



Subject:	Membership of the Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN)
Date:	10 November 2020
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Brendan Murray, Waste Manager (Strategic Planning and Delivery)

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	A pilot network is being formed, the Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN) to facilitate knowledge sharing and promote joint working between stakeholders interested in increasing the levels of repair and reuse locally.
1.2	Membership of the network will assist the Council in terms of learning, best practice and potentially linking up with project partners to develop the repair and reuse sector. This aligns with our work under the Resourceful Belfast theme of growing the circular economy.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee are asked to approve:

	<p>1) The Council’s membership of the Northern Ireland Resource Network for the duration of the free membership period (until March 2022).</p> <p>2) The Council’s ongoing membership of the network (initially set at £250 per annum and subject to reasonable increases over time) subject to review and assurance that the membership remains worthwhile to the Service.</p>
3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>3.1 DAERA recently commissioned a study into the potential for re-use and repair to contribute to the local circular economy. The findings of the feasibility study are attached in Appendix 1.</p> <p>3.2 Following interviews with 30 reuse and repair organisations, all 11 Councils and with input from 8 other national networks across Europe confirmed one of the recommendations of the study regarding establishing a re-use and repair network, is about to come to fruition through the establishment of the Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN).</p> <p>3.3 The network aims to facilitate knowledge sharing and promote joint working between stakeholders invested in increasing the levels of repair and reuse.</p> <p>3.4 The network membership policy is attached in Appendix 2 and provides more details on the network activities and benefits; lobbying, awareness raising, training, performance measurement, research and exploring funding opportunities.</p> <p>3.5 The circular economy model is gaining ground in the public, private and third sectors globally due to the range of social, economic and environmental benefits it generates (cost savings, job creation, skills development and volunteering opportunities for example).</p> <p>3.6 Strategic Investment Board (SIB), Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department for Economy (DfE) are currently working together to develop a circular economy strategy for N. Ireland and Members will be appraised of developments when the consultation paper is produced.</p> <p>3.7 The Resources & Fleet Service welcomes the establishment of a formal, local network for repair and re-use. This will assist the Council in delivering more quickly, the social,</p>

	<p>economic and environmental benefits associated with reuse and repair initiatives and circular economy approaches in general.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>Membership of the network is free for an initial pilot period (until March 2021) and for the first year of the official network (April 2021 – March 2022).</p>
3.9	<p>Following the free membership period, different types of organisation will be subject to different membership fees thereafter. An annual membership fee of £250 will be payable by Councils. It is assumed that this may change over time, so approval for ongoing paid membership includes an assumption that reasonable increases are also approved and membership remains will be reviewed to ensure it is of benefit for the Service.</p>
3.10	<p>Membership of the network is expected to increase the Council’s capacity to deliver, and will therefore act as a net benefit rather than a burden on Council resources. The membership policy includes a commitment to complete NIRN’s annual survey of reuse and repair metrics to facilitate reporting on impact. This information will be gathered as a matter of course in the Council’s relevant activities and does not present any significant additional workload.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>No impact</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Feasibility of a reuse and repair network in Northern Ireland</p> <p>Appendix 2: Northern Ireland Resources Network Membership Policy</p> <p>Further information available at: https://crni.ie/ni_pilot_reuse_repair_network/</p>