

Report No:	ort No: RCN12-05-14	
File No:		
Date:	16 May 2012	
Decision Required		

REPORT SUMMARY

Report to: Mayor and Councillors

Meeting Date: 24 May 2012 Report Author David Stephenson

Subject: Proposed Amendments to Solid Waste Activities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report proposes changes to the capital and operational budgets for the solid waste account over the period of the Long Term Plan and amendments to the rating area for the Refuse Recycling Rate.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the report is received and the resolutions be adopted.

DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

THAT the Proposed Amendments to Solid Waste Activities report RCN12-05-14 be received; and

THAT the capital works programme for solid waste in the Long Term Plan 2012-2022 be amended to delay improvements at the Mariri Resource Recovery Centre from Year 1 to Year 2, improvements at the Takaka Resource Recovery Centre from Year 2 to Year 3, the construction of landfill gas collection infrastructure at Eves Valley until Years 4 and 5, and other minor amendments as necessary as noted in the report RCN12-05-14; and

THAT the operational budgets for solid waste be amended to account for increased cost fluctuations for the 2011/2012 year, applied since preparation of the activity management plan, and other minor amendments as necessary as noted in the report, RCN12-05-14; and

THAT the operational expenditure budgets for solid waste be amended to account for the costs of the Emissions Trading Scheme applying from 1 January 2013, with amendments as outlined in the New Zealand Government



consultation document and with a conservative cost assumption of \$15 per NZU for the ten year period as noted in the report, RCN12-05-14; and

THAT the income projections for the activity be amended to account for updated information regarding sustainable income levels as noted in the report RCN12-05-14; and

THAT the balance of account be funded by general rate as noted in the report, RCN12-05-14; and

THAT the Refuse Recycling Rating areas in the Long Term Plan be amended as outlined in section 3.18 of the report RCN12-05-14 and as illustrated in the rating area maps appended.



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Long Term Plan

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose changes to the capital and operational budgets for the solid waste account over the period of the Long Term Plan and to amend the rating area for the Refuse Recycling Rate.

2. Background

- 2.1 Solid waste activities are funded by a combination of general and targeted rates, fees and charges and income from central government (the waste disposal levy).
- 2.2 Of particular note for this activity is the large proportion of income that is derived from fees and charges and the variable and somewhat unpredictable nature of this income.
- 2.3 Kerbside collection activities (rubbish bags, recycling and Kaiteriteri collections) are fully funded by targeted rates and income from bag sales. Council resolved during consideration of budgets for the Long Term Plan to collect through the targeted rate an additional \$401,000 per annum (with inflation adjustments) to fund other solid waste activities.
- 2.4 Waste minimisation activities are funded by income from the waste disposal levy (from central government) which is received quarterly and varies depending on the total waste disposed of across the country. Over the 12 months to January 2012, \$128,400 was received from this source.
- 2.5 Public good activities (closed landfills, waste policy and management, illegal dumping) are generally funded by general rate (and a portion of targeted rate income as outlined above).



- 2.6 Remaining activities (landfill, waste haulage and resource recovery centre operations) are funded by general rate and fees and recoveries. Ideally these would be funded entirely by fees and recoveries but Council's ability to collect sufficient income is limited by the commercial nature of this activity.
- 2.7 The Richmond Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) receives 67% of all waste disposed through the District's RRCs and is the major revenue source for these operational activities. Income from this site approximately meets expenditure.
- 2.8 At all remaining RRC sites (Mariri, Takaka, Collingwood and Murchison) the income received from fees and charges is insufficient to meet expenditure and significant general rate income is required to fund these sites.
- 2.9 The commencement of the emissions trading scheme (ETS) on 1 January 2013 has added also added uncertainty to cost projections for the Long Term Plan. Costs of methane emissions from the landfill will be subject to market prices for greenhouse gas emissions (traded as "NZU's" in the case of New Zealand).
- 2.10 Budgeting for emissions liabilities in the Draft Long Term Plan was based on an assumption of \$20 per NZU. This was on the basis of advice received from Local Government New Zealand, but market prices for emissions are likely to be affected by Government policy and international negotiations which are currently in a state of flux.
- 2.11 The Draft Long Term Plan also provided for a modest extension of kerbside recycling and rubbish collection in areas adjoining the current collection routes. Staff wrote to all affected property owners (approximately 300) outlining the proposal and received just over 30 submissions.

3. Present Situation and Matters to be Considered

- 3.1 Since preparation of budgets for the Draft Long Term Plan the following factors have impacted on projected income and expenditure for the account:
 - Proposed amendments to the emissions trading scheme, released in a consultation document by Government¹;
 - The publication of cost fluctuations factors for operational contracts; and
 - Publication of proposed disposal prices at the York Valley landfill.
- 3.2 A total of 37 submissions were received regarding refuse and recycling and 34 of these related to amendments to the Refuse Recycling Rating Area. In

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¹ Updating the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme: A consultation document, New Zealand Government, April 2012. http://www.climatechange.govt.nz/consultation/ets/consultation-ets-changes.pdf



addition staff have spoken to a number of submitters and other residents affected by the proposed changes.

3.3 Amendments to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

Central government has completed a review of the ETS receiving a report late last year from a technical advisory group and releasing a consultation document in April of this year.

- 3.4 In summary the proposals as they relate to landfills are:
 - an increase in the global warming impact of methane from 21 to 25 times that of carbon dioxide;
 - provision for a limit on the amount of international units able to be used to account for New Zealand liabilities;
 - extending the Government offer of a maximum price of \$25 per NZU to 2015; and
 - phasing in NZU surrender obligations from 50% in the current calendar year to 67% in 2013, 75% in 2014, 83% in 2015 and 100% in 2016 and following years.
- 3.5 Carbon emission liabilities are accounted in calendar years, not the July-June financial year of Council. The draft Long Term Plan budget assumed that payments for ETS liabilities fell in the 2013/2014 year, but this has been corrected so that the costs fall in the year that the liabilities are incurred rather than when payment is due and so the first liability is accounted for in the 2012/2013 year.
- 3.6 In the Draft Long Term Plan liabilities under the ETS were budgeted on a carbon price of \$20 per NZU. In recent months units have been trading at between \$6 and \$9 per NZU, although there is a high level of uncertainty in the market, which is mainly due to proposed changes to the ETS in New Zealand and the status of other markets and international agreements.
- 3.7 In the light of recent movements in carbon pricing, it is considered reasonable to lower for budgeting purposes the estimated cost of NZU's from \$20 to \$15. There is some risk to Council in lowering the budget cost due to the volatility of the carbon market.
- 3.8 The net impact of the ETS changes are summarised in the following table.

ETS liability per tonne of refuse*	Year 1 2012/13	Year 2 2013/14	Year 3 2014/15	Year 4 2015/16**
Draft Long Term Plan	NIL	\$11.00	\$22.00	\$22.00
Amended proposal	\$6.55	\$14.73	\$18.01	\$19.64

^{*} with no capture of emissions



- ** liabilities are expected to decline as gas collection systems are commissioned
- 3.9 Actual emission liabilities will vary each year and will be affected by composition and quantity of refuse to landfill, capture and destruction of landfill gas and on market prices and Council's purchasing strategy. A paper will be presented to the Corporate Services Committee shortly on a recommended approach to ETS trading.
- 3.10 The Draft Long Term Plan provided for construction of gas collection systems at the Eves Valley landfill from Year 2, but further cost-benefit analysis of this has indicated it is unlikely to be cost effective unless carbon prices rise above \$25 per NZU. It has been proposed to defer this work until construction of Stage 3 of Eves Valley (discussed later in this report). The effect of this change will be an increase in Council's emission liabilities between Year 3 and Year 5 but decreased debt and interest costs.

3.11 Cost fluctuations and other operational contract costs

Long term operation and maintenance contracts have cost fluctuation indices to account for changes in contract operating costs (fuel, labour, materials etc). While cost increases for the current year were budgeted at 2% to 3%, information received in December and January indicates that costs have risen between 3% and 6%.

3.12 As a consequence of these items, operational costs for the Long Term Plan budget have been revised upwards.

3.13 Landfill and resource recovery centre disposal prices

Since preparation of the Draft Long Term Plan staff have better information on which to predict sustainable price increases at Council disposal sites.

- 3.14 The Draft Long Term Plan originally assumed an increase of \$10 per tonne at Resource Recovery Centres and is proposed to further increase prices at some sites in the 2012/2013 year. The spread of prices between Richmond, Mariri and other sites has been increased slightly. A further review of special waste tonnages and prices has indicated a need to also increase prices in this area.
- 3.15 Income projections for Year 2 and subsequent years have been generally revised down from projections in the Draft Long Term Plan. This will generally require further general rate contributions to the activity in these years.
- 3.16 Specific changes to fees and charges are discussed in more detail in a separate report to the Council.



3.17 Capital funding adjustments

As discussed above, Council staff have completed a cost-benefit analysis of gas collection on the current stage of the landfill. Essentially this has concluded that as long as carbon prices remain below \$25 per NZU that it is more cost effective to pay emission liabilities than to capture methane.

3.16 On this basis, some capital works scheduled for landfill gas recovery have been deferred to years 4 and 5, when they will very likely be a statutory consent requirement as part of Stage 3.

3.17 Submissions on Refuse Recycling Rating Area

A total of 34 submissions were received regarding the extension of kerbside collection routes and the amendment of the Refuse Recycling rating area. The submissions were generally in support of the proposed amendments, but with some questioning the basis of the rate for uninhabited properties.

3.18 A summary of the submissions, and staff comments and recommendations are provided on the following pages.



Location	Details	Staff comments	Staff recommendation
All areas	Unoccupied / undeveloped properties	The rating of unoccupied properties for this service has been raised previously and by other submitters. A previous discussion indicated that implementation of a rating system such as this would cost in the order of \$50,000. The majority of costs would be incurred in the definition of "dwelling" or "household" for each property. As the current service is scheduled for review in the next 12 to 18 months it is recommended that this issue be canvassed through this process.	That the rating policy for refuse and recycling be reviewed as part of the service review scheduled in Years 1 and 2 of the LTP.
Matenga Road (Ligar Bay)	to end of road	This area was extensively damaged in the December 2011 rainfall event and there is uncertainty whether these properties will be able to be developed in the short term.	Remove Matenga Drive and Nyhane Drive West from proposed route extension. These kerbside extensions are broadly cost neutral.
Onekaka Iron Works Road	to end of road	It appears that a significant number of residents currently use the refuse and recycling service already, by leaving bags and recycling bins at the intersection of SH60 and Onekaka Ironworks Road. Concerns regarding additional truck movements on this road may be resolved through implementation of the service.	That the rating area extension be approved.
Little Sydney Road (Brooklyn)	to end of road	It appears that a significant number of residents currently use the refuse and recycling service already. A further 16 ratepayers were informed of the proposed change and none have submitted. Although the property does not include a dwelling, rating of this property is consistent with the existing policy. As the current service is scheduled for review in the next 12 to 18 months it is recommended that this issue be canvased through this process.	That the rating area extension be approved.
Harley Road (Tasman)	to Harley Ridge	A total of 24 ratepayers in were informed of the proposed changes. A single submission in support was received.	That the rating area extension be approved.
Harley Ridge (Tasman)	to end of road	A total of 11 ratepayers were informed of the proposed changes. A single submission in support was received.	That the rating area extension be approved.



Location	Details	Staff comments	Staff recommendation
Horton Road (Tasman)	to 151	It appears that a significant number of residents (including this submitter) currently use the refuse and recycling service already, by leaving bags and/or recycling bins at the intersection of Aporo and Horton Road. A total of 6 ratepayers in were informed of the proposed changes. One submission was received in support and one in opposition.	That the rating area extension be approved.
Redwood Road (Appleby)	SH60 to Rabbit Island	A total of 6 ratepayers were informed of the proposed changes. A single submission in opposition was received. It is considered that on balance there is support for this proposal.	That the rating area extension be approved.
Cotterell Road (Appleby)	to end of road	A total of 7 ratepayers were informed of the proposed changes. A single submission in opposition was received. It is considered that on balance there is support for this proposal.	That the rating area extension be approved.
Redwood Valley Road	to Redwood Park Road	A total of 39 ratepayers were informed of the proposed changes in this area. Two submission in opposition and four in support were received. It is considered that on balance there is support for this proposal.	That the rating area extension be approved.
Pigeon Valley Road	to 433 Pigeon Valley Road	A total of 8 ratepayers were informed of the proposed changes. A total of three submissions in opposition were received. It is considered that on balance the proposal should be not adopted. One existing property is rated but not able to access the service; the rating area should be amended to remove this property	That the rating area extension not be approved and that the area be corrected to reflect the existing service. The net effect of this extension is broadly cost neutral.
Glacial Terrace Beechnest Drive (St Arnaud)	to end of road to end of road	This extension recognises a residential subdivision in St Arnaud, which previously straddled the rating area boundary. One submitter suggests alternative arrangements to kerbside collection, and while these are considered unlikely to provide cost savings, they could be considered review in the next 12 to 18 months through the review of services. To consider alternatives for St Arnaud in the interim would like cost a minimum of \$10,000.	That the rating area extension be approved. That the rating policy for refuse and recycling and service delivery for more remote areas be reviewed as part of the service review scheduled in Years 1 and 2 of the LTP.

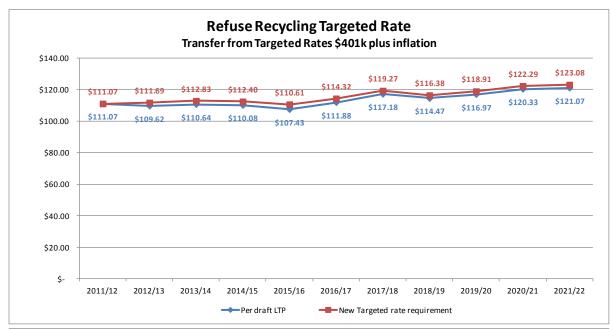


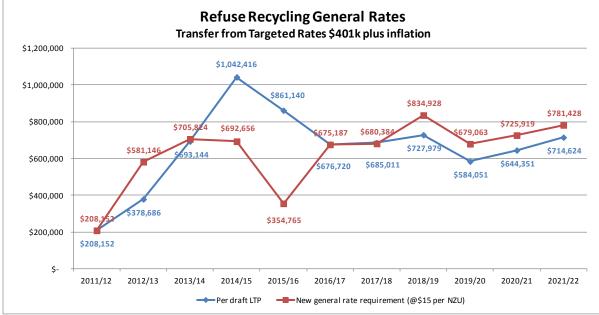
Location	Details	Staff comments	Staff recommendation
Aniseed Valley Road	Extension of recycling collection from Haycock to existing collection point at top of hill. Further extension of recycling and rubbish bags from existing collection point at top of hill to 1003	At present a refuse collection only is provided as far as the top of the Aniseed Valley Hill (#336 approximately), where there is also a refuse collection cage for TDC bags. The proposal presented in the draft LTP was to extend the collection of recyclables to this point and to rate residents up to this point. It was anticipated that the refuse collection cage would be reviewed later in the year. Early submissions and discussions with residents indicated there was potential support for extension of the kerbside services further up the valley and for removal of the cage. Staff then wrote to approximately 55 Valley residents above and below the site of the existing refuse drop-off cage seeking their views on the matter. A range of views were expressed in written and informal responses. A total of 9 submissions were received. Almost all residents were reluctant for the cage to be removed without an alternative being provided. Six of nine submissions supported or supported in part an extension of the service further up the valley. A total of three submitters opposed further extension of the service.	On balance it is considered that kerbside refuse and recycling collection should be extended to 1003 Aniseed Valley Road, and that the refuse collection cage be removed. The rating area should be amended to reflect the proposed extension. As this extension is rural in nature it is expected that the extension will cost in the order of a further \$800, although this will be offset by reduced maintenance costs of the existing cage.



4. Financial and Budgetary Considerations

- 4.1 Please note that all financial data provided in this report is based on the Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022 budgets.
- 4.2 Following review of the factors outlined above staff have adjusted proposed budgets and reassessed the overall impact on general and targeted rate. The results of this assessment are presented below.





4.3 As shown above, the proposed changes will result in modest increases to the targeted rate in all years and substantial increases to the general rate in the first two years.



- 4.4 The increase in targeted rate is primarily driven by recent cost-fluctuation increases in this activity. Extension of kerbside routes is generally cost neutral.
- 4.5 The increase in the general rate is primarily driven by an inability to recover actual costs at landfill and RRCs through fees and charges. The bulk of this income gap is from commercial waste operators (particularly in Richmond).
- 4.6 The constraint on income imposed by commercial operations is the most influential factor affecting the general rate requirement for this activity.
- 4.7 This, coupled with the opportunity to reduce costs on a per tonne basis across the region, is a driver for Council to work towards shared services in the solid waste area (particularly landfills). This work is scheduled in the Joint Waste Management and Minimisation Plan and has been budgeted to commence in the first year of the Long Term Plan.

5. Options

- 5.1 Given the significant increase in general rate requirement for this activity, staff have considered a number of options to reduce general rate requirements.

 These options are:
 - reducing operational contract costs;
 - reducing discretionary spending on waste minimisation activities;
 - consideration of reduced opening hours, lower levels of service or closure of the Collingwood RRC; and
 - deferral of capital expenditure.
- 5.2 Extensions to kerbside collections as proposed earlier in this paper will be broadly cost neutral and will not affect general or targeted rates in any material manner, and therefore have not been considered further.

5.3 Reducing operational costs

Following extension of Contract 613 (kerbside collection and resource recovery centre operation) Council has met with the contractor to discuss potential cost savings in this contract. Discussions have been constructive and the contractor has indicated potential savings of up to 5% throughout the contract. Talks continue with the contractor with a view to reaching agreement but these savings have not been budgeted at present.

5.4 Waste minimisation activities

Historically these activities have been regarded as discretionary and have been reduced when necessary due to income shortfalls. However these activities are now funded entirely by central government through the waste disposal levy and



reducing activities below this funding level is likely to be scrutinised when the activities are audited.

5.5 Reducing levels of service

Staff have considered reducing levels of service at several locations: for example reducing the opening hours and the scope of services provided at more remote sites such as Collingwood and Murchison. Examples of reduced levels of service could include removing items such as greenwaste, scrap metal and vehicle bodies from the list of accepted materials at these sites.

5.6 In the analysis of these options it was considered that any savings were unlikely to be significant, as many operating costs are relatively fixed. Further, adopting these changes without indicating this intention in the Draft Long Term Plan is likely to lead to an unfavourable reaction from the community.

5.7 Closure of the Collingwood Resource Recovery Centre

Given the scale of the increase in general rate required for the activity, staff have considered the likely scale of savings were the Collingwood site to be closed. The site is approximately 27km from the Takaka RRC and many residents are likely to travel to Takaka on a regular or occasional basis. Commercial waste collectors already travel to Takaka and waste volumes at this site have been falling steadily over the last five years.

- 5.8 An analysis of this option indicates that savings of approximately \$45,000 may be achievable. Some fixed costs (such as consent monitoring and principal and interest payments) are likely to remain over the next ten years, while other costs such as Council overheads and management costs would need to be respread.
- 5.9 It is likely that closure of this site would create significant adverse reaction from the community for what are, relatively speaking, modest cost savings. Review of the long term costs and benefits of this site would be best considered in open consultation with the community (as provided for in the Joint Waste Management and Minimisation Plan).

5.10 Deferral of capital works

Most capital works are funded by loan, so deferral of capital works gives relatively modest short-term savings. However, given the projected medium term increases in general rate requirements, it is prudent to consider deferral of some capital works. Deferral or cancellation of capital work results in a saving of approximately 5.5% in the first year and 11% in subsequent years (for a 20 year loan).



- 5.11 Over the next three years the most significant capital works are at the Eves Valley landfill and Mariri and Takaka Resource Recovery Centres. Preparation of a resource consent for Eves Valley is essential in the short term and cannot be delayed.
- 5.12 The proposed upgrade and renewal works at Mariri and Takaka may be delayed by one year without critically impacting on operations. Savings from delaying these works are likely to be in the order of \$40,000 in year 1 and \$20,000 in year 2. However a risk remains that maintenance and operational costs may increase at these sites and these would need to be carefully monitored.

6. Pros and Cons of Options

- 6.1 Projected income and expenditure in this activity indicates a significant increase in general rate contribution over the next three years primarily due to increased landfill operational and capital costs. Cost savings may be possible in some areas such as resource recovery operations, waste minimisation activities and delaying capital works. However they are likely to be modest in comparison with increasing landfill costs.
- 6.2 It is considered that the best use of Council resources is to progress joint management options for the regions' landfill space. Rationalisation of landfill activities could lead to significant savings for both Councils (although potential savings are greatest for Tasman). Progress on this issue could lead to very significant capital savings if the next stage of the Eves Valley landfill is able to be deferred or funded jointly.
- 6.3 Significant reductions in levels of service (such as closure of the Collingwood site or significant reductions in opening hours at other sites) are likely to be negatively received by communities. Dealing with this adverse reaction is likely to divert resources from more important regional activities. It is considered that cost savings in these areas are best pursued with the contractor and in consultation with the community.
- 6.4 Capital upgrades (rather than renewals) are able to be feasibly delayed without significant impact, and may be better implemented once regional disposal options have been agreed.
- 6.5 The majority of waste minimisation activities (excepting kerbside recycling) are funded by central government and are shared or coordinated with Nelson City Council. It is not considered prudent to reduce these services, particularly as they may impact on the development of a joint approach with Nelson City Council.



7. Evaluation of Options

- 7.1 On balance it is considered that the preferred approach to achieving savings in the Solid Waste activity is to delay capital work not essential in years 1 and 2 and to ensure resources are directed to achieving good progress towards joint management of the regions' landfills.
- 7.2 Operational savings are likely to be achieved at some sites with minor or no reduction in levels of service. These savings should be pursued with some urgency but are not able to be budgeted at this stage.
- 7.3 Any other significant changes to levels of service are not recommended in the short term. Implementation of these would likely be unpopular and draw energy and resources away from regional initiatives which have the potential to provide more sustainable long term savings.
- 7.4 In the medium to longer term the levels of service offered and the affordability of these will have to be reviewed with the community. This work is identified in the Joint Waste Minimisation Plan and programmed through existing budgets.

8. Significance

- 8.1 This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Significance Policy because the proposals recommended in this report do not breach the significance thresholds of Council.
- 8.2 An alternative decision of Council with regards to significant reductions in levels of service or closure of facilities may breach the significance thresholds.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That the capital works programme for solid waste be amended to delay improvements at the Mariri RRC from Year 1 to Year 2, improvements at the Takaka RRC from Year 2 to Year 3, the construction of landfill gas collection infrastructure at Eves Valley until Years 4 and 5, and other minor amendments as necessary.
- 9.2 That the operational budgets for solid waste be amended to account for increased cost fluctuations for the 2011/2012 year, applied since preparation of the activity management plan, and other minor amendments as necessary.
- 9.3 That the operational expenditure budgets for solid waste be amended to account for the costs of the Emissions Trading Scheme applying from
 1 January 2013, with amendments as outlined in the New Zealand Government



- consultation document and with a conservative cost assumption of \$15 per NZU for the ten year period.
- 9.4 That the income projections for the activity be amended to account for updated information regarding sustainable income levels.
- 9.5 That the balance of account be funded by general rate.
- 9.6 That the Refuse Recycling Rating areas be amended as outlined in section 3.18 of this report and as illustrated in the attached rating area maps.

10. Next Steps

10.1 The decisions of Council on these matters will be incorporated into final budgets and the Long Term Plan document being prepared for adoption by the Council in June.

11. Draft Resolution

- 11.1 THAT the Proposed Amendments to Solid Waste report RCN12-05-14 be received: and
- 11.2 THAT the capital works programme for solid waste in the Long Term Plan 2012-2022 be amended to delay improvements at the Mariri Resource Recovery Centre from Year 1 to Year 2, improvements at the Takaka Resource Recovery Centre from Year 2 to Year 3, the construction of landfill gas collection infrastructure at Eves Valley until Years 4 and 5, and other minor amendments as necessary as noted in the report RCN12-05-14; and
- 11.3 THAT the operational budgets for solid waste be amended to account for increased cost fluctuations for the 2011/2012 year, applied since preparation of the activity management plan, and other minor amendments as necessary as noted in the report, RCN12-05-14; and
- 11.4 THAT the operational expenditure budgets for solid waste be amended to account for the costs of the Emissions Trading Scheme applying from 1 January 2013, with amendments as outlined in the New Zealand Government consultation document and with a conservative cost assumption of \$15 per NZU for the ten year period as noted in the report, RCN12-05-14; and



- 11.5 THAT the income projections for the activity be amended to account for updated information regarding sustainable income levels as noted in the report RCN12-05-14; and
- 11.6 THAT the balance of account be funded by general rate as noted in the report, RCN12-05-14; and
- 11.7 THAT the Refuse Recycling Rating areas in the Long Term Plan be amended as outlined in section 3.18 of the report RCN12-05-14 and as illustrated in the rating area maps appended.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Brightwater/Waimea Recycling Rating Area

Appendix 2 – Ligar Bay/Tata Beach Recycling Rating Area

Appendix 3 - Richmond Recycling Rating Area

Appendix 4 – Wakefield Recycling Rating Area