

Fluoride consultation

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| TO | Council |
| FROM | Angela Jane - Governance and Strategy Manager |
| DATE | 1 December 2014 |
| SUBJECT | Fluoride consultation |

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to convey the Thames Community Board's recommendation on future consultation on fluoridation of the Thames water supply and to seek endorsement of the recommendation not to consult on the matter of fluoridation in the 2015-25 Long Term Plan.

2 Background

The Thames Community Board was prompted for a recommendation from a staff report following a discussion on the known consultation topics at the Mayor's Plus forum for the upcoming Long Term Plan consultation document.

The report to the Thames Community Board is attached and contains the relevant background to the current situation.

3 Issue

Following consideration of the attached report the Thames Community Board at its meeting on 24 November 2014 resolved the following:

1. *Receives the 'Fluoridation in Thames' report dated 10 November 2014.*
2. *Recommends that consultation is not undertaken on the matter of fluoridation in the 2015-25 LTP and;*
3. *Recommends Council considers whether or not to consult on the matter of fluoridation of the Thames Water Supply."*

Since the Thames Community Board meeting on 24 November 2014 the Council has received 173 letters making the following request:

*"We respectfully urge Council to honour it's commitment to consult on the issue of fluoridation, **if not on the LTP, then as part of the SCP in Feb 2015**, as this is the closest opportunity in time to the LTP."*

4 Discussion

The attached report to the Thames Community Board contains relevant discussion points for the current situation. In addition to the attached report further clarification has been sought on whether the Council should signal if or when further consultation should occur on the matter of fluoridation.

Fluoridation is considered a level of service and as it is only delivered through one of the five community board areas, it is considered a local level of service. Under the local empowerment model the Mayor would prefer that local levels of service are a matter for each Community Board and would prefer to take direction from the Thames Community Board on the matter of further consultation.

Should Council wish to signal if and when consultation may occur in the future the Council could signal it will only do so under the advice of the Ministry of Health as fluoridation is considered to be a health issue which is central government's responsibility not local government.

Over the next two years (by August 2017) the Council will be reviewing the cost-effectiveness of current arrangements for meeting the needs of communities within its district for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions. This review is required under the new Section 17A of the Local Government Act 2002 that was adopted in August 2014. Levels of service will be a factor within this review and is another opportunity to consider the matter of fluoridation.

If the Council or Thames Community Board considered that the matter of fluoridation should be determined more permanently then a binding referendum of the water supply area is an option to consider over further traditional consultation. The Council could offer the option of a binding referendum to the Thames Community Board. The referendum would be conducted under Section 9 of the Local Electoral Act and would involve polling electors within the Thames water supply area of benefit. The cost of conducting the referendum has been estimated by our electoral services contractor between \$20,000 and \$23,000. This estimate is based on the cost per elector for a recently conducted referendum for Wairoa District Council. Recommended timing for a binding referendum this term would be the second half of 2015 - after the Long Term Plan process and ahead of the local government elections year.

The decision not to consult in the 2015 Long Term Plan is required in December 2014 in order for the consultation document to be drafted over January to be ready for the February long term plan audit. A decision on if or when to consult via other methods is not time dependent. The Council could ask staff to investigate the opportunities presented in this report (and/or other suggestions raised at the meeting) further and/or seek the views of the Thames Community Board in early 2015.

5 Suggested Resolution(s)

That the Thames-Coromandel District Council:

1. Receives the 'Fluoride consultation' report, dated 1 December 2014.
2. Endorses the Thames Community Board's recommendation that consultation is not undertaken on the matter of fluoridation in the 2015-25 LTP.

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A *Report to Thames Community Board' Fluoridation of the Thames Water Supply'*

[Attachment A - Fluoridation of the Thames Water Supply Nov 2014 TCB](#)