

7.4 Solid Waste and Waste Minimisation Update

Report To:	Local Services Committee
Meeting Date:	Wednesday, 11 March 2026
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Purpose

To provide the Local Services Committee with an update on current solid waste activities, waste minimisation initiatives, and the status of future projects.

Recommendation

That the Local Services Committee:

- a. receives and notes the Solid Waste and Waste Minimisation Update Report (Resolve # 2026-91).

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on Council's solid waste activities for the October to December 2025 quarter, including kerbside collection, waste to landfill, recycling, and diversion initiatives. Tonnage collected was slightly up on the previous quarter, while participation rates for recycling and glass remained steady. Outbound recycling and diverted materials demonstrate ongoing progress in waste diversion, despite temporary storage of green waste.

We continue to implement the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2022–2028, with several actions complete, ongoing, or being addressed through this year's Circular Economy Intern Work Plan. A full WMMP Implementation Report will be presented to the Committee at the June meeting, outlining progress to date and setting out tracking for the remainder of the plan. Preparations for the next WMMP will also begin in line with legislative requirements and community expectations.

Two Circular Economy interns are supporting community-level resource recovery initiatives, including follow up work from prior projects. A report outlining their Work Plan and key projects, with expected outcomes and deliverables, will also be presented to the Committee at the June meeting.

Pending national waste legislation and ongoing operational and financial considerations, including Waste Levy Revenue, continue to inform Council planning and decision-making. Risks are actively managed, with mitigation strategies in place across revenue, service delivery, compliance, and legislative change.

Context

Transfer Stations

Council owns and operates transfer stations in Tokoroa and Putāruru, which accept general waste, green waste, and a range of divertable materials. A recycling only drop-off facility is also available in Tīrau. All three sites are managed by a private operator under a Council service contract.

Commercial and Industrial Waste

Tokoroa Transfer Station is the only facility accepting commercial and industrial waste. All green waste is mulched onsite at Tokoroa before being transported to MyNoke for vermicomposting.

Kerbside Collection

Council provides kerbside collection services across the four urban areas:

- Weekly rubbish in 120-litre wheelie bins
- Fortnightly recycling in 240-litre wheelie bins
- Fortnightly glass in 45- or 60-litre crates.

Co-mingled recycling (plastics #1, #2, #5, cans, paper, and cardboard) is transported to the Hamilton Material Recovery Facility (MRF), while glass is transported to Visy Recycling in Onehunga.

Illegal Dumping

Council contracts out collection and disposal services for illegal dumping on all local roads, excluding State Highways. Our 2025 Circular Economy Intern has been tasked with exploring ways to reduce illegal dumping. His 12-month project is now concluding, and a comprehensive report will be provided to the June 2026 Local Services Committee.

Monitoring and Compliance

The Environment, Sustainability and Waste team undertakes monitoring, compliance, and reporting on Council's three closed landfills, as required under resource consent conditions.

Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2022-28

Council adopted the WMMP 2022-28 on 7 December 2022. The WMMP sets the strategic direction for solid waste activities, services, and infrastructure over the next six years. Managing and minimising waste is a key Council responsibility, guided by the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, which encourages waste reduction to protect the environment while delivering social, economic, and cultural benefits.

A key focus of the WMMP is supporting community education and engagement. Waste levy revenue funds a range of initiatives that help residents reduce waste and recycle correctly, including:

- Zero waste education in schools
- Community workshops
- The Paper for Trees program
- Promotion of new recycling services, such as child car seat recycling

These initiatives directly support the WMMP's objectives by raising awareness, encouraging behavioural change, and helping the district move toward its goal of minimising waste sent to landfill.

Discussion

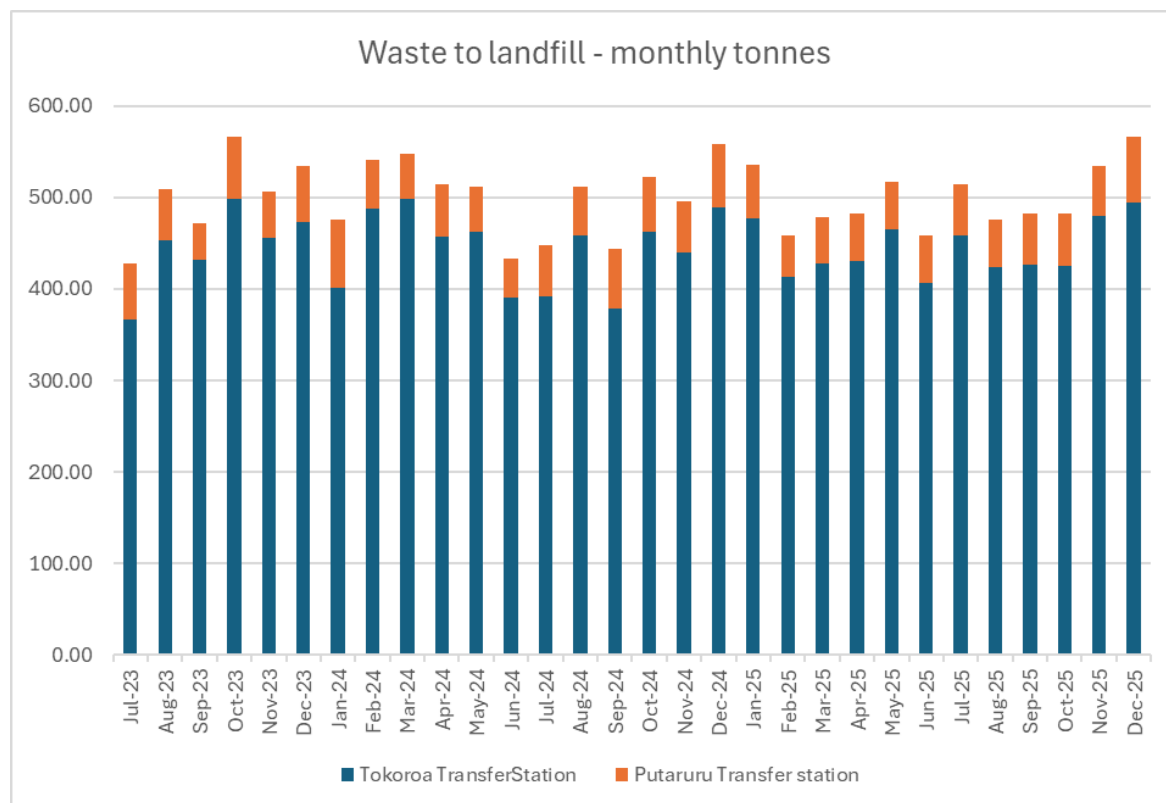
Kerbside Collection

Kerbside collection data for the October - December 2025 Quarter			
	Rubbish	Recycling	Glass
Monthly average bins emptied	29,650	11,172	3,332
Monthly average participation rate	80%	61%	18%
Monthly average tonnes	304	67	24

Tonnage is slightly up on the previous quarter. Participation rates for recycling and glass remain unchanged.

Outbound Waste to Landfill

Total outbound waste to Hampton Downs for the quarter was 1,583 tonnes, slightly higher than the previous quarter (1,472 tonnes).



Outbound Recycling and Diverted Materials (October - December 2025)

During the October to December 2025 quarter, Council sent 197 tonnes of co-mingled recycling to the Hamilton Material Recovery Facility and 147 tonnes of glass to Visy Recycling in Onehunga.

No green waste was processed at MyNoke for vermicomposting this quarter because bulk green waste is being temporarily stored at the Tokoroa Transfer Station until sufficient capacity is available for cost-effective chipping.

Other diverted materials, primarily paint and metal, totalled 24 tonnes.

Despite the temporary storage of green waste, these results reflect ongoing progress in waste diversion and support Council's waste minimisation objectives.

Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2022-28

The WMMP 2022-28 continues to provide strategic guidance for Council's solid waste services, kerbside collection, and community engagement activities.

Of the 25 actions outlined in the plan:

- six have been completed
- twelve are ongoing and completed annually
- five are being addressed through this year's Circular Economy Intern Work Plan
- one action relating to kerbside organics collection is on hold
- one action is unlikely to proceed due to administrative requirements outweighing potential benefits

- Support for community groups, as identified in Action #24, continues on an annual and ongoing basis.

A full WMMP Implementation Report will be provided to the Committee at the June meeting. The report will outline progress on all actions to date, highlight key outcomes, and set out how we will track implementation for the remainder of the current WMMP period. We will also begin preparations for the development of the next WMMP to ensure continuity and alignment with legislative requirements and community expectations.

Circular Economy Interns 2026

Council participates in the Waikato Regional Council Circular Economy internship program, which is funded through Waste Levy Revenue and allows tertiary students to apply their academic focus to waste prevention and circular economy initiatives.

For 2026, two interns have been appointed, with a Work Plan that includes five WMMP actions. The Plan primarily focuses on resource recovery at a community level and incorporates valuable follow-up work from the 2024 Farm Waste project and the 2025 Illegal Dumping project.

A report outlining the interns' Work Plan and key projects, including expected outcomes and deliverables, will be presented to the Local Services Committee at the June meeting.

New Waste Legislation

Central Government is developing new, fit-for-purpose waste legislation to replace the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and the Litter Act 1979. The Government intends to enact the new legislation before the November 2026 General Election.

The proposed legislation will change how the waste levy is allocated to territorial authorities and define what it can be spent on. It will also ensure that producers are accountable for their products throughout their lifecycle, strengthen monitoring and enforcement of waste legislation, introduce more effective controls for illegal dumping and littering, and clarify roles and responsibilities across central and local government as well as the broader waste sector.

These changes are expected to have a positive impact on Council operations and support our waste minimisation objectives.

Options

N/A

Linkage to Strategic Plan Priorities

Vision: Thriving Communities - our diverse people are healthy and well, with ample opportunities to support their quality of life.

Vision: Sustainable Environment - the district is a national leader in benefitting from a circular economy.

Goal 2: More people participate in community activities and events than ever before.

Goal 3: No waste or rubbish leaves the district.

Consultation (Internal and External)

Internal consultation has been undertaken with Council teams involved in solid waste operations and with contractors managing the Tokoroa and Putāruru Transfer Stations to ensure accurate reporting of services and activities.

Externally, we have engaged and consulted with Waikato Regional Council through the Circular Economy Internship program and with the Ministry for the Environment regarding waste levy guidance and pending legislative changes, ensuring alignment with regional and national waste priorities.

Financial Considerations

Waste Levy Revenue received to date for 2025-26 totals \$268,000, with the full-year revenue estimated at \$405,000. This aligns with Ministry for the Environment advice that levy revenue has been reforecast downwards, reflecting a national reduction in landfilled waste partly due to the ongoing construction slump.

Waste Levy Revenue continues to fund key waste minimisation initiatives, including:

- community education programs
- Circular Economy internship
- support for diversion and recycling projects.

Proposed legislative changes to waste management are expected to broaden the permissible uses of levy revenue and provide a fairer distribution across territorial authorities, while continuing to meet the needs of larger centres. These changes may offer additional flexibility in funding future waste initiatives and support ongoing delivery of Council's waste minimisation objectives.

Risks

Waste Levy Revenue Shortfall

- Risk: Lower than expected Waste Levy Revenue could reduce funding available for waste minimisation initiatives and community programmes.
- Mitigation: We will continue to monitor revenue trends closely and prioritise core waste minimisation activities. Proposed legislative changes may provide additional flexibility in levy use, helping to manage funding variability.

Illegal Dumping and Littering

- Risk: Ongoing incidents of illegal dumping could increase operational costs and negatively impact community perception.
- Mitigation: The Circular Economy Intern project and Council's compliance programme continue to focus on education, reporting, and enforcement. Community engagement campaigns and improved awareness of disposal options are ongoing.

Legislative and Regulatory Change

- Risk: Pending national waste legislation may require adjustments to Council's operations, levy allocation, and reporting obligations.
- Mitigation: We are tracking legislative developments closely and will align Council processes with new requirements. Staff are preparing for proactive implementation planning to ensure smooth transition.

Kerbside Collection and Recycling Services

- Risk: Fluctuations in participation or tonnage may impact diversion targets and service efficiency.
- Mitigation: Regular monitoring of collection data and community education programmes will be maintained. The WMMP Implementation Report will track performance and inform any required service adjustments.

Significance & Engagement Policy

The matters and recommendation contained in this report do not trigger Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Reference

Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2022-28
Long Term Plan 2024-34

Attachments

None