

Notes of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Whakatāne office, on Thursday 14 September 2022, commencing at 10 am

- Chair:** Councillor Bill Clark
- Advisory Group:** Alan Law, Linda Virbickas, Peter Askey, Jane Waldon (Rangitāiki River Forum Secretariat), Michael Van Tilburg (Whakatāne District Council), Councillor Alison Silcock (Whakatāne District Council).
- BOPRC Staff:** Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Andrew Pawson (Area Engineer), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Niroy Sumeran (Engineering Team Leader), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments), Laura Boucher (Communications Partner), Paula Chapman (Contract Project Manager)
- Apologies:** Councillor Toi Iti, Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Mereana Toroa (Finance Support Team Lead), Shona Pedersen, Leeann Waaka, Peter Askey (for early departure)
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1 **Welcome**

Councillor Clark welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jane Waldon. Jane is working for both the Rangitāiki River Forum and Te Maru o Kaituna River Authority to help these groups meet the objectives of their river documents.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3 **Notes of previous meeting held 6 May 2022**

Resolved

That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirm the notes of the meeting held 6 May 2022 as a true and correct record.

**Law/Askey
CARRIED**

4 **Matters arising from previous meeting**

The group discussed and agreed that with three members not in attendance the workshop scheduled for after lunch should be postponed until the next meeting.

ACTION:

Staff to arrange for the postponed satisfaction survey workshop to be included in the March 2023 meeting.

Kirsty Brown ran through the completed actions from the previous meeting and Mark Townsend reported back on Environmental Data Portal usage statistics (Action 8). Mark advised that overall use of the portal is on the increase, however the team was unable to extract usage information for specific data sites. Mark advised that the portal can be accessed from mobile devices as well as computers and offered to show interested members how to access via their phones or tablets after the meeting.

A discussion on the Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation (IPO) and its effect on weather patterns followed. Mark explained that during the negative IPO phase ocean currents bring cyclonic events into the Bay of Plenty region and during the positive IPO phase there are rain events but fewer big cyclonic events. On average the phases last approximately 25 years and the phase changed from negative to positive around 2018. Mark confirmed that the IPO is different to El Nino and La Nina.

5 **Scheme annual report 2021-2022**

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

Key points:

- The maintenance programme was delivered generally on budget and to programme.
- The capital programme includes large multi-year projects which have experienced some delays with work deferred due to additional funding requirements or project complexity.
- Operating revenue of \$5,848,000 was \$499,000 higher than budget of \$5,349,000, due to additional insurance recoveries from the 2017 flood event. Note also that external interest income was significantly lower than budgeted due to lower than budgeted interest rates being realised.
- Operating expenditure of \$3,608,000 was \$27,000 higher than budget of \$3,581,000.
- Capital revenue of \$1,170,000 was \$3,177,000 lower than budget of \$4,347,000, due to not being able to claim CIP funding for deferred capital projects (College Road Floodwall and Rangitāiki Floodway)
- Capital expenditure of \$5,852,000 was \$576,000 lower than budget of \$6,428,000, with carry forwards into 2022-2023 proposed for flood repair work and the Rangitāiki Floodway Project.
- Total reserve fund opening balance of \$3,301,000 and closing balance of \$3,392,000 (increased by \$91,000)
- Loan opening balance of \$39,424,000 and closing balance of \$41,838,000 (increased by \$2,414,000)
- Asset valuation as at 1 July 2021 of \$126 million, an increase of \$10.4 million. Kirsty advised of an error in the agenda pack report where the valuation figures were reported as 2021 and 2022 figures rather than 2020 and 2021 figures.

Discussion:

- In response to a question about the achievement of projects and programme performance assessment, Kirsty advised that the team is happy with what was achieved in 2021-2022. The Rivers and Drainage Assets, Rivers and Drainage Operations and Engineering managers meet monthly for programme status updates and to discuss issues and assess programme tracking against scope, budget, and schedule.
- The underspend in the capital programme was questioned and Kirsty explained that some work had been deferred and the unspent budget would be carried into 2022-2023.

- The review of how river scheme assets are insured was discussed. Kirsty explained that the Infrastructure Insurance review concluded that currently it is best to remain with the status quo of professional insurers from the London market. To self-insure, the modelling determined that a prudent reserve contribution would be \$1.5 million per year. In comparison the status quo insurance premium across all schemes is \$734,000. This also provides cover for other natural hazards like earthquakes and tsunamis.

6 Capital programme

Mark Townsend and Niroy Sumeran delivered a presentation focusing on the Rangitāiki Floodway and spillway.

Key points/discussion:

Rangitāiki Floodway

- Stage 6c stopbank construction work is complete with some minor reinstatement work (re-grassing and spring fertiliser) to finish.
- Swing gates to be installed on McLeans Road and McCracken Road by June 2023 to complete the floodway.
- While Stages 6a and 6b were delivered to plan and to budget, Stage 6c involved significantly more earthworks and geotechnical treatment than was originally envisaged and was over budget with an additional \$950,000 approved by Council for 2022-2023.
- Maintenance requirements for the seepage trenches were discussed. Niroy explained that the aggregate in the trenches is specially graded and wrapped in geotextile to prevent soil getting in. The collection chambers are designed so they can be flushed out if necessary. He advised that during an event you can hear water flowing along the trench and this is a good physical indicator that it's working. Mark added that the Asset Management Plan specifies a ten-year inspection schedule for seepage trenches and the proposal is to excavate a section of trench every ten years to carry out an inspection.
- The planting of trees on or near the upgraded stopbanks was raised. Niroy advised that the stopbanks are protected by the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws and any plantings would need approval from Regional Council. The Bylaws can control plantings on the stopbank and within 12 metres of the landward toe of the stopbank, with an extra focus on anything within six metres of the stopbank or seepage trenches/wells where roots could penetrate these structures.

Rangitāiki Floodway spillway

- Design for the spillway is complete and currently being technically reviewed.
- The design is a concrete capped fixed crest weir designed to start spilling after a 1:20 year or 5% AEP (Annual Exceedance Probability) event and be fully operational in a 1% AEP event. The weir will be supported by a contingency gated spillway at a level lower than the weir.
- Contractors for the mechanical and civil aspects of the project are being shortlisted based on registrations of interest. Planning to tender the work in October 2022.
- Resource consent application has been lodged as a variation to the 2009 consent and will be publicly notified in a few weeks' time.
- Members were pleased to see the design and felt a good approach would be to go back to the community prior to the public notification of the consent to explain the design and

any increased costs and to work through any community concerns or issues. Mark responded that a date will be set to update the community on the proposal.

- How fluctuating riverbed levels have been accounted for in the design was queried. Mark explained that the contingency gates can be opened earlier than the weir operating if required and this will counteract any effects of changing riverbed levels.

Other capital projects

- College Road concrete floodwall upgrade work (87-109 College Road) is about to go out for tender. The existing concrete wall will be replaced with sheet piling encased in concrete, with a pool-style fence on top to provide security for neighbouring residents.
- Upgrade of the lower Rangitāiki left bank stopbank, downstream of Thornton bridge, to commence November 2022. Initially scheduled for 2020-2021 this project was deferred after the initial design phase cost estimates were significantly higher than the initial budget. Additional funding has now been approved.
- Upgrade to the Tarawera left bank stopbank, downstream of SH2, to commence February 2023.
- Currently investigating areas of the Tarawera right bank stopbank, downstream of SH30, that the capacity review identified as needing upgrading. Geotechnical investigations will be carried out over summer and detailed design completed by the end of June 2023.
- Rangitāiki-Tarawera Capacity Review report will be finalised this month. Review shows some minor upgrades needed on sections of both river and canal stopbanks, with some areas needing further investigation and possibly a change to the level of service. In the planning stage now with recommendations before the end of the financial year.

Attendance: Niroy Sumeran left the meeting at 11:10 am

7 Maintenance programme

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

Key points:

- It has been a wet winter, with three times the typical rainfall during June and July, and Operations staff have put in a huge effort pumping and maintaining drainage.
- Bruce advised of an error in the Maintenance Programme Summary on page 27 of the agenda pack. The maintenance budget should be \$1,172,530 and adding the annual flood damage budget of \$213,000 makes a total budget of \$1,385,530.
- Repeat rain events have resulted in increased end erosion on areas of riverbank with existing erosion protection and the annual flood damage budget is already fully allocated.
- Condition assessment defect repair work is high priority however there is currently no dedicated budget for this work so expecting the maintenance budget to be overspent at year end.
- Trees along the stopbank in Edgecumbe identified for further investigation to determine whether they need to be removed have been assessed by an arborist. Most of the trees are healthy and stable and are currently not a risk to stopbank structural integrity and

performance so do not need to be removed. They will be monitored for any changes through the condition assessment process.

- Rangitāiki Drainage Scheme annual meeting held in June with useful discussion on drainage scheme issues.
- The Old Rangitāiki Canal pump station electrical upgrade will improve reliability and increase efficiency. This winter with the Tarawera River running high, and with high seas, the pump station has run more hours than during the 2017 flood event.
- The trial of HDPE plastic fish-friendly flood gates is showing positive results. The HDPE gates cost more than the tongue and groove treated timber versions however have a longer lifespan.
- Fish-friendly flood pumps were discussed with Bruce providing an overview of the work being done around the country and the various options available for new pumps and retrofitting existing pumps. There are options for the larger pumps, however more challenging for the small to medium sized pumps which make up most of the Rangitāiki Drainage Scheme pumps.

8 Rangitāiki River Forum update

Kirsty Brown explained that this agenda item was intended to improve information sharing between the Advisory Group and the Rangitāiki River Forum. The agenda report provides members with a high-level overview of key topics from the Forum meeting held 3 June 2022. Staff also provide the Forum with updates from the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Advisory Group meetings, and this has been well received.

Members can access Rangitāiki River Forum meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations on the website at <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/your-council/council-and-region/committees/rangitai-ki-river-forum>

Charles Harley advised that Regional Council is in the early stages of bringing partners together to form another co-governance group - the Tarawera Restoration Group. This group is a result to the Ngāti Rangitihī treaty settlement and will include Ngāti Rangitihī and other iwi with statutory acknowledgements along the Tarawera River, from the Lake Tarawera outlet to the river mouth. Like with other co-governance groups there is a requirement to prepare a river document. This will replace the existing Operative Regional Plan for the Tarawera River Catchment (Tarawera River Plan).

Alignment of the Tarawera river document with the upcoming Regional Policy Statement on Freshwater Management was questioned. Charles responded that it would be ideal for both to align and achieving this it will be come down to the Tarawera Restoration Group formation, timeframes, and priorities.

Attendance: Peter Askey left the meeting at 11:46 am

9 Asset management planning

Kirsty Brown spoke to the agenda report signalling that the river management environment and how Regional Council will deliver on flood protection and land drainage services is changing. The way river works are managed will focus on adaptability and maximising natural river processes, while continuing to meet flood protection levels of service. Future solutions may involve providing more room for the river and using natural and nature-based flood risk management solutions.

This approach will be incorporated in the Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan review in 2023-2024. Workshops with advisory groups on implications of the proposals will be valuable as the review progresses.

Kirsty also spoke about the National Adaptation Plan released in August 2022. The Plan looks at the impacts of climate change now and into the future and sets out how Aotearoa New Zealand can adapt. The Plan recognises that councils have functions and duties in relation to natural hazards, civil defence and emergency management, and improving community resilience. All councils are required to consider the National Adaptation Plan in their planning processes from November 2022.

Discussion

The inclusion of a possible ponding option for the Rangitāiki Floodway in a public report (Rangitāiki River Scheme Review – April 2018 Flood Event) without any consultation with affected landowners was discussed. Members stressed the importance of Regional Council respecting private property rights, discussing possible options with landowners before they are made public, and providing compensation if properties are affected. Mark Townsend agreed that there are learnings from this. Regional Council does not usually make possible options public until there has been consultation with affected landowners. In this case the option was one of a number being assessed and considered and was not at the stage that Regional Council would make it public. Mark advised that Regional Council had not wanted the option included in the report. He noted that the option was never progressed beyond initial consideration and assessment.

10 General business

10.1 Gravel management update

Paula Chapman took the agenda report as read and discussion followed:

- Members asked if iwi are happy with the gravel extraction concept. Paula responded that each iwi and hapū have different concerns however all take a holistic view and are concerned about impacts on the environment and tuna.
- Members asked for an update on the Southern Generation proposal to extract gravel at Rabbit Bridge.

ACTION:

Staff to report back to the group on status of Southern Generation's gravel extraction resource consent application for the Rabbit Bridge area.

10.2 Regional Council rates invoicing (item added at request of members)

The new process of Regional Council collecting their own rate was discussed with the following key points raised:

- For dairy farmers receiving a huge rates bill with an October payment date when cash flow is at the lowest point of the year was a bit of a shock. Many farmers thought that it needed to be paid in a lump sum. Staff responded that there are a range of direct debt payment options and the information on this is available on the rates invoice and on the website.
- One member believed their farm rates had increased by more than a third. They searched on the website and couldn't find the information they wanted so made a call to the call centre and felt they didn't get any answers. Would just like to know why the

increase and what it is for. Bruce Crabbe responded that they shouldn't have seen that level of increase and advised that a few staff could be available after the meeting to investigate further.

ACTIONS:

Staff to be available after the meeting to listen to any individual concerns and talk members through any rates issues.

Circulate website links for relevant rates information to members

10.3 **Communication update**

Laura Boucher from the Communications Team introduced herself and discussed working with the Advisory Group to help provide information that would be beneficial to their community. Laura also demonstrated the Rivers and Drainage webpages and encouraged members to register for scheme updates.

10.4 **General business report**

Kirsty Brown took the agenda report as read and highlighted a few key points.

Key points:

- The advisory group Terms of Reference Review is progressing with a draft issued to group members for feedback. Review process is on hold until the new Council has formed post local body elections in October.
- The next round of flood protection and drainage infrastructure assets condition and performance assessments are due to commence. Asset condition is a measure of the physical state of an asset which is visually assessed by staff/contractors and graded from 1 (very good) to 5 (very poor). Condition assessment looks at the physical state of an asset and performance assessment is a 'whole picture' analysis assessing required service levels, asset condition, intrinsic strength, capacity, geology, and the potential risks to communities.
- Local Government elections are being held for Regional Council's 14 councillor roles. Postal voting opens on 16 September and closes 8 October 2022.
- Councillor Clark is not running for re-election and Kirsty Brown thanked him for his service to the community and the environment.

10.5 **Other business**

Mark Townsend advised that Whakatāne District Council's has plans to develop cycleways along various stopbanks in the area. The proposals are District Council led and have received central government funding. The proposals are for the Whakatāne River and Te Rahu Canal from Whakatāne to Awakeri, and the Rangitāiki River left bank from Te Teko to Thornton. The stopbanks are mostly on private land and District Council will be engaging with landowners to get access permission. Regional Council's involvement will be through the resource consenting process, the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws 2020, and any grazing license agreements.

Councillor Clark thanked members for their support during his six-year term on Council. He enjoyed representing the community and working in river scheme management.

Meeting closed at 12:23 pm