



## **MEDIA RELEASE – 10 June 2022**

### **Westport Flood Protection - Responding to community concerns**

Buller District Council Chief Executive Officer, Sharon Mason, has acknowledged the concerns of community members raised in regards to the mitigation options for Westport flood risk and says no final decisions have been made yet.

“The proposal presented by the TAG does not include protection structures for the Snodgrass Road area and we acknowledge that this is of particular concern to people who live or own property in this area,” said Ms Mason.

“The proposal, has been based on the expert advice of the TAG. This advice has identified that some degree of protection can be achieved by embankments around most of Westport, but that it is not possible to eliminate all risk for all properties.

“We will be seeking Government support for some situations where owners are unprotected, in particular the Snodgrass Road area. We can't make promises on behalf of the Government, and there can be no guarantees, but we understand residents' frustration and possible anxiety about this situation.”

The current work is one part of a business case that will be taken to the Minister of Local Government, Hon. Nanaia Mahuta, requesting Government support to co-invest in Westport's long term flood resilience.

“A final decision cannot be made until we have a co-investment commitment from the Government. These are big decisions that will require extensive further consultation and engagement with the community.”

The business case to the Government is currently being drafted and includes 'non-structural' elements, such as how to accommodate growth in Westport in less hazardous areas.

“It is important to emphasise that we will be working closely with affected communities and individuals over the coming months, and in all likelihood years. We will continue to advocate on behalf of our communities

“If you are feeling particularly stressed or unsure about the current process, please contact the Community Hub and our fantastic Navigators. They are here to help.”

The Community Hub is open weekdays between 9.30am-4.00pm at 175 Palmerston Street, Westport or phone 0800 768 348.

## Ends

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### Media contacts

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### Notes to the editor:

- The Westport Rating District Joint Committee recommended that the Buller District Council and West Coast Regional Council continue to advocate for climate change adaptation options for people not protected as part of the non-structural actions included in the Westport flood risk mitigation business case.
- From this point the TAG proposal will be presented to the full West Coast Regional Council on 14 June. The WCRC will consider the TAG's proposal for inclusion in the business case seeking co-investment to build Westport's resilience against flood risks. A programme of extensive public engagement and consultation will commence from this point.
- This business case is being developed by Westport Flood Recovery Steering Group, which will report back to the WCRC and BDC by the end of June 2022 with an integrated package of long-term measures.
- Subject to the Councils' and iwi agreement, a joint proposal will then be made to the Minister of Local Government seeking agreement to co-invest, in partnership with the local community, on a recommended integrated package of resilience measures.
- It is important to note at this stage of the process is that aspects of the preferred scheme will not have certainty until such time as co-investment funding is secured from central government. Until that time, the proposal should be viewed simply as a 'proposal'.
- After co-investment funding is secured, then WCRC and BDC intend to continue their robust consultation and engagement processes.