

Report of a meeting of the Operations Committee, held in the Council Chambers, 29 Bowler Avenue, Gore, on Tuesday 28 August 2018, at 4.03pm

Present His Worship the Mayor (Mr Tracy Hicks, JP), Cr Davis (Chairman), Crs Beale, Bolger, Dickson, Gardyne, D Grant, Highsted, Phillips, Reid and Sharp.

In Attendance The Chief Executive (Mr Stephen Parry), Chief Financial Officer (Mr Luke Blackbeard), General Manager Regulatory and Planning (Dr Ian Davidson-Watts), General Manager Infrastructure (Mr Ramesh Sharma), 3 Waters Asset Manager (Mr Matt Bayliss), Project Manager Infrastructure (Mr Hashem Ramezan-zadeh), Communications/Marketing Manager (Sonia Gerken), Planning Consultant (Mr Keith Hovell), Junior Planner (Fran Davies), Animal Control Administrator (Rowena Burnby), Events Coordinator (Emma Carle), Arts and Heritage Curator (Jim Geddes), Corporate Support Officer (Suzanne Lucas) and two members of the public in the gallery.

Apology Cr P Grant apologised for lateness.

1. PYRAMID BRIDGE DEBRIS MANAGEMENT (SC2134)

Mr Jonathan Streat, Director of Operations at Environment Southland was in attendance to discuss with the Council the management of debris on the Mataura River following the Pyramid Bridge collapse and future plans to improve the resilience of the stop banks in Gore and Mataura.

The Director introduced himself and gave an overview of how river systems were managed. He informed the Council \$300,000 per year was spent on river management in Mataura, of which 15% came from Gore ratepayers. It was a complicated rating system with those closer to the river paying more proportionally than others further out in the catchment but it included rock works, erosion planting, willow removal, willow planting and removal of any obstacles that impeded the flow velocity of the river. Any material gathered was disposed of.

Cr D Grant asked if this had always been standard practice.

The Director said during the two years he had been with Environment Southland it had always been the case but it was only one entity operating on the river and it worked with other individuals adjacent to the river. The Maitara River Liaison Committee defined the work programme each year.

The Director said reserves were built up to repair stop banks and insurance schemes were in place to manage assets. Climate change was a consideration. The return period did not change the level reached, but climate change may alter the frequency stop banks were exceeded.

Cr Beale mentioned the upgrade of the flood bank had been approved and due to start in the coming months.

The Director commented that was in relation to a stretch of the river where a freeboard would be added in order to increase the stop bank height by approximately 400mm and at a cost of \$60,000. This work should commence in January/February 2019.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Director explained a freeboard was a piece of board above the top of the bank and served to extend its height. The material could be wood, concrete or earth.

In response to a question posed by Cr Dickson, the Director explained anything in the middle of the floodway or river system needed to be removed to allow the maximum capacity of the river flow, but added this could put pressure on the bank as well.

Cr Sharp suggested there was urgency for flood bank work to commence in Gore.

The Director said he would ensure those concerns were passed on and included on the works programme.

Cr Highsted directed the meeting to the agenda item - Pyramid Bridge and debris management with particular concern to the debris that had built up against the Pyramid Bridge prior to its collapse. He asked what the management process for debris management was.

The Director did not want to comment on the cause of the bridge collapse. He said that if Environment Southland was removing material, it would be disposed of but they were not responsible for removing all debris from the river.

The Director said Environment Southland rated to undertake works on those parts of the river for which ratepayers had requested a number of works. This included erosion control, stop bank construction and maintenance and river management. He said there were a lot of people who interacted with the river and there were a number of sources of debris from farm operations, forestry and riverbank collapse.

Cr P Grant entered the meeting at 4.19pm.

Cr Gardyne referred to the debris from a contractor working near Pyramid Bridge and the resulting debris that flowed down the river to the bridge. He asked what the policy of removing that debris was.

The Director said that it would normally be left or burnt.

Cr Phillips said that if it could not be burnt and was left and a weather bomb hit the area, all the debris could enter the water and potentially take out bridges.

The Director said he would not comment on any scenarios and would not comment on Pyramid Bridge.

Cr Gardyne suggested that leaving debris was a liability.

The Director strongly disagreed.

Cr Gardyne said he disagreed with that comment and argued pressure from a build-up of debris would cause the bridge to collapse.

The Director said he had no knowledge of what it would take to cause a bridge to collapse, it was not in his area of expertise but he thought there would be a range of factors that would contribute to a bridge failing. He would not make any further comment.

Cr Phillips suggested the tree trimming programme be realigned so that it did not coincide during a time when there was a fire ban, alternatively it should be picked up or chipped.

The Chairman commented that a discussion of Pyramid Bridge and the build-up of debris was an agenda item. She asked why the Director was not willing to discuss the matter.

The Director said he had been briefed on the issue but he did not concur with the premise that the build-up of debris caused the collapse of the bridge.

Cr Bolger said the Council did think the debris contributed to the bridge collapse and that was the concern. If the Director chose not to comment that was fine, but the Council's concerns needed to be taken back to the Chief Executive and a formal response was expected.

The Director said there had been correspondence back and forth but he would add to that.

Cr Gardyne commented that moving forward, the procedure for dealing with debris needed to be addressed.

The Director said dealing with debris was separate to the idea of failures of bridges. Dealing with debris fitted into a wider discussion and related to how people used their land adjoining the river.

Cr Gardyne said Environment Southland was the only organisation who had been cutting willows on the river.

The Director said that was not the case. He was sure there were other people who did that. He said Environment Southland only worked on a part of the river, on the main stem and not on any of the tributaries. Attributing the whole system to it was unfair and incorrect.

Cr Gardyne said the Council was referring to its part of the system.

The Director said it followed consistent practice and could perhaps look at it, but it was a long standing system across the province.

Cr Gardyne said from his long experience, the usual protocol was for the contractors to cut the trees and then burn, but that had not happened in the last three years.

The Director said he could not comment on that.

The Chief Executive suggested there might be an opportunity to establish some type of protocol or a Memorandum of Understanding so both parties had a clear understanding of what would or would not be done and therefore a future event could be managed. He said a number of seasoned observers of the Mataura River saw an unprecedented build-up of debris which was the prime concern for the questions posed of how it got there and what can be done to avoid a repetition. The Council would like knowledge and possibly input into the protocol to ensure that “weaponry” was not created which could cause potential damage to assets along the river. He suggested a protocol be established with a small working party made up of the Regional and District Councils.

The Director asked if this would be at a provincial level and include the Southland District and Invercargill City Councils. He said it was important to realise there were nine River Liaison committees that made decisions about actions and work plans. The Council was reviewing river management committees and the way they might operate within a wider review of river management. There was increasing pressure to look at tributaries so it could be suggested to the Council that either Mataura is looked at specifically or as a wider consideration.

Cr Davis thanked the Director for this suggestion and his attendance at the meeting.

Jonathan Streat left the meeting 4.27 pm.

2. STREET LIGHT REPLACEMENT UPDATE (SC2081)

The Council perused a report from the Transport Manager with an update on the progress to upgrade the Gore District lights to LED luminaires. The report also advised that the Gore Pakeke Lions were dismantling and recycling the old light heads.

Cr Davis asked if all of the lights were to be dismantled by the Pakeke Lions.

The General Manager Infrastructure confirmed they were.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Gardyne, seconded by Cr Beale, THAT the report be received,

AND THAT the Council note the disposal arrangements made with Pakeke Lions.

3. 3 WATERS OPERATION REPORT

A report had been received from the 3 Water Asset Manager.

Cr Davis noted Coopers Wells was not recharging to the level it had been and asked the Manager for an update.

The Manager said it was being monitored closely, but the well levels had continued to drop and a significant flood in the river over next the few weeks was needed to lift the well levels. Serious consideration would need to be given to undertaking emergency pumping from the river if this did not occur. This was very unusual for this time of the year but the emergency pipeline was in place following its construction last summer.

Jim Geddes and Emma Carle entered the meeting at 4.31pm.

The Manager said Jacobstown well levels were good, so as much demand as possible would be put on Jacobstown rather than Coopers Wells but this was a careful and gradual process to make sure the pressures in the network were minimised.

Cr Davis commented the Pleura dam levels were looking good.

The Manager said Coopers Well hadn't recharged, as they relied on a flood of the river whereas the Pleura dam had recovered due to a reasonable amount of rain fall which had resulted in surplus run off.

Cr Beale asked about the bore at the Showgrounds.

The Manager said there was an action plan for finding an alternative water supply. A consent had been received from Environment Southland to allow test drilling. A water

diviner had identified possible sources and Beca was looking at pipeline routes from the Showgrounds. Combining the two water treatment plants into one at East Gore would give more control over the demand at Jacobstown and Coopers Wells.

In response to a question posed by Cr P Grant regarding the recharge of Coopers Wells, the Manager said there appeared to be a close link between when the river flooded and how quickly the aquifer recharged.

Cr Dickson asked if demand for water had increased.

The Manager said the water supply demand was average but the river levels were lower than usual.

Cr Beale asked if the installation of the flow meters had been completed and if it was possible to monitor the flow into the wells.

The Manager said there were two flow meters on each outlet of the reservoir which monitored night time flow to aid leak detection. Leak detection had been a priority for 3 Waters staff and this was an ongoing exercise along with repairs of the detected leaks.

His Worship asked if the low well level at Coopers Well was a trend evident around the province.

The Manager said each aquifer acted differently depending on how it was recharging. While Jacobstown and Coopers Wells were geographically close they were acting differently. Coopers Wells was reliant on the flow of the river and would be influenced by short term trends.

Russell Paterson and Lorraine Weston-Webb entered the meeting at 4.40pm.

The Chairman referred to the baffle at the Matura oxidation ponds which had failed and asked if that had affected any of the discharge consents.

The Manager said the contractor had arrived on site the previous day to replace the baffle. There did not appear to have been any impact on the discharge quality in the short term and no non-compliance in terms of water quality had been noted.

Cr Phillips asked if the free available chlorine level had been achieved throughout the Otama water scheme.

The Manager confirmed the results had returned a reading of 0.2mg/l and it was hoped to get the Water Safety Plan approved soon and the boil water notice removed.

The Manager commented the wastewater industrial plant was going well and Opus' processing engineer was on site and was happy with the performance of it. He said

the Mataura backwash project had been commissioned and was operating. The diversion of the backwash into the wastewater system was now occurring.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Phillips, seconded by Cr Reid, THAT the report be received.

4. REVIEW OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENT WITH BULK WATER CARRIERS TO EXTRACT WATER FROM THE COUNCIL'S WATER RETICULATION (SC1732)

The Council perused a report from the 3 Waters Asset Manager relating to the provision of "water take consents" and the existing arrangement with water carriers. As a result of prolonged water restrictions, an investigation of alternative options had been carried out.

The Manager explained there were sophisticated options available, but on balance a manual system with a flow meter and a manual locking system for permanent back flow prevention, would be fit for purpose and appropriate for the level of demand to be expected.

Cr D Grant referred to the recorded percentage of bulk water demanded and asked if this quantity was reliant on an honesty system.

The Manager said the figure was reliant on the honesty of bulk carriers reporting to the Council on the quantity of water they had taken from the network. There had been reports of significantly more water having been taken from the network but there was no evidence to prove that.

Cr D Grant questioned the proposed location of supply of water and said he would prefer a position in town and within full view of the public.

The Manager said that was considered but for health and safety reasons in regard to traffic management, the nominated location was deemed to be safer. He said there would be a locking system and there would be more control over water take.

Cr Beale asked if option three was selected, would the \$35,000 cost be covered in the Long Term Plan as consent or reticulation renewals in the urban area.

The Manager confirmed that was correct.

Cr Beale then suggested raising the cost of water extraction as considerable water could be leaving the Gore District. Raising the cost would serve to offset the new system and ensure the end user was charged for the water uplifted.

The Manager confirmed the current rates the water carriers were charged and explained this cost was generally passed onto the end user. He said in the period 2007 to 2018, a total of \$29,000 had been recovered in charges. The upfront funding to

implement the system was the consideration but over time, the end user would help to recover that cost.

The Chief Executive suggested the recommendations include an increase in bulk water carrier charges and a report be presented to the Council at its next meeting which would be timely for the forthcoming summer period.

The General Manager Infrastructure said increasing charges while at face value was a good idea it was the Council's obligation to keep supply fair, reasonable and safe.

The Chief Executive said a review was needed to consider the pros and cons of increasing the bulk carrier charges and a comparison of market rates with other authorities. This could be presented at the next Council meeting in September. If time did not allow, then it could be considered at the October Operations Committee meeting and confirmed at the following Council meeting.

Cr D Grant asked if it was possible to have the bulk water fill station ready for the coming summer.

The Manager confirmed it was.

Cr Phillips asked how the usage would be monitored.

The Manager explained there would be a locking system and each carrier would have a key or a code. The courier would be required to advise when taking water, the meter would record actual amount taken and this would be compared to the reported take. This should identify any water theft. A swipe card system would be more robust but for the capital required, the proposed approach was fit for purpose. If it became obvious there was water theft occurring, a swipe card could be added.

Cr Davis asked for cost clarification for the difference in price for each option.

The Manager said option two which was an automated water fill station would cost \$75,000. For option three, the preference was \$35,000 and option four which offered a continuously monitored permanent backflow protection would cost \$70,000 to install.

Cr Highsted suggested water theft would occur elsewhere in the network despite the precaution.

Cr D Grant thought making the public aware of water theft would increase vigilance and public scrutiny.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Beale, seconded by Cr D Grant, THAT the report be received,

THAT a designated water tanker fill location as described in option three of the report be installed at an estimated cost of \$35,000,

THAT the capital expenditure be funded by deferring \$35,000 of the water renewals budget in the 2018/2019 financial year,

THAT the supply of water to bulk water carriers be suspended when Level 4 water restrictions are imposed,

THAT the bulk filling station be located near the intersection of River Street and Bury Street in Gore, with no bulk filling station being provided in Matura,

AND THAT a review of the current charging regime for bulk carriers be undertaken and presented to the Council for consideration, prior to the forthcoming summer season.

5. THREE BRIDGES MAINTENANCE – PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT (SC2141)

A report from the Project Manager Infrastructure had been received detailing the progress of the three bridges maintenance project and highlighting the risks and issues which may affect the project outcome.

The Manager advised the start date for repairs to Kennedy bridge had been deferred due to uncertainty around the consent and subcontractor availability. However, the River Road bridge maintenance was programmed to start earlier than expected, on 10 September.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Manager said a temporary bridge had been installed prior to the construction period to aid public access.

Cr Highsted questioned the high contract price in relation to the budget and asked how it was to be funded and how the budget would be affected.

The Manager explained the existing budget was originally for the maintenance of three bridges, but due to budget limitations, maintenance on the Landslip Valley bridge had been deferred.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Phillips, seconded by Cr Sharp, THAT the report be received,

AND THAT a further report be provided on bridge repair priorities after the four yearly structure inspection has been completed later in the year.

6. RESOURCE CONSENT RENEWAL – WWTPS DISCHARGES – PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT (SC2270/SC2271)

A report had been received from the Project Manager Infrastructure informing the Council on the progress of three resource consent renewals for the wastewater discharges and highlighting the risks and issues which may affect the project outcome.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Phillips, seconded by Cr Highsted, THAT the report be received.

7. GORE WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE – PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT (SC0647)

A report had been received from the Project Manager Infrastructure updating the Council on the progress of the Gore water treatment plant upgrade project (excluding the Mataura River crossing) and highlighting the risks and issues which may affect the project outcomes.

Cr Highsted referred to the investigation and project development activity and the budget vs contract price.

The Project Manager explained this related to investigations undertaken to find the best options for the project upgrade but was a cost incurred prior to the current budget.

The Chief Executive confirmed these costs were incurred in the previous two or three years and concerned analysing options and commissioning reports and was a historical cost of the project.

Cr Phillips asked if water was found from another source in the district would it affect the cost of the upgrade.

The General Manager Infrastructure explained if a new source of water was found it would not affect the cost of the treatment plant upgrade and reticulation improvement was a separate issue.

Cr Gardyne asked if the size of the plant was sufficient to cope with supplying Gore and Mataura and any expected growth.

The General Manager replied the water treatment plant was modelled for current needs but the layout plan of the building would allow for growth following identification of future needs.

In response to a question from Cr Davis about the potential for population growth and increased water uptake, the General Manager confirmed the plant was future proofed.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr D Grant, seconded by Cr Reid, THAT the report be received.

8. PYRAMID BRIDGE (SC2134)

A report had been received from the Project Manager Infrastructure updating the Council on the progress of the new Pyramid bridge project and highlighting the risks and issues which may affect the project outcome.

The Manager advised two designs had been developed for both a single and a double lane bridge. A single lane bridge was deemed to be a safer option.

Cr D Grant asked if engaging a Quantity Surveyor was now the way forward rather than relying on estimates and would this ensure more accurate costing and budgeting.

The Manager said he believed it was an essential requirement to ensure realistic estimates and to allow more accurate reporting.

Cr Highsted asked if the budget which incorporated the Southland District Council share still had the NZTA component to come off the total cost.

The Manager confirmed this was the case and for a single lane bridge the contribution from NZTA would be 55% of the total cost.

The Chief Executive said NZTA preferred a single lane bridge and if a two lane bridge was chosen, its subsidy would be capped at \$2 million. He said he was unsure if the tender price was higher than the engineers estimate what NZTA's contribution would be, but assumed it still be 55% for a single lane bridge. However, it was clear that NZTA would not support a double lane bridge with a 55% contribution.

Cr P Grant raised the question of whether a bridge was still actually necessary as there were alternative routes being used for accessing the other side of the river.

Cr Bolger commented there was the additional cost of a water supply and a responsibility to the Otama water scheme.

Cr Gardyne asked for clarification as to whether it was necessary to verify with the Council, prior to the tender process that a single lane bridge was the preferred option.

His Worship said the purpose of the report was to put forward to the other partners the preference of the Gore District Council for a one or two lane bridge.

Cr Highsted asked where the cost benefit ratio would hit its limit.

The General Manager Infrastructure explained if the tender price for a single lane bridge exceeded \$5 million then the Council was failing. The Council would then need to decide whether to proceed or surrender the funding.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Bolger, seconded by Cr Gardyne, THAT the report be received.

9. REPORT FROM THE TRANSPORT MANAGER

A report had been received from the Transport Manager.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Phillips, seconded by Cr Beale, THAT the report be received.

The meeting concluded at 5.38pm