

13 March 2026

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Kia ora ██████████

Official information Request: Solution to the Featherston Wastewater treatment plant (FWWTP).

I am writing to you in response to your request received 12 February 2026 for the following information relating to the Featherston Wastewater Treatment Plant (solutions). Additional questions were received during the Council meeting on 19 February and have been included in this response.

We have assessed your request under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). I have received information to provide the following response to the above questions:

1. Who prepared the C1278 Tender for SWDC? / Who prepared tender docs.	The Request for Proposal (RFP) was prepared in-house at SWDC by staff.
2. Under who's instruction was the tender produced and were all councillors involved and/or consulted?	This process was undertaken in-house by Council officers, overseen by the Group Manager, Infrastructure & Community Operations (acting). There was no direct consultation with councillors (refer question 3 below).
3. When was the recommendation for a GETS tender (or estimate) first agreed by Council.	The project was approved as part of the 2025-34 Long Term Plan which underwent extensive community consultation, as is required by law. This meant that after the LTP was adopted last year, the project was able to go to tender. The decision to award the tender (or not) is at the discretion of Council.
4. The instruction to proceed with the GETS processing in Nov 2025 and any accompanying promotion was made by - Full council?	Please see response to Q3 above. Proceeding with the tender process was an operational process and managed internally by staff.
5. Who reviewed the suitability of the	There were no pre-selection or individual approaches made to contractors in advance of the notification of the tender.

<p>potential contractors to be approached.</p>	<p>The tenders are lodged on the Government's GETS site and pre-tender notifications were also lodged on GETS so that contractors knew the work was in the pipeline. GETS is the regular source of information about such infrastructure tenders for the whole public sector throughout the country.</p>
<p>6. What Regional Council and Community, CLG or Iwi, approvals were obtained (to prepare the Tender). Have Iwi and CLG been consulted on the new Riparian Planting Program which must be completed in 15 months, before the DAF installation.</p>	<p>A full public consultation was delivered (by GWRC in collaboration with SWDC and WWL) as part of the legal process to apply for the consent. We summarise the process and provide key background documents on our website here: https://swdc.govt.nz/featherston-wastewater-treatment-plant-upgrade/</p> <p>Riparian planting was not included in the scope of the SWDC WWTP Upgrade advertised on GETS. Consultation on planning requirements formed part of the consenting process.</p> <p>Stage 1 - Riparian Planting</p> <p>The riparian planting must be completed within 15 months of the commencement of the consent and the Riparian Planting and Management Plan (RPMP) must be submitted to GWRC one month before planting commences.</p> <p>Key activities to deliver this condition include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement planning to deliver works – both planning and execution • Collaboration with iwi regarding the RPMP, • Iwi review of the RPMP (conditions allow 6 weeks review time) • Approval from GWRC Flood Protection • Submission of the RPMP for acceptance by GWRC
<p>7. How many quotations for the Tender preparation were sought - by whom at SWDC</p>	<p>Tender preparation was completed in-house by SWDC staff. No external consultants were involved in the tender preparation.</p>
<p>8. What has the tender process and preparation cost been this far.</p>	<p>The costs associated with the tender process has been kept to a minimum, as it has been managed in house. However, Council has engaged external support with a tender evaluation team in place.</p>
<p>9. Why were different solutions proposed and accepted for GTN & MBA but excluding Fstn which has a DAF consent. Have copies of the GTN & MBA</p>	<p>Every wastewater treatment plant has its own operational environment and associated environmental constraints. The FWWTP has its own consenting history, which meant that a practical approach towards positive and timely environmental outcomes was sought.</p>

<p>consents for an MBBR installation been made available to tendering contractors?</p>	<p>The Project will achieve crucial short-term environmental objectives (within a constrained budget, bearing in mind the district's significant affordability challenges) by delivering an immediate 'step change' in the quality of discharges into, and effects on, Donalds Creek. The project will also be laying the groundwork for a potential future sustainable, longer-term wastewater solution to land for the Featherston community.</p> <p>There are no requirements for a consent for the MBBR. The resource consents for Greytown and Martinborough set the conditions for treatment and disposal – the mechanism for doing that does not necessitate a specific consent.</p> <p>All relevant documentation concerning the Resource Consents for Greytown and Martinborough has been made available through the GETS tender portal.</p>
<p>10. The GETS Tender of Nov 17 to Dec 5th (Copy below) included irrigation fields and irrigation equipment. However this component was redacted in the Jan 13th 2026 document. why?</p>	<p>The scope of works related to irrigation was not finalised when the tender was issued. To ensure that the project proceeded as quickly as possible, this component was removed.</p>
<p>11. From 19 December 2025, under the new Taumata Arowai standards, consenting authorities cannot issue consents that conflict with the new standards unless specific exceptions apply. Why has SWDC proceed with the Oct 2025 FWWT Trial consent and a new GTN, MBA discharge to the river, not Land, via MBBR. Which does not meet the new standards. Knowing that in 10 years, a new Fstn consent will be required, which must comply with the new wastewater standards that now apply to any</p>	<p>The new National Wastewater standards are implemented through regional councils through resource consent conditions. The new standards became law on 19 December 2025 and the consent conditions for the Featherston WWTP were issued by the GWRC on 8 October 2025. These conditions are therefore based on the RMA.</p> <p>The new standards will not necessarily be able to be adopted in all circumstances and adoption will depend on how sensitive the local environment is.</p> <p>The existing Resource Management Act consenting process will continue to apply to areas that fall outside of the standards.</p> <p>The link below guides you to all of the necessary information processed by GWRC to enable the consent to be issued.</p> <p>Featherston Wastewater Treatment Plant Have Your Say Greater Wellington</p> <p>From 1 July 2027, the Wairarapa Tararura water entity will become responsible for considering the outcomes of the trial</p>

<p>new consents or renewing existing ones.</p>	<p>and will be responsible for the preparation of the consent required from 2035.</p> <p>The Wairarapa Tararua entity will consider the relevant technology to ensure the most suitable cost effective and environmentally suitable option at that time. This may or may not fall within the new standards.</p>
<p>12. There are however still solutions available for our community as provided by Taumata Arowai. Refer below Finance & Expenditure Committee report. Has SWDC considered or engaged with Taumata Arowai as a solution to the 10 year consenting problem?</p>	<p>Please refer question 11 (above)</p>
<p>13. Who recommended the MBBR and DAF mix, and why, acknowledging that Moa Point is a MBBA installation operated by WWLtd and Veolia, installed almost 30 years ago - old, inferior technology</p>	<p>South Wairarapa District Council is obligated to meet the requirements of resource consent conditions, to not do so would result in enforcement action. Appropriate monitoring and reporting against consent conditions is the mechanism to evaluate effectiveness of operations and expected environmental outcomes.</p> <p>Featherston Wastewater Treatment Plant Have Your Say Greater Wellington</p> <p>MBBR was selected for operational robustness and consistency with the other fixed film activated sludge process for better nitrogen removal while having lower sludge production than other activated sludge technologies.</p>
<p>14. Are you convinced that a MBBR will satisfy the MBA & GTN WWT issues? Yesterday I received this email from GW.... “Whether this new treatment process works as intended is an entirely different matter – something which SWDC will need to evaluate in due course.” This is a \$6-8 million TRIAL.</p>	<p>Council held a 2009 discharge consent for Featherston WWTP. In preparation for applying for a new consent Hodder Farm was purchased to continue the application of the strategy to move from disposal to water to disposal to land. The active consent (WAR970080) expired 25 August 2012 which meant the plant continued to operate under S124 of the RMA.</p> <p>A new consent application was submitted in 2017 but that was withdrawn in 2020, which left Council continuing to work under s124 of the RMA.</p> <p>Between 2020 and 2025 several options were considered and the cost of these ranged from \$30 to \$140m, which was an issue for the council given the constraints on budget and potential implications for the cost to customers.</p>

	<p>To better inform council on the most suitable disposal options for the FWWTP, a short-term 10-year consent duration was sought from GWRC in 2023. This would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide SWDC with sufficient time to implement the proposed upgrades. • Monitor the performance of the wastewater treatment plant upgrades and refine the treatment process in response to monitoring results. • Trial, monitor and refine the land application process prior to any future expansion of the area of land application. <p>Information obtained through environmental monitoring during this short-term consent will help inform the consent application for the longer-term wastewater solution for Featherston.</p> <p>Please refer question 13 (above)</p>
<p>15. Yesterday [18 Feb] the tender closing date was moved to 26th March. Why was that and what actions if any promoted the change of dates? Who approved that change and why..</p>	<p>Tenderers requested an extension of time to allow more time to prepare their submissions. This was approved by Council officers towards enabling comprehensive tender applications.</p>
<p>16. Election results were posted Oct 11th. The tender went live Nov 17th. 240 pages. Fast work. No wonder there are basic errors. Hodder farm is not on Longwood East)</p>	<p>This error is noted.</p>
<p>17. Taumata Arowai standards are in place, The FWWT consent does NOT comply. A NEW consent is required in 10 years. GW invoiced the council \$3.325 million for this latest consent hearing which not one single councilor attended over the three days. This figure does not include the costs of GHD,</p>	<p>Please refer to question 13 (above).</p>

lawyers, council staff etc.	
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Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. If this request is selected it will be published at <https://swdc.govt.nz/lgoima-proactive-release/>, with your personal information removed.

You have a right to request a review by the Ombudsman on this response. Further information about this process can be found on <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-make-complaint> or email info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Nāku noa, nā



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