

Mayor's Tabled Report to Council

Three Waters Meeting 9.9.21

Good afternoon,

It is rare that I have not had a report in the Order Paper rather than a tabled report, so my apologies. I will ask that this report is added to the full Council meeting later this month. The pressure that Councils are under to deal with Three Waters makes consideration difficult.

This Council report prepared by staff provides a public portal to the Three Waters information discussion. It is not and should not be a decision process to opt out or into an aggregated position on the delivery of Three Waters (i.e. the provision of wastewater, potable or drinking water and stormwater to our communities). That time will come later.

The meeting is to update Councillors and the public with information and as correctly pointed out in the report to identify areas of concern to provide feedback to LGNZ (Local Government New Zealand), Entity B and the Government. Post this meeting these issues will be workshopped, to be able to provide the necessary responses. In my view our letter to Minister Mahuta would be a public record as soon as is possible.

I thank Peter our Chief Executive and staff for the balanced factual basis to the report. It is accurate and allows the conversations to happen. The staff, like Councillors, have real concerns over this reform and we need to listen to them as well as the concerns of the public and Councillors. I also thank them for the huge amount of time that has been put into these reports.

The report correctly puts out the limitations of decision making under the Local Government Acts, especially around our requirement to consult with the public. Government is the Government and can change this by mandating or legislating changes. My personal position is that we should fight that position if it occurs. The public must, in my mind have a say.

I have many concerns which I am sure will mirror the concerns of Councillors. Rather than highlight them as part of my report I will add to the conversation and workshops that follow. However, in terms of process the speed that this happening is, in my view, unrealistic and undemocratic.

Andy Watson
Mayor