

14 October 2025

Minister of Infrastructure  
C/o Ministry for the Environment  
PO Box 103622  
Wellington 6143

Dear Minister

### **Letter of Endorsement – Referral Application under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024**

Waikato District Council (Council) acknowledges the referral application lodged by Pokeno Development Limited (PDL) for the establishment of a Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) Wastewater Treatment Plant in Pokeno, under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024 (Pokeno Housing and Tourism Project).

#### **Regional and Local Growth Context**

Pokeno is the fastest growing town in the northern Waikato Region, consistently delivering approximately 200 new dwellings per year, and is a strategic industrial node. Significant work has been undertaken by Council through its District Plan review and Variation 3 (Medium Density Residential Standards) to ensure that 30 years of residential and employment growth can be accommodated in Pokeno. This planned growth is consistent with Council's statutory obligations under the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD).

Growth in Pokeno is recognised and reinforced through the sub-regional future development strategy 'Future Proof', the district growth and economic development strategy 'Waikato 2070', the RPS, and the District Plan as regionally significant. Pokeno is a strategic location in the region where a well-functioning urban environment is to be delivered.

#### **PDL Landholdings and Growth Capacity**

PDL, through its subsidiary companies, owns significant land holdings in Pokeno. These are already zoned and capable of accommodating approximately 2,250 houses, in addition to employment opportunities enabled by the Tata Valley Zone, Industrial Zones, and Local Centre Zone (all part of the Pokeno Housing and Tourism Project). The majority of planned growth in Pokeno is directly associated with PDL's landholdings.

#### **Infrastructure Constraints and Need for the Proposal**

At present, wastewater infrastructure in Pokeno is subject to significant constraints. From February 2025, Council issued letters to landowners confirming that no further wastewater connections could be made due to capacity limits. This is due to a lack of both hydraulic capacity within the network (by the physical

infrastructure connecting Pokeno to Tuakau) and contracted processing capacity at the Pukekohe Wastewater Treatment Plant (PWWTP). PWWTP is owned and operated by Watercare, who are owned by Auckland City. This situation represents a critical barrier to enabling the planned and regionally significant growth of Pokeno.

PDL's proposed MBR Wastewater Treatment Plant is understood to be designed with a minimum capacity to service 5,000 household unit equivalents (HUE's). This provides for PDL's landholdings, while allowing for potential expansion to meet wider growth needs. Unlocking this infrastructure constraint is considered a regionally significant opportunity to realise the strategic housing and economic development aspirations for Pokeno as part of the wider Waikato Region.

### **Strategic Importance and Council Position**

Council acknowledges that consenting the MBR as the first stage of the proposal is a critical step. The project is considered to be of strategic importance, addressing multiple demand drivers and supporting the long-term economic development of the region.

Council confirms its support in principle for the use of the fast-track consenting process as an appropriate mechanism to advance this proposal. This support is conditional on a robust process and full assessment of the Substantive application, and in no way fetters Council's regulatory responsibilities under relevant legislation.

### **Partnership and Next Steps**

Council looks forward to providing formal comments on the specifics of the proposal following the Minister's consideration of the referral request. We also welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the applicant and central government agencies on the shape and form of a potential Substantive application and other approvals.

Yours sincerely,



**Craig Hobbs**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Waikato District Council**