1. Why Now?

The National Policy for Freshwater Management 2014 requires overall water quality to be maintained or improved. The Otago Regional Council is responsible for water quality, and is now looking at urban water discharges. This will include septic tanks. The cumulative effects of discharges from septic tanks can be as damaging as discharges from agricultural activities.

As the population grows and the density and number of septic tank systems increases, the cumulative discharge from septic tanks into the ground increases the threat to nearby groundwater and surface waters. Clyde has the highest density of septic tanks within the Otago Region. This poses a health risk.

There is anecdotal evidence of sewage odours from the commercial area, particularly during peak summer tourist periods.

Further subdivision growth in and around Clyde is not currently possible due to the lack of wastewater infrastructure. Installation of a public wastewater collection system removes the wastewater barrier to further subdivision in Clyde.

2. Is a standalone wastewater treatment plant for Clyde an option?

This has been investigated and found to be less affordable than transporting the wastewater to the Alexandra Wastewater Treatment Plant. The discharge from a treatment plant in Clyde is not able to go directly to the river and would need to be applied to land. This means that treated wastewater will drain down and still end up in groundwater, which is closer to domestic drinking water bores.

3. Are there any subsidies from tourism and regional development funds?

Council is investigating the availability of subsidies. We will actively pursue any options available for Government funding.

4. Why can’t I just upgrade or clean my septic tank more frequently?

Upgrading of your septic tank does not change the flow path of the wastewater. This means that nutrients, oils, chemicals and solvents can still end up in groundwater. Upgrading of the septic tank is expensive, it can still be difficult to remove nutrients, and requires ongoing monitoring and maintenance. Desludging the septic tank removes solids but does not significantly change the wastewater character in terms of nutrients or pathogens.
5. **When do I have to connect?**

This is part of the consultation process, Council's proposed option is a staged construction. In the staged construction, properties will be connected during construction of the reticulation for each stage.

6. **How has the timing of the stages been determined?**

Stage 1 includes the oldest septic tanks, the area with the greatest density of septic tanks, the commercial area, hospital and the septic tanks that are closest to the river. This stage has been timed to occur as soon as possible, and to coincide with construction of the water pipeline between Alexandra and Clyde. This means the wastewater and water pipes can be laid at the same time.

The Alexandra wastewater treatment plant needs to be upgraded before 2036 to improve the quality of discharge. The timing of stage 2 has been set to tie in with this upgrade, and to meet growth requirements.

Stage 3 has been set at 25 years to provide a suitable useful life for the new septic tanks that have recently been installed.

7. **Might the timing change?**

The timing for stage 1 is unlikely to change. The timing of stage 2 may need to occur earlier if population growth in Alexandra and Clyde exceeds our projections. The timing of stage 3 will be reviewed during public consultation on future Council Long Term Plans.

8. **Will everyone inside a stage be connected at the same time?**

Properties will likely be connected as the pipe network is completed in each street.

9. **Are the proposed boundaries for each stage fixed or will these change?**

The properties within each stage will be refined further through the detailed design process. The current stage boundaries are not expected to change significantly.

10. **What happens to my septic tank?**

The septic tanks will be disconnected from your house, the tank will be emptied, disinfected and the area made safe.

Depending on the location and type of tank used, the tank will either be removed or punctured and filled in.

11. **Will Council connect right through to my house or will I have to connect to the sewer at my boundary?**

Council will connect to the most appropriate point within your property. This will likely be just before the pipe from your house goes into your existing septic tank.
12. How will my section be serviced if it cannot drain directly to a sewer in a road?

These issues will be addressed through the detailed design process. In some circumstances, there may be a requirement for easements if the Council pipes need to pass through private property.

13. When will I need to start paying full district wastewater rates?

Connected properties will be rated for the full district wastewater rate from the 1 July after they are connected. This means a property that might be connected in September would not be charged the full district wastewater rate until the following July.

14. Has this kind of project been done before?

Yes, this type of project and similar wastewater upgrades have been completed by many councils in New Zealand. Some examples include Kerikeri (Far North District Council), Ongare Point (Western Bay Of Plenty District Council), Mangawhai (Kaipara District Council), Mahia Beach (Wairoa District Council), Akaroa and Halswell (Christchurch City Council), Waitakaruru (Hauraki District Council), Oakura (New Plymouth District Council) just to name a few.

Also Darfield and Kirwee in Canterbury, Rotoma and Rotoiti in Rotorua Lakes District, Matata in Whakatane District and Kerikeri in the Far North District have plans to collect and treat wastewater.