

3. WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2004: PART 1 AND PART 2

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The purpose of this report is to gain approval for the Wastewater Management Plan, consisting of:

- Part 1: Strategic Issues, and
- Part 2: Asset Management Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Wastewater Management Plan Part 1: Strategic Issues, was presented along with key asset management plan findings, to a workshop of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee on 16 October 2003. The Committee accepted the information presented subject to further input from the four external experts who were assisting with advice on Part 1. In addition, feedback has been sought and incorporated from the discharge audit group, which has been set-up as a requirement of the (short term) resource consent into the Estuary from the wastewater treatment plant. Feedback was generally very supportive of the draft strategy. There was a need to amend some wording in the document to ensure intentions were clear. Also raised was a strong desire for the monitoring and maintenance of small-scale treatment systems (modern septic tanks etc) to be the responsibility of the Council rather than individuals and support for the Council to prepare guidelines for the acceptable design/performance of these. Both groups also raised the need for Council to develop a policy for greenhouse gases.

STATUS OF PLAN

It is proposed that the Waste Management Plan 2004 become a Council policy document that does not go through the Special Consultative Procedure (SPC). Although Part 2: Asset Management Plan is legally required to be prepared, it is not required to go through a Special Consultative Procedure. Some of the matters raised in Part 1: Strategic Issues should, at some point in time, be the subject of wider (ie special) public consultation. However, it is considered this would be better to take place at the same time as the assessment of water supply and sanitary services (required by the LGA 2002 to be undertaken by June 2005) is prepared or, perhaps later on, when a combined three water (water supply, wastewater and stormwater) integrated management plan is being prepared. Thus this Part 1 document should be viewed as a step in a wider planning process that will involve full consultation further down the track.

CURRENT SITUATION

Subsequent to the October 2003 workshop, the following key amendments have been made to Part 1: Strategic Issues (refer attachment 1 separately circulated):

- The reliance on a centralised sewerage system will remain, but the need for future improvement upgrades of the centralised system will be minimised by emphasis on managing wastewater quantity and quality at source and by introducing reticulated septic tank systems where appropriate.
- Investigations and trials for nutrient recovery will be continued as part of the Council's 'Green Edge' project for enhancement around the estuary.
- A customer charter backed by an education programme should be developed to ensure customers recognise their responsibilities to manage inputs into the liquid waste stream, and conversely the Councils undertaking to its customers.
- A Council policy regarding greenhouse gasses should be developed in conjunction with other agencies and Council Units.

The key changes to Part 2: Asset Management Plan (refer attachment 2 separately circulated) were outlined at the Workshop in October 2003 and are as follows:

- The Council will accept ownership of sewer laterals in the street (typically the 10 metres of pipe between the boundary and the sewer), resulting in an increase in wastewater depreciation of \$770,000 annually, but being overall rates neutral.
- The pipeline from Belfast programmed for installation between 2007 and 2009 will now be brought forward to allow commissioning by 2006 (ie budgeted between 2004 and 2006).

- A strategy will be prepared for incorporation in the 2006 Part 2: Asset Management Plan, to significantly reduce odours arising from the wastewater system. This follows a clear response from public consultation to improve this service level.
- Response times to non-emergency occurrences (like odours) involving after-hours callouts should be investigated Council wide, as survey respondents expressed a willingness to pay for this improved level of service.
- Expenditure on new mains will be reduced by \$800,000 annually until 2009/10, which will be balanced by a projected increase in new works to meet City growth requirements.

DOCUMENT

Draft documents (Part 1: Strategic Issues, and Part 2: Asset Management Plan) have been separately circulated to allow Councillors to review their content. After content endorsement, it is intended that the presentation (not content) be further enhanced for public availability.

SUMMARY

Subsequent to the October 2003 Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee Workshop, a number of adjustments have been incorporated into the Wastewater Management Plan Parts 1 and 2. These adjustments take into account feedback from the Committee, expert panel and estuary discharge audit group. The Council endorsement of their content is now sought prior to presentation enhancement and public availability.

Recommendation: That the content of the Draft Wastewater Management Plan Parts 1 and 2 be endorsed, prior to editing and printing enhancement, for public availability.