Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Taratahi
CARTERTON
DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA

Waste Water Treatment Plant Advisory Group meeting

Date: **Wednesday, 25 February 2026**

Time: **10:00 am**

Location: **Carterton Events Centre**
50 Holloway St
Carterton

Cr R Round (Chair)
Cr B Deller (Deputy Chair)
Cr S Gallon
Cr S Casey
Mayor S Cretney
Phil Vernon, Te Whatu Ora
Tony Falloon, Te Whatu Ora
Ray Craig, Mangatārere Restoration Society
Vern Brasell, Sustainable Wairarapa Inc
Rawiri Smith, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa
Joel Ngātuere, Ngāti Kahukuraāwhitia
Horipo Rimene, Rangitāne o Wairarapa
Aaron Johnston, GWRC
Anna Muspratt, GWRC
Scott Ihaka, GWRC
Jo Gillanders, GWRC
Lawrence Stephenson, CDC
Jeet Kiran, CDC

Notice is hereby given that a Waste Water Treatment Plant Advisory Group meeting of the Carterton District Council will be held in the Carterton Events Centre, 50 Holloway St, Carterton on:

Wednesday, 25 February 2026 at 10:00 am

Order Of Business

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Mai i te pae maunga, raro ki te tai

Mai i te awa tonga, raro ki te awa raki

Tēnei te hapori awhi ai e Taratahi.

Whano whano, haramai te toki

Haumi ē, hui ē, tāiki ē!

2 APOLOGIES

VIDEOCONFERENCE DETAILS

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 445 037 118 291 70

Passcode: ga2k2Bm7

For organizers: Meeting options

Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Taratahi
CARTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

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3 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2025

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Minutes of the Waste Water Treatment Plant Advisory Group Meeting held on 12 March 2025 are true and correct.

File Number: **508127**

Author: **Robyn Blue, Democratic Services Officer**

Attachments: **1. Minutes of the Waste Water Treatment Plant Advisory Group Meeting held on 12 March 2025**

MINUTES OF CARTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL
WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
HELD AT THE CARTERTON EVENTS CENTRE, 50 HOLLOWAY ST, CARTERTON
ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2025 AT 1:00 PM

PRESENT:

Deputy Mayor S Cretney (Acting Chair)
Cr S Gallon
Cr G Ayling (via VC)
Cr B Deller
Mayor R Mark
Johannes Ferreira, CDC
Lawrence Stephenson, CDC
Jeet Kiran, CDC
Joel Ngātuere, Ngāti Kahukuraāwhitia (via VC)
Vern Brasell, Sustainable Wairarapa Inc
Ray Craig, Mangatarere Restoration Society
Sara Renall, CDC
Katrina King, CDC

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

The meeting opened with a karakia by all members

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cr Dale Williams, Sandra Williams, and Phil Vernon.

3 CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARATION

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

4 PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public forum.

5 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2024

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Minutes of the Waste Water Treatment Plant Advisory Group Meeting held on 6 March 2024 are true and correct.

6 REPORTS

4.1 WWTP OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

To update the advisory group on the operational matters at the wastewater treatment plant.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Advisory Group:

1. **Receives** the report.

Noted

- Lawrence gave an update on the Aerator failure, which in turn resulted in the aerator replacement being brought forward.
- The nursery has been progressing well. About one third of the area has been planted in poplar trees.

4.2 WWTP RESERVOIR UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

To provide the WWTP Advisory Group with an update on the current status of the Wastewater Treatment Plant reservoirs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Advisory Group:

1. **Receives** the report.

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

The meeting closed with a karakia by all members.

The Meeting closed at 1.36pm.

Minutes confirmed: ……

Date: .....

4 REPORTS

4.1 WWTP RESERVOIR UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

To provide the WWTP Advisory Group with an update on the current status of the Wastewater Treatment Plant reservoirs.

2. SIGNIFICANCE

The matters for decision in this report are not considered to be of significance under the Significance and Engagement Policy.

3. RESERVOIR UPDATE

Consent conditions - Schedule G:

Condition 7 - No treated wastewater was discharged to the Mangatārere stream when the flows were between half median and 2x median *(2 x Median Flow means a flow of 4.470 cubic metres per second in the Mangatārere Stream, as measured at the GWRC State Highway 2 flow recording site).* We were able to discharge the treated wastewater to the Mangatārere stream when the flow was consistently above 2x the median, which is favourable.

Condition 10 - Treated wastewater quality:

The sequential batch reservoirs have been fully operational since May 2023. In accordance with Schedule G Condition 10, treated wastewater discharged to surface water is required to meet specified 95th percentile limits, and median limits are to be established based on operational performance data.

Full wording of Condition 10.

a) Treated wastewater discharged from the CDC WWTP to surface water shall meet the following standards measured at the point of outflow from the sequential batch reservoirs:

TSS (g/m³)	To be confirmed	50
TAN (g/m³)	To be confirmed	20
DRP (g/m³)	To be confirmed	9
E. coli (per 100 mls)	100	100

Monthly sampling of the treated effluent discharge has been undertaken in accordance with the monitoring requirements specified in Resource Consent WAR160341 (Schedule B and Schedule G). Monitoring results for the reporting period confirm that all treated effluent quality parameters complied with the applicable 95th percentile limits.

All parameters remained within their respective 95th percentile compliance limits during the reporting period.

In accordance with Schedule G Condition 10(c), proposed median limits for treated effluent quality parameters have now been developed based on the monitoring data collected since reservoir commissioning. These proposed median limits are provided for review and consideration by GWRC and will be progressed in consultation with GWRC, as required under the consent.

Overall, treated effluent quality performance during the reporting period demonstrates stable reservoir operation and continued compliance with consented discharge standards.

Table 1 Sample results taken from the Reservoirs

Parameter	Median Limit	Median value	95th Percentile Limit	Maximum
BOD_5 (g/m^3) (schedule G)	*TBC - Proposed (20)*	11	*25*	57
TSS (g/m^3) (schedule G)	*TBC - Proposed (30)*	14.5	*50*	26
TAN (g/m^3) (schedule G)	*TBC - Proposed (16)*	11.9	*20*	30
DRP (g/m^3) (schedule G)	*TBC - Proposed (4)*	2.81	*9*	5.50

Conditions 13 to 16 - **Macroinvertebrate Sampling, Periphyton and Algae Assessment**

An appropriately qualified and experienced freshwater ecologist was engaged to undertake macroinvertebrate sampling and periphyton/algae assessments in the Mangatārere Stream, in accordance with Conditions 11-16 of Consent WAR160341.

The most recent ecological compliance survey was carried out on 24 April 2025, following a 16-day low-flow accrual period and during a discharge-to-land regime.

Periphyton and Algal Assessment:

Monitoring confirmed that both upstream and downstream sites recorded very low periphyton biomass and cover, consistent with the relatively short 16-day accrual period prior to sampling.

All measured indicators were comfortably within consent limits:

- Chlorophyll-a biomass: well below the 120 mg/m² limit
- Filamentous algae cover: <30%
- Cyanobacteria (diatom/cyanobacterial mat) cover: <60%
- No evidence of sewage fungus was observed

Both sites exhibited predominantly clean substrate conditions, with only minor thin-film growth observed. These results confirm compliance with the periphyton-related consent conditions.

Macroinvertebrate Monitoring (QMCI Assessment)

Macroinvertebrate community indices were assessed using QMCI equivalence testing, as required under the consent conditions.

The results demonstrated:

- Upstream and downstream QMCI scores were statistically equivalent
- The difference between sites was well within the permitted ±20% equivalence band
- Statistical analysis indicated a 99.99% probability that upstream and downstream ecological conditions were equivalent
- No measurable adverse ecological effect attributable to the discharge was detected at the time of sampling

These findings confirm compliance with the macroinvertebrate conditions of the consent.

Overall Ecological Compliance Statement

The April 2025 monitoring confirms that the Carterton District Council Wastewater Treatment Plant continues to comply with all ecological consent requirements (Conditions 11-16) under discharge permit WAR160341.

The results indicate that treated effluent management under the current land-application regime is maintaining instream ecological health, with:

- No exceedances of periphyton thresholds
- No significant change in macroinvertebrate community condition downstream
- No evidence of sewage fungus

The ecological outcomes observed are consistent with previous monitoring and indicate that instream values are being protected under current operational practices.

Figure 1 – Ecological survey carried out in Mangatārere Stream, April 2025

Operational Management Plan – Maximising Discharge to Land

(Schedule A – OMP Objective (b), WAR160341)

In accordance with the Operational Management Plan (OMP) for WAR160341, CDC is required to:

"Maximise as far as practicable the discharge of treated wastewater to land in preference to discharge to the Mangatārere Stream, provided this can be achieved without exceeding the sustainable capacity of the irrigation area."

The irrigation of treated wastewater to the GWRC Te Uru (Daleton) Nursery forms part of CDC's broader land discharge strategy under Schedule B (Discharge Permit [34718]). While the nursery arrangement itself is not specifically stipulated in the resource consent conditions, it operates within the authorised land irrigation area and supports the OMP objective of increasing beneficial reuse to land.

Irrigation Discharge to GWRC Te Uru (Daleton) Nursery

During the reporting period, treated wastewater continued to be supplied to Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) for irrigation at the Te Uru O Tāne (Daleton) Nursery located within the WWTP site.

Irrigation Programme and Coordination

The irrigation programme for the 2025-2026 summer season was developed and implemented by GWRC, with regular updates provided to CDC to assist with storage and discharge planning.

The season commenced with an initial trial phase in November 2025, where varying irrigation frequencies were tested (weekly 10-hour runs, followed by alternate-day and daily shorter-duration runs) to determine the most suitable programme for plant health and soil conditions.

From December 2025 through February 2026, the programme transitioned to a structured schedule generally comprising:

- 10-hour runs,
- Commencing at 19:00 and concluding at 05:00,
- Primarily on Thursday and Friday nights,
- With adjustments made in response to soil moisture readings and rainfall events.

In late January and February, irrigation was refined to manage pooling risks in Zone A while continuing irrigation in the more free-draining Zone B. GWRC has indicated that irrigation volumes are expected to reduce later in the season as part of standard horticultural practice to prepare deciduous stock for winter dormancy.

CDC has maintained ongoing communication with GWRC to align irrigation timing with treated wastewater storage levels and river discharge opportunities.

Monitoring and Water Quality Assurance

Prior to irrigation commencement, GWRC requested updated:

- Viral pathogen testing,
- Full nutrient analysis (including N, P, K, Ca, Mg, Na),
- Heavy metals suite,
- pH confirmation.

Testing was undertaken through accredited laboratories, with costs invoiced to GWRC. Results were provided to inform agronomic planning and ensure the suitability of treated wastewater for nursery irrigation.

Soil moisture monitoring is conducted by GWRC using Harvest probes.

Schedule E – Ecological Mitigation

Mudfish Habitat Rehabilitation (Conditions 4 & 5)

In accordance with Schedule E of WAR160341, where brown mudfish are present, and habitat is affected by works, like-for-like habitat is required to be provided and managed in consultation with GWRC ecology input.

Habitat Establishment and Infrastructure

During the reporting period, significant progress has been made toward establishing and refining the replacement habitat:

- Installation and plumbing of IBC(1000L)-based holding and habitat units, with controlled inflows and overflow modifications to reduce escape risk.
- Ongoing refinement of overflow structures following on-site observations.
- Establishment of habitat complexity within IBCs and restoration drains, including addition of mānuka branches and aquatic vegetation.
- Regular inspection of flows to ensure a continuous water supply to habitat units.
- Monitoring of overflow integrity and general system performance by WWTP staff (2-3 site checks per week during critical periods).

Flow checks have confirmed that the IBC systems are operating as intended, with no issues noted during recent inspections.

Fish Management and Monitoring

- An initial cohort of mudfish was placed in the IBC habitat units prior to Christmas to evaluate habitat suitability and system performance.
- Following confirmation of stability, additional mudfish were introduced to selected IBC units.
- Eels captured from the restoration drain were relocated to the Mangatārere Stream to reduce predation pressure.
- A temperature logger has been deployed in one IBC (with flow temporarily isolated) to monitor thermal response and assess habitat resilience.

Monitoring to date indicates that mudfish are tolerating the holding environment well, with further staged introductions planned as habitat readiness continues to be confirmed.

Vegetation Establishment

To support long-term habitat stability and water quality:

- 100-200 Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani (Kuawa) plants have been procured as part of a staged planting trial.
- Internal coordination has been undertaken for plant collection and delivery logistics.
- Planting will proceed once delivery timing is confirmed and site conditions are suitable.

Vegetation establishment is intended to improve cover, bank stability and invertebrate habitat within the rehabilitation area.

Current Status and Next Steps

The mudfish rehabilitation works are progressing in stages, with infrastructure installed, initial habitat confirmed operational, and ecological enhancement ongoing. Monitoring and incremental improvements are continuing in collaboration with GWRC ecological staff.

Next steps include:

- Continued monitoring of IBC flows and habitat condition,
- Completion of wetland planting,
- Further staged mudfish placement as appropriate,
- Ongoing review of habitat performance and adaptive refinement if required.

At this stage, works are consistent with the intent of Schedule E Conditions 4 and 5, and the project remains in an active establishment and optimisation phase.

Figure 2: Overview of IBC installation

Operational Update – Wild Bird Mortalities at WWTP

(January-February 2026)

On 8 January 2026, a small number of deceased wild birds were first identified within Oxidation Pond 2 at the Carterton WWTP. At that stage, observations were confined to oxidation pond 2 only.

In the days following the initial observations, additional mortalities were identified within the receiving wetland and subsequently within the reservoirs. Birds were typically located near the margins of these water bodies.

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) also advised that a small number of birds were observed deceased within their nursery area. It is considered likely that these birds had prior contact with WWTP oxidation pond 2 before relocating short distances.

The affected species were limited to paradise ducks (pūtangitangi) and swans. No other species were identified as affected during the monitoring period.

Observations and Likely Cause

Multiple site inspections were undertaken. Observations included:

- Green algal growth consistent with oxidation pond conditions
- Visual indicators consistent with cyanobacteria presence
- Mortalities confined to water-associated areas
- No evidence of widespread dispersal beyond WWTP-adjacent locations

The pattern, species affected, and spatial confinement were consistent with a localised environmental response.

Avian botulism was considered a possible contributing factor, given:

- Sustained hot weather and elevated water temperatures
- Organic and nutrient-rich conditions typical of oxidation ponds
- The seasonal susceptibility of waterfowl species

There were no clinical or epidemiological indicators consistent with exotic disease.

Biosecurity Engagement

Although formal notification thresholds were not triggered, MPI Biosecurity New Zealand was proactively contacted as a precautionary step.

Following discussion with MPI Incursion Investigator (Animal Health):

- MPI confirmed there were no concerns regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).
- The event was assessed as consistent with a localised environmental cause.
- No biosecurity response was required.

MPI further advised that during the same period, nine other similar bird mortality events were identified, including at wastewater treatment plants nationally. This broader pattern supports the conclusion that prevailing environmental and seasonal conditions were likely the primary drivers, rather than a site-specific or infectious issue.

Management Actions Implemented

The following operational controls were implemented:

- Daily monitoring of oxidation ponds, wetlands and reservoirs
- Daily removal of carcasses during operational hours
- Interim burial in a designated pit to manage hygiene and reduce secondary impacts
- Reinforcement of staff safety protocols (PPE, hygiene precautions, restricted edge access)
- Ongoing assessment of water condition, algal presence and wildlife impacts

Carcasses were managed in accordance with standard operational procedures for non-HPAI events. At no stage were carcasses left unmanaged beyond routine operational timeframes.

Current Status

Bird mortality appears to be declining, with fewer birds observed during recent monitoring. The situation remains confined to water-associated areas and continues to be monitored.

This update is provided for transparency and situational awareness. The matter does not constitute a consent compliance breach and is not associated with an exotic biosecurity incursion.

Figure 3: Overview of oxidation pond 2

4. RECOMMENDATION

That the Advisory Group:

1. **Receives** the report.

File Number: **507373**

Author: **Jeet Kiran, Waters Compliance and Monitoring Officer**

Attachments: **Nil**

Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Taratahi
CARTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

4.2 WASTEWATER OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

To update the advisory group on the operational matters at the wastewater treatment plant.

2. SIGNIFICANCE

The matters for decision in this report are not considered to be of significance under the Significance and Engagement Policy.

3. WWTP UPDATE

Flows through the plant have continued to be managed with average volumes over the past year. The bypass pump has been used on occasion to stop flooding of the inlet channel and equipment, but this has still meant that the inlet pumps have not kept up. This has resulted in higher channel levels leading to the flow meter is over-reading the inlet flows. This is shown in *Table 1* as the wide discrepancy between inlet and discharge flows.

Historically the annual volume has been about 800,000m³. A comparison of annual discharge flows in *Table 1* shows a wide variation, with the wet 2021-2023 years. A high level review would indicate the Lincoln Road renewal work, an area with a high water table has reduced volumes an estimated 18% compared to historic averages.

Annual period	Inflow volume (m³)	Total Discharge volume (m³)
2024-2025 total	2,448,209	656,144
2023-2024 total	2,035,753	774,493
2022-2023 total	5,341,543	1,501,916
2021-2022 total	2,751,241	1,410,740
2019-2021 total	1,476,107	982,208

Table 1 Table of Annual inlet and discharge (river and land) flows 2019-2025

4. UPDATES

4.1 WWTP Headworks Upgrade

One of our major projects for the current Long-Term Plan is the WWTP Headworks Upgrade project. The project's scope is to renew the inlet works over the next 18 months to improve the treated effluent before it feeds into the oxidation ponds.

Several components of the WWTP are still the same as when the plant was originally constructed in the 1970's and are at the end of their useful life.

Tender Award: The tender process has been completed. Three tenders were received for the design and build of this project and the tender was awarded to Seipp Construction. The contract has been signed, with a construction timeframe of 18 months. The first 6 months period will be spent on the design and procurement, after which construction will commence. Construction completion is therefore expected in July 2027.

Legend

IFS	Influent Flow Slitter
PS	Lift Pump Station
SFT	Salsnes Filter
GFC	Grit/FOG Channel
SCM	Scum Tank & Pumps
EPST	Existing Pr.Sed Tank

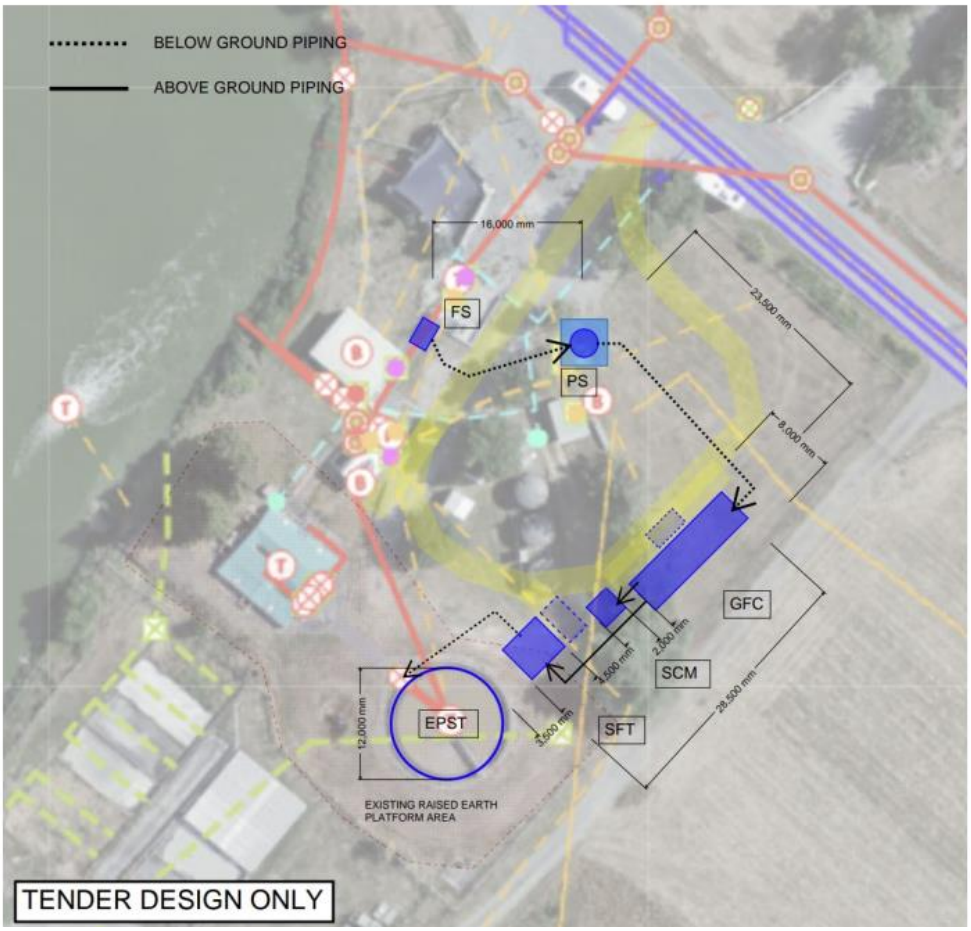

Figure 1 :Indicative Headworks Layout

4.2 Waste Water Treatment Plant: Sewage Sludge Composting Pilot Programme -Pond 3

The composting programme has now entered the verification stage. Samples have been taken to check for any signs of E.coli. Temperature readings throughout the period have been surprisingly high, which is good sign that the process would be successful. The heavy metals and other contaminant sampling will be undertaken in the next month which will inform if any further mulch is needed to get the levels below the limits for the A1 biosolids. A1, (Aa) biosolids are able to be applied to

land as a permitted activity under rule 70 of the Natural Resources Plan and as part of the new biosolids standards.

Once the results are known the overall costs, the long-term viability of composting sludge will be assessed.

Figure 2 : Composting process

Composting NZ Budget for Pilot Phase of Sewage Sludge Composting				PROGRAMME		Scheduled		In Progress		Completed		
	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Project establishment												
Site Set Up												
Establish plant												
Disestablish plant												
Stripping and preparing site												
Strip site												
Construct topsoil bund												
Construct mulch bunds												
Construction of access road												
fill potholes												
deliver lime												
shape road												
Construction of lime pad 40 x 40 for stockpiling												
Lime supply												
Lime placement												
Final shape and roll												
Construction of lime pad 40 x 40 for composting												
Lime supply												
Lime placement												
Final shape and roll												
Sludge Removal												
Stockpile mulch material												
Dewater Pond 1												
Extract Sludge												
Composting												
Form windrows		C1 & C2	C3-C6	C7								
Week 0 -initial temps		C1 & C2	C3-C5	C5-C8								
Sanitisation Phase (5 weeks)				C1-C5	C5-C7							
Stabilisation Phase				C1-3	C4-5	C1-5	C6-7	C6-7				
Maturation							C1-5	C6-7				
Blending if required												C1-7
Testing												
Collect samples for testing								Prelim/verif	verification	verification		
Send for testing								Prelim/verif	verification	verification		
Receive results								Prelim/verif	verification	verification		
Mass Balance anaylsis for blended material												C1-7
Reporting												
Week 1												
Week 2												
Week 3												
Week 4												
Monthly												
End of contract												

Figure 3 Composting Programme

4.3 *Matarawa Farm*

The Council has completed the purchase of the 89-hectare Matarawa farm. It is currently being leased and the Council is reviewing the best way to utilise the land, and work with neighbours. Neighbouring properties will be approached as part of early consent engagement, because any expansion of the land irrigation will require a resource consent.

4.4 Manuka trial

4 hectares of manuka seedlings were planted to compare the onsite growth with the laboratory results at ESR, both under and outside of the pivot area. A final report has been prepared by ESR and is being reviewed.

Initial reports were not encouraging, with a poor survival rate for the seedlings. The trial was not able to be maintained frequently enough by Council staff, and a contractor was organised to replace, maintain the plants in 2024. The reports identified the following issues:

- The weeds have taken over and overgrown many of the trees
- Some trees have been pushed over and almost smothered by the weeds with the result that it takes some time to find them and then untangle them from the weeds.
- A significant amount of trees have died due to:
    - Not being planted properly. Holes were augered with a 100mm auger and the plants dropped into the holes without proper backfilling.
    - Some plants were inserted without the root balls having been broken up.

Despite the failures it is hoped that ESR were able to get sufficient data from the lab and field site to draw some conclusions on the potential for the Manuka plants.

4.5 Nursery update

A nursery update from GWRC is in **Attachment 1.**

5. CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Climate change

The storage reservoirs continue to provide resilience storing water for beneficial reuse, or discharge when the river level are high.

5.2 Tāngata whenua

The Council will continue to work with Ngāti Kahukuraāwhitia through the memorandum of understanding with the nursery, as well as the working to increase the volumes discharged to land.

5.3 Financial impact

The projects are managed within the existing budgets.

5.4 Community Engagement requirements

The ongoing meeting and relationship with the advisory group will be the main community engagement avenue.

5.5 Risks

The transfer of the assets and on-going relationship with the new Wairarapa Tararua water entity will change. This is scheduled for full operation by July 2027.

5.6 Wellbeings

Cultural

Continue work with Ngāti Kahukuraāwhitia through the memorandum of understanding with the nursery, as well as the working to increase the volumes discharge to land.

Environmental

Increase of the volumes discharge to land.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That the Advisory Group:

1. **Receives** the report.

File Number: **507887**

Author: **Lawrence Stephenson, Group Manager Infrastructure**

Attachments: **1. GW Nursery Update ⇩**

Te Uru o Tāne Nursery– CDC WWTP Advisory Group Update Summary February 2026

The Te Uru o Tāne nursery continues to make progress, with major site establishment, irrigation infrastructure, and early planting phases now advancing. The project represents an innovative partnership between Greater Wellington, Ngāti Kahukuraāwhitia and Carterton District Council, and the team has continued to adapt as operational knowledge grows within this pioneering treated wastewater irrigated nursery.

Key Achievements

- Core site preparation including an internal access track have been completed.
- Full-site irrigation is now installed and operational across phases 1 and 2 planted areas, with staff trained in system programming and use.
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 stool bed plantings (around 6.5 ha) and shelterbelt establishment are progressing well.
- A comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for working safely with treated wastewater has been successfully implemented, ensuring safe and consistent operations.
- Monitoring programmes for soil, irrigation, and plant performance are now developed to support long-term site health and pole growth.

Recent Events

- The severe October 2025 storm caused damage to the windbreak and some onsite infrastructure. Insurance assessments have been completed, and reinstatement options are under review.
- Construction activities paused temporarily during this period.
- Concerns have been raised about the nursery's current use of treated wastewater (TWW), which may be lower than some stakeholders originally expected. This is understandable given that the nursery is still in its establishment phase and is the first of its kind to operate using TWW. Typically, pole nurseries require two to three rotations to reach stable, fully operational pole supply, and the introduction of TWW irrigation adds additional variables that may influence these timeframes.

  To support the production of high-quality poles, TWW irrigation volumes need to be carefully managed and balanced with:

  - the biological growth requirements of poplar and willow stools,
  - soil field capacity and long-term soil health, and
  - seasonal conditions, crop development stages, and the overall maturity of the nursery.

The monitoring programmes now in place provide an objective framework to guide these decisions and help ensure irrigation volumes remain aligned with both plant and soil health requirements.

Looking Ahead

Financial updates are now being prepared that will support decisions on staging, future development, and prioritisation of outstanding capital works (after the storm events). Including:

- Reviewing options for the completion of the compound facility (design and consents already in place) and artificial shelterbelt reinstatement.
- Remaining shelterbelt planting (approximately 1,200 trees).
- Phase 3 stool bed planting planned for Spring 2026 (approximately 16,000 cuttings).
- Updated modelling and planning work required to confirm long-term production needs.
- Future staged planting across the remaining site.
- Ongoing monitoring.

The project team remains committed to working closely with Carterton District Council and Ngāti Kahukuraāwhitia to deliver a resilient, modern nursery.

Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Taratahi
CARTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

4.3 LOCAL WATER DONE WELL UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

This report is an information update for the Council on the Wairarapa Tararua water establishment and transition programme.

2. SIGNIFICANCE

The matters for decision in this report are not considered to be of significance under the Significance and Engagement Policy.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first of a regular series of updates for the Council on the Wairarapa Tararua water establishment and transition programme. In 2026 Councils will receive quarterly updates on the programme until programme completion in June 2027. We will also provide further updates at major programme milestones (e.g. the appointment of Board members).

The establishment programme is proceeding in two major stages, with the first stage (legal establishment) well advanced and on track to be completed by the end of March 2026.

This report provides an update on activity in each of the programme's six workstreams.

4. BACKGROUND

Following the Government's approval of the four Councils' Water Service Delivery Plans (WSDPs) in October last year, the transition programme for Wairarapa Tararua water was established and an update on the programme was last provided to the Council as part of Council induction in December 2025.

We are now setting up regular updates for each Council over the course of the programme to ensure all elected members are kept up to date with progress.

There are two major stages to the establishment of the new company:

- **Stage 1 – legal establishment (September 2025 to March 2026):** This stage of the programme is focused on the establishment of company governance structures, preparation for Board member arrival and company incorporation. It will be complete in March 2026.
- **Stage 2 – operational transition (April 2026 to June 2027):** This stage of the programme is focused on detailed design and set up of the new organisation and transition of Council services, assets, debt, staff and operations prior to go live. It will be complete by 30 June 2027.

The Programme has been set up in six key workstreams to support delivery:

- Governance, regulatory and partnerships
- Organisation, people and change
- Finance and commercial
- Digital and systems
- Service delivery and operations
- Communications.

5. DISCUSSION

Stage 1 delivery progress

Delivery of Stage 1 of the programme is on track and will be completed by the end of March 2026.

The programme reached a major milestone prior to Christmas with the appointment of all members to the Stakeholders' Forum and the convening of the Forum for its first meeting. The Forum is a key part of the governance structure for the new water organisation and will fulfil a critical role as the committee responsible for the oversight of company performance. Table 1 below sets out the membership of the Forum.

The Forum is mid-way through the recruitment process for Board members with interviews of the confirmed shortlist taking place in the first half of February.

Table 1: Stakeholder Forum membership

Masterton	• Craig Bowyer (Chair) • Alternate Member to be appointed
Carterton	• Brian Deller • Rachel Round (Alternate)
South Wairarapa	• Fran Wilde • Rob Taylor (Alternate)
Tararua	• Scott Gilmore • Sharon Wards (Alternate)
Rangitāne	• Tipene Chrisp • Lorraine Stephenson (Alternate)
Ngāti Kahungunu	• Robin Potangaroa • Ray Hall (Alternate)

6. PROGRAMME WORKSTREAM UPDATES

Following is a summary of key progress updates in each workstream as at the end of January 2026.

Governance, Regulatory and Partnerships

- Stakeholder Forum member appointments have been completed by the four Councils and both iwi, and the Forum has been stood up. The Forum held its first meeting on 19 December where it elected its chair and determined the shortlist of candidates for Board interviews.
- Eleven candidates are in the process of being interviewed by the Forum. Across the group they bring the necessary skills for high-quality governance of the water organisation as well as good regional presence.
- Planning for company incorporation, and the Board's onboarding and induction is beginning and will remain a key focus over the remainder of the quarter.
- Following completion of the Board recruitment process, the Forum's focus will move to the development of the Statement of Expectations.

Organisation, People and Change

- Development of initial advice for the incoming Board on the company's organisational strategy and operating model is underway. These topics will form key parts of the induction programme for the Board who will need to make early decisions in these areas to keep the transition on track.

Finance and Commercial

- Development of initial advice for the Board on the company's financial strategy, revenue and pricing modelling and transition, and debt transfer is underway. These topics will form key parts of the induction programme for the Board who will need to make early decisions in these areas to keep the transition on track.

Digital and Systems

- The Programme Steering Group has taken a decision on a preferred approach to the digital transition which will be tested with the incoming Board prior to moving to implementation. The preferred approach combines some of reuse of existing Council systems, reconfiguration of new instances of existing Council systems, and going to market for new systems in some cases.
- We are currently completing procurement for external support to lead the digital transition.

Operations, Service Delivery and Risk

- This workstream is working closely with the organisational workstream to develop advice on service delivery models for the incoming Board.
- The workstream is also beginning substantive documentation and due diligence work on Councils' contracts, resource consents, assets, asset management approaches, capital programme, and operational processes and activities as the first step in the eventual development of the Councils' Transfer Agreements.

Communications

- Communications plans for each Council have been developed covering regular internal and external communications activities.

7. CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Climate change

There are no climate change considerations related to the decisions in this report.

7.2 Tāngata whenua

There are direct impacts on tāngata whenua related to the decisions in this report.

7.3 Financial impact

There are no financial impacts related to the decisions in this update report.

7.4 Community Engagement requirements

There are no community engagement considerations related to the decisions in this report.

7.5 Risks

The LWDW team are managing project risks with the Project Steering Group (Council CEO's) and more recently with the Wairarapa – Tararua Stakeholder Forum (Council EM's and Iwi reps). There are no direct risks related to the decisions in this update report.

8. RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1. **Receives** the report.

File Number: **508026**

Author: **Geoff Hamilton, Chief Executive**

Attachments: **Nil**

5 GENERAL BUSINESS

6 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA