

Minutes of a hearing of submissions on the Proposed QLDC Trade Waste Bylaw 2014 held in the Board Room, 74 Shotover Street, Queenstown on Thursday 23 April 2015 commencing at 1.00pm

Present:

Mayor Vanessa van Uden; Councillor Lyal Cocks (via teleconference) and Councillor Alexa Forbes

In attendance:

Mr Ulrich Glasner (Chief Engineer) and Ms Jane Robertson (Governance Advisor)

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

It was noted that Councillor MacLeod had withdrawn from the hearings panel owing to a conflict of interest, as a submission had been lodged by his business.

Commencement of the hearing

The Governance Advisor called the meeting to order and ask the elected members to determine the Chairperson for the hearing.

On the motion of Councillors Forbes and Cocks it was resolved that Mayor Vanessa van Uden chair the hearing.

The Mayor took the chair.

Hearing of submissions

1. Mr Aaron Parkhill (Septic Tank Services)

Mr Parkhill joined the meeting via teleconference from the Wanaka Council office.

Mr Parkhill stated that his company serviced most of the grease traps in Wanaka. He believed that the build-up to date was generally acceptable but many units were small and with businesses getting busier, the current grease traps may not ultimately be adequate. He did not believe that the bylaw would address issues with inadequate size of the grease trap units. Overall however, he believed that most establishments had a regime of cleaning their grease traps regularly because they did not want to have any problems with them.

Mr Parkhill questioned the process for FOG testing as the sample location and how recently the unit had been cleaned would both impact on the result. He also asked what the standard was based on. He believed that a better way forward was to educate establishments about best practice and instead focus initially on those areas where there were already problems in the pipes. He added that sampling points were sometimes not easy to access and clarification/agreement would have to be reached with property owners about the best location. He also observed that some operators used a large amount of hot water to address grease and suggested that consideration could be given in such cases to installing a water meter.

Mr Parkhill believed that establishments would be wary of additional costs that could come with registering and monitoring grease traps under the bylaw but acknowledged that such an approach was better than the cost of addressing blocked pipes.

2. Mr Simon Spark

Mr Spark advised that his company S J Allan serviced 98% of the grease traps in Queenstown and although he supported the bylaw, he struggled with its complexity. He believed that grease traps were only part of the problem with cess pits and heavier industrial areas also contributing, but in his view the key issue was that under-sized grease traps were being sold with the pitch that they were a 'one size fits all' solution and seldom needed to be cleaned out.

Mr Spark observed that there was a high concentration of food outlets in a small area in central Queenstown and questioned the practicality of the proposed testing regime. By way of example he noted that testing to the nearest man hole would be ineffective as there could be as many as seven establishments feeding into this and it would be impossible to identify the culprit.

There was further discussion about how the Council would be able to determine if introduction of the bylaw was making a difference. It was noted that the pipes where there had been problems in the past would be the first target for regular inspections and these would reveal where improvements were being made. Additional staff would be recruited to assist in implementation of the bylaw.

There was also discussion about the alternatives to using a grease trap and ways of supplementing a grease trap's performance. It was noted that there were often limitations with retrofit buildings where plumbing was already in place but it was important to ensure that the grease trap was not plumbed in the same pipe as the dishwasher.

The meeting adjourned at 1.40 pm and reconvened for deliberations on 20 May 2015 with Councillor Alexa Forbes present.

Deliberations

Ulrich advised that the Medical Officer of Health had contacted him about the bylaw and had indicated that all its provisions were acceptable. Ulrich then described the process of communicating with customers that would occur as part of the bylaw's implementation which would include education and development of a customer database. As part of this process he also intended to undertake a review of the back flow prevention system.

There was discussion about the resources which would be procured for the first year of implementation of the bylaw and the need for additional staffing resource in the longer term.

It was agreed that none of the matters raised in submissions required any amendment to the draft Bylaw and it was therefore appropriate to recommend to Council that the QLDC Trade Waste Bylaw 2014 be adopted without amendment.

As the remaining members of the hearings panel (Mayor van Uden and Councillor Cocks) were not present at the final deliberations it was agreed to obtain their agreement to the proposed way forward by way of email.

The meeting concluded at 10.18am.

Following the meeting the Governance Advisor contacted the Mayor and Councillor Cocks to ascertain if they agreed that the panel should recommend to Council that the Trade Waste Bylaw 2014 be adopted without amendment.

The Mayor confirmed on 22 May that she supported this course of action; Councillor Cocks agreed to the proposed recommendation on 27 May and these responses were passed to the Chief Engineer.

The recommendations of the hearings panel will be forwarded to the Minister of Health to view and a final report recommending the adoption of Trade Waste Bylaw 2014 will be presented to the ordinary Council meeting to be held on 30 July 2015