

Notes of the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Ōpōtiki Golf Club, Opotiki, on Wednesday 6 April 2022, commencing at 10:00am

Chair:	Councillor Bill Clark
Advisory Group:	Barry Hennessey, Jessica Wiseman, Stace Lewer (Ōpōtiki District Council), Councillor David Moore (Ōpōtiki District Council), Dean Petersen
BOPRC Councillors:	N/A
BOPRC Staff:	Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Annalees Craig (Acting Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Tony Dunlop (Area Engineer), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Paula Chapman (Project Manager), Andy Dixon (Treasury and Tax Specialist)
Public:	John Galbraith (Project Director, Ōpōtiki Harbour Development), Maude Maxwell
Apologies:	Councillor Iti, Kim Douglas, Robbie Petersen, Dave Wilson, Steve Nelson, Tania Te Whenua, Laura Albrey (BOPRC Communications Partner)

1 Welcome

Councillor Clark opened the meeting. Kirsty Brown introduced Annalees Craig (Acting Asset Management Coordinator).

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

2 Apologies

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3 Notes of previous meeting held 22 September 2021

RESOLVED

That the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirm the notes of the meeting held 22 September 2021 as a true and correct record.

**Hennessey/Petersen
CARRIED**

4 Matters arising from previous meeting

Kirsty Brown addressed the completed actions from the 22 September 2021 meeting.

5 Te Ara Moana a Toi, Ōpōtiki Harbour Development Project

John Galbraith spoke to his report and provided a presentation on the progress of the Ōpōtiki Harbour development.

Key points:

- Construction of the harbour walls commenced in May 2021 and to date over 60% of each wall's length has been completed.
- HEB Construction are confident of completing walls construction by December 2022 and are targeting completion of dredging and river closure by July 2023. Official opening of the Harbour planned for August 2023, with further work continuing, reclaiming stockpile areas and demobilisation.
- The project has provided and attracted very favourable local media attention throughout the year. HEB Construction initiated a community project for schools, supplying a 2-tonne hanbar unit to each of 19 local schools for them to paint in their own styles. The units will be placed in visible locations on the walls and in amenity areas.
- The project has been consulting with community and iwi regarding public access, amenities, and opportunities for including cultural elements in the finished design.

Questions/Discussion:

- Councillor Clark queried the use of the sheet piling which John advised was to retain the integrity of the wall.
- Councillor Clark also questioned how the project was tracking budget wise, which John answered by saying that at present they were tracking below budget.
- John commented how the ownership of the structure has not yet been determined. Currently, the structure is owned by Crown Regional Holdings Ltd but it will be passed on to an ongoing entity at some point.
- Dean Petersen asked about the dredging once the project was completed and queried whether the river flow would assist. John advised that investigation was underway regarding funding of ongoing dredging and commented there was sufficient river flow to mobilise the sediment. It is most likely ongoing dredging will be required to move sand from one side to the other to replenish the beach.

6 Engineering update

Mark Townsend spoke to his report and presentation.

Key points:

- The Waioeka-Otara stopbank capacity review is now entering the optioneering stage with phases 1 and 2 of the geotechnical investigation now complete. Phase 3 of the geotechnical investigation which involves analysis of the geology, and historical data has been delayed. Delivery of this final phase is now due mid-June 2022. Engagement on options will occur with iwi, the advisory group, Ōpōtiki District Council and the community.

Questions/Discussion:

- Councillor Clark asked how the error was picked up from the consultant. Mark advised that the staff peer review of the draft report picked up that one of the model runs had included the climate change effects twice. Maude Maxwell asked who is coordinating the optioneering. Mark Townsend advised that Katalin Maltai will be leading this stage.

7 Operations update

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

Key points:

- Numerous small to medium flood events over the period have pushed some jobs back a bit, but largely on budget at this stage.
- Ongoing cooperation with Ōpōtiki District Council in particular urgent works for the ODC bridge at the Tutaetoko Stream outlet into the Otara River.
- Collaboration with hapū groups, with Maude Maxwell and the Ngāti Ira group has been very productive.
- Working with Eastern Region Fish and Game, and the Department of Conservation (DOC), mainly to do with the fish habitats and the bird life.
- Paula Chapman and Tony Dunlop provided an update on gravel management, noting that staff have been working closely with Ngāti Ira and Otara River Mana Whenua Collective.

Questions/Discussion:

- Members had concerns over where the landowner comes into the communications noting that there is talk with the iwi/hapū but often not with the landowners. Tony advised that often we deal with farm manager on the site, and effort is made to consult with everyone.

8 BOPRC Collecting 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. Priority 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.

Questions/Discussion:

- Councillor Clark asked the question if you can only set up quarterly payments. Andy Dixon replied that ratepayers can set up any payment plan they require.

- Members questioned whether there would be a discount for paying upfront. Andy advised that there will not be an upfront discount as this would mean that extra funding would fall on to those who struggle to pay.
- Stace Lewer queried assessing rates affordability, pointing out that rates for Opotiki are amongst the highest in Bay of Plenty. Andy Dixon advised that an independent advisor has been doing assessments across the entire region, noting that level of rates is dependent on the work that is done throughout the year. Bruce Crabbe noted that Ōpōtiki has a low population, and two troublesome rivers so unfortunately a result of this, is higher rates per capita.

9 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:

- **External interest income** \$2,000 lower than budgeted.
- **Total revenue** was \$16,000 higher than budgeted.
- **Total operating expenditure** was \$16,000 lower than budgeted.
- Total resulted in an **operating surplus** of \$241,000.
- **Capital expenditure** was \$54,000 higher.
- **Total reserves funds** available at 31 December 2021 was \$1 million.
- The **loans** closing balance was \$4.7 million.
- The scheme's **asset valuation** as at 31 December 2021 was \$52 million.

Questions/Discussion:

- Councillor Clark queried why do we have money in reserve and what is the interest on the reserve. Andy Dixon commented that Asset Replacement Reserve is overdrawn because the internal loans for capital spend are spread over a 20-year repayment schedule whereas the depreciation is a much longer timeframe. The reason the works reserve (targeted rates) hasn't been used is due to projected targeted rate increases in the next two years. The reserve will be used to lessen the burden of those increases. The reserve receives interest rate returns on average of 3.2% which is higher than the 1.2% for the borrowing.
- Councillor Clark questioned why these numbers are not reflected in the finance report? Andy responded that the reserve funds are held in Council's wider pool of investments and the interest is distributed when received. The specific investments for this reserve haven't matured yet for interest to be paid out. An accrual should have been put through, unfortunately it was not, the interest for the full year will show in the year end accounts.

ACTION:

Andy Dixon – Finance report to reflect additional information and report back to group.

10 Community Group Updates

No community group updates were made.

11 Online Survey Feedback and Current Terms of Reference Review

Kirsty Brown spoke to her report and presentation.

Key points:

- Members feedback regarding the advisory groups was recently sought via an online survey. Results are as follows:
 - 72% strongly agree groups are working well
 - 67% strongly agree they are happy with the information received
 - 66% agreement that participation by mana whenua be welcomed.
- Improvements that are being made based on these results are:
 - Information sharing e.g. website notifications
 - Looking at the barriers to meeting attendance (travel costs, time off work etc) and how these can be removed
 - A review of the Terms of Reference (TOR).
- A working group was formed for a review of the TOR. The purpose of the review of the TOR is to:
 - Confirm that the purpose of the advisory groups remains appropriate in 2022
 - Consider how the groups might assist in achieving our Long-Term Plan strategic impact areas: Partnerships with Māori, Climate Change and Community Participation
 - Address any concerns from members on how the meetings currently work.
- The next steps are to:
 - Action feedback from advisory group members
 - A final draft of the TOR circulated to the Working Group
 - Circulate draft TOR to current advisory group members for comment
 - Present draft TOR to Council for adoption.

Questions/Discussion:

- Chris Ingle raised the question that when the treaty settlement occurs, would there be a connection between the new Kaitiaki forum and this river forum? Maude Maxwell suggested that we must wait for the Kaitiaki group to be formed and then see what happens. If the settlement goes ahead there will be changes. The Kaitiaki forum may have more interest in water extraction and wider environmental and habitat matters within the river, rather than river management for flood protection.

12 General Business

12.1 Gravel management report

Update provided in Operations section of the meeting.

12.2 General business report

Items in the general business report were taken as read. No questions followed.

12.3 Communications Item – Signing up to the Webpage

- The new river scheme webpages have been activated. This includes signing up to receive update notifications including weekly works notifications. Everyone is encouraged to sign up.
- Education material will soon be launched providing information on stopbanks, seepage, floodways and floodgates.

13 Public Forum

- Mark Townsend demonstrated how to access the environmental data portal to access information on the rainfall and river levels in the area.
- Councillor Clark mentioned that local body elections will be held in October. Councillor Clark will not be running so there will be a vacancy for a regional councillor if anyone is interested or knows anyone that is interested.

Meeting closed at 12:10 pm