

WWTP RECOVERED WATER MANAGEMENT MULTI CRITERIA ANALYSIS

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a broad update on the proposed decision-making framework and Mana Whenua partnering approach to guide the Recovered Water Management site selection, and to inform a Council workshop.

The update focuses on this project only and not the wider Wastewater Programme. We seek Council's acceptance of the proposed Multi Criteria Analysis metrics and baseline weighting, as we look to engage and partner with Mana Whenua in the Recovered Water Management site decision making process.

2. REASON FOR THE MULTI CRITERIA ANALYSIS

Background

Investigations into a suitable management and discharge site for the recovered water from Rotorua's upgraded Wastewater Treatment Plant have been going for some time. This project was initially termed the SFA (Sustainable Forest Approach), as it anticipated a discharge point within the forest but at a much-reduced footprint area in line with the earlier agreements reached with CNI and relevant Iwi. In considering the options forward this project will now be known as the Recovered Water Management Solution.

In brief, when the current upgrade to the treatment plant is commissioned in mid-2026, there will be a significant improvement in the quality of the recovered water to be returned to the receiving environment. It is anticipated that the recovered water will be of a quality that meets and exceeds currently developed National Performance Standards.

The current discharge site on CNI's land in the Whakarewarewa forest will continue under section 124, until such time as RLC is able to secure, build and commission a new arrangement with a possible discharge site and long-term sustainable solution.

We are now at a point where a multiparty group involving Council's partners and other stakeholders will be invited to consider the issue in detail and work through a collaborative and joint issue resolution framework, consider options and make recommendations to that effect.

While a number of sites and potential recovered water management solutions have been investigated, it is critically important that through our current engagement process with Mana Whenua, we are able to reach balanced consensus on solutions.

We are now looking to work more closely with Mana Whenua and other important stakeholders within a partnering arrangement, to frame and drive the decision-making process around site and solution selection (recovered water management). To aid that endeavour, it is important that a set of criteria to guide solution investigations is adopted.

Council is the owner of the wastewater system and has the obligation under the LGA to make effective and efficient decisions on behalf of the community. Sustainable solutions require community and partner willingness to collaborate and engage in a

meaningful search for balanced outcomes. Therefore, adopting criteria that guide such collaboration are important enabling tools.

The selection of the site and discharge of the recovered water will need to run concurrently with the discharge process methodology. An example is that different discharge and management solutions require different engineering interventions, location footprints, or a trade use partner who utilises some of the recovered water thus reducing the final disposal volume.

Multi Criteria Analysis

A Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) is viewed as a framework to help inform and steer decisions. It provides an appraisal process to measure variables such as monetary value, time savings and project sustainability, as well as variables that can be quantified but are not so easily valued, such as whakapapa and the value of connection to nature. The MCA process helps complex decision making where there may be conflicting views, perspectives, interests and ultimate goals. The MCA set up should be completed in two parts:

- 1 determine appropriate criteria to ensure the solution will have considered all relevant parameters;
- 2 determine the scoring, ensuring that the weighting is appropriately calibrated, measured and does not unfairly bias the outcome.

Captured within the MCA process, there will be factors that likely rule a solution or site out. Examples could include Mana Whenua not accepting direct discharge to a particular location or a technical parameter such as very steep land that precludes site development.

For the recovered water management solution, the agreed MCA will be used to assist in framing partnering discussions with Mana Whenua, and other stakeholders on how we ultimately score and elevate solution or site suitability, the outcome of which will be Council approval of a preferred solution or site in due course.

The following MCA is proposed for Councillor discussion and approval, and for the project team to take forwards into discussions with the Mana Whenua working group. *Please note, the proposed MCA should not be viewed as an exhaustive criterion, but considered a baseline from which to frame working group discussions and optimisation of this MCA within that group:*

Stage 1

Factors that make an option non-viable	Pass/Fail	Pass required in <u>all</u> factors to proceed to Values scoring process.
Legal and Regulatory compliance		An option must fit within Councils regulatory obligations.
Sits within Financial Strategy		An option must not significantly affect our rates and overall affordability.
Landowner approval		Council must be able to reach a suitable occupation window with the landowner/s.
Technical feasibility: - Groundwater - Surface water - Geotech - Permeability - Accessibility - Constructability - Operability Infrastructure hurdles		An option must be technically feasible without undue hurdles.

Stage 2

VALUES	Weighting 1	2	3	
Relationship with Mana Whenua	10%	10%	15%	Mana Whenua aspirations to be captured in this value.
Community Acceptance and Support	10%	10%	15%	Our community must be in general agreement with the proffered option.
Te Mana O te Wai alignment	5%	5%	15%	Fit within framework.
Total lifecycle cost	50%	40%	25%	The solution must be affordable.
Intergenerational Value, including environmental outcomes (100-year horizon).	5%	30%	25%	The solution must consider and provide the best outcomes for generations to come.
Wider Economic value to community	10%	5%	5%	A solutions ability to add value for the community.
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	

NOTE: three different values weightings have been indicated, to illustrate the differing pathways that a scoring criterion could take. In theory, the derivation of values should have been constructed to capture the lateral extent of what requires focused consideration, and a scoring pathway should be constructed that is balanced and does not result in undue bias.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

Financial/Budget Considerations

For context, the current budget from the 2024 LTP is tabled below:

Programme Part	2021 LTP	2024 LTP
Trility Contract 22/037	\$58,800,000	\$58,800,000
Variations	\$0	\$4,400,000
SFA Approach part	\$0	\$26,900,000
Programme Contingency	\$2,092,000	\$13,861,332
Total	\$60,892,000	\$103,961,332

The LTP provides a budget of \$26.9m, plus a yet undefined portion of the Programme contingency.

Risks

The project itself has a risk register and risk management processes. The key project financial risks are:

- Not engaging with Mana Whenua effectively and compliance effects.
- Programme promulgation.
- Meeting regulatory requirements.