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Report 00.768

24 October 2000

File: Y/1/6/3

Report to Policy & Finance Committee
from Ian Gunn, Manager, Operations (Wairarapa)

October 2000 Flood Damage - Wairarapa

1. Purpose

To obtain approval for the use of Council's Flood Damage Contingency funds to undertake flood damage repairs within the Wairarapa river management schemes.

2. Background

2.1 The Wairarapa Division has responsibility for maintaining 7 river management schemes consistent with Council policy and approved asset management plants. These schemes have a total asset valuation of \$44.7m and a current maintenance budget of \$1.3m annually.

2.2 Significant flood damage has occurred in these schemes recently as a result of intense rainfall events occurring a week apart in the Tararua Ranges. The first event recorded 1037 millimetres at the Angle Knob rain gauge between 29th September and 3rd October. The three-day rainfall total has a return period of 50 years. The second event on 9th October was shorter with higher intensity rainfall occurring over a twelve hour period. The peak flood flows in the second event were generally higher because of the super-saturated conditions found in the Tararua Ranges.

2.3 In the Upper Ruamahanga, Waipoua and Mangatarere Rivers very large peaks were recorded in both events. In the second event the Upper Ruamahanga at Wardells and the Mangatarere had flood peaks estimated to be in the order of 50 year return periods. The Waipoua River had a return period of 22 years.

The flood peaks in the other rivers, the Waiohine, Waingawa and lower Ruamahanga, were of the order of 5-10 year return periods. The first event produced the largest flood in volume to flow through the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme since completion of the stopbanking in the mid-1980's.

- 2.4 This combination of frequent and significant size flood events, especially the long duration of the first event, produced serious flood damage in the tributary rivers from the Tararua Ranges. For example, within the Upper Ruamahanga and Tauherenikau Rivers several stopbank breaches occurred. River overflows also threatened assets on the Waipoua, Mangatarere and Waingawa Rivers. Assets such as the approach to the runway at Masterton Aerodrome were totally destroyed, and the Masterton Oxidation Ponds were at threat from flooding. Stopbanks and farmland were also threatened on the Waiohine River.
- 2.5 The flood damage repair requirements are estimated and itemised on a scheme by scheme basis in the attached schedules. The items have been prioritised depending on the relative risk to life and property. In addition all non-essential programmed work has been deferred and some flood damage has been absorbed into scheme maintenance programmes.
- 2.6 Meetings and inspections are currently being held with the various scheme advisory committees. The attached schedules indicate staff recommendations to the advisory committees. The total scheme flood damage repair requirement is \$727,000 as summarised in Table 1, of which 50% or \$363,500 is sought from the Contingency Fund.

Table 1 - Wairarapa Schemes Flood Damage

Scheme Name	Total Damage	Claim from Contingency Fund
Upper Ruamahanga	\$240,000	\$120,000
Waiohine-Mangatarere	\$187,000	\$93,500
Waipoua	\$105,000	\$52,500
Waingawa	\$43,000	\$21,500
Lower Wairarapa Valley Development	\$152,000	\$76,000
Total	\$727,000	\$363,500

- 2.7 Additional flood damage repairs are also required to protect Masterton District Council infrastructure and assets. These repairs are estimated at \$380,000 or with a 50% contribution from the Flood Contingency Fund of \$190,000. Although these assets are not strictly scheme responsibilities as yet, they are within existing river scheme boundaries and their protection is expected to shortly become scheme obligations consistent with the comprehensive scheme reviews currently in progress. The regional council has previously contributed towards flood protection works in these areas.
- 2.8 The total flood damage repairs are presented for the Policy & Finance Committee's consideration, and have a total cost of \$1,107,000 as itemised on the attached schedules of which 50% or \$553,500 is sought from the Contingency Fund.

3. Discussion

- 3.1 In the event of significant flood damage the 50% regional funding component is normally obtained from the Council's Flood Contingency Fund. In the Wairarapa the 50% local share is obtained from the scheme rating district and other beneficiaries. The Wairarapa and the Landcare Divisional Managers can approve calls on the Flood Contingency Fund of up to \$100,000 jointly, under delegation. Other withdrawals need to be approved by Council. In this instance following the first event, works totalling \$110,000, or \$55,000 from the fund, were approved under delegation to allow the commencement of two urgent works. Given the extent of damage and the lengthy period to the next scheduled Council meeting, it was decided to report directly to this Policy and Finance Committee rather than report to the December Council meeting through the Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee.
- 3.2 As the itemised schedules have yet to be considered by all the scheme advisory committees, it is suggested that Councillors Buchanan and Long and the Council Chairperson be given delegated authority to approve the final schedules after the round of advisory scheme committee meetings has been completed.
- 3.3 The process of presenting proposed flood damage repair programmes to scheme advisory committees is seen as being particularly robust, as the priorities and affordability of the programmes are carefully checked and approved by people who are very directly paying for a share of the cost involved. Inspections of the damage will occur in the presence of the committee members. The two Wairarapa councillors attend these inspections and committee meetings.
- 3.4 The Council's Flood Contingency Fund has a current balance of \$577,000 as at 30th June 2000. This fund is for flood damage repairs to Council administered Schemes within the Wellington region as a whole. Currently annual contributions of \$100,000 each are made through the Wairarapa and Landcare Divisions budgets. If the Flood Contingency Fund withdrawals being recommended to the Council are approved, there will be approximately \$25,000 in the Contingency Fund at year end, plus this year's \$200,000 contribution. Note however that there will be a claim for flood damage from the Landcare Division for this flood event. The claim for the western rivers will be reported to the Landcare Committee on 16 November.
- 3.5 The situation with the local funding share for this flood damage is also tight. The Waiohine River Scheme is already in deficit and will increase to approximately \$215,000 with the proposed works. Rates in this scheme were increased by 60% last year and the scheme committee has now agreed to repay the deficit over the next 3 years. The scheme reserves in most other Wairarapa schemes will be used up and the only Scheme with any significant reserves will be the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development scheme.
- 3.6 Masterton District Council has committed to fund the local share of works undertaken to protect their assets. They have worked closely with Council staff to ensure any works are compatible and consistent with river management scheme objectives.

4. Recommendation

That the Committee recommends that Council;

- (1) *Approves the expenditure of up to \$727,000 and the withdrawal of up to \$363,500 from the Council's Flood Damage Contingency Fund for flood damage repairs in the Upper Ruamahanga, Waiohine-Mangatarere, Waingawa, Waipoua, and the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development river management schemes.*
- (2) *Approves the withdrawal of up to \$190,000 from the Council's Flood Damage Contingency Fund for river protection works to protect Masterton District Council infrastructure assets within the Waingawa, Waipoua and the Upper Ruamahanga river management scheme areas.*
- (3) *Establishes a sub-committee of the Council Chairperson and Councillors Long and Buchanan to approve the final schedule following the completion of the advisory committee meetings.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:



Ian Gunn
Manager, Operations



Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa