

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Catchment Sub-Committee held in the Council Chamber, 200 Tuam Street, Christchurch, on Thursday, 7 October 2021 at 10.30am.

To adhere to Covid-19 alert level restrictions, no public were in attendance, except those attending for the deputation.

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Present

Committee Co-Chair Councillor Ian Mackenzie and Councillors Grant Edge, Claire McKay, Elizabeth McKenzie (via audio/visual link), Peter Scott, and John Sunckell.

In Attendance

Councillor Megan Hands (via audio/visual link).

Management and officers present

Katherine Harbrow (Director Operations), Tafflyn Bradford-James (Director Communications and Engagement), Jesse Burgess (Senior Strategy Manager), Nick Daniels (General Manager, Field Operations), Leigh Griffiths (Manager, Rivers), Shaun McCracken (Flood Protection - Recovery Manager, Catherine Schache (General Counsel) and Petrea Downey (Committee Advisor) and Vivienne Ong (Committee Advisor).

Report Writers and other staff were also present.

1. Mihi/Karakia Timatanga - Opening

Co-Chair Councillor Mackenzie opened the meeting.

The karakia for the day had been made at the Councillor only time held at 8.30am.

Members were reminded of the Terms of Reference which explained the purpose of the Catchment Sub-Committee.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Committee Co-Chair Tumu Taiao laean Cranwell, Councillor Phil Clearwater, Tumu Taiao Yvette Couch-Lewis and Councillor Craig Pauling and Chair Jenny Hughey (ex-Officio).

3. **Conflicts of interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. **Public Forum, Deputations and Petitions**

There were no requests for public forum or petitions. There was one deputation.

- 4.1 Deputation - George Kelcher, Special Projects, Road Metals Co Ltd and Dan Francis, General Manager, Road Metals Co Ltd

George Kelcher and Dan Francis from Road Metals Co Ltd provided a deputation on extracting gravel and gravel management. Information was provided prior to the meeting (attached).

The Chair thanked George and Dan for their presentation.

CATCHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE RESOLVED

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

1. **receives the deputation from George Kelcher and Dan Francis, Road Metals Co Ltd, on Gravel extraction, managing rivers and water flow capacity.**
Councillor Scott/ Councillor Sunckell
CARRIED

5. **Minutes**

The minutes of the 1st meeting of the Catchment Sub-committee held on 12 August 2021 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

CATCHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE RESOLVED

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

1. **confirms and adopts, as a true and correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2021.**
Councillor Ian Mackenzie/Councillor McKay
CARRIED

6. **Matters Arising**

Councillor McKay requested a high level percentages, quantum in the area of types of rates collected in the river schemes. Staff advised, for this financial year, across all 59 river rating districts, 9.5 million, of that, targeted rates are 6.6 million, works and services rates are 1.5 million, general rates are 1.4 million and also receive revenue net income of lease and forestry of 4.5 million.

7. **Information Items**

7.1 **River Management**

Refer page 15 of the agenda.

Staff spoke to the report, which included information on flood recovery, braided river revival, gravel management, regional parks and funding.

The following points were made:

- Work on the Waimakariri-McIntoches Bend is to be finalised this month, which is one of the first in the country to be completed. It is planned that Members of Parliament be invited to an event and to talk about broader topics.
- Waiau Township Stopbank Repair and Construction is in its final stages of being completed.

In response to the different funding options that staff proposed, the Sub-committee noted the majority of members preferred Option 3D, and advised their four preferences were:

- Option 3B - Fund the \$12.2m over 2 years via a new Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) (region wide)
- Option 3C - Fund the \$12.2m over 2 years via a new Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) (impacted districts only)
- Option 3D - Fund the \$12.2m over 2 years via a 50/50 increase in general rates and a new Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) (Region wide)
- Option 4 - Expansion of 'out of scheme' approach to include physical works

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

1. RECOMMENDS to the NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE that it recommends to COUNCIL that an additional financial delegation approval is given for unbudgeted May/June 2021 flood recovery expenditure of a further \$4.1 million for the year ended 30 June 2022 (noting that Council has already approved \$4.1m for immediate flood recovery work)
2. notes the balance of the unbudgeted May/June 2021 flood recovery expenditure of approximately \$10 million will be included in the 2022/23 Annual Plan
3. RECOMMENDS to the NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE that it recommends to COUNCIL that potential options for rating changes for funding flood recovery are explored and presented by staff for inclusion in the draft 2022/23 Annual Plan

4. endorses a further workshop with Canterbury Mayors ahead of potential 2022/23 Annual Plan to further engage on possible short- and long-term solutions for the community on flood recovery, river rating and broader out of scheme issues
5. notes that Regional Councils, as a sector, are continuing engagement with Central Government for co-investment in flood protection.

CATCHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE RESOLVED

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

1. **RECOMMENDS to the NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE that it recommends to COUNCIL that an additional financial delegation approval is given for unbudgeted May/June 2021 flood recovery expenditure of a further \$4.1 million for the year ended 30 June 2022 (noting that Council has already approved \$4.1m for immediate flood recovery work).**

Councillor McKay/Councillor Sunckell
CARRIED

Councillor Edge Proposed Amendment to 2.:

2. notes the balance of the unbudgeted May/June 2021 flood recovery expenditure of approximately \$10 million is proposed to be included in the draft 2022/23 Annual Plan.

Councillor Edge/Councillor McKenzie
(**For:** Councillors Edge, Sunckell, McKenzie;
Against: Councillors Scott, Mackenzie and McKay)
LOST

CATCHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE RESOLVED

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

2. **notes the balance of the unbudgeted May/June 2021 flood recovery expenditure of approximately \$10 million will be included in the draft 2022/23 Annual Plan.**

Councillor Scott/Councillor Sunckell
CARRIED

CATCHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE RESOLVED

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

3. **RECOMMENDS to the NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE that it recommends to COUNCIL that potential options for rating changes for funding flood recovery are explored and presented by staff for inclusion in the draft 2022/23 Annual Plan.**

Councillor Scott/Councillor McKay
CARRIED

Councillor Mackenzie proposed an amendment to 4.:

CATCHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE RESOLVED

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

4. **endorses a further workshop with Canterbury Mayors, partners and stakeholders, ahead of draft 2022/23 Annual Plan to further engage on possible short- and long-term solutions for the community on flood recovery, river rating and broader out of scheme issues,**

Councillor Ian Mackenzie/Councillor McKay
CARRIED

That the carried amendment 4. above become the substantive motion.

Councillor Ian Mackenzie/Councillor Sunckell
CARRIED

CATCHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE RESOLVED

That the Catchment Sub-Committee:

5. **notes that Regional Councils, as a sector, are continuing engagement with Central Government for co-investment in flood protection.**

Councillor McKay/Councillor Sunckell
CARRIED

8. **Notices of Motion**

There were no notices of motion.

9. **Extraordinary and Urgent Business**

There was no extraordinary or urgent business.

10. **Next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 18 November 2021.

11. **Mihi/Karakia Whakamutunga - Closing**

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation.

Karakia: The closing Karakia for the day was provided at the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee, which followed this meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.13pm.

CONFIRMED 18 NOVEMBER 2021

Councillor Ian Mackenzie (Co-Chair) _____

Tumu Taiao Iaeen Cranwell (Co-Chair) _____

7th October 2021

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Presentation to Environment Canterbury Catchment Sub Committee.

The Infrastructure Commission New Zealand recently put out a statement which was repeated at the Quarry NZ Conference in July which said ***“Infrastructure must be prioritised to ensure that community needs outweigh “The opinions of a few.”***

This is a very apt statement in today's world as the strident voices of a few that at times seem to ignore reality and the effects that nature brings into our community on a regular basis. Rivers have been providing an aggregate resource ever since New Zealand started being developed with tracks - then roads - and in the last 150 years for the construction of the infrastructure that we now have today.

Over the last two decades it has become harder and more expensive to obtain consents to extract gravel from rivers and our Industry has been turning more and more to land based resources which still comes at a major cost and involve months and years of time to put consents in place.

The June 2000 ECan list of consent application charges showed that the short term gravel extraction consent fee was \$150.00 plus G.S.T. A long term consent for up to 35 years was \$600.00 plus G.S.T. The same non notified consents now are costing upwards of \$10,000 by the time we get a consent to disturb the bed of a river, an air discharge consent, permission from LINZ & DOC & IWI, bird reports and at times searches for Lizards and Grasshoppers and other creatures which come at an even higher cost.

Our Industry fully realises that rivers will not continue to supply an endless supply of aggregates to satisfy the current demand but this said, rivers still need managing as floods and high flow events take place on a regular basis. This is where our Industry is one of the most cost effective tools that ECan has in their toolbox – the managing of excess gravel in rivers can be managed at largely nil cost by people and businesses that have had decades of experience in undertaking this work. My own experience now entails over 46 years of undertaking gravel extraction and river management and Road Metals Company Ltd has been in the business for over 66 years.

The move away from river based resources to permanent land based sites poses some risk for ECan as shown during the recent flood events in Mid Canterbury and especially in the Ashburton River area. With the Lake Hood Development and the permanent land based Quarry site now supplying most of the aggregate demand for the wider Ashburton area then less and less gravel has been extracted from the Ashburton river resulting in an ever increasing gravel build up in the bed and a much reduced flow capacity inside the river banks during high flow and flood periods.

With climate change effects now becoming well recognised these events are, according to the experts, becoming a lot more frequent and we can expect higher volume extreme flood events. Ashburton was very lucky recently to escape being flooded by river flows overtopping the flood protection that is currently in place – much of this caused by gravel build up in the river bed itself resulting in lower flow capacity.

I believe that given the extreme events that have been taking place over the last few years that ECan now has a responsibility to be planning ahead and to be taking advantage of all the options to manage the rivers under their control in the most cost efficient manner available. A major part of this could be to make it easier to extract gravel from the built up islands in the bed of a lot of rivers, design the beds to be wider to enable a higher flow capacity before breaking the banks and to review what are deemed to be mean bed levels in a lot of rivers that are based not on any engineered design but rather what the perceived bed level was at some point of time – usually from the 1980 to 1990 period.

There should be some serious investigation into how we can enhance the flow capacity of the rivers to cover the higher flows that are expected. Much of the gravel extraction work that will be required to achieve this can be undertaken at effectively nil cost to ECan by the Gravel Extraction Industry. This would happen during low flow periods where the effects are a lot less than during high flow periods or immediately after flood events.

Higher and more stop banks will be part of an answer but these will come at a cost. Much of the recent damage in the Orari River came from flood waters overtopping the current banks and scouring them out – this could have been relieved by lowering and widening the bed of the river and thus creating a higher flow capacity – Temuka and surrounding areas were very lucky to have avoided being flooded out.

To make this a more attractive option for gravel extractors the current consent process in my opinion needs overhauling. Once there is a flood or extreme event it seems to be fine to have diggers, bulldozers and other equipment working in riverbeds and in flowing water to undertake emergency works with no regard at all to the items that make up all the consent conditions in a gravel extraction permit. There may well be retrospective consents sought for this work after it is carried out but this does not negate the fact that the work has already been undertaken.

It would be much more proactive to look at what is actually happening in these extreme events and to work backwards through the consent process to enable work to take place prior to these extreme events taking place. This would pose the following questions.

- 1/ What work is undertaken during and immediately after these extreme events?
- 2/ What should we be doing to work towards mitigating the effects of these events prior to them happening?
- 3/ What tools do ECan need to achieve the right outcomes?

4/ How much can gravel extraction and gravel management assist with the process of creating higher flow capacity in rivers prior to overtopping stop banks and flooding rural and urban areas?

5/ How can the consent application process be simplified and only relevant conditions be put in place so that the work that is required can be carried out in an efficient and cost effective manner when river flows are low.

6/ How can this work take place with the least effect and at minimum cost?

There does not seem to be any problem with crossing and working within flowing water in emergency situations but it is very hard to get consents to even cross water to get to gravel beaches and certainly hard to leave what should be a proper river bed level design behind when there are restrictions in working within 5 metres of the water's edge and keeping 300mm above water levels.

One place that working below water levels is allowed is in the Waimakariri River and I guess this is permissible given that the river is so changeable and if not managed correctly can break out and flood parts of Christchurch. The high risk to a larger populated society has been recognised in this instance and this recognition should be applied across a lot of other sites. There may not be as many people involved along other rivers but these areas also have a community to look after and a lot less ratepayers around to pay the inevitable costs once the damage is done.

Nature has absolutely no regard for infrastructure, Government policies, ECan consents and conditions, bird, skink, lizard and grasshopper habitats when we have a flood event. Nature is something that can only be managed to a certain level and never fully controlled but we can put systems in place to make this easier to achieve instead of creating ever ending hurdles and conditions in the consent process. This needs to be looked at and changed so as to enable our Industry to be able to achieve what is a benefit for all of society, taxpayers and ratepayers alike.

In the areas where gravel is available this effectively becomes a community asset due to having resource available within the local area and minimising the cost of transport for the products that are produced from the gravel available from rivers. The average cost of processed aggregate supply effectively doubles with the first 30 kilometres of cart distance and keeps rising with every kilometre of cart distance after that. In the North Island it is not unusual for cartage distances to be getting up to 150 kilometres one way into both Auckland and Wellington for some materials. This is a massive cost to the taxpayer and ratepayer who ultimately fund all of Government and Local Body spending. This also extends the carbon footprint effect across the region with increased burning of fossil fuels and wear and tear on the roading network.

It is common knowledge that Central Government is imposing legislation and policies that create added cost and effort from ECan to be able to implement and monitor. These policies need to be looked at pragmatically and interpreted in the most simple and common sense way so as to not make the result any more onerous than it has to be. Local Bodies need to be

lobbying Central Government so that they can realise the effects that their legislation is having and the cost involved. A book full of legislation has little effect on nature when it comes to floods and extreme events.

My understanding is that ECan has the responsibility for managing Canterbury rivers and whilst there are a considerable number of affected parties like LINZ, DOC, Fish & Game, Bird Protection Societies and others we should be ensuring that these other parties are not taking control or having undue influence on work that should be being carried out as part of recognised river management. I believe that this is already happening to a higher level than it should be. Whilst these organisations are affected parties they are seldom there when the flood damage is apparent and there is a large bill to be paid to put the damage right again – this is again left to the tax payer and the rate payer who also indirectly fund these other organisations.

There are already too many conditions in place that are largely only there to keep these other parties satisfied, quite often with no real positive effect on the environment. I believe that ECan needs to take control of their responsibilities in this instance and not put unrequired conditions on consents just to satisfy these other parties when all this does is add cost and time into the process.

The overall attitude should be “How can we make river management happen in the simplest and most economical manner” instead of over complicating the system with due process, a myriad of conditions to meet with when applying for consents and then another lot of conditions to work under once a consent is granted.

Most long term gravel extraction operators have a high level of environmental compliance at heart, they like to be proud of the job they leave behind as the intention would be able to come back to the site when gravel does replenish over time. Time is spent in creating better breeding grounds for birds, a cleaner wider riverbed for fish, and generally leave the gravel extraction sites in a much better state than what they were before extraction took place.

Part of gravel extraction is gaining permission for access into the various river sites. Most Companies form long lasting relationships with the adjacent land owner for sites that are regularly used. Issues are now arising with LINZ & DOC either refusing access or having no time frame around granting access usually with an attached fee which is making the consent issuing system unworkable and uneconomic for Contractors when only being able to gain consents from ECan for a period of 12 months.

ECan currently have an agreement with LINZ for access to rivers where the gravel extraction is for river management purposes when issuing Gravel Authorisations under an umbrella consent held by ECan – this agreement should be across the board for all river extraction consents and should include DOC as well – again ECan should have responsibility and authority to be able to manage rivers and to grant access across LINZ & DOC land as part of the consent being issued.

Road Metals have some recent experience with getting Iwi and Runanga sign off for a gravel extraction consent in the Rakaia River. One Runanga Group gave their sign off to a relatively small consent whilst the other Group would not give their sign off and wished to be heard at a hearing. Their concerns included lack of availability of gravel in the river bed, the effect of gravel extraction on the New Zealand Coast line and possible effect of coastal erosion, climate change and higher sea levels.

It will be well documented through survey work that there is plenty of gravel available in the Rakaia River and that there is build up taking places in certain areas that will have negative effects on surrounding farm land and road and bridge infrastructure in the area. The cost of undertaking studies on all their areas of concern is well outside of the scope of applying for a consent to disturb the bed of the river and should be undertaken and funded by others if this work is to be required. This has the probability of making the option for ECan using gravel extraction as an effective river management tool impossible without this particular Group's sign off. The cost of an Environment Court Hearing to satisfy this Runanga Group makes applying for a relatively small volume gravel consent prohibitive.

Once again I reiterate that ECan needs to take back control of being able to manage the rivers in the best interest of all their ratepayers and taxpayers within Canterbury. Also go back to the statement from Infrastructure New Zealand - ***"Infrastructure must be prioritised to ensure that community needs outweigh 'The opinions of a few.'"***

There is plenty of opportunity for ECan and the Gravel Extraction Industry to work together in a closer partnership scenario to undertake work where it is required and where it can enhance river flow capacity as we go forward into the future and we face whatever nature will be putting in our path. I urge this committee and ECan Councillors to take time to look at all the options that may be available as part of an ongoing joint relationship that has largely worked very well over the last 50 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and for your time in listening.

George Kelcher (Special Projects)
Road Metals Co Ltd.

Founding Member of the South Canterbury MOU Group
Member of the Canterbury Gravel Liaison Committee
Past President – Institute of Quarrying New Zealand.
Honorary Fellow -- Institute of Quarrying New Zealand.
Past Executive Member – Aggregate & Quarry Association NZ.

Dan Francis (General Manager)
Road Metals Co Ltd