

Notes of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Whakatāne office, on 6 May 2022, commencing at 10am

Chair:	Councillor Iti
Advisory Group:	Alan Law, Heyden Johnston, Leeann Waaka, Peter Askey, Shona Pedersen, Councillor Alison Silcock (Whakatāne District Council)
BOPRC Councillors:	Councillor Bill Clark
BOPRC Staff:	Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Karen Scheffer (Acting Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments), Paula Chapman (Project Manager), Kelly Sarjeant (Executive Assistant), Andy Dixon (Tax and Treasury Specialist)
Apologies:	Linda Virbickas, Jane Waldon (Independent Secretariat), Michael Van Tilburg (Whakatāne District Council), Andrew Pawson (Area Engineer)

1 Welcome

Councillor Iti opened the meeting.

Additional items for general business:

- Rainfall data display (Mark Townsend).
- Council's capital investments (Alan Law).

2 Apologies

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3 Notes of previous meeting held 14 October 2021

Resolved

That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirm the notes of the meeting held 14 October 2021 as a true and correct record.

**Clark/Askey
CARRIED**

4 Matters arising from previous meeting

- Leeann Waaka noted incorrect spelling of surname in previous meeting notes.

- Alison Silcock queried whether a media release on the Kopeopeo West Canal floodgate trial had been actioned. Bruce Crabbe responded information had been shared via social media but not a media release.
- Councillor Clark sought clarification on the Trustpower annual contribution amount as per item 12.1 of the General Business Report. Kirsty Brown responded and clarified this point.
- Councillor Iiti sought clarification on the flood repair work and the 20-year loan term from the minutes of previous meeting. Kirsty Brown responded, noting that loan funding term was presented to Council under the Annual Plan process, who decided to investigate further at next LTP.
- Kirsty Brown provided an overview of the regulations for whitebait stands, noting that:
 - Regulations of whitebait stands falls under the Resource Management Act 1991 as a structure in rivers/estuaries which is the responsibility of the Consents and Compliance teams at BOPRC. Whitebait stands are a permitted activity but require resource consent if in the coastal marine area.
 - The Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws 2020 do not control structures in the river but if a structure is connected to a stopbank it would need bylaw authority.
 - Individuals should speak to the Department of Conservation for whitebait fishing regulations.

ACTION: To circulate regulation information relating to whitebait stands to group members.

Discussion followed around whitebait stands, bylaws with structures and BOPRC assets.

ACTION: Staff to approach the Consents team regarding whitebait stand mentioned by Heyden Johnston (completed).

5 Capital work programme

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

Key points:

- The last 500 m of Rangitāiki Floodway Stage 6C is on track to be completed by April 2022 noting that Covid-19 has impacted contractor's staff as well as material supply.
- Visual concepts of the floodway stoplogs/swing gates shown and explained.
- Rangitāiki Spillway design and drafting of the resource consent application is underway. Construction now expected to start late 2022.
- The preferred option for the College Road floodwall has been selected and consultation with landowners has been completed. Drafting of the resource consent application is underway.
- Investigations of the Tarawera River left bank stopbank, downstream of Braemar Road, reveal an upgrade is needed to achieve 1% AEP level of service. Construction phase is scheduled for February to May 2023.

- Physical works for the Lower Rangitāiki Stopbank upgrade (left bank) have been deferred to 2022-23 pending approval from Council for additional funding. Awaiting final sign off from affected party. Construction is programmed for September 2022 to March 2023.

Discussion/questions:

- Discussion followed around the Spillway gates including health and safety around guard railings, variations on riverbed levels and capacity, and full control and back-ups being in place for the gates (default to close, generators).
- Peter Askey queried whether the Spillway was future proofed e.g. varying capacity. Mark Townsend responded that there would be long term capping of the amount of flow down the spillway and that arrangements are in place with Matahina Dam for flood storage. He advised that discussions are taking place around using Aniwhenua Dam for flood storage as well.
- Councillor Clark queried how much attention and budget has been allowed on adequate fish passage, habitat etc. on the Rangitāiki. Bruce Crabbe responded that they have been very mindful and look for any opportunity available for enhancing habitats. He noted that they can be restrained in narrow riverbank areas however berm areas are positioned at the right level for inanga spawning and in the dryer months tide gates remain open for as long as possible to maximise indigenous habitat. Bruce referred to the Kopeopeo system which is very successful with the tidal flow and many native fish.
- Councillor Clark queried if independent freshwater marine biologists have been invited to comment on works. Bruce advised that they work closely with Council's freshwater scientists in this space.
- Councillor Clark complimented the College Road floodwall upgrade, feedback has been positive. Leeann Waaka commented that the community felt like they were part of the process and were kept well informed. Mark Townsend acknowledged the great job that Peter Hay did leading this project.
- Alan Law raised concerns (in relation to the Lower Rangitāiki Stopbank Upgrade) that he met with a rate payer/owner of a residential section complaining they had no notification for eight months and wanted an update.

ACTION: Mark Townsend to follow up.

6 Maintenance work programme

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the agenda pack report highlighting a range of operational and maintenance works being undertaken within the scheme.

Key points:

- Annual flood damage repairs to three sites on the Rangitāiki River and two on the Tarawera River, noting that the annual flood repair allowance of \$200,000 is already over-subscribed for this financial year.
- Rock replenishment in the lower reach on Reid's Central Canal have been completed.
- Ongoing work repairing high priority defects identified through asset condition assessments, including tree removal and stopbank restoration at Edgecumbe rugby field.
- Collaboration with iwi and hapū on works planned in their rohe.

- Working with the Edgecumbe community on tree removal works which pose a risk to stopbank integrity.
- Funding received from Trustpower's Environmental Fund for \$15,000 and \$8,000 respectively which goes towards buying native plants, establish native habitat, etc.
- Rangitāiki Drainage Scheme Advisory Group meeting is to be held on 7 June 2022.
- Tree removal work photos shown, and the work involved discussed.
- A stockpile of 5,000 tonnes has been established at Hydro Road which supports community resilience by having material on hand in flood events and following repairs.

Discussion/questions:

- Discussion followed on the Trustpower Funding which is provided for community based environmental/cultural projects on the river/awa.
- Councillor Clark queried the rock pile funding at the Hydro Road site. Bruce Crabbe responded that it will be in place by the end of the financial year.
- Allison Silcock queried rock pile procurement from the quarries. Bruce confirmed that procurement processes are in place allowing procurement to occur directly from the quarries. He noted that the stockpile is available for the Whakatāne District Council to use in emergencies, provided it is replenished as soon as practicable.
- Tree removal was discussed. Bruce advised that trees planted close to stopbanks in high risk areas have been identified and investigated, noting healthy trees may not necessarily be removed.
- Councillor Clark queried whether the stockpile of 5,000 tonnes is adequate. Bruce responded that it would not be adequate for everything but it is a great start. Bruce noted that rock supply generally is much better than in previous years.
- Heyden Johnston queried whether Council has considered purchasing a quarry for own supply. Paula Chapman advised this was considered during developing the Rock Supply Strategy and that Council remains open the idea should the opportunity arise.

Bruce Crabbe left the meeting at 11.15am.

7 Changes to the way BOPRC collects its rates

Kirsty Brown and Andy Dixon spoke to the agenda report and provided a presentation.

Key points:

- From August 2022 the BOPRC will start collecting its own rates. Primary reason for the change is to become more transparent and accountable for the work that BOPRC does.
- It has been estimated that there will be a saving of \$6 million over 10 years by moving to self-collection.
- This will also enable Council to control remission and postponements available to ratepayers, penalty schedules and payments plans/direct debits to spread payments.
- Four other regional councils collect their own rates. Council is following Waikato Regional Council's format.

Discussion/questions:

- Discussion was had on payment plans and how these will work. Councillor Iiti commented there will be good communication that payment plans are available and added that this system will be a good way to show dividends from Quayside.
- Alan Law complimented Council on this initiative, noting that he can see the major cost savings.

8 Finance report

Kirsty Brown spoke to the Finance Report and provided an overview of the scheme's revenue and expenditure for the six months ending 31 December 2021.

Key points:

- **Total revenue** was \$11,000 lower than budget.
- **Operating expenditure** was \$99,000 lower than budget.
- Total **capital revenue** was \$577,000 lower than budget due to delay in the central government funding projects
- **Capital expenditure** was \$2 million higher.
- **Total reserves funds** available to the Scheme as at 31 December 2021 was \$3.3 million.
- The **loans** closing balance was \$38.5 million.
- The scheme's **asset valuation** was \$126 million.

Discussion/questions:

- Discussion followed regarding opportunities to share information and educate the public particularly around the Rangitāiki Floodway and the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws.
- Councillor Clark queried the investment income split not being shown, Andy Dixon provided a detailed explanation. Discussion followed around shielding rating schemes from interest rises and dips.
- Leeann Waaka commented on a roadshow as a way of getting PR on evacuation plans etc.

9 Update from the Rangitāiki River Forum

Councillor Clark provided an update to group members.

Key points:

- Jane Waldon has been appointed as Independent Secretariat to support iwi members of river forums and will be attending advisory group meetings to support communication flow between the two groups.
- Charles Harley advised that Landcare Trust have created a Catchment Coordinator role in the BOP region for a fixed term of three years. The successful candidate is to be confirmed.

Discussion:

- Alan Law commented on the need for everyone to work together in the rivers and drainage space and making sure this is done sensitively and carefully.
- Discussion followed on the environmental and cultural shifts underway and the need for effective communication and finding a collective way forward.
- Councillor Clark queried what constitutes a wetland. Charles Harley advised that a definition has come out and seeking clarification from Ministry for the Environment.

10 Online survey feedback and current terms of reference review

Kirsty Brown spoke to her report and presentation.

Key points:

- 18 out of 34 members across forums responded to the survey. Three out of seven members of this forum completed the survey.
- Improvements are being made based on survey results including:
 - Information sharing e.g. website notifications.
 - Improving the connection between the Rangitāiki River Forum and the advisory group.
 - Addressing other concerns e.g. barriers to meeting attendance.
- A Council endorsed review of the advisory groups Terms of Reference (TOR) is underway. The purpose of the review is to ensure the groups remain appropriate and to consider how they might assist with achieving LTP strategic impacts areas of Partnership with Māori, Climate Change and Community Participation.
- A draft TOR will be circulated to advisory group members for comment.

Questions/Discussion:

- Councillor Clark commented on the lack of participants in the survey suggesting a roundtable discussion would have been better. Alan Law queried whether this could still happen. Kirsty responded that this could be actioned.
- Alan Law queried what other issues were raised in the open comments section. Kirsty and Alan to discuss after the meeting.
- Discussion followed on the need for continual improvement and the benefit of a roundtable discussion. This was supported by ground members.

**Clark/Askey
CARRIED**

ACTION: For staff to organise a workshop facilitated by BOPRC Engagement Team following the September 2022 meeting.

11 General business**11.1 Gravel management report**

Paula Chapman spoke to the agenda report, noting that some numbers now vary from the original report.

Key points:

- A collaboration plan with Ngāti Manawa is being developed to build capacity, share information and come together more frequently. Bruce Crabbe's team have been working much closer in operational work which has been positive.
- Late last year a meeting with held with Council, Ngāti Manawa and contractors to talk about gravel extraction on the Horomanga River. Ngāti Manawa are particularly interested in how extraction work might to support the enhancement and development of tuna habitat.
- Priorities for Ngāti Manawa have been around their Covid-19 response. Once they have readied their resources, discussions will move forward.

Questions/Discussion:

- Shona Pederson raised a concern of gravel build up around Galatea Road Bridge. Paula Chapman responded Whakatane District Council are working on proposal for the bridge as the bridge was their asset.
- Alison Silcock requested an update on the extraction at Rabbit Bridge. Charles Harley noted that a consent has been lodged by Southern Generation Limited Partnership and is going through the process.

11.2 General business report

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

Key points:Infrastructure Insurance

Aon and Tonkin & Taylor Ltd assessed the flood risk for the scheme and whether the insurance premium was efficient. The conclusion was that it is best to stay with current commercial insurance. The figures of self-insuring vs the current infrastructure insurance premium and cover options were discussed.

Grazing Licence Renewal

Staff are working towards renewing the currently 32 grazing licences which are due to expire June 2022. This scheme has 19 licences in place covering 135 hectares. These will be renewed for a further 9 years.

Review of the April 2017 Flood Repair Project

Christensen Consulting was engaged by Council to review the programme of flood repair work completed following the April 2017 flood event. Recommendations from this report suggest more involvement from wider stakeholders and technical disciplines and using natural based flood prevention measures.

ACTION: A copy of the final report to be circulated to advisory group members.

Questions:

Councillor Clark queried what the prognosis going forward with insurance may be in terms of giving any indication in relation to climate change. Kirsty responded that latest feedback was that the previously hard market is softening but there has been no indication of the implications of climate change.

ACTION: Copy of the email outlining the outcomes of the infrastructure insurance review to be re-circulated to group members.

11.3 Communications update

In Laura Albrey's absence, Kirsty Brown provide an update of communication improvements, encouraging members to sign up to scheme web pages to receive notifications.

Alan Law queried who the Rural and Environmental Organisation Forum were.

ACTION Staff to confirm Rural and Environmental Organisation Forum (completed).

11.4 Feedback on status report

Kirsty Brown sought feedback from members on the new reporting format for the Capital and Operations programmes. Members' feedback was positive and included comments such as it gives a good general overview and is easy to read.

12 Public forum

General business:

Mark Townsend demonstrated a new dashboard to access rainfall information on the BOPRC website, advising that the Environmental Data Portal is the most utilised tool on Council's website.

ACTION: Staff to share website data statistics e.g. the areas mainly being accessed.

Alan Law raised a concern over the many new kiwifruit orchards being developed by the river and how Council is managing that risk. Kirsty Brown responded that new orchards within the Bylaws Applicable Areas would require bylaw authority which includes conditions to mitigate the risk.

Councillor Iti thanked everyone for their input and taking the time to attend and closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting closed at 12.33pm