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Report to Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Karen Brewster, Section Leader, Policy and Planning

Proposed Solid Waste Management Plan for Wairarapa

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the Proposed Solid Waste Management Plan that has been prepared by Waste Management Wairarapa, and to advise of the submission made by the Wairarapa Division.

2. Background

2.1 In 1996, following a review of Wairarapa's future waste disposal options, the Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils decided to collaborate on the region's waste problems. A jointly funded Wairarapa Regional Landfill Committee was established, which subsequently agreed to operate under the name Waste Management Wairarapa. Membership of this committee also includes local iwi and Wellington Regional Council representatives. The Committee agreed to develop a solid waste management plan on a Wairarapa-wide basis in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1996.

2.2 With a view to preparing the Waste Management Plan, Waste Management Wairarapa produced a Public Discussion Document in August last year identifying waste management issues and options for the Wairarapa. A total of 17 submissions were received, with strong support for:

- Zero Waste practices;
- maximising the 4 R's (reduction/re-use/recycling/recovery of waste);
- community initiatives and education on waste management; and
- to a lesser extent although still significant, support for local transfer stations servicing a single regional (Wairarapa) landfill.

The Regional Council's submission expressed general support for the "...development of a **single regional landfill** for the Wairarapa, combined with **waste minimisation options** such as those advocated through "Zero Waste"

(refer Attachment 1). This approach was consistent with indications from the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee at its meeting on 27 August 1999.

- 2.3 Waste Management Wairarapa considered the submissions, and prepared the Proposed Waste Management Plan which was notified in July this year. The Proposed Plan is far more specific than the Discussion Document, and includes a number of goals and action points on waste management practices. A full copy of the Proposed Waste Management Plan is available from the Policy and Planning Section.
- 2.4 Submissions closed on the Proposed Waste Plan on 4 August 2000 and hearings were held in front of the Waste Management Wairarapa Committee on 15 August. Seventeen submissions were received in total on the proposed plan, with continued strong support for Zero Waste, and education initiatives on waste minimisation. Support for a regional landfill was not as apparent as for the previous public consultation phase. The Regional Council submission is attached (refer Attachment 2).

3. Comment

3.1 Regional Council Submission

The Regional Council submission sought mainly to tighten wording or correct inaccuracies in the Plan, but the following pertinent points were also raised:

- The legal status of the Waste Management Wairarapa Committee was questioned. It was considered important to clarify whether the Committee had any powers under the Local Government Act, and to determine what weight would be given to the recommendations of the Committee in the Waste Management Plan by the respective Councils.

Territorial Authorities are required by the Local Government Act to prepare a waste management plan, but it was unclear whether this meant that the joint management plan *had* to be adopted by the respective Councils. It was considered important that the Plan clarified these matters so that the Regional Council and the public are fully aware of the process. Discussion at the hearing confirmed that the Committee existed to *consider and explore* the waste management issues and options for the Wairarapa, but the respective Councils could choose to ignore the recommendations of the Committee.

- The wording of the Proposed Waste Management Plan implied that regional councils should be actively preventing or mitigating adverse effects arising from hazardous substances. The Regional Council submission reminded the Committee that the respective roles of the Regional and District Councils with regard to hazardous substances had been clearly spelt out in the Regional Policy Statement made operative in May 1995. In all areas, except the beds of rivers and lakes, and the coastal marine area, the Regional Council has the policy making function for hazardous substances, while the territorial authority has the rule making function.
- The Regional Council's support for Zero Waste practices was reiterated in the submission. However, it was emphasised that Zero Waste was not considered an immediate or absolute solution to waste issues, and that Waste Management Wairarapa needed to remain focused on providing for the waste

management needs that will be necessary in combination with Zero Waste philosophies, including regional landfill. This position was again stated at the hearing, but the Waste Management Wairarapa Committee considered progress towards a regional landfill to be premature, as it had not yet been determined whether a regional landfill is required.

- The submission noted that the Waste Plan made no reference to the issue of disposing of solid waste by way of burning. Masterton's winter air quality problems were discussed with the Committee. While it was noted that the Regional Council controlled discharges to air by way of the Regional Air Quality Plan, it was considered appropriate and important that goals and actions be added to the plan to discourage burning as a method of waste disposal.

3.2 Process from Here

The Waste Management Wairarapa Hearings Committee (made up of the political representatives on the committee) is currently considering the submissions and an officer's report will be prepared outlining the committee's recommendations. It is hoped that Regional Council officers can continue to liaise closely with the committee to ensure the Waste Plan is appropriate and effective. Once the Waste Plan is finalised it will be put to each respective Council for adoption. While each Council is required to prepare a Waste Management Plan under the Local Government Act, there is no statutory/legal requirement for them to adopt *this* plan.

4. Communication

The Regional Council does not have any direct responsibility for publicity of the Proposed Waste Management Plan. The Proposed Plan was publicly notified in July this year, and all parties who made earlier submissions were sent copies of the Plan for further comment.

5. Recommendation

That the report be received and the contents noted.

Report prepared by:

Karen Brewster
Section Leader, Policy & Planning

Approved for submission by:

Steve Blakemore
Manager, Planning & Resources

Attachments 1 and 2