Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group

Meeting notes

**Commencing:** Wednesday, 22 March 2023, 10.00 am

**Venue:** Putauaki Room, EastBay REAP

**Chairperson:** Cr Toi Iti

**Members:** Leeann Waaka (Urban), Peter Askey (Rangitāiki Plains), Alan Law (Rangitāiki Plains), Linda Virbickas (Rangitāiki Plains), Shona Pedersen (Galatea/Waiohau), Heyden Johnston (Urban), Michael Van Tilburg (Whakatāne District Council), Cr Tu O’Brien (Whakatāne District Council), Cr Wilson James (Whakatāne District Council) Jane Waldon (Rangitāiki River Forum Secretariat)

**BOPRC elected members:** Cr Ken Shirley, Cr Malcolm Campbell

**BOPRC staff:** Chris Ingle (GM Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Dan Batten (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Bruce Crabbe (Principal Advisor), Sharleen Augustus (Assets Management Coordinator), Niroy Sumeran (Engineering Team Leader), and Laura Boucher (Comms Partner).

**Public:** Joe Metcalfe (WDC Transport Planner) and Richard Faire (WDC Tourism Product Development Advisor), Scotty Muir.

**Apologies:** Karlo Keogh (acting Finance Support Team Lead), Andrew Pawson (Area Engineer).

1. Opening

Chair opened the meeting and followed with around-the-table introductions.

2. Previous Meeting Notes

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| **2.1** | **Resolved:****That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:****Confirms the notes from the previous meeting held 14 September 2022 are a true and correct record.** **Leeann Waaka/Michael Van Tilburg****CARRIED** |
| **2.2** | **Matters Arising:**There were no matters arising.  |

3. Agenda items

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| **3.1** | **Capital Works Programme Update**Presented by: Mark Townsend and Niroy Sumeran. Agenda report taken as read. **Key Points:*** Construction works for the College Road floodwalls is underway.
* Reynolds Bend contract is currently out to tender, closing on 31 March.
* Lower Rangitāiki stopbank upgrade is also out to tender, closing mid-April.
* The installation of seven salinity piezometers at various locations in the lower Rangitāiki is proposed in April, to monitor and measure salinity over the next five years. Results will be reported back to the Advisory Group.
* Rangitāiki Floodway swing gates – tender price is $800,000, higher than the estimate. Construction due to commence in April. During the floodway operation, the four sets of swing gates will swing closed, tying into the stopbanks and diverting floodway flows over McCracken and McLeans Roads.
* Rangitāiki Floodway spillway upgrade – seepage analysis and detailed design has revealed the lower fixed crest weir requires cut offs at either end and more extensive downstream paddock contouring. The radial gates also require cut offs for the gate bay plus increased downstream scour management. Risk mitigation associated with the project has significantly impacted the cost estimates. Impact on rates was shared based on the three options presented. Community meeting is planned for 15 April 2023 in Edgecumbe, member support is requested. Members to contact Sharleen if interested in an additional meeting prior to the community session. It was noted that Council is seeking additional CIP government funding for the spillway.

**Key Points – Members:*** Rangitāiki Floodway has been a significant community investment and the project needs to be completed which is beneficial for the whole district.

**In Response to Questions:*** Increased salinity in the lower Rangitāiki is due to sea level rise.
* Swing gates are manually operated and are located below and above the road, on the left and right stopbank. Gates are swung across the road so road closure will occur during operation. Staff actively monitor flood events, and the gates will be closed prior to floodway activation.
* Lowering the fixed crest weir has been considered but would allow more water to flow down the floodway.
* Insurance benefits are not guaranteed upon completing the floodway.
* Flood protection schemes are designed for a certain flood event level. Cyclone Gabrielle was understood to be an overdesigned event in the impacted Hawkes Bay rivers.
* Climate change factors – the design flow downstream has been capped. Future considerations include better utilisation of the Matahina and Aniwhenua dams, plus water management higher in the catchment. The current works provide for 1%AEP levels of service and climate change to 2040.

**Items for staff follow up:*** Provide feedback to those members unable to attend the Community meeting on 15 April.
* Provide initial salinity results and data at September 2023 meeting.
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| **3.2** | **Maintenance Works Programme Update** Presented by: Dan Batten and Bruce Crabbe. Agenda report taken as read. **Key Points:*** Exceptionally wet period extending from June 2022 through to late February 2023. Refer to data on page 15 of the agenda report.
* Key maintenance projects completed included rock replenishment at College Road, Reid’s Central Canal, and the Tarawera River erosion repair at the golf course.
* Maritime have assisted to certify the new airboat. Majority of its use will be in the Eastern Bay.
* Staff movements – Anaru Freeman has been appointed as the new Works Coordinator for Rangitāiki-Tarawera.

**In response to questions:*** Rock stockpile has shown efficiencies especially for larger maintenance works.
* Anaru Freeman is the new Works Coordinator for Rangitaiki-Tarawera but will still be available for pump assistance until the new person has been appointed.
* We are still undertaking flood damage inspections and these details will be available at the September meeting.
* Animal pest control on and near stopbanks is ongoing.

**Items for staff follow up:*** BOPRC Staff to contact Leeann regarding rabbit control assistance from the community in Edgecumbe.
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| **3.3** | **Gravel Extraction Update**Presented by: Paula Chapman. Agenda report taken as read. **Key Points:*** An Environmental Engineer recently inspected gravel areas on the Horomanga River and Kopuriki Stream.
* Ngāti Manawa are currently not supportive of gravel extraction from the Horomanga River. We are working with Ngāti Manawa as they want to be part of the decision-making process.
* Extraction at the Horomanga is encouraged. Currently there are no applications lodged, but we are expecting one from the Whakatāne District Council for the Galatea Bridge.

**Key Points Members:*** Gravel building up at Rabbit Bridge, noting that a new island has formed which is significantly impacting the community and vital infrastructure.
* Members noted that the migration of silt has increased due to the Aniwhenua Dam.
* Southern Generation’s resource consent for the Aniwhenua Dam expires in 2026. Members and public attendees are interested in how Council can ensure that the advisory group is informed and involved in the application process.
* Concern raised with the Matahina Dam consent process and the restricted outcomes regarding local concerns.

**In Response to Questions:*** Conversations have been ongoing with Ngāti Manawa regarding their involvement with gravel extraction.
* Southern Generation’s gravel extraction consent application for the Rabbit Bridge area was considered incomplete by the Consent team and returned for more information.
* Previously staff have made submissions to notified resource consent applications, on behalf of the River Scheme Advisory Group members.
* Suggestion was made that a meeting be organised between Southern Generation and the advisory group.
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| **3.4** | **Cycleways on BOPRC Stopbanks in the Eastern Bay** Presented by: Joe Metcalfe and Richard Faire (WDC). **Key Points:*** Whakatane District Council has obtained Government funding for the cycleway construction.
* Funding relates to three cycleways which are situated largely on BOPRC managed stopbanks.
* BOPRC staff are supportive in principle, recognising the primary purpose of the stopbank is flood protection.
* Consultation is scheduled for the next three to four months.
* Cycleway construction is scheduled to commence pre-Christmas 2023.
* Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws authorities will be required.

**Key Points - Members:*** Whitebating sites on the awa will need to be considered.
* Consultation needs to commence immediately and to consider privacy issues and cycling through working farms with machinery etc.
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| **3.5** | **Finance Report Update**Presented by: Kirsty Brown. **Key Points:*** Revenue and expenditure update for the 6 months ending 31 December 2023.
* Total operation revenue is $39,000 lower than budget.
* Total operating expenditure of $436,000 lower than budget.
* Total operating surplus of $397,000.
* Total capital revenue is $1.273 million higher due to final insurance pay out received for the April 2017 flood event.
* Total capital expenditure is $4 million lower than budget.
* Total reserve funds available is $3.8 million.
* Internal loans closing balance as of 31 December 2022 was $39.4 million.
* Asset valuation as of 1 July 2022 $139.4 million.

**Discussion:*** Increase in asset value due to increased construction costs, new assets, and asset register data improvements.
* Capital expenditure is forecasted to be significantly below budget, as highlighted in the Capital programme report.
* Members raised concern with the level of the scheme loan. It was noted that loan repayments are spread out over a number of years due to the intergenerational nature and benefits of the works.

**Items for staff follow up:*** Provide loan breakdown including whether fixed or floating, interest rates and loan term.
* Provide overview update of asset value increases over the recent year, including Edgecumbe works and Rangitāiki Floodway.
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| **3.6** | **Upcoming Long Term Plan, Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan and Infrastructure Strategy Review**Presented by: Kirsty Brown. Agenda report taken as read. **Key Points:*** Three yearly reviews of Council’s Long Term Plan, Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan and Infrastructure Strategy due to commence.
* Central theme will be for supporting communities to be more sustainable and resilient.
* Requires shift in thinking for ongoing and future flood and river erosion works to enable the river to behave more naturally.
* Sought feedback from members how they would like to contribute to proposed changes and budgets.

**In Response to Questions:*** Staff are currently workshopping what “making room for the rivers” means for the Council, noting that each catchment, river, and river reach are different. We will have more information at the September meeting.

**Items for staff follow up:*** Arrange a separate Long Term Plan and Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan workshop for August 2023.
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| **3.7** | **Rangitāiki River Forum Update**Presented by: Kirsty Brown. Agenda report taken as read. **Key Points:** * To facilitate better communication between the advisory group and the Rangitāiki River Forum.
* Summary of key topics from the Forum’s meeting held on 2 September 2022.

**Key Points - Members:*** It was noted that the advisory group have a good relationship with the Forum but the two groups should not be combined.
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| **3.8** | **General Business**Presented by: Kirsty Brown, Mark Townsend and Laura BoucherAgenda report taken as read.**Key Points:*** Expecting significant impact on the cost and availability of infrastructure insurance coverage following Auckland floods and Cyclone Gabrielle. This insurance covers the 40% local authority share of infrastructure restoration following a natural disaster.
* Careful monitoring and analysis of the insurance market and Council’s asset risk is required. Members will be kept informed.
* Tabled an Open letter from the Eastern Bay advisory group members requesting Council commissions an extensive independent forest condition survey and pest animal inventory of Te Urewera and the adjoining Department of Conservation estate.
* Tabled item – newly formed co-governance partnership, Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group, established under the Ngāti Rangitihi Treaty Settlement. Noted that reporting to facilitate communications between the two groups will commence.

**Discussion:** * Central Government threshold for the 60% it contributes towards restoration following a natural disaster is based on capital value of the region and the amount of damage. The whole region’s capital value is applicable even if the event is only in a localised area.
* Peter Askey - pest animal numbers have increased in the Te Urewera and the adjoining DoC estate. The open letter raises members concern that the poor condition of the upper catchment is contributing to flooding and silt build up in the lower catchment. High E.coli readings in the upper river was cited as evidence. Mass areas of Pampas was also noted as a concern. Staff recommended members work directly with the parties concerned e.g. Doc and TUT. Potential for this to be a project for a PHD student. Satellite survey of the area was discussed.

**Items for staff follow up:*** Initial planning to undertake a high-level investigation to determine river scheme impacts of potential deterioration of Eastern Bay forests.
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12.00 pm - Tu O’Brien and Wilson James left the meeting.

Public Forum

5.1 Renewal of Southern Generation’s Aniwhenua Dam resource consent - Scotty Muir

* Highlighted the need for forward planning and investigation for the up-and-coming Aniwhenua Dam consent renewal, including investigations into gravel impacts and low flows.
* Van Voorthuysen’s Consenting Process – Managing Multiple Roles report, highlighted recommendations including that the Consents team uses independent commissioners and officers.

**Items for staff follow up:**

* Look at the Dam consent renewal process and a work programme that may be needed to respond (action plan). Report back to the next meeting on the Aniwhenua Dam and consent renewal for 2026. Look at the previous consent to see what can be improved.

12.35 pm – the meeting closed.

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| **Action Sheet****Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group Meeting****22 March 2023** |  |  |  |
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| **Action** | **Person Responsible** | **Completed** | **Comment** |
| 1. Members to contact Sharleen if interested in an additional meeting prior to the community session. It was noted that Council is seeking additional CIP funding for the spillway.
 | Sharleen Augustus | Yes | No request for additional meeting |
| 1. Provide initial salinity results for the Lower Rangitāiki at 13 September 2023 meeting.
 | Mark Townsend | Underway | Initial results to be provided at September meeting if available.  |
| 1. BOPRC Staff to contact Leeann regarding rabbit control assistance from the community in Edgecumbe
 | Dan Batten | Yes | Health and safety restrictions.  |
| 1. Provide loan breakdown including whether fixed or floating, interest rates and loan term.
 | Kirsty Brown | Yes | Email to members 1 August 2023 |
| 1. Provide overview update of asset value increases over recent year, including Edgecumbe works and Rangitāiki Floodway.
 | Kirsty Brown | Yes | Email to members 1 August 2023 |
| 1. Initial planning to undertake a high-level investigation to determine river scheme impacts of potential deterioration of eastern bay forests.
 | Mark Townsend | Yes | Update to be provided at September 2023 meeting. Initial analysis of aerial photography did not reveal anything.  |
| 1. Report back to the next meeting on the Aniwhenua Dam and consent renewal for 2026.
 | Mark Townsend | Progressing | Update to be provided at September 2023 meeting.  |