

# Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**

5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

## **PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – BRIEFING/WORKSHOP**

*TO WHICH ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ARE INVITED*

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

I enclose a copy of the briefing paper for the following item to be considered at the meeting to be held at 5.15 pm on Thursday, 5th March, 2020.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

2. **Waste Collection Update - John McConnell** (Pages 1 - 8)

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Subject:	Waste Collection Update
Date:	5 <sup>th</sup> March, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services, City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services, John McConnell, City Services Manager (Resources & Fleet)

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide an update on Waste Collection missed bin and access issues for the Waste Collection meeting of the Peoples and Communities Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note this update and agree the contents of this report prepared for this separate meeting to discuss the ongoing issues with waste collections.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>

<p>3.1</p>	<p><b>Missed Bin and Access issues</b></p> <p><b>Executive summary of actions</b></p> <p>This report will highlight work progressed to date to address persistent issues which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive work with squads reinforcing the concern of members and the customer experience</li> <li>• Using narrow bodied vehicles where logistically possible</li> <li>• 8 narrow bodies vehicles ordered due Spring 2020</li> <li>• A further trial with a yet narrower and smaller vehicle to happen in March 2020</li> <li>• Working with communities and residents directly or through elected members regarding restricted access</li> <li>• Meetings with DFI officers on the ground regarding yellow lines and enforcement</li> <li>• Strategic Director and senior officers have met with DFI officials February 2020</li> <li>• Identified key affected streets per area - looking at solutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Background</b></p> <p>3.2 An update on Waste Collection issues was submitted to the P&amp;C Committee on 8th October 2019, and a further detailed briefing was provided to the Party Group Leaders on the 8th November 2019. A further update paper was produced on 14th January 2020</p> <p>The October report stated:</p> <p>3.3 'Turning to the issue of missed bins, this item has received increased scrutiny over the past two years as the new Resources &amp; Fleet City Service, has been established and throughout the summer of 2019 in particular. One of the priorities in Waste Collection is to ensure that the number of missed bins are kept to a minimum. It is worth reminding Members that on average we collect approximately 154,000 bins a week, so the percentage of missed bins is less than 0.5%, although we appreciate the impact even this has on people'.</p>
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3.4	<p>Waste Collection runs on average 49 planned routes each day, some operate over a 10 day cycle. Routes are designed to ensure that all crews are employed for 37 hours per week, and have been reviewed in the last 12 months. Routes take into account travel times and times taken to empty lorries as well as carrying out compulsory vehicle safety checks each day.</p>
3.5	<p>Adjustments to routes are made as necessary e.g. new housing stock, PBMSA coming on stream etc. There is no established capacity to revisit missed streets during normal operational hours except for the provision of one Quick Reaction Team to recover missed black bins. All other recovery is currently carried out on overtime.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Current Issues</b></p> <p>In recent years, the number of missed collections has increased as a result of several factors and these have been covered in previous reports. However, more recently the main and growing problem cited by returning squads has being restricted access to streets due to parked cars. Although difficult to quantify, Waste Collection staff believe this to be a mix of residents parking in their own streets and commuters parking just off main arterial routes and then using public transport to continue their journeys to and from work. This remains the case.</p>
3.7	<p>The number of missed bins reported to the Council's Call Centre spiked over and following the July 2019 holiday period, and although Waste Collection strived to reduce this as quickly as possible, this was not been resolved quickly enough, mainly due to resources being diverted to cope with the increased demands for compostable waste collections which reached record levels throughout the Summer of 2019. Although levels reduced towards the previous year's figures, there was a further spike over the Christmas and New Year's holiday period. This figure has also reduced back towards previous year's levels.</p>
3.8	<p>Members will be aware that several approaches have been identified to improve the situation, and are being implemented or will be explored as part of the Transition and Improvement Plan within the Department, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness with squads about missed bins, using the data - core staff have been instructed to make every effort to get bins emptied "first time, every time" but,</li> </ul>

	<p>should this not be possible, to promptly communicate difficulties. This work continues and Assistant Managers continue to stress the importance of reporting issues immediately.</p>
3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been stated that “If the lorry can’t get to the bin, can the bin get to the lorry?” and this is being considered. Council Health &amp; Safety officers are working with Waste Collection to consider the frequency and distances involved to bring bins from agreed collection points to the vehicle, whether there is a recommended “maximum distance” an operator can be asked to pull a bin. This remains a work in progress as there is no definitive HSE, Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum (WISH) or other guidance on this and individual risk assessments would be required taking into account road conditions, length of travel, weight of bins, etc. This would be a major undertaking to achieve, and the effects on route efficiency and resourcing also need to be understood.</li> </ul>
3.10	<p>Also being considered is the logistics and costs of additional staff to offset the above operation, however, we also need to consider operator fatigue to provide longer pulls? Current IT modelling systems cannot easily determine how many extra operators it would take to address missed bins through this method. This is due in the main because missed bins are not defined by one area or by one days’ collection or by one single waste stream.</p>
3.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selective targeting (e.g. missed Assisted Lifts) as a priority – discussions are underway with the individual crews on how best to introduce a new system of recording missed assisted lifts. It is hoped to trial a simple IT solution with the use of smartphones in the coming months, lead through the Customer Focus Programme.</li> </ul>
3.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better use of ICT with the first draft of “heat maps” being used to identify difficult areas but this is dependent upon access to critical staff members or additional technical support. Temporary admin support is to be utilised to devise heat maps and data that can be used to identify specific problem areas.</li> </ul>
3.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer-term, amending the fleet to have a better fit-for-purpose (i.e. procuring ) narrow body and/or 12T or 18T refuse collection vehicles; an initial step has been taken to order 8 x 26T narrow body RCVs which are due to delivered in April/May 2020. These vehicles are 250mm (10”) narrower and should assist in accessing some narrow streets more easily and positively impact upon missed bins.</li> </ul>

3.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close dialogue is maintained with Road Service regarding the installation of double-yellow lines and enforcement, and higher level discussions have been held about adopting alternative approaches – such as red or blue lines, clearway zones etc, but these have been deferred pending reestablishment of the Assembly. We have written to the Department for Infrastructure formally to update them on these challenges, the impacts, and seek to get support and action from them on how to address.</li> </ul>
3.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above work and our work around the Departmental Transition and Improvement project for Resources and Fleet Services, is underpinned by the Corporate Customer Improvement Programme. This work is ongoing and further reports will be presented in due course.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Update on progress</b></p>
3.16	<p>Since the report of 9th October and subsequent update in January 2020 Waste Collection Management have continued to focus on the issue of missed bins and the following actions have been undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the Customer Focus Programme, a body of work has been undertaken by Digital Services to link current IT systems and data to create a Waste Collection ‘dashboard’ to provide relevant management data on which to base operational decisions on a live basis. The first version of this has been demonstrated and released to operational management and is currently under their review for comment and suggestion for improvement.</li> <li>• A trial was undertaken to independently verify and check, using internal quality monitors, instances whereby drivers have reported instances of access issues. Photographic evidence was obtained wherever possible. The aim was providing assurance to management that access is restricted when reported. The trial is under review as there were specific issues around the timeliness of taking photographs (parked vehicles often had moved etc) and it that the subjectivity / expertise of the staff monitors, who are not qualified heavy goods drivers, has to be considered.</li> </ul>

3.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A temporary admin resource is looking at extracting data on missed bins to provide some analysis on the main problem streets across the city, in order to prioritise any available resources to address. Good progress has been made around the information given to managers and squads in relation to missed assisted lifts.</li> </ul>
3.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing restricted access issues - work has been undertaken to assess the level of interaction with the public and with the Department for Infrastructure at local management level to address specific issues. An exercise has been undertaken to pull together all separate hard copy data and email records held within Waste Collection. This has been an attempt to quantify, in 2019, the number of actions/ interventions taken by local waste management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lettering of residents in relation to access issues – 5,602 properties contacted across 132 streets;</li> <li>Number of formal interactions with local Dfl management in relation to individual streets – 46 occasions;</li> <li>Number of interactions that has resulted in action by Dfl (eg introduction of yellow lines) – 41 occasions;</li> <li>Number of successful outcomes from these interactions – 32 occasions, (subjective view from front line management - exact data is not held);</li> <li>Number of on-site meetings with Councillors, MLAs and / or their representatives in relation to access issues by Waste Collection Management – 44 site meetings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Heat Maps’ have been devised to identify the main problem streets in terms of Waste Collection. How to best use this information is now being considered, and initial findings are being shared with officers from the Department for Infrastructure, as a basis for targetting their resources around difficult access areas. Next operational meeting has been set for 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020</li> </ul>
3.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work continues to develop reliable data using IT systems and to inform management decision making, to target available resources wherever possible to maximise the first time collection of bins across the city.</li> </ul>
3.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers from Resources and Fleet, Customer Focus Programme and Digital Services have received initial presentations from Vehicle Tracking Systems</li> </ul>



<p>3.22</p>	<p>suppliers to inform where in cab technology may be utilised to link in to current IT systems to drive improved service delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of the operational planning regarding Christmas and New Year 2019, Members will be aware that party group leaders were briefed on some of the difficulties faced in terms of operational planning. Since then detailed conversations with management, staff and Trade Unions have taken place to address ongoing issues around some working practices and Bank / Public holiday working arrangements and getting agreement on the arrangements for bank/ public holidays during 20/21.</li> </ul>
<p>3.23</p>	<p><b>Financial and Resource Implications</b></p> <p>These have not been assessed at this time, as this report is an update report. Clearly to implement some of the possible improvement actions and as the Customer and Transition and Improvement Programs progress, actions will be developed and these will be need to be assessed in terms of their feasibility and costs.</p>
<p>3.24</p>	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessments</b></p> <p>None required at this time.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None.</p>

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