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MEDIA RELEASE

Water company rejected

A single council-owned company to manage water, wastewater and stormwater services is off the table.

At today's meeting, Waipa District Council rejected a recommendation to form a non-asset owning company alongside Hamilton City Council.

Hamilton voted last week to support the formation of a waters company with itself and Waipa as founding shareholders. Waikato District Council, which has also been involved in discussions, has yet to indicate how it wants to manage its waters business going forward. It is unlikely to make a decision until early 2018.

Last week Hamilton cited the financial efficiencies offered to each Council compared with the status quo; the regional benefits to be gained from closer collaboration and the non-financial benefits including the ability to attract and retain expert staff as reasons to form a company.

Today Waipa's elected members rejected those arguments, 7-6. Those who voted against the recommendation to form a company were Councillors Hazel Barnes, Vern Wilson, Grahame Webber, Clare St Pierre, Sue Milner, Judy Bannon and Elwyn Andree-Wilson. Those in favour were Mayor Jim Mylchreest, Bruce Thomas, Liz Stolwyk, Susan O'Regan, Marcus Gower, Andrew Brown.

Mylchreest said he was disappointed at the outcome of today's Council meeting but respected the process and the vote. He said it was a "very difficult and technically, a very complex decision".

"Time will tell whether today's vote was the right way to go. Personally, I don't think so. But, the decision has now been made and as elected members our job is to wholly support our staff in getting on and delivering the best possible water services we can with the resources we have," he said.

"That's exactly what we'll be doing. Waipa has a huge capital works programme proposed over the next decade and that needs to be our focus."