

Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group

Meeting notes

Commencing:	Wednesday, 27 September 2023, 10.00 am
Venue:	Ōpōtiki Golf Course, 14 Fromow Road, Opotiki
Chairperson:	Cr Ken Shirley
Members:	Robbie Petersen (Urban), Barry Hennessey (Urban), Jessica Wiseman (Otara Catchment), Cr Dean Petersen (ODC Elected Rep), Cr Steve Nelson (ODC Elected Rep), Nathan Hughes (ODC staff rep), Maude Maxwell (Ngāti Ngahere),
BOPRC Elected Members:	Chairman D Leeder, Cr Malcolm Campbell
BOPRC staff:	Chris Ingle (GM Integrated Catchments), Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Dan Batten (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Tony Dunlop (Area Engineer), Hemi Barsdell (Asset Management Specialist), Paula Chapman (Project Manager), Kelly Sarjeant (Executive Assistant), Laura Boucher (Communications Partner)
Public:	David Moore (ODC Mayor)
Apologies:	Cr T Iti, Kim Douglas (Ngāti Ira), Loris Hastie (Management Accountant), Stephen Lamb (BOPRC),

1. Opening

Chair opened the meeting. The following item was tabled:

1. Email from Shay Dean, Environmental Scientist regarding forest monitoring.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

3. Previous Meeting Notes

3.1 Resolved:

That the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

Confirmed the notes of the meeting held 5 April 2023 are a true and correct record.

Noted that action points covered in staff presentations.

Maxwell/ Hennessey

CARRIED

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 and ecological offset work.
- Potential future financial pressures to be aware of:
 - The review of the BOPRC Regional Natural Resources Plan to implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management may impose additional expenditure requirements for the scheme, such as the need to obtain resource consent for currently permitted activities. A change such as this would likely bring additional compliance/monitoring and ecological impact offsetting costs.
 - 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 pay 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.

- Update from Laura Boucher, Comms Partner - affordability for communities is top of mind and focus is on core deliveries. Provided overview of the communications plan for LTP.

Discussion:

- Members raised concerns regarding Room for the River for river management. Staff advised application is only in the development stage and engagement will follow in due course.
- Question raised about the funding source for the Waioeka-Otara stopbank construction. Staff clarified that it is included in the 'Before the Deluge' application submitted to the central government, and a decision is anticipated after the upcoming election. A placeholder value has been allocated with additional details to be provided in the future.
- River Scheme Sustainability project currently in consultation process, will identify work outcomes when it is completed.
- It was noted that the Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan has allowances for climate change.
- Concern raised about the sustainability of expenditure for the future. Staff advised that the existing budgets uphold the current level of service, highlighting that the focus is primarily on the initial three years, while future budgets are considered as placeholders. Staff had been actively seeking ways to reduce costs for ratepayers. Including potential future changes to levels of service to manage renewal costs.
- Member raised concerns around the Room for the River and Snell Road, wanting protection from erosion due to many assets in the area and aspirations for the land by Whakatōhea.

4.2 Capital Works Programme Update

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

Key Points:

- The individual projects within the scheme focus on Climate Change Resilience and are part of the broader River Scheme Sustainability Project. This aims to enhance the resilience of the river system in the face of climate change challenges.
- The capacity review of Waioeka-Otara stopbanks has been completed, with sections of stopbank currently not meeting the level of service. Further modelling information on options expected to be available in March 2024.
- Geotechnical investigation has taken place on various sites, some seepage areas identified, and solutions are currently being investigated.

Discussion:

- An update was provided on the live flooding occurring in the Duke Street area, and acknowledged Mark, Dan, and the team's efforts, including additional pumping systems in this location.

- The group were informed of the design report currently being prepared for the Opotiki District Council for the Duke Street area. Once completed, combined discussion on joint solutions for this area would be required.
- David Moore raised his concerns about the Duke Street area stopbank. He emphasised that they also protect two State Highways servicing infrastructure in Eastern Bay and Gisborne. Chairman Leeder mentioned the current 80/20 funding ratio.
- Question was raised about the functionality of a flood gate on a specific property due to water not draining properly. Staff clarified that it is an ODC asset recently replaced.
- Nathan Hughes advised that the Eastern Bay of Plenty is undergoing a spatial plan process, discussing community aspirations, particularly for the south of the town. Conversations about what "Room for the River" would mean for those aspirations will be needed.
- Ōpōtiki evacuation maps drafted and next steps covered. Leaders of this plan will be ODC and EMBOP.
- Three stages for trigger points to evacuate covered.
- Nathan Hughes acknowledged the great work done in this space, thanked Mark and team.

4.3 Maintenance Works Programme Update

Presented by: Dan Batten and Tony Dunlop. Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- Rock replenishment works will commence this summer.
- The electronics at the Duke Street pump station will undergo an upgrade.
- Collaborating with the Biosecurity and Land Management teams to control woolly nightshade and pampas grass spread over the scheme.
- Asset condition defect works are currently underway, with high priority stopbank defect sites first on the list.
- Progressing towards nature-based solutions in conjunction with hard engineering methods. The approach will be determined site by site.
- A drone footage survey has been conducted.

Discussion:

Staff acknowledged hapū members for their valuable assistance. This collaborative effort has proven effective in benefiting the river.

4.4 Finance Report Update

Presented by: Kirsty Brown. Report taken as read.

Key Points:

- Revenue and expenditure update for the 12 months ending 30 June 2023, noting report is draft until adoption by Council.
- Total operation revenue \$262,000 higher than budget due to unrealised gains from missing assets.
- Total operation expenditure was \$108,000 higher than budget due to the high rainfall experienced over the last 12 months.

- Resulting in a total operating surplus of \$108,000.
- Total capital revenue \$445,000 higher than budget due to the final settlement for the April 2017 floods, resulting in a total surplus of \$553,000.
- Total capital expenditure was \$17,000 higher than budget.
- Noted that the reserve information presented at the March meeting was incorrect.
- Total reserves \$1.355 million.
- Internal loans closing balance as of 30 June 2023 \$4.19 million.
- Asset valuation as at 1 July 2022 of \$56 million.

4.5 Gravel Extraction Update

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

Key Points:

- Returns information not yet available for allocations granted this financial year.
- Waioeka gravel extraction consent wording agreed with Ngāti Ira along with an agreement formalising the way Regional Council works alongside the hapū on gravel management.
- Bed level surveys and Waioeka River cross sections presented.

Discussion:

- Formalised agreements for extraction on the Waioeka and Otara do not apply to subsidiary rivers as they have their own consent conditions. The health of the river is at the forefront of any requests received around gravel extraction.
- It was questioned whether the gravel/sediment has an impact out to sea. Staff responded that this happens right along the coast.

4.6 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.
- Guiding principles included aligns with Council's strategic impact areas.
- Reimbursement for travel and time off work to attend meetings now available.
- Second three-year term of ratepayer membership is due to conclude in October 2023. The public nomination process is scheduled for November.

Items for staff follow up:

- Maude Maxwell requested it be considered for two hapū representatives to attend meetings.

Public Forum

- N/A

Meeting closed at 12.00 pm

CONFIRMED

**Iti/ Peterson
CARRIED 27/03/2024**

Action Sheet

Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group Meeting

27 September 2023

Action	Person Responsible	Completed	Comment
1. Maude Maxwell requested it be considered for two hapū representatives to attend meetings.	Kirsty	Completed	