

Whakatane-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group

Meeting notes

Commencing:	Wednesday, 4 October 2023, 10.00 am
Venue:	Council Chambers, BOPRC Whakatāne office, 5 Quay Street, Whakatane
Chairperson:	Cr Ken Shirley
Members:	Scottie McLeod (Rangitāiki Plains), Brian Power (Rangitāiki Plains), Fraser McGougan (Middle Catchment Whakatāne River), Councillor Andrew Iles (WDC Councillor representative)
BOPRC staff:	Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments Group), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Dan Batten (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Bruce Crabbe (Principal Advisor), Geoff Stone (Area Engineer), Paula Chapman (Project Manager), Cleo Hanlon (RAD Coordinator), Laura Boucher (Comms Partner), Hemi Barsdell (Asset Management Specialist)
Apologies:	Geoff Mercer, Councillor T Iti, Loris Hastie, Patrick McGarvey, Toni Boynton (for lateness), Boots McNaught (for lateness),
Absent:	Bernie Clark, Jim Finlay, Malcolm Campbell

1. Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and acknowledged the passing of Paki Nikora.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

3. Previous Meeting Notes

3.1 Resolved

That the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirms the notes from the previous meeting held 29 March 2023 are a true

and correct record.

**Andrew Iles/Fraser McGougan
CARRIED**

3.2 Matters Arising:

- There were no matters arising from the previous meeting notes.
- In agreement with landowners' observations, sheetpiles have been removed at Kopeopeo Canal. Discussion continued regarding the need for remediation at the western end of the Kopeopeo Drain, despite low contamination levels reported to the Advisory Group. It was advised that this would be a larger-scale project without central government co-funding, making it cost-prohibitive. Alternatives such as capping the area as a wetland or exploring in situ bioremediation techniques are under consideration. Any future action would require resource consent.

4. Agenda items

4.1 Long Term Plan 2024-34 and Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan 2024-74

Presented by: Kirsty Brown, Hemi Barsdell and Laura Boucher.
Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- The proposed budget figures are currently in their initial stages and will undergo further refinement following group feedback.
- External pressures such as Central Government regulations, inflation and climate change contributing to unavoidable cost increases.
- Budget forecasts aim to achieve an appropriate balance between affordability and service provision, including appropriate risk management and alignment with national standards.
- The proposed operational expenditure is comparative to previous years, with proposed increases for asset defect remediation, Bylaws compliance and monitoring, ecological offset work, electricity, and diesel.
- Potential future financial impacts to be aware of:
 - Changes to the BOPRC Regional Natural resources Plan to implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management may impose significant additional expenditure requirements for the scheme, particularly regarding drainage water discharge quality and scheme maintenance.
 - Aon Ltd has indicated that there could be a significant increase in infrastructure insurance premiums due to recent national and international weather events.
- Room for the River – entering a period of change for river management, with evolving principles and best practices, along with central government reforms and policy changes. Room for the Rivers is used globally to restore the natural flow path of rivers. It is expected that, overtime, this approach will play a pivotal role in future decision making for river management.
- Detailed comprehensive budgets with rating implications will be

- presented to the Advisory Group during the March 2024 meeting.
- Chris – staff are conscious of increases in rates and are looking at all options to reduce these increases, whilst maintaining our level of service.
- Laura – acknowledge that affordability for communities is top of mind. Focusing on core deliveries. Spoke through the comms plan for LTP.

Discussion:

- The Rangitāiki Drainage scheme is part of the AMP, and undergoes a cycle of condition assessments, including visual inspections. Observed defects are triaged and passed onto the R&D Operations team for repair. Previously, there has been no budget for the removal of trees and other repairs so additional baseline budget has been proposed.
- The Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaw review in the previous triennium increased bylaw applicable areas, so this will capture more defects (ie trees) than had been previously identified.
- There will be the need to deliver ecological offset type work once the Regional Natural Resources Plan is updated as a result of the essential freshwaters program. This is expected to be finalised in 2025. Budget is being proposed to enable this work in the interim at a small scale and to begin to develop a 'catalogue' of offset type opportunities.
- Council is only in the initial stages of investigation into potential Room for the River approaches. Information will be provided as it comes available. Part of the investigation will include where erosion has already occurred, and where some sites may be healing naturally. Learnings and information will be provided at future meetings.
- Resource consent costs are provided for in years 3 to 5 of LTP2024-2034. This budget is based off actual figures from previous consent application costs. These figures are placeholders only in the event that the Regional Natural Resources Plan review requires the scheme to obtain resource consents for currently permitted activities.
- It was noted by some members when consultation periods fall in spring time, it is not always possible for farmers to engage due to their busy period.
- The group was asked to consider if the current stopbank levels of service need to be reviewed. If current levels of service remain, modelling may eventually show that an upgrading of stopbanks will be required, however if stopbank level of service is reduced, then these upgrades may not be required.

Actions:

- It was requested that a full breakdown of costs, and where budget is to be spent, is presented to this group.
- The digital pulse survey is to be circulated amongst members.

4.2 Capital Works Programme Update

Presented by: Mark Townsend. Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- Project Future Proof will occur over four stages, from the McAlister St pump station to Muriwai Drive.
- Stage 1 of the project is out to tender, with tenders closing in November. Hapū engagement is nearing the end. Consents with WDC and BOPRC are progressing but are dependent on a cultural impact assessment report. Procurement will be confirmed in December, and construction to begin in January.

Discussion:

- BOPRC and WDC have been working together on Project Future Proof for five years. The Steering Group meets monthly (including CEO's from both Councils and Ngāti Awa). Stage 1 has been signed off by all three parties, and remaining stages are still being worked through.
- The Fishing Club is working through options with WDC and keeping BOPRC informed.
- Boots McNaught raised concerns over consultation with the community.

Actions

- Boots McNaught to be invited to attend an information day to communicate any concerns within the urban area.

4.3 Maintenance Works Programme Update

Presented by: Dan Batten, Geoff Stone and Bruce Crabbe.
Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- The Operations team are streamlining efficiencies. Maintenance sites are assessed on a case-by-case basis, working alongside landowners as much as possible.
- The Orini floodgate gantry has been replaced, for efficiencies and health and safety purposes.
- Proactive gravel maintenance assists with costs savings, and overflow depressions can also assist with pampas management.

Discussion:

- The Rūātoki water intake has been sheet piled by WDC. This is working, however it also requires some gravel management to help with the overflow.
- A spray programme in conjunction with TUT is to be restarted to get on top of pest plants that are re-establishing.
- BOPRC is working with WDC on the Ohutu Bridge abutments, and BOPRC will address the upstream erosion issues.

There were no matters arising.

4.4 Finance Report Update

Presented by: Kirsty Brown. Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- Revenue and expenditure update for the 12 months ending 30 June 2023. Draft until adopted by Council.
- Total operating revenue is \$487,000 higher than budget due to data improvement with found assets, noting this is an accounting entry and does not impact operating reserves.
- Contract work expenditure was \$549,000 higher than budget due to weather events and the SOS project.
- Depreciation \$720,000 higher due to the unbudgeted depreciation for Kopeopepe Canal which will be removed as an end of year adjustment.
- Total operation expenditure \$650,000 higher than budget.
- Total operating deficit of \$1.1 million higher than budget.
- Total capital revenue \$366,000 lower than budget. This has resulted in an operating deficit of \$1.1M.
- Total capital expenditure was \$7million lower than budget due to prolong weather events and delays in community consultation for the Whakatāne River Stopbank (Project Future Proof) Project.
- Total funds available in reserves as at 30 June was in deficit \$261,000 as capital works were funded from the asset replacement reserve instead of borrowings.
- Internal loans had a closing balance of \$7.7 million.
- Asset valuation as of 1 July 2022 of \$99M.

There were no matters arising.

4.5 Safeguarding our Stopbanks (SOS) Project Update

Presented by: Paula Chapman. Agenda report was taken as read.

Key Points:

- Stage 2 update. 2a stopbank work complete. 2b stopbank works substantially complete due to delays with weather events. Some finishing work is to be carried over to the new financial year.
- Budget estimate is \$490k. The actual YTD costs are \$535k, due to a change to methodology, weather and ground conditions etc.
- Stage 3 includes the stopbank from properties 75 - 113 Riverside Drive.
- Geotechnical testing is being undertaken in this stage.
- Budget estimate \$700k. Spend YTD is \$50k, which has been for preliminary and Geotech works.
- Comms are ongoing via various mediums, including a newsletter, community reference group, the Whakatāne Beacon, website and direct communications.

Discussion:

- Ongoing maintenance of the stopbanks will include mowing. These costs were included in the LTP paper.
- Cut and carry will result in revenue over time, which will offset mowing costs.
- Stage 4 will complete the area from Landing Road to Riverside Drive. There may be other areas that will need to be completed after Stage 4. Stage 4 costs have been included in the LTP paper.
- Land drainage issues in the Apanui Ave catchment is a WDC issue, and concerns raised by residents should be directed to WDC.

4.6 Gravel Extraction Update

Presented by: Mark Townsend and Paula Chapman. Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- The average gravel supply rate into the Tauranga River is estimated to be 20,000m³ per year. While this indicates extraction is generally sustainable, extraction is purposefully directed towards specific locations are reaches where it is beneficial to the river system.
- There has been no extraction from the Tauranga River over the past 15 months.
- There was one extraction by WDC at Ōwhakatoro Stream this year, to remove the build up of gravel at bridge 105.
- There have been no extractions from the Whakatāne River since 2018.

There were no matters arising.

4.7 General Business

Presented by: Kirsty Brown. Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- 2023 Terms of Reference for all river scheme advisory groups was adopted at the 9 August 2023 Council meeting.
- Second three-year term of ratepayer membership is due to conclude in October 2023. The public nomination process is scheduled for November.

Additional General Business items:

- A new Project Manager has been appointed to the Eastern Drain stopbank upgrade, and the project will start to progress soon.
- BOPRC are working with the Boat Harbour Project team on a peer review.

12.37 pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

**Power/Iles
CARRIED 20/04/2024**

Action Sheet

Whakatane-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group Meeting 4 October 2023

Action	Person Responsible	Completed	Comment
1. It was requested that a full breakdown of costs, and where budget is to be spent, is presented to this group.	Kirsty	Underway	Will be covered in item 1
2. The digital pulse survey is to be circulated amongst members.	Laura	Completed	
3. Boots McNaught to be invited to attend an information day to communicate any concerns within the urban area.	Mark	Completed	