



<b>Subject:</b>	Resources and Fleet Waste Update
<b>Date:</b>	7 February 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Matthews, Director Resources and Fleet
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	John McConnell City Services Manager Resources and Fleet

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

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	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	<p>The purpose of this reports is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To make the Committee aware of the recently published Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland and to invite comments and feedback to be considered for inclusion in Belfast City Council's response.</li><li>• To make the Committee aware of the recently published Government response to the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) Consultation.</li></ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Note the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland.</li><li>- Forward any comments for inclusion in Belfast City Council's response to the consultation by 28<sup>th</sup> February.</li></ul>

	- Note the Government response to the DRS Consultation.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b>Key Issue</b> <b>Consultation on a Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland</b>
3.1	The Department for the Economy (DfE) has launched a public consultation on the draft Circular Economy (CE) Strategy for Northern Ireland. This draft strategy sets out the Department’s vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core. A Circular Economy will be a key enabler of the DfE’s 10x Economic Vision for a decade of innovation.
3.2	This draft CE Strategy also aligns directly with Northern Ireland’s draft Programme for Government and the draft Green Growth Strategy. It also makes a significant contribution to many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
3.3	In March 2022, the Northern Ireland Executive passed the Climate Change Act. This sets out broad targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48% lower than the 1990 baseline by 2030.</li> <li>• net zero by 2050.</li> </ul>
3.4	The draft CE Strategy states that our efforts to switch to renewable energy, increase energy efficiency and increase carbon capture technology would only tackle 55% of our global emissions. The remaining 45%, which relate to how we make and use things, can be tackled by the transition to a Circular Economy <sup>1</sup> .
3.5	The main goal of the CE Strategy is to adopt a circular model and reduce our material footprint to live responsibly, build resilience, exploit new opportunities and to secure future prosperity for businesses, people and the planet.
3.6	A circular way offers an economic model, that many countries are pursuing, in which we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rethink and reduce our use of earth’s resources</li> <li>• switch to regenerative resources</li> <li>• minimise waste</li> <li>• maintain the value of products and materials for as long as possible.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> ‘Completing the Picture: How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change<sup>15</sup>’ by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF),

3.7	DfE has worked together with all Government departments to develop the draft strategy, in collaboration with external stakeholders from local Government, the private sector, academia, the voluntary and community sectors and others.
3.8	The overarching target is to halve Northern Ireland’s annual material footprint per person to 8 tonnes by 2050. Our material footprint is the total volume of material embodied within the whole supply chain to meet our demands. It measures the global (domestic and foreign) extraction of raw materials required for goods and services used by the residents of Northern Ireland. To live sustainably, the United Nations recommends that we should only be using an average of 6-8 tonnes of resources per year. However, it is estimated that each person in Northern Ireland is consuming well over 16 tonnes of resources per year.
3.9	The draft CE Strategy sets out how this can be achieved through; switching to materials that can be reused, increasing use of fuels that can be replenished, designing things to be kept in use for longer and reducing waste.
3.10	<p>It is worth noting that many of the original EU targets for waste prevention have now passed into UK law. In relation to waste, Northern Ireland transposed the following European Circular Economy Package (CEP) targets which requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% of household waste by 2025</li> <li>• 60% of household waste by 2030</li> <li>• 65% of household waste by 2035</li> <li>• no more than 10% going to landfill by 2035</li> </ul>
3.11	Northern Ireland’s Climate Change Act recently introduced a higher target, requiring 70% of waste to be recycled by 2030.
3.12	<p>The draft CE Strategy focuses on four business sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction and the built environment</li> <li>• Bioeconomy</li> <li>• Advanced manufacturing</li> <li>• Tourism and Hospitality</li> </ul>
3.13	<p>It focuses on four types of materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textiles</li> </ul>

<p>3.14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Packaging</li> <li>• Electricals</li> </ul> <p>To help create more sustainable production and levels of consumption, the CE Strategy presents twelve proposals for change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a programme to support and promote behaviour change</li> <li>• Create clusters and networks to raise awareness and assist collaboration</li> <li>• Develop an outcome-focused Circular Economy monitoring framework</li> <li>• Embed Circular Economy principles in public procurement</li> <li>• Work with businesses to increase circular design</li> <li>• Create and support platforms and hubs to share goods and materials</li> <li>• Maximise the value of materials locally</li> <li>• Establish a Circular Economy funding programme</li> <li>• Create a regulatory framework that supports and incentivises greater circulation of goods and materials</li> <li>• Invest in research and development to support the valorisation of materials</li> <li>• Embed Circular Economy principles at all levels of education</li> <li>• Design of future skills programmes and reviews of current programmes to support a Just Transition</li> </ul>
<p>3.15</p>	<p>The public consultation is open for 10 weeks until Monday 20 March 2023. There will be three virtual consultations for anyone wishing to learn more about the draft strategy. These will take place on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 2 February – 10.30am to 11.30am</li> <li>• Tuesday 7 February – 2.30pm to 3.30pm</li> <li>• Wednesday 1 March – 6.30pm to 7.30pm</li> </ul>
<p>3.16</p>	<p>The draft strategy is available at Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland , alongside supporting documentation including information on how to register for the virtual consultation events. A full copy of the consultation “Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland” is attached as Appendix I.</p>
<p>3.17</p>	<p>Belfast City Council’s draft response to the consultation will be presented to March’s People and Communities Committee. Should Members wish to discuss any aspect of the consultation or to provide any comments to be considered in our draft response, please</p>

contact in the first instance Jennifer Stephens (Waste Officer – Compliance and Research) email - [stephensi@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:stephensi@belfastcity.gov.uk) Comments should be received on or before **28<sup>th</sup> February** in order to formulate a complete response.

**Publication of Government Response to the second Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation**

- 3.18 Members may be aware that the proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is a system where consumers are charged a deposit up-front when they buy a drink in a container that is “in scope” of the scheme. The deposit can be redeemed when the empty container is returned to a designated return point.
- 3.19 Deposit return schemes are a well-established feature across Europe and the world. They often focus on single-use drinks containers, with the most effective schemes achieving collection rates of over 90%.
- 3.20 On 20th January 2023, the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland published their response to the second consultation on **‘Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland’**.
- 3.21 The aims of the proposed scheme are to boost recycling levels, reduce littering, and promote a circular economy. Key highlights from the response are:
- The Deposit Return Scheme will be introduced from October 2025
  - Single-use drinks containers from 50ml to 3 litre containers will be in scope of the Deposit Return Scheme
  - Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, steel cans and aluminium cans will be included for England, Northern Ireland, and Wales
  - Glass bottles will be included for Wales only<sup>2</sup>
  - A Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be appointed to manage overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme
  - Retailers selling in scope containers in store will be required to host a return point, where consumers can return the empty container and be given their deposit refund, subject to some specific exemptions that retailers can apply for

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<sup>2</sup> Glass bottles are also part of Scotland’s Deposit Return Scheme, along with PET plastic bottles & metal cans.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where containers are sold online, it is expected that the scheme will require large grocery retailers to offer consumers a takeback service for those containers</li> </ul>
3.22	<p>The consultation response presents further detail that will be set out in legislation. This legislation will place obligations on producers of in scope drinks containers, retailers and the Deposit Management Organisation.</p> <p><b>Deposit Management Organisation</b></p>
3.23	<p>The Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be responsible for managing the overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme. The DMO will be appointed by Government through an application process.</p>
3.24	<p>The Deposit Management Organisation will be an industry-led organisation. The DMO will be made up of a consortium of industry representatives with membership of organisations which represent drinks producers, retailers, importers and logistics.</p>
3.25	<p>The DMO will be required to ensure the collection targets are met. The collection targets will be introduced in a phased manner. In year one, at least 70% of in-scope containers that producers place on the market must be collected. In year two, this will increase to 80%, and then 90% from year three onwards.</p>
3.26	<p>The DMO will be responsible for setting the deposit level.</p> <p><b>Next Steps</b></p>
3.27	<p>Regulations, which reflect the policy outcomes set out in the consultation response, are being developed for the DRS.</p>
3.28	<p>Engagement will begin soon with prospective consortia interested in being the DMO. Later in the process, UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland will formally invite applications for the DMO as part of a fair and open process.</p>
3.29	<p>The full consultation is attached as Appendix II and the Government Responses are attached as Appendices III and IV. They can also be accessed electronically:</p>

	<p>Consultation on DRS: <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland</a></p> <p>Government response: <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/deposit-return-scheme-summary-2021-consultation-responses-and-publication-government-response">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/deposit-return-scheme-summary-2021-consultation-responses-and-publication-government-response</a></p>
3.30	<p>DAERA intend to host Northern Ireland specific webinars on DRS and EPR on Tuesday 7th (afternoon) and Friday 24th (Morning) February and details of the events will be shared soon.</p>
3.31	<p>To find out more about the Deposit Return Scheme visit <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland</a></p>
	<p><b>Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)</b></p>
3.32	<p>Members should be aware of an emerging subject which is attracting increasing attention within the waste industry, namely that of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).</p>
3.33	<p>POPs are chemicals which can remain intact in the environment for long periods, and if not disposed of properly can have harmful impacts on human health and on the environment.</p>
3.34	<p>The Environment Agency (EA) in England has undertaken an investigation and confirmed the widespread presence of large quantities of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and other hazardous chemicals in both the textiles and foam of upholstered domestic seating.</p>
3.35	<p>Current legislation<sup>3</sup> requires that where POPs breach the permitted level within domestic seating the waste must be destroyed to prevent lasting environmental harm and impacts on the food chain. This means waste containing POPs (sofas, armchairs, upholstered kitchen and dining room chairs, upholstered stools and foot stools, home office chairs, futons, bean bags, floor and sofa cushions) must be incinerated and must not be re-used, recycled or landfilled.</p>

<sup>3</sup> The Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulations 2007 (as amended) and Retained Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 on persistent organic pollutants as amended by the Persistent Organic Pollutants (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020

3.36	Following this investigation, the EA has issued a series of Regulatory Position Statements (RPS) to Local Authorities in England advising on how POPs should be collected, stored and treated.
3.37	The EA also noted that from 1 January 2023, they would be taking enforcement action with regard to non-compliance with the requirements of the RPS. This has created significant challenges for Local Authorities in England due to the time frame involved in adopting operational practices (separate collection & storage) and the lack of facilities which can accept these materials for treatment.
3.38	Locally, this subject was raised with DAERA officials by Councils at the January 2023 meeting of the Government Waste Working Group. As a result, DAERA is intending to establish a sub-group to examine the implications for the waste industry with the aim of providing clearer direction (RPS). Dependant on DAERA and NIEA Position Statements, there may be significant implications in relation to the collection methods, storage and segregation arrangements and disposal via incineration of these items.
3.39	The Council will continue to work with the Department and the regulator, arc21 and the residual waste treatment contractors to arrive at suitable arrangements for the collection, storage and treatment of this particular waste stream and will update Committee as the matter develops.
<b>Site Visits Household Recycling Centres and Huhtamaki</b>	
3.40	The Service is liaising with Democratic Services to plan a half-day, Members' site visit to a recycling centre followed by a trip to Huhtamaki in Dollingstown Co. Armagh.
3.41	The aim is to provide an overview and raise awareness of the work carried out at a recycling centre and the challenges encountered by staff in carrying out essential, front-line work with the goal of driving up the city's recycling rate. This will be followed by a trip to Huhtamaki, who take the paper and light card from kerbside collections and convert it into a fibre packaging product (egg cartons, cup holders). During the site visit Members will receive a brief presentation on the role the factory plays in the local economy, the range of products produced and the importance of quality input material (paper & craft card).



3.42	<p>It is anticipated that this visit will take place in March 2023 with further details issued in due course.</p>
<p><b>The Future of Kerbside Recycling Collections – Option 5 – full in-housing of collection services</b></p>	
3.43	<p>Members may recall that they requested a full options appraisal on the Future of Recycling Collections. Having presented the findings to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2022, officers were instructed to conduct an in-depth feasibility study regarding Option 5 of the Kerbside Collections economic appraisal, namely the in-housing of all kerbside recycling.</p>
3.44	<p>By way of update officers can report that the feasibility study on Option 5 is well progressed with the Service now in receipt of a draft report. Further iterations of this report will be required and the Service is targeting a final version to be available by the end of February 2023. This will then undergo the Council’s governance process via SP&amp;R Committee.</p>
<p><b>Operational Update – Drivers</b></p>	
3.45	<p>As a consequence of being unable to fulfil all Christmas and New Year Bank Holiday collections due to a shortage of drivers, Resources and Fleet have instigated a ‘task and finish’ group to review current arrangements in relation to the numbers and activities of Category C (HGV) drivers within Resources and Fleet.</p>
3.46	<p>There is undoubtedly a challenging marketplace. A range of measures is being considered to deal with the market conditions both in the short, medium and longer term.</p>
<p><b>Public Holiday Arrangements – St Patrick’s Day (Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March)</b></p>	
3.47	<p>Planning has commenced for the staffing requirements for 17<sup>th</sup> March St Patrick’s Day bin collections.</p>
<p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p>	
3.48	<p>None in relation to responding to the consultations.</p>

3.49	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>None in relation to responding to the consultations.</p> <p><b>Abbreviations</b></p> <p>CE – Circular Economy</p> <p>CEP - Circular Economy Package</p> <p>DfC - Department for the Economy</p> <p>DAERA - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</p> <p>DRS – Deposit Return Scheme</p> <p>DMO – Deposit Management Organisation</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix I – Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland</p> <p>Appendix II – Consultation on Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland</p> <p>Appendix III – Summary of DRS Consultation Responses</p> <p>Appendix IV - Government Response to DRS Consultation</p>