



Subject:	Sanitary Waste Pilot Update
Date:	Tuesday 10 th May 2022
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Director Neighbourhood Services, CNS
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision

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	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the success of a pilot sanitary waste scheme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the contents of the report.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	In February 2022, as part of an update on period poverty to SP&R committee, officers reported that the Community Awareness and Waste Education teams were developing a pilot initiative that would provide access to free, reusable sanitary products.
3.2	The aim of the initiative was to raise awareness and encourage increased use of reusable period products. This will have an environmental benefit as it will reduce the amount of period waste that is entering our waste stream and being landfilled, and it will also reduce

	<p>plastic waste. Disposal of single use menstrual products - tampons, pads and applicators generates 200,000 tonnes of waste per year in the UK¹. In addition, sanitary waste can be made of up to 90% plastic.</p>
3.3	<p>In the most recent BCC Waste Composition Study (2014) it was found that 1.87% of all miscellaneous combustible waste (the largest category of waste we collect) was of a sanitary waste nature (including other absorbent hygiene products but excluding nappies). This means each household was producing on average 3.38Kg of this type of product waste per year.</p>
3.4	<p>This project was primarily focused on waste reduction but also had the benefit of providing a sustainable resource for those affected by period poverty which is an added pressure on individuals and families as a result of the current cost of living pressures.</p>
	<p><u>Project delivery</u></p>
3.5	<p>The pilot scheme was launched on 30 March 22 and was designed to provide free access to reusable sanitary products to people in the Belfast area. Council worked with the social enterprise, 'Hey Girls'. (www.heygirls.co.uk) to deliver the scheme, where participants could register and order reusable sanitary products online. This company has worked with local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales to deliver similar schemes.</p>
3.6	<p>The Belfast pilot scheme received unexpected and unprecedented levels of demand with over 2,750 orders made in less than 24 hrs. Such was the level of demand that the notional budget officers had notionally allocated to the scheme had to be increased five-fold. Social media coverage and feedback on the scheme was also very positive. Commentary praised Belfast City Council for bringing the initiative forward. Over 95,000 people were reached through Council social media on the topic with over 225,000 people having viewed twitter posts promoting the scheme.</p>
3.7	<p>Officers will now evaluate the scheme and ongoing levels of interest to determine how future initiatives should be delivered. The pilot scheme delivered products at no cost to maximise uptake, but is it anticipated that future schemes would include some contribution from participants to increase the numbers who can benefit from the scheme.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>Costs for the initial pilot will be provided through existing budgets (21/22 and 22/23). . Officers will explore other internal and potentially external funding opportunities in order to</p>

¹ Calculation by Natracare 2018

3.9	<p>be able to deliver a further scheme in the 22/23 financial year. If none are available, the next scheme will not be delivered until 23/24.</p> <p>For reference, participants could choose to order a Full Cycle Pack (containing 1 x reusable pantyliner, 2 x day reusable pads and 2 x night reusable pads) to the value of of £18.86 per pack or approximately £15.60 for a Period Cup (including all associated costs). A total of 2,767 orders were accepted via the pilot scheme.</p> <p><u>Equality, Good Relations or Rural needs implications</u></p> <p>The pilot scheme was designed to be accessible to as many residents in the Belfast area as possible. Officers will review uptake and consider any ways to address imbalances in uptake either through education or design (e.g. applying additional criteria and/or targeting) of future programmes.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None