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MEDIA RELEASE

Cambridge wastewater plant for upgrade

Waipa District Council has begun a five-year programme to upgrade the Cambridge wastewater treatment plant.

Council's manager, water services Bob Shaw, said the plant requires a major upgrade before its existing resource consents expire in 2016. It was important to begin the process now.

"We will be seeking resource consents from Environment Waikato to cover the operation of the plant for the next 35 years so it is appropriate that we start now to make sure we get it right," he said. "Our aim is to secure the discharge consents within the next year."

The upgraded plant will be designed to accommodate Cambridge's project growth over the next 35 years. Cambridge's population is expected to grow by 75 per cent over that time with the town's population expected to be around 24,000 people.

The plant will also need to meet discharge standards that are acceptable under the proposed co-management regime for the Waikato River. Council will be seeking strong input from Waikato-Tainui and tangata whenua throughout the process to ensure its approach is consistent with the agreed vision and strategy for the river.

The Council plans to lodge its resource consent applications with Environment Waikato early next year. It plans to use what is known as a 'black box' approach to apply for its consents. This means it will assess the various design and cost options once the consents have been approved and their conditions are known.

"This will give us the opportunity to assess various design, operational and cost options to meet the conditions of the consents over the period," Mr Shaw said. "It means council will be able to make the best environmental, financial and engineering decisions on behalf of the community and stakeholder groups."

A project advisory group for the project has been formed to represent the interests of key community groups. The advisory group is made up of two Waipa District councillors, two Cambridge community board members, five iwi representatives and a Hamilton City Council representative. The group's role is to provide high-level oversight of the project and to make recommendations to Council for its consideration. Formal community consultation about the project will begin later this year.

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