

Minutes

From	Steve Howard
Subject	Raglan WWTP Discharge Consenting Process (public meeting)
Date Held	27/11/2019 Raglan House
Attendance	B MacLeod, C Rayner, D Amooore, R Thorpe, Malibu, L Hughes, C Young, J Lawson, A Moore, M Keely, G Parson Cllr Thomson, Cllr Bech G Hall (Beca) S Howard, S Danks (Watercare), R MacCulloch, I Cathcart (WDC)

I. Presentation/Topics

- I.1. Roger MacCulloch (RM) Brief update, including Karl Pavlovich departure, short-term consent, water services model WDC/Watercare (WSL) contract, introduction of co-chairs (Ian Cathcart (IC), and Garrett Hall (GH) who will talk to Power Point (attached)
- I.2. Slide 1- Waikato District Council (WDC)/Watercare Services Limited (WSL) Transition (IC)
- Purpose of transition related to the project – to leverage skills/experience of WSL and potential ability to utilise scale of economy to lessen cost of final solution;
 - Nature of contract – aligned with LTP cycles – relevant to the project given this is basis of available WDC spend on solution;
 - Governance – An established Water Governance Board (WGB) in charge of three waters going forward – significant technical ability sits within this group;
- I.3. Slide 2 – WSL (GH)
- GH has 10 years' experience with WSL WWTP projects, and was able to cover Auckland Region highlighting:
 - 'Big' and 'small' systems apply, which encompass 'old oxidation-ponds' and 'new – Pukekohe' technology;
 - Success of WSL in securing long term consents;
 - Recent experience with Pukekohe and mana whenua/greater community group engagement methods, which involved ongoing engagement throughout the process. An example presented with was the Pukekohe Cultural Impact Assessment that was prepared with specialist consultant resources provided to assist mana whenua facilitate this. The resultant mitigation was conversion of a ponds/SBR to membrane bioreactor (MBR) with discharge to freshwater. Potential relevance to the Raglan scenario – recognition of growth pressures with design, where a complete change of approach eventuated with co-design;

- An additional example presented was Wellsford, where trails included advanced wetland with chemical dosing – Relevance to Raglan scenario include ability to draw on past experiences;

1.4. Short term consent slides (GH/IC/RM)

- 2019 technical investigations prepared and completed, where it was recognised that a revised approach was required when land opportunity didn't come to fruition as anticipated. A new consent needed to be lodged by 14 November 2019 to allow the WWTP discharge to continue legally. Decision was that a place holder consent was most appropriate. This was prepared (status quo operation – 36 months) allowing additional time and contingency time to arrive at final long-term application – allows for greater focus on best practicable option for the longer-term consent. The membrane mitigation didn't form part of the short-term consent, to avoid potential for the creation of a stranded asset (i.e. membrane treatment may not align the with the long-term solution);

1.5. Process Options/Project Objectives slides (GH)

- How can we work together better over 36 months?
- Feedback sought on project objectives/assessment criteria

2. Discussion topics

2.1. Short term consent

Non-satisfaction expressed toward Council processes, in particular:

- Prior request (2.5yrs earlier) to WDC Waters Manager regarding a wastewater symposium was unheard;
- An explanation seems warranted, to responsibility for unsuccessful lodgement of long term consent - Overhaul of project staff/process to ensure smaller communities receive satisfaction/fair treatment

General Manager responses (IC/RM)

- WDC didn't get timing right, where this is acknowledged and can be noted to wider community, with a view of restoring reliance in process moving forward. Specific notes are:
- WDC instructs consultants – Any disapproval of timing of prior work therefore sits with Council;
- WDC/WGB methods should improve upon past track record including:
 - Long term consenting is listed within WGB risk register, and requires quarterly reporting – inability for matters to fall off radar within short term consent duration;
 - Council overhaul of staff structure and processes is completed now, to reduce silo actions;
 - An acknowledgement of incorrect timing can be made publicly (ACTION – RM) (i.e. at the request of J Lawson)

2.2. Working Together

- General feedback is that community don't want to be told, where space needs to be provided to be part of the decision making / inside the tent. A desired outcome expressed was:
 - A defined pathway presented – with clear milestones (Malibu can review). This would clear identify if objectives were met.

General Manager responses (RM)

This is aligned with WDC objectives. WDC seek 1 to 2 months to present a bespoke engagement model of how this may be achieved and indicative project timeline **(ACTION – RM)**

2.3. Affordability.

Challenges here are understood by all. A message is not to let this limit thinking yet – not Council methods, community driven should at least be tabled fleshed out (other taxes, private funding, extra funds). WDC enhancement (Nick Johnson – Funding and Partnership Manager) may be applicable – role encompasses empowering community groups;

2.4. Land Challenge

- (GH) –Availability of land is a central challenge (regardless of soil capacity consideration).

Solution: A reset is needed to take stock, and revisit conceptual options considered previously (considered within 2000-2002 Wastewater Working Party). Reason – assessment processes have evolved;

2.5. Information gathering

- *General Manger Thinking* – There is significant investigation history (earlier consent – 2 yrs of working party monthly meetings) that should (for the sake of the project) be:
 - *Summarised, with notes to highlight ‘what has changed’* **(ACTION Beca)**

2.6. Questions Received

(Q) *Is land and marine treatment interchangeable- are they vastly different?*

- Response (GH) – There is a difference in treatment approach needed dependent on the nature of the receiving environment.

(Q) *A marine discharge/contingency exists, where LTP budget provides for TSS membrane, why wait?*

- Stranded asset risk. The public health risk of the existing discharge is better understood now through NIWA Quantitative microbiological risk assessment (QMRA) analysis, completed Sept, that TSS concentrations in the treated wastewater do not affect the effectiveness of the existing UV disinfection unit.

NIWA report will be distributed by best method link/website **(ACTION Steve H)**

(Q) *Future growth captured?*

- Yes – projections captured – *General Manager Response:* experience is that additional 20% space may be beneficial;

(Q) *Distribution of WRC audit and short-term application?*

- *General Manager Response:* Website will be updated with information with links sent **(ACTION Steve H)**

(Q) *What has been determined within the last several months of investigation?*

- *Response GH* – *land systems are technically possible at Raglan, where limiting factors are land availability, soils, slope and cost effectiveness given the significant areas that are needed Affordability is linked to proximity, where multiple options need to be taken as far*

as is possible, to find a solution. Potential areas include Wainui Reserve, where previous investigations can be referenced.

- *Malibu – Chris Tanner earlier work considered areas where too much clay was the conclusion.*
- *GH – Soil science knowledge/testing has moved on through decades, therefore revisit would be necessary to assess feasibility/potential – Water tables are a factor needed to be considered equally -very complex. LEI have been engaged for such work;*
- *WSL involvement will allow new ideas – innovative solutions*

(Q) The dual land and water scheme seems most likely from information shared – elaborate (J Lawson)

(GH) Yes - this option will form part of the short-listed concepts. The key component of this option is the availability of land.

Malibu lastly outlined that ongoing engagement is a definite need through-out consent life (consultation group becomes liaison group alongside Hapu) for ongoing reporting

2.7. Closing of Meeting

- Cllr Bech (Deputy Mayor) highlighted that:
 - Council is changing, with new ways recognised in working with communities, with the theme of partnership;
- Roger thanked all.