



## Aide memoire: Talking points meeting with Auckland Council 29 April 2024

Date submitted: 29 April 2024

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Actions sought from ministers	
<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS <b>Minister for the Environment</b>	Read ahead of your meeting with Auckland Council on 29 April 2024.

Appendices and attachments
Appendix 1. Talking points Appendix 2. Biography of attendees

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Karen Zhang	n/a	
Responsible Manager	Liz Butcher	022 517 3314	
General Manager	Annabelle Ellis	022 009 7624	✓

# Talking points meeting with Auckland Council 29 April 2024

## Purpose

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1. This aide memoire provides you with background information and talking points to support your meeting with Auckland Council on Monday 29 April 2024 at 2pm.

## Background

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2. On Monday 29 April 2024 at 2pm, you are meeting representatives from Auckland Council online via Microsoft Teams. Talking points are provided in Appendix 1 and a short biography of Auckland Council attendees is in Appendix 2. Officials will also attend the meeting.
3. Auckland Council's letter to you on 16 January 2024 outlines the following areas for discussion:
  - Auckland Council's draft 2024 Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP)
  - kerbside food scraps, recycling and refuse services
  - Government waste minimisation funding
  - Auckland's resource recovery network expansion and market competition.
4. The Auckland region consists of about 25 per cent of New Zealand's population and 50 per cent of the New Zealand waste industry.

## Draft 2024 Waste Management and Minimisation Plan

5. Auckland Council recently closed consultation on their draft 2024 WMMP. The draft WMMP sets an overarching goal for Auckland to be zero waste by 2040. This goal is supported by shorter-term 2030 targets to reduce total waste by 30 per cent, reduce kerbside waste by 29 per cent and reduce council waste by 50 per cent.
6. Key actions that are outlined in the draft WMMP include:
  - complete the roll-out of kerbside food scraps collection to all urban households and once complete, move to fortnightly refuse collections
  - complete the transition of the whole region to a rates-funded refuse collection
  - continue the expansion of Auckland's resource recovery network
  - increased focus on diverting commercial waste away from landfill to beneficial use.
7. Auckland Council's draft WMMP targets and actions are ambitious and generally align with the 2023 New Zealand Waste Strategy.

## **Kerbside services**

8. Auckland Council are currently completing the roll-out of their kerbside food scraps collection service to all urban households. After this roll-out is complete Auckland Council intends to shift its kerbside refuse service from weekly to fortnightly. The council may share their feedback on how this roll-out is going including both challenges and opportunities.
9. Auckland Council is planning to bring the full region to a rates-funded kerbside service.<sup>1</sup> Prior to making this decision, Auckland Council conducted research into the effectiveness of rates-funded versus pay-as-you-throw collection models.
10. Standard materials for kerbside recycling and food scraps collections came into effect on 1 February 2024. Auckland Council are supportive of this policy despite having to make several changes to what they collect in kerbside recycling. Auckland Council undertook a large education campaign in their community following the changes.
11. Auckland Council may seek an update on the status of other policies that were part of the kerbside policy package agreed to under the previous Government. This includes mandatory provision of kerbside food scraps and recycling services, a kerbside performance standard and reporting data on private kerbside collections.

## **Government waste minimisation funding**

12. In the last three years Auckland Council received funding through the Waste Minimisation Fund (WMF) and the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund for:
  - *Establishing a Community Recycling Centre in Onehunga (completed 2022)*: Auckland Council received \$2.24 million to fast-track the establishment of this facility on a council-owned site in Onehunga
  - *Auckland's Material Recovery Facility Upgrade (completed 2023)*: a total of \$16.6 million was granted to upgrade the plastics and fibre sorting at the Material Recovery Facility in Onehunga
  - *Auckland Council Kerbside Food Scraps Collection Project (in deed January 2024)*: Auckland Council will receive \$1.8 million to expand their kerbside food scraps roll-out to non-contiguous communities eg, Waiheke Island.

## **Resource recovery network expansion and market competition**

13. Auckland Council has 15 community recycling centres spread across the region and have signalled their intent to build several more centres including two larger commercially focused resource recovery parks by 2031. These centres aim to make it easy for communities to divert as much material as possible to beneficial use. You recently visited the Onehunga Community Recycling Centre.
14. Auckland Council considers these investments to generate significant economic activity and broader social and economic benefits, due to partnering with local community groups,

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<sup>1</sup> Currently half of Auckland households pay through rates and the rest through pay-as-you-throw tags/bags.


iwi, and charitable trusts on the operation of the centres. We understand Auckland Council subsidises the network, and they have conducted social return on investment analysis.

*An opportunity to discuss potential “crowding out” of private capital by councils*

15. You recently attended a meeting with the Waste & Recycling Industry Forum who expressed concerns about Auckland Council (and councils generally) potentially using levy funds to ‘crowd out’ private investment by subsidising their operations. The Forum suggested that the Warkworth (Lawrie Road) Community Recycling Centre was opened in competition with a nearby transfer station owned and operated by Northland Waste Limited.
16. Auckland Council’s Lawrie Road facility was the only transfer station and recycling centre in Warkworth until it was closed by the Council in 2018 for contamination remediation. The transfer station had until that time been operated by Northland Waste under their brand “Mason Bins.”
17. While the facility was closed, Northland Waste opened a new facility called Warkworth Re:Sort approximately 5 kilometres away from the Council site. Following the remediation work Auckland Council undertook a competitive tender process for the operation of the Lawrie Road site. Mahurangi Waste Busters won the tender to operate. The site recently reopened and includes a resale shop.
18. You may wish to discuss the development of Auckland’s Community Recycling Centre network and potential for crowding out of private investment with the Auckland Council and how that can be mitigated.

## Signatures

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Annabelle Ellis  
Acting General Manager

**Waste Systems**

**29 April 2024**

Hon Penny SIMMONDS  
**Minister for the Environment**

**Date**



## **Appendices**

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Please see appendices attached via email to the Minister's office.