



# Open Briefing: Organics Business Case

## 14 June 2023 – 6.15pm

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### Attendees

**Elected Members:** Cr Briggs, Cr Brown (via audio-visual link), Cr Mitchell, Cr Morgan (via audio-visual link), Cr Parkin, Cr Shaw, Cr Stallinger, K Yung (Petone Community Board).

**Staff:** A Blackshaw, Acting Chief Executive; A Geddes, Director Environment and Sustainability; G Roberts, Manager Waste Minimisation; A Saker, Senior Advisor Waste Minimisation; D Cornille, Graduate Advisor Waste Minimisation and J Randall, Democracy Advisor.

### Apologies

Mayor Barry, Cr Barratt, Cr Dyer, Cr Edwards, Deputy Mayor Lewis, Cr Tupou, M Henderson (Petone Community Board), T Harker (Wainuiomata Community Board), B Spedding (Eastbourne Community Board),

### Presenters

D Cornille, Graduate Advisor Waste Minimisation and G Roberts, Manager Waste Minimisation.

### Introduction and key objectives of the briefing

The purpose of the briefing was to outline the objectives, process and options for managing organic waste in Lower Hutt and the wider region.

# **Presentation by G Roberts, Manager Waste Minimisation and D Cornille, Graduate Advisor Waste Minimisation.**

## **Slide 1 – Organics Collections and Processing (Header)**

**Slide 2 – What is organic waste?** Garden and food waste – officers will not be including biosolids.

**Slide 3 – Organic waste in Lower Hutt:** A high percentage of waste in landfill bins is organics – 600 tonnes per week. There is potential for a large amount of this organic waste to be diverted.

## **Slide 4 – Why organic waste? (Header)**

**Slide 5 – Environmental:** Organic waste produces methane and carbon dioxide in the landfill which is harmful to the environment.

**Slide 6 – Strategic:** The Ministry for the Environment has released documents that indicate a ban on organic waste in landfills is likely. By 2030 all councils must provide a food waste collection in urban areas – this is key to reducing emissions. Food waste diversion will be a priority action in Council’s Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP).

**Slide 7 – What are we trying to achieve?:** Many groups are involved to help develop a cost effective and affordable business case.

**Slide 9 – Process so far:** Completed milestones include stakeholder engagement, and a recently received options report. The options report will be finalised before work on the business case begins.

**Slide 10 – HCC stakeholder engagement:** Regional councils, including Hutt City Council, undertook extensive engagement with businesses, community groups and food processors. This helped councils understand the status

quo, and barriers and opportunities for food waste changes. This information will be provided to Council's consultant and included in the options report and business case.

**Slide 11 – Field trips:** Officers visited some processors to look at options.

**Slide 12 – Options report (header):** A summary of collection and processing options.

**Slide 13 – Potential processing options:** The main possibilities for food waste plant and processing options.

- Land use and the surrounding urban area need to be considered.
- It will be difficult to find a suitable site for some options due to possible odour and leachate issues.
- There is a lack of available bulking agents for some options.
- Some options are expensive.

**Slide 14 – Vermiculture:** Use of worms – pros and cons.

**Slide 15 – Aerated static piles:** Forced air to accelerate the decomposition – pros and cons.

**Slide 16 – Windrow composting:** Machinery turns the windrows – pros and cons.

**Slide 17 – In vessel composting:** Composting using technology, i.e. heat and a mechanical process to accelerate the composting – pros and cons.

**Slide 18 – Wet anaerobic digestion:** A biogas plant with a high level of liquid waste generating gas – pros and cons.

**Slide 19 – Dry anaerobic digestion:** Does not need as much liquid to operate as wet anaerobic digestion – pros and cons.

**Slide 20 – Community composting – co-existing:** Community composting has benefits alongside a larger kerbside system. Some community groups are already composting.

**Slide 21 – Collection options:** There are options to either mix or separate green and food waste streams, depending on the type of plant used.

**Slide 22 – Assessment criteria:** Diverting food waste from the landfill is important because of the greenhouse gas it generates and its environmental impact.

## Questions and discussion points

- Raising public awareness will be an ongoing action for officers. Council supports the EnviroSchools programme in Lower Hutt as part of promoting behaviour change.
- There are issues with including nappies and sanitary products in composting. Nappy manufacturers would need to make their products to certain standards. Also, there are cultural restraints on putting human excrement on land. In addition, the quality of the composted product would be compromised.
- The option Council chooses needs to be straightforward and without fishhooks so the public can use it easily.
- Biosolids cannot be included since they contain heavy metal contaminants which would compromise the finished product.
- Government's New Zealand Waste strategy states that every council must have an organics kerbside collection. More detail is not yet available.
- Officers will assess the options for processing plants. A process will emerge from the business case.
- Behaviour campaigns are being run more frequently, some with a focus on zero food waste. The Ministry for the Environment is funding a number of

behaviour change campaigns as part of their nationwide strategy so that there is less waste.

- Officers have been undertaking a market validation project to explore avenues for compost and other products such as topsoil removed from building sites. Cr Briggs asked to hear more on this project once the business case is complete. He said using by-products in a meaningful way will provide a rationale for the community to participate in the process whilst also offsetting emissions.

## Next steps

- Once the options report is finalised and the business case is complete, officers will report back to Council.
- The Ministry for the Environment has funding streams available for organic waste collection and processing.
- K Yung was invited to attend the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee meeting on 4 July 2023 when the options will be discussed in more detail.

## Briefing materials

**Attachment 1 – PowerPoint Presentation:** Organics collection and processing

**The briefing closed at 6.45 pm**