

Three Waters and Solid Waste

TO	Thames-Coromandel District Council
FROM	Scott Summerfield - Policy and Planning Manager
DATE	8 May 2018
SUBJECT	Three waters and solid waste

1 Purpose of report

This is one of a series of reports which presents submissions received on the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan, staff analysis and recommendations for Council consideration.

The focus of this report is the three waters activities, and the solid waste activity.

2 Issue

Council decisions are required on the proposals included in the consultation document and on the matters raised by submitters.

3 Wastewater

3.1 Wastewater Service Extensions (Hahei, Wharekaho, Thames area)

Submission points

- 13 submitters request that Council prioritise installation of wastewater infrastructure for the Wharekaho community in the LTP 2018-28.
- One submitter said that septic tanks in Wharekaho are environmentally unacceptable with their close proximity to the foreshore and this issues needs to be included in the draft 10 year plan.
- One submitter requested Council upgrade Hahei Sewage Collection and Treatment Systems
- Two submitters said Council needs to protect against stream and groundwater pollution and prioritise upgrades where this is occurring by connecting properties in Hahei.
- One submitter noted the cost for water supply and wastewater service extensions seems incredibly high.
- One submitter said that in relation to water supply and wastewater service extensions they submitter support a user pays approach, though acknowledges standards have have to be met and maintained for everyone's benefit.
- One submitter does not support the service extension investigations.
- One submitter though that Council needs to justify that the wastewater and water supply current setup in Hahei is bad enough for the environment, or septic tank seepage into drinking water aquifers to justify the costs of stopping and disposing of septic tanks.
- One submitter considered the pollution of Wigmore Stream in Hahei is from grazing cattle not septic tank seepage.

Analysis

An investigation to extend water supply and wastewater services in Wharekaho for year 2 of the Long Term Plan is included in existing budgets. Staff do not consider it is necessary to bring the investigation forward, however will note the support already within the Wharekaho community for seeing these services made available. Consultation on extending these

services, if deemed feasible, can be included as part of the 2020/21 Annual Plan or 2021-2031 LTP.

Support for Hahei investigations for wastewater and water supply was also received and the investigation will proceed in year 1 of the LTP. Concerns about the drivers and cost of the network extension will be reflected in staff analysis of the investigation outcomes.

Recommendation

Proceed with existing planned investigations for wastewater and water supply extensions scheduled for Hahei in year 1, Wharekaho in year 2, and Thames/Thames Coast in year 3.

Hahei wastewater and water supply service extensions

Outside of the long term plan process, seven ratepayers in Hahei, on Emma Place, Emmerdale Drive and Hahei Beach Road, have requested that Council provide for them to be connected to Council wastewater and water supply networks ahead of the wider investigations into Hahei service extensions in year 1 of the LTP. Staff have been clear that the individual costs to them may be greater in doing so ahead of the rest of Hahei however these ratepayers still support the early connection option. There is sufficient existing capacity on both networks for these additional connections.

Staff advise Council to include additional budgets of \$120,000 for wastewater network infrastructure and \$15,000 for water supply network infrastructure in 2018/19. The costs of these extensions are to be recovered directly from the seven ratepayers who are to be connected. A targeted consultation with those ratepayers will be required in September/October 2018 to formally determine their support for the cost recovery options (a lump sum payment or a targeted rate).

Recommendation

That Council approve a budget of \$120,000 in 2018/19 for Hahei wastewater service extensions and a budget of \$15,000 in 2018/19 for Hahei water supply extensions, the costs of which are to be recovered directly from the affected ratepayers.

Direct staff to prepare a special consultative procedure to be run with affected Hahei ratepayers of these wastewater and water supply service extensions to determine the preferred cost recovery mechanism.

Opito Bay wastewater

- One submitter said that Opito Bay (including the new Edens subdivision) should be connected to Council water supply, wastewater and stormwater.

Analysis

Council has previously agreed to take on ownership and operate the new wastewater treatment plant arising from the new 76 section subdivision in Opito Bay. Staff are exploring the feasibility of connecting the rest of Opito Bay to this wastewater system in the process, and are in discussions with the developer over whether a modular wastewater system which Council can add to in order to service a wider area is an appropriate installation. This can be met within existing wastewater extension investigation budgets.

Recommendations

Investigate Opito Bay wastewater extension and consult on at the next LTP, including targeted consultation with Opito Bay ratepayers on connecting to a Council wastewater system.

Submissions not requiring recommendation

- One submitter requested that wastewater facilities are high on Council's priority list for the 10 year plan.
- One submitter said urgent action is needed at Kuaotunu as during flooding there are many sewerage systems underwater. Council gave consents for these systems and they need to be re-assessed. Another submitter asked that Kuaotunu Creek be cleaned up.
- Two submitters noted their support for the Matarangi Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade.
- One submitter believed that the Pauanui-Tairua Waste Treatment plant should be in the LTP.
- One submitter commented with regard to the Matarangi Treatment Plant Upgrade, that community expectation and environmental outcomes be considered when determining the most appropriate treatment system, and that no additional subdivision be allowed in Matarangi until the new plant is in place.
- One submitter said that Council should invest in the health of the environment, and be aware of the impact of our infrastructure on the environment.
- Another submitter thinks that Council wastewater facilities should be developed once and done well.
- One submitter supported the Thames wastewater airfield expansion but considered the Kopu stormwater improvement project to be a higher priority.
- One submitter requested Council investigate and ensure the operation of wastewater treatment plants is the most environmentally friendly according to available technology.
- One submitter suggested a funding mechanism to support those on old septic tank systems upgrading to modern, less environmentally harmful on-site systems or joining their local wastewater system.

4 Water supply

Water Supply service extensions

Submission points

- 13 submitters request that Council prioritise installation of water supply infrastructure for the Wharekaho community in the LTP 2018-28.
- Two submitters question the high costs for the investigation costs for water supply and wastewater services extensions.
- One submitter notes that Hahei has several privately operated schemes and prior to Council developing future options it needs to get agreement to take them over. Suggests that not everyone will agree to paying the annual fee of \$515 per property. Also note that if private developers have a need for water supply then they should fund a large part of the study and upgrades.
- Hahei Residents and Ratepayers Association and one other submitter request upgrading of the Hahei water systems.
- Seaview Avenue Water Society in Te Puru welcomes Council's involvement providing the cost of water supply does not increase. They note that their water quality is currently excellent and tested annually.
- One submitter noted that there are issues with water in Ngarimu Bay however the bigger problem is with septic tanks. Suggests expenditure on wastewater would be a better spend.
- One submitter suggested that residents of Simpsons Beach and Opito Bay (including the new Edens subdivision) should be connected to water and sewerage systems in conjunction with new subdivision/development.
- One submitter suggests that the costs for water supply and wastewater service extensions should be on a user pays basis.
- One submitter support the status quo, i.e. not undertaking the service extensions.

Analysis

An investigation to extend water supply and wastewater services in Wharekaho for year 2 of the Long Term Plan is included in existing budgets. Staff do not consider it is necessary to bring the investigation forward, however will note the support already within the Wharekaho community for seeing these services made available. Consultation on extending these services, if deemed feasible, can be included as part of the 2020/21 Annual Plan or 2021-2031 LTP.

Recommendation

Proceed with existing planned investigations for wastewater and water supply extensions scheduled for Hahei in year 1, Wharekaho in year 2, and Thames/Thames Coast in year 3.

Tairua Water Supply Dam

Submission points

- Three submitters including the Tairua Residents and Ratepayers Association believe that Council needs to find a suitable location for a dam in the Pepe catchment to give 6 months of water supply regardless of rainfall. The dam needs to be in place within the next 5/6 years to avoid future summer water restrictions.

Analysis

A study of options for water supply for Tairua was carried out in 2006. The option of a dam was considered at this time along with other scenarios. Multiple factors were taken into account such as quality of water, natural hazards, impact on the environment, and investigation and long term costs. As a result of this study the recently commissioned river bank filtration was picked as the most suitable solution. Staff do not consider a dam is a necessary response to Tairua water supply restriction issues.

Recommendation

Do not install a dam to service the Tairua water supply.

Rainwater tanks

Submission points

- Submitter suggests that Council needs to encourage people to revert to supplementary water systems through water tank storage.
- Submitter questions where there will be a reduction in rates if residents take responsibility for their own stormwater collection for domestic use (i.e. collect rainwater for drinking and reduce demand on Council services).

Analysis

As part of its Water Demand Management Strategy, Council has identified encouragement of property owners to purchase rainwater tanks as a key response in managing demand on Council's water supplies. Budget of \$31,000 in the 2018/19 year, and \$3,000 per year thereafter has been included in this Long Term Plan for implementation and ongoing promotion of a district wide education programme on rainwater tank systems.

Recommendation

Retain funding for rainwater tank community education in the LTP.

Other submissions not requiring recommendation

- Submitter commends Council for realizing that water and wastewater services are under pressure. Raises concerns about costs and people's ability to pay, particularly as the population continues to age.
- Submitters asks Council to be proactive on water supply network maintenance.
- Submitter notes that the water in Whitianga is often undrinkable.

5 Stormwater

Holland Close, Pauanui

- The administrator of the Pauanui Community Office notes that there is a long standing stormwater issue in Holland Close which requires Council to take some proactive measures to address.

Analysis

Staff acknowledge the problem of flooding in Holland Close, Pauanui and suggest the following approach to remedy these issues:

- Investigation Phase - Update the existing stormwater model and calibrate it to the recent events. To be completed in 2018/19.
- Design Phase - Develop and test solutions with the model. To be completed in 2018/19.
- Finalise action plan for 2019/20 and onwards as required.

Action on responding to the Holland Close stormwater issues will be included in the 2019/20 Annual Plan. The costs of this work can be met from within existing budgets.

Recommendation

Do not provide further budget for Holland Close, Pauanui stormwater management.

Carina Creek, Whitianga

Submission points

- 3 submitters including Mercury Bay Royal Forest and Bird Society oppose piping of the Creek.
- 2 submitters request further information be provided to the public.
- 1 submitter suggests that the reasons for the work have not been disclosed and some inexpensive repair work is more appropriate for this asset.

Analysis

\$386,000 in 2018/19 is currently budgeted under district funded stormwater for the piping of Carina Creek. Carina Creek in Whitianga functions as an overflow channel for the Taylor's Mistake area, and even if piped would still carry some water in the open on top of the piped portion of the stream. Concerns were raised by submitters that piping this length of a creek goes against now accepted ecological good practice to keep waterways in daylight and to support a wider ecosystem as part of them. The Community Board could instead opt for beautification options around the creek. For hydraulic reasons, staff do not recommend Carina Creek be piped. This will save ratepayers \$1.67 from 2018/19 onwards.

Recommendation

Remove the piping of Carina Creek from the 2018/19 year of the Long Term Plan.

Submissions not requiring recommendation

- Submitter states that the commentary in the LTP is not correct in relation to stormwater collection in urban areas. Submitter notes that in areas of Whangamata,

Pauanui and Matarangi property owners are responsible for onsite stormwater disposal. The District wide funding catchment is not equitably shared across users in these areas as they provide for their own disposal as well as contributing to the district catchment costs of all urban properties who dispose to a public system. Also notes that the new stormwater capital is all in the Mercury Bay and Thames ward.

- Submitter raises concerns regarding water use suggesting the reducing stormwater flows into the sewage system would to reduce inflows.
- 2 submitters including the Onemana Ratepayer Association note that there isn't anything in the LTP regarding general maintenance of stormwater drains and gutters. The submitters note that in particular, the beachfront drains need maintenance with the Culvert on Beach Road being unsafe, unsightly, rarely maintained and often used for dumping rubbish.
- One submitter asks that a culvert be installed on the beach front reserve of Onemana.
- In relation to Whangapoua, the Chairman of the Whangapoua Beach Ratepayers Association notes that there are drainage issues causing ongoing road deterioration therefore the Association supports proposed remediation.

Analysis

These matters will be explored by staff within existing budgets. Any major changes from the scheduled maintenance, renewal and upgrade programme for stormwater will then be identified in the 2019/20 Annual Plan.

6 Rubbish and Recycling

Mercury Bay South green waste collection/disposal

- Seven submitters, including the Hahei, Hot Water Beach and Mercury Bay South residents and ratepayers associations, requested a green waste disposal or collection services in Mercury Bay South area.

Analysis

Multiple requests for a green waste collection service have been received both as part of the LTP consultation and in the years leading up to it. At this stage the costs of providing such a service are unknown so staff cannot advise the true impact of Council offering this service in this area.

Staff also understand that there is a private operator who may be interested in providing a green waste service in the Mercury Bay south area. A private green waste operation in this will likely be less expensive for the district ratepayer and should be explored alongside the option of Council providing the service.

Recommendation

Investigate the costs and logistics of providing a green waste service in Mercury Bay South in 2018/19.

Additional budget for this investigation is proposed in below under Solid Waste Investigation Budget.

Solid Waste charge on properties on unserviced roads

One submitter who lives on Harriet Kings Road requested the removal of the solid waste charge from their rates as they do not have full solid waste disposal services.

Analysis

Staff are looking further into how many ratepayers may be paying for on-street rubbish and recycling collection but not receiving it, and will consider a change to charging for the solid waste activity if appropriate. This will be resolved at an operational level where people are being charged rates inappropriately.

Whitianga Refuse Transfer Station

Two submitters requested that Council upgrade refuse stations for optimal recycling.

Analysis

Staff will follow up with the contractor who runs the Whitianga Refuse Transfer station to ensure service level agreements are being met. The Whitianga Refuse Transfer station is due for renewals in 2018/19 and 2019/20 with \$1.955M budgeted.

Recommendation

Direct staff to work with contractors at Whitianga Transfer Station to ensure service level agreement is being met with regards to recycling levels.

Resource recovery centre in Whitianga

- Two submitters requested Council set up a recycle shop at the refuse station in Whitianga.

Analysis

The Seagull Centre in Thames and Gold Mine in Coromandel Town are both successful privately operated resource recovery centres. Council supported the establishment of the Seagull centre in Thames by providing them a financial grant and also permission to set up their operation on Council land adjacent to the Thames refuse transfer station. Council also supported the establishment of the Gold Mine in Coromandel Town through a financial grant, a short term loan to assist with construction, and a low cost lease of Council land. Staff are open to working with an interested community operator in Whitianga, or in any other town in the district, to establish additional resource recovery centres.

Council public recycling bins

- Four submitters asked that Council provide recycling bins as well as rubbish bins on streets, in parks and reserves, and at other public places in the district.

Analysis

Staff agree that Council serviced recycling receptacles in public places would be a positive step in reducing waste to landfill in the district. While costs of providing and servicing these receptacles are not currently known, this can be further investigated in the 2018/19 year for inclusion in the 2019/20 Annual Plan.

Recommendation

Direct staff to investigate costs of providing and servicing public recycling bins for inclusion in the 2019/20 Annual Plan.

Waste reduction

One submitter requests that the Council lead waste reduction such as banning the use of takeaway coffee cups in offices.

Analysis

Previous work on an internal council sustainability strategy to identify ways in which the organisation can reduce its own waste output and energy requirements stalled. Staff are able to revisit this work if desired by Council, either for how the organisation operates internally or as a governance level strategy which defines both our operational sustainability approach as well as initiatives Council will undertake in the community.

Staff will consider how the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan can be implemented internally to reduce the environmental impact of Council operations.

Wheeled bins for rubbish collection

- Three submitters asked that Council move from plastic bags to wheeled bins for rubbish collection.

Analysis

Staff are broadly supportive of a move from plastic bags to wheeled bins for rubbish collection. The benefits of doing this are:

- a) Reduce the number of plastic bags going to the landfill
- b) Tidier operation
- c) A safer means for rubbish collection
- d) Convenient for holiday home owners in the district i.e. no need to tie rubbish bags on trees until collection for example.

If Council wishes to implement wheeled bins for rubbish collection in the future, then it is recommended that investigation work to assess the logistics, set up costs, operational costs, risks, lessons learnt from other Councils across the country etc, commence in 2018/19. The ideal timing for Council to implement any change would be when the current waste management contract comes up for renewal in 2023.

Recommendation

Direct staff to investigate use of wheeled bins instead of plastic bags for rubbish collection. *Additional budget for this investigation is proposed in below under Solid Waste Investigation Budget.*

Solid Waste investigation budget

The initiatives identified for solid waste in previous submission lines above require a small investigation budget within the rubbish and recycling activity to investigate.

Staff recommend a budget of \$50,000 in year 1, and of \$20,000 in year 2 for these investigations and any other waste minimisation initiatives that may arise. The rating impact of this will be \$2.17 per ratepayer in year 1, and \$0.89 in year 2.

Recommendation

Approve a rubbish and recycling investigation budget of \$50,000 in the 2018/19 year, and \$20,000 in the 2019/20 year.

7 Suggested resolution(s)

That the Thames-Coromandel District Council:

1. Receives the 'Three waters and solid waste' report, dated 8 May 2018.
2. Approves/declines the recommendations within the report.