Appendix B: Draft household hazardous waste policy
Hazardous household waste is a unique waste stream presenting few, if any, opportunities for reuse and recycling at end of life. In fact some treatment options includes bulking up and diluting into solid materials such as saw dust before landfill disposal, waste volumes could actually increase as a result of treatment.

Safe treatment and disposal to keep this material out of landfill and water treatment facilities is the main pathway for management, placing it very low on the waste hierarchy at treatment and disposal level.

Auckland Council’s current approach is to manage the risk to people and the environment when chemicals become unwanted, by funding a free collection service to remove these chemicals from circulation.

This strategy proposes to continue that program, but ramp up effort at the avoidance/reduction end of the waste hierarchy, to discourage use of toxic chemicals before they are purchased.

Raising awareness about safer alternatives, and trying to ensure people buy and use only what they need becomes the priority.

Current Behaviours

Auckland Council’s existing collection service is currently collecting between 8 and 16 tonnes of hazardous household chemicals per year. The wide margin between these two figures is due to unknown volumes of commercial waste being dropped in to the domestic service, and a large volume of household hazardous waste that was informally collected by council contractors during the previous household inorganics service.
Based on recent data from Christchurch that found households were stockpiling large volumes (up to 51 kilograms) of household chemicals, and the significantly higher volumes being surrendered through a similar service operated in NSW, Australia, we estimate the Auckland service should be expecting to see 64 tonnes per annum.

This calculation is based on 2 per cent of households (11,000) using the service each year, and that those 11,000 households are bringing in an average of 5.85 kilograms per household.

A further 4800 tonnes of potentially hazardous waste is understood to be entering landfill directly via the kerbside bins.

**Hazardous Waste and Product Stewardship**

Product Stewardship programs with advanced disposal fees for the wastes such as paint and waste automotive oil which can be recycled into new product, or which have a value have already been established. These programs now exist as ROSE, Resene Paintwise and the Dulux paint take back program.

If a product stewardship or retailer takeback program existed, Auckland Council may be able to save on its own costs for providing a safe disposal service, however there would be few incentives for consumers to reduce volumes overall, or to completely use up the products they have, because a free disposal service still exists.

Product stewardship for garden chemicals was tested with a group of retailers, manufacturers and importers in 2016 including Yates, Palmers, and The Warehouse but none were receptive to playing any role in product take back, either as a financial contributor or as a take back site. This was in part due to the health and safety concerns for staff of handling chemicals that had been opened and partially used, as well as the challenges of dealing with brands or chemical types surrendered that are not part of the collection scheme.

For now, in order to reduce volumes of hazardous household chemicals reaching landfill, Auckland Council is financially committed to providing a collection service to householders with the bulk of its investment in safe disposal.

**Increased Awareness and Avoidance of Hazardous Chemical Use**

In New Zealand generally, there appears to be low levels of awareness of product toxicity and there is likely to be considerable scope for improvement in this area, (although this hasn’t been thoroughly tested with consumers in Auckland via any formal research).

There is information available from the Environment Protection Authority – the agency with general responsibility and oversight of regulating approvals and controls of hazardous substances including household chemicals, cosmetics, cleaners and pool and garden chemicals.

It is unknown how aware members of the community are of the EPA or the information available there, however given the size of EPA, and the notion that it is seen as an industry regulator, it is assumed that this information is not widely accessible to the general public.
EPA also has a role to play in product labelling. The Environmental Protection Authority sets the rules for labelling many of these products. These rules are based on international rules and are an important source of safety information.

EPA also provides information advising the public about how to keep themselves and their families safe in the home when using and storing household chemicals.

Auckland Council could share the burden of chemical awareness-raising and home detox campaigns with the EPA to enhance the effectiveness of these programs and reduce its own disposal cost burden.

**Strategy Overview**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the access of residents to hazardous household waste collection services. Transferring collection sites to community recycling centres and increasing the number of sites as new CRCs come on line.</td>
<td>Short to medium term</td>
<td>Maximise landfill diversion and minimise the harmful effects of waste.</td>
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<td>To create stronger links to the EPA to enable both EPA and Auckland Council to inform the public about safe purchasing decisions, storage practices and disposal options.</td>
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<td>Continue to advocate for product stewardship for some products.</td>
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<td>To assess options related to share/swap use up programs for unwanted household chemicals (used in overseas models, in particular in the US).</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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<td>To design a campaign to inform people about the natural alternatives to household and garden chemicals as a way of minimising reliance on chemicals overall.</td>
<td>Long term</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating opportunities for community involvement and education through targeted support for WMIF projects that are focused on reducing the overall toxicity of waste in the home.</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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