

General questions

What is the Organics Processing Plant?

The Organics Processing Plant in Bromley has been operating since 1994 and is responsible for processing the city's garden and food waste that you put in your green bins. This is known as mixed kerbside organics. The site and plant are owned by the Christchurch City Council and managed by Waste Management, operating as Living Earth.

How does the plant work?

Check out this [operational process diagram](#) to see how the plant works.

Is the garden waste from the transfer stations included in the tonnage going to the plant?

No, garden waste from the transfer stations is not included in the calculations for the short-term options we're consulting on. The plant uses only a small portion of garden waste from the transfer stations as an add-in to improve the quality of compost made from the kerbside organics. Garden waste, other than that in your green wheelie bin, is not part of the issue that we need to resolve.

What's the issue the Council's trying to resolve?

The issue is odour. The plant is in Bromley. Some residents living in nearby suburbs tell us that odours from the plant are affecting their health and quality of life. We are looking for a short-term option for managing mixed kerbside organics until we have a permanent solution in place by 2027–29. We have identified five options that we want feedback on.

Does the plant process mixed kerbside organics from any other councils apart from Christchurch?

Yes. The plant currently processes 55,000 tonnes of mixed kerbside organics from Christchurch City Council and 5,000 tonnes from Waimakariri District Council.

What will happen to Waimakariri District Council's mixed organics if the Council decides on a short-term option?

The short-term options don't include the 5,000 tonnes currently going to the plant from Waimakariri District Council. Waimakariri District Council will be responsible for managing its mixed kerbside organics once a decision is implemented for Christchurch.

Odour and community effects

What is the odour situation at the plant?

The plant is in Bromley. Nearby residents tell us that odours from the plant are affecting their health and quality of life.

The plant has a resource consent issued by Environment Canterbury to discharge odour on the condition that the odour is not offensive and objectionable beyond the plant's boundary. We have tried to manage organics processing to reduce the risk of offensive and objectionable odour beyond the plant's boundary as much as possible. Environment Canterbury has deemed that on some occasions odour from the plant has exceeded the allowed limits to a level assessed as offensive or objectionable, and we've received a fine for breaching our consent.

What kind of effects are odours from the plant having on local residents?

Nearby residents tell us that odours from the plant are affecting their health and quality of life. As a Council, the health and wellbeing of our residents is a priority. This is why we're seeking feedback on short-term options for managing mixed organics collected from green bins all over the city.

Is the plant allowed to produce any odour?

Yes. The plant has a resource consent to discharge odour but not to the extent that the odour is offensive and objectionable beyond the plant boundary. We have tried to manage organics processing to reduce the risk of offensive and objectionable odour beyond the plant's boundary as much as possible.

Has any enforcement action been taken against the Council for the odour?

Yes. Environment Canterbury – as the regional regulatory authority – has taken various enforcement actions against the Council and Living Earth over the past two years. This enforcement action includes Notices of Non-Compliance (NoNC), infringement notices and an abatement notice. [Read more](https://ccc.govt.nz/organicsplant) about the enforcement action carried out at ccc.govt.nz/organicsplant

What action has the Council taken to minimise odour from the plant?

In response to the odour complaints, and subsequent enforcement action by Environment Canterbury, the Council and Living Earth have worked together to make substantial operational changes at the plant. Key changes include:

- not accepting commercial food processing waste (as of December 2020)
- not maturing compost outdoors in windrows (long piles of organics that are turned regularly to help the composting process)
- increasing the amount of time material spends in processing tunnels
- changes to the blend of material

Is the Council monitoring the odours?

Yes. In January 2022 we appointed independent external environmental specialist Pattle Delamore Partners (PDP) to monitor odours at, and around, the plant. This has provided us with further detail about where, when and how strong the odours are. PDP odour reports are available online at ccc.govt.nz/organicsplant

Research into options

Were any other options considered outside of the five that are being consulted on?

Yes. The report to the Council on 21 June 2023 outlines our investigation into options for processing or disposal of mixed kerbside organics at sites all over New Zealand. A total of 23 alternative locations and 20 different processing options were assessed. Options were assessed against criteria including whether the solution addresses the odour issue, emissions, costs, and feasibility. The five options the Council wants feedback on are those identified as the most feasible to implement at the earliest opportunity. You can read the full list of options assessed under the Document Library at letstalk.ccc.govt.nz/organics

Costs and rates

Will any of the options affect rates, and if so how?

Yes. Most of the short-term options have an effect on rates. Early indications are that these may be in the range of 0.8% to 4.1% rates increases, depending on the option. However, the full effect on rates will not be known until the Long-Term Plan process is finalised in 2024.

You can read more about the rates effects of each option at letstalk.ccc.govt.nz/organics

Why is the cost of the short-term solution spread over five years?

Five years is the maximum timeframe for the short-term solution. After that the effect on rates will be calculated based on the permanent solution, expected to be opened sometime from 2027–2029. The costs of the short-term solution have been worked out to cover until 2029.

Will the cost of the short-term solution be included in rates as a fixed rate per household or will it vary based on property value?

There is a fixed charge kerbside mixed organics as part of the Waste Minimisation Targeted Rate. This fixed charge is applied to every property to cover the kerbside organics and recycling service. Your property value does not affect this.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Will any of the options affect greenhouse gas emissions and if so, how?

Yes. All short-term options, apart from the status quo (Option 3), increase greenhouse gas emissions. The emissions level depends on the option, as different types of processing (such as composting, worm farming or landfilling), produce different volumes of emissions.

You can read more about the greenhouse gas effects of each option at letstalk.ccc.govt.nz/organics

How are greenhouse gas emissions measured?

Greenhouse gas emissions are measured as carbon dioxide equivalents (Co2-e). This measure combines the effects of different types of emissions, such as methane and carbon dioxide.

The emissions totals for all options include both transportation emissions (from taking the organics waste to the processing location or landfill), and the emissions produced from the specific type of processing or disposal of the organics.

All emissions figures are estimates, based on the best information available for each option. Actual amounts may vary depending on the timing of various options becoming operational, contracts being signed, and any necessary consents being attained.

Consultation, Long Term Plan and the Council's decision making questions

Why is the Council consulting on short-term options for managing kerbside organics?

Due to ongoing odour issues reported by residents living near the plant, the Council decided to get feedback from Christchurch residents and mana whenua on five short-term options for managing kerbside organics until a permanent solution is in place (around 2027–29)

Why does there need to be public consultation on the short-term options? Why can't the Council just make a decision immediately?

This decision could significantly affect rates and the level of service we provide to all residents for collecting garden and food waste at the kerb.

We'd like to hear from as many residents as possible. Receiving your views and preferences will help the mayor and councillors make a decision on a short-term option for managing our kerbside organics until permanent solution is in place.

The Council decision is expected to be made in December 2023.

You can read more about the impacts of each option at letstalk.ccc.govt.nz/organics

Can you send me a hard copy of the consultation document and feedback form?

You can contact Tessa Zant, Engagement Manager at letstalk@ccc.govt.nz or phone 03 941 8935 to request a copy.

Who decides which option is chosen as the preferred short-term solution?

The mayor and councillors will make the final decision on the preferred short-term solution. This is expected to be in December 2023.

What's the decision-making process for the chosen option as part of the Long Term Plan process? Will people have their say again on the chosen option as part of the Long Term Plan consultation?

If the Council's preferred short-term option for managing mixed kerbside organics involves additional costs in future financial years – which is likely – the Council must make a funding decision on meeting that cost in the next Long Term Plan in June 2024. The Long Term Plan will go out for public consultation around March/April 2024 so there will be another opportunity for people to provide feedback on the selected short-term option at that time.

Who decides what gets funded in the Long Term Plan?

The mayor and councillors make the Long Term Plan funding decisions.

Why can't the Council just go straight to the long-term solution?

The Council has indicated, subject to community engagement, that its preference is to end composting at the plant as soon as practically possible. The long-term solution won't be operational until around 2027–29 so the Council wants a short-term solution for managing organics until this time.

Permanent solution

What is the permanent solution for the plant?

A procurement process is currently underway to identify a potential site and service supplier – a permanent facility to be operational around 2027–29.

Who are the providers involved in the procurement process?

Details of the sites, suppliers and solutions are confidential at this stage as they are commercially sensitive.

When will the Council decide on the permanent solution?

The Council expects to make a decision on a preferred long-term solution in December 2023. The expected December decision on the short-term solution is planned to follow the decision on the permanent solution. This is so the Council can be mindful of the permanent solution when deciding on the short-term option.

Will I get a chance to provide my feedback on the long-term solution?

We are not consulting on specific options for the long-term solution for organics processing. Funds were allocated to establish a permanent organics processing facility at a new (non-Council) site through the 2021-31 Long Term Plan process. In April 2022, the Council's Finance and Performance Committee agreed, in principle, to relocate of the Organics Processing Facility to an alternative site. We now have a procurement process underway for a new organics processing facility at a (non-Council) site. The construction of this solution will use the funds on plan to provide the same level of service to the community as our existing organics processing operation.

Kerbside collection questions

Does the decision on the short-term solution mean my green bin won't be collected?

No, your green bin will continue to be collected. You should continue to put your green bin out as usual.

When a decision is made (expected December 2023), will changes to my green bin collection happen then?

No. Regardless of the Council's decision on the short-term solution, the green bin kerbside collection will continue. We want people to continue putting garden and food waste into the green bin.

If the Council decides to send organics to landfill does that mean I can put organics in the red bin and rubbish in the green bin as it's going to the same place?

No. If the Council decide on Option 2 (sending organics to Kate Valley Landfill) the green bin kerbside collection will continue. We want people to continue putting garden and food waste into the green bins. This is to prevent people changing their behaviour so when the permanent solution for composting organics starts (2027–29) we can start composting immediately. If 'red-bin' rubbish goes into the green bin we won't be able to compost the material. It's important that people maintain good 'green-bin' habits for when the new permanent solution starts being used.

Will I still be able to take my garden waste to the transfer station at Metro Place?

Yes, you can still take your garden waste to the transfer stations at Metro Place, Styx Mill or Parkhouse Road.