



Subject:	Secure Needle/Drug Waste Bins
Date:	Tuesday, 8 th April, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan – Operational Director, City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Pól Hamilton – Lead Officer, Neighbourhood Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
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 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 an update on progress against the Notice of Motion passed on 1st November, 2023 which committed Council to “working with relevant partners, including the Public Health Agency, Government Departments, PSNI, BIDs, businesses and organisations supporting the vulnerable in the City centre core, towards the installation of specific needle/drug waste bins in key locations that are known to have high incidences of needle finds.”
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	For Members to consider the contents of the report and agree to the locating of a needle disposal bin within a Belfast City Council car park.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background and Context</u>
3.1	Following the passing of the above noted Notice of Motion, several meetings were scheduled with key partners to discuss feasibility, risks, costs and management of such needle disposal bins.
3.2	The Public Health Agency (PHA), as the body responsible for needle exchange services across NI, agreed to purchase one bin and work in partnership to deliver a pilot initiative. Council Officers were tasked with reviewing data on areas with high incidences of needle finds, liaising with landowners about potential installation as well as monitoring and disposal of the needles once the bin became operational.
3.3	As a result, several sites in Belfast City Centre have been considered over the past year in consultation with outreach partners through the fortnightly City Centre Tasking Group which is chaired by a Safer City Coordinator from the Community Safety Unit. Alongside data on the number of needles removed from sites, other factors were considered including proximity to housing, community spaces and local businesses, staff access and landowner willingness.
3.4	This has been a lengthy process and has been impacted by ongoing changes to hot spot locations and in some instances, the reluctance from landowners to participate in the pilot.
3.5	In reviewing Council held statistics in 2025, and taking into consideration reports from our staff around new trends, two Council car parks have been identified as possible locations for the needle disposal bin – Little Donegal Street and Corporation Square.
3.6	Little Donegal Street has seen an increase in needle finds in recent months and both sites are highlighted as being in the top 6 locations for discarded needle reports. It should be noted that multi-story or enclosed car parks under private ownership have significantly higher reports of discarded needles, however cleansing of these locations is not the responsibility of Council and so to place the bin in such locations would require their permission and would limit future Council involvement in the pilot.
3.7	The PHA has recently suggested that if no suitable location can be found, they would be willing to allocate the bin to one of the needle exchanges, however, this may not necessarily be in the Belfast area.

3.8	Members are therefore asked to consider approving the location of the needle disposal bin in one of the two Council owned car parks; Little Donegal Street or Corporation Square, subject to further exploration about the most suitable location.
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The PHA has purchased one needle disposal bin. Monitoring and disposing of any discarded sharps will be managed within the existing budgets of operational teams involved in needle disposal for the Council. Outreach teams working in the city centre will also be asked to support the pilot in a monitoring and reporting role.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></p> <p>There are no good relations or rural needs impacts associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
4.1	None