

Report 07.363
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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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Kopuaranga River Enhancement Project – Scheme Update

1. Purpose

To recommend approval of the revised Kopuaranga River Enhancement Project and to make financial provision to commence the work within the 2007/08 Annual Plan.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The Committee were appraised of the progress of the project in May 2006 (Report 06.192) and regular updates in subsequent Divisional Manager reports. The project was initiated following the floods of 2004, when there was widespread community support for Greater Wellington to investigate the feasibility of creating a scheme to clear the willows that were blocking the Kopuaranga River channel.

The benefits to accrue from these works include:

- savings in reduced costs of flood damage to pastures and fences.
- farm infrastructures such as tracks and irrigation and water reticulation systems will be flooded less frequently.
- improved stock health
- social and business benefits from less frequent road flooding (note there is no dollar figures attached to these benefits)
- reduced road maintenance

Following consultation with the community, a sub-committee was formed which included representatives of affected landowners, Masterton District Council and Greater Wellington.

The sub-committee, under the chairmanship of Gavin McLachlan has met on a continuous basis to further develop the scope of the project, confirm the rating classification, and consult with the community.

Following the completion of the investigations, the community was provided with the documented information and an invitation to attend public meetings in January 2007. These meetings considered a proposal to clear willows from Hastwell to the junction of the Kopuaranga and Ruamahanga Rivers (a total length of 50 kilometres).

4. Community consultation on the proposed scheme

At a combined public meeting in March it was clear that the proposed scheme did not have the full support of the community, with 46 in favour and 20 against. Due to the low numbers of the community attending the meeting, the project sub-committee recommended that a postal vote be completed to gauge the full extent of community opinion. A postal vote was organised in April 2007.

The committee reviewed the postal vote where:

Votes for the scheme	68
Votes against the scheme	55
Total votes	123
Total eligible voters	177

It was acknowledged there was not solid support from the community for the current scheme and consideration should be given to an alternative scheme. A major issue for the proposed scheme was the levying of a dwelling charge on all dwellings within the Kopuaranga River catchment. This change was developed to reflect the indirect benefits of clearing the willows, primarily in the form of improved access as roads would be flooded less frequently.

5. Amended Scheme Proposal

The results from the postal vote showed that nearly all of the landowners in the lower end of the Catchment were substantially in favour of the scheme proceeding. On this basis the sub-committee asked staff to consider a smaller scheme.

A revised scheme was proposed with a reduced area covering from the Kopuaranga confluence at Rathkeale up to the bridge, just downstream of the reserve (Clarke Memorial Domain) on the southern side of Mauriceville, a distance of approximately 27km, (see **Attachment 1**). The number of rated properties for the revised scheme is reduced to 51. Those properties that were now outside the scope of the revised scheme were written to, explaining the initial scheme would not be proceeding.

A summary of the revised scheme is detailed, as follows:

- The estimated total scheme cost including planting is \$240,000 and will cover an eight year period. It is anticipated that ongoing maintenance after this period will be approximately \$8,000 per annum
- The loan term will be 20 years, with rates indexed to the construction cost index, giving an actual term of 12 to 13 years
- The land classification rebate, which provides a benefit to those landowners who participated in the isolated works on the Kopuaranga in 2006, will stop when the loan is paid off
- There will be no dwelling charge
- Rates will be collected based on land classification and only from houses that were either flooded, had flood water under them or where the private access driveway was flooded. The Masterton District Council contribution reflects the reduced road maintenance costs and Hatuma Lime Company contribution is based on benefits derived on an improved level of business continuity.
- The cost benefit analysis was evaluated for the revised scheme and now offers a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 1.43. There is an internal rate of return for the project of 13.7%.

6. Funding

Funding of the scheme will be based on an expenditure of \$23,200 per annum, with 50% contribution from Greater Wellingtons general rate, with the remaining 50% (\$11,600) provided by:

• Land / Houses floodable	\$6,200	(53%)
• Masterton District Council	\$4,000	(35%)
• Houses in Catchment	\$1,150	(10%)
• Hatuma Lime	\$250	(2%)

7. Communications

The revised scheme proposal was documented and sent to the landowners and a public meeting was held on 24 May 2007. At the meeting there was an overwhelming support for the proposal with a vote of 23 for and 1 against.

The one voter against the scheme proceeding did so because he considered his property fell outside the influence of flooding from the Kopuaranga River. Subsequent research has confirmed this is the case. As a consequence this property and areas from adjacent properties have been removed from the schemes rating classification

All landowners associated with the revised scheme were advised of the outcome of the meeting and that there was an opportunity to address any concerns through

submission on the Annual Plan, no later than Friday, 1st June 2007. No submissions were received.

Gavin McLachlan was then elected as Chairman of the Kopuaranga River enhancement committee. A Scheme Committee was elected to reflect the spread of landowners along the length of the scheme.

The scheme committee is due to meet in July and will focus on the delivery of the works programme for 2007/08. A newsletter will follow that meeting and provide further information to the community.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Approves*** the amended Kopuaranga River Enhancement Project at an estimated total cost of \$240,000.
3. ***Endorses*** the financial provision made in the 2007/08 annual plan to commence the work.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Graeme Campbell
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Attachment 1: