Auckland Council waste assessment overview

(Produced under the auspices of the ATA)

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Auckland Council
Te Kaunihera o Tamaki Makaurau

Auckland's chance to make a real difference

Background

The creation of Auckland Council on 1 November 2010 provides the opportunity for the new city to review the dilemma of fragmented and inconsistent waste management policies and practices that have been inherited from the former councils and then plan for the outcomes that will be most beneficial to Auckland.

The Auckland Council, like every other city and district council, is required by the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 to adopt a new Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) by mid-2012. However, the Auckland Council has a requirement under the Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act 2010, Section 84(3) that: '**Not later than 1 May 2011, the Auckland Council must consider and decide on proposals** prepared for achieving long-term integrated waste management and minimisation planning and services, including proposals for managing waste contracts, leases and other arrangements in relation to waste.'

This in effect will set the strategic direction for Auckland's WMMP.

With the establishment of a single unitary authority, there is an opportunity to put in place a single WMMP covering the whole region that will encourage the recycling and re-use of more materials in the waste stream, minimise the amount of material ending up in landfill sites, reduce harm to the environment from waste, and increase resource efficiency.

Auckland Council has inherited its current waste management and minimisation plan – an amalgam of the existing waste management plans and practices of the seven former territorial authorities in the region – as provided for in the Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act 2010. Based on these seven waste plans, different practices and systems are operating in different parts of the city, with different levels of contractor engagement, different methods of charging households and businesses, and different methods of sorting, recycling and re-using waste materials.

Nevertheless, the inherited plans and practices are operative until the Auckland Council adopts a new WMMP. The new WMMP must conform to the objectives and requirements laid down in the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and have regard to the New Zealand Waste Strategy 2010. As a result, the plan requires the council to take actions that will minimise waste going to landfill, ensure public health and safety, encourage resource efficiency, and reduce the harmful effects of waste on the environment. The harmful effects on the environment and human health can include a range of effects from the emission of greenhouse gases (from the decomposition of organic material in landfills) to the safe manner of waste collection operations.

The common objective underpinning the former councils' waste management plans is:

- A policy of minimising community waste, reducing the volume of waste going to landfill and working towards a zero waste concept. **It should be noted that the targets committed to by the seven former councils averaged a 65% reduction in the whole of the waste stream from landfill.** These targets are not achievable without significant action.

All of the former councils planned to meet this objective by implementing initiatives such as:

- organic waste collection and processing
- a resource recovery centre network
- improved recycling services
- advocacy for initiatives such as Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) and product stewardship schemes
- diversion of construction and demolition waste
- programmes for minimising and diverting business waste
- behaviour change programmes
- hazardous waste management.

However the current practices to achieve this objective have been confined to:

- encouraging sorting of waste, re-use and kerbside recycling by householders
- providing a weekly basic waste collection, whether by the council or private contractor
- various inorganic and hazardous waste collections
- providing services on a "polluter pays" basis rather than all costs for services being included in the rates. Five of the seven former councils provided "polluter pays" services
- waste education initiatives for schools, community and businesses
- a single council-controlled resource recovery centre in the region.

Although best endeavours have been made, Auckland's current fragmented performance does not even come close to meeting the intent of the Waste Minimisation Act of 2008 or the objectives of the former councils' waste management plans. Whilst these inherited objectives included the entire waste stream to landfill, in practice the plans could only focus on the relatively small proportion which councils collected from residential properties.

This is principally because, in the last 20 years, local government in the Auckland region has surrendered ownership and control over most refuse transfer stations and landfills, and now owns or controls little of the infrastructure needed to meet its objectives. Accordingly, the Auckland Council now, unlike many other cities in New Zealand, has little control or influence over most day-to-day decisions on the handling of the entire waste stream to landfill. This control is largely held by the privately-owned waste industry which is not currently bound by the obligations of the Waste Minimisation Act.

Prior to the 1990s, the councils' involvement in owning and operating the waste industry infrastructure was based on the need to protect public health from the negative effects of poor waste management practices. The need for council involvement lessened as waste management standards were raised, and as landfill engineering and operation became a far more specialised and capital-intensive activity. Councils in the Auckland region withdrew almost entirely from infrastructure ownership.

In recent years, however – as the focus of waste management shifted from public health to sustainability issues – this lack of infrastructure involvement has prevented councils in the Auckland region from effectively meeting their new waste management objectives. The establishment of the new Auckland Council and the drafting of a new WMMP provide an opportunity for local government to once again take a more influential role in waste management in the region.

How Auckland's waste management systems perform now

When it comes to reducing waste to landfill, Auckland as the economic powerhouse of New Zealand, underperforms compared with many other major cities in New Zealand – although the domestic sector is as committed to recycling as the rest of the country. The economic influence was observed as waste volumes dropped when the economy worsened.

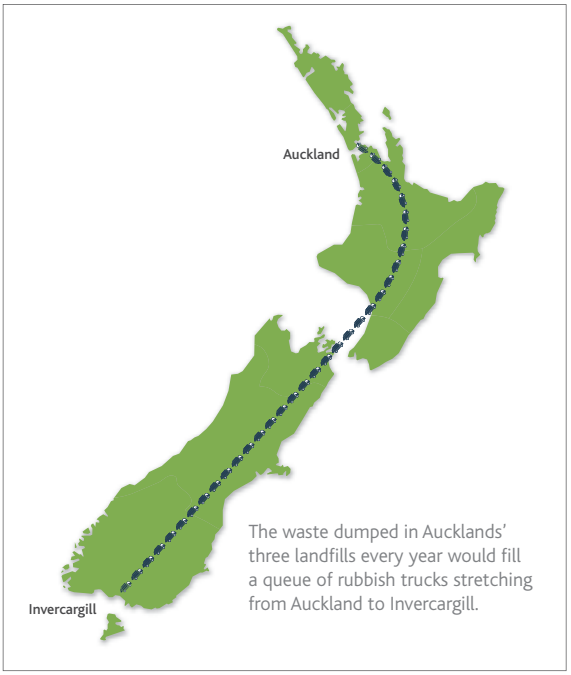
If, as a theoretical construct, one combined all the domestic and industrial commercial waste volumes and averaged that volume on a per capita basis, Aucklanders would generate almost a tonne of waste per head every year. As the majority of waste comes from the industrial commercial sector this is an artificial construct but it simply demonstrates the quantum of waste arriving to landfill.

The total volume of waste is growing. Auckland's predicted growth will put more pressure on the four available landfill sites, which are already partly filled and have limited life-spans. Establishing new landfills is a very expensive process, thus making the best use of existing sites is sensible and cost efficient.

Aside from the council's kerbside collections, most of Auckland's waste operations are carried out by private waste companies who are also the major landfill owners. Unfortunately, as a result, about half of Auckland's waste goes to landfill sites without ever being processed for re-use or recycling.

According to the 'Auckland Waste Stocktake and Strategic Assessment – Auckland Regional Council Technical Report No.107 October 2009', Auckland currently disposes of an estimated 1.4 million tonnes of waste a year, mostly in three landfill sites: Redvale in the north, Whitford in the south east and Hampton Downs to the south of the Auckland region.

If all this waste was placed in waste trucks they would be queued end-to-end from Auckland to Invercargill.



The waste dumped in Aucklands' three landfills every year would fill a queue of rubbish trucks stretching from Auckland to Invercargill.

Building on the theoretical construct described previously, if total volumes of domestic and industrial/commercial waste were averaged per capita across Auckland, this would represent a tonne of waste per head of population every year – about 20% more than the national average. This quantity is increasing every year. With Auckland's population predicted to increase to more than two million by 2031, and with all the ensuing extra resource use (houses, technology, infrastructure etc), the demand for waste collection and disposal will continue to grow and the waste mountain will continue to increase. Whilst the increases are an accepted reflection of Auckland's GDP, Auckland can be in a position to make major strides in recycling and re-use opportunities. However if present levels of waste generation continue until 2031, the two million tonnes sent to landfill could then stretch from Cape Reinga to Bluff! And this does not take into account any future increases in per capita waste generation due to short lifecycle products and our rapid move towards being a highly disposable society.

The former councils' waste management plans were adopted under the Local Government Act 2002. Under that Act, each council's role was to provide effective and efficient waste management in its district. However, the introduction of the Waste Management Act in 2008 has placed specific responsibility on councils to minimise the waste in the Territorial Authority's district, rather than just focusing on the residential waste stream to landfill. Auckland Council's new WMMP must take into account this new, much greater, responsibility.

Household waste

Unlike the past, when local government owned all of the region's landfills, council's current role is fairly confined to residential waste collections. Aucklanders currently put their household waste on the kerbside for collection. From there, it is either taken directly to landfill or to one of eight of the 17 transfer stations in Auckland.

A quantity of household waste is collected and transported inefficiently because of commercial competition and commercial arrangements on the part of waste collectors and transfer station owners. This inefficiency results in additional traffic congestion and poor use of resources. Major transfer stations like those in Constellation Drive, Pikes Point, Wiri and East Tamaki are situated in highly-populated areas but take no council-collected waste from their surrounding areas. This represents a very inefficient use of the transfer station and roading networks.

(This issue will be subject to analysis by an independent consultancy firm to determine the scale and quantum of the inefficiencies.)

Devonport transfer station

Case study

An extreme example of the inefficient transport of household waste is waste that is collected in Devonport. Trucks carrying this waste, bypass three refuse transfer stations prior to disposal in Redvale landfill in Dairy Flat – a round trip of 56 kilometres. On each trip, the trucks are twice negotiating the congested Lake Road in Belmont.

Commercial and industrial waste

A majority of waste material that ends up in landfill is generated by commercial activity and industry in the region. It is estimated that about 85% of landfilled waste comes from these sources. From the customer's bin to the landfill, this waste stream is controlled almost entirely by private waste companies rather than the council.

Of the four landfills that serve the Auckland region, Auckland Council owns only a part share of the smallest major landfill (Whitford) and the tiny Claris Landfill on Great Barrier Island. Of the 17 refuse transfer stations in the region, the council owns three minor and one major facility. As a result of this lack of control, the council has little influence over most of the commercial and industrial waste in the region.

The bulk of Auckland's landfill facilities, transfer stations and specialist waste vehicles are owned by two competing privately-owned companies: Transpacific Industries Group (NZ) Ltd and EnviroWaste Services Ltd. Whilst having various contracts with the council for the collection and handling of household waste; these two companies also control nearly the entire commercial and industrial waste stream. There are a number of other small commercial collectors that also contract with industry to collect waste and dispose of it in the privately-owned landfills.

Unfortunately, the commercial objectives of the private waste companies that manage the collection and disposal of commercial and industrial waste are not aligned with neither the council's objective nor that of the WMA, which is to recycle and re-use as much of the waste stream as possible.

While private refuse transfer operators earn a minor fraction of their income from recycling and re-using waste, industrial and commercial waste is only recovered when it is considered by the operators to be economically feasible. They earn most of their income from charges for the collection and disposal of waste that are based on **volume**, where ironically, business customers with the greatest volume of waste generally pay the lowest rate per tonne. Landfill site owners, who have large amounts of capital invested in an asset with a limited life-span, naturally want to maximise the volumes of waste being disposed of to landfill and earn their rewards from the disposal fees they charge. Again, this is in direct conflict with the objectives of the WMA.

Accordingly, most commercial and industrial waste goes directly from where it is collected straight to a landfill without any sorting or material recovery. By way of example there is clear guidance through successive national waste strategies and central government to remove organic waste from landfills yet major landfill owners not only promote continuance of organic waste to landfill, they depend on it .

Less than half of all commercial and industrial waste will be taken to a transfer station before being landfilled, even though the main objective of doing so is to compact the waste and aggregate bulk loads for more efficient transport. The landfill-owning private waste operators do not find it economically viable to sort all commercial and industrial waste at a transfer station in order to recycle and re-use resources before the residual waste goes to a landfill.

With two major competitors each owning their own transfer stations, and approximately 250 private waste collection and disposal companies operating across the region, it is estimated there are up to a million waste-related truck movements a year throughout the Auckland region. Preliminary analysis indicates that this could be reduced if operators were able to take their waste to the most conveniently-located transfer stations, rather than being bound by the landfill operators highly-competitive 'loyalty agreements' currently in place. This efficiency gain would result in reducing road congestion and danger, decreasing heavy vehicle wear on roads, reducing air pollution, using energy more efficiently, and resulting in as yet unquantified but real benefits gained in reducing the harmful effects of unnecessary vehicle movements on the environment.

While the commercial waste sector provides an essential service to industry and commerce, with minimal council involvement, the current outcomes are directly contrary to the objectives of the council's waste management and minimisation plan. The existing situation also conflicts with the council's responsibility under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (which relates to the entire waste stream in the Territorial Authority's district), to promote effective and efficient waste management and minimisation, especially in the three key areas of recycling, re-using resources and minimising waste volumes going to landfill.

Since the commercial and industrial sector produces 85% of material going to landfill, changing the manner in which this waste stream is currently managed is an obvious opportunity to assist the council in achieving the objectives of its current and future waste management and minimisation plans.

Cost

Solid waste is a big ticket item for the council. In the current year, the council will spend about $85 million on all aspects of waste management, including household services. The council recovers just over $20 million per year via direct or indirect charges, leaving a shortfall of just over $65 million to be financed from the general rates.

The Auckland Council now has an exciting opportunity to reform the way in which commercial and industrial waste is handled. This reform, along with a range of other measures, could turn the council's role in waste collection and disposal into a sustainable and cost-effective operation, removing current costs from the council's budgets.

The opportunity now exists to produce an efficient waste management system that meets the needs of the region while being in accordance with the council's objectives and the legislative requirements, and improves the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of the region.

Dilemma and opportunity

The creation of the new city on 1 November 2010 provides the opportunity for Auckland to review the dilemma of fragmented and inconsistent waste management practices currently existing across the region and decide on the outcomes which will be most beneficial for Auckland.

Through the new waste management and minimisation plan the council can create an efficient, uniform and affordable system across the whole region which better encourages recycling and re- use of appropriate materials from the waste stream and minimises the volume of material ending up in landfill. This embodies the principles and requirements set out in the Waste Minimisation Act.

In doing so, there two new work streams open for Auckland Council to consider:

a) Recycling organic waste (about 50% of the household waste stream). The ever-growing volumes of household waste could be raw material for a number of activities such as composting or energy generation. This would benefit the region by using these resources for beneficial purposes instead of sending them to landfill.

b) Taking responsibility for the way in which commercial and industrial waste is collected, sorted, recycled and re-used. Since the commercial and industrial sector generates about 85% of all waste material going to landfill, the biggest gains in reducing these volumes will result from reducing, re-using and recycling a greater proportion of this waste. Council has little or no influence over this component of the waste stream at present. A range of actions need to be tested to see how this might be best achieved:

   a. Legislation which would require the industrial and commercial sector to fulfil the objectives of the WMA.

   b. A regulatory bylaw mechanism to underpin the council's approach.

   c. Influencing how transfer stations operate.

   d. A range of other educative and collaborative mechanisms to strengthen the waste minimisation approach.

The investigations and analysis carried out as part of the waste assessment process show there to be **three basic options** for the council to consider as the strategic basis for its new waste management and minimisation plan detailed in the assessment.

Strategic direction option (1)

Continue with the status quo with some streamlining

This would provide the current collection of household waste and other services (including a domestic service to Rodney residents) whilst moving towards more streamlined consistent services. **(This will only be possible, however, when the current contractual arrangements come to an end.)**

Under this model, any significant reductions in waste to landfill would simply be the result of forces outside of the council's control, such as a decrease in the level of economic activity or a meaningful increase in the waste levy by the national government. By choosing this option, the council is accepting that it will not be able to satisfy the requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act; follow the guidance in the National Waste Strategy; or achieve the former councils' waste management plan objectives.

Comment: **Every household in the Auckland region currently receives a basic weekly waste collection and varying recycling opportunities. Market research demonstrates high levels of satisfaction from a householder point of view. While a new WMMP that is based primarily around combining the operations of seven former councils will capture some minor savings and other positive outcomes through efficiencies of scale, no significant cost savings or waste volume reductions would result.**

Using this approach, the council would let contracts that enable uniformity of service to be created across the region. Preferably, these services would be based around the successful "polluter pays" principle, a recognised key element in any waste minimisation strategy. "Polluter pays" is the most commonly-used payment method in the region at the moment. In two of the four former city councils alone, "polluter pays" represented a 23% waste reduction per household.

Strategic direction option (2)

Continue with the status quo with new activities to maximise diversion

This option would establish new systems to collect and recycle garden waste and food waste, which make up about 50% of the household waste stream, and could provide raw materials for a number of activities such as the growing compost industry in Auckland or energy generation.

Comment: **This initiative would certainly reduce the volumes of household waste ending up in landfills and there is the possibility of building a new composting plant south of the Auckland region.**

Nevertheless, because household kerbside waste forms a relatively small proportion of total waste currently going to landfill (about 15%), this action alone – although positive in its own right – would not result in a sufficient reduction in landfill volumes to satisfy the requirements set out by Government in the Waste Minimisation Act. If half of the food and garden waste currently disposed of through kerbside household collections can be diverted into a kerbside organics collection, this would result in a further 5 to 9% decrease in total waste to landfill.

This is the largest 'bold action' available to reduce the amount of landfilled waste from the household collections that the council controls. New services under this model would come at a cost to the council, as this model does not involve council gaining any more influence over the region's waste infrastructure. Without more council influence over waste at transfer stations across the region, financial benefits to the council, industry and ratepayers will go unrealised.

Strategic direction option (3)

Take actions as in option (2) but also move to have operational influence over the entire waste stream to landfill

To gain more influence over the waste stream will require a mix of measures. This mix is likely to include:

- advocating for legislation to require industry to comply with the WMA
- a supporting solid waste bylaw
- operational influence over transfer stations via contractual arrangements.

Once operational influence is achieved, charging regimes and operating practices can be overhauled. When this is accomplished, the council can effectively work towards waste minimisation. With this greater influence, the council can drive greater waste avoidance, improve the sorting, re-use and recycling of the entire waste stream and ensure a significant reduction in total volumes going to landfill. The benefits will be both financial and environmental and will be shared by the council, ratepayers and the private sector alike. The costs will be borne, as they should be, by the polluters, those who generate and dispose of waste to landfill.

As mentioned above, there are three approaches potentially available to the council to achieve operational influence over the entire waste stream; legislative change regulation/bylaw, and direct actions.

The council could advocate for changes to the relevant legislation to ensure the responsibility of miminising waste is not only council's but also shared equally by the private waste industry. The council could encourage the Minister for the Environment to provide specific regulation pursuant to the WMA to provide for Auckland's unique situation. This would require the industry to be accountable for meeting the Waste Minimisation Act objectives for the 85% of the waste stream to landfill that they currently control. This could be seen as a least-risk option, although the time frame is likely to be lengthy.

Regulation also involves using other legal mechanisms such as bylaws or district and regional plan rules to help behaviour change. The waste assessment has considered the option of obtaining further control of activities at transfer stations or other private waste facilities through use of bylaw regulation. This would involve licensing transfer stations, specifying diversion targets and activities, along with implementation of a performance bond system. Initial legal advice is that while this is possible, the judiciary has taken a narrow interpretation on bylaw powers so this option carries a degree of risk to the council and could be subject to legal challenge. However, it has been suggested that consultation with industry should be considered to reduce this risk.

Direct action for changing behaviour and minimising waste to landfill is through direct action by the council supported by regulation and behaviour change programmes. The direct action methods generally involve having administrative/operational control of key waste infrastructure. The introduction of a separate organic collection system in conjunction with the ownership of resource recovery facilities and transfer stations, such as seen in Christchurch and Timaru, has been shown to achieve high levels of domestic waste reduction.

To enable any of the options mentioned above, the council will need to discuss a way forward with industry.

It needs to be emphasised that work on this option is still preliminary. The methodologies to achieve influence will need to be tested and validated through a rigorous analytical process involving economic and commercial analysis[1] before proceeding down any of the paths.

Once the governing body endorses the strategic direction, officers can commence discussions and detailed work to outline the best way forward. This will be undertaken as part of the drafting of the WMMP.

Comment: **This would be a major turnaround in the management of Auckland's waste. Having influence over the entire waste stream to landfill by a mix of measures is the only way that would enable Auckland Council to meet the waste minimisation objectives of the Act.**

[1] The funding for this would come from the Waste Levy fund.

Selecting the council's preferred strategic direction option

Neither option (1) or option (2) will enable the council to even come close to meeting either its current objectives (under the existing waste management and minimisation plan) or fulfilling the intent or requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act.

Therefore, it is recommended that the draft WMMP be based on option 3, which will provide:

- improvements to the current household services
- a region-wide organic waste kerbside collection
- operational influence (either by legislation and/or regulation and/or contractual agreement with industry) of the handling of the commercial/industrial waste stream to ensure the handling meets the council's objectives of increasing recycling, re-using materials and reducing volumes going to landfill
- rationalisation of the current transfer station network
- charges for all waste services on a "polluter pays" basis.

Reviewing charging rates and removing the cost of waste services from the council's budget will place the costs where they should be – on the polluters. Gaining operational influence over the handling of the commercial/industrial waste stream is seen as the major way to improve waste minimisation in Auckland. It can be tackled on a number of fronts.

The first is by legislative change requiring operators to conform to the Act's objectives, and/or supported by a bylaw, or by negotiation with the waste industry. Action on all of these can happen concurrently.

It should be noted in suggesting that council has greater influence, that it is a logistical imperative for the council to have access to all of the transfer stations in the region if there is to be cost- effective and efficient waste collection services, including organic collection, an effective resource recovery network, and hazardous waste facilities that can be easily accessed by all residents.

This decision to propose a model that would see local government more directly involved in the solid waste infrastructure in the region reflects the reality that market forces alone are not sufficient to encourage the privately-owned waste industry to reduce the ever-increasing volumes of waste being sent to landfill.

The current minimal involvement of local government not only makes it impossible for the council to achieve more ambitious objectives and targets, but also results in inefficient transport patterns and compromised environmental outcomes as waste material is moved inefficiently around the region to suit the commercial objectives of the competitive private operators who currently control the infrastructure.

The present system sends the wrong price signals to waste generators. The commercial reward for the privately-owned waste industry comes primarily from capturing the largest possible volumes of commercial and industrial waste for the landfill they own. The present system provides no incentives to the industry to collect, transport and process waste in ways that meet the objectives set out in council's current or draft WMMP.

If a satisfactory agreement for greater council operational influence over the transfer station network cannot be reached with commercial waste operators, the council would need to consider other mechanisms to enable it to achieve its objectives and implement its new Waste Management and Minimisation Plan. Preliminary discussions that have been held with industry indicate some interest in contractual or other arrangements. Achieving agreement is a matter of ensuring that the interests of the commercial waste operators align with the council's objectives.

The creation of the new Auckland Council coupled with the legislative requirement for councils to meet stringent new criteria through their waste management and minimisation plans creates a timely opportunity for a review of the current situation and a major change in the region that will benefit all stakeholders.

Actions required to implement the draft WMMP

- The Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act 2010, Section 84 (3), requires the council to consider and decide on proposals prepared for long-term integrated waste management and minimisation planning and services by no later than 1 May 2011. It is considered that this deadline will compromise the decision making framework due to the inadequate time to test and validate the methodologies via rigorous analytical process involving economic and commercial analysis before proceeding down any of the paths. However, the council needs to decide on a strategic direction for the draft WMMP before detailed analysis is undertaken to validate methodologies discussed in the assessment. The three steps required are:
- Council endorses the strategic direction
- Council to endorse the draft waste management and minimisation plan for consultation
- Adopt the draft WMMP.

If the council endorses strategic direction option (3), it would initiate discussions:

- with the government to explore legislative change
- with the waste industry for greater influence over the waste infrastructure.

Further actions could include a mix of the following (bearing in mind that all of these need to be thoroughly assessed and tested):

- **Redesign the kerbside collections** in Auckland.
- **Gain operational influence** over the commercial and industrial waste stream, preferably by negotiating longer-term region-wide contracts with private sector operators, in which the interests of the private sector and the council are aligned.
- **Impose sufficient council charges** on various elements of handling both the commercial/industrial and household waste streams **so that a cost-effective and sustainable council waste operation is created** that will move the cost of waste to the producer.
- **Rationalise the number of transfer stations,** potentially closing some to achieve greater efficiency and scale of operation, developing those retained in the system into resource recovery and transfer station operations and possibly creating new facilities in more efficient and strategic locations.
- **Rationalise waste transport by requiring all commercial and industrial waste to go to the nearest or most suitable transfer station after collection** to facilitate sorting, recycling and re-use of this important waste stream.
- **Require all transfer stations to accept all waste** offered to them to achieve transport efficiencies and implement uniform pricing mechanisms that incentivise pre-sorting of waste before it arrives and separation at the facilities.
- **Standardise, where practicable, the council's household waste and recycling collections across the region using wheelie bins or bags as circumstances dictate.**
- **Encourage greater sorting and recycling at household level** (including organic waste), and provide households with appropriate bins and collection services.
- **Establish uniform systems and charging regimes across the region** that will result in householders as well as industry paying on a "polluter pays" principle rather than waste services being charged in the rates.
- **Continuously look for ways to make the system more efficient.**
- **Run information campaigns** to encourage householders and businesses to avoid waste and if it can't be avoided, to sort their waste.
- **Implement waste bylaws** that will prevent the improper disposal of waste at cleanfills and unregulated facilities.
- The 2010 NZWS recognises the role product stewardship plays in minimising waste to landfill. **Council must develop policy positions** on various product stewardship initiatives such as Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) which is a valuable tool to avoid and minimise creation of waste.
- **Establish community run resource recovery parks,** linking to a network aligned to every refuse transfer station.

Whichever packages the council decides to pursue it would:

- **Initiate a rigorous analytical process** involving economic and commercial analysis of the available methodologies.

Outcomes of implementing the draft WMMP based on strategic direction option (3) – (Direct Action/ Regulation)

- **Greater sorting of waste at household (kerbside) level** prior to collection, resulting in reduced waste to landfill and other environmental benefits.
- **Greater sorting of commercial and household waste at transfer stations** to achieve greater recycling (particularly organic waste which can be used to produce compost, as well as timber, scrap metal, glass, aluminium, plastic and paper and cardboard.) Possible establishment of resource recovery centres at some or all transfer stations. All transfer stations taking all waste offered to them.
- **Economic benefit to the region** through efficient collections, recovery and use of materials from the waste stream and creation of employment in the waste industry and downstream in the recovered materials industries.
- A forecast **reduction of an estimated 25% or more in the medium-term in the total waste volumes being disposed of in landfills,** helping to extend the life of existing landfills and delaying the need to invest in expensive new landfill facilities.
- **All householders being treated equally and fairly,** with uniform systems and charging methods ("polluter pays"), where practicable, provided consistently across the region. This will lead to changed householder behaviour and cost efficiencies for the council with the bulk purchase of materials and services.
- **More efficient use of transport** involved in waste collection and disposal across the region, leading to better environmental outcomes, more efficient energy use, and cost savings. Collecting and disposing of waste involves a million truck movements a year in Auckland. The system changes outlined in the draft WMMP should enable a reduction in truck movements, reducing impact on the roads and the environment.
- **More composting of organic waste** (garden waste and food waste) that will both reduce waste volumes to landfill and the resulting production of greenhouse gases. It will also create soil amendments that can be used to improve and maintain the fertility of the region's soils, and include the possibility of energy generation.
- A **reduction in carbon emissions** between 66,000 to 81,000 tonnes per annum.
- A **reduction in the harmful effects of waste,** increased protection of public health, and improved resource efficiency.
- **Minimising costs to ratepayers.** By the measures outlined in the draft WMMP, the council may be able to eventually eliminate the need for rates to fund any waste services.
- **Compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation.**

Where to from here? Decisions needed

Step 1: Council to decide on a high-level strategic direction

The council needs to decide on a strategic direction for the draft WMMP, to enable detailed analysis to validate methodologies discussed in the waste assessment. Therefore, the first decision the council needs to make is selecting council's preferred option in terms of a high-level strategic direction:

Strategic direction option (1):
continue with the status quo with some streamlining.

> Outcome: **very limited waste reduction and diversion of waste. Reduced longevity of landfills.**

Strategic direction option (2):
option 1 plus new systems to maximise diversions.

> Outcome: **a further 5 to 9% decrease in total waste to landfill.**

Strategic direction option (3):
take actions as in (2) but also move to have operational influence over the entire waste stream through a mix of tested methodologies.

> Outcome: **a potential 40+% decrease in total waste to landfill and environmental, social and economical benefits to the community.**

Step 2: Council to endorse the draft waste management and minimisation plan for consultation

Once the council chooses its preferred strategic direction option, the draft WMMP will reflect this direction and detail the services and activities that support it. The council will then need to endorse this draft WMMP for public and local boards' consultation.

Step 3: Undertake consultation on the draft WMMP as required by legislation

The Special Consultative Procedure will be followed to consult on the draft WMMP. Submissions will be sought from the community, industry stakeholders, local boards and any other interested parties on the various issues in the draft WMMP.

It is anticipated that the draft WMMP will go to public consultation in the second half of 2011, with the objective of having a final WMMP adopted by 1 July 2012.

Step 4: Adopt and implement the WMMP

On completion of the consultation process, the council will need to adopt the desired WMMP.

Current services will continue unchanged until the new WMMP is adopted. Changes may not be apparent initially but will come into effect in subsequent years as existing contractual commitments expire and new systems and services are able to be introduced.

The WMMP would be implemented as soon as practicable, which is anticipated to be 1 July 2014. This timetable gives all stakeholders time to prepare for change as it affects them.