

MEMORANDUM

Job 10684

To: Darren de Klerk

From: Hamish Lowe, LEI

Date: 28 May 2020

Subject: Te Paerahi and Porangahau – Community Wastewater Management into the Future – A Strawman Approach

Overview

The Te Paerahi and Porangahau communities are requiring the appropriateness of their wastewater discharges to be confirmed, or modifications made, prior to their current resource consents ending.

The characteristics of the current treatment facilities and discharges are provided in Beca (2020). Resource consent for both communities expires 31 May 2021 at Te Paerahi and Porangahau.

Engagement with members of both communities over the last 15 years has highlighted reservations with the current practices; namely the unacceptability of the Te Paerahi treatment and discharge site, and the discharge from the Porangahau treatment system into the Porangahau River. Engagement in late 2019 and early 2020 provided a clear steer of community expectations, specifically with regard to modifications of the discharges for both communities. The overwhelming preference was to see discharge to water ceased and land application utilised. While not being fully supported, there is community acceptance that land application that uses irrigation and provides for no surface water discharge may not be feasible; being that at certain times of the year, to avoid unrealistic storage volumes over winter and irrigation of wet soils, alternative discharges that use some form of rapid discharge whereby the discharge may reach surface water may be necessary.

The community has high regard and desire to address tangata whenua values. This includes the avoidance of wahi tapu, and in particular significant landforms and areas surrounding the Te Paerahi wastewater treatment ponds and discharge. The other aspect is Maori consider wastewater discharge to surfaced water, even after treatment, to be culturally abhorrent, with a preference that there is land passage over Papatuanuku.

Each community has slightly different dynamics, with Te Paerahi having beach house type dwellings with a large number occupied seasonally. Porangahau has a more permanent population, but a low average household income. Regardless of the reason, both communities have financial limitations to afford increases in rates to pay for new or upgraded wastewater facilities, either as a result of not wanting to pay because they are not there for large periods of the year, or not able to pay because of household income.



Objectives

Based on knowledge and information gleaned from the community, the following objectives are relevant.

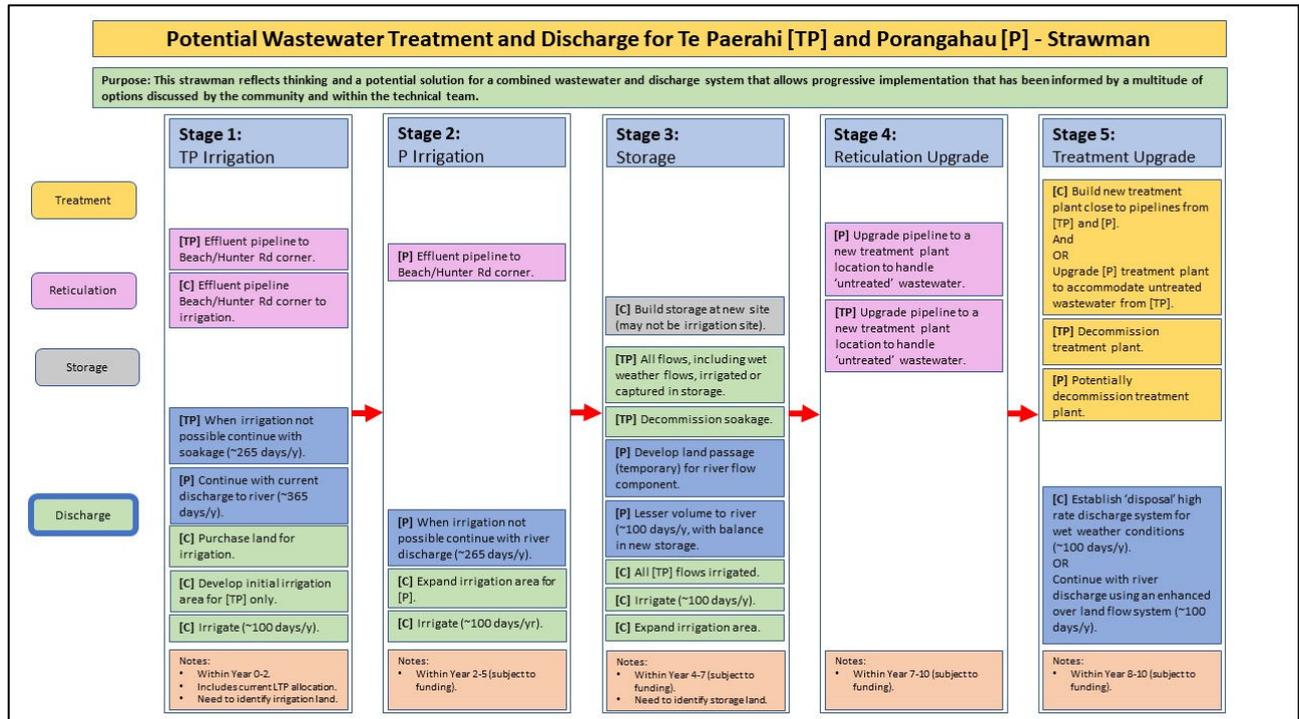
- 1) Cease discharge at Te Paerahi and ideally cease treatment;
- 2) Ideally cease, or at a minimum reduce the discharge of wastewater at Porangahau to Porangahau River;
- 3) Develop a discharge system whereby the wastewater is beneficially reused;
- 4) Develop a system that utilises land application as far as practically possible;
- 5) Provide for efficiencies of managing both communities together where possible;
- 6) Recognise and provide for tangata whenua values;
- 7) Provide for a system that can be implemented over time and as finances provides for;
- 8) Provide for community growth; and
- 9) Provide a system that is environmentally and regulatory robust and enduring.

Strawman

There is a multitude of options and combinations to manage both the existing and potentially new wastewater solutions. The options are further compounded when considering the combining and development of possible joint facilities. What is known is that there are clear components that need to be considered irrespective of the option:

- Treatment;
- Reticulation;
- Storage; and
- Discharge.

The following figure provides a possible path to develop a sustainable wastewater solution for the community. On the agreement of this solution (or variants), the necessary consents can be procured. Prior to undertaking the consent process, it is essential that the solution is informed by and reflects the practical reality of the affordability of the system; as the desired and possibly aspirational system may be simply unaffordable. The opportunity to stage the solution may be a practical means to help the community achieve what it wants, as it allows tasks and changes to be made in accordance with the aspirational target.



There is a need to be realistic in delivering solutions. Community expectations are typically to want the best. While this is admirable, the system owners (Central Hawke's Bay District Council) need to ensure the system delivered balances needs with wants. They have a duty and requirement to provide for public health through necessary infrastructure requirements. Still, the provision of such services has to be appropriate for the community as a whole, including being economically, socially, culturally and environmentally balanced. The outlined Strawman seeks to balance solutions with the needs of the communities.

Best Practical Option

The solution which will be arrived at for the community can be described at the Best Practical Option. This may not be the cheapest, most low impact or culturally appropriate solution, but a solution that balances the needs and aspirations of the community with its affordability and needs to implement changes. Such a system should then have its concept refined and develop further and resource consent(s) sought for its implementation.