

Community Reference Group for the Ngongotaha Flood Event Structural Works Options

Following a significant rain event on 29 April 2018, the Ngongotaha River overtopped its banks and flooded parts of the Ngongotaha Township near Rotorua. The Rotorua Lakes Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council have worked together since then, alongside other agencies, to assist the community to recover from this event. The councils commissioned an independent review of the flood event to understand the cause of the flooding and how similar flood impacts may be avoided in the future. This report was presented to the councils' elected members on 10 December 2018.

To facilitate the implementation of the 24 recommendations of the *Independent Review of the Ngongotaha Flood Event* report, four senior managers¹ of the two councils will jointly lead a series of actions over coming months. They have appointed an independent project management expert², to ensure the key work streams are identified, evaluated, sequenced and stay on task. That progress with each workstream is well communicated.

A key recommendation of the four senior managers was to form a **Community Reference Group** who can assist the councils to collaborate and effectively connect with the affected community and iwi, and to ultimately ensure that any **structural works** option chosen, are balanced, practical, affordable and deliver the risk reduction that the local people need.

Terms of Reference for the Community Reference Group for Structural Works Options

The role of the Community Reference Group is to interrogate proposed options and guide the implementation of recommendation 17 of the Independent Review: *Additional structural flood protection works are considered, particularly to reduce the flood risk to residential properties to the north of Western Road. These works could include the construction of new channels, wetlands (flood detention), culverts/bridges, pump stations and stopbanks.*

The Reference Group are therefore asked to:

1. Assist the council technical staff with identifying, reviewing, testing and fine-tuning the options being developed for recommendation 17, before taking those options to the community;
2. Assist with engaging with the local community on the proposed shortlisted suite of options, then refining these options as a result of community feedback, and facilitating the selection of a final preferred package of work programmes and actions ;
3. Assisting with presenting the preferred option to the two councils and making a recommendation to each council relating to Recommendation 17.

Each Council will appoint an elected member to serve on this Community Reference Group, to be joined by an iwi member(s), and 2-4 members of the Ngongotaha community.

¹ Stavros Michael & Henry Weston, Rotorua Lakes Council; Chris Ingle & Namouta Poutasi, Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

² Elva Conroy.

Other actions required for implementing the Independent Review's recommendations

The Councils intend delivering on all of the 24 recommendations in the Independent Review. The 4 senior staff are developing an Action Plan to co-ordinate this work. Priority workstreams in the short term include:

1. Complete the civil defence emergency response management plan, so that emergency service lead agencies and members of the community understand their roles during an event.³
2. Flood modelling and options development work currently underway needs to be fine-tuned and then delivered to the community, so they understand the likely impacts of different events and the options available to reduce flooding risk for homes affected by a severe storm event (the Community Reference Group's workstream).⁴
3. Complete the repairs to the streambed and banks including debris removal for optimal flood conveyance; and develop a streambed maintenance plan so the community can be confident that stream bed maintenance is being kept up to an agreed standard.⁵
4. Councils' planning and consenting protocols will be reviewed to ensure all new homes are constructed in manner that reflects current and emerging flood levels knowledge and ensures resident safety from river flooding hazards.⁶
5. Upper catchment management also to be looked into, to investigate opportunities to manage and mitigate the speed of rural rainwater runoff which may assist to control peak flood levels downstream and to ensure that rural landowners are also safe from future flood events.

Information relating to all of these workstreams will be presented to the Community Reference Group at their monthly meetings, so that members will understand and can have input into the wider context of the flood mitigation work occurring in the catchment.

³ Recommendation 22.

⁴ Specifically recommendation 17 and 18, and more generally recommendations 9-13.

⁵ Recommendations 14 to 16 and also recommendations 4-6.

⁶ Recommendations 8 and 21.