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Water CCO back on agenda

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A proposal to form a water company to manage water and wastewater is back on the agenda.

At next Monday's Council meeting (December 5) Waikato District Council elected members will be asked to reaffirm the council's support for a ratepayer-owned council controlled organisation (CCO) to manage water and waste water on behalf of Waikato, Waipa District and Hamilton City Councils.

The proposal stems from an independent recommendation made to all three Councils in May 2015 which identified huge financial and non-financial benefits to ratepayers from forming a council-owned water company.

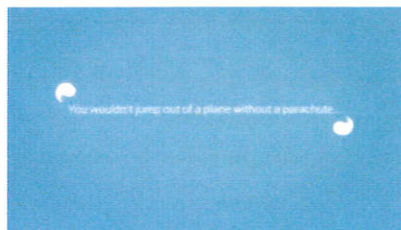
All three councils have already resolved to support forming an asset-owning CCO, subject to public consultation. This followed an agreement thrashed out between the councils before local government elections in October which covered a range of issues including representation, debt and shareholding arrangements. All three councils said they would revisit the agreement once new councils had been elected.

Waikato is first off the blocks on Monday and will consider a staff recommendation that council continue supporting an asset-owning CCO with the three councils as sole shareholders. The report notes a two-council CCO or non-asset owning CCO could also be considered but said both options would require significant additional analysis and would drive further costs and delays.

The report notes Hamilton City Council is expected to request a slight change to the existing agreement to make the city solely responsible for installing residential water meters, should they ever be needed in the city. Water meters are already largely in place, or are currently being installed, in both Waikato and Waipa districts.

Waikato's report recommends that, if a request is made by the city to change the existing agreement in relation to meters, Waikato District councillors support the change and continue supporting the asset-owning CCO proposal.

Waipa District Council and Hamilton City Council are also expected to reconsider their support for the CCO proposal within coming weeks.



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