

Policy and planning Chairs report

June 2022

Good morning and welcome to a very reduced order paper. I have struggled to come up with something challenging to say about the content, so instead I will throughout a few thinking points.

I receive through my overfull email system a number of reports from many different agencies, one that caught my eye was the projections for our climate in the next 70 years and what the implications are for us as a district. The report was generated out of NIWA, on the following link.

[Our Future Climate New Zealand | NIWA](#)

The key take home points that may be the most relevant are the drying out of the north east of the district approximately from Taihape in the general direction of the gentle Annie road, and a wetting up of the southwest of the district, approximately Hunterville to the sea. In view of what we seem to be witnessing with our storm events and our near miss with drought in the north, it would seem that the projections are already here. To put a policy perspective on these scenarios are we as an authority quick enough to evolve our policies and actions ahead of time or will we let mother nature have her way with us and then scurry around pulling policy together after the event?

A second question that I would like to ask, again in the management of assets space is how do we manage historical knowledge especially when it involves multiple agencies and changes of personal and ownership. The reason I raise this issue is the observation of the management of a section of privately owned land and road reserve on a rather precipitous piece of land scape, that had a jointly funded intervention to stabilise the adjacent hillside historically. Since the joint planting of a significant number of trees on this site undertaken by the Rangitikei county council, the Rangitikei catchment board and the father in law of the current owner the road has been well protected with no loss of service. It previously had continually collapsed onto the road to the point where the road was barely usable at time. If we come forward to 2022, a different management regime (I would describe as "mismanagement" regime) has taken place where all the trees have been poisoned and have died, the roots rotted and the structural integrity of the whole slope lost, and all the costs of those decisions have been socialised to the ratepayer. site is so "tragic" in a farming sense that little or no profit will be generated even in the long term. Now we have a two lane road that will soon be reduced to one lane, and another portion of that road that is continually being inundated from above.

From a policy perspective my question is what systems do we have in place to capture "old knowledge about sites such as this? What policies do we have to engage with an adjacent landowner and the Regional council under whose mandate soil stabilisation and erosion control sits, and to be slightly more blunt, when might we be likely to actually enact those policies should we have them. From my perspective as a councillor and chair of policy there seems to sometimes be a gap between having the tools to do a job and actually applying them when the application sits outside what might be seen as core business. As with a number of roads that have been impacted by recent storm events, often the causes and fixes actually exist outside of our immediate sphere of core business, and yet by not having the right policies or having them but not enacting them we start to become the authors of our own demise both physically and financially. I would really appreciate some feedback from our staff at our next policy meeting, identifying any gaps in either policy or enactment of them.

Angus Gordon. Chairman.