

7th October 2020

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Dear Shaun

Featherston Wastewater Disposal Resource Consent Applications WAR120294 and WAR170229

Introduction

We write to you in relation to applications by South Wairarapa District Council ("SWDC") for resource consent in relation to the Featherston Wastewater Treatment Plant (FWWTP).

The FWWTP currently operates under consents WAR970080.

1 Applications WAR120294

SWDC lodged applications for resource consent WAR120294 on 25 May 2012, three months prior to the expiry of consents WAR970080. Consents WAR970080 were due to expire on 25 August 2012. Section 124 of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA"), applies to the continued operation of the FWWTP under consents WAR970080:

- a) SWDC is the holder of consents WAR970080;
- b) Applications for resource consent WAR120294 are for the same activity and were made to the appropriate consent authority, Greater Wellington Regional Council ("GWRC");
- c) Applications for resource consent WAR120294 were made in the period beginning 6 months before the expiry of the existing consent WAR970080 and ending 3 months before the expiry of the existing consent; and
- d) GWRC in its discretion allowed SWDC as the holder of the consent WAR970080 to continue to operate.

Under Section 124(2) of the RMA, SWDC may continue to operate the FWWTP under consents WAR970080 until new consents for the FWWTP are granted and all appeals are determined.

Applications for consent WAR120294 remain on hold, under a Section 37 of the RMA extension of time limits, until such time as a decision is made on the application lodged with GWRC on 1 March 2017 (WAR170229, as discussed below). As you know, SWDC pursued the WAR170229 application but due to community concerns has decided not to pursue this application to hearing at the current time. Further detail on this process is provided below.

SWDC requests that applications WAR120294 remain on hold under a further extension of time limits under Section 37 of the RMA, while SWDC, together with Wellington Water Limited (WWL), conduct a study to determine the options for treatment and disposal of wastewater from Featherston ("the study").

2 The Study

The study is at the start of a 12-month development phase to work with iwi partners and to consult on and develop the preferred option for the Featherston wastewater disposal. Stakeholder consultation will predominantly take the form of four workshops held over the next nine months. Community consultation will be a series of 'drop-in' sessions held in Featherston.

At the end of the study a recommended option will be identified for SWDC to consider taking forward to the preparation and lodgement of a new resource consent application. Therefore, at this stage it is envisaged that a new resource consent application will be lodged with GWRC by approximately late 2021.

With application WAR120294 remaining on hold, we propose to provide regular updates to GWRC as the study progresses so that GWRC can be assured that steady progress is being made towards lodgment. The proposed updates will follow the key stakeholder workshops (which GWRC are a participant in) and at the time that an option is recommended to SWDC.

3 Section 37 Time Limit Extension

SWDC understands the duty of GWRC to avoid unreasonable delays in the assessment and determination of applications WAR120294. However, we consider it is consistent with the sustainable management purpose of the RMA for applications WAR120294 to remain on hold while SWDC and WWL work with the Featherston community, iwi and stakeholders to determine the preferred option for the treatment and disposal of wastewater discharges from Featherston and to consent this through a new resource consent application.

It is in the interests of the Featherston community and environment to allow applications WAR120294 to remain on hold while the study is being completed, in order that an appropriate range of options can be identified, evaluated and consulted on, so that an appropriate and enduring solution can then be delivered.

No person will be directly and adversely affected by the extension of time limits for WAR120294.

SWDC therefore considers that GWRC should grant an extension of time limits so that WAR120294 remains on hold.

4 Applications WAR170229

A new resource consent application WAR170229 was lodged with GWRC on 1 March 2017 by SWDC. This application sought to obtain long-term discharge permits for a term of 35 years, and to undertake a two-stage upgrade to the Featherston WWTP for an irrigation based land treatment scheme, including upgrades to the Featherston underground sewerage network.

At the Council meeting held 18 March 2020 SWDC resolved to withdraw applications WAR170229 (Minute DC2020/27). As part of making this decision, it was considered that there is *"urgency of ensuring untreated wastewater was not discharged to waterways and the need to consider a range of options, associated costs and a community engagement plan in a timely manner."* Therefore, GWRC can be assured that progressing the study and selecting the preferred option is a top priority for SWDC.

Accordingly, SWDC now seeks that GWRC formally records the withdrawal of applications WAR170229. If there are any outstanding costs associated with this application please advise. Please also note that letters to submitters to applications WAR170229 have been sent to advise of the withdrawal of the applications WAR170229.

5 Conclusion

SWDC looks forward to receiving confirmation from GWRC that applications WAR120294 continue to remain on hold (with the proposed timetable in place); and acknowledgement of the withdrawal of applications WAR170229.

If you have any queries or require clarification in regards to this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Steven Kelliher, Project Manager, GHD Ltd, T: 04 474 7343, M: 027 620 7456, E: steven.kelliher@ghd.com.

Yours sincerely,



Euan Stitt

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South Wairarapa District Council

