

Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group

Meeting notes

Commencing:	Wednesday, 27 March 2023, 10.00 am
Venue:	Ōpōtiki Golf Course, 14 Fromow Road, Opotiki
Chairperson:	Councillor Toi Iti
Members:	Robbie Petersen (Urban), Dave Wilson (Waioeka Catchment), Jessica Wiseman (Otara Catchment), Barry Hennessey (Urban), Councillor Dean Petersen (ODC Elected Rep), Councillor Steve Nelson (ODC Elected Rep), Nathan Hughes (ODC staff rep), Maude and Karaitiana Maxwell (Ngāti Ngahere), Kim Douglas (Ngāti Ira) Logan Bertram (Whakatohea Trust board)
BOPRC Elected Members:	Councillors Ken Shirley and Malcolm Campbell
BOPRC staff:	Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Dan Batten (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Tony Dunlop (Area Engineer), Paula Chapman (Project Manager), Laura Boucher (Senior Communications Partner) Jenn Goodfellow (Asset Management Coordinator), Cleo Hanlon (Operations Coordinator) and Michelle Lee - Planner (Water Policy) •Policy (Freshwater)
Interest parties:	Logan Bertram, Environmental Manager, Whakatōhea Māori Trust Board.
Apologies:	Chairman Leeder, Chris Ingle (GM Integrated Catchments), Hemi Barsdell (Asset Management Specialist), AJ Prinsloo (Finance Manager), Robert Anstis (Waioeka Catchment Rural) and Tawa Kingi (Ngāti Ira).

1. Opening

Chair opened the meeting. The following items were tabled:

1. Draft Long Term Plan Handout
2. Long Term Plan Consultation document
3. LTP 2024-2034 - Rainfall and Flow Monitoring Gauges (late item).

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 27 September 2023 are a true and correct record.

Iti/ Peterson
CARRIED

Action Items from meeting 27 September 2023

3.2

Brief overview of the action item from the previous meeting was provided. It was noted that Maude Maxwell's request for two hapū representatives to attend meetings had been approved.

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

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

Key Points:

- Staff's focus has been on balancing affordability and risk while ensuring the continued function of rivers and drainage activities.
- Draft budgets are showing increases in both operational and capital expenditure.
- External pressures such as inflation, increased interest rates and insurance hikes contributing to unavoidable cost increases.
- Capital investment in flood protection has boosted resilience but it comes at a cost.
- Loan interest rate is forecasted to move from 2.5% to 4%, resulting in a significant financial cost to the scheme.
- Growing need to prepare for climate change and meeting an increased demand for Rivers and Drainage services.
- Noted that presented budget information is based on version 4 of the budget adopted by Council for review by Audit NZ in December 2023 and for public consultation from 8 March to 9 April 2024. Staff are currently working towards version 5 of the budget.
- Detailed budgets with loan and rating implications and property examples were presented.
- Staff are still working towards finding further savings.
- Overview of the LTP consultation process provided.

Discussion:

- LTP budget is based on the financial modelling where the predictions are more reliable for the first three years. The Capital budget for the first financial year of \$1.739M is an estimate.
- The Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan allows for 5-year and 10-year flood events that are reflected in spikes in the Operational budget. The accumulated Flood Damage Reserve is set aside for these costs.

6 Capital Works Programme Update

Presented by: Laura Boucher and Mark Townsend
Agenda report taken as read.

Key Points:

- Overview of the scheme's website and communications update provided.
- The capacity review has been completed. Sections of the flood protection system has been identified as not meeting the agreed levels of service.
- Geotechnical investigation has further identified seepage in some locations on both the Waioeka and Otarā stopbanks. Also identified the replacement of the flood wall from King Street to Richard Street and culvert outlet upgrades.
- The engagement group will be re-convened once the modelling options are completed. Options for remediation will be ranked against the multi criteria analysis and shortlisted.
- Tree removal and culvert outlet work to commence shortly.
- The outlet upgrades will require consultation with Opotiki District Council for the removal of trees.
- The evacuation maps are ready to be reviewed by Opotiki District Council and Emergency Management Bay of Plenty. Once reviewed consultation engagement will commence with hapū/iwi and the community.
- Overview of the September 2023 flood event was provided.

Discussion:

- Areas that were identified and monitored as hot spots were selected for the geotechnical testing of the stopbanks on the Otarā River.
- The flooding on Duke Street area in September 2023 was a 50-year event, surpassing the capacity of the ODC's stormwater system. Responsibility for the affected area lies jointly with ODC for the urban area and BOPRC for the rural area. Decisions are to be made on how to address flooding in that area and which Council will carry out the work.
- An overview of proposed LTP projects for ODC was provided by

Nathan Hughes.

Action Items:

- Link to the Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme page on the BOPRC website will be circulated to members.

7 Maintenance Works Programme Update

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

Key Points:

- Overview of scheme maintenance works, and programme highlights provided.
- Upgrades to the Duke Street Pump Station programmed for this financial year. Includes an upgrade to the pump electronics and the improving the access with pads installed around the pump station for temporary pumping to be used in an emergency.
- Otara River Pony Club Berm: Weed growth in large area, open to suggested solutions.
- Planting native species in conjunction with willow and rock erosion protection. Trials are ongoing with promising results with cabbage trees.

Discussion:

- Work is ongoing with weed control, inspections, and monitoring particularly in areas of gravel buildup.
- Erosion on Connors point river edge. Opotiki District Council works to be completed in this area and reassess the issues.
- Clarification provided of asset types under the management of BOPRC.

8. Essential Freshwater Update

Presented by: Michelle Lee

Key Points:

- Changes to the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and Regional Natural Resources Plan (RNRP) which will result in potential rule changes including:
- Drain discharges regulated to improve water quality.
- Regulations on setbacks and stock exclusion from rivers and drains.
- Guidelines for managing stock on steep land.

- Regulations against grazing practices that lead to bare soil.
- Control measures for nitrogen and phosphorus fertiliser use.
- Regulation of scheme works near rivers and wetlands.
- Amendments to allocation limits and minimum flow requirements for water extraction.
- Council has delayed the release of the draft RPS and RNRP documents due to the recent central government changes.
- Council has extended proposed plan notification date to September 2025 (from December 2024)

Discussion:

- Currently working under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) statement that existed pre-election.
- The due date for public notification has been pushed out by central government to 2027 but Council recently resolved to set a public notification date of September 2025. Noting however that this may be revised dependent on the government's NPS-FM review.
- 100s of water take and discharge legacy consents will expire in October 2026 which restricts BOPRC pushing out to the new date of 2027.
- Concerns that Freshwater Farm Plans will put pressure on farmers.
- There have been indications that the new policies could be less focused on prescriptive central control and more on property ownership and catchment by catchment treatments.
- Overview of the current Te mana o Te Wai discussions was outlined.

9 Finance Report Update

Presented by: Kirsty Brown. Report taken as read.

Key Points:

- Revenue and expenditure update for the 6 months ending 31 December 2023, noting report is draft until adoption by Council.
- Total operation revenue \$23,000 higher than budget due to higher interest rates.
- Total operation expenditure was \$116,000 lower than budget.
- Resulting in a total operating surplus of \$139,000.
- No capital revenue received due no funding from central government for climate resilient projects.
- Total capital expenditure was \$156,000 lower than budget.
- Total reserves \$1.6 million.

- Flood damage reserve funds available of \$565,000.
- Internal loans closing balance as of 31 December 2023 \$3.944 million.
- Asset valuation as at 1 July 2023 of \$56 million.

No discussion followed.

10 Gravel Extraction Update

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

Key Points:

- There's a proposal to raise the gravel management fee from 90 cents per m³ to \$2.70 per m³ under the proposed Fees and Charges Policy. The current fee hasn't been reviewed in 14 years. The management fee includes the costs associated with surveying riverbeds, conducting site inspections, administration, engagement and reporting.
- Conducting workshops to discuss resource consenting conditions with Ngāti Ngahere.
- Consultation on the Fees and Charges Policy is being conducted alongside the draft Long-Term Plan (LTP) process. Submissions are open until 9 April

Discussion:

- Higher demand for gravel from some areas due to quality. Where the gravel is low quality, but removal is required, the costs could potentially need to be covered by the scheme.
- Concerns about the increase in gravel extraction fees for contractors.
- It was noted that under the fees and charges proposal there is the ability for fee waiver criteria to be established.
- Submissions were encouraged from members.
- Ratepayers will carry the costs if the fee for extraction is not increased.
- There are exclusion periods and inspections needed for extraction between August to January due to the birdlife nesting season (Banded dotterel and Pied Stilt)

Action Items:

To be circulated to members:

- Waioeka-Otara scheme page link.
- Fees and Charges Policy, which now includes the gravel management fee and the proposed increase.
- Gravel Management Fee FAQ's.
- Fees and charges policy review submissions.

11 General Business

Presented by: Mark Townsend – Rainfall and Flow Monitoring Gauges

Key Points:

- There is a need for additional rainfall and flow monitoring gauges for the Opotiki area. Current monitoring levels are insufficient.
- The \$65,000 costs required, are not currently within the 2024 – 2034 LTP.
- Encourage submissions from the advisory group to support.

Discussion:

- Explanation on the monitoring process.
- Confirmed the location of current monitoring gauges and areas that are not currently monitored.
- There is a high priority for instant and reliable data that can feed into evacuation responses.
- Investment would pay itself off over the years.
- The group showed interest in filing submissions.

Action items:

- Links to the Long Term Plan hub sent to members including details of submission information.

Meeting closed at 12:19

Action Sheet

Waioeka-Otara Rivers Scheme Advisory Group Meeting

27 March 2024

Action	Person Responsible	Completed	Comment
1. Link to the Waioeka-Otara scheme page on the BOPRC website to be sent to members	Laura	Completed	
2. Fees and Charges Policy, which now includes the gravel management fee and the proposed increase sent to members.	Laura	Completed	
3. Links to the Long Term Plan hub sent to members including details of submission information	Laura	Completed	