



Subject:	Sustainable Period Products – Phase 2
Date:	19th August, 2022
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision

Restricted Reports	
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"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on proposals to build on the success of the initial Period Waste Pilot Initiative (March - May 2022).
1.2	An update report was presented to the People and Communities Committee on 10th May. It agreed that, given the success of the initiative, a request be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to find the budget to enable the provision of reusable sanitary products to continue to be funded and, where possible, that these products should continue to be offered free of charge or for a nominal charge at a minimum.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: i. note the contents of the report, consider the options presented within it and make a recommendation on whether the initiative should run again in-year at a smaller scale (£25,000 budget available) or whether it is content to recommend to Council that the

	<p>budget be increased, on a non-recurrent basis, to run it again at a similar level (£50,000 budget – additional £25,000 required); and</p> <p>ii. consider and make a recommendation on whether a future scheme should continue to provide products free of charge on a first come, first served basis or whether a notional charge of £5 per applicant should be applied to enable more people to avail of the scheme.</p>
3.0	Main Report
	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>3.1 The aim of the Period Waste Pilot initiative was to raise awareness and encourage increased use of reusable period products. More people using sustainable rather than disposable products will have an environmental benefit as it will reduce the amount of period waste that is entering our waste stream and being landfilled, and it will also reduce plastic waste. Disposal of single use menstrual products i.e. tampons, pads and applicators generates 200,000 tonnes of waste per year in the UK¹. In addition, sanitary waste can be made of up to 90% plastic.</p> <p>3.2 In the most recent BCC Waste Composition Study (2014) it was found that 1.87% of all miscellaneous combustible waste (the largest category of waste we collect) was of a sanitary waste nature (including other absorbent hygiene products but excluding nappies). This means each household was producing on average 3.38Kg of this type of product waste per year.</p> <p>3.3 This project was primarily focused on waste reduction but also had the benefit of offering a sustainable and therefore more affordable choice for those who might be affected by period poverty which is an added pressure on individuals and families as a result of the current cost of living pressures.</p> <p>3.4 The pilot scheme was launched on 30 March 22 to unprecedented applications and in less than 24 hrs demand had exceeded capacity in terms of the budget that had been identified within Council and thus had to close to further orders. Council had worked with the social enterprise, 'Hey Girls'. (www.heygirls.co.uk) to deliver the scheme, where participants could register and order reusable sanitary products online. As a result of the project we provided reusable period products to 3,159 people in the Belfast area at no cost to the individual.</p> <p>3.5 Such was the level of demand within the 24 hour period of it going 'live' that the notional budget officers had allocated to the scheme actually had to be increased five-fold (from</p>

¹ Calculation by Natracare 2018

£10,000 to just under £50,000). Social media coverage and feedback on the scheme was also very positive. Commentary praised Belfast City Council for bringing the initiative forward. Over 95,000 people were reached through Council social media on the topic with over 225,000 people having viewed Twitter posts promoting the scheme.

3.6 Officers are currently evaluating the scheme and this process will likely be completed by October 2022. This will include results from a follow up questionnaire issued to those who received the items asking whether the products were used, how frequently and asking users to give a rating for both the service and the products.

In-year Funding Options

3.7 Officers have identified the options for members' consideration and approval:

- Option A: Run the initiative for a second time in 2022/23 financial year but at a reduced level with a smaller budget and smaller number of recipients.
- Option B: Enhance the available budget by £25,000 to be able to run the initiative at the same level for a second time in-year.
- For both options members should consider and advise whether the products should continue to be offered free of charge on a first come, first served basis or whether a notional charge of £5 per applicant should be applied to enable more people to avail of the scheme.

3.8 Running the scheme for a second time will allow us to expand on the consultation findings and consider how we resource and deliver this, or a similar initiative, on a more longer-term basis – with a further report then brought to committee/council outlining the findings and recommended way forward later in the year (Qtr 4 period 22/23).

3.9 Officers have commenced early discussions with DEARA and there may be a future collaborative funding opportunity to develop and deliver the scheme in partnership with them, however whilst encouraging, conversations are at a very early stage and Officers have not been able to identify any other external funding opportunities to support the project at present.

Financial and Resources implications

Option A:

3.10 Council budget - £25,000 would be made available within the existing 2022-23 Waste Awareness Budget. This level of funding would enable approximately 1,320 people to access sustainable period products if they were provided free of charge again, or if each

	<p>individual was asked to pay a £5 contribution then approximately 1,845 people could participate (an additional 525 people).</p> <p>Option B:</p> <p>3.11 Add an additional £25,000 to Option A budget and match the original scheme's scope. Therefore, enabling approx. 2,700 people to participate if provided free of charge or 3,690 people to participate, if residents paid £5 toward the products. This may incur a potential overspend of £16,000 - £25,000 in the Waste Awareness Budget, unless the funding could be found elsewhere.</p> <p>For reference, participants can either choose to order a Full Cycle Pack (containing 1 x reusable pantyliner, 2 x day reusable pads and 2 x night reusable pads) to the value of £21.40 per pack or a Period Cup Combo approximately £12.99 (including all associated costs).</p> <p>*Assuming £25K total spend, notionally split at £20k spend Home Pack and £5K spend cups.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.12 The pilot scheme was designed to be accessible to as many residents in the Belfast area as possible. Officers will review uptake and consider any ways to address imbalances in uptake either through education or design (e.g. applying additional criteria and/or targeting) of future programmes.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None