



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Health and Environmental Services Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>“Rethink Waste” Grant Applications</b>
<b>Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> August, 2010
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### Relevant Background Information

The Department of Environment for Northern Ireland (the DOE) recently launched a £3.13 million fund which was open to councils in order to assist with the roll-out of additional recycling and re-use schemes.

On 28 May, the Minister for the Environment, Mr Edwin Poots, announced the “*Rethink Waste*” Fund during a visit to the Council’s Ormeau Recycling Centre. The fund is being administered by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

The fund has been specifically developed to cover the cost of **capital** items for which councils can submit proposals either individually, or in partnership with other councils or the community and voluntary/private sector. The community and voluntary/private sector however are excluded from applying directly for funding. The funding made available for councils must comply with certain criteria, one of which is that the money must be spent before 31 March 2011.

Examples of the type of schemes for which funding may be available include:

- Improvements or extensions to kerbside collection schemes
- Improvements or extensions to Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)
- The introduction of home composting schemes and
- The introduction of/improvements to bulky household waste collections.

Speaking at the launch of the fund Minister Poots said “*I recognise that all Northern Ireland’s councils have made excellent progress in boosting recycling rates in recent years. However, I am convinced that with the right support further improvements can be achieved and I am keen to assist councils in doing this.*”

Under the criteria set out in the “*Rethink Waste*” Fund the Waste Management Service lodged 3 applications for the following equipment:

- A shredding machine to facilitate mattress recycling.
- Two pre-fabricated buildings, two lock up steel containers, four electric trucks and associated signage for storage of items for “*reuse*” at the Council’s HRCs.
- The installation of new wireless on-board weighing equipment to collect data from recycling collection rounds.

## Key Issues

The DOE has stated that it will be announcing successful projects at the end of August 2010. Should the Council receive funding approval for any or all of its submissions, and in order to comply with the criteria set by the DOE, the contracts must be awarded and monies spent before the end of this financial year. A further criterion worth noting is that all projects must be scheduled to run for a minimum of three years. Given that the fund is for capital expenditure, the criteria and spend timeframes have presented significant challenges. However, the Council has submitted bids for the following three projects.

### **1. Mattress Recycling**

The objective of this project is for the Service, in partnership with a suitable commercial or third sector organisation, to purchase a mattress shredding machine to increase the amount of waste diverted from landfill.

It is estimated that 40,000 mattresses are currently discarded in Belfast each year. Each mattress weighs 0.02 tonnes (approx.) and contains materials such as steel and textiles which could be recovered.

The mattresses are presently either collected by the Council's bulky household collection service, deposited at the HRCs or illegally fly-tipped. They are then uplifted and landfilled but are also difficult to handle.

The following materials may be generated from a typical mattress.

Waste Item	Market
Coconut Hair	Compost Horticultural
Flock	Biomass
Cover Fire Retardant	Equestrian Surfaces
Foam	Cortex
Polyester Webbing	Textile
Horse Gut	Composting
Linen Cotton	Textile
Mattress Base	Kindling Wood
Springs	Metal

It is proposed to use the "*Rethink Waste*" funding to purchase a suitable shredding machine to enable the materials in the mattresses to be recycled and helping the Council meet both its EU Landfill and EU Waste Framework Directives targets and divert waste from landfill for recycling.

The Service proposes to tender for a commercial or third sector contractor to provide the staff and facility for a mattress shredding operation, for sole use by the Council. It is anticipated that the project could divert about 10,000 mattresses from landfill, the material of which could be recovered. The recovery of these materials also reduces the prospect of greenhouse gases being produced by their decomposition.

- The estimated cost for a suitable shredding machine - £265,000
- The estimated cost of four containers for on-site storage of mattresses at the HRCs - £10,000

The project meets the objective of the "*Rethink Waste*" Fund as it improves the services offered by the Council at its HRCs and through its bulky waste collection service.

## **2. Storage Facilities for Articles for Re-use**

The objective of this project is for the Service to purchase and erect two temporary pre-fabricated buildings and two steel lock-up containers for the storage of reusable items brought onto the four HRCs by members of the public. This will increase the range of materials which could be diverted from landfill for reuse purposes but items such as furniture and electrical items must be dry-stored to prevent them suffering weather damage.

Arising from concerns regarding manual handling, electric trucks will also be needed to move heavy items into the storage units, along with appropriate signage to promote the reuse buildings/containers at each of the HRCs.

It is proposed that a tender exercise will be conducted to select two third sector organisations to work in partnership with the Service to provide a reuse service for items brought to the HRCs. The HRC staff will ask the public to consider putting items into a building/container should they be appropriate for reuse.

These items would then be inspected and removed from the HRCs on a regular basis for refurbishment and resale through established charitable retail outlets.

There is currently limited, accurate data on the actual tonnage of bulky items which could be reused but, from experience, it is estimated that around 300 tonnes could be diverted from landfill each year. The Service also anticipates that, by not paying for disposal, this project should also save the Council money.

Planning approval will be required to erect the buildings at the Ormeau and Blackstaff Way HRCs and planning applications will be promptly lodged should this project be approved.

- The estimated cost of two pre-fabricated buildings - £70,000
- The estimated cost of two steel storage containers - £5,000
- The estimated cost of four electric trucks - £24,000

As above, the project meets the objective of the “*Rethink Waste*” Fund as it improves the services offered by the Council at its HRCs and it also neatly dovetails with the first project as the sites can accommodate both types of container.

## **3. Wireless On-Board Weighing System**

The objective of this project is for the Service to improve the data capture and use of information to increase its engagement with the public in poorer-performing areas or where contamination levels are higher in order to increase the Councils recycling rate and divert waste from landfill. This could be achieved through the purchase and installation of a wireless based on-board bin weighing equipment onto the recycling vehicles used for the blue and brown collection rounds.

Longer-term, such information will allow the Service to plot the City’s recycling performance and better target communication and behavioural change messages.

It is estimated that the installation of a wireless on-board weighing system could result in a total savings of £472,000 over the lifetime of the project (7 years). These savings are likely to be achieved through increased participation and reduced contamination levels in the blue and brown schemes.

- The estimated capital cost of installing wireless bin weighing system in the blue and brown bin vehicles - £217,000

The project meets the objective of the “*Rethink Waste*” Fund as it improves the quality and reliability of the data captured and allows both the Cleansing and Waste Management Services to target their resources more effectively.

### **Resource Implications**

#### **Financial**

All funding applications have been based on 100% capital grant funding from the Rethink Waste Scheme.

It is anticipated that there will be minimal annual revenue funding required for each scheme, however this will be fully assessed as part of the Council’s Gate Review Process should the projects be considered further.

#### **Human Resources**

None.

#### **Asset and Other Implications**

These projects will help the Council meet its recycling targets and divert waste from landfill.

### **Recommendations**

Committee is asked to:-

- Note the submission of the three applications for capital grant funding under the recently announced Rethink Waste Scheme.
- Approve the advancement of the proposals in principle and commend the proposals to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for prioritisation and inclusion in the Council’s Capital Programme and (given the extremely tight timescales regarding availability of funding and completion of projects) seek the prompt commencement of the tender process, subject to the Council’s review Process and the successful drawdown of 100% funding from the “*Rethink Waste*” Fund.

### **Decision Tracking**

The Head of Service will keep the Committee informed of the progress of the proposals and funding applications.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

WRAP – Waste & Resources Action Programme  
HRC – Household Recycling Centre  
DOE – Department of Environment