

Item not on the Council Agenda **15 December 2022**

THAT the Council:

1. Considers the following report at its meeting on 15 December 2022:
Report 22-286 Woody Debris Clean-Up 2022/23 Season
2. It is recommended that the report be accepted as a late item. The delay of this report was because the item was submitted after the agenda was printed.



Heather Kohn
Democracy & Support Services Manager

Title: Woody Debris Clean-up 2022/23 Season
Section: Liveable Spaces
Prepared by: De-Arne Sutherland – Liveable Spaces Manager
Meeting Date: Thursday 15 December 2022

Legal: No

Financial: Yes

Significance: **Medium**

Report to COUNCIL/TE KAUNIHERA for decision

PURPOSE – TE TAKE

The purpose of this report is to seek a decision on a further woody debris beach clean-up for Gisborne's town beaches this summer season.

SUMMARY – HE WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

Council carries out an annual clean-up of woody debris from the Gisborne City beaches and northern Uawa Beach in Tolaga around labour weekend each year. In addition to the labour weekend clean up this year, there is some further work at Waikanae Beach end and Tolaga northern beach that needs to be completed, with smaller twiggy material being removed in mid-December under the initial contract price.

In recent years Council has spent on average \$200,000 per annum on woody debris clean-ups, although in 2021 the woody debris clean-up cost \$360,000. This year so far, Council has spent \$250,000.

Council resolved to develop a Policy position on how Council will respond to the issue of woody debris on the regions beaches in November 2021 and this work is in progress. Refer to **Report 21-224**.

In the meantime, beach clean-ups continue in absence of this policy position. Staff have been asked to prepare a late report for Council decision, whether to invest in further woody debris beach clean-up of the Gisborne City beaches for this summer season in absence of the Policy position being finalised.

The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **Medium** significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS – NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

- 1. Notes that the beach clean-up this season to date has cost \$250,000.**
- 2. In the absence of a Policy position for the 2022/23 summer season, the options recommended for decision are:**
 - a. Option A: Do nothing beyond the current contract for Woody Debris Removal.**
 - b. Option B: Undertake a controlled clean-up of the city beach at a cost of \$52,000.**
 - c. Option C: Undertake a full clean-up of the city beach at a cost of \$165,000.**

Authorised by:

Michele Frey - Director Liveable Communities

Keywords: beach clean-up, woody debris, Waikanae beach, Tolaga Bay beach, Uawa beach

BACKGROUND – HE WHAKAMĀRAMA

1. Council undertakes a clean-up of woody debris from the Gisborne City Beaches and Northern Uawa Beach in Tolaga every year around labor weekend. The woody debris is a result of storm events that bring trees and woody debris down the rivers and eventually ends up on our beaches. This is a natural process but can be exacerbated by severe weather events and upstream land management practices.
2. Community expectation of woody debris beach clean-ups has been present over many years, requesting Council to clean up annually from Gisborne and Uawa beaches for summer recreation (our most populated and well used beach locations).
3. This woody debris beach clean-up comes at considerable cost, especially if multiple clean-ups are required. This process must also meet strict resource consent conditions.
4. Currently this clean-up is done reactively and due to community demand and staff have no policy guidance on how extensive these clean-ups should be, and subsequently how much cost should be placed on the ratepayer for this work.
5. In recent years Council has spent on average \$200,000 per annum on woody debris clean-ups. Although in 2021 the woody debris clean-up cost \$360,000. This included two large clean-ups of the town beaches following a large rain event the week after Labour Weekend.
6. The clean-up this season has cost \$250,000 to date, with a focus on high visitor access areas e.g. in front of Surf Clubs (Tolaga, Waikanae, and Midway).
7. This season, a woody debris beach clean-up was undertaken in October 2022.
8. The woody debris material washing up this season appears to be smaller in nature than previous years, with twig like material continuing to wash up (following the labour weekend clean up) in some parts. For this reason some further work to remove smaller twiggy material at Waikanae Beach end and northern Uawa Beach will be undertaken, scheduled for mid-December 2022. This is being completed as part of the initial contract.
9. Currently, some larger woody debris remains, and Council has received complaints from community members and key stakeholders, including both Midway and Waikanae Surf Clubs. Their requests are for the clean-up to continue, particularly in the area between Grey Street and Beacon Street reserve down to Midway beach.
10. Staff have been asked to prepare a report for Council decision, whether to invest in further woody debris beach clean-up of the Gisborne City beaches for this summer season.
11. **NOTE:** Should a further storm event occur following a further woody debris beach clean-up, then further costs may be incurred to clean the beaches of woody debris.

Developing a Policy Position on Woody Debris Clean-Up for Council

12. Council resolved to develop a policy position on how Council will respond to the issue of woody debris on the regions beaches in November 2021. Refer to **Report 21-224**.
13. A Project Manager for Wood Solutions was contracted in June 2022. This work acknowledges the long-term management of the woody debris on beaches across the region is complex.
14. A policy position is currently being drafted and engagement workshops are planned for early 2023. Council will then consider a draft woody debris policy mid-way through next year. This will ultimately provide clarity to staff on Council's role in the management of woody debris on our region's beaches and how this will be paid for.

DISCUSSION and OPTIONS – WHAKAWHITINGA KŌRERO me ngā KŌWHIRINGA

15. Three options have been presented below for council consideration. They include do nothing, relocate material to enable safe functioning of Surf Club activities (as clarified through consultation with the Surf Clubs) or undertake full debris removal from Grey Street to Midway.
16. An overview of the options is provided below:

Option/Cost	Description	Pro/benefits	Cons/challenges
A. Do nothing/ no additional spend	Debris has been removed from in front of Surf Clubs, but debris remains between Grey Street end and Beacon Street reserve.	Financial – no additional spend.	Does not meet some of the community's expectations (visually, health and safety concern, reputational risk)
B. Stack up debris (Grey St to Midway) /additional spend of \$52k	Provide a minimum 3m wide access width above high tide from Grey Street to Midway Surf Club.	Enables clearer access for beach walking and Surf Club patrols at high tide. Dune protection and potential nourishment. Less costly than removal option.	No improvements visually and could look worse (given stacking of material). Will not fully meet community expectations.
C. Remove debris from beach (Grey St to Midway) /additional spend of \$165k	Remove woody debris between Grey Street and Midway Surf Club. This will be relocated to Pacific Street end by 23 December and chipped early 2023.	Mostly clears beaches (some larger logs visible) until next large rain event. Undisrupted access to the beach.	Costly – but not inconsistent with 2021 spend on woody debris beach clean-up. Unease from wider rate payer community regarding spend without a policy position.

ASSESSMENT of SIGNIFICANCE – TE AROTAKENGA o NGĀ HIRANGA

Impacts on Council's delivery of its Financial Strategy and Long Term Plan

Overall Process: **Medium** Significance

This Report: **Medium** Significance

Inconsistency with Council's current strategy and policy

Overall Process: **Low** Significance

This Report: **Low** Significance

The effects on all or a large part of the Gisborne district

Overall Process: **Medium** Significance

This Report: **Medium** Significance

The effects on individuals or specific communities

Overall Process: **Medium** Significance

This Report: **Medium** Significance

The level or history of public interest in the matter or issue

Overall Process: **Medium** Significance

This Report: **Medium** Significance

17. This report is part of a process to arrive at a decision that will/may be of **Medium** level in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy

TANGATA WHENUA/MĀORI ENGAGEMENT – TŪTAKITANGA TANGATA WHENUA

12. There has not been any specific mana whenua engagement on the beach clean-up operational work this season, although extensive engagement is proposed through the development of the policy position.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – TŪTAKITANGA HAPORI

18. No community engagement was undertaken prior to works beginning, although staff have met with representatives of Midway and Waikanae Surf Clubs in recent weeks. The options included in this report reflect their aspirations at a minimum to achieve more beach access, and ideally requesting removal of debris.
19. The community will be notified of pending clean up works to encourage awareness of heavy machinery activity on the beaches the week before Christmas via mixed media (public notice, and likely to include social media and radio).

CLIMATE CHANGE – Impacts / Implications – NGĀ REREKĒTANGA ĀHUARANGI – ngā whakaaweawe / ngā ritenga

20. Woody debris on our beaches is likely to continue as te Tairāwhiti experiences more large rain events given the geological make up of our district's hills and mountain ranges. Council staff are developing a draft policy position, following community and mana whenua engagement, for Council decision next year. This will consider how Council responds to this matter, and how this activity is resourced.

CONSIDERATIONS – HEI WHAKAARO

Financial/Budget

21. Historically, approximately \$60,000 per annum was made available through rates for woody debris clean-up. In recent years, clean-ups of the town and Uawa beaches has cost between \$200,000 and \$360,000 per annum. As contractor costs escalate Council is receiving potentially less value for spend. This spend comes from Council's reserves operating budget and results in an over allocation to that budget annually.
22. Spend to date this season is \$250,000 split almost evenly between Uawa and Gisborne City beaches. The further spend options outlined in this report are specifically in relation to the Gisborne City beaches.
23. Should Options B or C outlined in this report be approved by Council the total spend for beach clean up for this season will be either \$302,000 or \$415,000.

Legal

24. The activity is undertaken under resource consent CP-2021-110879-00 and is monitored to ensure compliance. Under this consent the community should be given two weeks' notice of work start date. In this regard, a public notice in Gisborne Herald and social media will be made asap following decision on Thursday 15 December. This revised timeframe has been endorsed by Compliance and Enforcement Team Leader.
25. There are no legal implications considered likely as a result of this report.

POLICY and PLANNING IMPLICATIONS – KAUPAPA HERE me ngā RITENGA WHAKAMAHERE

26. The current approach largely complies with the rules of the TRMP, and where required resource consent has been obtained to enable the works to proceed for this coming summer. The methodology for forming the long term Council position will be developed closely with the policy and planning departments of Council to ensure alignment. Further details are outlined in report 21-224

RISKS – NGĀ TŪRARU

27. Risks are considered in the Options outlined in this report. These range from medium health and safety (debris interferes with surf clubs' ability to patrol between surf clubs) and regional reputational risk (e.g., visitors to our region are disappointed with debris on our beaches).

NEXT STEPS - NGĀ MAHI E WHAI AKE

Date	Action/Milestone	Comments
19 December 2022	Stack up or removal options gets underway. Expect works to be complete by 23 December (or if Option C is endorsed chipping will be undertaken in early 2023).	Update community via public notice in the Gisborne Herald on 17 December and mixed media from 15 December.