Monitoring and Operations Committee

Open Minutes

Commencing: Tuesday 5 March 2024, 9.30 am

Venue: Totara Room, Whakatāne District Council, 14 Commerce Street, Whakatāne and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)

Chairperson: Cr Kevin Winters

Deputy Chairperson: Cr Ron Scott

Members:
Cr Stuart Crosby (via Zoom)
Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti
Chairman Doug Leeder
Cr Matemoana McDonald (via Zoom)
Cr Jane Nees
Cr Paula Thompson (via Zoom)
Cr Lyall Thurston
Cr Andrew von Dadelszen
Cr Te Taru White (via Zoom)
Cr Kat Macmillan
Cr Malcolm Campbell
Cr Ken Shirley

In Attendance: Reuben Fraser – General Manager, Regulatory Services, Chris Ingle – General Manager, Integrated Catchments, Namouta Poutasi – General Manager, Strategy and Science, Pim de Monchy – Coastal Catchments Manager, Presenters – as listed in the minutes, Amanda Namana – Committee Advisor

Apologies: None

Please note: This meeting was livestreamed and recorded and can be accessed on Council's YouTube channel: Monitoring and Operations - 5 March 2024 (youtube.com)

1. Order of Business

Agenda Item 7.3 - Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital Incorporated presentation was considered prior to Agenda Item 7.2 - Kaituna Re-Diversion and Maketū Estuary, to accommodate the availability of presenters.

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

3. Minutes

Minutes to be Confirmed

3.1 Monitoring and Operations Committee Minutes - 30 November 2023

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Confirms the Monitoring and Operations Committee Minutes - 30 November 2023 as a true and correct record.

Scott/Campbell
CARRIED

4. Presentations

4.1 NZ Landcare Trust Update

Presentation: NZ Landcare Trust Update: Objective ID A4616904 ⇨

Presented by: Nardene Berry - Waikato Regional Coordinator/North Island Team Leader (via Zoom) and Fran van Alphen – Bay of Plenty Catchments Groups Coordinator – NZ Landcare Trust (via Zoom)

Key Points:

- The Catchment Group Coordinator role commenced in 2022 to provide coordination support to key catchment groups to improve their vision, uptake and opportunities, and assist them to be sustainable over time
- Supported Waiōtahe Water Care Group backyard planting days, developing community engagement opportunities and funding applications to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) catchment extension services programme fund
- The Coordinator role was vital to the Nukuhou and Waiōtahe catchments, particularly with meeting timelines
- A key focus of the role was to act as a conduit for sourcing funding and collaboration between Regional Council and the catchment groups
- Networking and maintaining relationships with other agencies was also important
- The role was still gaining momentum, and was funded until 2028 through MPI, after which longer term funding would be required.

In Response to Questions:

- Needed to ensure that care group work was aligned with the science and research being undertaken in each catchment.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the presentation, NZ Landcare Trust Update.

Nees/Thurston
CARRIED

4.2 Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital Incorporated

Presentation: Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital: Objective ID A4616895 ⇨

Presented by: Dr Beccy Ganley - Plant & Food Research - Science Group Leader and Co-Chair, supported by Greg Corbett – Biosecurity Manager

Key Points:

- Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital Incorporated's (TMBCI) focus was on:
  - Regional biosecurity collaborations
  - Covering all biosecurity issues that threatened New Zealand's environment or economy
  - Building capability across the network
- Along with having the largest port in the country, the Bay of Plenty had some of the largest primary industries, unique biodiversity and potential for a large number of high risk invasive species
- Outlined the projected economic impacts of biosecurity incursions to the region, including losses to tourism and export industries
- A key aspect was engaging with schools and communities
- It was important to gain community understanding of rāhui, and the reasons and value for doing this, when they were put in place
- Described how to differentiate between the native brown shield bug and the brown marmorated stinkbug (BMSB).

In Response to Questions:

- The BMSB was of major concern - previous detections in New Zealand were able to be contained and managed, but the potential cost to industries was significant and early detection was critical
- There were chemical sprays that could be applied to combat Myrtle Rust, but regular use created a different set of environmental issues. Conservation of seed was a key part of control - breeding for resistance could also be effective.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the presentation, Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital Incorporated.

Nees/Thurston
CARRIED

4.3 Kaituna Re-Diversion and Maketū Estuary

Presentation: Spit Erosion and Breaching - Lower Maketū Estuary: Objective ID A4616880 ⇨

Presented by: Jim Dahm - Coastal Scientist, Eco Nomos Ltd (via Zoom), supported by Pim de Monchy – Coastal Catchments Manager

Key Points:

- The presentation focused on spit erosion and breaching in the lower Maketū Estuary

- A number of breaches had been caused over time by the tidal current cutting into the back of the spit, typically during storms. These generally repaired themselves over a number of years but caused disruption to boat users' navigation and kaimoana gathering
- Showed the effect of the re-diversion on lower estuary hydrology. Since the re-diversion, erosion was of more concern on the seaward side of the spit as it occurred faster than the landward side
- In the event of another significant coastal storm, there was concern that a breach could reoccur, causing significant disruption to the harbour and taking years to naturally restore. Preventative action was strongly suggested by pushing up sand from the beach to build a higher dune
- Since the potential breach was so far advanced it may not be possible to stop, however efforts to manage it (using natural protection) held a low cost with high potential benefits
- Monitoring of the situation would continue and if a breach was likely then further measures could be considered
- Hoped that the re-diversion would reduce the frequency of future breaches.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted the vulnerability of settlements and marae in the area and highlighted the need for them to be prepared.

In Response to Questions:

- The distance of sand dune to be pushed up was approximately 120 metres
- Although the proposed interim solution had not yet been designed or costed, it would typically cost approximately $20k-30k
- Climate change would affect the seaward side by exacerbating existing erosion as sea levels rose
- A tangata whenua collaboration group had been established during the consenting phase of the re-diversion project and were broadly supportive (as were the community) of the option to push up sand on the spit if it was determined that there was an acute risk of a breach.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the presentation, Kaituna Re-Diversion and Maketū Estuary.

Nees/Thurston
CARRIED

5. Reports

5.1 Chairperson's Report

Presentation: Harbourmaster - Whakatāne bar calling: Objective ID A4616874 ⇨

Presented by: Reuben Fraser – General Manager, Regulatory Services and Jon Peters – Harbourmaster

Key Points:

- The practice of the Whakatāne bar calling had been in place for many years and today many things had changed, creating a number of additional risks and factors involved with this process:
    - Safety concerns – the bar was called at 7am and conditions would significantly change following the call
    - Miscommunication concerns
    - Concerns around differing capabilities of individual vessels and skippers dependent upon the conditions
    - Nowhere else in the country had kept the practice of calling the bar
    - There were now a superior range of tools and technologies available that skippers used most prevalently to ensure the bar was safe to cross. These included live weather and tide updates, Coastguard live bar cameras and wave buoys
- Due to these concerns and the significant risk factors present, the Harbourmaster made the operational decision to cease the process of the calling of the Whakatāne bar, commencing from 1 March 2024
- The Harbourmaster was working closely with the Coastguard and local radio station 1XX to appropriately communicate the changes to the community
- The lighted bar pole would remain in place for the Harbourmaster to use for closing the bar in extreme weather conditions or when otherwise necessary.

Key Points - Members:

- Encouraged the Harbourmaster to write letters of thanks for employees' service over the time they had been tasked with calling the bar
- Emphasised the dynamic nature of the bar and reiterated that each skipper held the ultimate responsibility for crossing it and ensuring the safety of everyone on board
- Expressed concern over observing a lack of lifejacket wearing by those crossing the bar
- Strongly encouraged supporting the Coastguard for ongoing monitoring and other future requirements in this space.

10:45 am - Cr Shirley **withdrew** from the meeting

10.52 am – The meeting **adjourned.**

11.10 am – The meeting **reconvened.**

5.1 Chair's Report (Continued)

Presented by: Karen Parcell – Team Leader Kaiwhakatinana and Marion Henton – Senior Regulatory Project Officer

Key Points:

- Outlined the third interim decision announced by the Environment Court and estimated there were approximately 120 land owners affected by the new rules
- Provided a Rotorua Airshed update:
    - Standards had not been breached for more than four consecutive years
    - Winter enforcement of wood burners included working with homes that were unable to change out heating without assistance e.g. vulnerable communities, to find a solution
    - New particulate matter (PM) standards were potentially being introduced by central government which would change how airsheds were monitored. These standards would change from monitoring PM10

to PM2.5, which were substantially finer particles. At present, the standards for PM10 were being met, however there was more work required to reduce PM2.5 in the airshed.

Key Points - Members:

- Expressed frustration for neighbouring businesses at the high threshold for issuing abatement notices and prosecuting, when they were responsible for their employees' health.

In Response to Questions:

- Rotorua was a gazetted airshed and would remain so after five consecutive years without exceedances
- Rules in the Regional Air Plan and Rotorua Air Quality Control bylaw still applied
- PM2.5 was the size of the particles and would predominately come from wood smoke at the Rotorua airshed location
- All wood burners produced smoke, the more modern ones were designed to reduce the amount of smoke they emitted. Ultra-low emission burners were proving successful across New Zealand
- Warmer Kiwi Homes grants were restricted to owner occupiers
- All Rotorua Kāinga Ora tenants were now in compliant homes
- Odour complaints were particularly challenging to prove when there are multiple potential odour sources, however staff continued to respond and monitor all complaints received.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the report, Chairperson's Report.

Winters/Thurston
CARRIED

5.2 Coast Care - External programme review and beach user survey results

Presentation: Coast Care Update: Objective ID A4611724 ⇨

Presented by: Rusty Knutson – Land Management Officer and Coast Care Regional Coordinator, supported by Pim de Monchy – Coastal Catchments Manager

Key Points:

- Outlined the background of Coast Care and the Beach Users' Survey, including key findings that beach users:
  - Had consistent results during surveys over time
  - Did not support any coastal protection methods resulting in loss of sandy beach area (even if this protected coastal property)
  - Supported restriction and enforcement of vehicle access to beaches
  - Supported all council ratepayer funding for the Coast Care restoration programme

- Valued beaches for natural beauty/wildlife, as well as being safe places for children, families and education - supported collaboration in protecting these values.

Key Points - Members:

- Supported the majority of the recommendations provided in the Coast Care External Review, but to exercise caution in the implementation regarding volunteers.

In Response to Questions:

- Defined 'vehicles' as being any motorised user on the beach, including but not limited to cars, 4WD, quad bikes, motorcycles etc.
- The Coast Care Review recommendation relating to focusing more on community and less on schools was considered to be less relevant to the Bay of Plenty region, where the programmes were executed differently than in other regions
- Due to increasingly large storm events, a conscious decision had been made to support funding partners with frontal dune restoration to provide protection to the buildings and infrastructure, as well as the dune system itself.

11:55 am - Cr Leeder **withdrew** from the meeting.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the report, Coast Care - External programme review and beach user survey results;

2 Notes the key recommendations made by the Coast Care external review panel;

3 Notes the key findings of the 2023 Beach User Survey.

Macmillan/Campbell
CARRIED

5.3 Taihuarewa Takutai - University of Waikato Coastal Chair's Report

Presentation: Coastal Chair's Update: Objective ID A4615651 ⇨

Tabled Document 1 - Coastal Chair's Report 2020-2021 (draft): Objective ID A4615191 ⇨

Tabled Document 2 - Coastal Chair's Report 2021-2022 (draft): Objective ID A4623209 ⇨

Tabled Document 3 - Coastal Chair's Report 2022-2023 (draft): Objective ID A4623208 ⇨

Tabled Document 4 - Professor Battershill Study Leave Application 2022: Objective ID A4615187 ⇨

Tabled Document 5 - Coastal Sediments and the darkness at noon: Objective ID A4615188 ⇨

Presented by: University of Waikato Professor Chris Battershill, supported by Rob Donald – Science Manager

Key Points:

- Financial sections of the tabled reports were yet to be completed
- Provided a brief coastal science update with a focus on marine biosecurity and biotechnology
- Raukokore Marine Research Centre was successfully launched in collaboration with Te Whānau-ā-Apanui in September 2023, with a focus on educating rangatahi about kaimoana restoration and providing internship opportunities in this space
- Internships were increasing, as were the post-graduate group. The University was considering moving some undergraduate work to Hamilton
- Unusual deeper reef communities in the Bay of Plenty had been discovered to have subtropical sponges in juvenile phases. These were important to commercial fish species but were found to be under stress
- Black kina were out-competing native kina in many parts of the country and iwi/hapū were noticing a severe reduction at many locations
- Addressing the stressors on these environments required a focus on actionable mitigation methods e.g. controlling nutrients coming off land and sedimentation issues, as opposed to weather events and other uncontrollable factors
- Provided photographs from Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, highlighting sedimentary discharges from the Raukokore River
- Noted concern over the persistent appearance of white sharks, particularly around the northern part of Tauranga Moana - disturbance within the food chain was being considered as a potential factor
- An integrated spatial planning tool was being developed to look at linkages between land use and dynamics of the harbour in catchments
- Explored 'Blue2Green' - Solutions for the sea that may have applications on land, particularly for agriculture
- Developed an independent State of the Environment report to assess the environmental effects of the proposed expansion of Port of Tauranga shipping channels and wharves
- Outlined key issues from the Environmental Hearing which now required further work
- Noted there were species in the Tauranga Harbour that occurred nowhere else on earth, including the blue 'sneezing sponge'
- The condition and trends of the harbour environment were being monitored, along with opportunities for ethical, culturally appropriate enhancements for kaimoana
- Turret Road – developers were interested in looking at 'living walls' and restoring the estuary area and enhancing diversity
- An international collaboration opportunity had arisen for indigenous-led science with Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia which potentially had important implications for New Zealand research and Mātauranga-led science.

Key Points - Members:

- Highly commended the groundbreaking mahi undertaken with the transitional relationship between matāuranga Māori and western science,

the application in bringing it all together and future international opportunities that may arise
- Supported being advised of any opportunities to provide assistance in progressing this work
- Expressed concern over ongoing issues with the declining health of the Ōhiwa Harbour despite long term efforts to combat them, including riparian planting and other measures implemented over time.

In Response to Questions:

- Addressed members' concern over moving the undergraduate programme to Hamilton, noting that recruitment of undergraduates would be critical to keeping the programme in Tauranga, expensive living conditions were also a factor
- The tender for establishing the Sulphur Point facility had been successful and would enhance green space, hold a public aquarium and cultural centre, as well as several amenities
- Rāhui systems were dynamic and could be shifted around to address issues surrounding over-fishing. Influencing fishing technology could also provide some solution
- Assessing White sharks' eating habits could be helpful in understanding whether they were changing and why e.g. starting to target species closer to shore, and potential reasons for this.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the report, Taihuarewa Takutai - University of Waikato Coastal Chair's Report;

2 Writes a letter of support to the Waikato University Administration for the marine facility at Sulphur Point and the work of Professor Battershill, also identifying the value and importance of his work undertaken with rangatahi in the East Coast, particularly at Raukokere.

Scott/Campbell
CARRIED

5.4 Climate Change Quarterly Report

Presented by: Nic Newman – Climate Change Programme Manager

In Response to Questions:

- There were a number of circular economy initiatives undertaken by Bay of Connections which contributed to climate goals, the future for work in this space was dependent upon final direction provided in the Long Term Plan
- Staff would investigate what the uptake had been for the Life's a Beach initiative and report to a future meeting
- The Climate Change Science Kit was apolitical and focused only on the underlying science and science-based solutions
- Whilst Futurefit was a good tool, the challenge for many people was in looking at their own lifestyles and making change.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the report, Climate Change Quarterly Report.

Nees/Macmillan
CARRIED

5.5 Ōhiwa FMU Land Management Update

Presentation: Ōhiwa Land Management Operations Update: Objective ID A4616841 ⇨

Presented by: Sami Fox – Land Management Officer and Jackson Efford – Principal Advisor, Land and Water

Key Points:

- Provided an update on water quality in the catchment, highlighting the priority contaminant status of e-coli and sediment. Both required high scale change to meet the draft National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) targets and environmental outcomes
- The Ōhiwa catchment was steep and highly erodible, modelling found sediment sources to be 75% from landslide, 17% from channel banks and 8% from surficial erosion
- The Nukuhou River was not part of a rated river scheme, therefore financial resource to address the issues was limited
- Displayed a map showing that the majority of properties in the catchment had environmental programmes in place
- There were 13 Care Groups around Ōhiwa Harbour, protecting thousands of hectares of land
- The Ōhiwa Harbour catchment was home to many diverse fish and bird species including kiwi and threatened species of fish/shellfish.

Key Points – Members:

- Ōhiwa Harbour tributaries had a unique and sensitive receiving environment and solution options needed to be diverse and flexible.

Key Points – Chris Ingle, General Manager, Integrated Catchments:

- Noted that other funding mechanisms could be used for bank protection that had not previously been considered for this purpose.

In Response to Questions:

- Good management practice across farms could reduce e-coli/sediment levels by approximately 15%, and would require a combination of regulatory levers, potential land use change and other mitigations.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the report, Ōhiwa FMU Land Management Update;

2 Recommends a report to a future Strategy and Policy Committee meeting providing further information on the health of the Ōhiwa Harbour and viable options for mitigation measures.

Iti/Macmillan
CARRIED

5.6 Rates Collection Update

Presented by: Charlie Roddick – Rates Engagement Team Leader, Whenua Māori Engagement and Relations (via Zoom)

In Response to Questions:

- Rates rebate schemes through central government were run by Territorial Local Authorities and home owners needed to occupy their property for longer than six months and one day (e.g. permanent location), otherwise they did not qualify for a rates rebate.

Resolved

That the Monitoring and Operations Committee:

1 Receives the report, Rates Collection Update.

Iti/Scott
CARRIED

1.46 pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

Cr Kevin Winters
Chairperson, Monitoring and Operations Committee