

Strategy and Policy Committee

Open Minutes

Commencing:	Tuesday 20 February 2024, 9.30am
Venue:	Council Chambers, Ground Floor, Regional House, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga
Chairperson:	Cr Paula Thompson
Deputy Chairperson:	Cr Kat Macmillan
Members:	Cr Malcolm Campbell (via Zoom) Cr Stuart Crosby Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti Chairman Doug Leeder Cr Matemoana McDonald Cr Jane Nees Cr Ron Scott Cr Ken Shirley Cr Lyall Thurston (via Zoom) Cr Andrew von Dadelszen Cr Te Taru White (via Zoom) Cr Kevin Winters (via Zoom)

In Attendance:	<u>Staff:</u> Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive; Namouta Poutasi – General Manager, Strategy and Science; Chris Ingle – General Manager, Integrated Catchments; Kataraina O'Brien – General Manager, Strategic Engagement; Julie Bevan – Policy and Planning Manager; Stephen Lamb – Environmental Strategy Manager; Nicki Green – Principal Advisor Policy and Planning; Paula Golsby – Principal Advisor, Consents; Karen Parcell – Team Leader Kaiwhakatinana; Dean Howie – Programme Manager, Regional Economic Development; Penny Doorman – Programme Leader, Geothermal; Freya Camburn – Senior Policy Analyst; Jenny Teeuwen – Committee Advisor <u>External:</u> Julian Fitter – Environmental Consultant; Brent Mountfort and Jesse Brennan – BOP Federated Farmers; Shay Schlaepfer – Chief Operating Officer, Environmental Defence Society (FDS)
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Apologies:	Cr Te Taru White for late arrival
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1. Chairperson's Opening Statement

Chairperson Cr Paula Thompson opened the meeting and reminded those present that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded and that the recording would be available on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (Regional Council) YouTube channel following the meeting.

Recording link: [Strategy and Policy Committee - 20 February 2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

2. Apologies

Resolved

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1 **Accepts the apology from Cr White for late arrival, tendered at the meeting.**

**Thompson/Macmillan
CARRIED**

3. Order of Business

There was no change to the order of business but it was noted that item 8.1 - Spatial Planning Verbal Update, had been withdrawn from the agenda and was deferred to the next meeting.

4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

5. Minutes

Minutes to be Confirmed

5.1 Strategy and Policy Committee Minutes - 31 October 2023

Resolved

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1 **Confirms the Strategy and Policy Committee Minutes - 31 October 2023 as a true and correct record.**

**Nees/Shirley
CARRIED**

6. Presentations

6.1 National Policy Statement - Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB)

Presentation: [Environment and Wildlife Partnership Proposal: Objective ID A4603513](#) ⇨

Presented by: Julian Fitter - Environmental Consultant

Key Points

- Better protection of our environment and wildlife was urgently needed.
- New Zealand had over 100,000 native species, with 80% found only in New Zealand.
- 429 priority biodiversity sites (PBS) had been identified by Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) - 196 received some level of active management, 233 had no active management.

- Of the 47 identified high priority Category One sites, 53% received no level of management, 25% received some level, and only 13% received good or excellent management.
- Proposed an Environment and Wildlife Partnership for the Bay of Plenty. Provided overview of the Partnership's aim and who would be involved.
- Discussions with BOPRC, DOC, and other stakeholders would take place over the next few months. Hoped to have a report and a further presentation available by August 2024.
- Was looking for BOPRC to be a partner but not the lead agency of the Partnership.

In Response to Questions

- The next step (Stage One) would involve contacting other potential partners/funders including Bay Trust, TECT and EnviroHub.
- Jobs for Nature were more project focussed, while the proposed Partnership would be more long-term "results on the ground" focussed.
- The biodiversity credits system could be considered as a funding stream; however, the Bay of Plenty was a wealthy area and there should be numerous funding opportunities to tap into.
- Staff would speak further with Mr Fitter regarding the Partnership proposal and how BOPRC might be involved.

6.2 Freshwater Programme - BOP Federated Farmers

Presentation: *Freshwater Programme - BOP Federated Farmers: Objective ID A4603759* [↗](#)

Presented by: Brent Mountfort and Jesse Brennan - BOP Federated Farmers

Key Points

- Provided overview of the Federated Farmers organisation. Over 620 active members in the Bay of Plenty region.
- Acknowledged the time and resources that had gone into BOPRC's Freshwater process to date.
- Would like to see BOPRC pause the process until it was clearer what the new National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) looked like, or what the Government's next move might be.
- The preferred notification date was September 2025.
- Provided overview of the implications and challenges for farmers regarding Te Mana o Te Wai.
- Relationships would be a crucial part of the Freshwater process going forward, particularly with the farming community, and Federated Farmers would like to assist with this in any way possible.

In Response to Questions

- Federated Farmers were supportive of the September 2025 notification date, noting any extension to the original December 2024 notification date would be beneficial and welcomed.
- A heavily prescriptive planning approach did not work. Did not want to see farmers overburdened with large costs, but coming up with a middle ground would be a challenge.

- Farmers had not been “sitting on their hands” over the last 10 to 20 years and significant change had occurred to the way farmers were operating. It was important to build on the work that farmers were already doing.
- In the past, farming had been mainly focussed on production (high inputs, high outputs); now the focus was more on profitability (how to make more out of less). The environment was also becoming equally important.
- Federated Farmers were always looking for alignment with other organisations.

6.3 Freshwater Programme - Environmental Defence Society (EDS)

Presented by: Shay Schlaepfer - Chief Operating Officer, EDS

Key Points

- EDS has extensive involvement in freshwater matters and was also a key player in government policy relating to freshwater.
- Notwithstanding the Government’s extension to the deadline for notification of Freshwater Plans, BOPRC had a legal requirement to give effect to the NPS-FM in its regional policy and plans ‘as soon as reasonably practicable’ (section 55 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), and clause 4.1 of the NPS-FM), which meant without delay.
- With draft changes already ready to go, EDS supported Option 1 in the Freshwater Policy Programme: Timeframes report being presented at today’s meeting (March 2025 notification date).
- EDS was aware that some Ministers were recommending to councils to pause their freshwater plan making processes until after the new Government had changed the NPS-FM. EDS cautioned that this recommendation was contrary to councils’ legal obligations and should not be followed.
- Acknowledged the difficult position BOPRC had been put in with respect to timing given the Government’s announcements, but asked that BOPRC please just ‘get on with it’.

In Response to Questions

- BOPRC had the discretion to notify before the December 2027 date. Delaying further would only incur more costs.
- BOPRC had the opportunity to be an exemplar in this space.
- EDS would be doing their best to speak with every council throughout the country.

10.48am - the meeting **adjourned**.

11.10am - the meeting **reconvened**.

7. Reports

7.1 Operating Environment

Presented by: Namouta Poutasi – General Manager, Strategy and Science
Julie Bevan – Policy and Planning Manager

In Response to Questions

- There had been no mention of changes to the National Planning Standards in the Government's recent announcements and staff continued to work on this, i.e. simplifying, regrouping and reformatting etc.

Resolved**That the Strategy and Policy Committee:****1 Receives the report, Operating Environment.**

**Thompson/Crosby
CARRIED**

7.2 Freshwater Policy Programme: Timeframes

Presentation: [Freshwater Policy Programme: Timeframes: Objective ID A4603593](#)
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Presented by: Stephen Lamb – Environmental Strategy Manager
Nicki Green – Principal Advisor Policy and Planning
Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive
Paula Golsby – Principal Advisor, Consents

Key Points

- Four options were presented and assessed. The staff recommendation was for Option 2: September 2025 notification date.
- Outlined the main reasons for amending the timeframe to September 2025.
- Chief Executive Fiona McTavish noted the following:
 - Attended a meeting last Friday with all regional and unitary councils. Key points included:
 - o It was important to recognise the new Ministers' direction and to work with Government to implement this direction.
 - o It was also important to progress Regional Policy Statements (RPS) and regional plan changes where there was good reason to do so.
 - Believed there were good reasons to do so in the Bay of Plenty.
 - Recommended that Councillors write to Ministers inviting them to the Bay of Plenty to understand the rationale for progressing the plan changes here.
 - It would be important for staff to be adaptive going forward.
 - Endorsed staff recommendation Option 2 as a practical way forward.

11.22am – Cr White **entered** the meeting (via Zoom).

In Response to Questions

- A more “streamlined” Regional Natural Resources Plan (RNRP) would be shorter, more fit for purpose, and would have clear objectives, clear policies and rules, and would also absorb/replace the On-site Effluent Treatment (OSET) Regional Plan and the Tarawera Catchment Regional Plan.
- Terms of consents could not be reduced based on potential pending policy change but new consent review conditions could be included.

11.30am – Cr Campbell **withdrew** from the meeting.

- Councillors sought clarity regarding the Government’s intention to “Allow district councils more flexibility in how they met environmental limits and seek advice on how to exempt councils from obligations under NPS-FM”. Staff advised that this appeared to refer to recent plan changes that had notified target attributes and stated requirements that would put a huge burden on some district councils with their water treatment, stormwater, and wastewater infrastructure.
- It was the Government’s intention to continue with Freshwater Farm Plans (FFPs) as a key tool, but they were signalling revisiting the requirements and streamlining for more efficiency. There was no detail yet about what the approach might be.
- The option remained available to Council to further extend the notification deadline if, prior to the September 2025 notification date, it became obvious that NPS-FM changes would require significant amendments to the plan changes that would take more time.

Key Points - Members

- Overall, the staff recommendation (Option 2 – notification date September 2025) was supported, with an additional recommendation to invite Ministers Bishop and Simmonds to the Bay of Plenty.

Resolved

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Freshwater Policy Programme: Timeframes.**
- 2 Decides to extend the timeframe for notifying Proposed Regional Policy Statement Change 7 (Freshwater) and Proposed Regional Natural Resources Plan Change 19 (Freshwater) from December 2024 to September 2025.**
- 3 Notes staff will write to Ministers Bishop and Simmonds inviting them to meet with Bay of Plenty Regional Council to understand our Freshwater context further and to understand Government direction further.**

**Iti/Thompson
CARRIED**

7.3 Regional Plan Amendment for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Industrial Process Heat

Presented by: Karen Parcell – Team Leader Kaiwhakatinana

Resolved

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Regional Plan Amendment for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Industrial Process Heat.**
- 2 Agrees to make the amendment to the Air chapter of the Regional Natural Resources Plan as directed by the National Policy Statement for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Industrial Process Heat.**

**Thompson/Nees
CARRIED**

7.4 Regional Economic Development Operational Update

Presented by: Dean Howie - Programme Manager, Regional Economic Development
Stephen Lamb - Environmental Strategy Manager

In Response to Questions

- Discussions had occurred with key Bay of Connections stakeholders. There had been understanding of the decisions BOPRC had made, with no negative reaction.
- Staff were currently framing up options for the future of the activity and these would be presented to Councillors in due course. In the meantime, the work was moving forward and avenues to progress next steps were being explored.

Resolved

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Regional Economic Development Operational Update.**
- 2 Approves the disestablishment of the Bay of Connections Leadership Group, with an effective end date of Thursday 29 February 2024.**
- 3 Notes the future direction of the Regional Economic Development activity is subject to the outcome of public consultation on the Draft Long Term Plan and subsequent deliberations.**

**von Dadelszen/Scott
CARRIED**

7.5 Plan Change 11 Geothermal

Presented by: Penny Doorman – Programme Leader, Geothermal
Freya Camburn – Senior Policy Analyst

Key Points

- Noted that the key drivers for Geothermal Regional Plan Change 11 (PC11) were different to the drivers for the Freshwater plan changes.
- Four broad options were presented. The staff recommendation was for Option 1: To continue progressing PC11 for notification in March 2025.
- Provided an explanation of System Management Plans (SMPs), in particular, the SMPs for Rotorua, Tauranga and Kawerau, and how these related to the PC11 process.

12.18pm – Chairman Leeder **withdrew** from the meeting.

- Provided an update on the recent Rotorua SMP hearings and deliberations process. The Hearings Panel's final report and recommendations were expected to be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee in April 2024.
- Provided an update on the review of the Tauranga and Kawerau SMPs.

In Response to Questions

- The geothermal systems across the Bay of Plenty (approximately 12) were all different with varied levels of information and complexity. Early drafting of the Tauranga SMP and review of the Kawerau SMP were already underway, and the current evidence base and some initial iwi engagement should enable the March 2025 timeframe for notification of PC11 to be achieved; however, this would be dependent on engagement with iwi.

12.41pm – Chairman Leeder **entered** the meeting.

- Provided explanation of how the review of the Tauranga SMP process would integrate into the new timeframes for the Freshwater plan changes.
- Acknowledged the request for further information regarding the Tauranga SMP and its relationship with the Freshwater Policy Programme. An update would be provided at the next meeting in April 2024.

Resolved

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Plan Change 11 Geothermal.**
- 2 Agrees a timeframe of March 2025 for notification of Proposed Plan Change 11 Geothermal (region-wide).**

**von Dadelszen/Crosby
CARRIED**

12.48pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED 9 APRIL 2024

Cr Paula Thompson
Chairperson, Strategy and Policy Committee