KERBSIDE WASTE SERVICES POLICY

To:	Infrastructure and Growth Committee
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 3 March 2026
From:	Fiona Walker, WasteNet Director; Rhiannon Suter, Manager – Strategy, Policy and Engagement
Approved:	Russell Pearson – Acting Group Manager - Infrastructure
Approved Date:	Wednesday 25 February 2026
Open Agenda:	Yes
Public Excluded Agenda:	No

Purpose and Summary

This report presents a draft Kerbside Waste Services Policy for approval and recommendation to Council for adoption.

Recommendations

That the Infrastructure and Growth Committee:

1. Receives the report "Kerbside Waste Services Policy".

2. Approves the draft Kerbside Waste Services Policy as presented.

Recommends to Council:

3. To adopt the Kerbside Waste Services Policy for consultation alongside the 2026/2027 Fees and Charges Schedule in March or April 2026.

Background

A s17A and Business Case review of Waste Service options for Invercargill City District, carried out in 2025, included a recommendation for each individual WasteNet Council to develop a kerbside waste services policy to ensure consistency and transparency regarding the service and how it is carried out. This draft Kerbside Waste Services Policy has been developed in order to address this recommendation, and codifies Council's approach to the provision of this service.

Issues and Options

Analysis

The draft policy formalises and codifies the current arrangements for kerbside waste collection as provided by Council through WasteNet Southland. Certain aspects are dependent on the contract currently in place through WasteNet. The policy also sets out objective frameworks for decision-making, including the basis on which services would be extended to new areas, and the factors to be considered if someone requests additional bins.

Most of the policy sets out arrangements as they currently exist, and in many cases this information is already on Council's website. Details on proposed new or notable provisions are provided below.

Extending the Service Area

Council from time to time receives requests to consider extending kerbside waste services to other parts of the district. For example, during the Kerbside Waste Service Options consultation carried out in 2025 regarding the potential addition of new types of bins, 28 submitters indicated that they do not currently receive Council kerbside waste services, but would like to in the future.

Council has not to date had a framework or formal policy around how such requests might be considered. It is proposed that this section of the policy be included to provide transparency and understanding for the public on this process. The suggestion is that a review may be considered following one or more requests to extend services to a new area, and provided that it would affect a minimum number of properties, and that it would be feasible to extend the services (in terms of practical matters such as accessibility, as well as economic considerations and having enough capacity). If all these factors are satisfied, then consultation may be carried out with the properties which would be affected, then if the decision was made to extend the service area ratepayers would receive a period of notice before this change took place. This type of level of service consultation would normally take place as part of annual or long-term planning.

Central Business District

Premises in the CBD are currently able to purchase pre-paid stickers for rubbish bags, in order to have them picked up three times a week. Premises are not otherwise rated for this service, nor are they supplied with bins. During the development of this policy, it was noted that the cost of these stickers had inadvertently not been included in the fees and charges schedule to date. The updated 2026/2027 Fees and Charges Schedule will contain this fee which was raised to reflect the current costs.

Bin Checks and Suspension of Service

This section codifies the existing inspection and enforcement provisions already in place regarding bin contamination. It should be noted that the policy refers to the current one calendar year period for the three strikes enforcement measures, but should Council agree to

extend this to two consecutive calendar years as recommended by the Waste Advisory Group at its February 2026 meeting, this will be updated.

Assistance

Under the terms of the current WasteNet-held contract, it is possible to request that the collection vehicle drivers retrieve the bins for collection, then return them to the premises, rather than the customer needing to put their bin on the kerbside themselves where they are unable to do so. This service is currently used by one property, but has not been widely advertised. To date, requests have been handled on an individual basis as they are received. Again, this issue was highlighted during the recent Kerbside Waste Service Options consultation, including by submitters who presented at the Hearing.

It is proposed to include the details about this assistance in the policy in order to improve equity and accessibility. Assistance is available for people who meet two criteria: that they have a medically-identified physical impairment or restriction which means they cannot put their bin out for collection, and that they do not have other household or community support available to them. It is proposed that ongoing eligibility be assessed annually.

It is possible as a result of publishing this information that the number of requests for assistance may increase. If the increase in demand were significant, this could require increased resourcing for administration, which would have a budget implication.

Alternatively, Council could choose to no longer provide this assistance, noting that this would be a reduction in the current service, or could choose to set a fee to offset or subsidise these costs.

Fees for Lost or Damaged Bins

Bins need to be replaced from time to time. In the 2024/2025 financial year we received 999 requests for service due to damaged or stolen bins (noting not all of these have resulted in Council having to replace the bin – Council replaced 167 bins due to damage or theft in this time). The opportunity has been taken to formalise the situations in which Council might seek reimbursement for having to replace a bin due to loss or damage which is not the fault of Council or its contractors. It is clarified that while Council will bear the costs of replacement bins due to normal wear and tear, for any damage or loss due to negligence, misuse or deliberate acts by the customer, Council may seek reimbursement. The fees for replacement bins will be included in the updated fees and charges schedule to be presented to Council later this month.

Additional Bins

This is not a new provision, and the charge for additional bins is already in our fees and charges schedule. Currently there are 293 rating units which pay for additional bins, some of which have more than one additional set, for a total of 678 additional bin sets.

This part of the policy gives some clarification around the charge, in particular that it is a set fee for all types of additions or sizing upgrades to the bins. The fee includes the cost of the physical bin, the increase service cost, as well as admin fees. The draft policy also explains that it is not possible to apply costs pro rata, or to provide refunds if someone wants to return their additional bins, as this is an aspect of the rating system.

What is new is the list of factors to be considered when deciding whether to grant a request for additional bins. To date applications are decided case-by-case using the factors listed in the draft policy on an informal basis. For the sake of transparency and consistency of decision making, it is proposed to list the factors that Council may take into account. For instance, people who have medical issues may quickly fill up the standard 120l red bin so can be considered to have a genuine need, and on the other hand someone who just generated a lot of rubbish may be encouraged to explore better ways to reduce that waste as part of waste minimisation principles and in alignment with the Waste Minimisation Act 2008.

Significance

This policy is of medium significance. Although the subject is likely to be of interest to a large number of ratepayers, the policy itself does not make many substantive changes which would affect the level of service, as currently drafted.

Options

This Committee can choose to approve the draft policy as presented, or suggest such changes as it deems appropriate. The Committee could also choose not to proceed with a Kerbside Waste Services Policy at this time, but this is not recommended. It is helpful for our community to have easy access to information about the services they receive, and where there are aspects of discretion it is important that decision making is transparent and consistent. This protects Council, and provides certainty and assurance to ratepayers.

Community Views

Community views relating to kerbside waste have been heard recently by Council as part of the consultation carried out last year into potential changes to the types of bins to be provided for kerbside waste collection. However, and given the related additions to be made to the fees and charges schedule, it is proposed that this policy be consulted on alongside the 2026/2027 Fees and Charges Schedule in March or April 2026.

Implications and Risks

Strategic Consistency

This draft policy is consistent with wider Council strategy including the Southland Waste Management and Minimisation Plan and the Activity Management Plan for Solid Waste. Codification of the assistance provision for bins aligns with Council's Equity and Access Policy for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled People. Any future changes to the service made through the Long-term Plan can be reflected in updates to the policy as required.

The Southland Waste Management and Minimisation Plan is due to be updated this year. Should there be any changes which impact on this Policy, relevant amendments will be brought back to this committee for consideration.

Financial Implications

The kerbside waste service is managed under the existing Solid Waste Activity budget. As mentioned above, if there were an increase in requests for assistance as a result of publishing

this policy, it is possible that further resourcing would be needed for administrative functions. Additional financial and resource impacts are unknown at this stage, and if required they will be optioned for next Long-term Plan or a future Annual Plan.

Legal Implications

The policy has no particular legal implications. Solid Waste services including kerbside waste services are governed by legislation including the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and the Local Government Act 2002, and are carried out in accordance with documents such as the District Plan. Solid Waste services are rated for in accordance with Council's Rating Policy. This policy is not inconsistent with any of these legal requirements.

Council has previously had a Solid Waste Bylaw, though this is no longer in force. WasteNet has in its work programme to develop a new bylaw for adoption by each council but this is currently on hold due to ongoing central government legislative reviews. Were Council to adopt a new bylaw in the future, it is likely that this policy would have to be updated accordingly.

Climate Change

There are climate impacts arising from the manner in which waste is managed. This policy seeks to support waste management and minimisation efforts, as part of ongoing climate impact considerations.

Risk

The draft policy aims to reduce and manage risk. By providing information and clarity, customers are less likely to be left dissatisfied with the service they receive. Clearly articulating the principles we follow reduces the risk of actual or perceived unfairness or inconsistency in decision making.

It is of note that the region's key waste service contracts expire on 1 July 2027 and that WasteNet has initiated procurement of these services. There is the potential that renewed contracts may have a bearing on the policy, such as assistance and collection times, which may require the policy to be reviewed. As such, it is recommended that the first review of the policy occurs in FY2027/28 to ensure alignment between the policy and the new waste service contracts.

There is risk associated with not developing a policy on this matter, in particular in relation to the risk of perceived or actual unfairness or inconsistency of decision making, and customer dissatisfaction or frustration.

Next Steps

If this Committee approves the draft policy, it will be recommended to Council for adoption for consultation. If the policy is adopted for consultation, it will be consulted on alongside the 2026/2027 Fees and Charges Schedule in March or April 2026.

Should the policy be adopted by Council, it will be communicated to WasteNet for consideration by the other WasteNet Councils to ensure regional consistency where

appropriate, noting that each council will need to develop, adopt and maintain their own respective policies.

Attachments

1. Draft Kerbside Waste Services Policy (A6323152).