



Subject:	Update on reinstating the Castle Area Wheelie-box waste collection pilot
Date:	10 August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Matthews, Operational Director Siobhan Toland, Operational Director
Contact Officer:	John McConnell, City Services (Resources & Fleet) Manager

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"/>
Sometime 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	To provide an update on plans to reinstate the Wheelie-box pilot in the Castle Area. The scheme was suspended in March 2020 due to the COVID outbreak. Councillors and residents have regularly enquired when the process would be reinstated.
1.2	To highlight recommendations to the configuration of the wheelie-box scheme and seek approval to start communicating to the residents prior to ratification at the September 1 st Council meeting, with a view to restarting the full service from Monday, 6 th September 2021.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4 th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the update to reinstate the service. • Agree with the proposed configuration changes to the collection process as illustrated in Table 1 and to starting the engagement and communication with Residents in the coming weeks in advance of the ratification by Council on 1st September.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members are reminded that it was noted at the 11 th May People and Communities Committee that plans were being drawn up to re-instate the Caste pilot subject to review of the resource capacity within Resources and Fleet and appropriate controls being put in place to achieve a Covid safe recovery of the service.
3.2	The planning and review led to operational recommendations to achieve the successful recovery of the pilot. The changes are to the collection process to streamline it making it easier for residents to recycle and for crews to collect more efficiently.
3.3	Specifically, by separating cardboard from glass recycling, this improves the safety of the operation and positively impacts the collection efficiency at the kerbside because less sorting is required.
3.4	Additionally, the proposal to sort cardboard with paper makes the end process consistent with other re-cycling providers and more straightforward for residents. The combination of paper and cardboard in the same wheelie box improves the re-cycling rate by lowering the rejection rate at Bryson recycling and at the paper processor ¹ .
3.5	Finally, discussions were held in relation to the collection of batteries and hand tools with the MRF contractor, Bryson Recycling. Bryson highlighted particular concerns around the recycling of batteries, as a significant fire risk at their facility. It was noted that there had been two significant fires at Waste Facilities in Belfast in the last year and the major cause of such fires have been attributed to batteries. In relation to hand tools it was noted the near zero uptake of these items and as such the space in the wheelie boxes could be put to much better use.

¹ This is done by removing the risk of broken glass and the liquid contents of bottles contaminating the cardboard.

Table 1 below sets out the proposed changes

	Pre COVID process	Proposed process
Top box	Bagged textiles and paper	Cardboard and paper
Middle box	Plastics and tins	No change
Bottom box	Cardboard and glass	Glass only
Food waste	Food Caddy	No change
Textiles	Bagged and placed in the Top box	Bagged and placed in any of the 3 stacker boxes
Batteries and hand tools	Batteries bagged and hand tools in top box	This Service will not be re-instated at this time

3.6 To reinstate the pre-COVID service, 3 x Romaquip Waste collection vehicles and crews are required. One of these vehicles is additional due to the impact of Covid increasing the levels of waste collection from home with glass collection increasing by 33%, recyclables by 23% and black bin waste by 12%. An additional 3 follow on vans are also required to comply with social distancing. The requirement of this additional vehicle and crew will be kept under review should government guidance changes in relation to operational working constraints,

3.7 With the uncertainty around the lifting of Covid19 restrictions the forecast is additional vehicles will be required until the end of this financial year, this will be kept under review in light of any updated public health advice.

3.8 Arc 21 and Bryson Recycling have been engaged in developing the reinstatement implementation plan. The reinstatement of the full service will reflect the collection and processing arrangements Bryson have introduced to the inner city collection service that have been running throughout the current pandemic.

3.9 The pilot is due to run until September 2022 with the evaluation to date continuing to feed into the current economic appraisal on recycling operations and thereafter the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. It is important the full pilot resumes as soon as practical to inform the wider strategic direction.

3.10 The operational recovery assurance process has been completed, but the service will not fully resume until all the necessary risk assessments, associated training plans and

	governance are agreed and are in place. It is envisaged that all outstanding safety measures will be in place before the requested start date of 6 th September 2021.
3.11	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are costs associated with the reinstatement of the pilot as Covid restrictions continue to impact, particularly from social distancing and from the additional waste and recycling volumes arising from the impact of increased levels of working from home. These additional costs are forecast to be up to £160k and we expect to claim the costs from the Department for the Communities Covid fund.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs assessment associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None