

Wainui Beach Management Strategy (WBMS) – Summary of Existing Documents

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT AND DECISION

(APPLICATION FOR RESOURCE CONSENT – Rivers and Land Drainage Section of GDC)

Author(s) – Commissioners' were J Mathews (chair), R Muir, C Bauld, J Dahm

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Document reviewed by – Kevin Strongman (Water Utilities Manager) in August 2012

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Scope –

The decision is for a resource consent application by the Rivers and Land Drainage section of the Gisborne District Council for a coastal permit to deposit substances on the foreshore, erect and place a structure fixed in, on or over the foreshore, to occupy the coastal marine area, and for a further land use consent to excavate and deposit beach materials, and place a structure within the Coastal Hazard Overlay.

Permits were sought for the removal of rail iron/piled wall and replacement with a sloping rock revetment from south of the Tuhahine Crescent access way towards the Wainui Stream.

The decision covers in brief the history of the beach including the history of the WBMS.

Three Officers reports from the Gisborne District Council were referenced from the Water Conservation Department, Soil Conservation Department and from a Development Control Planner. All three reports recommended granting the application.

The Department of Conservation provided conditional support.

Evidence was provided from six submitters in opposition.

Relevant provisions considered in terms of Section 104 of the Act for the decision included:

- The National Coastal Policy Statement
- The Regional Policy Statement
- The proposed Regional Coastal Environment Plan for the Gisborne region

The part operative Combined Regional Land District Plan rules were also considered.

The statutory assessment process is detailed.

The effects on coastal hazards, natural character and public access are noted.

The main findings are given.

The resource consent was refused. The reasons for the Commissioners decision were given as -

- a) The actual and potential effects of the proposal are likely to adversely affect the existing and natural character of Wainui Beach.
- b) The proposal does not accord with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, and in particular Sections 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 3.3.2, 3.3.1, 3.4.3, 3.4.4 and 3.4.6 in that a precautionary approach on the information supplied with the application would require refusal of the proposal as presented.
- c) The proposal is in conflict with, although not necessarily contrary to in terms of Section 104 (D), to the general policies in 5.4.6 to 5.4.9 of the District Plan.
- d) The integrity of the natural and existing structures and features that are providing a defence against natural hazards has not been sufficiently recognised and included.
- e) Alternatives in size, location and best practical options have not been considered and put forward.
- f) The proposal does not avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of the use and development of the beach environment.
- g) The proposed development does not preserve the natural character of the coastal environment or protect and enhance public access to or along the CMA in terms of Section 6.
- h) The proposal does not maintain and enhance amenity values and assess fully the effects of climate change.

Key Coastal Hazard Components –

The Commissioners main findings which covered coastal hazards along with natural character and beach access were that -

- The proposal will not protect the natural character of the beach and is likely to diminish it, particularly during periods when beach widths and sand levels are naturally low;
- Issues in respect to public access were not adequately addressed. It is acknowledged that access to the beach can be provided through access along the beach may be reduced during periods when beach widths and sand levels are naturally low;
- There is up to 10 metres encroachment onto the sandy beach at the lowest level of sand, although it is accepted that for a large part in the summer the rocks may be covered.
- There is uncertainty as to the performance of the erosion protection during severe storms due to the lowered crest elevation adopted to reduce environmental effects. This could also lead to pressure for enlargement of the structure and more significant adverse effects.

- We are not convinced that the proposed structure is necessary or the best practicable option along the full length of the area, even though there does appear to be a case for protection in areas where houses lie within the identified Extreme Risk hazard zone;
- Removal of existing rail/log structure is advantageous but this benefit does not outweigh the potential adverse effects identified;
- There is uncertainty in respect to potential end effects erosion immediately further north of the stream. "Planning creep" (i.e. use of the wall to justify further such works along the beach) was a concern as identified by one submitter.
- The development may be consistent with the previous structures built south of this proposal but those structures themselves are more inappropriate north of the concrete groyne;
- The proposal does comply with the WBMS but that strategy is seven years old and is due for review;
- The effects of digging into the papa shelf are not fully known and on a precautionary basis should be carefully monitored and considered if the proposal proceeded;
- The effects of climate change are not adequately addressed, including effectiveness of the structures and the only partial protection provided as well as the potential adverse environmental effects.

Potential Implications for the Wainui Beach Management Strategies –

The Commissioners main findings included in their decision will need to be considered when creating the new Wainui Beach Management Strategy.