

Appendix K

Early engagement and feedback

The following is a summary of themes drawn from early engagement and previous insights from our dealings with various groups connected to waste. The summary is current as at 20.9.23.

What we've heard from mana whenua

We invited representatives of mana whenua of Tāmaki Makaurau to participate in the review of the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan; and talked with representatives of Te Ahiwaru / Makaurau Marae, Te Runanga o Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Whatua Orakei, and Te Ākitai.

Mana whenua have told us that:

- We need to move away from an extractive, linear view of waste to a more holistic view of preserving resources
- There is a need to build a common understanding of waste to unify/strengthen voices for change
- They support the container return scheme, and a circular economy.
- Are concerned that wasting/extracting resources is often cheaper than re-using or re-cycling generally.
- They support waste independence (local solutions) and people taking responsibility of own waste.
- We need to reach out to businesses, manufacturers and suppliers who must play a part
- Everyone needs better visibility of where their waste goes; and iwi need to be able to see what is recycled onshore, what is exported and what goes to landfill.
- They support education; and importance of linking waste to whakapapa of resources to demonstrate the link to careless over-exploitation
- Equity is an important consideration e.g., supporting households with lots of waste
- Climate change should be a focus area; including emissions, but also managing waste in disasters
- Addressing organic waste including food, is important; and relevance of hua parakore principles
- They are concerned around achievability of zero waste, but also noting the 2040 timeframe is useful in driving urgent change
- Regarding landfills – not establishing further landfills is important recognising the need to preserve spaces and not polluting another rohe;
- They are concerned about problematic waste streams such as tyres; and the importance of rethinking opportunities to recycle e.g. (uncontaminated) biosolids as fertiliser
- They are looking to work more closely with the council; noting need to strengthen understanding of te ao Māori, to provide educational resources that can be tailored appropriately for Māori delivered by leaders in the community; and opportunities to build capacity in managing and reducing waste.
- The council needs to be open to working with mana whenua to deliver on their own waste ambitions at a time that works for iwi.
- The locations and services of resource recovery centres are hugely relevant to mana whenua

- There should be a focus on holistic consideration of impacts when looking at procurement opportunities and for energy from waste proposals (social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes including longer term impacts on waste minimisation)
- They are interested in opportunities to support Māori in partnering opportunities, and for joint approaches to businesses and central government.

What we've heard from community partners

We talked with a range of community groups involved in promoting and supporting waste minimisation in the community across diverse groups ranging from youth, Māori, Pasifika, Chinese.

Key themes included:

- The value-add of community partners and recycling centres in changing attitudes and behaviours and connecting communities; need for sustainable funding and access to resources; education and awareness-building important at all ages and for diverse communities
- The vital importance of regulatory change especially product stewardship and a container return scheme; but also product bans, further increase to the waste levy, and right to repair requirements.
- The importance of people using food scraps services, composting and support for other food reduction opportunities noting also climate change connection.
- Making the right thing the easy thing to do: changing mindsets; including reducing consumerism; normalising repairing, re-using items.
- Reflections on focusing on the entire life cycle of products including environmental costs of resource extraction.
- Transparency around where waste and recycling is going to help build public trust in recovery
- Opportunities to strengthen outreach to communities through various methodologies.
- Support for financial incentives and penalties with consequences for bad behaviours including focus to reduce litter and dumping.
- Creating community support for zero waste including the need to tell the story of Zero Waste and celebrate success at local level; using influencers and leaders and diverse platforms
- Relevance of providing local-level data on waste and recycling to show impacts of actions locally
- Mainstreaming activities to upcycle and reuse items, reducing consumerism
- Empowering whānau through entrepreneurial opportunities regarding waste
- Funding research and development around waste solutions, mātauranga Māori, assessing Māori and Pasifika needs, and outcomes
- The relevance of te Ao Māori values in supporting messaging to move away from consumption; and linking to how behaviour can diminish the mauri of resources; relevance of tikanga and a focus on a holistic framework
- Concern around the need to plan to reduce impacts of disasters such as flood waste
- Importance of capacity building and financial sustainability for social enterprise so we don't lose valuable community leaders and can put in place succession training

What we've learned from the commercial sector

To help reflect key priority areas from the waste industry and businesses that produce significant waste streams, we drew on numerous conversations held with the private sector from recent years. Auckland Council's waste team works across many sectors, with special focus on the construction and demolition sector. We also have important contractual relationships with waste companies who provide essential waste services; and we regulate waste operators through the council's Waste Bylaw.

In addition, recent workshops¹ held with the building sector on C&D wastes, together with outcomes from research that the council commissioned for the 2023 Waste Assessment² add to the picture of what is important to businesses in relation to waste. waste priorities. Key themes include:

- Significant investment is required to enable higher recovery rates of key waste/materials and reprocessing of materials.
- Clearer central government policy is needed to create certainty for where investment is required.
- There are few regulatory requirements for waste quantities to be measured, tracked, and reported, and data capture and reporting tools are limited.
- Encouraging collaboration to maximise recovery rates for materials is a challenge within competitive markets.
- Accessing materials from council-controlled waste streams can help create scale for developing new infrastructure or services.
- Creating viable product stewardship schemes remains a challenge - both regarding the reverse logistics required and the end-market demand for products produced.
- Voluntary product stewardship schemes that do not receive support from all stakeholders result in creating uneven playing fields and are not sustainable.
- The waste and resource recovery sector currently utilise reusable systems in its own operations, and has an interest in developing reverse-logistics services, in particular to support business-to-business reusable packaging systems.
- Waste collectors are concerned about protecting their staff and equipment from hazardous materials including lithium-ion batteries that frequently cause truck fires.
- The resource recovery sector need sustainable volumes of clean, uncontaminated waste materials to have certainty of supply
- Regulatory frameworks at the council level (e.g., planning rules, consenting requirements, building specifications) can be restrictive when seeking alternative uses and management options for recovered materials such as soils, biosolids, reprocessed construction materials.
- Techological innovations are a real opportunity to create value e.g. in passing on information to consumers on carbon and waste footprints, in collecting data to track waste, to connect people and businesses to resources.

¹ Workshops facilitated by the Sustainable Business Network, The Construction Sector Accord and the council

² Including research on specific materials/wastes such as plastics, food, packaging, textiles, and soils

What we've heard from local boards

Local Board input to inform the draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan was sought in August 2023. Local boards were provided with initial Waste Assessment findings, together with the following key opportunities identified at that time to strengthen the next Waste Plan:

1. Continuing on our current pathway to zero waste by 2040 including:
 - a. finalising the standardisation of our kerbside services regionwide, and moving to fortnightly refuse collections once food scraps collections are embedded
 - b. reflecting the revised Resource Recovery Network Strategy 2021 to bring the total number of community recycling centres and resource recovery parks to 23 by 2031
 - c. an ongoing focus to reduce litter, illegal dumping, and marine waste

2. Refreshing our focus areas for commercial waste streams, to include:
 - a. construction and demolition waste
 - b. organic materials
 - c. plastics
 - d. cardboard/paper
 - e. textiles

3. Strengthening our focus on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience

4. Extending our food scraps collection services to additional urban areas in alignment with central government requirements.

5. Reflecting ways to strengthen our partnership approach and opportunities with mana whenua; and to recognise the benefits of te ao Māori in waste management and minimisation

6. Re-focusing advocacy to central government to ensure the 2023 waste strategy goals are delivered and targets met⁽¹⁾, and that cross-ministry policy supports a circular economy

7. Continuing to address waste generated from council and council-controlled organisations' operational activities, particularly from activities generating high volumes of waste

8. Refreshing actions to work closely with others recognising that we cannot get to zero waste by acting alone

All twenty-one local boards provided feedback. Fifteen of those boards supported the general direction of the plan while six didn't explicitly state whether they supported it or not.

The following key themes were identified:

Support for:

1. **Waste Reduction and Sustainability:** The overarching goal across most statements is waste reduction and sustainability. This includes reducing landfill waste, promoting recycling, and addressing various waste streams to achieve zero waste or minimize environmental impact.
2. **Community Engagement and Involvement:** Many statements emphasize the importance of engaging and involving the community in waste management decisions to ensure plans, services and programmes work for diverse local needs.

3. **Education and Communication:** Effective communication and education programs are deemed crucial for informing residents about waste management changes, recycling practices, and waste reduction strategies. Community education is seen as key to successful waste management.
4. **Resource Recovery and Recycling Centers:** There is widespread support for expanding and establishing resource recovery and recycling centers. These facilities are considered essential for diverting waste from landfills, for example as hubs for waste education and upcycling.
5. **Inorganic Collections:** support for continued inorganic collections including suggestions to extend that with skips placed periodically in neighbourhoods or kerbside collection.
6. **Efficiency and Cost-effectiveness:** Efficiency and cost-effectiveness in waste management operations are mentioned in various statements. Balancing environmental goals with economic considerations is important.
7. **Accountability and Planning:** Emphasis on specific actions with delivery dates for accountability and assurance of funding through the Long-Term Plan for waste management initiatives.

Like to see more of:

8. **Central Government Leadership including Product Stewardship:** Several statements express support for product stewardship, and especially the container return scheme; alongside calls for increased waste levies, and circular economy policies. Central government involvement is seen as crucial for achieving waste reduction goals.
9. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Collaboration with other organizations, including mana whenua, is emphasized in multiple statements. Partnerships are viewed as a means to achieve waste reduction goals more effectively.
17. **Focus on Commercial Waste Streams:** Many statements highlight the importance of addressing commercial waste streams, including construction and demolition waste, plastics, organic materials, and more. These areas are recognized as significant contributors to landfill waste.
18. **Food Waste Management:** Support for expanding food scraps collection services and calls to establish commercial food waste collection systems and support food redistribution networks.
19. **Green Waste Collections:** support for green waste collections noting the contribution or organic materials to landfill emissions.
10. **Packaging and Reuse:** Focus on reducing packaging and implementing systems to provide alternatives such as replacing single-use cups and providing water refilling stations.
11. **Local Procurement and Sustainability:** Recommendations to promote local procurement, sustainable end-of-life management for projects and consider embodied carbon

Challenges

12. **Reducing Barriers to Access:** Removing barriers for residents to access recycling and waste disposal facilities is a recurring theme. Efforts to make these services accessible to all are emphasized.
20. **Fortnightly Refuse:** Some concern about the proposal to go to fortnightly refuse collections.
21. **Climate Change Considerations:** Climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience are mentioned in several statements, highlighting the connection between waste management and broader environmental concerns. Waste management is seen as a way to contribute to climate goals; and to enhance community resilience during disasters.
22. **Litter and Illegal Dumping Solutions:** Recognition of the persistent issue of illegal dumping and the need for innovative solutions and enforcement.
23. **Trust-building and Transparency:** Suggestions to build and maintain trust in waste services through transparency, including options to improve access to waste-related information through digital channels.

Additional Recommendations

24. Various additional recommendations such as ensuring waste minimisation funding goes to longer-term initiatives, reviewing effectiveness of rates-funding services, enhancing waste data collection, banning recyclables from landfill, looking at the future of closed landfills, de-privatising landfills and addressing the disposal of specific waste types.