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Committee Strategy and Policy Committee
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Report on Te Kāuru Upper Ruamahanga River Floodplain Management Plan Subcommittee meeting, 23 July 2014

1. Purpose

To inform the Strategy and Policy Committee of Te Kāuru Upper Ruamahanga River Floodplain Management Plan Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) meeting of 23 July 2014.

2. Reports

2.1 Te Kāuru Upper Ruamahanga Floodplain Management Plan

The Subcommittee received an overview of the preliminary findings from Phase 1 of Te Kāuru Upper Ruamahanga Floodplain Management Plan (the Plan). The purpose of Phase 1 is to establish the context of the Plan. This includes defining the flooding issues in the area, identifying the flood hazard, collecting information and describing the elements at risk.

The Upper Ruamahanga/Te Kāuru catchment covers an area of 1560 square kilometres. It includes the Waingawa, Waipoua, Kopuaranga, Whangaehu and Taueru rivers, and a number of smaller tributaries, all of which eventually flow into the Ruamahanga River. The investigations completed during the first phase of the floodplain management planning process have created a clear picture of the values of the rivers and the adjacent floodplain, and identify the risks that exist in the relationships between flood hazards, people and communities, values, and the way in which the interactions between these are managed. The main outcomes of the Phase 1 investigations are:

- flood risk affecting homes, businesses and critical infrastructure in both rural and urban areas of the catchment
- erosion risk affecting productive land and critical infrastructure situated near the river corridor

- conflicts between current river management techniques and cultural, environmental and social values
- relationships between communities, groups and individuals involved with the management of rivers; and
- the current funding, rating and governance methods used to pay for flood, erosion and river management.

The Subcommittee discussed each of the identified outcomes, in particular the flood risk. The 1-in-100 year flood models for the Plan have identified some areas of additional flooding greater than the area identified in modelling carried out in 1995. The most significant change is for northern Masterton, where a large number of additional properties (2000) will be classified as within a flood hazard area, which has been sub-classified into low hazard and high hazard areas. It was noted that a hazard classification does not directly correlate to the estimated value of damage, but instead takes into consideration the risk to, or potential loss of, human life. This risk category will be reviewed before the work is finalised

It was agreed that the next stage in the process, which is to inform property owners of the change to the flood hazard area, is extremely important, and the Subcommittee emphasized the importance of conveying clear, consistent information to those affected. Initially, affected property owners will receive a letter which will include an invitation to attend public forums on the matter, and details of who to contact should they have any questions.

The Subcommittee agreed that the Chair, Bob Francis, along with Greater Wellington Regional Council officers, would meet with the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of Masterton District Council in the coming week to ensure both parties are familiar with, and agree to, the proposed process.

In addition to providing affected property owners with information, the Subcommittee discussed the individual flood protection Schemes in the catchment and how they relate to the overarching aims of the Subcommittee. It was agreed that each Scheme needs to be kept up to date with the work of the Subcommittee, and that there needs to be a strong link between the two.

The Subcommittee discussed the next steps for the Plan, which will now move into Phase 2. This will involve agreeing on the key issues, setting objectives, and developing assessment methods and methods to manage the flood risk.

3. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

4. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

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Report approved by:

Cr Donaldson
Chair, Strategy and Policy
Committee