

Notes of the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Whakatāne, on Monday 2 May 2022, commencing at 10am

Chair:	Councillor Bill Clark
Advisory Group:	Bernie Clark, Boots McNaught, Fraser McGougan, Geoff Mercer, Scottie McLeod, Patrick McGarvey, Andrew Iles (Whakatāne District Council)
BOPRC Councillors:	Councillor Toi Iiti
BOPRC Staff:	Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Karen Scheffer (acting Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Geoff Stone (Area Engineer), Paula Chapman (Contract Project Manager), Charley Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments), Kelly Sarjeant (Executive Assistant), Andy Dixon (Tax and Treasury Specialist)
Public:	Phil Wardale (Project Manager Whakatāne Boat Harbour), Lesley Immink (Whakatāne District Council Councillor), Paki Nikora (Rūātoki landowner)
Apologies:	Chairman Leeder, Brian Power, Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager)

1 Welcome

Councillor Clark welcomed everyone to the meeting. Paki Nikora opened with a karakia.

Councillor Clark reminded attendees of the purpose of the advisory group, noting that any concerns outside of the agenda could be covered at the end of the meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies received as recorded above.

3 Notes of previous meeting held 15 September 2021

Resolved

That the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirm the notes of the meeting held 15 September 2021 as a true and correct record.

**Clark/Iles
CARRIED**

4 Matters arising from previous meeting

Paula Chapman provided an update on both the risk assessment for the Waikirikiri Marae and the outstanding April 2017 flood damage repairs in the Rūātoki area. Paula advised that draft reports have been prepared on both matters and that feedback is currently being sought from Te Uru Taumatua. Once finalised these will be shared with the members.

Paki Nikora firstly gave an apology on behalf of Henare Rogers who was mandated by the Marae to attend this meeting but was unable to due to a bereavement. Mr Nikora then raised concerns of the flood impacts for landowners who have been losing their land to the river and asking for BOPRC plans to alleviate this since 2013. Paki queried what timeframes the council is working to.

Paula responded that a risk assessment for the Marae suggested a way forward, highlighting that it was important that all parties were onboard. In terms of implementation, works would commence with high priority sites (the Marae) and working through the outstanding sites, as time and resources allowed.

Patrick McGarvey commented that historically there has not been a whole river approach, noting that collaboration between landowners, hapū and Council is needed. He commented that he was confident they could work with Waikirikiri Marae.

Councillor Iti commented that iwi need to find a way to work together and with the wider community collectively, looking at the whole river catchment and the challenges like climate change.

5 Capital work programme

Paula Chapman spoke to the agenda report on behalf of Mark Townsend and delivered a presentation.

Key points:

- The two main components of Project Futureproof is the installation of seepage control and the upgrading of the floodwall foundations.
- Work will take place in four areas – Kakahoroa Drive (east), Quay Street (west), Quay Street (east) and the boat ramp carpark. Work is underway with design.
- The cost of work is \$10.3m over two years.
- Construction is programmed for February 2023 to June 2024.

The Chair sought the members endorsement for the Regional Council's decision to provide additional funding in the draft Annual Plan for this project. Motion of support passed by majority – contrary recorded for Boots McNaught.

Discussion:

Fraser McGougan commented that historically the river floods every four years and sheet piling is imperative due to this timing, noting that the project has been well socialised by Council and the importance to continue progress.

Councillor Clark queried the rates impact. Staff advised it would be 1.5% increase in rates.

Discussion followed on the fishing club area, with staff clarifying there is no floodwall raising or other works at the fishing club at this time, with seepage work being completed in the four areas mentioned above.

Lesley Immink introduced herself and commented on the mixed messaging from the recent meeting at the Whakatāne Fishing Club. Staff responded that work is only taking place at the four sites in bullet 2 above and the seepage control sites of Project Futureproof do not include the fishing club location.

ACTION: Boots McNaught queried seepage at WDC's McAlister Street Stormwater Pump Station and the flood protection bylaw requirements – Mark Townsend to contact Boots directly to discuss.

6 Maintenance work programme

Paula Chapman, Bruce Crabbe and Geoff Stone spoke to the report in the agenda pack and delivered a presentation.

Key points:

- Safeguarding our Stopbanks update:
 - Work is taking place where land use over time has encroached over legal boundaries onto public land, impacting on the integrity of the stopbank.
 - Work for the 17 properties within the first stage of the project now complete.
 - Examples of the nature and extent of encroachments were covered with before and after photos.
 - Letters and bylaws pamphlets have been sent out to additional landowners and has generated further interest.
 - Regional Council has been working alongside District Council.
 - Costs to date are within original estimates (efficiencies in working on properties in sequence as a tranche of work).
- Land use change - Ferry Road to Awatapu:
 - This area will be changed from grazing to 'cut and carry'.
 - Safety and access improvements have been made to the area.
 - Work is taking place to extend whitebait ponds and enhance areas for Inanga spawning and fish habitat. A recent survey showed many native fish species in the area.
- Kopeopeo-Orini Canal and Floodgate:
 - Increase in flushing to control weed and additional rock armour added for vulnerable spots.
 - The tidal inflow/outflow maintains good water quality and provides habitat and spawning opportunities for native fish.

Discussion:

Discussion followed on the stopbank remediation work and grass being the best cover for stopbanks; the future potential to develop more Inanga spawning habitat; standard water safety precautions near the river bank and whitebait ponds and potential uses for the mowed area of land for the community.

7 Changes to the way BOPRC collects its rates

Kirsty Brown spoke to the agenda report, with Andy Dixon providing a presentation on the topic.

Key points:

- From August 2022 the BOPRC will start collecting its own rates.
- 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.

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:

- Operating expenditure was \$221,000 higher.
- Total capital revenue was \$278,000 lower.
- Capital expenditure was \$648,000 lower.
- Total reserves funds available as at 31 December 2021 was \$732,000.
- The loans closing balance was \$7,483m.
- The scheme's asset valuation as at 31 December 2021 was \$87 million.

9 Community group updates

Charles Harley advised that a funded position with Landcare Trust for three years has been approved. The position would be a catchment coordinator role, bringing together people to work on environmental projects.

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. Five of the seven members of this group completed the survey.
- Improvements are being made based on survey results including:
 - Information sharing e.g. website notifications.
 - 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.

11 General business**11.1 Gravel management report**

Paula Chapman took the report as read on behalf of Mark Townsend and commented that there has not been much change from previous report.

Questions/Discussion:

Fraser McGougan commented that the riverbeds are moving well, and that spraying of weeds is working to get shingle moving. He acknowledged the good management in his area.

11.2 General business report

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

Key points:**Infrastructure Insurance**

Overview of the recent Aon and Tonkin & Taylor Ltd flood risk assessment. Findings confirmed that infrastructure insurance is currently the most cost-effective method for financing flood losses.

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 adopting 'room for the river' principles and using more nature based flood & erosion management measures.

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

Questions/Discussion:

Fraser McGougan queried timeliness of repairs. Paula advised that doing repairs quickly was not necessarily a good thing with some of the low to medium priority sites eventually self-repairing. Paula noted that many positives and lessons had come out of the report.

Discussion continued around moving away from channelising rivers in the future, allowing the river more room to move naturally, and using soft engineering repairs where possible.

Andrew Iles commented on a previous presentation Mark Townsend made to the Whakatāne District Council some years ago. Mr Iles requested an update on the raising of stopbanks and suggested some clarification in next report of where this work is at.

ACTION: Mark Townsend to prepare update for next meeting.

11.3 Te Rāhui Herenga Waka (Whakatāne Harbour Project) Update

Phil Wardale spoke to his report and provided a presentation.

Key points:

- Overview of the consenting process including the use of the Covid-19 (Fast Tracking Consenting) Act, which allowed the project's consent application to be considered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Detailed design now underway.
- Working with Department of Conservation to obtain concession to cross DOC land to enable connection with the river.

- Consent conditions will soon be available on EPA website.
- Keepa Road upgrade which includes widening and raising of various areas.

Questions/Discussion:

- Future dredging, channel depth, sedimentation and low tide manoeuvrability. It was noted that dredging does not work well in areas outside of the main flow. Ongoing dredging costs will be paid for by the entity.
- Members queried whether there would be an impact upstream. Phil responded that this had been taken into consideration and had little impact.
- Brian Power sought reassurance on the channel capacity of the Kopeopeo Canal.
ACTION: Response from staff required.

12 Public forum

Paki Nikora raised concerns about “allowing the river room to move” noting that this should not be at the cost of land loss.

Discussion followed around forming a committee together in the interests of Ōhinemataroa and that the owners and hapū of the upper reaches of the Whakatāne River being open to collaborating with other parties.

Councillor Clark thanked everyone for their input. Paki Nikora closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting closed at 1:00pm.