

# **Masterton District Council**

## **Media Release – Wednesday March 5, 2008**

### **Consultation delayed while further option costed**

Another scheme option is to be costed and then included in the consultation process for the Riversdale Beach sewerage scheme, postponing public consultation for another three months.

As well as the two scheme types and four scheme locations already publicised, a new option similar to that proposed for implementation at Himatangi Beach, by the Manawatu District Council, will now be considered.

The call for this additional option came from the Riversdale Beach Sewerage Steering Group (RBSSG) on the eve of public consultation material being signed off by Masterton District Council and after members of the group requested, at short notice, another meeting with Council.

The RBSSG also questioned Council processes leading to the implementation of the proposed sewerage scheme. Council will arrange for a probity audit of the procurement processes and procedures used for the sewerage scheme.

RBSSG Chair Roddy McKenzie said the audit would be undertaken concurrently with the preparation of costings for the additional scheme option.

The outcome of this audit will be reported to Council and made public when it is complete.

“Having last minute delays of this nature is frustrating, but given the intensity of the call from the steering group to consider this alternative scheme, Council has agreed to postpone the consultation phase of the project by approximately three months to allow officers to have costings prepared and the audit undertaken”.

This audit is designed to give an assurance that Council has done and will continue to engage in good practice in regards to the Riversdale Beach Sewerage Scheme.

“During the process of selecting a preferred scheme for Riversdale Beach, Council has had an open mind and has taken advice from nationally and internationally recognised experts in the field of sewage treatment and disposal regarding the most appropriate treatment system for the community.

“This advice was to construct a pond-based scheme on the Tatham property to the south-west of the settlement. At their respective meetings in December 2007 the RBSSG and Council agreed with this advice and adopted a pond-based based scheme on the Tatham property as their preferred scheme option.”

At the December 2007 meeting with the RBSSG, Council stressed it would consider alternative tenders if contractors were able to demonstrate among other things that their tenders were:

- Able to meet the conditions of the Resource Management Act,
- Well engineered and cost effective,
- Not going to place the Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme subsidy at risk, and
- Able to provide verifiable whole of life costings.

At its most recent meeting, the steering group asked why Council had not entered into a preferred supplier agreement for the delivery of this project.

Chief Executive Officer Wes ten Hove said:

“Most of the services provided by external suppliers to the Masterton District Council for projects of a significant size are procured through an open tendering process. Open tendering allows competition between suppliers, and subject to stringent tender evaluation, generally provides Council and the community with best value for money. This approach has been adopted with Riversdale Beach where consultants have been engaged for a range of work. Such a process is proposed for the construction of the sewerage scheme.”

Once the costings have been completed for the alternative scheme type, a meeting will be held with the RBSSG to discuss the next steps.

Relevant reports and information relating to this project are in the public arena and can be downloaded on the Council website [www.mstn.govt.nz](http://www.mstn.govt.nz) (quick links/Riversdale sewerage scheme) or by contacting Council Special Projects Manager Ian Steer on (06) 370 6298.