

Whangapoua Molok Drop-off Facility

TO Mercury Bay Community Board
FROM Peter Barrett - Temporary Solid Waste Manager
DATE 15 October 2015
SUBJECT **Whangapoua Molok Drop-off Facility**

1 Purpose of Report

To present a staff recommendation on the future of the Whangapoua Molok facility and seek the Mercury Bay Community Board's endorsement of the recommendation.

2 Background

There have been long standing issues and complaints associated with the Molok facility in Whangapoua. These have principally been around the nuisance factor associated with very high volumes of refuse the facility attract, particularly during the peak period. There have also been issues regarding odour from the facility, as well as abuse of the rules regarding what can be deposited there.

Below is a brief history of the site, as used for the Moloks:

- Moloks (3 units) installed as a trial on land classified as reserve in 2004
- Moloks increased to 4 units in 2007
- Complaints mount from nearby residents, avoidance of the normal roadside collections, abuse of the service and use as a quasi-refuse transfer station (RTS).
- Community Board recommended removal of the Moloks and a temporary collection point established in March 2012
- Residents objected to the temporary collection point and any removals/changes placed in abeyance.
- Consultation document to each ratepayer - Christmas 2012. 59% favoured retention of existing Molok site.
- Molok site legalisation issues
- Decision on removal delayed awaiting Shared Services Contract - July 2013.
- KTB Planning comprehensive report - November 2013

Whangapoua has a high proportion of non-residents ratepayers and customers, which can be roughly gauged by the lack of use of the solid waste service during the off season. There is a rough indication that occupancy in Whangapoua in the non-peak period could be as low as approximately 8% of the solid waste service rated properties.

To provide a service for departing occupants and visitors on non-collection days, particularly in the peak period, three Molok bins were installed in 2004 as a trial drop-off facility on Meri Te Tai reserve on land adjoining a cul-de-sac access to the beach located in the centre of Whangapoua.

As a result of the increase in popularity and usage the Molok bins were increased to four in 2007 together with five recycling bins. Whilst initially a trial project, the 2007/2008 Reserve Management Plan did not provide for the Moloks and identified that they would be eventually be removed.

3 Issue

A decision needs to be made regarding the future use of the site, and whether it is suitable for continuing use as a solid waste facility.

4 Discussion

The Moloks are continuing to be used on a daily basis, extensively in the peak period. This use for some customers appears to be rather than utilising the kerbside collection.

Regular complaints have been received over the years from nearby residents particularly in the peak period regarding odours, overuse, noise and environmental damage caused by the overflow of waste and recycling together with broken glass and non-bagged refuse. The Molok site is being used as a quasi-refuse transfer station and not as an unobtrusive containment facility for bagged waste and minor recyclable items on non-collection days. The use of the facility as a quasi-RTS also attracts deposition of household items and builders waste, thereby avoiding standard RTS fees and charges.

The retention of the existing Molok and recyclable bins would require legalising the site by application to TCDC for a resource consent which is likely to be publically notified and heard by an independent commissioner. The Reserve Management Plan would also require amendment to permit the reserve (or part of it) to be used as a solid waste facility, with the necessary process to vary this plan being required. The anticipated costs of these legalisation changes are estimated to be in the order of \$30,000, plus any upgrade or improvement works.

The Community Board recommended in 2012 that the Moloks be removed and a temporary collection point established at the Te Rerenga State Highway intersection in the peak period. However opposition from residents adjacent to the temporary collection point and the then forthcoming retendering of the solid waste contract the Board resolved to defer further decision on the Moloks until after commencement of the contract. Smart Environmental Ltd was awarded the new contract for a period of ten years which commenced in October 2013.

Currently no further progress has been made on retention, relocation or removal of the Molok site but complaints have not abated and Council staff have recently met some of the complaining residents on site to hear their issues.

KTB comprehensive report November 2013 commentary which is largely endorsed and mirrored in this report.

A number of options for alternative sites were suggested in the KTB report, however all alternative Molok locations have the same, or similar, adverse attribute of being relatively near residential properties attracting similar problem issues and "NIIMBY" response as the current site. Alternative sites away from residential areas and observation such as on the Te Punga Road would attract and possibly increase the use of the Moloks as a quasi-refuse transfer station, while also attracting inappropriate refuse dumping.



2014 Winter



2011 Summer Peak Period

The misuse, complaints regarding odour and noise, avoidance of fees and environmental issues plus the known current legal status of the site suggests that the Moloks should be removed, and the location immediately reinstated/landscaped to a predetermined plan. This will leave non-peak collections weekly every Tuesday for blue bags with the additional service of glass and recyclables every second Tuesday.

During the peak period the collections are increased to Tuesdays and Fridays with blue bags, glass and recyclables every Tuesday and blue bags and glass every Friday. The options for people leaving on a non-collection day in the peak period or any Sunday if the Moloks were removed are:

- Arrange with a neighbour to put the blue bag out by 7.30am on the Tuesday or Friday collection morning to avoid bird or animal nuisance. This option relies on the neighbour being in residence at the time of collection and having a friendly relationship with each other but would be a viable option for some.
- Matarangi, Coromandel, Whitianga and Tairua RTSs are open with all facilities until 7.30pm on Sundays in the peak period. Matarangi, Whitianga and Tairua RTS's are only either on or within a short deviation distance of the State Highway for travellers South with a RTS at Coromandel if this is the alternative route off the peninsula.
- 24/7 Drop-off facilities for bagged rubbish and glass and paper recyclables are available at Matarangi, Pauanui and Tairua RTSs all year. The majority of the residents are normally domiciled off the peninsula and when leaving Whangapoua driving South have three all hours facilities to dispose of collection bags and minor recyclables.

Options

Option One

Remove the existing Moloks and glass recycling bins, reinstate the reserve and communicate the change to the community. The estimated cost of this, depending on the reserve features, is expected to be less than \$10,000.

Option Two

Leave the Molok facility on the Meri Te Tai reserve in Whangapoua. Tasks that would be required for this option include applying for a TCDC resource consent and amendment of the reserve management plan. Both of these tasks would be very intensive as well as being subject to public processes. As such the estimated costs would be approximately \$30,000, plus any upgrade of improvement works required at the site.

With the increased collections in the peak period, extended hours of local refuse transfer stations and 24/7 disposal facilities at a number of the RTS locations, and the absence of demand for the Molok facilities in non-peak periods, staff recommend the removal of the Moloks.

Retention of the Moloks will require considerable expense in legalising their location and will not stifle the continuous complaints from immediate neighbours and visitors of misuse, odours and visual pollution.

Option One is recommended by staff - removal of the Moloks and all associated refuse and recycling facilities.

It is also recommended that should the Community Board resolve to remove the Moloks; that a strong communication strategy is adopted and the above information together with information on RTS locations, operating hours and 24/7 drop off sites, is recommended to be provided to all Whangapoua ratepayers. This could be in the form of a letter drop or post together with a fridge magnet or laminated sheet format for retention at each residence. This local solid waste service information should also be provided on the Council website and in the Hauraki Herald and communication outlets and with increased publication frequency in the peak period.

5 Suggested Resolution(s)

That the Mercury Bay Community Board:

1. Receives the 'Whangapoua Molok Drop-off Facility' report, dated 15 October 2015.
2. Recommends that the existing Moloks facility located on the reserve are removed and the reserve immediately reinstated including the installation of signage to confirm the removal of the facility as well as the collection days and the solid waste facilities available for both peak and non-peak periods.

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A *Whangapoua Solid Waste (Moloks) Issues and Options Report*

