
West Coast Catchments Committee MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the West Coast Catchments Committee held in the Council Chambers, Waikato Regional Council, 401 Grey Street, Hamilton East on Wednesday 8 March 2017 at 10am.

	Present:
Waikato Regional Council	Cr Fred Lichtwark
Waikato District Council	Cr Lisa Thomson
Otorohanga District Council	Cr Deborah Pilkington
Waitomo District Council	Cr Sue Smith
Department of Conservation	Natasha Hayward
Local Community Representatives	Andrea Hanna
	Rob Jolly (Chair)
	Kristel van Houte
	Mike Moss
	Mark Smyth
Te Tokanganui-a-noho	Weo Maag
Maniapoto Maori Trust Board	Ray Wi
Waikato-Tainui	Maxine Moana-Tuwhangai
Chairman Integrated Catchment Management Committee	Cr Stu Kneebone
Chair of Council and Deputy Chair of Council	Cr Alan Livingston
	Cr Tipa Mahuta
Waikato Regional Council Staff in attendance	Greg Ryan - Principal Advisor Integrated Catchment Management
	Matthew Davis - Manager - Lower Waikato/Waipā/West Coast Catchments
	Jolene Francis – Zone Manager – West Coast
	Adrian Jepson – Catchment Management Officer
	Callum Bourke – Catchment Management Officer
	Jackson Efford – Catchment Management Lead
	Brett Bailey – Biosecurity Pest Animals Team Leader
	Sarah McLeay – Democracy Advisor

Apologies

Bill Thomson
Tom Mandeno

Accepted

SECTION A: UNDER DELEGATION FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL**Confirmation of Agenda**

(Agenda Item 2)

Mark Smyth moved/Kristel van Houthe seconded

WCC17/01

RESOLVED

THAT the agenda of the meeting of the West Coast Catchments Committee of 8 March 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as the business for the meeting.

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/01)

Disclosures of Interest

(Agenda Item 3)

Cr Fred Lichtwark noted his role as manager of Whaingaroa Harbour Care Inc. There were no other disclosures of interest.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

File 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 4) Doc 9033328 and 10017724

Deb Pilkington moved/Weo Maag seconded.

WCC17/02

RESOLVED THAT

1. the Minutes of the West Coast Catchments Committee meeting of 30 August 2016 be received and approved as a true and correct record; and
2. the extract from the Integrated Catchment Management Committee held on 19 September 2016 as presented to the Council meeting held on 29 September 2016 be received.

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/02)

Matters Arising – Issues and Actions from previous West Coast Catchments Committee Meetings

File: 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 5) Doc 9989442

Presented by Zone Manager Jolene Francis, the report updated the Committee on the actions and issues discussed at previous West Coast Catchments Committee meetings.

Mike Moss moved/Natasha Hayward seconded

WCC17/03

RESOLVED

THAT the report “Matters Arising - Issues and Actions from previous West Coast Catchments Committee Meetings” (Doc 9989442, dated 20 February 2017) be received.

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/03)

Chair's Report March 2017

File: 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 6) Doc 9994498

Presented by the Chairman Rob Jolly, the verbal report:

- provided an update to the Committee on:
 - items discussed at the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 29 September 2016; and
 - issues of significance and matters of relevance to the West Coast Zone; and
- introduced the new Committee members, Cr Fred Lichtwark and Lisa Thomson.

Andrea Hanna moved/Mark Smyth seconded

WCC17/04

RESOLVED**THAT the report "Chairman's Report March 2017" (Doc # 9994498, dated 21 February 2017) be received.****The motion was put and carried (WCC17/04)****West Coast Zone Status Report to 31 January 2017**

File: 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 7) Doc 9988508

Presented by Jolene Francis – Zone Manager West Coast. The report outlined the status for West Coast Zone activities and work programmes, covering the period from 1 July 2016 to 31 January 2017.

During questions, answers and related discussion of the Committee the following points were noted:

- The use of an eight wire fence in the Mokau fencing of Limestone bluff met the requirements necessary (Hill Country Erosion funding) to contain the class of stock on the property, being sheep and cattle.
- River Management stock exclusion requires a minimum of a two wire electric fence. Where there has been an investment in planting then fencing is more extensive. Maintenance follow up after stock exclusion is important. Landowners pay half the cost of willow removal. As the Landowner's undertakings cannot be enforced, if they fail to undertake their part of the required work then there will be no further investment. The standard procedure for willow removal is to cut, spray and replace. There is a willow instream workshop next week.
- There was a three-month period between the photographs in the report showing before and after willow removal at Waitetuna Stream.
- Concern was expressed about farms funded for willow work undertaking other activities that are environmentally degrading such as draining wetlands. In the specific example highlighted, staff were aware and raised the issue through the correct channels.
- Wetland drainage is often restorable but prevention is better. Positive action with landowners should be undertaken whenever possible. Staff undertook to provide information to the next meeting on what action could be taken with landowners to prevent the drainage of wetlands.
- Movement of sediment following willow removal is limited by the method of removal. Willow removal plans must include actions to mitigate the potential for negative impacts.
- Waikato Regional Council may benefit from working with Harbour Care groups.
- Stream restoration needs to be supported by the provision of education to farm consultants. The provision to landowners will not always achieve desired outcomes.
- Willow removal should be followed up with fencing.

Cr Deb Pilkington moved/Cr Sue Smith seconded.

WCC17/05 **RESOLVED THAT the report “West Coast Zone Status Report to 31 January 2017” (Doc 9988508 dated 8 March 2017) be received.**

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/05)

SECTION B: FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Annual Plan 2017/18 Budget Increases

File: 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 8) Doc 9993296

Presented by Jolene Francis – Zone Manager West Coast outlining the proposed increases to the rate revenue for the West Coast Zone in the 2017/18 Annual Plan budget and seeking direction from the Committee for Council consideration as part of the annual plan process.

During questions and answers, three key points were discussed: activities that may be funded, how those activities may be funded and the impact on rates. With regard to activities that may be funded it was noted that:

- West Coast is a priority in respect to hill country and harbours.
- The financial commitment to the hill country followed the Hill Country Erosion Fund Work Programme and catchment works including farm plans. Outputs need to be visible.
- Much of the work undertaken in the zone was for the common good rather than targeted at a single issue.

With regard to how those activities may be funded it was noted that:

- There was work to be done and a need to obtain funding assistance to speed up implementation without a further rates burden.
- A new funding stream from the Ministry for the Environment was available and may be an option.
- Landowners had an obligation to do their bit and one possibility was to change the level of landowner subsidy.
- Long Term Plan funding (first) and Hill Country funding (subsequently) came on line at different times which meant that the use of reserves was required.
- Reserves had been used to support achievements to date.
- Funding options were presented compared with other zones dollar for dollar and the use of reserves was discussed at previous meetings.
- The new direction of Council should be taken into consideration when considering rate adjustments and application of funding dictated by work plans.
- Works could be spread over a longer period taking a generational approach, however a clear understanding of the consequences of delays need to be taken into consideration and understood.
- It was important to understand the financial information and how the activities are to be funded.
- There was some support for a 20% rate increase and an extended time frame.

With regard to the impact on rates it was noted that:

- When compared to other zones, the West Coast zone was larger with fewer rate payers.
- Council acknowledged that these factors placed an additional burden on ratepayers in the zone.
- The zone, however, receives a higher general rate subsidy (50%) than other zones (typically 25%).
- Other zones have larger budgets due to flood schemes that require significant funds.

- The Waipa zone completed a catchment plan and increased its rates substantially in recent years to deliver more outcomes at a quicker rate than previously.
- Ratepayers need to know what additional rates will achieve and how it would impact on them.
- The Committee should not be a vehicle to impose unreasonable rate increases.
- There was concern that debt funding was not sustainable.
- An increase in general rates may be as acceptable as a targeted increase once a careful decision is made.
- There was particular concern that a significant rate burden would be difficult for small land owners and elderly Māori living near marae in their ancestral areas.

In conclusion it was noted that the West Coast zone was underinvesting relative to the other zones. There was a need for direction by way of parameters from the Committee on the budget for the West Coast zone. The priorities needed to be finalised in June. The Committee decided to establish a working group to consider options and recommend a preferred option for consideration at the next Committee meeting.

Cr Fred Lichtwark moved/Cr Stu Kneebone seconded.

WCC17/06

RESOLVED

THAT the report “Annual Plan 2017-18 Budget Increases” (Doc #9992395, dated 21 February 2017) be received.

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/06)

Cr Fred Lichtwark moved/Cr Stu Kneebone seconded

WCC17/07

RECOMMENDED THAT

- 1 staff determine all funding options and combinations including the rate impacts for each and report back by email to all West Coast Catchments Committee Members who will provide feedback.**
- 2 following this, staff work with a working group of the West Coast Catchments Committee made up of Mike Moss, Cr Fred Lichtwark, Rob Jolly, Mark Smyth, Cr Deb Pilkington and Maxine Moana-Tuwhangai to determine the preferred option and reasons.**
- 3 the working group recommend the preferred option is approved by the West Coast Catchments Committee at its next meeting scheduled for 23 May 2017 for recommendation to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee.**

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/07)

Department of Conservation Management of the Whitebait Fishery Report

File: 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 9) Doc 10038702

The report was presented by Natasha Hayward – Department of Conservation outlining the Department’s role in managing the whitebait fishery.

During questions, answers and related discussion of the Committee the following points were noted:

- There was concern that predator species such as trout are protected but native species not. This contributed to the decline of the fishery. Commercial fishing was also contributing to the decline.
- It was noted that whitebait in some areas had improved as a result of habitat and other environmental improvement such as river fencing. The use of stands and their control was a significant issue.
- A ban on fishing for sale was a positive step towards fishery preservation. However, this is likely to interfere with intergenerational customary fishing activity of Māori.
- Other organisations were engaged in this area and it was important to work smarter together.

Mike Moss moved/Cr Deb Pilkington seconded

WCC17/08

RESOLVED

THAT the report “Department of Conservation Management of the Whitebait Fishery” (Doc 10038702 dated 8 March 2017) be received.

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/08)

Mike Moss moved/Cr Fred Lichtwark seconded

WCC17/09

RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. so as to better conserve and protect the whitebait fishery in this region the West Coast Catchments Committee recommend to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee that a recommendation is made to the Department of Conservation that a moratorium is imposed on the sale of whitebait sourced from the region until there is evidence supporting the need for a change; and
2. the West Coast Catchments Committee recommend to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee that the Council work with other agencies to better preserve and protect the whitebait fishery.

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/09)

SECTION A: UNDER DELEGATION FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL

West Coast Zone Prioritisation Review

File: 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 10) Doc: 9993296

Presented by Jolene Francis – Zone Manager West Coast to advise the Committee of the outcome of the West Coast prioritisation review. This was taken as read part way through.

Maxine Moana-Tuwahangai moved/Weo Maag seconded

WCC17/10

RESOLVED THAT the report “West Coast Zone Prioritisation Review” (Doc #9993296, dated 21 February 2017) be received.

The motion was put and carried (WCC17/10)

Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting Reports (16 February 2017)

File: 03 02 38 (Agenda Item 11) Doc: 10017652

Presented by Matthew Davis, Manager – Lower Waikato / Waipa / West Coast Catchments to advise the Committee of relevant items from the recent meeting of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee on 16 February 2017.

During questions, answers and related discussion of the Committee the following points were noted:

- There were concerns that sectors that have an impact on catchments, such as engineering, sometimes retain superseded views of best practice in relation to matters such as wetlands.
- A holistic view is required when considering restoration of wetlands. Council is fostering a culture of integration (e.g., merging of River and Catchment Services with Biosecurity and Biodiversity during the last triennium).
- Long term and sustainable economics of drainage districts need to be reviewed.
- Predator Free 2050 involves a specified group of pests: rats, stoats and possums. Cats, dogs and imported predator breeds, such as ferrets are not included and remain a significant issue.
- Ferrets can still be purchased as a pet in New Zealand, although this is set to change.

Maxine Moana-Tuwhangai moved/Weo Maag seconded

WCC17/11

THAT the report named “Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting Reports (16 February 2017)” (Doc#10017652, 17 February 2017) be received.

The motion was put and carried (wcc17/11)

Items for next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 23 May 2017

(Agenda Item 12)

Recommendations to Council relating to funding issues.

Area Overviews

Following the last Item on the agenda, the Chair requested that each Member provide an overview of significant issues for them. The following points were noted:

- Work was being undertaken on submissions in response to Healthy Rivers –Wai Ora reflecting West Coast issues.
- The West Coast Zone Plan can be used as the basis for these submissions as it identifies the priorities of the sub-catchments.
- Work in the Kariori area was acknowledged. This is an example of multi-agencies working together.
- Important to keep in mind a three harbour perspective when considering environmental good practice.
- Erosion protection has been enthusiastically received in the Waitomo district.
- The participation of all Members of this important Committee is appreciated.
- Council and the Department of Conservation are working together on aerial and ground control. A partnership with Maniapoto Trust Board is involved.
- Work is being undertaken on reducing waste including recycling of plastics from farms.

Meeting closed at 1352.