

1 July 2022

Dr Ashley Bloomfield  
**Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Hauora**  
**Director-General of Health**  
[fluoride@health.govt.nz](mailto:fluoride@health.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Dr Bloomfield,

### **Community water fluoridation next steps**

Thank you for your letter, dated 3 May 2022, in which you invited Horowhenua District Council (Council) to provide further comment on the costs and timeframes to implement a fluoride dosing system for Levin's water supply.

Council held a workshop on Wednesday 29 June 2022 to discuss and clarify the broader public health outcomes of fluoridation, leading to our response to your letter. We would like to thank Riana Clarke, your National Clinical Director for Oral Health, for her presentation. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss the benefits and community health outcomes with your chief dental expert.

Our previous advice on the costs and timeframes for the Levin water supply, dated 15 December 2021 remains largely unchanged. With regard to the two questions posed:

- a) *the estimated financial cost of adding fluoride to the drinking water, including any additional costs of ongoing management and monitoring*

We have carried out some preliminary investigations into the addition of a fluoride dosing system into our water treatment plant, including advice from specialist suppliers. The plant itself will require some modifications alongside the design, supply, installation and commissioning of the new dosing system. At the time of writing, and based on current market conditions, the estimated capital cost of adding fluoride to Levin's water supply will be circa \$1,000,000.

The high-level breakdown would be:

- \$500,000 for the mechanical and chemical engineering systems
- \$250,000 for the civil engineering modifications to the plant
- \$250,000 for project management, design, compliance, commissioning and contingency

We estimate the ongoing (business and usual) operational costs would be circa \$40,000 per annum.

Furthermore, our asset management plan would also need to include planned renewals, inventory of spares and reactive maintenance budgets per annum. Quantification of those costs is reliant on the system we select and the various warranties, guarantees and depreciation cycles for the specialist equipment.

We will of course work alongside the Ministry to detail and confirm the scope and budgets once the Director General of Health has outlined the direction.

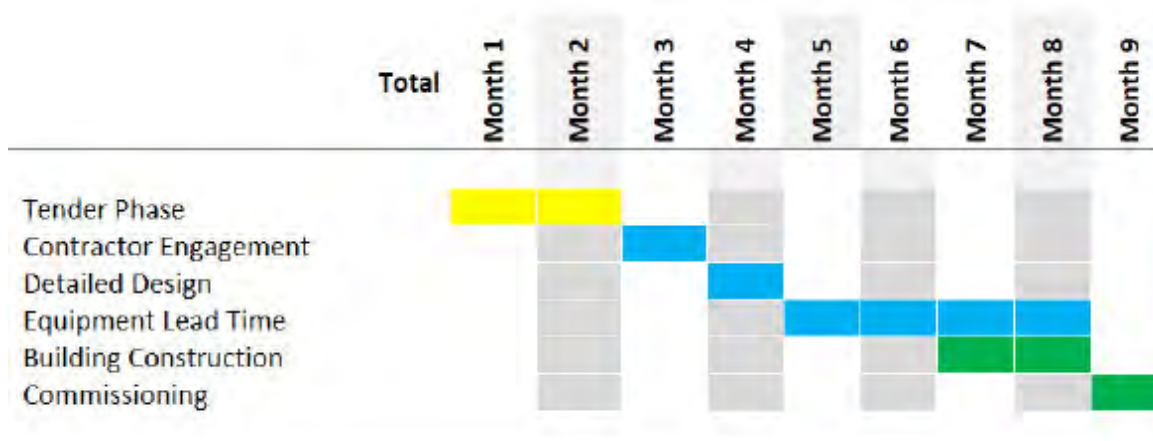
Council will require funding assistance from the Ministry. You will be aware that Council had not anticipated this as part of our Long Term Plan of Annual Plan processes and does not have any dedicated funding set aside for the additional capital and operational costs. Our team will work alongside the Ministry to determine a mutually agreeable funding model going forward.

b) *the date by which your local authority would be able to comply with a direction.*

At the time of writing and based on market advice, we have conservatively estimated up to nine (9) months to design, install and commission a fluoride dosing system for Levin. Noting the timeframe can be reduced depending on the procurement method and lead times to secure the specialist equipment.

Procurement would commence immediately upon receipt of a direction from the Director General of Health. It is conceivable we could begin dosing fluoride in 2022.

We have outlined a simple critical path programme below.



I wish to reiterate Council's concern about the ad hoc way in which we introduce this treatment into our community means we could lose out on bundling and procuring work across our 5 treatment plants, rather than just the one treatment plant you have identified. With the impending Three Waters Reform Programme we are concerned about the compounding impact of adding in infrastructure, that we do not have allocated budgets for. We also seek clarity on the implications of this direction with our current Water Safety Plan obligations.

We trust this further information provides the necessary confirmation and commitment you were looking for from Council. Please do not hesitate to make contact should you have any further questions. We look forward to working with you to implement this important initiative for our community.

Ngā mihi,

Monique Davidson  
**Chief Executive**