# Notes of the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Tuscany Villas, Whakatāne, on Wednesday, 19 September 2018, commencing at 10am

**Chair:** Councillor Norm Bruning

**Advisory Group:** Bernie Clark, Boots McNaught, Brian Power, Fraser McGougan, Geoff Mercer, Scottie McLeod, Tom Pyatt, Jim Finlay (Whakatāne District Council), Councillor Andrew Iles (Whakatāne District Council).

**BOPRC Councillors:** Councillor Tiipene Marr

**BOPRC Staff:** Paula Chapman (Project Manager Flood Repair Project), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Geoff Stone (Area Engineer), Tony Dunlop (Flood Restoration Project Engineer), Andy Dixon (Accounting Team Leader), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Chris Ingle (General Manager, Integrated Catchments), Kay Boreham (Marketing and Communications Advisor), Nic Newman (Principal Advisor), Simon Stokes (Eastern Catchments Manager), Brendon Love (Project Manager Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project).

**Public:** Richard Holmes

**Apologies:** Chairman Leeder, Councillor Clark, Roger Waugh.

## 1 Welcome

Councillor Bruning welcomed everyone to the meeting and Councillor Marr opened the meeting with a karakia.

## 2 Apologies

Apologies received as recorded above.

## 3 Notes of previous meeting held 16 February 2018

**Resolved**

**That the Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:**

**1 Confirm the notes of the meeting held 16 February 2018 as a true and correct record.**

**Marr/McNaught**
**CARRIED**

## 4 Matters arising from previous meeting

Jim Finlay to provide an update on the Whakatāne Wharf project in General Business.

## 5 Operations report

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the Works Programme report provided in the agenda pack highlighting the following:

- Weather has been challenging with frequent rainfall events – scheme has been working as required through these events.
- On top of the Flood Repair Project, which only focuses on flood damage for the April 2017 events, there is also annual flood repairs that the scheme needs to manage.
- Te Rahu pump station surge chamber needs repairs and strengthening – work hasn't been priced as yet.
- Maintenance budget is fully allocated.
- Rangitāiki Drainage meeting scheduled for 31 October 2018 to discuss matters related to the drainage scheme and pump stations. Membership is Scottie McLeod, Brian Power and three members of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Advisory Group (Linda Virbickas, Alan Law and Peter Askey).

***Attendance***
*Simon Stokes joined the meeting at 10:18am*

## 6 Flood Repair Project report

Paula Chapman spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack and delivered a PowerPoint presentation showing progress with the April 2017 Flood Repair Project.

- 108 repair sites in the Whakatāne-Tauranga scheme (520 sites across the region).
- 24 Whakatāne-Tauranga sites completed as at 30 June 2018.
- In 2018-2019, a further 35 Whakatāne-Tauranga sites are scheduled for repair.
- Work in the Whakatāne and Tauranga Rivers expected to take the full four years of the project. Completion by June 2021.
- Repair work funded through insurance (40% of like for like repairs), central government assistance through Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (60% of existing essential infrastructure repairs), minor funders like NZTA where appropriate, targeted rates (80%) and general rates (20%).
- Suitable graded rock supply continues to constrain the work programme with Matahina Quarry currently unavailable for supply.
- Weather and ground conditions are limiting the type of work that can be undertaken.

Discussion

- Issue with Matahina Quarry is they cannot supply rock to the specification required for the flood repair works. Looking at opening a new area in the quarry and this requires Resource Consent which takes time.
- The value of our flood control assets is significant and important to know where the assets are and what condition they are in. There are gaps in the current asset information and to address this, a new Asset Management System is being developed. As flood repair work sites are completed the key information is being captured and the site registered as a new assets or changes to an existing asset.
- A comment was made that the amount of rock work along the river is changing the naturalness of the river and potentially impacting on native species. Repair techniques to providing for river edge fish habitat are used where possible and Rivers and Drainage staff are guided in this by the Science Team.
- Council is fixing the flood damage now, but what's the thinking around ways to mitigate ongoing issues and factoring in climate change. The River Scheme Sustainability project is focusing 100 years into the future and investigating alternatives to continuously repairing and raising stopbanks. Questioning whether land use and development has squeezed the river up too much. Although it would be good to pull fences back from the river, giving room for the river, and riparian plant, not all landowners are supportive of this. Currently work with landowners who are supportive.

Planting can provide good river edge protection in some situations and at a lower cost than rock armouring.

- Houses were flooded on Reid's Road and locals have observed issues with the stream through SWAPs Quarry struggling to get water away. Community are feeling like they haven't had any feedback from Council. Issue is when the river is up the area can't drain and it backflows and floods Reid's Road. Engineering team is working on a solution. Simply straightening the drain or increasing the size of the culvert will not fix the issue.

***ACTION:***
***Geoff Stone to contact Fraser McGougan and Richard Holmes to discuss suitable sites for erosion protection plantings.***

## 7 Engineering update

Mark Townsend delivered a PowerPoint presentation covering the following key topics:

Whakatāne River Cross Sections
A series of cross section graphs, representing river bed levels, were shown for the Whakatāne River covering the period 1969 to 2017. Main observation was that there has been very little change. There is a process of overall slight aggradation with scouring when there is a flood – which we would expect to see. The cross sections are surveyed every 3-5 years.

Kakaharoa Drive and Quay Street Seepage issues
When Whakatāne River is high the volume of water seeping through and under the stopbank is sufficient to cause road closures and business disruption. In 2012 and again in 2017 seepage was observed through cobble stones, manhole covers, road seal and around pohutukawa trees. This uncontrolled seepage could result in piping and possible stopbank failure. It is proposed to intercept the seepage layer and bring it to the surface in controlled manner by installing a system of seepage collection trenches and pump wells along the east end of Kakaharoa Drive and Quay Street.

Whakatāne Urban Stopbanks
Some sections of the Whakatāne River stopbank from the Skate Park to Mataatua Boat Ramp do not have the full amount of freeboard and need to be raised to meet the design standard of 1% AEP + 800mm freeboard. In 2004 when the spit fuse didn't work some areas of stopbank were close to overtopping. In 2017 the spit fuse worked, and although there was more flow in the river the levels were not as high. In the next two years (2018-2019 and 2019-2020) $670k is budgeted for stopbank raising.

Investigation of Floodwalls
A recommendation of the Rangitāiki River Scheme Review was for all concrete floodwalls in the region to be assessed. The Rangitāiki walls were investigated last year and in 2018-2019 the focus is on Whakatāne floodwalls. The main area of investigation is the stability of the ground below the floodwalls.

River Scheme Sustainability project
$100k per annum budgeted to look for river scheme management solutions that will be sustainable into the future. It is not an option to continue raising stopbanks so the project is investigating alternate solutions. How the river schemes will cope with climate change, with predicted sea level rise and more intense rainfall, is a key part of the thinking. Possible themes include – retention or detention, ponding areas, flow diversion, making room for the river, pasture to wetlands, land use controls, farm management practices, ecological corridors, and sediment management.

## 8 Communications update

Kay Boreham spoke about her background, her involvement with the Whakatāne District Council Recovery Office following the April 2017 floods and outlined her new role with Regional Council focusing on communications in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. She emphasised that Council staff want to hear what works best for our communities and to ensure that people are getting the information they want in the style they would like to receive it. Members were encouraged to get in touch if they had any concerns or suggestions.

Discussion

- Comment made that Regional Council seems to depend on website communication a lot and that face-to-face communication is of greater value.
- With the Flood Repair Project have been attending community group meetings and have run a number of open days – these have been very successful and provide people with the opportunity to ask their burning questions.
- Farmers like good, useful, information which is not too wordy.
- Richard Holmes stated he felt BOPRC was not managing gravel extraction very well and there was no opportunity for him to have input. He suggested that extractions be publically notified. Staff undertook to have Richard added to the gravel extraction notification email group.

***ACTION:***
***Add Richard Holmes to the gravel extraction notification email group.***

***Attendance***
*Brendon Love joined the meeting*

## 9 Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project update

Brendon Love delivered a PowerPoint presentation updating the group on the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project. The key points were:

- Main objectives of the project are to clean the canal and remove the contaminants from the food chain.
- Flood control measures are in place - flood water is being diverted to the west and this has resulted in prolonged elevated water levels in areas where historically there hasn't been any flood issues. Working within the constraints of the consent to lower canal levels in advance of rainfall to reduce the impact of this.
- Project is behind schedule with the rate of dredging well below expectation and re-dredging has been required when dioxin targets not met. Have dredged 2 km of canal and results have been validated for 1.85 km.
- Aiming for completion date of April 2019.
- Recent tests of sediments in Kopeopeo West drain have returned results above target levels and this will need further investigation and work. Kopeopeo West is not included in the scope of the current project and priority is on getting the current job completed.

Discussion

- Landowners don't want to have to go through another winter without the canal operating at full capacity.
- Intend to have an affected landowner meeting to ensure everyone is kept informed.
- Are we getting rid of the dioxin? Using a proven method and it is working well. Once a section is completed it gets tested and peer reviewed before being validated as clear.

- What's happening with bioremediation? Bioremediation is phase 2 of the process and currently conducting pilot trials with poplar trees inoculated with fungi as a more natural alternative to the costly options of chemical treatment, heat treatment, incineration or sterilisation procedures. Dioxins have a half-life of 65 years and the concept is the fungi will generate enzymes that will speed up the breakdown of the dioxin. Small scale trials have been successful but nothing has been proven at the scale of this project.
- Kopeopeo Canal Project webpage has a lot of information about bioremediation.

***Attendance***
*Bruce Crabbe and Brendon Love left the meeting*

## 10 Finance report

Andy Dixon spoke to the finance report provided in the agenda pack and gave an overview of the scheme's revenue and expenditure for year ending 30 June 2018. The following points were noted:

- Two funding options considered for flood repair work during Long term Plan deliberations. Council went with Option 1 which was to vary the targeted rate in relation to when flood repair expenditure occurs. This approach allows for adjustments to be made to rate increases by using advantages like the flood damage reserves. The predicted 36% rate increase in 2019-2020 will be reduced by the flood damage reserve funds.
- Contract Work in the financial report shows as negative $271,000. This is the result of reclassification of some flood damage repair works, from operational to capital.
- Reserve balances as at 30 June 2018 as follows:
    - Flood Damage Reserve $77,410 (this is contingency cash held for flood damage works and is currently held on term deposit). An annual amount is allocated to the fund for it to accumulate a balance in anticipation of future flood events. A larger allocation is made every five years to allow for five and ten year flood events. These funds can only be activated when a flood event reaches a set threshold. The flood damage reserve has decreased significantly since December 2017 as a result of the April 2017 floods.
    - Works Reserve $375,598 (surplus targeted rates from previous year available to fund operating expenditure)
    - General Reserve $93,899 (surplus general rates from previous year
- Outstanding Loans $6,213,121 – includes $2.3m from 2012 which will be paid off in 2022 and a ten year loan for flood repair works pre 2009 which will be fully paid in the next 2-3 years. There will be a spike in the loan balance as funds are needed upfront for the April 2017 flood repairs however, large repayments will be made as insurance claims are paid out.
- Whakatāne-Tauranga Asset Valuation 1 July 2017 $62,615,758

<u>Discussion</u>

- Members were reassured that no work was being held up for financial reasons.
- The increased risk to the scheme from climate change was mentioned and anything that distorts the risk is not advisable.

## 11 Integrated Catchments update

Simon Stokes explained that the Eastern Catchments work programmes includes all catchments in the Eastern Bay of Plenty except for the Rangitāiki Catchment which as a priority catchment has its own work programme. He highlighted a new area of work in the Waioho catchment where recent water quality data has been of real concern with high nitrate levels and low macro-invertebrate populations.

The Eastern Catchment land management officers provide support to landowners to:
1. protect and/or restore biodiversity sites like wetlands and areas of native bush
2. develop riparian management plans to manage waterways on their properties.

Focus needs to move from a property by property basis to a collaborative, catchment based approach.

Simon brought Plan Change 9 to the attention of members. It is the first step in a two-stage approach to improving the rules for water quality and quantity management in the Bay of Plenty. The recommendations of the plan change strengthen water allocation limits and improve management of water. The recommendations were adopted by Council on 18 September 2018 and will be publically notified on 9 October 2018.

Discussion

- With a number of different arms of Council working in the catchment it is often confusing for landowners. Needs to be one point of contact. Chris Ingle advised that land management officers are the relationship managers and they should be the first point of contact. Their areas of responsibility are shown on the website.
- It was questioned whether there is a communications plan around Plan Change 9 as it is very important that affected landowners are aware of the implications and understand what it means. Simon Stokes advised that there is an implementation plan.

***Attendance***
*Andrew Iles left the meeting at 12:22pm*

# 12 General business

## 12.1 Gravel management update

Tony Dunlop spoke to the gravel management update provided in the agenda pack. He explained that the April 2017 floods had a major influence on the gravel river beds with significant changes observed in the cross section surveys carried out post the flood events.

The upper Whakatāne River shows bed level decline with the beds scoured from the high energy flood events. All commercially driven extraction in this reach of the river has been halted until bed levels recover. Extractions will still be undertaken for river management purposes, particularly where overflow cuts are constructed and where beaches are armoured.

Discussion
Richard Holmes referred to the Draft NERMN report and asked when the recommended bed level envelope for the Tauranga River would be available. Mark Townsend responded that cross-section surveys had been completed and acknowledged the NERMN report was well over due.

Richard had detailed questions about gravel management that staff present could not answer and it was agreed that Roger Waugh would contact Richard to discuss his concerns.

***ACTION:***
***Roger Waugh to contact Richard Holmes to discuss Richard's concerns and questions regarding gravel management practices.***

## 12.2 **Advisory group continuous improvement**

Nic Newman explained he had been asked by the Chief Executive to look at the advisory groups and identify any opportunities for improvement. He will be providing a report and feeding back to the group by the end of the year. Members provided useful feedback and any additional comments can be emailed to nic.newman@boprc.govt.nz.

## 12.3 **Whakatāne Wharf update**

Jim Finlay provided an update on the Whakatāne Wharf redevelopment.

- Governance group formed to oversee the development of wharf facilities and related waterfront development options. Has representation from Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Awa Holdings Limited and Whakatāne District Council.
- Redevelopment needs to provide: safe berthage, meet future demand for berthage, enable marine and White Island/Whakaari related economic development and employment growth, and recognise the cultural significance of the river; all without increasing the flood risk to the river and township.
- Proposal is to develop the area from the Yacht Club to the Information Centre including a protective groyne structure. There will be room for 90 berths (Yacht Clubs current 20 berths plus an additional 70 berths (existing 25 commercial berths, 14 people on waiting list and 31 unallocated berths).
- Plan to start work in 2020.

**Meeting ended:** 1:00pm