



WASTE MANAGEMENT BULLER DISTRICT NEW MODEL OF SERVICES

Considerations of Statement of Proposal
July 2023

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1 Background

1.1 The current situation

Under the requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 Buller District Council must promote effective and efficient waste management and Minimisation within the District. This is achieved by:

- Having a Regional Waste Minimisation and Management Plan.
- Working with a contractor to provide waste and recycling collection from households in Westport and Reefton.
- Provides for the rubbish and recyclable materials drop off at transfer stations (Westport, Reefton,) and small landfills (Maruia, Karamea).

Council is proposing changes to the household collection services for Zone 1. This includes Sedonville, Hector, Granity and Waimangaroa in the North. Cape Foulwind, Charleston, Fox River and Punakaiki to the South and Buller Gorge Road, Inangahua, Reefton, Blackball, Ikamatua to the East.

The key changes will be a shift from the current rubbish bags to mandatory wheelie bins for rubbish collection (for properties located on roads where the Kerbside collection vehicle routes past). With rubbish collection funded through a standard charge for each property receiving the service. Recycling collections, transfer station and landfill services will remain the same.

1.2 Existing waste and recycling services for Buller

Residential Collection

Waste and recycling collection services are provided in parts of the Buller District with both urban and rural residents in Zone 1 having access to refuse and recycling collections at the main roadsides.

Kerbside waste is collected in compactor trucks and consolidated at the Westport Transfer Station and Recycling Centre for transportation to landfill. For refuse collection households can use (60L) bags at a cost of \$9.10 per bag (since 1 July 2023) or use one of several commercial wheelie bin collection services, which costs approximately \$356 annually. The bag charges reflect the cost of collection and transport to landfill shared amongst those who use the bag service.

There is also a two-stream kerbside recycling service in all areas except Karamea and Maruia. Households have fortnightly collections of co-mingled materials (paper, cardboard, plastics, and tins in a 240L wheelie bin) and glass (in a 45L crate). This service is currently covered by a targeted rate.



Image of existing bags and recycle containers.

Transfer Stations & Refuse Drop-off Points

Transfer stations accept recyclable materials and waste and are located at Westport and Reefton. The public can also drop off refuse to landfills at Karamea (some recyclable materials) and Maruia.

Refuse from Westport and Reefton (transfer stations and residential collections) is transported to Nelson's York Valley Landfill. Recyclable materials are captured for recycling and transported

with Kerbside recyclable materials around the country, depending on the current market. Green waste is used to build a soil cover on the closed Westport Landfill.

In the Buller District refuse drop-off and transfer station services attract user charges for waste and some recyclable materials.



1.3 Drivers for Change

The current contract for waste minimisation and management services in Buller is coming to an end in mid-2024 (In progress to be extended until Mid-2025). Council have agreed to work with Grey District Council and Westland District Council to deliver consistent household collection and transfer station services across the West Coast. This is anticipated to make delivery of services more efficient and increase the resilience of our service delivery with more staff and equipment available across the Coast.

In reviewing the services in Buller, we have identified several issues that suggest it is timely to make changes to our household collections. These are:

- The waste collection sector is moving away from the use of bags to collect rubbish for health and safety reasons.
- The Ministry for the Environment have announced standard household collection services, focussed on recyclable materials and food waste.
- There is ongoing illegal dumping in the District, providing a service for all households in key areas is anticipated to reduce illegal dumping.
- By controlling services, Council is able to invest on behalf of the community to capture more materials for recycling or recovery.
- By providing a universal household collection service to the specified areas of the Buller District, Council is able to manage costs for each household.

These issues are discussed further below.

1.3.1 Health & safety

The current bag-based waste collection in Buller Zone 1 presents a health and safety risk to collection staff. These risks are actively managed by the current collection contractor, but the waste sector is moving away from bag-based collections due to the need to manage these risks and potential consequences. The key risks include:

- Repeated lifting of bags
- Running in traffic
- Sharps in bags

Moving away from bags to a wheelie bin system addresses these risks, reducing the potential for injury or death.

1.3.2 New Zealand's Waste System changes

Recently the Government announced some key changes to New Zealand's waste system, these are future focused and are working towards the commitment to a low-emissions, low-waste circular economy by 2050.

Among the key changes outlined is the intention to deliver 'improved household recycling and food scrap collections, making it easier for people to recycle and divert food scraps from landfills. Under this banner, the three main changes being introduced are:

- From February 2024, councils across Aotearoa will accept the same materials in their household collections - the current recycling service meets these requirements.
- By 2027, recycling collections will be available to households in all urban areas - the current recycling service meets these requirements.
- By 2030, food scraps collections will be available to households in all urban areas. – a new service will be required by 2030.

1.3.3 Illegal dumping

Illegal dumping is an issue for the Buller District as it is widespread and has a negative effect on both people and the environment. Illegal dumping also has a financial cost to the community – for removal and disposal of the waste by Council. Moving from a system where households need to pay directly for waste collection to a service that is provided to all households is anticipated to reduce illegal dumping by reducing financial barriers to accessing waste disposal.

A move from bags to wheelie bins also prevents animals getting into bags and spreading waste/litter.

1.3.4 Council control of services

By providing a rubbish and recycling service to all residents Council is able to encourage households to recycle materials.

Many households already use Smart Environmental wheelie bins for rubbish, typically a 120L.

A Council service provided to all households will be significantly lower cost per household compared to a similar service purchased by individual households.

Providing 120L refuse wheelie bins to all households is anticipated to improve the capture of recyclable materials. Limiting the space in the bins to 120L provides an incentive for people to recycle more efficiently and compost food and garden waste. Providing even smaller bins (80L for example) would further encourage households to divert garden waste, either to composting at home or dropping off at Council transfer stations in Westport or Reefton. This is not currently being considered.

1.3.5 Cost of Kerbside rubbish service to households

The cost for a household using 1 bag per fortnight is \$9.10 per bag (from 1 July 2023) or around \$237 per year. For a household using a bag per week the cost is around \$478 per year, which is more than the forecast cost of a fortnightly wheelie bin service (estimated combined cost of rubbish and recycling between \$375 and \$450 per year).

When compared with similar areas bag prices in Buller District are relatively high, most likely reflecting the rural nature of the District and high disposal costs (including transport).

1.4 New contract (Regional)

The current contract for waste services in Buller District ends in 2024, Grey and Westland have

recently extended theirs to also end in 2024. The intention is to adopt a single contract across the Grey, Buller and Westland Districts for kerbside collections, transfer of materials, transfer station operations and trading of recyclables.

For the Buller District, the proposal is to match Grey and Westland District kerbside services for waste. These are based on a fortnightly collection of waste in 120 L wheelie bins. Funding is through a targeted rate (a standard charge for each property).

In order to deliver the combined services contract the three councils will establish a formal Joint Committee. The Joint Committee will oversee waste Minimisation and management activities across the West Coast on behalf of the three Councils, including:

- Delivery of services (collections, transfer stations) under a joint contract with a single contractor.
- Implementation of the Regional Waste Minimisation and Management Plan (WMMP).

2 The Proposal

The Buller District Council is proposing changes to the way that household waste collection services are delivered and funded in waste and recycling zone one.

Currently a contractor operates the rubbish bag collections in Zone 1 with the service funded by bag sales. Recycling collection is funded by Council through a standard charge for each household.

The proposal involves a move away from the existing 60 litre rubbish bags to the use of 120 litre wheelie bins for rubbish. The wheelie bins will be collected fortnightly, equivalent to using one rubbish bag each week.

Instead of having to buy rubbish bags, the rubbish and recycling service will be funded by a standard charge through each property's rates bill. This means that households will no longer need to buy rubbish bags (or make arrangement for a private wheelie bin service).

The recycling collections will remain the same with a wheelie bin for mixed recyclables and a crate for glass. These will continue to be collected fortnightly.

Zone one covers urban Westport and Reefton, the areas from Westport to the Mōkihinui Bridge, Westport to Punakaiki, Westport to Reefton including Blacks Point, and Reefton to Ikamatua.

The operation of the Karamea and the Maruia Landfill recycling centres would be included in the new regional contract under the proposal, however, the level of services in both areas would remain as it is. It would be the day-to-day running of the landfill sites that changes to one common West Coast-wide contractor under the new system.

3. Implications

2.1 Overview

The implications of this proposal for both council and the community are related to the service change and funding change.

The move from bags to bins in zone one will reduce the potential for damage to bags resulting in rubbish being spread on the streets on collection day. The bins also provide a secure container to store rubbish while on properties between collection days.

The shift from rubbish bags (collected weekly) to wheelie bins (collected fortnightly) will deliver a similar level of service for households using one bag per week or less. For households using more than one bag per week, they will need to find other ways of managing the waste that they produce.

This could include:

- Reducing rubbish by purchasing less.
- Reusing or re-selling items rather than putting them in the rubbish.
- Using a compost bin or worm farm to deal with food and garden waste.

- Where possible, recycling materials through the kerbside collection or by taking materials to their local transfer station.
- Taking extra waste to the local transfer station or arranging for a private collection of waste.

Council will continue to provide information and education to support actions that reduce waste and maximise the capture of materials for recycling.

2.2 Implications for households

For households in zone one, key changes will be:

- A shift from using rubbish bags to having a wheelie bin provided by Council.
- Service going from user choice to mandatory.
- Changing from weekly to fortnightly collection of rubbish.
- Paying for rubbish collection through rates rather than buying rubbish bags.

For landlords, this means that you will start paying for rubbish collection services from your properties through your annual rates bill.

For tenants, this means that rubbish collection will be paid for through your landlord's rates bill. You will no longer need to buy rubbish bags or pay for a private wheelie bin collection.

The changes in funding are outlined below (presenting estimates for 2023, costs will increase in the future due to inflation). It is important to note that for homeowners, the costs are anticipated to be similar to current costs for 1-2 bags per week. For rented properties, the cost will shift from the tenant to the property owner.

	Existing (Up to July 1 2023)	Proposed from 1 July 2023	Proposed (2025 forward estimated)
Rubbish collection by bags	\$7.10 per bag \$185 per year (1 bag a fortnight) \$356 per year (1 bag a week)	\$9.10 per bag \$239 per year (1 bag a fortnight) \$478 per year (1 bag a week)	Targeted rate funded wheelie bin Est \$197-\$272 per year*
Rubbish collection by wheelie bins	\$356 per year for a private wheelie bin (fortnightly)		No longer provided
Recycle collection	Target rate funded. \$171 per property each year	\$178 per property	TBD

* This is estimated as the actual cost will be determined via a tender process. General cost escalations/inflation, landfill levy and emissions trading scheme charges will increase costs over time.

2.3 Implications for Council

For Council, the change in funding approach means that there will be an increase in rates charged to properties that receive the rubbish collection service. The funding will cover costs including provision of wheelie bins for rubbish to each household, rubbish collection and rubbish disposal.

The change to the rubbish collection and charging through rates means that Council is required to formally consult on the changes. This is termed a Special Consultative Procedure under Section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002.

This 'Statement of Proposal' meets the requirements of the Local Government Act. Your feedback on the proposal, through written submissions and/or presenting to a Council hearing, will be considered by Councillors in deciding whether to implement the proposal, modify the proposal or adopt an alternative approach.

4. Other Alternatives Considered for Rubbish Collection

In considering how to ensure that households in zone one (including Westport and Reefton) have access to rubbish collection services a number of other options have been considered. These are:

- Continue the current weekly bag service funded by bag sales:

There is an industry wide move away from bag based collections due to health and safety and efficiency concerns. The current bag collection competes with private sector wheelie bins, this has an impact on the cost for each household.

On balance this option is considered **more expensive** for households, **less safe** and **less effective** in containing waste prior to collection.

- Rely on private sector services for household rubbish collection:

The private sector currently offers rubbish collection using wheelie bins in Westport and Reefton. This service is a similar price to the cost of using one rubbish bag each week and significantly higher than the anticipated cost of a Council provided service. This is because a Council provided service is shared by every household and is more efficient to deliver than collections from a smaller number of households.

On balance, this option is considered **more expensive** for households.

- Council to provide a weekly collection of rubbish in 80L wheelie bins:

This would continue the weekly service, but with 80L wheelie bins (larger containers than the 60L bags currently sold for rubbish collection). This service is likely to be more costly than the current for households, reflecting the cost of the wheelie bins and the weekly collection.

Provide larger containers for a weekly service is likely to increase the proportion of garden waste and recyclable materials in the rubbish container.

On balance, this option is considered **more expensive** for households and result in **more green waste and recyclables** disposed of as rubbish.

5. Have Your Say

As part of the Local Government Act 2002, Councils are required to consult with residents and affected parties on significant changes to levels of service.

This means that council seek community views about the proposed changes to the Buller District Council's waste service delivery through a public consultation before any final decisions are made. Anyone can give feedback on the proposal including individuals, organizations, and businesses.

Community feedback opens Monday 7 August 2023 and closes at 4.30pm on Monday 4 September 2023. Late submissions will not be considered.

People can give their feedback by:

- Completing an online submission form.
- Completing a hard copy submission form.

There will be an opportunity to talk in support of your submission at a Council hearing, which is still to be scheduled.

To find out more, go to <https://bullerdc.govt.nz/have-your-say/new-waste-management-system-2025/>
