



Report to:	Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Introduction of a Progressive Dry Recyclables Scheme & Food Waste Collection Service for around 5,000 households in the West of the City
Date:	28 November 2014
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1	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>Following securing £236,000 from the DOE's Rethink Waste Capital Grant scheme, to seek approval from the Committee to introduce a food waste collection service for around 5,000 households in the west of the City and change the existing dry recyclables scheme in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ capture additional recycling tonnage, ▪ deliver an improved environmental solution and ▪ afford residents in the proposed area the opportunity to recycle food waste and on the basis of no additional costs to the council going forward.

2	Background
2.1	The Council has successfully secured £236,000 from the DOE Rethink Waste Capital Grant scheme to fund the provision of new wheeled stacker collection units.
2.2	In Belfast, Waste Management has been actively seeking to simplify waste collection options for a number of years in order to reduce confusion and to make recycling as easy as possible for householders. With this aim, the City is now primarily on two schemes, a weekly recycling/food waste box service for the denser-housing stock in the inner city and an alternate weekly, three-bin service (organic and residual wastes collected one week, recyclables the next) for the outer city.
2.3	There is however one small area of the city which almost a decade ago, due to the house size, was considered appropriate to be issued with a dry recyclable (blue) bin yet, as they did not have gardens, they did not receive an organic bin. This means that this area does not have a food waste collection service as these materials would be collected in an organics bin. These houses are located in inner west Belfast (see appendix 1 - street list) and currently have an alternate weekly, two-bin service for dry recyclables and residual wastes only.
2.4	As stated above, these households were omitted from the original roll-out of organic

	(brown) bins as most did not have gardens. Recently, the Department of the Environment (DOE) published its “ <i>Synopsis of Responses on the Restrictions on Landfilling Food Waste</i> ” which will introduce the requirement for councils to provide a food waste service for all households within their jurisdiction.
2.5	With a renewed emphasis on diverting food waste from landfill, the Service has considered how to tailor a cost-effective solution for these households in order to provide a commensurate service to that received by the other 96% of households in the city, boosting recycling/composting tonnages and complying with impending legislation.
2.6	In advance of the DOE paper, the Service had been working for some time to consider how to introduce a food and glass waste service to these households – it looked like a weekly service using a kitchen caddy with a larger, external caddy was the most suitable option with a supplementary box for collecting glass. Last year, however, considerable effort went into providing tailored solutions for many of the inner-city apartment blocks and flats and during this programme a new waste receptacle was launched – a wheeled stacker collection unit (a stacker box). Where these units have been introduced, they have worked well.
2.7	Earlier this year, Waste Management submitted an application to the DOE’s Rethink Waste Capital Grant scheme to fund the provision of new stacker boxes for this project and was successful in securing £236,000 for their purchase.
2.8	The households chosen will transfer onto a new, progressive stacker box collection system, with additional kitchen and external caddies for food waste being provided as well. The food waste and recyclables will be collected on a weekly basis on a single pass, dedicated vehicle using the Council’s existing contractor for kerbside collection, Bryson Recycling. The residual waste collection will remain fortnightly.
2.9	The new stacker box service will mean that these householders will be able to recycle a wider range of materials than at present, most particularly through the inclusion of food waste and glass. This is likely to increase the Council’s recycling rate by almost 0.5%.
2.10	The stacker box service has already been introduced to a similar number of households in Newtownabbey Borough Council and has received a positive reception in terms of tonnage captured and resident feedback.
2.11	This service aims to assist in meeting the following specific waste objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To assist in delivering a recycling rate of 50% of household waste by 2020 (EU Waste Framework Directive) ▪ To contribute to a proposed Department of the Environment (DOE) target of 60% for NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (LACMW) recycling rate by 2020. ▪ To contribute to the Council’s on-going achievement of Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme Regulations 2004 (NILAS) – the progressive, annual reduction in biodegradable waste allowed to be disposed of to landfill. ▪ To contribute to the DOE’s proposed Food Waste Regulations (2014) and the requirement for councils to introduce separate food waste collections for all households. ▪ To make better use of the Council’s finances for waste collection, treatment and disposal.
2.12	It also meets the proposed DOE regulations as food waste will be collected separately in caddies. The proposed service will also permit the Council to demonstrate that it is keenly focused on providing all householders with the opportunity to recycle on their doorstep and, in so doing, that it is considering how best to deliver the Technically, Environmentally, Economically Practicable (TEEP) obligation as required under the EU

	<p>Waste Framework Directive, by tailoring solutions to maximise recycling quality. In this case, the projected improved environmental performance is matched by reductions to the cost of providing this service.</p> <p>This proposal could also inform strategic collection issues for the Council arising from TEEP longer-term, as well as improve the quality of materials for re-processing - an increasingly important issue in moving towards a circular economy.</p>
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3	Key Issues
3.1	This report is seeking Member approval to introduce a food waste collection scheme for around 5,000 households in the west of the City and, in so doing, change the current kerbside collection scheme for dry recyclables by introducing a progressive new, stacker box collection system(see Appendix 2).
3.2	The householders will receive a weekly collection of dry recyclables in the wheeled stacker box and food waste, along with a fortnightly collection of residual waste.
3.3	This scheme ties in with the objectives of the Council’s “Towards Zero Waste” Action Plan and, more specifically, action point 1. “To Improve Recycling Collection Services for Householders (More Materials, Better Services)”. As outlined in the options appraisal which was provided to the DOE, the annual collection and treatment costs for the stacker box proposal are fully offset by (i) landfill gate fee savings, (ii) additional income from the kerbside box scheme, (iii) MRF gate fee savings, (iv) reduced resources being expended on the blue bin scheme which can be realised as part of the Route Optimisation exercise to be delivered in Cleansing Services around Q2, 2015/16 and (v) the non-requirement of a separate glass collection service for these households. This shows it to be a more advantageous economic and environmental solution than the alternative dedicated, food waste collection plus blue bin scheme.
3.4	<p>There are a number of potential advantages associated with the proposal, both for the Council and residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of a weekly food waste collection to the targeted households would mean an equitable service of food waste collection now being provided citywide either in a dedicated caddy, or a brown bin, as well as improving capacity in the residual bin for those who use the scheme. ▪ The wheeled stacker collection box provides an increased range of materials compared with the current blue bin scheme namely: glass, mixed plastics, batteries, hand tools and textiles ▪ This should increase tonnage of recyclables captured, contributing directly to the recycling rate, projected at around 460 tonnes, or almost 0.5%. ▪ Improved quality of recyclables with the materials being sorted at the kerbside rather than the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) which should reduce contamination within the recyclables, currently standing at around 10%. ▪ This scheme could inform strategic direction of recyclables collections as the DOE intend to introduce legislation which will require the separate collection of food waste only. ▪ One pass collection of recyclables and food waste in the same vehicle would be of benefit to the environment by reducing emissions ▪ With the Council’s existing kerbside-sort contractor being in a position to take on the collection of recyclables and food waste from these households, the Council has the opportunity to deliver efficiency savings in this regard. ▪ This is also an optimum time to introduce such a change as Cleansing Services are preparing to review their waste and recyclables collection routes in response to Local Government Reform (LGR).

3.5	Subject to approval, the Service will develop a communications campaign to explain the changes to the waste collection arrangements and to engage directly with both Members and householders in the area before introducing the new stacker box collection scheme.
3.6	As stated above, this year the Council has secured a total of £970,000 from the DOE's Rethink Waste Capital Grant to support a range of recycling schemes, including £236,000 to provide the stacker boxes for this project. As a condition of this funding, it must be spent within the 2014/15 financial year. The Committee may care to note that the purchase of the stacker collection boxes will be made from a framework contract which is already in place.

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>The introduction of this proposal will be rates neutral.</p> <p>As there is a matter of scheduling the introduction of this service with the Route Optimisation work being undertaken by Cleansing Services, there are costs of £16,000 to be borne in early 2015/16 by the existing arrangements prior to this service starting – this can be covered from within projected budgets. As the dry recyclable bins in this area are due to be uplifted during the introduction of the service, if these bins are in a satisfactory condition they may be reused and, given that they are currently in use, it is probable that these could offset the costs of the stacker box service through reducing the spend on replacement bins for 2015/16.</p> <p>Once introduced, given that the capital costs for the purchase of the stacker boxes has been provided for by the DOE, it is projected that the service will be cost neutral.</p> <p>The Committee may care to note that for 2014/15, the Council has been successful in being granted approval for projects from the DOE Rethink Waste funding of almost £1M, subject to the money being spent in this financial year.</p>
4.2	<p>Human Resources</p> <p>The proposal will involve the household recycling collections currently serviced by Cleansing Services switching to the Council's kerbside sort contractor, Bryson Recycling.</p> <p>It is not proposed that the staff should transfer but that, as part of the Route Optimisation exercise to be delivered around Q2, they should be redeployed elsewhere in the city thereby contributing to the delivery of efficiency savings within Cleansing Services. These households are currently serviced by approximately a third of a crew.</p>

5	Call-In
5.1	This report is subject to call-in

6	Recommendation
6.1	In order to ensure that the Council can draw down the DOE's Rethink Waste scheme, the Committee is requested to approve the proposed introduction of the stacker box and food waste collection service for around 5,000 households, as identified.

7	Abbreviations
	<p>DOE – Department of the Environment LACMW – Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste NILAS – NI Landfill Allowances Scheme TEEP – Technically, Economically & Environmentally Practicable LGR – Local Government Reform</p>

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Street List for the Proposal (subject to amendment following assessment for suitability). Appendix 2 – Wheeled stacker promotional information.</p>