Health Impact Assessment on the Wairoa District Council’s Draft Waste Management Activity Plan: The results of a process and impact evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background
This report presents the findings of a process and impact evaluation of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on the Wairoa District Council’s draft waste management activity plan. HIA is a practical assessment approach to ensure that health, wellbeing and equity are considered as part of the policy development process. This particular HIA was lead by the HIA team from the Hawke’s Bay District Health Board (DHB) in partnership with staff from the Wairoa District Council (WDC) and Quigley and Watts Limited. The evaluation was undertaken by the HIA Research Unit, University of Otago. The HIA was supported with funding from the Ministry of Health HIA Support Unit’s *Learning by Doing Fund*.

Methods
The evaluation was conducted concurrently with the HIA. Data were gathered for the evaluation using a mix of methods: including participant observation, participant workshop evaluation feedback, documentary analysis and interviews with nine key stakeholders.

Results
The evaluation findings suggest all six of the HIA’s objectives were achieved, though some to a lesser extent than others. Those fully achieved included the enhancement of a working relationship between the WDC and the Hawke’s Bay DHB and building capacity within the WDC to use HIA. The Council’s major contribution here primarily involved the time spent by one of its senior managers and that of a consultant who stood in for the manager at the HIA’s appraisal workshop. Prior to commencing the HIA, the WDC’s chief executive officer fully endorsed the use of the HIA on the WDC’s draft waste management activity plan. The WDC’s senior manager who worked in partnership on the HIA with the HIA team indicated the Council would be prepared to use an HIA process again but only on significant projects, given the time and resources involved in running an HIA.

The literature review’s evidence and the workshop participants’ input contributed to the Council making ‘a significant policy shift’, attested to by its endorsement of two of the HIA’s recommendations. Both recommendations supported the Council taking a community development, joint council-community waste management and community education approach. The Council established two pilot waste management initiatives soon after endorsing these two recommendations. Two Māori development trusts, who were represented at the HIA’s scoping and appraisal workshops, will work jointly with the Council to implement the pilots in two of the Wairoa District’s more rurally isolated communities.

In addition to supporting the above two recommendations, the evidence in the literature review and the workshop participants’ input also supported the three remaining HIA objectives.

The HIA’s community consultation component was considered a key strength of the HIA process. Stakeholders saw the consultation as much broader than any previous consultation undertaken by the Council, drawing in, as it did, representatives from some of the district’s more rurally isolated communities, including two Māori development trusts. The HIA consultation was credited with achieving a high level of community engagement. It was seen as having provided a buffer between the Council and its constituents, thus enabling them to voice their ideas in what was described as ‘a non-threatening environment’.

In addition to supporting the above two recommendations, the evidence in the literature review and the workshop participants’ input also supported the three remaining HIA objectives.
The HIA report was distributed to the all stakeholders involved in the HIA as required by its fifth and final HIA objective. Wider dissemination will occur when the HIA is reported on the Ministry of Health, HIA Support Unit’s E-news and its website. It also intended to report it in international peer reviewed journals.

Time constraints limited the scale of the extended consultation planned by the HIA team. This was disappointing for all concerned as the Māori community stakeholders involved in the appraisal workshop had indicated their willingness to assist the HIA team to extend the consultation out on to the marae. They saw the extended consultation as an opportunity to engage and raise community awareness about the Council’s waste management activity plan, as well as the issues involved, consequently they were disappointed about that missed opportunity.

**Key lessons learnt from this HIA**

*Overall learning*

- HIA can assist councils to develop policy more strongly based on evidence and effective community consultation than some traditional council processes
- HIA can assist councils to make innovative policy decisions
- HIA may be most appropriate for major policy developments as the process takes time and resources that councils may not always have to hand, at least to undertake HIAs themselves
- A partnership between councils and district health boards can facilitate effective HIA processes, particularly if there is some joint resourcing of the process
- New funding makes HIA possible
- The relatively high cost of undertaking HIAs suggests it is mainly suited for use on significant policy projects such as the subject of this HIA.

*HIA process*

- When HIA is new to an organisation, careful consideration should be given when screening policies to selecting a policy which lends itself to HIA and is likely to be well supported in the community.
- Checks need to be made at key stages in the process to ensure that the process addresses obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.
- At the scoping phase it is important to size the HIA to the policy under consideration and to the resources available, to be clear about what is included and excluded from the HIA, and what could be picked up in other processes.
- Careful consideration needs to be given as to how to engage key stakeholders, including senior management and political leaders, and community members in the HIA process.

*Community consultation*

- There is benefit in taking HIA to the people and holding workshops in environments where your stakeholders feel comfortable. It can assist HIA participants to more effectively participate in the process.
- There is a need to collect full contact details from those involved in the HIA workshops – names, address, organisational roles, and email addresses positions – so that HIA reports can be sent to people (several community stakeholders reportedly did not initially receive copies of this HIA reports. This oversight was later rectified ).
Workshop facilitators need a strong foundation in HIA, effective communication skills, an ability to work with a range of different audiences, and the flexibility ‘to think on their feet’ when it becomes obvious changes to the programme as needed.

Outlining the HIA process and the issues under consideration at the beginning of screening, scoping and appraisal workshops enables an effective discussion. Including presenters who can speak to the realities of the issue under consideration also assists, especially at the scoping and appraisal workshops.

Use of exercises to enable people to participate in decision-making can increase the engagement of participants in the process e.g. use of post-it notes for identifying health individuals’ health and wellbeing determinants and population group priorities in order to build consensus.

Evaluation of community consultation workshops provides valuable feedback to the process.

Asking participants in the scoping workshop for advice about available data and who to consult can provide valuable information.

It is critical that the principles, aims and objectives and concepts underpinning HIA closely align with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori health and community development models, particularly in a district such as Wairoa which has a high Māori population.

Consideration should be given to the likely advantages and disadvantages of breaking into groups when the numbers of workshop participants are small. Between eight and 10 participants are considered optimal for focus group work where there is just one facilitator.

More time may need to be allowed for workshop participation deliberations when the set tasks/themes are both multiple and complex, as was the case in this HIA’s appraisal workshop. Four hours was allowed in this instance and it appears to have been insufficient. However, this needs to be balanced with making unreasonable time demands on busy community and policy people.

Training and resources

Training for HIA practitioners is important to enable them to undertake HIAs effectively.

Novice HIA practitioners benefit from mentoring throughout the HIA process. It enables them to build the necessary knowledge and skill base.

New money makes it easier for organisations to undertake HIA as they do not have to find savings in other areas.

The HIA document A Guide to Health Impact Assessment: A policy tool for New Zealand requires revision or alternatively a practical, new step-by-step HIA process guidance manual should be developed. A resource for lay people that explains HIA concepts simply would be useful when working with those not trained in HIA.

Conclusion

The Learning by Doing Fund provided the Hawke’s Bay DHB with new funding for this and four other HIAs. Two of the five are now completed, including the one we have reported on here, the HIA for the draft Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan. The evaluation suggests the WDC benefitted significantly from the HIA inputs.
In response to one of the HIA recommendations, two of the district’s more isolated rural communities are currently in negotiations with the Council to pilot joint council-community waste management pilots in their communities, a development that is unlikely to have occurred without the HIA. Our evaluation observations of the first and now this most recently completed HIA show the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s HIA team’s knowledge, skills and confidence in managing and implementing HIAs have been greatly strengthened by those experiences. The mentoring provided by the HIA consultant through the *Learning by Doing* funding is acknowledged as having been a major contributing factor in growing the HIA team’s knowledge and skill base. Finally, the evaluation serves to provide those directly involved in the HIA’s process an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learnt and apply the knowledge gained to future HIAs. This evaluation again suggests that the *Learning by Doing* funding continues to live up to its promise.
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Hawke’s Bay District Health Board (DHB) is currently working with local governments in its region to incorporate health impact assessment (HIA) into their planning processes. Following an ‘HIA advocacy seminar’ conducted by the Hawke’s Bay DHB in March 2008 the DHB was approached by a Wairoa District Council’s (WDC) staff member, who attended the seminar, about the possibility of undertaking an HIA on its draft waste management activity plan. Following discussions both parties agreed to proceed with an HIA, in partnership with HIA consultants from Wellington-based Quigley and Watts. This report presents the results of an evaluation of that HIA process and its short-term impact, as applied to the WDC’s Waste Management Activity Plan 2008 (the plan) (Wairoa District Council 2009). The evaluation was undertaken by the Health Equity and Wellbeing Impact Assessment Unit, University of Otago for the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s HIA team.

Funding for the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s current HIA programme and their respective evaluations was provided through the Ministry of Health’s Health Impact Assessment Unit’s Learning by Doing fund.

Background to the draft waste management activity plan

The WDC’s draft Waste Management Activity Plan 2008 was developed by the Council to determine an effective waste management plan following several past attempts to find a model that would best suit its predominantly rural, geographically isolated communities.

The Wairoa district, with its population of 8,916 people, is made up of a number of small rural and seaside holiday communities. The district’s economy is largely based on pastoral farming, fishing and forestry.

Wairoa township is the district’s main urban servicing, administrative, educational and cultural centre.

Ngati Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa is the largest iwi in the district. There are over 30 marae peppered throughout the district. Te Reo Māori is spoken by 20 percent of the district population. This is significantly higher than the 4.5 percent for New Zealand as a whole (Wairoa District Council 2002).

Compared to the total New Zealand population, the Wairoa District has a high proportion of Māori, low-income families, unemployment, welfare beneficiaries, comparatively low transport ownership and a declining population (McClellan 2004). Wairoa was described during this HIA as tightly knit community and committed to the development of the district.

The Council’s draft plan was informed by its previous waste management models, a recent community survey, that elicited a relatively low response rate, and a number of follow-up, community-focused forums. The HIA was seen by the Council as an additional approach to accessing community input into the planning process.

The draft plan on which the HIA focused proposed the following three service levels and their associated service components. Each service component is followed by a set of options:

Level of service: Council will provide a landfill facility for disposal of domestic and commercial refuse

1a) Long-term disposal options

Option 1: Close landfill (ie, truck all residual waste out of district)
Option 2: Status quo (charges would need to rise as current gate charges not covering costs)

1b) Accepting waste at the landfill

Option 1: Compulsory to sort refuse otherwise not accepted at landfill
Option 2: Status quo (ie, individual choice whether to recycle)
Option 3: Users encouraged to sort refuse (landfill users directed to recycling at point of entry)

Level of service: Council to actively promote and educate the public about waste minimisation

Option 1: No waste education (discontinue school and general public education initiatives)
Option 2: Status quo (maintain school education programme, with some extension into marae, businesses and general public)
Option 3: Increase expenditure (target broader cross section of the community)

Level of service – The Council will provide a domestic refuse collection service

Option 1: Status quo (full user-pays refuse collection with choice of collection service supplier eg, Council’s contractor service or different contractor of choice)
Option 2: Partially subsidised system (set bag rate, with remainder funded through rates)
Option 3: Fully subsidised system (totally funded through rates) (Wairoa District Council 2009).

HIA as applied to the Wairoa waste management activity plan

A definition

HIA is defined as “a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, program or project may be judged by its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population” (European Centre for Health Policy 1999). It is a practical way to ensure that health, wellbeing and equity are considered as part of policy development in all sectors. It also helps facilitate policy-making that is based on evidence, focused on outcomes and encourages collaboration between a range of sectors and stakeholders. HIA is used in many countries, including New Zealand. In recent years policy-level HIA has been increasingly embedded in this country (Signal et al 2006).

HIA typically involves a four-stage process, namely:

1. Screening: a selection process where policies are quickly judged for their potential to affect the health, wellbeing and equity of populations, and hence the need (or not) to undertake HIA
2. Scoping: planning the HIA including identifying the aims and objectives, identifying key stakeholders, determining resources needed and identifying possible data sources
3. Appraisal: describing the potential benefits and risks to health and their nature and magnitude and identifying potential changes that could be made to a policy to
enhance its positive and mitigate its negative impacts on health, equity and wellbeing

4. Evaluation: assessing the process of the HIA in order to determine how it was done and to provide information useful for future HIAs, assessing the impact of the HIA to determine the extent to which the recommendations were taken on board in the policy decision-making process; and assessing the outcome of the HIA, that is its long-term effects on health, equity and wellbeing (Public Health Advisory Committee 2005).

The HIA of the Wairoa District Council’s draft plan underwent all four HIA phases as outlined above. The HIA was jointly led by Ana Apatu and Maree Rohleder, both from the Hawke’s Bay DHB (the DHB’s HIA team), and was undertaken in partnership with the WDC’s Senior Planner Neil Cook. The HIA team was assisted by HIA consultant Robert Quigley (and his colleagues) of Wellington-based Quigley and Watts Limited. The HIA consultant’s services – facilitation mentoring and a review of the literature, were funded by the Ministry of Health, HIA Support Unit’s Learning by Doing fund, as was the evaluation.

**Aims and objectives of the HIA**

The overall aim of the HIA was to apply an HIA process to the draft waste management activity plan with the overall purpose of informing the decision-makers of its potential health and wellbeing impacts on the identified populations.

The objectives of the HIA as applied to the plan were to:

1. Enhance a working partnership between the WDC and Hawke’s Bay DHB through shared planning and resourcing.
2. Assist the WDC to build on the positive aspects of the waste management activity plan and reduce any unintended negatives impacts, hence developing a well rounded plan.
3. To build capacity within the Hawke’s Bay DHB and WDC to use HIA.
4. To support the WDC’s consultation process with the community.
5. To provide recommendations to the decision-makers regarding the implementation of the waste management activity plan based on the HIA’s findings.
6. To disseminate the HIA findings into the wider policy arena of all relevant agencies (Apatu and Rohleder 2009).
SECTION 2: THE EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of the HIA on the WDC’s Waste Management Activity Plan aimed to determine, in terms of process:

- If the objectives of the HIA were met
- The strengths of the HIA process
- The constraints of the HIA process
- Possible ways the HIA process could have been improved
- The resources used throughout the HIA process
- The linkages between the HIA and the WDC’s long-term council community planning process.

In terms of impact:

- The impact of the HIA on the draft Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan
- If the HIA added value to the planning process? If so in what ways?

With regards to overall issues the evaluation aimed to identify:

- Key factors or ‘hooks’ that achieved buy-in into the HIA process and outcomes, particularly at the senior management and political level
- Possible resources that could be developed for future use in HIAs, such as manuals/handbooks, planning templates, workshop letters of invitation, and workshop evaluation questionnaires
- Key lessons from this HIA for the key HIA players in the Hawke’s Bay (the Hawke’s Bay DHB, the WDC and other potential community agency partners).
SECTION 3: DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This evaluation was conducted in the spirit of ‘learning by doing’ in line with the funding source criteria for the HIA and its evaluation. While the two-member evaluation team conducted the evaluation independently, they also worked with the HIA team and the HIA consultant as participant observers. In this role they listened, took notes throughout the key HIA-related workshops and meetings, and reviewed the various key draft documents once completed. The evaluators also provided feedback to the HIA team throughout the HIA process and prompted those involved to reflect on their practice. This feedback and reflection provided opportunities for the HIA team to pause and to make changes where required.

The evaluation was conducted concurrently with the HIA, with the evaluators first formally engaging at the scoping stage. Evaluation data were gathered using the following methods – participant observation, workshop evaluations, documentary analysis and key stakeholder interviews.

Observation of HIA process
One of the two-member evaluation team (Velma McClellan) attended both of the HIA workshops - one scoping and one appraisal workshop. Her role in these workshops was primarily one of observing. This involved taking note of who attended, recording observations throughout the workshops’ proceedings, reflecting on the process and documents, arising from the process, and providing feedback to the evaluation’s principal researcher, the DHB’s HIA team and the HIA consultant. Both evaluation team members participated in the key planning meetings and the two telephone conferences with the HIA team and the HIA consultant. Feedback on documents produced for the HIA was provided via email.

Analysis of HIA workshop participants’ feedback
Evaluation questionnaires were handed out to the nine stakeholders who participated in the HIA scoping workshop and also the nine who participated in the appraisal workshop (see appendix 1 for copies of the workshop evaluation questionnaires). Most stakeholders who attended the two workshops completed the questionnaires. The one non-respondent who did not left the workshops early due to other work commitments.

The evaluation responses were subsequently analysed for key themes. Evaluation reports for each workshop were prepared and emailed to the HIA team and the HIA consultant for their information and comment. The reports were intended to inform the process of the HIA going forward and provide evidence for future HIAs.

Review of relevant HIA documentation
All key documents relevant to the HIA were read to:

- inform the evaluation by providing background and context to the HIA
- provide information on the HIA’s content, process and impact.

Documents included:


- The minutes from other HIA team meetings and teleconference calls.

**Key stakeholders interviews**

**Interview schedule design and development**

Two interview schedules were developed for the interviews with key stakeholders (see appendices 2 & 3). The first was prepared for those directly involved in developing and implementing the HIA process - the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s HIA team, the WDC senior staff member and the HIA consultant. The second schedule was developed for the interviews with other local community stakeholders who attended either one or both of the HIA workshops.

**Interview sample selection**

The evaluation team drew up a list of 10 stakeholders considered representative of the range of stakeholders that were involved in the HIA process. They included the two HIA team members, the HIA consultant, and the WDC senior staff member who worked in partnership with the HIA team. The list also included six local community stakeholders. They included two Māori community trust members, a local public health nurse, an Opus International projects engineer, a staff member of Quality Roading Services, and a Kahungungu Executive staff member.

The list of stakeholders was subsequently sent to the HIA team for comment and to seek assistance with the proposed interviewees’ contact details.

All 10 stakeholders were sent an email with an evaluation information sheet and an interview consent form attached. The explanatory email indicated that the interviews would take between 30-40 minutes for those directly involved in the development and implementation of the HIA and up to 15 minutes for the other general community stakeholders. The evaluator subsequently followed up the emails via telephone to schedule in interview appointment times. Consent forms and an evaluation information form were sent to people prior to the interview. The interviewer checked to see if the participant had read the information sheet prior to commencing the interview. If they indicated not being familiar with the information that was to them, the interviewer offered to go through it with them. All had read it.

**Participants in stakeholder interviews**

It took considerable time to contact some of the 10 listed stakeholders. Nine of the 10 were subsequently interviewed by telephone. The stakeholder who was not able to be contacted did complete a workshop evaluation questionnaire.

**Data analysis**

All data were analysed for key themes specific to the HIA evaluation objectives and any other relevant issues that emerged during analysis.

**Ethics**

Ethics approval was sought from the multi-region ethics committee. The committee noted ethics approval was not required as the evaluation was an audit of work being undertaken by the DHB.
SECTION 3: THE PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

This section of the evaluation report outlines the HIA process adopted by the Hawke’s Bay DHB for the WDC’s draft *Waste Management Activity Plan* and presents the evaluation participants’ feedback about the HIA’s scoping and appraisal workshops as a process. The findings also include data arising from the evaluator’s participant observation, documentary analysis and workshop evaluation where appropriate.

The ‘HIA team’ as described in this report includes the two Hawke’s Bay team members and the HIA consultant unless otherwise stated.

**HIA screening phase**

This first HIA stage was held on 18 August 2008 to determine whether the Council’s proposed *Waste Management Activity Plan* was ‘the right fit’ for an HIA. Three people attended the screening workshop, the two Hawke’s Bay DHB team members and a WDC senior staff member. The screening process showed the draft plan to be appropriate to an HIA in terms of the plan being in its development phase and because it met the HIA assessment criteria, namely the plan has the potential to impact on the health of the Wairoa District’s population. The two parties agreed to proceed with the HIA.

**The scoping phase**

The scoping workshop was held six months following the HIA’s initial screening phase. The proposed *Waste Management Activity Plan* was in the preparation process over that six month period, hence the time lag. The scoping workshop was held on 4 March 2009 at the Celtic Rugby Club rooms in Wairoa’s township. The workshop was facilitated by Ana Apatu of the Hawke’s Bay DHB and supported by HIA consultant and mentor, Rob Quigley. A member of the evaluation team was also present.

The four-hour workshop commenced at 10am with a karakia by one of the local kaumātua participants. This was followed by a welcome by the Wairoa District Council’s senior planner. A further eight stakeholders also attended. Those stakeholders included an educator from the Mohaka primary school, two Opus International representatives and a local road management company representative, with a professional interest in waste management, and representatives from four local Māori development agencies.

The HIA facilitator, Ana Apatu, opened the workshop with a clear, concise, and well delivered outline of: the HIAs that the Hawke’s Bay DHB had recently completed as well as those underway; the principles and aims and objectives on which HIAs are based; and the holistic health and wellbeing HIA framework. She explained the latter in terms of the holistic Te Whare Tapa Wha health model and its role with regards to the Treaty of Waitangi principles. She also noted that the application of HIA was particularly valuable when applied during the early development phase of the policy development process, as was the case with the WDC’s *Waste Management Activity Plan*.

The Council’s representative for the HIA process provided an informative overview of the draft *Waste Management Activity Plan* using a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

The introductory session very effectively set the scene for the day’s proceedings. The stakeholders present were visibly ready to actively engage in the HIA process.
**The determinants of health and wellbeing**

Following a brief description of the determinants of health and wellbeing concept, participants identified a long list of waste management-related determinants in a group brainstorm facilitated by Ana Apatu. Post-it notes were distributed and participants asked to select from the list the three determinants they considered most important for the HIA to take into account. This process identified three broad determinant groups - public education; community pride, in terms of visual amenity; and long-term environmental effects.

**The populations affected**

The above exercise was repeated to identify the population groups most likely to be affected by the proposed plan. This exercise initially identified six potentially affected population groups. These were subsequently narrowed down to three:

- the rural community
- low-income groups
- the holiday population.

Potential sources of evidence and data were also identified. They included:

- a literature review and community profile
- local waste management data
- data elicited by the HIA team from the workshop and subsequent stakeholder interviews.

**Workshop participant evaluation feedback**

Prior to concluding the scoping workshop community stakeholder participants were invited to complete an evaluation form (see Appendix 1). Subsequent analysis of these showed participants generally had found the HIA workshop worthwhile and well facilitated. They had appreciated the opportunity to:

- share their experience and views with other community agencies
- identify possible solutions to the district’s waste management issues
- generally provide input into the WDC’s waste management activity plan.

The feedback did not identify any weaknesses in the HIA process, nor were there any suggested improvements despite questions about this in the evaluation form.

The general feedback from the workshops’ participants suggests they found the workshop a very worthwhile experience. They welcomed the chance to express and share their knowledge and ideas with a view to helping the Council to address the district’s waste management issues.

**The appraisal phase**

An HIA appraisal workshop was held on 8 April 2009 in the Wairoa township’s Celtic Rugby Club rooms, one month after the scoping workshop. The workshop was facilitated by HIA consultant, Robert Quigley. He was supported by the two DHB HIA team members, Ana Apatu and Maree Rohleder. An evaluator was also in attendance.

The workshop opened with a karakia, a round of introductions, a presentation and recap of the scoping workshop outcomes, and a brief outline of the WDC’s draft waste management activity plan. The latter was presented by a local consultant, familiar
with the plan and contracted by the WDC to present the outline of the plan because the key WDC staff member, who had previously worked on the HIA, had other commitments on the day.

The HIA facilitator suggested that participants break into two groups with each discussing one of the two topics – the proposed waste collections options and the community education options. There was some reluctance among some participants’ to do this. Their preference was to remain as one group and discuss both topics. After discussion regarding likely time constraints, it was decided participants would break into two groups each focusing on one of the two topics and that if time permitted they could move on to consider the other topic. Subsequent feedback from the HIA indicated that the second topic “… was never meant to be half the time as the other group had hopefully already been covered it in more depth” (R Quigley, personal email communication, 13 May 2009).

In brief, the two sets of options considered by the two groups were:

1. The Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan (WWMAP) proposed refuse collection options, namely:
   (a) Maintain the status quo i.e. full user pays
   (b) Partial subsidy - $1 per bag with the remainder covered by rates
   (c) Full subsidy by rates – (the ‘old status quo’).

2. The WWMP’s community education options, namely:
   (a) None – discontinue existing education programmes
   (b) Maintain existing education programmes - currently largely a school-based education programme
   (c ) Extend the existing programme to cover a broad range of community groups, including businesses, marae and the general public.

The groups then presented their findings to the meeting. On conclusion of this process, consensus was reached in relation to the overall aim of the draft waste management activity plan, namely the need to minimise the district’s waste. There was also agreement this would be best achieved through a partial subsidised approach rather than the current status quo of full user-pays, which was considered too expensive for Wairoa’s low-income households. There was similarly consensus that the current school-based waste minimisation education programme should be expanded to encompass education of the general public.

Participant’s deliberations around Wairoa’s rural communities’ waste management issues resulted in a new joint council-community waste management option, which it was suggested should be put to the Council in the form of an HIA recommendation. That option would see communities, like Mahia, Waikaremoana and Raupunga, work in collaboration with the Council to collect their own waste and provide community-targeted waste minimisation education.

Prior to closing the appraisal workshop the participants identified a number of groups they thought should be consulted – the farming community and those areas in the district where tourists are known to impact on waste management activities. The HIA team consulted with farmers through the Federated Farmers’ chairperson. Background papers were sent to the chairperson who gathered input from its local members and fed this back to the HIA team. Time constraints also ruled out arranging meetings in the tourist affected areas (Apatu & Rohleder 2009: 43).
**Workshop participant evaluation feedback**

Of the nine anonymous evaluation forms distributed prior to concluding the appraisal workshop, eight were subsequently completed. The responses with regard to questions about the effectiveness of the HIA process were generally positive. The opportunity to discuss and ‘brainstorm’ the issues involved with other community stakeholders was identified as the HIA’s key strength. The only improvement suggested was that more time could have allowed so that both sets of service level options could have been considered in greater depth.

In summary, the appraisal workshop’s participants were clearly engaged in the HIA process as most had attended the previous scoping workshop. Several had also travelled considerable distances to attend. The workshop was well facilitated and very productive.

**The literature review**

The literature review, which was completed after the appraisal workshop, was undertaken as a component of the HIA’s appraisal phase (Meikle 2009). It was completed following the appraisal workshop. The literature review addressed three questions:

1. What interventions are effective in changing waste behaviours?
2. What domestic refuse collections are effective in changing waste management behaviours?
3. What is the relationship between waste and health?

The review’s methodology involved a mix of methods:

- A search of three website databases - Scopus, EBSCO and the Web of Science
- A search of Google for relevant New Zealand reports and case studies
- Contact with six key people using the snowball method to identify local case studies and networks.

This triangulated approach resulted in 33 references, seven of which were New Zealand references. The latter were described as primarily descriptive and were not peer reviewed. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence were included in the review.

**Key strengths of the review**

The key strengths of the literature review were that:

- It’s methodology is clearly described
- It includes a list of the websites searched and states the limitations of the review’s evidence
- On finding limited New Zealand specific documents available via the key database search engines, including a Google search specific to New Zealand, the review’s author subsequently contacted key agencies/ people to locate additional local evidence and opinion
- The review’s executive summary is concise and well written as is report generally
- The review includes informative descriptions of waste management education programmes including two New Zealand-specific studies - the Porirua Fly Tipping Study and the Ngati Whatua o Oraki, Māori-specific community-based case study. These undoubtedly would be of interest to the Wairoa District Council
planners and the Māori community stakeholders who attended the HIA’s scoping and appraisal workshops.

The review did not draw conclusions based on its findings regarding the three populations groups - low-income groups, rural communities and holiday populations - identified in the HIA’s scoping phase as most likely to be affected by the WDC’s three waste management options. While not a specific focus of the review nevertheless, it would have been useful to provide some overall assessment at this level. However, this gap was possibly a consequence of the limited evidence available to the review’s author. If this was the case then it should have been stated as one of the reviews limitations.

**Stakeholder evaluation feedback on literature review**

As part of the concluding HIA evaluation interviews, the WDC stakeholder noted that the literature review had ‘added weight and credibility’ to the Council’s draft plan. While considered useful, the WDC stakeholder noted that a literature review is not a routine component of the Council’s policy development process, nor is it reportedly likely to be given the funding required to undertake such reviews. A second community stakeholder saw the literature review as ‘supportive of what the community was saying’ in terms of the:

- usefulness of school-based education approaches as a vehicle for raising awareness and increasing knowledge about waste minimisation and its management
- the potential value of collaborative approaches to community waste management and minimisation issues (see earlier discussion under this subheading).

**HIA report and recommendations**

The HIA report was submitted to the WDC in time for its full Council meeting in May 2009. The timing was arranged to assist the Council’s decision-making with respect to its long-term consultation plan (LTCP).

The final HIA report included five recommendations. These appeared closely aligned to the international and national evidence emanating from the HIA’s literature review and the HIA community stakeholders’ input, which is contrary to the view held by the Council’s stakeholder as noted above. In summary, the HIA report’s recommendations supported:

1. community development focused, joint council-community waste management options
2. increased investment in waste management minimisation education initiatives
3. a working partnership model with the HBDHB’s health promotion advisers to implement community focused education models
4. broadening support for existing and new whole-school education approaches
5. partial subsidy waste collection as opposed to the current full-subsidy approach (Apatu, Rohdler, 2009: pp 44-46).

This well crafted HIA report includes a succinct executive summary, a solid description and overview of the legislative basis, community setting, and historical context in which the Council’s *Waste Management Activity Plan* was developed. The WDC Plan’s expected community outcomes, principles, goals and objectives are also presented in a concise but informative manner. The wellbeing and health pathway flow charts are highly complex, extending over two entire pages. However, they are
informative for those with an in-depth understanding of the area and the patience to follow the linkages through. The report would have benefited from a brief explanation of the pathway flow charts in the text.

Each of the Council’s service options like the HIA recommendations are discussed in light of the HIA-generated evidence. The report and the attached literature review will undoubtedly be of considerable interest to the Council and its rural community partners, who are about to develop and implement the HIA-recommended joint council-community waste management and minimisation pilot initiatives. The report should also be of interest to health promoters and others working in this field.

At the time the evaluation interviews were conducted, Council had already acted on the joint council-community waste management recommendation, by establishing two such pilots in two of its more isolated rural communities. The HIA team reportedly has endeavoured to follow-up with the Council to see how the other four of the HIA report’s recommendations fared, but has yet to get a response to the contacts it has made.
SECTION 4: RESULTS OF THE STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

This section of the report presents the findings from an analysis of data resulting from the interviews with nine stakeholders who took part in the final HIA evaluation. Note the questionnaire used for the interviews with the stakeholders, directly involved in managing and delivering the HIA process was more detailed than that used for the interviews with the other five community stakeholders (see appendices 1 & 2 for copies of the interview schedules) hence their responses are largely presented under separate subheadings.

Were the HIA objectives met?

HIA objective 1

Enhance working partnership between the Wairoa District Council and the Hawke’s Bay District Health Board through shared planning and resourcing

The HIA team’s responses suggested that both parties were currently more aware of what each other have to offer in the way of resources and planning.

The Hawke’s Bay DHB’s HIA team members considered that as a result of the HIA the Council’s idea of health had broadened, in that, it is now more aware of how its work impacts on community health and wellbeing. On the other hand, the WDC stakeholder indicated he was not sure that the alignment between the Council’s and the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s work is naturally there for much of the work that the Council does. However, he conceded that the HIA process had served to enhance the Council’s consultation process.

The HIA consultant suggested that while the HIA might possibly have enhanced each parties understanding of their respective work areas, the collaborative partnership between the two had not been as fully developed as the HIA team would have liked.

With hindsight, the Hawkes Bay DHB team members considered that ideally it would have been useful to have a second Council staff member involved in the HIA process, as they were aware that one they had worked with was ‘very stretched’ with his other work commitments. However the time he was able to make available to them was much appreciated.

HIA objective 2

Assist the Wairoa District Council to build on the positive aspects of the waste management activity plan and reduce any unintended consequences

All four HIA stakeholders involved in the delivery of the HIA process [the HIA team and the Council stakeholder] indicated that the HIA had achieved objective two. One HIA team member saw the evidence gathered for the HIA, for instance the literature review as having both ‘wrapped around the preferred options,’ and ‘supported the community voice.’

One of the HIA team considered the HIA ‘had reinforced ideas thrown out there’ by the HIA workshop participants particularly with regard to the newly recommended joint council-community waste management option. There was reportedly some reticence on the HIA team’s part initially about adding this ‘new option’ to the mix, given the three options described earlier had already been settled on. However, the Council stakeholder saw the addition of this additional waste management approach option as a ‘good idea’ and noted it had subsequently been adopted by the councillors.
Council action to that effect had already been put in place in terms of changing the waste management activity plan accordingly and providing funding for three rural pilot schemes.

**HIA objective 3**

*Assist to build capacity for the Hawke’s Bay District Health Board and the Wairoa District Council staff to use health impact assessment in the Hawke’s Bay*

The HIA team members and their WDC HIA partner indicated that the HIA had ‘definitely’ added to the Hawke’s Bay DHB HIA team’s capacity, in terms of increasing both their skills and experience in working with an HIA process. ‘Every HIA is unique,’ said one of the HIA team, ‘This one had quite a different voice.’ Each HIA was generally seen as adding to the team’s learning. The HIA consultant saw the Wairoa HIA as having ‘put another cog in the wheel’ for the DHB’s HIA team. He noted that ‘they’re doing well.’

One of the DHB’s HIA team facilitators considered the Council, and the consultant it contracted to present at the appraisal workshop, would have a better understanding of how waste management impacts on health and wellbeing since working on the HIA. The HIA consultant was less sure that the HIA had built capacity within the WDC, but conceded, ‘they may be more inclined to seek another because it worked well for them.’

The WDC stakeholder suggested the Council’s awareness of HIA as a tool is there. He indicated they consequently might use it again on a significant project. He saw the HIA concepts of risk management, risk mitigation and stakeholder engagement as very useful concepts which could be usefully built into the Council’s project work. However, he perceived the ‘high cost of HIA’ as likely to preclude HIA being used on anything other than significant projects.

**HIA objective 4**

*To support the Wairoa District Council’s consultation process with the community*

There was consensus among the HIA team that HIA had ‘greatly’ supported the consultation process. The consultation side of HIA had exceeded one team member’s expectations in that in their view, ‘bigger things are likely to grow from this process.’ The addition of the joint council-community management option was seen as having considerable potential to impact positively on the broader socioeconomic determinants of Wairoa’s more isolated rural (and largely Maori) communities, as those communities would now have more control to address their own health and wellbeing needs, at least in relation to waste management. As such, the newly recommended option was seen as ‘very much in keeping with Treaty of Waitangi principles.’

The HIA consultant saw the HIA as giving the communities an extra avenue to voice their ideas and suggestions, particularly the recommended joint council-community management option. The consultant argued that the HIA enabled community participants to focus and articulate their particular agenda for the wellbeing of their particular communities. (It should be noted, however, that the Council stakeholder had considered this type of option while preparing its Plan but did not include it).

The WDC stakeholder also considered the consultation side of the HIA process as the key strength of the HIA.

The feedback from the five community stakeholders regarding the consultation was similarly positive. For instance, one considered HIA as ‘a very useful tool for
engaging small rural, spread-out communities’ and ‘one that could be usefully used again in the future.’

Two of the five community stakeholders while positive about the consultation process would have liked the process expanded. They had hoped for marae-based hui and were prepared to help to make this happen. However, this did not eventuate due to time and resource constraints. As a consequence, one stakeholder contended that ‘we only scratched the surface’ of what was otherwise a perceived missed opportunity to engage and raise the smaller rural communities’ awareness of the newly proposed waste management and minimisation approach.

**HIA objective 5**

*To provide recommendations on the implementation of the Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan from the health impact assessment process to the decision-makers*

The HIA report provided five recommendations, one of which has already been acted on.

All three members of the HIA team referred to the WDC’s acceptance of the HIA joint council-community management option recommendation as indicative of the value of the HIA process to the decision-makers. From the Council stakeholders’ view point this same recommendation, ‘Resulted in a significant policy shift in terms of what had been technically a user-pay policy. It’s now been interpreted in a different way, in the sense that, we’ve ring-fenced a rural community as a user rather than individual households.’

**HIA objective 6**

*To disseminate the health impact assessment findings into the wider policy arena of all relevant agencies*

The responses to this objective-related question were mixed. The two Hawke’s Bay DHB HIA team members and the Council stakeholder interpreted ‘wider policy arena’ as meaning the Council and the community stakeholders. The Council was reportedly sent a full report, while a summary report was reportedly sent out to all the community stakeholders, although two of the HIA stakeholders reported having not received a summary HIA report at the time of interview. This was put down to issues with contact details provided by the community stakeholders.

In terms of the wider political arena, the HIA consultant made reference to a 20 July 2009 Ministry of Health email, which was sent to various HIA-interested individuals alerting them to a recently published Ministry for the Environment report - *Waste Management and Minimisation Planning: Guidance for territorial authorities*. The email noted a reference in this report to HIA as a useful tool and also to this Wairoa Waste Management HIA which was underway at the time.

**Level of buy-in to HIA at a senior DHB level**

The Public Health Unit of the Hawke’s Bay DHB was described as very much committed to continuing with HIA. However, less certainty was expressed with regards to buy-in to HIA at the senior management level at the DHB. One of the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s team members responses indicated that the HIA team had recently discussed how best to get buy-in into HIA at Board and Public Health Advisory Council level. Dr Fiona Cram was reported as currently conducting a study to determine ways to imbed the Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT tool) into its funding and planning processes. This same study had also reportedly ‘drilled down’
into HIA as another potentially useful planning and funding tool. Senior management was consulted as part of this study. The results of this study are anticipated soon.

**Level of buy-in to HIA at a senior Council level**

The WDC stakeholder suggested there was some degree of buy-in into the HIA process at the Council’s senior management level, but added the earlier discussed caveat that using a full HIA process would only be warranted if the project were a significant one. The perceived high expense would rule it out for smaller projects. He also indicated that the HIA was seen to have ‘added weight to what we had previously considered’ but not included in the plan, namely the HIA recommended fourth joint council-community management option.

**Level of buy-in to HIA at Council’s political level**

The Council stakeholder saw the district’s local councillors as ‘a step removed from the HIA process’ consequently they were judged as having ‘no real knowledge of the process’ as such. However, he added, ‘they were aware that HIA was used.’

One of the Hawkes Bay DHB’s HIA team citing an email (26 June 2009) from her Council HIA colleague indicated that:

> The Council discussed the [HIA’s] summary points during submissions to the Long-term Council Community Plan. The main point around dealing with rural communities in some other way than we have been has got through and they have allocated some funding for a trial at Waikaremoana and also at Raupunga/ Mohaka – so all is good.

The HIA team indicated they had met with the WDC’s chief executive officer early on in the HIA process. He reportedly endorsed the use of the HIA on the WDC’s draft waste management activity plan and gave his approval to proceed.

**Level of buy-in at the community level to the HIA**

All five community stakeholders indicated the HIA process had helped to achieve buy-in into the WDC’s waste management activity plan. Two considered the Council prior to the HIAs did not have ‘a great record’ of consulting their community. The HIA was considered an improvement on the Council’s part to ‘reach out to people’ and ‘making an effort to connect with its community.’ Another commended the Hawke’s Bay DHB as ‘the one organisation that cared enough to give us an opportunity’ to talk about rural communities’ waste management issues.

Because the WDC’s draft plan looked to one community stakeholder as if it was ‘a fait accompli’, this was seen as likely to have put people off from participating. But instead people ‘saw their chance’ to express their views in a constructive way.

There was consensus among all five community stakeholders that the Council’s adoption of the HIA-generated co-management waste management and minimisation recommendation was a very good outcome.

Two stakeholders noted that their communities had already had discussions with Council about possible ways to pilot the co-management option. One community was planning ‘to start small’ on a co-managed recycling venture and that a meeting had been scheduled with Council to that effect. This community’s stakeholder noted that ‘We got the result we were looking for.’ The second stakeholder spoke that a submission put to Council by the Trust he worked for had been looked on ‘favourably,’ to the point that Council had provided funding for the Trust to ‘kick start’ its community’s pilot co-management waste management and minimisation model.
HIA parties: Overall strengths of the HIA process

All nine stakeholders - the three HIA team members, the one WDC stakeholder (i.e. the HIA parties) and the five general community stakeholders were asked - Based on your experience, what do you think were the main strengths of the Wairoa District Council’s waste management plan HIA process? The HIA parties’ responses are presented below. The number of responses is presented in brackets. The total number of possible responses is nine.

The consultation process

The community representation and engagement process at the HIA workshops was commended by HIA team and one community stakeholder. (4)

Having the Council draw up the list of possible people to invite to the HIA workshops and issue the invitations to the workshops was considered a major strength by the Hawke’s Bay HIA team members. (2)

The HIA was perceived by one stakeholder to have provided a platform for the rural communities’ voices to be heard. Another considered it had provided a rural community mandate for a collaborative rural community waste management and minimisation option. (2)

The HIA was also seen to have provided ‘a slight buffer’ between the Council and its community constituents. One evaluation participant sensed ‘a history’ between the Council and some of its community members. The Wairoa community’s low response to its relatively recent waste management survey was thought to be indicative of that past history. The HIA workshops were perceived to have helped the community stakeholder participants feel freer to voice their ideas. The invitation to the workshops gave the impression that ‘it [the draft plan] was not a done deal.’ (1)

From the Council’s point of view, the HIA ‘drove us into the community to seek engagement and involvement. We probably would have done it anyway, but it ensured that we did.’ The HIA also reportedly helped the Council to ‘put a structure around the decision-making process, around what is a complex issue.’ It also provided ‘a group consensus around the priority areas.’ (1)

The $30 petrol voucher koha to those participants who had travelled considerable distances to attend the HIA workshops was deemed a most appropriate sign of appreciation. (1)

Mentoring and facilitation

The HIA consultant’s ability to ‘think on his feet’ and ‘better pitch’ the HIA midway to make it more meaningful to the appraisal workshop’s participants was commended. (1)

The evidence base

The literature review’s findings ‘tied up with what the community was saying.’ (1)

The draft waste management activity plan

The draft Waste Management Activity Plan was considered by a member of the HIA team a clear and well prepared document making it very amenable to an HIA process.

Community stakeholders: Overall strengths of the HIA process

Five community stakeholders considered the HIA process ‘a very good process’ because it:
Gave rise to ‘lots of the good ideas that were put on paper. I’ll have to get a copy of the report and look at those ideas again. I’m quite keen to build on some of them’

Was a ‘useful way to highlight the strategy’ [the waste management activity plan] … it applied horse power to the decision-making process. It’s a good social policy tool’

‘Brought the district’s more isolated communities together in an unintimidating environment. It made them feel comfortable. They understood it was about working together.’

**Community consultation and participation (4)**

Others singled out the consultation side of the HIA as a major strength of the HIA:

- ‘Great for the communities involved to be given the opportunity to voice their views and concerns, to have a pathway plotted for their ideas and how these might work.’
- ‘It was good to see people had thought about how things might work better’ and to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the various options.’
- ‘The right people were there around the table’ thanks largely to the efforts of the Opus consultant who reportedly personally extended invitations to the workshops on the Council and the HIA team’s behalf. People were also seen as prepared to be involved.’
- The recommendations that came out of the appraisal workshop were considered ‘useful,’ because ‘they reflected the communities’ views and input.’
- Bringing the various agencies together under a health and wellbeing umbrella was seen to have, ‘provided a forum that put the emphasis on communication and collaboration … A new way, a good way.’
- The workshops were seen by another as having provided a vehicle for the ‘real story’ to be told about ‘what was happening out there at the coalface. ‘It was the first opportunity that we [rural people] were able to put our case.’

**HIA facilitation**

The Hawke’s Bay DHB’s facilitator was considered ‘a very good facilitator’ of the HIA process. ‘She was good at listening’, ‘providing context around the good ideas and issues’ raised by participants, as well as providing ‘positive encouragement to people to voice their ideas’.

**HIA parties: Perceived constraints of the HIA process**

**Time and resource constraints**

Time constraints were the most commonly identified constraint around the HIA process. These were apparent right from the start of the process, according to both Hawke’s Bay DHB’s HIA team members. The lag-time between the WDC’s initial approach to the HIA team and the HIA’s screening session (4 months) and subsequently between the screening and scoping workshop (7 months) was considered ‘very long’ though understandable, according to one of the Hawke’s Bay HIA team members, given that the Council was drafting its *Waste Management Activity Plan* over that time period. Following the scoping workshop, the remainder of the process reportedly went quite quickly.
The HIA team reportedly had not received any feedback from the Council regarding the HIA report at the time the evaluation interviews were conducted. This was put down to time constraints. ‘People’ [the Council staff included] were described as ‘generally very stretched in their roles.’

The HIA report also suggests the HIA team’s efforts to organise a proposed in-depth community consultation with the farming community was limited, while that with communities with large holiday populations was curtailed due to time constraints.

One HIA team member considered it would have been good to ‘have a little closure with the Wairoa community.’ She was thinking of possibly organising a hui in Wairoa as a way of giving the community feedback regarding the outcome of the HIA and for expressing the team’s gratitude to the HIA participants for their valuable participation and involvement. A letter to this effect had been sent out to all HIA workshop participants but replies had yet to come in at the time the evaluation interviews were carried out.

**The cost associated with delivering an HIA**

The WDC stakeholder indicated the cost of running an HIA would have prevented it from running an HIA itself of the kind organised and delivered by the Hawke’s Bay DHB. He considered the consultants’ fees alone would have precluded the Council picking up the HIA mantle.

**Community stakeholders: Perceived constraints of the HIA process**

**Community consultation limitation**

Interviews with two of the five community stakeholders noted the marae-based hui following the HIA’s appraisal workshop did not take place as planned. Both expressed regret about the HIA team having not come to their communities. One of the two stakeholders who had indicated willingness to help set up such a hui noted on interview that he was never contacted. He expressed disappointment about the loss of that opportunity to raise rural people’s awareness of the issues involved and extending the level of buy-in into the recommended fourth option.

One of these same stakeholders felt the HIA’s appraisal should have been a day-long workshop, as opposed to the four hours that was set aside for it. He personally ‘would have liked more time for us to express our ideas’, and to have had the opportunity to work with the other workshop group.

Another community stakeholder perceived school representatives as missing from the appraisal workshop. There was ‘lots of talk about what schools are doing’ regarding waste minimisation, but ‘little real knowledge of just how far down the track schools are,’ regarding its place in the curriculum and the actual efforts that schools are taking to recycle.

A fourth stakeholder considered the pre-workshop invitation and information sent out to his organisation was not explicit enough about what was expected of would-be workshop participants. ‘If I had understood what was involved some one more suitable could have represented us.’

The fifth community stakeholder identified no constraints that acted to limit or constrain the HIA process.

**HIA parties: Suggested ways to improve the HIA process**

The HIA stakeholders suggested the following ways to improve the HIA process:
Allow more time to do the post-workshop consultation process (2)

Identify a way to ‘round the process off properly’ (1)

‘No real constraints’ from the Council’s view, ‘it all went okay.’ (1)

Community stakeholders: Suggested ways to improve the HIA process

Two of the five community stakeholders appeared quite satisfied with the Wairoa HIA process, in that, ‘nothing’ was seen to be necessary to improve it. ‘It was a good process’, in the eyes of one of these two stakeholders, ‘It got people talking freely and working together.’

Others (2) expressed disappointment that the planned extended consultation with the smaller rural communities did not take place. Both felt the process would have benefitted from this if it had occurred. ‘There would have been huge interest in our area’ according to one, while the other felt ‘the wider audience was needed to get additional ideas and to raise awareness of the issues.’ ‘Wairoa’s issues are different than rural areas like ours.’

Two stakeholders considered the process would have benefitted from having the stakeholders better prepared for what was expected of them with regards to the process and its content. In the case of one of these stakeholders, more informative information prior to the HIA would have enabled the organisation he worked for to select a more suitable representative. While he considered the process a good one overall, waste management was outside his area of expertise.

One of the community stakeholders considered that re-mixing the groups to consider each of the options would have improved the process.

Resources used in the HIA process

One of the HIA team interpreted the resources used for the HIA as meaning the funding provided through the Ministry of Health’s HIA support unit Learning by Doing fund. This amounted to $34,708.00 (the total sum) for this particular HIA. From this budget $18,000 covered consultants’ fees, $12,000 of which was for preparing the HIA’s literature review. The total sum also covered payment for venue fees, catering, travel to and from Wairoa, and other incidental expenses.

One of the HIA team members noted having spent 65.5 hours between 18 Aug 2008 and 27 April 2009 on the Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan’s HIA. Hours were not recorded or calculated for the other HIA team member. However, it is likely the time spent on the HIA was similar, if not slightly higher, than that of her colleagues, given she was present on the day of both the HIA’s scoping and appraisal workshops, whereas her colleague was unavailable for one of the workshops.

Alignment between the HIA and the WDC’s planning processes

From the Hawke’s Bay HIA team’s point of view the Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan was definitely aligned to the WDC’s Long-term Council Community Plan. That alignment, to a large extent, was perceived to have constrained the timeframe within which the HIA had to be conducted, in that, the HIA report had to be ready for the WDC’s consideration at its May 2009 meeting.

The Council’s HIA stakeholder similarly indicated that he and the HIA team had ‘made it align’, although he added, ‘I’m not sure the alignment was there naturally’.
Availability and development of HIA resources

As in an earlier HIA evaluation, the HIA team reported that the Public Health Advisory Committee’s *A Guide to Health Impact Assessment: A policy tool for New Zealand* requires revision to render it more user-friendly for those wanting to carry out an HIA. This suggestion was discussed in some detail in an earlier HIA evaluation of the Hastings District Council’s *Graffiti Vandalism Strategy* (McClellan, Signal 2009). That same report also outlined an alternative suggestion of producing an ‘easy to use’ practical handbook or manual, about how to manage and implement an HIA process, for HIA and up-and coming HIA practitioners. The DHB’s HIA team suggested that such a manual should:

- be kept simple
- outline the key HIA concepts
- be tailored to novices
- note the need for good facilitation skills and an ability ‘to think on one’s feet should there be a need to refocus an HIA’s focus during the course of a workshop’
- outline potential challenging situations, including the difficulty of controlling external factors e.g. HIA partners’ other work commitments, and time constraints
- ‘embed the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles’ into any new handbook, pointing out ‘its natural alignment to the HIA principles and process.’

In this evaluation, the WDC stakeholder saw a need for simplified ‘how to do’ information by suggesting that the key concepts, definitions and process could be summarised in a leaflet form.
SECTION 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation of the HIA undertaken on the WDC’s draft Waste Management Activity Plan is one of five HIA evaluations either completed or currently being undertaken by the Hawke’s Bay DHB with the funding support of the Ministry of Health, HIA Support Unit’s Learning by Doing fund.

For this evaluation we used a range of research methods: participant observation, documentary analysis, workshop evaluation and key stakeholder interviews to assess this particular HIA’s process and impact. The overall findings are now assessed against the evaluation objectives as specified in Section 2 of this report.

Did the HIA achieve its objectives?

Did it enhance working partnerships?

Staff from both agencies directly involved in the HIA process - the Hawke’s Bay DHB and WDC - appeared very satisfied with the overall outcome of their working partnership. The Hawke’s Bay DHB’s HIA team considered each now had a better understanding of the other’s organisational operations and roles, as well as Council possibly now having a better idea about how its work impacts on the health and wellbeing of its community. One the other hand, the Council’s HIA partner while appreciative of the support the HIA provided its consultation process questioned whether the alignment between its work and its community’s health and wellbeing is naturally there. The Council was perceived as likely to use HIA again only if it were a ‘significant project.’ The perceived costliness of running an HIA was identified as a likely inhibiting factor for using the approach on a regular basis.

Did the HIA assist to strengthen the Waste Management Activity Plan?

From the WDC stakeholder’s point of view the HIA’s strong consultative process did indeed strengthen its waste management activity plan. Changes were made to the draft plan as a consequence. The HIA process also reportedly resulted in a significant policy shift on the Council’s part, by moving it from what had been ‘technically a user-pays policy’ to one wherein rural communities would now be ‘ring fenced’ and treated as one user rather than as a community of individual households, as had been the Council’s policy.

While the Council’s stakeholder expressed some reservations about whether the literature review ‘came through into the HIA’s recommendations’, the discussion around these and the various Council’s options do indeed appear to draw heavily on both the evidence presented in the literature review and the HIA stakeholder’s views.

All HIA parties indicated considerable satisfaction with the Council’s recent move to implement joint council-community waste management, minimisation pilot initiatives in the small isolated rural communities of Waikaremoana and Raupunga/Mohaka. This was directly attributed to the first of the five HIA recommendations.

Did it help build capacity for HIA in the Hawke’s Bay DHB and WDC?

Based on this report’s authors’ observations of this particular HIA, and an earlier HIA evaluation (McClellan & Signal 2009) and a further two that the Hawke’s Bay HIA team has currently underway it is evident that both team members have become very skilled and quietly confident in their abilities to manage and implement HIAs. They have considerable respect for each other’s strengths and abilities, which each described as complementing each others. One community stakeholder commended the facilitation skills of the HIA team members. The HIA team facilitator who introduced
HIA to the appraisal workshop participants did so most skilfully by tailoring her introduction to specifically engage the predominantly Māori stakeholder audience, in the sense of relating the HIA principles to those of the Treaty of Waitangi as well as Māori concepts of health and community wellbeing.

Evaluation interview feedback suggested less certainty about HIA capacity having been built within the WDC. The uncertainty appeared to larger stem from the perceived time constraints, work pressures and commitments that impacted on the WDC’s senior manager who initially expressed interest in the possibility of having an HIA process work on the Council’s draft Waste Management Activity Plan and who subsequently became the HIA partner. While he was involved in the HIA screening and scoping phases, he was unable to front the HIA’s appraisal workshop due to work commitments. This same manager also expressed doubt as to whether the alignment was ‘naturally there’ between his Council work and that of health/HIA principles. He noted the perceived high cost of running an HIA process would probably exclude any thought of using an HIA process for small policy projects. However he conceded it could be used for ‘significant projects.’

**Did the HIA support the WDC’s community consultation?**

Both HIA partners and all community stakeholders acknowledged the considerable contribution of the HIA to the WDC’s consultation with its community. Most considered the consultation was over and above what the Council would have been likely to have done without the benefit of an HIA.

**Did the HIA provide recommendations based on its findings?**

The evaluation data including the HIA report and its literature review suggest all five recommendations were closely aligned to the evidence gathered through the HIA process (see earlier discussion). However, the WDC HIA partner appeared not completely convinced that the HIA’s recommendations were in fact supported by the evidence provided through the literature review.

**Were the HIA findings disseminated into the wider policy arena?**

The HIA team distributed the HIA report, or alternatively its executive summary, to all its key stakeholders. The HIA team were considering ways to feedback the HIA results to the wider Wairoa community given that they were unable to do the planned extended HIA consultation due to time constraints. The HIA report findings will also be more widely disseminated through the Ministry of Health’s HIA support unit, and through peer reviewed journals. The HIA on the WDC’s waste management activity was also reportedly referred to in a 2009 Ministry for the Environment’s document - *Waste Management and Minimisation Planning: Guidance for territorial authorities*.

**Other evaluation objectives**

In addition to assessing whether the HIA’s objectives were met, the evaluation was required to also determine the following process and impact-related factors.

**The main strengths of the HIA**

The community consultation generated through the HIA was considered a major strength. The representation of key rural community stakeholders together with their level of engagement was generally lauded, as was the outcome of the HIA recommendation, namely piloting of the joint council-community waste management minimisation initiatives. These appeared to have exceeded people’s expectations.
Some considered the consultation component of the HIA a marked improvement on the WDC’s past consultation efforts. It also provided a buffer between Council and its community constituents and provided a non-threatening platform and environment for the people’s voices to be heard.

**The main constraints of the HIA**

Time and human resource constraints were the main constraints identified for this HIA process. Time and work pressures were in part responsible for the long lag time between the HIA’s screening and scoping phases. Work commitments also precluded the WDC’s HIA partner from fronting the HIA appraisal workshop. Work pressures in the form of the swine flu epidemic similarly prolonged the preparation of the HIA report. The epidemic combined with the need to get the HIA report to the Council soon after the completion of the appraisal workshop curtailed the extended consultation the HIA team had planned to undertake with other stakeholder groups that were identified in the appraisal workshop.

When interviewed, the HIA’s community stakeholders expressed disappointment that the marae-based hui they had offered to help set up for the extended consultation did not happen. This was, as the community stakeholders’ perceived, a missed opportunity to increase the community’s awareness and knowledge about waste management and minimisation issues. Efforts were made to organise a consultative meeting with representatives of the farming community, but little interest was reportedly shown. This was unfortunate given that disposal of agricultural waste is considered a major issue for the district.

**Possible avenues for improvement**

Providing more time in the appraisal workshop to cover what were seen as very complex issues, and carrying out the planned extended consultation were the two main avenues stakeholders considered would have improved the HIA process.

**Impact on the Waste Management Activity Plan**

The draft *Waste Management Activity Plan* clearly benefitted from the evidence produced through the literature review and from the high quality input provided by stakeholders who were clearly engaged in the HIA process. Both evidence sources strongly supported community development focused, collaborative waste management approaches – the first of the five HIA recommendations. The Council has already acted on that particular HIA report recommendation, by providing funding for two joint council-community pilot initiatives in two of the district’s more geographically isolated rural areas. The Council’s joint partners will include two of the Māori development trusts who were represented at the HIA’s scoping and appraisal workshops. The initiative was described by a Council stakeholder as a ‘significant policy shift’ on the Council’s part. At the time of the evaluation interviews the council stakeholder was unable to discuss any decision-with regards to the remaining four HIA recommendations. However, he did indicate that changes to the plan were afoot based on the HIA findings. The HIA team has reportedly endeavoured to follow-up the Council decision-making with regards to the other four HIA recommendations. At the time of writing this report it was waiting on a response to its enquiries.

**Did the HIA add value to the planning process?**

As discussed earlier, all the stakeholders involved in this HIA process acknowledged the consultation component of the HIA as one of its major strengths. Most indicated it had been over and above the Council’s usual way of consulting with its community.
The Council stakeholder conceded that the Council would not have the resources to carry out intensive consultation, on a regular basis, along the lines of that undertaken through the HIA. Having another agency external to the Council undertake the consultation was perceived, by one stakeholder as having provided ‘a slight buffer’ between the Council and the community. Its earlier efforts to consult with the community regarding waste management, namely a survey followed up by focus groups, were seen by this stakeholder as not particularly suited to a community whose population is predominantly Māori and low income.

**On-going impacts of the HIA**

It is too early to provide an answer to the research question about the on-going impacts of the HIA. A further impact assessment in the next year and an outcome evaluation of the HIA in three years time would provide evaluable evidence of the on-going impacts and the long-term outcomes of the HIA.

**Key factors for senior management and political level buy-in to HIA process**

There was reportedly very little involvement of senior managers in this particular HIA at the HBDHB level, compared to other current HIAs. However, the HIA team indicated that their senior managers, including the CEO, were kept informed of the work. The evaluators have been advised to follow this question up as part of the evaluations of those HIAs remaining to be evaluated. It will be interesting to see whether support from senior management and politicians continues to grow as these other HIAs are completed.

The HIA’s Council partner was the only senior Council manager directly involved in the HIA process. While acknowledging the value of the HIA as a consultative tool, on the other hand, he perceived HIA as an expensive process that would prohibit its use as a regular policy development tool for all but ‘significant’ policy-related projects.

The WDC’s councillors were given copies of the HIA report and its summary to consider at the meeting where, as part of its LTCCP it assessed the HIA’s recommendations with regard to the *Waste Management Activity Plan*. The councillors were aware of the HIA’s contribution to the plan but were said to have ‘little real knowledge of what was involved in an HIA process.’

**Resources for HIA**

Revision or additions to the HIA Guide (Public Health Advisory Committee 2005) is a key recommendation from this HIA as it was in the evaluation of the HIA of the Hastings District Council’s Graffiti Vandalism Strategy (McClellan, Signal 2009). As in that evaluation, there was a call from those directly involved in the running of this HIA for a practical HIA handbook for newcomers to the HIA process in particular, but also for HIA practitioners in general. This HIA generated a number of key documents, for instance the scoping and appraisal workshop evaluation forms and key informant interview questions, that may be of use in future HIAs (see appendices 1 & 2). This evaluation also provides a resource to assist others involved in HIA processes.

**Key lessons learnt from this HIA**

This HIA evaluation has identified many lessons that may assist the Hawke’s Bay DHB HIA team and the WDC, should they ever engage again in a future HIA, also other key stakeholders in the Hawke’s Bay, and those interested in HIA nationally. These lessons include:
**Overall learning**

- HIA can assist councils to develop policy more strongly based on evidence and effective community consultation than some traditional council processes.
- HIA can assist councils to make innovative policy decisions.
- HIA may be most appropriate for major policy developments as the process takes time and resources that councils may not always have to hand, at least to undertake HIAs themselves.
- A partnership between councils and district health boards can facilitate effective HIA processes, particularly if there is some joint resourcing of the process.
- New funding makes HIA possible.
- The relatively high cost of undertaking HIAs suggests it is mainly suited for use on significant policy projects such as the subject of this HIA.

**HIA process**

- When HIA is new to an organisation, careful consideration should be given when screening policies to selecting a policy which lends itself to HIA and is likely to be well supported in the community.
- Checks need to be made at key stages in the process to ensure that the process addresses obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.
- At the scoping phase it is important to size the HIA to the policy under consideration and to the resources available, to be clear about what is included and excluded from the HIA, and what could be picked up in other processes.
- Careful consideration needs to be given as to how to engage key stakeholders, including senior management and political leaders, and community members in the HIA process.

**Community consultation**

- There is benefit in taking HIA to the people and holding workshops in environments where your stakeholders feel comfortable. It can assist HIA participants to more effectively participate in the process.
- There is a need to collect full contact details from those involved in the HIA workshops – names, address, organisational roles, and email addresses positions – so that HIA reports can be sent to people (several community stakeholders reportedly did not initially receive copies of this HIA reports. This oversight was subsequently rectified).
- Workshop facilitators need a strong foundation in HIA, effective communication skills, an ability to work with a range of different audiences, and the flexibility ‘to think on their feet’ when it becomes obvious changes to the programme as needed.
- Outlining the HIA process and the issues under consideration at the beginning of screening, scoping and appraisal workshops enables an effective discussion. Including presenters who can speak to the realities of the issue under consideration also assists, especially at the scoping and appraisal workshops.
- Use of exercises to enable people to participate in decision-making can increase the engagement of participants in the process e.g. use of post-it notes for identifying health individuals’ health and wellbeing determinants and population group priorities in order to build consensus.
Evaluation of community consultation workshops provides valuable feedback to the process.

Asking participants in the scoping workshop for advice about available data and who to consult can provide valuable information.

It is critical that the principles, aims and objectives and concepts underpinning HIA closely align with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori health and community development models, particularly in a district such as Wairoa which has a high Māori population.

Consideration should be given to the likely advantages and disadvantages of breaking into groups when the numbers of workshop participants are small. Between eight and 10 participants are considered optimal for focus group work where there is just one facilitator.

More time may need to be allowed for workshop participation deliberations when the set tasks/themes are both multiple and complex, as was the case in this HIA’s appraisal workshop. Four hours was allowed in this instance and it appears to have been insufficient. However, this needs to be balanced with making unreasonable time demands on busy community and policy people.

Training and resources

Training for HIA practitioners is important to enable them to undertake HIAs effectively.

Novice HIA practitioners benefit from mentoring throughout the HIA process. It enables them to build the necessary knowledge and skill base.

New money makes it easier for organisations to undertake HIA as they do not have to find savings in other areas.

The HIA document A Guide to Health Impact Assessment: A policy tool for New Zealand requires revision or alternatively a practical, new step-by-step HIA process guidance manual should be developed. A resource for lay people that explains HIA concepts simply would be useful when working with those not trained in HIA.

Conclusions

The Learning by Doing Fund provided the Hawke’s Bay DHB with new funding for this and four other HIAs. Two of the five are now completed, including the one we have reported on here, the HIA for the draft Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan. The evaluation suggests the WDC benefitted significantly from the HIA inputs. In response to one of the HIA recommendations, two of the district’s more isolated rural communities are currently in negotiations with the Council to pilot joint council-community waste management pilots in their communities, a development that is unlikely to have occurred without the HIA. Our evaluation observations of the first and now this most recently completed HIA show the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s HIA team’s knowledge, skills and confidence in managing and implementing HIAs have been greatly strengthened by those experiences. The mentoring provided by the HIA consultant through the Learning by Doing funding is acknowledged as having been a major contributing factor in growing the HIA team’s knowledge and skill base. Finally, the evaluation serves to provide those directly involved in the HIA’s process an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learnt and apply the knowledge gained to future HIAs. This evaluation again suggests that the Learning by Doing funding continues to live up to its promise.


Wairoa District Council. 2002. *Executive Summary*  
www.wairoadc.govt.nz/documentswairoa %20In520 profile.yrog3exec.sum.pdf
APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

Wairoa Draft Waste Management Plan
Health Impact Assessment Scoping Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

By completing this brief questionnaire you will help the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Team to keep on improving its processes for collecting stakeholder/community input into its HIAs. *No names or other identifying information are required on this form.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand why HIA is undertaken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I understand why we are doing HIA on this topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I understand what the main focus of this HIA will be</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I felt I was able to contribute to the decisions about what this HIA was going to focus on</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I want to continue to be involved in future parts of this HIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I will consider the HIA process for other projects that are/will be occurring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. The main strengths of the scoping session were?

8. What could have been done to improve the scoping session?

9. Any other comments?

Thank you very much for providing this feedback
# Wairoa Draft Waste Management Plan

## HIA Evaluation Appraisal Workshop Questionnaire

By completing this brief questionnaire you will help the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Team to keep on improving its processes for collecting stakeholder/community input into its HIAs. *No names or other identifying information are required on this form.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall, this workshop has been very useful for identifying the intended and unintended effects that this Wairoa draft Waste Management Plan might have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I now have a greater understanding of the ways this draft plan might affect the determinants of wellbeing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The workshop has been a good opportunity for me to develop or maintain links with people across the sector/s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The workshop has been a good opportunity to contribute my views and ideas for the enhancement of the Wairoa draft Waste Management Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I will consider the HIA process for other projects that are/will be occurring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The main strengths of this appraisal workshop were?

7. What could have been done to improve the appraisal workshop?

8. Any other comments?

*Thank you very much for providing this feedback*
APPENDIX 2: FINAL EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

Wairoa Waste Management Plan
HIA Internal Stakeholders’ Interview Schedule

Stakeholders’ name: ........................................................................................................
Organisation: ...................................................................................................................
Position: ..........................................................................................................................

Thank you for agreeing to my interviewing you today. Did you have time to read the
information sheet that I emailed you earlier, which explained?

1. The evaluation objectives of the Hawke’s Bay DHB’s health impact assessment (HIA)
   process evaluation with regards to its use in helping to develop the Wairoa District
   Council’s (WDC) Waste Management Activity Plan, and
2. How we plan to protect your anonymity.

If the response is yes ask – Would you like me to go through these again, or, do you have any
questions about the evaluation before we start?

The first evaluation questions focus on the actual HIA process

1. Based on your experience, what do you think were the main strengths of
   the WDC’s Waste Management Activity Plan HIA process?
2. Are you able to identify any factors that acted to limit or constrain that HIA process?
3. What might have been done to improve the HIA process?
4. What resources were used in the HIA process? (Prompts - staff, financial, other)
5. How was the HIA aligned to the WDC’s planning processes (especially its Long-term
   Council Community Plan)?

The following questions focus on the impact of the HIA on the development of the
Wairoa waste management plan

6. Based on your experience, do you think the HIA for the WDC’s Waste Management
   Activity Plan achieved its objectives? For instance did it …. 
   
   (6a) Assist to enhance a working partnership between the WDC and Hawke’s Bay DHB in
        terms of shared planning and resourcing. Yes If yes, ask in what way? No If no, ask why not?

   (6b) Assist the WDC to build on positive aspects of the Waste Management Activity Plan
        and reduce any unintended negative aspects. Yes If yes, ask in what way? No If no, ask why not?
[6c] Assist to build capacity for both the Hawke’s Bay DHB and WDC to use HIA.
   Yes    If yes, ask in what way?    No    If no, ask why not?

(6d) Support the WDC’s consultation process with the local community?

(6e) Provide useful recommendations to support the implementation of the Wairoa Waste Management Activity Plan. Yes    If yes, ask in what way?    No    If no, ask why not?

(6f) Disseminate the HIA findings into the wider policy arena?
   Yes    If yes, ask in what way?    No    If no, ask why not?

**Other general issues**

7. Do you think the HIA process helped in any particular way to get buy-in into the HIA process and outcomes, particularly at the …

(7a) Hawke’s Bay DHB’s senior management level    Yes    If yes, ask in what way?    No    If no, ask why not?

(7b) WDC senior management level    Yes    If yes, ask in what way?    No    If no, ask why not?

(7c) WDC’s political level    Yes    If yes ask in what way?    No    If no, ask why not?

8. Are there any of the current HIA resources that you think could be used or modified for future use by either DHBs or the local council’s? Yes    No    If yes, ask which resources?

9. What do you think are the key lessons from this HIA for the Hawke’s Bay DHB, WDC and other potential HIA partners?

10. That’s the end of the interview questions, is there anything that we didn’t cover earlier that you would like to raise before we finish the interview?

**Thank you for your input today**
Thank you for agreeing to my interviewing you today. Did you have time to read the information sheet that I emailed you earlier which explained?

1. The evaluation objectives of the health impact assessment (HIA) process evaluation with regards to its use in helping to develop the Wairoa District Council’s (WDC) Waste Management Activity Plan, and

2. How we plan to protect your anonymity.

**If the response is yes ask** – Would you like me to go through these again, or, do you have any questions about the evaluation before we start?

**The first evaluation questions focus on the actual HIA process**

1. Based on your experience, what do you think were the main strengths of the health impact assessment process?

2. Based on your experience, were there any factors that acted to limit or constrain the health impact assessment process? Yes **If yes, ask in what way** No **If no, ask why not?**

3. What might have been done to improve the health impact assessment process?

**The following questions focus on the impact of the HIA on the development of the Wairoa waste management plan**

4. In your opinion, did the health impact assessment process help to get consideration of equity issues for low-income, smaller rural communities and holiday populations in the waste management plan? Yes **If yes, ask in what way** No **If no, ask why not?** Not sure

4b. Do you think the HIA process helped in any particular way to get buy-in into the proposed waste management plan at a community level?

**If yes, ask in what way?** No **If no, ask why not?**

4c. Have you received a copy of the HIA’s summary report? Yes **If yes, what did you think of it?** No

4d. Do you think the health impact assessment process was a useful way of getting community input into the Council’s draft waste management plan? Yes **If yes, ask in what way?** No **If no, ask why not?** Not sure

5. That’s the end of the set evaluation questions, is there anything that we didn’t cover earlier that you would like to raise before we finish the interview?

**Thank you for your input today**