



<b>Subject:</b>	Resourceful Belfast Update (formerly the Materials Strategy)
<b>Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director, City and Neighbourhood Services Department Tim Walker, Head of Waste Management,
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Marcus Campbell Waste Officer (Project) Brendan Murray, Waste (Strategy, Planning & Delivery) Manager

<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	Waste Management has continued to develop and refine the Council's approach to the Circular Economy under the banner of "Resourceful Belfast". This has involved consideration of how the Council can use procurement and its contract base. We are also considering the policy landscape that could be created and benchmarked against the actions of other cities.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>Members are requested to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the contents of the report and approve holding a Members' workshop in the New Year to report work to date and inform future steps.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<p><b><i>Background</i></b></p>
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that the results from the Waste Collections consultation exercise was presented to Committee last month, and briefings on these are being scheduled for January 2019. These amount to a proposal to improve the quality of materials collected which can then be used locally for reprocessing and remanufacture.</p>
3.2	<p>In addition to the proposals around waste collections, which form part of the Council's draft Waste Framework strategic framework, a further series of actions are being developed to improve the Council's waste operations specifically around (i) waste infrastructure and treatment (ii) residents' behaviour change and (iii) the use of ICT and other technologies and new equipment to support these changes. The focus of the Framework is to effect a paradigm shift waste management in Belfast in order to add value to what is currently thrown away and, in the process, to create jobs in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.3	<p>To assist in this transition away from a treatment and disposal operation, Waste Management has been collaborating with other internal/external partners to develop <i>Resourceful Belfast</i> (a sister document to the Waste Framework) to articulate what these jobs may be, and in which sectors. The aim of a Circular Economy is to minimise the extraction of natural resources through the reuse and recirculation of goods and materials in order to gain maximum value from them. By extending a product's life through repair/recirculation, a Circular Economy enhances "waste" to being a material or commodity, while minimising the residues sent for disposal. In such a way, the opportunities created are not just environmental, but economic and social and supports the Belfast Agenda. This means the focus of Resourceful Belfast is not on managing waste, but on identifying the sectors/creation of jobs which could use the materials resulting from working higher up the waste hierarchy (see Diagram 1). As this work is emerging in response to recent Circular Economy legislation, there are no ready-made templates or best practice within cities or regions which the Council can readily adopt so this is a</p>

discovery piece. Like many proactive councils, Belfast has been collaborating and working with others to inform and develop its thinking and approach.

- 3.4 At the People & Communities Committee meeting in August 2016, Members approved formation of an Advisory Board to develop a Circular Economy (CE) strategy or framework. That framework was formerly referred to as the “*materials strategy*” but is now known as *Resourceful Belfast*. At this meeting, Members also approved a collaborative arrangement with WRAP. Following this meeting, Waste Management created a cross-Departmental *Resourceful Belfast* Board to identify what actions could be taken.

### ***Circular Economy Advisory Board***

#### Emerging agendas

- 3.5 Since the first report there have been a number of game changers as highlighted in last month’s report, particularly with David Attenborough’s Blue Planet II highlighting the scale of the problem of escaped plastics, and the Chinese Government’s implementation of *Operation National Sword* which reduced China’s acceptance of low quality recyclates (8M tonnes per annum approx.), and a resultant global weakening of these materials’ prices.
- 3.6 Also, the EU Circular Economy Package was passed. As this was ratified before March 2019, it is part of the legislative bundle which the UK will adopt prior to Brexit and national legislation should be drafted within the next couple of years to enact this. This legislation is of note because it is principally concerned with facilitating increased waste diversion through recycling and reuse, in addition to designing out waste at source, and the promotion of new business models.
- 3.7 There are higher targets for household waste recycling – 55% by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035, along with a 10% maximum allowance to landfill for municipal waste. This emphasises the need to achieve the significant behavioural change outlined in the Council’s Waste Framework, and highlights the importance of completing the present consultation exercise.

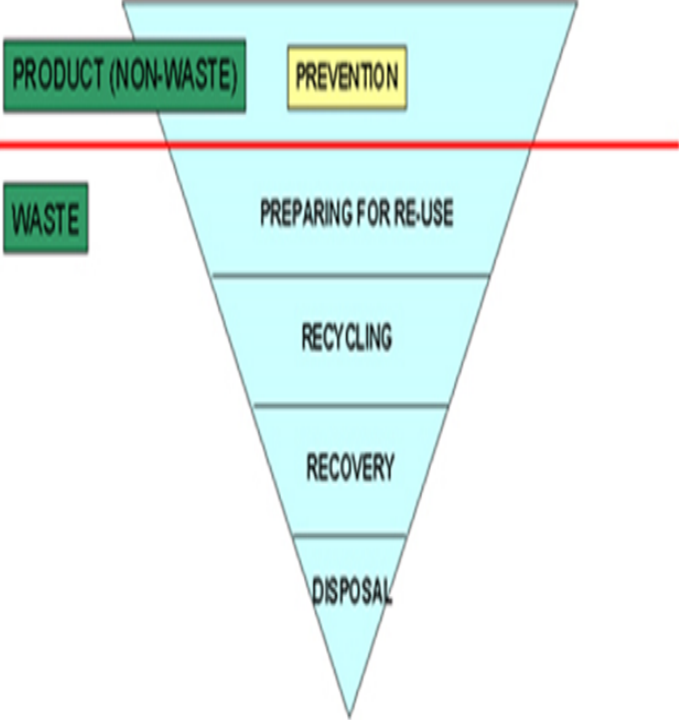
Stages	Include
 <p>The diagram is an inverted pyramid divided into five horizontal sections. From top to bottom, the sections are: PREVENTION, PREPARING FOR RE-USE, RECYCLING, RECOVERY, and DISPOSAL. To the left of the pyramid, a green box labeled 'PRODUCT (NON-WASTE)' is positioned above a red horizontal line, and a green box labeled 'WASTE' is positioned below the red line.</p>	Using less material in design & manufacture. Keeping products for longer; re use. Using less hazardous materials.
	Checking, cleaning, repairing, refurbishing, whole items or spare parts.
	Turning waste into a new substance or product. Includes composting if it meets quality protocols.
	Includes anaerobic digestion, incineration with energy recovery, gasification & pyrolysis which produce energy (fuels, heat & power) & materials from waste; some backfilling.
	Landfill & incineration without energy recovery.

Diagram 1: Applying the waste hierarchy

3.8

In parallel, or as part of the Package, several national and international plastics strategies have been proposed or launched focusing on preventing or increased recycling. This has generated many calls for partial or total bans of single use plastics, for example, cotton buds and straws as recently covered locally. As outlined to Members recently, one of the **key objectives of the Waste Framework is to improve the quality of materials collected to create/support local jobs** by introducing new collection arrangements of which one of the most obvious waste streams is plastics. The specific aim of this proposed revision to collections is to collect better quality materials to be used locally in remanufacture, as opposed to offshoring and recycling elsewhere, which is also likely to minimise the Council's future spend on waste. Such an approach will increase NI's sustainability and economic resilience. Discussions have been held with the universities and with organisations like the NI Polymers Association (NIPA– which represents over 50 plastic processors across the region) and some limited research using students has been conducted. Many are interested in increasing the amount of recyclate used in plastic polymer production locally although financial support may be needed to progress this further. A recent application to the ESRC to progress some of these elements involving some Council support has been successful.

3.9	<p>Recently, the Collaborative Network which, in 2016, identified that it could reprocess locally most of the glass, plastic and paper which would be available in NI through better quality recycling and would be worth £47M per annum. These findings contributed considerably to the draft Waste Framework. This Network has now been re-established to explore how to realise these local improvements.</p>
3.10	<p>For over a decade, the Council has been extremely active in NI in moving waste thinking beyond simple collection, treatment and disposal. Initiatives, such as Business Improvement through Environmental Schemes (BITES); European Week for Waste Reduction to NI; securing funding for a Carbon Card (founded due to Great Recession), collaborating on ReNEW project (with WRAP); introducing waste prevention schemes (the Fashion Souk, Stitch &amp; Style, &amp;c); and developing contracts to encourage expand the waste and resources management marketplace in NI were all achieved.</p>
3.11	<p>From this background, the Council developed <i>Resourceful Belfast</i> to explicitly link waste/resources management with local material supply and, in the process, what contribution could be made to the Belfast Agenda and job creation. The Council (Waste Management) and WRAP established a collaborative agreement to help develop a Circular Economy framework and, working with the Advisory Board (comprising officers from Waste Management, WRAP NI, DAERA Policy Unit, Procurement Unit, and Economic Development Unit), we have identified what might be possible for Belfast.</p>
3.12	<p>This identified that, through (i) policies and procedures, (ii) procurement exercises and (iii) market engagement/interventions, the Council could influence how circular economy thinking developed in Belfast. Members of the Advisory Board have also engaged with Strategic Planning and Property &amp; Projects to get this included in other Council documents, such as the Local Development Plan, and with Members.</p>
3.13	<p>In 2016, Waste Management joined the Eurocities Circular Economy taskforce and contributed to a Position Statement at their Annual General Meeting (see <a href="http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Final_-_Stmt_towards_circular_cities.pdf">http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Final_-_Stmt_towards_circular_cities.pdf</a> - Appendix 1).</p>
3.14	<p><b><i>Strategy Development</i></b></p> <p>The Circular Economy has proven to be dynamic with considerable focus upon manufacturing and resource efficiency, and new business models. Over the past two</p>

years, some clarity of councils' role in supporting this has become clearer (as shown by the Eurocities Position Statement). An underlying principle was that waste provided a starting point, the circular economy element means the focus is not only about cataloguing how many jobs are supported by the Council's recycling activities though, but also how additional steps stimulate new sectors/ businesses and thereby create opportunities additional to those from managing waste.

3.15 Rather than merely treating waste, the circular economy addresses the entire process of consumption, production and disposal in a way which conserves natural resources and generates local economic benefits. Adopting this approach over a decade ago supported the steps Bryson Charitable Group took in establishing some of its recycling activities and more recently similar backing has been provided to Extern (WEEE), East Belfast Mission (Bulky Goods) and Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL – mattresses). Building on these approaches, the Advisory Board has been working consistently to develop simple steps in the *Resourceful Belfast* framework, the objective of which stated that “*if we implement targeted interventions and support (1) to stimulate Circular Economy solutions (2) at key points in the local economy (3) we can generate significant economic, environmental and social benefits for the city (4).*”

3.16 These elements underpin the framework documents attached to this report which consists of:

- A summary concept diagram providing a high-level explanation of the framework and their interaction (see Appendix 2)
- A slide pack outlining the initial work; as a “*living*” document it considers how to implement the framework and how actions can be delivered (a copy of this is available within the Members Library)

3.17 These are now being used to engage with businesses, community and voluntary sectors, and other public sector stakeholders. Learning from Glasgow City Council (supported by Zero Waste Scotland), the Board recognised that longer-term a sectoral analysis of the local economy would identify where the most impactful opportunities exist. Glasgow's results helped inform their approach to developing relevant interventions and, posing this question, highlighted that the Council did not have this data and, as a next step, the Board proposes to work with WRAP to commission a similar exercise for Belfast.

***Associated Programme of Work***

- 3.18 One of the successes in terms of tackling problem wastes has been working with USEL. From a 2015 pilot, the Council contracted for a novel recovery operation which, last year, resulted in 14,000 mattresses being recycling or reuse. This scheme resulted in other councils and institutions getting involved and through its expansion, USEL created 22 jobs. Further materials are being considered including carpets and soft furnishings. In May, Waste Management was selected as USEL's "*Partner of the Year*".
- 3.19 Extending this approach, the Board considered how it could contribute to the Belfast Agenda and identified that, in addition to policy and procurement approaches, four material streams offered the **strongest opportunity to create new jobs through developing projects "*on the ground*". The four were:**
- **Clothing & textiles**
  - **Electricals & electronics**
  - **Food & drink**
  - **Furniture (Priority Waste provides a great opportunity for the reuse of bulky waste)**
- 3.20 To date, two workshops have identified seven projects as having potential and, currently, they are being assessed for deliverability given resources and timescales.
- 3.21 By way of example of actions of circular economy underway, a resource-matching community outreach/hub exercise run by International Synergies at South 13 Belfast happened in June to swap materials between organisations, many of which were manufacturers. Interested parties included North Belfast Men's Shed and several local waste management companies which identified new materials for repair and recycling. This prolonging material use, or repairing items is similar to the pop-up Repair Café which has established itself in Belfast and occurs at a different venues across the city. It shows that businesses and third sector organisations are identifying circular economy opportunities and how to realise its benefits. There is a prospect that some may approach the Council to collaborate and maximise local impact.
- 3.22 In terms of increasing employability and skills, as part of the Circular Economy the Economic Development Unit (EDU) has been identifying where there is a significant

	<p>employment need. As this sector develops and employment opportunities emerge around things like light fabrication, facilities management, &amp;c the prospect of accelerating this transition by establishing relevant employment academies may become an option.</p>
3.23	<p>EDU are working with a range of employers across the city to establish these employment academies in a wide range of sectors to provide residents with the skills and qualifications needed to apply for job opportunities. All the Council's employment academies are employer-driven to meet demand issues, and underpinned by sectoral employment needs and intelligence. Regular links are maintained with employers and business stakeholders, such as NIPA and EDU are currently focused on engaging with small businesses on a range of programmes and are promoting the Circular Economy message and <i>Resourceful Belfast</i> activities. In particular EDU has established a Circular Economy pilot programme for cafés and restaurants in Belfast.</p>
3.24	<p>Members may also care to note that a couple of social enterprises have expressed an interest in the North Foreshore, and proposals to develop facilities here or provide alternative approaches for Council services may be in preparation.</p>
	<p><b><i>Waste Framework</i></b></p>
3.25	<p>As highlighted in 3.4 above, currently the Council's wastes have secure treatment and disposal markets but with developments like the Chinese import restrictions, there is an increased emphasis upon maximising quality of recyclables which can be used locally (in NI) and create jobs. This adds weight to the Waste Framework and the paradigm shift needed in householders' behaviours improving the flight to quality of materials collected, rather than the simple approach – chasing ever-increasing weight based goals but relying on these lower grade materials being sorted somewhere else.</p>
3.26	<p>Top grade papers collected at the kerbside are selling well to local re-processors, such as Huhtamaki. On the other hand, recently the Council's contractor (Bryson) had to get a new market for the comingled (blue bin) collections' mixed papers, the price of which has fallen. Similar to <i>Resourceful Belfast</i>, the Waste Framework considers how waste collection changes could mitigate market volatility, optimise income and maintain jobs in line with the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.27	<p>An application for DAERA funding for a pilot wheelie-box collection service has been submitted and the Council anticipate being informed shortly if this is successful.</p>



**Internal Actions**

3.28

In addition to delivering the Waste Framework and *Resourceful Belfast*, there are other actions which the Council can take/is taking to set the circular economy agenda within the city through leading by example by adopting corporate policies, and further opportunities exist around purchasing, albeit to be fully effective the Standing Orders may need to be amended to provide greater clarity for the Procurement Service to manage environmental and social considerations within capital and revenue tender exercises. Examples from Eurocities and other progressive associations show that this is developing rapidly for councils and alongside enhanced procurement practices, there is scope to explore how circular economy can support SMART city aspirations.

3.29

Members have also been looking at what the Council could do and, at a recent meeting of the North Foreshore Working Group, they were keen the Council lead by example. Recent Notice of Motions on “*Water Refill Points*” and “*Single Use Coffee Cups & Plastic Items*” were considered supportive of the direction of the Council to reduce environmental impact, improve performance and demonstrate civic responsibility. When the issue of probable increased cost to deliver some of these approaches was highlighted, some Members felt this needed recognised but should not be the determining factor. Committee reports responding to Members’ Notices of Motion are addressing such issues.

3.30

Members may care to note that following discussion between Waste Management and canteen staff, single-use cups are now being charged for in the Cecil Ward Building.

**Risk**

3.31

The requirement to create and support local industry to use (reprocess) the materials collected has become more acute in recent months. As mentioned above, the Chinese “*Operation National Sword*” has introduced restrictions on certain wastes; the most relevant are (i) banning post-consumer plastics and mixed/unsorted paper (ii) setting a 0.5% tolerance level for sorted paper from 1 March 2018 and (iii) restricting import waste licences to China next year. Additional restrictions were announced in April which will come into effect in 2019/20 and will further impact income and processing capacity for certain materials.

3.32	<p>To date, the UK (in addition to the EU and US) has been reliant on exporting paper and plastics to China but with these restriction, alternative markets in Turkey, Indonesia and Vietnam (and elsewhere) are developing. In the meantime, income for these materials has fallen (e.g. in the past 6 months, mixed papers have fallen from £100/t to £35/t (or lower)). Nationally, there are concerns that these measures may lead to stockpiling of materials and mid-term create an increased need for landfilling or incineration of these materials.</p>
	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.33	<p>Discussions with the Services involved in the <i>Resourceful Belfast</i> Board indicate that there are considerable benefits to be gained from the Collaboration Agreement with WRAP in that it provides the Council with access to expertise and resources which it otherwise would not have. The initial agreement ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 but included provision to extend with the agreement of both parties. We plan to use this arrangement for a further three years to support the Waste Plan and Resourceful Belfast. Members are reminded that this agreement falls under regulation 12(7) of the Procurement Contracts Regulations 2015 which exempts contracts between contracting authorities which establishes or implements co-operation between those two contracting authorities.</p>
3.34	<p>It is envisaged that Waste Management would commit approximately £90K over the life of this agreement to progress projects of benefit to either delivery of the Waste Framework or <i>Resourceful Belfast</i>. This will be accommodated within the Service's Revenue Estimates.</p>
3.35	<p>As circular economy thinking evolves, some travel is likely to be needed for the purposes of exploratory visits and learning opportunities – it is proposed that these will be accommodated within the relevant Service's revenue budget.</p>
3.36	<p>As this work develops, resources to deliver this work will need to be kept under review and proposals will be developed if required.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.37	<p>Resourceful Belfast has potential to contribute to the Belfast Agenda by providing an opportunity for retraining and job prospects for the long-term unemployed and others distanced from the world of work.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – <a href="http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Final_-_Stmt_towards_circular_cities.pdf">http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Final_-_Stmt_towards_circular_cities.pdf</a> - Appendix 2 – Eurocities Position Statement on the Circular Economy Appendix 3 – Draft Resourceful Belfast Summary Concept Diagram (print A3)