

27. LICENSING HARDFILL SITES

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the concept of licensing waste carriers/hardfill sites in the city.

BACKGROUND

Hardfill sites require consent from Environment Canterbury to accept inert materials, of which construction and demolition materials is a major proportion. Resource consent conditions for hardfill sites do not require records on volume or weight to be kept, but a November 2000 study by Landcare Research estimates that approximately 363,000 tonnes per year of construction and demolition materials material alone went into hardfill pits in the city – i.e., in addition to the approximate 30,000 tonnes going to Burwood landfill.

Targeting disposers of waste to Burwood Landfill for a contribution towards the cost of waste minimisation initiatives has been an approach used with success in Christchurch, but disposers at hardfill sites have so far been excluded from this. As part of the drive to reduce all residual waste disposal, in line with the Council's waste reduction goal and targets, it would be possible to use the same approach for general disposal as well as disposal at hardfill sites.

The Council is authorised under the Local Government Act 1974 to license commercial collectors and transporters of waste and to impose conditions attaching to such licences. Furthermore, the Council is authorised to impose a waste minimisation levy on privately-owned disposal sites such as hardfill sites.

OPTIONS FOR COLLECTION OF WASTE MINIMISATION CONTRIBUTION

Current practice is for the disposal charge for residual waste to landfill (via refuse stations) to include a proportion of the charge collected at the kiosk at the refuse station for waste minimisation initiatives.

Option 1

Waste Carriers provide monthly returns

Collection of a contribution towards waste minimisation initiatives from hardfill sites does, however, pose a problem, in that very few hardfill sites have weighbridges. A recently initiated study on licensing waste carriers includes an idea to require all waste carriers to be responsible for collecting waste minimisation contributions. This will have the benefit of resisting potential attempts to transport waste out of the city to escape paying such contributions, which will become more of an issue as the City's waste charges increase. However, the logistics of this approach appear to be such that implementation and administration of such a scheme would be onerous for most waste carriers and, in addition, would be costly for the city and prevent surrounding territorial local authorities from joining in a wider implementation of such a scheme.

Option 2

Waste minimisation contribution collected by hardfill site operator

A more practical option for collecting waste minimisation contributions from waste going to hardfill pits would be to require, as part of a waste carrier's licence, use of a weighbridge, and producing proof of having done so. Waste transporters will therefore need to use a weighbridge first on the way into the hardfill site and secondly on the way out. Hardfill site operators would therefore, in terms of proposed license conditions, collect the waste minimisation contribution on behalf of the Council, having proof of the tonnage discharged at their site. Current disposal charges at commercially-owned hardfill sites vary, but generally hardfill is accepted for disposal at around \$4 a tonne.

The preferred option is for hardfill site operators to collect the contribution (i.e. option 2), which entails waste carriers using weighbridges, and the waste minimisation charge being collected by hardfill site operators on behalf of the Council. This option can be implemented and administered with lowest overall cost. In either case the aim would be to apply a per tonnage charge on waste to hardfills. Assuming the current charge is only around \$4 a tonne, it would seem reasonable to charge no more than an additional \$2 per tonne on 350,000 tonnes per year. This would result in additional potential revenue of about \$700,000 per year.

DISCUSSION

It is proposed that further work be done and that a report containing a specific proposal be submitted this financial year. Further issues requiring attention include the exact legal mechanisms, including changes to the waste management plan and refuse bylaws, and determining an appropriate level for such a charge. Determining a suitable charge for waste going to hardfill sites would need to take note of disposal charges.

SUMMARY

It is considered that operators of hardfill sites should be required to collect a waste minimisation charge in terms of the Local Government Act waste management legislation for all incoming waste. This will produce a revenue stream to help finance the Council's waste minimisation activities. A more detailed report will be presented to this Committee later in the year when more work has been done. If the Council wishes to include a revenue stream from this initiative in its forward budget it is suggested that an additional waste minimisation revenue of \$0.700M per year is included, starting with 50% (i.e. \$0.350M) in the 2003/04 year and the full amount (i.e. \$0.700M) in the 2004/05 year.

Recommendation: That a more detailed report be presented to this Committee later in the year.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** Not seen by Chairman.