



Subject:	Pre-loved Toys scheme Christmas 2022
Date:	4 April 2023
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Matthews, Director Resources and Fleet, City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	John McConnell, City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet), City and Neighbourhood Services Department Brendan Murray (Waste Manager)

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"/>
Some time 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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is to update Members on the outcomes from the pilot, pre-loved toys scheme operated at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in the run up to Christmas 2022. The aim of the initiative was to ease the burden on families during the current cost of living crisis, increase reuse and reduce waste going to landfill during this period.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the outcomes from the pilot and the key lessons learned going forward• Approve that the Christmas pre-loved toys scheme should continue as an annual event until further notice.

3.0	Main report
	<p data-bbox="248 228 427 259"><u>Background</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 327 1455 506">3.1 Members will recall that in November 2022, delegated authority was granted to the Director of Resources & Fleet to operate a pre-loved toys scheme at the Council’s Household Waste Recycling Centres in the run-up to Christmas. This followed a Members motion previously raised on this matter.</p> <p data-bbox="165 573 1455 752">3.2 The scheme was a clear example of a circular economy project, seeking to reduce waste while at the same time delivering social benefits to the local community. It was operated in 2022 as a trial initiative with a view to assessing its value and learning lessons for future potential schemes. The evaluation report is included as Appendix 1.</p> <p data-bbox="165 819 1455 1111">3.3 Donations were accepted at the Council’s four recycling centres from 9 November – 11 December and distributed back into the community through a range of charity partners. Some items were resold at affordable prices through charity shops but the majority were gifted free of charge to households in need. East Belfast Mission (EBM), the organisation which currently collects the majority of re-use materials from the Household Recycling Centres, operated as the lead partner and co-ordinated with other charities.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1178 1455 1312">3.4 The appeal was supported by a communications campaign and attracted an overwhelming volume of donations. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) paper was created for the Customer Hub and site staff to respond to any queries from members of the public.</p> <p data-bbox="248 1379 399 1411"><u>Outcomes</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 1478 1455 1872">3.5 Most of the items were processed by East Belfast Mission who provided the following feedback/ estimates:</p> <ul data-bbox="300 1581 1455 1872" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="300 1581 1455 1626">• Thirteen van loads of toys were collected from the HWRCs <li data-bbox="300 1637 1455 1771">• This translated to approximately 2,500 bags/boxes distributed by EBM (there was an unquantified but much lesser amount distributed through the other partners who had less capacity) <li data-bbox="300 1783 1455 1872">• Around 700 families benefitted and over 2,000 individual children were given at least one full bag of toys which would have been valued at £40-50 if new

3.6	If each bag of toys weighed 3kg (conservative estimate), the items distributed through EBM alone equate to 7.5 tonnes of items reused and diverted from disposal.
3.7	While toys vary in their material construction, one study ¹ showed that the carbon footprint for the lifecycle (from material extraction to eventual product disposal) of a typical plastic toy was 1.8kg CO2 eq/ kg. On that basis and assuming that 50% of the donated toys were of plastic construction, this scheme has avoided around seven tonnes of CO2eq compared to buying new.
<u>Evaluation</u>	
3.8	The scheme attracted significant positive media attention and was an overwhelming success in terms of the public response and the number of local families and children who were helped.
3.9	The initiative also connected multiple Belfast organisations and businesses in formal and informal volunteering roles to benefit the local community. It would have been impossible to deliver the scheme without this network of help.
3.10	However, the short notice for planning the scheme, and the significant volume of donations, meant that a number of aspects were unforeseen which created challenges for all parties concerned. This can be mitigated by a suitable planning window to deliver this scheme and adopting the lessons learned in the evaluation report, subject to Members approval.
<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>	
3.11	It is envisaged that the minimal costs incurred through any future scheme can be met through existing resources.
<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u>	
3.12	There are no Good Relations or Equality implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Pre-loved toys evaluation and lessons learned report

¹ Robertson, Madeline R. and Klimas, Christie (2019) "A Playful Life Cycle Assessment of the Environmental Impact of Children's Toys," DePaul Discoveries: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 7. Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/depaul-disc/vol8/iss1/7>

