



Subject:	Food waste campaign – “ <i>No Food Waste</i> ” stickers on residual/black bins
Date:	7 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Tim Walker, Head of Waste Management

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 this report is to inform Members of a change in waste legislation which is seeking to reduce the amount of food waste placed by householders into their residual waste bins from 1 April 2017.
1.2	In terms of facilitating this change, Waste Management intend to commence a food waste campaign involving placing “ <i>No Food Waste</i> ” stickers on every householders’ residual/black bins. DAERA has agreed funding of £10K to support this programme. To explain and support this change, an explanatory letter will also be delivered by Waste Management to every household.
1.3	In Belfast, despite a food waste collection service being available for every household, approx 25% of the residual bin is still food waste. If this waste was diverted into a food waste caddy or brown bin for composting instead of landfilling, the Council could save around £800K each year. Results from neighbouring councils which have adopted this approach already have shown an immediate uplift in the amounts of food waste collected of around 20% which, if applied to Belfast could also contribute around 1% to the city’s recycling rate.
1.4	Members should also note that the arc21 Joint Committee meeting of 26 January 2017 endorsed a recommendation to introduce a policy requesting that householders put all food

1.5	<p>waste only into the receptacle provided by the council for that purpose.</p> <p>Under the Waste & Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, the Council is permitted to specify the types of waste it will collect, as well as the type and number of receptacles which can be used to present the wastes. This grants authority to the Council to deliver the requirements of the Food Waste Regulations (NI) 2015 by specifying which wastes go into which bins. To implement the requirements of this more recent legislation, and coordinate roll-out of these requirements with other councils in NI, Waste Management is proposing to run a campaign for householders and introduce a protocol regarding the collection of food waste from residual waste bins in Belfast.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the arc21 Joint Committee recommendation that arc21 constituent councils introduce a policy by 1 April 2017 which requires householders to put all food waste only into the receptacle provided by the Council for that purpose and not to place any food waste into any other waste receptacle for collection by the Council ▪ a food waste campaign which will involve placing “<i>No Food Waste</i>” stickers on to every residual/black bin, along with the issuance of an explanatory letter for every household, ▪ the use of the encouragement protocol to support this initiative and boost recycling (see Appendix 3).
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Members should note that, at the January meeting of the People & Communities Committee, the NIEA Municipal Waste Statistics Annual report 2015/16 reported a fall in the Council’s recycling rate from 44% to 40%. This decline was as a result of the impact of the increased tonnages brought about through a number of causes; increasing waste growth across Local Authorities in NI, the transfer of households under LGR with an historical high dependence on residual waste bins and global volatility for recyclables, meaning some local processors diverted materials to alternative energy recovery outlets (stable) rather than recycling markets (variable). These challenges remain and continue to negatively affect the Council’s recycling rate. Maintaining current services will not reverse this decline and a paradigm shift will be needed to address this considerable challenge, and forms the basis for the Waste Agenda which will shortly be presented to the Committee for consideration.</p>
3.2	<p>In 2015, in order to encourage greater levels of recycling and to target the specific reduction of</p>

food waste from landfill, the DOE introduced the Food Waste Regulations (NI). This legislation proposed an initial approach which addressed food waste from commercial properties. As of 1 April 2016, premises generating more than 50KG of food waste a week had to arrange for the separate collection of these materials. From 1 April 2017, the threshold reduced for commercial properties (i.e. from 50KG to 5KG). It also provided for councils to take such steps as considered reasonable to extend the separate collection of food waste. Considerable dialogue was undertaken between councils and DAERA to clarify what separate meant, which has now been addressed.

3.3 Under the Waste & Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, the Council is permitted to specify the types of waste it will collect, as well as the type and number of receptacles which can be used to present the wastes. This grants authority to the Council to deliver the requirements of the Food Waste Regulations (NI) 2015 by specifying which wastes go into which bins. To implement the requirements of this more recent legislation, and coordinate roll-out of these requirements with other councils in NI, Waste Management is proposing to run a campaign for householders and introduce a protocol regarding the collection of food waste from residual waste bins in Belfast.

3.4 Compositional analysis of the kerbside waste collected by the Council shows that approximately 25% of the weight of a residual/black bin is food waste, despite a food waste collection service being available at the doorstep for every household. This means that each year, the Council is spending an additional £800K sending this material to landfill rather than compost treatment. This has significant detrimental financial and environmental consequences through wasting ratepayers' monies and creating greenhouse gases through landfill disposal.

3.5 In partnership with the other councils, the National Communication Advisory Panel (NCAP), Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and chaired by the Department of Agriculture Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA), Waste Management has been developing shared communication campaigns. The NCAP was established to review best practice on public recycling habits and behavioural change. Over the years, WRAP has tested a range of activities aimed at boosting the capture of food waste and they have demonstrated that operational changes, including frequency, are most promising. Any changes can be beneficially enhanced using a simple sticker along with an explanatory letter and an appropriate encouragement scheme has been recognised as contributing to collection best practice in boosting food waste in a mixed organic (food waste/garden waste) collection scheme.

3.6	<p>Some neighbouring councils have already introduced stickers and are achieving uplifts in their recycling rates and landfill diversion. It is envisaged that, in line with the legislative requirements to provide a food waste service to households, the remaining councils are either undertaking, or will undertake a similar exercise to broadcast this new development. The proposed scheme, using stickers as a prompt, has shown to provide an uplift of up to 20% and a similar response in Belfast could contribute to the city's recycling rate by around 1%.</p>
3.7	<p>For example, Ards & North Down Borough Council (A&NDBC) undertook a similar food waste campaign in the summer 2016, the results of which have proved to be positive with negligible negative feedback. There has been both an increase in compost/brown bin usage, a corresponding increase in the tonnage of food waste collected, along with a decrease in the residual/black bin tonnage (see Appendix 1 for details).</p>
3.8	<p>It is proposed that following recent "<i>primer</i>" articles in City Matters, the Council will follow best practice and, using WRAP-approved materials, issue letters to each household outlining what is needed to divert food waste from the residual bin, why the action is needed and how to contact the Council, should they not already be participating, to get all the necessary receptacles to take part in either the compost/brown bin (outer city) or the caddy food waste collection service (inner city) (see Appendix 2). The purpose of placing a sticker on each bin alongside issuing a letter to householders is that this will ensure that every resident sees the sticker on their bin. If the Council was to use alternative delivery vehicles, such as City Matters, it is probable that many householders would simply discard the sticker without putting it on their bin. The letter is very straightforward, and is designed to merely highlight why the Council is now seeking to dissuade householders from putting food waste into their residual waste bin. It involves no change to collection date or frequency.</p>
3.9	<p>Members may care to note that, shortly, a letter from the Council's Recycling Box contractor, Bryson Recycling, will be issued changing a limited number of households' day of collection for operational reasons to better align their resources. This is not a significant change and will only affect a couple of thousand households across the city.</p>
3.10	<p>Returning to food waste, Members should note that the arc21 Joint Committee considered food waste at their meeting in January and adopted the recommendation that arc21 constituent councils should introduce a policy by 1 April 2017 which requires domestic occupiers to put all food waste only into the receptacle provided by the council for that purpose and not to place any food waste into any other waste receptacle for collection by the council.</p>

3.11	<p>In Belfast, the Service considers that as Council recycling performance has plateaued, a new approach is now needed. The Waste Agenda, which is currently being finalised for consultation, highlights that, for a minimal cost, this initiative has the potential to contribute 1% to the Council's recycling rate (i.e. divert an additional 1,500 tonnes from landfill). This would have the added value of saving the Council around £800K per annum from avoided landfill charges. As outlined above with A&NDBC, several of arc21's constituent councils are developing this approach and a proposal is being presented to the Joint Committee recommending that the constituent councils introduce a policy by 1 April 2017 which requires households to put food waste only into the receptacle provided by the Council for that purpose and not any other.</p>
3.12	<p>Members are being asked to approve the encouragement scheme (Appendix 3) to support this initiative. This procedure, which will involve consultation with the relevant trade unions, will notify householders of the contamination in the non-recyclables bin, the steps required to address this issue and the graduated enforcement response where there is repeated contamination.</p>
3.13	<p>In the first contamination instance (i.e. food waste identified in the bin), it will be emptied but a notification sticker will be placed on the bin by Waste Management staff informing the householder of the requirement to separate out food waste (stage 1).</p>
3.14	<p>On the second occasion, the bin will be emptied and again a notification will be placed on the bin by Waste Management staff. A letter will also be sent to the householder informing them of the requirement to separate the food waste and the implications should they not choose to do so (stage 2)</p>
3.15	<p>On the third occurrence of contamination the bin will not be collected and a notification will be placed on the bin by Waste Management staff. This will inform the householder that the bin will not be collected until the item(s) of food waste is removed and the collection will be on the next scheduled collection day (stage 3).</p>
3.16	<p>The Council will ensure that each household has appropriate receptacles for their food waste collection service prior to considering any enforcement action. To assist in this regard, there will be a transition period of six months from the commencement of the campaign before any stage 3 notifications are issued. If a householder contacts the Council as a result of their bin not being emptied, staff will work with them to ensure future compliance with the policy.</p>

3.17	<p>As stated above, most of the councils in NI are adopting the same, or similar, protocol within the timeframe of Spring 2017 and it is possible that there may be a financial contribution from DAERA in relation to funding the provision of stickers.</p>
<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>	
3.18	<p>It is worth highlighting that by diverting food waste from being in the wrong bin (i.e. residual bin) could save the Council an <u>additional</u> £800K per annum by sending it for recycling rather than landfilling. Therefore, not only could diverting food waste from landfill make a positive contribution to the Council's recycling rate (1% approx.), but it could contribute to efficiency savings which could be re-invested elsewhere in the city.</p>
3.19	<p>In terms of the food waste campaign, total project costs are estimated at around £65K made up of around £10K for stickers and letters, and £55K for 32 x temporary staff and vehicles to cover all collection rounds before the legislation is introduced (1 Apr). These costs can be offset by a grant from DAERA for the provision of the stickers (£10K) and remaining monies can be accommodated within existing (2016/17) Departmental budgets.</p>
<p><u>Equality & Good Relations</u></p>	
3.20	<p>Equality and good relations implications, in relation to this policy, are still under consideration. Further updates will be sent to the Equality and Diversity Officer in due course.</p>
4.0	Appendices
<p>Appendix 1 – WRAP evidence on the effect of a “<i>No Food Waste</i>” sticker on the residual bin. Appendix 2 - Sticker Design & Draft Letter Appendix 3 – Draft Encouragement Scheme for Contamination in Residual Waste Bins Appendix 4 – Legislative Requirements for Food Waste Collections</p>	