Rangitāiki-Tarawera River Scheme based on a percentage for each of the three river reaches below the dam.
  - Reach 3 (Matahina Dam to Te Teko) – 25%
  - Reach 2 (Te Teko to Edgecumbe) – 15%
  - Reach 1 (Edgecumbe to river mouth) – 5%
- Staff estimated last year's annual contribution at around \$250,000, however would need to confirm this and get back to the group.
- Learnings from this process are being transferred within the region, and around New Zealand through the River Managers Group.

**Attendance:** Councillor Clark re-joined the meeting at 11:22 am.

## 7 Maintenance work programme

Bruce Crabbe introduced Dan Batten. Dan has worked for the Rivers and Drainage Operations Team in the Kaituna scheme for a number of years and has now taken up a new role as Works Coordinator for the Rangitāiki.

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

**Key points:**

- Council has been collaborating with Ngāti Manawa on how we manage the river systems, and getting their input into planned work within their rohe.
- In response to a question about the quarried rock procurement plan and rock stockpiles, Bruce explained that the sites were selected by where there was space available in areas where rock was needed for erosion repair work. The stockpile volume was determined by an estimation of the volume staff were confident would be used within a year. The stockpiled amount would be maintained – when rock is taken out for a job the supplier would replenish the stockpile.
- An area of gorse and blackberry on the right bank of the Rangitāiki River, below Te Teko, has been transformed with a grant from Trustpower for native plants. Work was undertaken in conjunction with landowners and Tāne Mahuta Forestry who are contracted to maintain the area for the next five years.
- A substantial number of stopbank defects have been identified through the Edgecumbe urban area as part of the asset condition and performance assessment process. These involve removal of large trees that are impacting on the structural integrity of the stopbank. This is going to be an ongoing project over a number of years. First site being the large trees at the Edgecumbe Domain.
- A floodgate trial is in progress on the Kopeopeo West Canal. One floodgate has been replaced with a gate that floats more easily, opens earlier and stays open at the top – all aspects that allow fish passage. The neighbouring floodgate will be replaced with a plastic gate (polyethylene). The performance of the two will be compared. Members commented that Council should be doing media releases on projects like this, profiling the good news stories to raise awareness of the work that is occurring.

## 8 **Item brought forward from General Business – Three Waters Reform**

The three waters reform was discussed in response to Alan Law asking for confirmation that flood protection and land drainage assets were not part of the reform.

**Key points:**

- Staff confirmed that flood protection and land drainage assets were not part of the reform.
- The government's three waters reform focuses on reticulated systems managed by district and city councils – drinking water, waste water, and stormwater. An agency has been created to set standards for these systems.
- Michael van Tilburg provided a Whakatāne District Council (WDC) perspective, advising that councils had originally been given the option to opt in or out of the scheme. WDC made a submission on the proposals, however felt that government had not provided adequate opportunities for consultation.

**Attendance:** *Chairman Leeder left the meeting at 12:03 pm.*

## 9 Flood Repair Project update

Paula Chapman spoke to the agenda report.

### Key points:

- The Flood Repair Project 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 total 224 sites originally identified for the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme, work has been completed on 144 sites, 75 lower priority sites were reassessed as work no longer required, and five sites are outstanding to be completed by 30 June 2022.
- At commencement of the project the estimated total programme cost for the Rangitāiki-Tarawera scheme was \$26 million. Have spent approximately \$18 million to date and projected to spend \$18.6 million by the end of the project. As a result, the actual cost of the loan for the scheme will be less than first estimated.
- 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, for the full programme, 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 final claim will be submitted.
- Material Damage and Business Interruption insurance claim for all the pump damage has been settled and a total of \$1,501,719 received.

## 10 Co-governance group update

Councillors raised the need for better communications between the advisory group and the Rangitāiki River Forum. Also there are new treaty settlements in progress that will also create statutory co-governance forums associated with river management.

Council have been approached by certain iwi for representation on other river scheme advisory groups. A review of the advisory group terms of reference is proposed to help facilitate this representation.

## 11 Members forum

An update on implementation of the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws 2020 was requested, particularly in relation to ploughing in the lower Rangitāiki. Kirsty Brown responded that some aspects of the 2020 Bylaws require the development of additional rules and guidelines, and ploughing is one of these. Council has been trying to recruit an additional staff resource to focus on bylaw implementation, unsuccessfully to date.

## 12 General business

### 12.1 General business report

Kirsty Brown reported back on a question earlier in the meeting regarding Trustpower's contribution to scheme management costs. She advised that in 2020-2021 the annual contribution was \$254,000.

Kirsty took the general business report provided in the agenda pack as read. The report provided updates on the infrastructure insurance review, Safeguarding Our Stopbank Project, and a membership feedback survey. No discussion followed.

### 12.2 Gravel management update

Paula Chapman took the agenda report as read and highlighted the following key points:

- The Kopuriki Stream extraction consent expires this month. Working through process with Whakatāne District Council to enable on-site processing of material.
- Staff met with Ngāti Manawa representatives over the last few months on a wide range of topics, not solely gravel management. Staff are keen to understand Ngāti Manawa's aspirations for their rohe.

### 12.3 River scheme website demonstration

Charlotte Jones 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 together scheme information into one place with the aim of building knowledge about scheme management through regular 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 developed so people can receive notifications when a page is updated.

### 12.4 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>

Members provided feedback that the river level information was hard to find.

**Meeting closed at 12:32pm**