

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 6th August, 2019

## MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Collins (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McReynolds;  
Alderman McCoubrey; and  
Councillors Black, Bunting, Cobain,  
Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Kelly, Magee,  
Mulholland, McLaughlin, McMullan,  
Newton, Smyth and Verner.

Also Attended: Councillors Heading, Ferguson and O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors Baker and Kyle.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th June were taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were reported.

### **Item Withdrawn from Agenda**

#### **Request for the use of Cathedral Gardens for "Rally for Choice"**

The Committee noted that the above item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

### **Matters Referred Back from Council/Motions**

#### **Glyphosate-Based Weed Killer**

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of Council on 1st July, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Collins, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

*"This Council recognises the dangers associated with the use of glyphosate-based weed killers, including the World Health Organisation's*

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*warning about carcinogenic side effects and the damaging impact on the environment and biodiversity.*

*The Council notes that other councils and government agencies have introduced bans across the world and agrees to immediately investigate and implement the use of safer weed killing methods in order to protect Council staff, the general public, and local flora and fauna.”*

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Ferguson addressed the Committee and outlined her concern regarding the use of glyphosate-based weed killers and the potential problems associated with its use.

It was agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Air Quality in Belfast**

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of Council on 1st July, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor O'Hara and seconded by Councillor Kyle, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

*“This Council notes that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) monitoring of Air Quality in Belfast has identified breaches of the Air Quality legal limits, alongside the Council’s own monitoring of and the data collected by Greens across the City.*

*Poor Air Quality reduces life expectancy, increases incidents of respiratory conditions, rates of lung cancers, strokes and asthma. These are more prevalent amongst older people, younger people and vulnerable groups. In addition, this disproportionately impacts inner city and working class communities.*

*In view of these issues and in support of all 5 objectives of the Belfast Agenda, particularly outcome 5 to make ‘Belfast a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable City’, the Council agrees to engage formally with DAERA and the Department for Infrastructure on the areas of concern and to produce reports on:*

- 1. Enhancing monitoring and reporting of air pollution, including recommended limits in line with the more stringent World Health Organisation Standards; and*
- 2. Introducing a Clean Air Zone in Belfast, in line with UK Government Guidance.”*

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor O'Hara addressed the Committee and stressed the urgent need to tackle air pollution in an attempt to improve air quality standards across the City of Belfast.

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A Member concurred and highlighted the rise in respiratory problems in young people and stated that he would welcome increased air quality monitoring, particularly in the vicinity of local schools.

A further Member referred to the need to consider commuter travelling and car parking and its impact on Belfast's air quality and it was further suggested that any research should take into consideration good practice models that had been implemented in other Cities.

It was agreed:

- that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee which would address the proposals contained within the motion; and
- that the Committee would write to the Department for Infrastructure in support of Eco Belfast's Campaign to designate Belfast a car free City from 20th – 22nd September, 2019.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Update in Relation to a Permanent Memorial  
to mark Baby Haven in the City Cemetery**

The Director of City Services provided the Committee with an update in respect of the process to design, produce and install a permanent memorial at Plot Z1 in the City Cemetery in which many babies had been buried.

The Director reminded the Committee that a Focus Group had been established, which had been made up of representatives of families that had relatives buried in the plot. The Focus Group had met regularly with Council officers and it had imputed greatly into both the design and installation of the memorial, to ensure that it was undertaken in a sensitive manner and also met the Council's protocol and policies.

The Committee was advised that the Bereavement Administrative team had undertaken a comprehensive count of burial records for Plot Z1, which had been validated against the original burial orders. The final verified number of babies buried in the Plot was 7,160 and this number had been inscribed onto the memorial.

The Director advised that it was anticipated that the works to erect the memorial would begin in early August and permission was sought to hold a commemorative and dedication event on Thursday, 12th September to unveil it, to which the Lord Mayor, Elected Members and other dignitaries would be invited to attend.

The Focus Group had requested that part of the proposed ceremony would have a religious aspect, as many of the families had been unable to hold funeral ceremonies. The Director advised that the Council would be taking advice from the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum to ensure that an inclusive spiritual element would be included within the ceremony that would recognize the faiths of all those buried within the plot.

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The Committee agreed to hold a commemorative and dedication event on Thursday, 12th September to unveil the permanent memorial at Plot Z1 in the City Cemetery, known as the Baby Haven.

**Waste Framework Update, Household Recycling  
Performance and Response to Notice of Motion**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To provide Committee with progress on implementing the Waste Framework, an update on household recycling performance over the recent past and to respond to the Notice of Motion raised at 1st November 2018 Council meeting which states that:**

*‘This Council is committed to increasing household recycling across the city of Belfast; notes the colossal impact waste is having on our oceans, cities and countrysides; welcomes the recent waste consultation; and will commit to introducing glass recycling in households across the city of Belfast as soon as possible.’*

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- 1. Agree that the wheelie-box scheme outlined in this report is the strategic direction of travel for the Council, subject to a successful assessment of the project within the Council’s Capital Programme.**
- 2. Agree the wheelie-box pilot as outlined to:**
  - **approximately 5,000 households in North Belfast commencing September 2019;**
  - **change collection day for operational reasons and to mitigate against ‘bin blight.’ If considered necessary, these will be communicated in advance to the residents affected;**
  - **in order to improve recycling further, as per the January 2014 policy, the trial will implement one bin per household with the usual exceptions (i.e. larger families of 6 or more, and those households with a resident who has a medical condition which generates additional waste,) following the successful application to DAERA to fund an in-house trial.**

3. Agree implementation of Phase 2 of the food waste campaign, as set out in the Council's Improvement Plan for 2019-20.
4. Agree extending the existing WRAP Collaboration Agreement for the 2019/20 financial year.
5. Agree to a Members' study visit to Welsh councils (as per November report) to see first-hand a kerbside sort approach, in operation.
6. Agree to a study visit to businesses and organisations in NI which use the secondary materials collected from the Council's recycling operations and learn how they contribute to the local Circular Economy.
7. Note the response to the November Notice of Motion.

3.0 **Main report**

**Key Issues**

**Background**

- 3.1 There are several drivers influencing management of the city's waste including:
- legislative compliance;
  - fit-for-purpose and value-for-money services;
  - the Belfast Agenda – an additional 66,000 residents will generate additional waste; and
  - the Circular Economy Package (CEP) focusing on higher recycling targets (65% municipal waste by 2035), improving quality of materials and contributing to jobs within the economy.
- 3.2 To address these challenges the Council, and its regional waste management group (arc21), have developed waste plans, the most recent of which was the Waste Framework approved in June 2017. These plans make recommendations in terms of infrastructural and policy requirements with the primary aim of reducing reliance on landfill and increasing recycling.
- 3.3 Over the last 15 years, the Council has achieved increases in the recycling of household waste from 5% in 2003/04 to 44% in 2017/18 (the most recent NIEA validated year). This has been achieved by developing an adequate recycling

infrastructure (Recycling Centres, bring banks, kerbside collection schemes) and associated contracts to treat the materials arising. In addition, the Council has invested consistently in communications and outreach activities to engage with residents and other partners such as schools, community groups and businesses to ensure that the 'Reduce, Reuse Recycle' message is continuously promoted.

- 3.4 In terms of performance, the city's recycling rate increased steadily in 2014/15, when it peaked at 44%. This trend was halted following Local Government Reform as many of the 22,000 households which transferred to Belfast were relied heavily upon residual waste collections. In recent years, there have also been plant closures – reducing local capacity to treat wastes, changes in the legal definition of recycling and fluctuations in the national and international markets (sometimes erratic) which have impacted upon both commodity prices and destinations for recycled materials.

Current Performance

- 3.5 With the introduction of the Food Waste Campaign in Summer 2017 and the focused targeting of this waste within the residual (black) bin, the recycling rate rebounded to 44% in 2017/18. In the same year, the household recycling rate across the whole of NI rose by 3.7% to 48.1%, bringing the 2020 national 50% target within reach.
- 3.6 In 2017/18, the Council was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in Northern Ireland for its household recycling rate. Given its different demographics and other characteristics (deprivation, housing type, etc) which impact on recycling rates, it should be noted that it is unrealistic to benchmark Belfast against the other councils in NI.
- 3.7 As a result, Belfast benchmarks its performance against similar cities in England such as Newcastle, Sunderland and Sheffield. Examining those cities latest performance reveals that Belfast continues to outperform, although they have additional statutory duties to discharge and austerity and associated budget cuts have deeply affected these councils.
- 3.8 In 2017/18, the total amount of household waste collected by the Council was 144,727 tonnes. Amongst the NI councils, Belfast produced the smallest amount of household waste per person, at 425kg and the smallest amount of waste per household, at 0.98 tonnes.

- 3.9** With the inclusion of non-household waste (commercial, fly-tipped/entry clearances) collected by the Council, the total amount of municipal waste collected rose to 169,368 tonnes. The treatment split for this waste was 40% recycled, 39% landfilled, 19% energy recovery and 2% other.
- 3.10** In total, around 68,000 tonnes of the municipal waste stream (household, commercial, street sweeps, fly tipped) was recycled. This supports the Belfast Agenda not only by producing a cleaner, greener city for residents, workers and visitors but also makes a significant contribution to the local economy and, in this regard, it is estimated that up to 680 jobs<sup>1</sup> are directly supported by the recycling of these materials. In addition, in terms of carbon dioxide and contributing to mitigating the Councils impact upon the climate, diverting this material from landfill is the annual equivalent of taking 16,500 cars (approx.) off the road.
- 3.11** Provisional figures suggest that the household recycling rate in 2018/19 will remain around 44%. Any uplift is likely to be due to a reduction in the amount of waste generated (down by 1,600 tonnes approx.) rather than an increase in recycling/composting, which has remained static<sup>2</sup>.

**Waste Framework – Actions**

- 3.12** The Waste Framework, approved by Council in June 2017, highlighted four themes to improve recycling, reducing landfill and ultimately delivering a more sustainable city. These are (i) Collection Systems (ii) Infrastructural Requirements (iii) Behavioural Change and (iv) Information Technology. The Framework outlines initiatives to improve not only the tonnage collected but the quality to supply local re-processing companies and contribute positively to the Circular Economy<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.13** In 2017, an Options Appraisal of future kerbside collection arrangements was completed by WRAP/Resource Futures to consider factor affecting recycling (contribution to recycling rate, financial impact, legislative compliance, user

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<sup>1</sup> Green Alliance report (2014) – ‘More jobs, less carbon’

<sup>2</sup> These figures will be validated by the NIEA, anticipated in Nov 2019 when the NIEA Annual Waste Statistics Report will be published.

<sup>3</sup> The circular economy offers an alternative to the linear ‘take-make-waste’ economy that is harming people and the environment. It seeks to extract maximum value from resources in use and keeps materials in circulation for as long as possible. The circular economy is strongly embedded in local economies and transition to this requires the innovative entrepreneurship and strong network connections that cities typically incubate - THE ROLE OF MUNICIPAL POLICY IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY.

acceptability) and a preferred approach, outlined in Figure 1 below was identified.

*Figure 1 : Proposed Kerbside Collection Approach*

## Collections - Potential Approach



- 3.14 The Options Appraisal recommended collecting recyclables and food waste weekly in a wheelie-box. It is worth noting this includes collecting glass. In common with the materials collected, with the exception of cans and plastic pots, tubs & trays, glass would be placed in a separate stillage container within the vehicle to preserve its quality (and market value). This system is complemented by a 180 litre bin for non-recyclable/residual waste.
- 3.15 In 2017, this proposed collection methodology was adopted by the Council as part of the Waste Framework and has been consulted on twice with the public through pre- and full-engagement exercises which used the Council's Citizen Space portal, supported by roadshows. To counteract bias, a statistically relevant, representative household survey was done in parallel with the full consultation.
- 3.16 The summary, findings showed broad support for the wheelie-box and a preference for a 180 litre black bin rather than a three weekly collections for residual waste.

### Market Developments

- 3.17 Waste and resources are an increasingly traded commodity on the international market with materials flowing across the world for treatment and disposal. In January 2018 however the Chinese Government's *Operation National Sword* introduced limits to reduce low-quality (i.e. contaminated) imported waste. These limits were brought into effect to protect China's environment and support Chinese jobs and the most relevant restrictions, affecting councils globally were (i) banning post-consumer plastics and mixed/unsorted paper

- (ii) setting a 0.5% tolerance level for sorted paper and
- (iii) restricting the number of import waste licences.

- 3.18** Historically, the UK has exported some paper and plastics to China. With changes in this market, alternatives were considered, but in the process, the income for low quality paper fell. At the time, the media highlighted that some councils' costs rose by up to £500k for their (lower grade) plastics and that, with several countries reaching capacity<sup>4</sup>, concerns increased that some materials were simply being dumped.<sup>5</sup>
- 3.19** In January, the party groups were presented with the proposed collection arrangements proposed within the Waste Framework and the results from the consultation exercises. Many of Belfast's materials are finding markets locally but the focus on improving recyclable quality is gaining importance rapidly. Top grade paper, collected at the kerbside, commands good prices from local re-processors such as Huhtamaki. Conversely, mixed materials from the co-mingled (blue bin) collections have fallen in value resulting in higher gate fees and a loss of demand from international markets.
- 3.20** Taking a strategic view, the Council needs to shift from simply delivering ever-increasing weight-based goals to producing high-quality recyclables to be used locally. This approach, which supports the Belfast Agenda, will mitigate the risk of market volatility, optimise income from recyclables and support local jobs. To add weight to this, a new Collaborative Network funded by Invest NI (there was an earlier iteration, called the Collaborative Circular Economy Network (CCEN) which produced a scoping study<sup>6</sup>), is looking at how to increase the amount of materials used locally – the Council is part of this project. It is worth noting that external organisations are also approaching the Council to explore opportunities to support this, or similar methodologies to maximise the recovery of quality materials and support local jobs. To show case this, approval was granted to the Committee in November 2018 recommending that Members

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<sup>4</sup> Exports of low quality materials increased to Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Turkey, &c. Some reached capacity quickly and ceased accepting these items, while others are now considering following China. This was picked up earlier this year when BBC broadcast 'War on Plastic with Hugh and Anita' and highlighted several councils' waste being dumped in Malaysia

<sup>5</sup> Letsrecycle.com article 'LGA warns of risk to Councils from China ban 22/10/18' see <https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/lga-warns-risk-councils-china-ban/>

<sup>6</sup> The CCEN study identified that greater value could be got from household recyclables by meeting local re-processors' quality requirements. Based on local data, there was a potential £50M GVA which could be added to the NI economy.

undertake a study visit(s) to businesses and organisations in NI which are already contributing to the circular economy. After this report, these visits will now be progressed.

- 3.21 As also approved in November 2018, an application for DAERA funding was submitted which secured sufficient capital funding for the Council to introduce a pilot wheelie box scheme for around 5,500 households currently on the blue bin scheme, with a go live date next month. This pilot will act as a familiarisation exercise for the Council, as previously this type of collection system has been outsourced, but in order to secure this learning it is imperative that the scheme starts in September as any delay will prevent this progressing in 2019 and could compromise the funding.
- 3.22 The households within the pilot area will receive the following collections:
- Weekly collection of dry recyclables by 165 x litre wheelie-box
  - Weekly collection of food waste by 23 x litre food waste caddy
  - Fortnightly collection of residual waste by 180 x litre black bin
  - Fortnightly collection of garden waste by 240 x litre brown bin
- 3.23 To drive recycling, the Service also intends to enforce the one bin policy introduced in January 2014 (collect only 1 x 180 litre black bin per household, except those households that have an approved second residual waste bin)<sup>7</sup>.
- 3.24 In the course of planning, it became clear that collection days for at least one stream of waste will need to change in the pilot area to avoid all containers being presented and all collection vehicles operating in the same area on the same day (bin blight).
- 3.25 In selecting the pilot area a number of criteria were assessed:
- *Public acceptability of the scheme* – Responses to the consultation exercise were used to identify areas which were receptive to the new scheme;
  - *Public attitude to recycling (in the form of current recycling performance)* – Performance data were used

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<https://minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s20755/15.1.14%20HES%20waste%20and%20recycling%20collection%20op%20policy.pdf>

to identify areas achieving reasonable recycling performance but with room to improve;

- *Operational feasibility/ impact* – Routes/ areas where the trial would be implemented with least operational impact; an area was selected where its impact on route optimisation was minimal;
- *Cost* – Any pilot would be introduced with minimal cost implications. It is recognised that efficiencies could be achieved by selecting an area currently on the glass trial and diverting these resources to the pilot.

- 3.26 The pilot involves weekly household collections and a lower daily pass rate compared with the co-mingled scheme. Consequently, it will incur a net increase to operational costs. These costs are mitigated, however, as the proposed area is on the pilot purple box glass collection scheme with resources transferred from this activity to the wheelie-box scheme. In addition, income from the improved quality of the materials and increased landfill diversion will offset additional operating costs. It is expected therefore that the pilot will be net cost neutral.
- 3.27 As per funding in Section 3.21 and considering the risk, cost, public acceptability and industrial relations, Members are requested to approve the pilot being rolled out in the Castle DEA (North Belfast) with immediate effect.
- 3.28 To ensure that the wheelie box scheme is included within the programme of works, a submission has been made to the Council's Capital Works programme and is currently Stage 2 – Uncommitted. The next stage, an Outline Business Case (OBC) is being developed and will be informed by the DAERA-funded kerbside pilot. Subject to results, Members are asked to approve adopting this collection methodology and it is envisaged that to roll-out a scheme of this size city-wide will require a detailed, phased, implementation plan over 3-4 years.
- 3.29 It is noteworthy that neighbouring arc21 councils (Antrim & Newtownabbey, Lisburn & Castlereagh, and Mid-East Antrim) are also adopting this approach, which mirrors that promoted by both WRAP and the Welsh Government. Wales now has one of the highest performing recycling levels in the world (61% household recycling rate in 2017/18).
- 3.30 To further inform the kerbside collection scheme OBC, Members are recommended to approve extending the Council's Collaboration Agreement with WRAP which will ensure the Council can draw down expertise from this

organisation regarding waste matters, and access additional networking and funding streams. Additionally, as per the November 2018 report, Members are recommended to undertake a study trip to Wales before considering the final OBC to see best practice and the kerbside scheme infrastructure in operation, most likely in Q4. It is envisaged that WRAP could assist with the arrangements surrounding this proposed visit.

- 3.31 As part of the English Waste Strategy published in December 2018, DEFRA has issued a consultation document '*Consistency in Household & Business Recycling Collections in England*'. This consultation sought views of English householders on collections options and the need to shift towards better quality, specifically outlining the potential for multi-material (wheelie-box type) collection schemes. The consultation was interested in stakeholders' views on additional performance indicators beyond weight-based targets (e.g. carbon intensity). While this consultation only applied in England, it will be important to reflect on the results which are likely to determine the direction of travel for the UK, as England makes up 85% of the national waste arisings. The results of this consultation are anticipated later this year and may generate further papers.

#### *Kerbside Glass*

- 3.32 The possibility of the Council providing a kerbside glass collection is frequently raised by Members and residents. The wheelie-box pilot is aimed at demonstrating how this scheme would deliver both an enhanced collection service both for residents (in terms of collecting greater array of materials from the kerbside) and for the emergent local circular economy as represented by the Collaborative Network, covered in Section 3.20.
- 3.33 Currently, around 80K households (54%) in Belfast have access to a kerbside collection of glass. Bryson Recycling provides a kerbside sort (box) collection service for 58K households and a further 22K households receive a fortnightly collection through an in-house pilot purple box. The amount of glass captured through both schemes is 3,800 tonnes per annum (approx.) which contributes around 2.5% to the City's recycling rate.
- 3.34 The '*WRAP Kerbside Waste Composition Report 2017*' noted that glass accounted for 9.4% by weight of the residual (black) bin (approx.). This is an easily identifiable material to recycle,

and important in terms of the circular economy, it contributes less than the recycling of food (25%) and paper/card (18%)

- 3.35 The glass collected goes mainly to Encirc, a glass manufacturer in Fermanagh, where it is recycled and made into new glass containers, an example of recycling supporting local jobs. The market price for recycled glass is low but stable in comparison with other material streams. The following table (see Table 1) is indicative of the prices being achieved earlier this year. In summary, there is an estimated 6,100 tonnes of glass still in residual bins with a potential value of up to £122K, compared with an estimated 11,400 tonnes of paper with a potential value up to £1.4M.

*Table 1 Market Prices*

£/tonne	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Mixed Glass	10-20	9-19	10-20	9-19
Paper (News)	90-100	90-100	80-90	77-85

Source: *letsrecycle.com*

- 3.36 Given the volumes of recycling materials available and the increasing limitations in international trade, re-processors increasingly want quality materials. Kerbside sort schemes produce higher quality materials compared to co-mingled schemes. An examination of the Council's co-mingled (blue) bin scheme which excludes glass has a contamination of around 15% per annum (2017/18); by contrast, the inner city kerbside sort scheme records negligible contamination as wrong items are left in the container for residents to put in their residual waste (black) bin. A fully co-mingled scheme (which includes glass) can exacerbate this as shards of glass embed themselves in materials, such as paper, which considerably reduces the quality and value of this material.
- 3.37 The Resource Association, which represents re-processors and their supply chain, advocates high-quality recycling in order to maximise the contribution recyclables can make by feeding into the circular economy. Its members handle more than 7M tonnes every year, contributing over £3.3B to UK GDP and employ over 12,500 people. In its Manifesto for Resources, it proposes a ban on co-mingled collections which include glass:

*'Collection systems that mix glass with other materials are unable to separate glass efficiently without contaminating other material streams. Poor loading and unloading of vehicles, breakages of glass containers and aging Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) are unable to separate glass*

*efficiently and consistently. Glass shards in the fibre stream (paper and card) cause real problems for paper manufacturers that are costly to resolve and reduce the value of materials that can be realised by local authorities.'*

3.38 As noted above in Section 3.20 above, building on the CCEN report the Council is a partner in an Invest NI funded Collaborative Network. The earlier study showed that improving recyclable quality could add considerable value to the NI economy; in particular, on glass the report noted:

- There were strong drivers within Encirc (glass manufacturer) to increase/maximise the level of recycle glass used in the manufacturing process. Contamination levels however must be less than 1%;
- Local re-processors consider that co-mingled collected glass is too highly contaminated and this gets used for lower value applications and exported;
- If more local glass was available from separated collection systems, Encirc would use this to grow its business and increase the recycle within its products.

3.39 Closely associated with quality is the value derived from the recyclable materials. An examination of market prices (see Table 2), shows that the income from separate collections of mixed glass V MRF co-mingled glass favours the former by around £35 per tonne.

*Table 2 – Market Prices (Glass)*

£/tonne	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Mixed Glass (separate collection)	10-20	9-19	10-20	9-19
MRF Glass	-25-5	-25-5	-25-5	-25-4

Source: *letsrecycle.com*

3.40 The revised Waste Framework Directive (2008 – rWFD) emphasises quality alongside tonnage as performance measures. In NI, the Waste Regulations (NI) 2011<sup>8</sup> highlight separate collection is expected for four materials (paper, metal, plastic, glass), unless it is technically, economically or environmentally impractical (TEEP) to do so. The Department for the Environment (DOE) sent a letter to councils outlining their legislative obligations surrounding separate collection

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<sup>8</sup> This legislation transposes the rWFD into Northern Ireland

obligations, particularly when councils were considering new collection arrangements. In this regard, the proposed wheelie-box collection scheme delivers this obligation and reduces the potential for legal challenge.

- 3.41 In light of the facts above, the Notice of Motion to commit the Council *'to increasing household recycling across the city of Belfast...(and)... to introducing glass recycling in households across the city of Belfast as soon as possible'* is to be welcomed. What is increasingly apparent is the need to emphasis collection of quality materials, which the wheelie-box scheme as outlined in the Waste Framework delivers upon and approving this approach as outlined in Section 3.28 following consideration of the pilot will progress this and set an example of best practice for NI and the UK. In terms introducing these measures as soon as possible, given that transition from a blue bin to a wheelie box scheme will take time and resources, an OBC and programme of work has been developed which will require capital support. Based on a successful pilot, it is expected that a further submission will be made to the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) for support that could alleviate some of these costs. The schedule for these steps mean however that any roll-out is likely to take between 3-4 years as outlined in the Section above. In light of this information, Members are asked to note the actions being taken which support the November Notice of Motion.

#### Behavioural Change

- 3.42 This section of the Waste Framework concerned motivating residents to positively respond to deliver the paradigm shift needed to achieve 65% recycling rate for 2035. Members may care to note that in March 2017, the People & Communities Committee agreed that in line with the Food Waste (NI) Regulations 2015, a city-wide food waste service would be introduced using new food waste caddies and liners along with a supporting promotions campaign to remove this waste stream from the residual (black) bin. The campaign saw stickers put on all black bins and letters issued to all Belfast households; there was also a social media campaign. In 2017/18, this campaign and resident response boosted the Council's recycling rate by 4%. The uplift from the food waste campaign has plateaued however and, given that food waste makes up around 25% of the residual (black) bin, it is important to move to the Phase 2 of the Food Waste Campaign as approved in March 2017. This approach means direct engagement with residents who have yet to embrace the *'No Food Waste'* message.

- 3.43 The engagement protocol adopted in 2017 notifies householders of the contamination/food waste in the residual (black) bin, the steps required to resolve this and a graduated response where there is repeated contamination

The exact steps are that:

- (i) When contamination is first noticed (i.e. food waste identified in the bin), the crew would empty the black bin but a notification sticker on it informing the resident of the requirement to separate out food waste (Stage 1);
- (ii) Next time, the bin would be emptied and again a sticker would be put on the black bin. A letter would be sent to the resident informing them of the need to put the food into the food waste container/bin and the ramifications should they choose not to do so (Stage 2);
- (iii) Finally, the bin would not be lifted and a sticker informing the resident would be put on the bin informing them that until the food item(s) are removed, the bin would not be lifted. When the resident removes the food item(s), collection will be on the next regular scheduled collection day (Stage 3).

- 3.44 To ensure that the Council does not inadvertently commence enforcement steps against residents, when contamination is recorded at Stage 1, the household will be visited to ensure that it has appropriate receptacles for food waste. The aim would be only to take action against residents who are actively choosing not to use their food waste bin properly. If a resident contacts the Council as a result of their bin not being emptied, staff would work with them to ensure future compliance with the policy.

- 3.45 Members may care to note that by diverting food from the residual (black) bin could save the Council a further £800K per annum. Therefore, diverting food could not only make a positive contribution to the Belfast's recycling rate and minimise its carbon footprint by reducing methane production in landfill sites, but it also could generate efficiency savings to be re-invested in other initiatives supporting the Belfast Agenda. Consequently, Members are requested to approve implementation of Phase 2 of the food waste campaign.

- 3.46 Finally, recent data concerning the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) shows that the amount of residual waste received at these facilities has started to overtake recyclable materials. In 2018, WRAP examined Belfast's HRC

performance and reported issues with (i) potential trade waste abuse (ii) users presenting residual black bags containing recyclable materials (iii) users coming from outside the City and (iv) the need for clearer communications.

- 3.47 Following the report, a WRAP led working group of officers from Councils was formed to address these issues. Arising from meetings, a Waste Acceptance Policy is being developed to tackle the unlawful disposal of commercial waste and ensure that residents continue to receive a valued and efficient service from the HRCs. The Service will bring a report outlining this approach to a future Committee meeting in due course.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.48 The costs associated with this report are planned for within the revenue estimates for 2019/20 and extension of the WRAP Collaboration Agreement is £30,000 for 2019/20.

(includes cost of proposed Members study visit).

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.49 There are no equality, good relations or rural needs issues associated with this report.”

The Director of City Services addressed a number of queries raised by the Members in relation to the proposed rollout of the scheme.

The Committee adopted the recommendations, as outlined in 2.1 of the report, points 1-6, in relation to progressing the implementation of the Waste Framework.

In respect of the Motion to introduce glass recycling (November 2018), it was agreed that a detailed options paper be submitted to a future meeting which would consider the feasibility of an earlier introduction of glass recycling in households across the City of Belfast.

**External Consultations on Packaging  
and Packaging Waste**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 As agreed at the April 2019 People and Communities Committee, this update is to provide Committee with a copy

of the relevant responses from the Council and arc21 to recent consultations relating to Packaging and Packaging Waste.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked:**

- To retrospectively adopt the consultation responses to the Reforming the UK Packaging Producer Responsibility Scheme, Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales & NI and Plastic Packaging Tax as submitted by the Council and arc21 earlier this summer.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Members may be aware of a recent series of consultations from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) relating to packaging and packaging waste. These are likely to have a considerable impact upon the waste and resources sector in the UK in general and serve to provide further justification for the Council in its approach to target improving the collection of quality materials from householders.**

**3.2 The three consultations are as follows:**

- 1. Reforming the UK Packaging Producer Responsibility Scheme (PPRS);**
- 2. Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales & NI (DRS); and**
- 3. Plastic Packaging Tax (PPT).**

**3.3 Members may care to note that DEFRA also produced a fourth consultation entitled '*Consistency in Household and Business Collections in England*' which is not applicable to Northern Ireland.**

**Key Issues**

**3.4 Considerable change in public attitudes to the natural environment and our impact upon it is underway, highlighted by TV programmes such as '*Blue Planet*' and '*The War on Plastic with Hugh and Anita*' which expose the pollution caused poor waste and resource management. Against this background, there is increasing recognition that waste and resources management provides a considerable opportunity to address production and consumption and manage materials better. Increasingly, this is being labelled as the**

circular economy which, as a concept, seeks to rebuild economic and natural capital. As an approach, it is worth emphasising that the circular economy is not just about recycling more stuff – dealing with materials and products once they become waste – but is about a complete recasting of how materials and resources are treated throughout their production and post-production life – managing the supply chain.

- 3.5 In May 2018, the EU approved a package of legislation setting binding targets on waste and recycling to move to a more Circular Economy. There are several headline targets under the new Directive which will require Member States to recycle 65% of their municipal refuse by 2035, to separately collect hazardous waste by January 2025, to halve food waste by 2030. The EU also proposed phasing out landfilling, and promoting economic instruments '*such as extended producer responsibility schemes*' (EPR).
- 3.6 A separate directive was also approved on Packaging Waste to ensure that 70% of packaging is recycled by 2030 (this is different for individual packaging materials, for example 30% for wood, 55% for plastic, 75% for glass and 85% for paper). Member States had two years to incorporate the Circular Economy Package into national legislation, followed by another two to three years to implement changes.
- 3.7 When published, the UK Government committed to backing the packages.
- 3.8 In the UK, in 2017 the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) produced the Clean Growth Strategy and highlighted that (a long overdue) Waste & Resources Strategy for England was due imminently which, combined with the Government's Industrial Strategy would have '*strong commitments on resources productivity as a critical contribution to a successful economy*'.
- 3.9 In December 2018, DEFRA published the Waste & Resources Strategy which included commitments on revising the extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes for a variety of materials (packaging included) and the introduction of a deposit return scheme. On initial review, the proposals around packaging could see retailers and producers expected to pay considerably greater sums under EPR (as much as £1Bn) and, in order to inform the finalisation of this approach, DEFRA undertook a series of comprehensive consultation exercises. The responses from these consultations will be

used to inform Government thinking and are likely to generate further consultations later this year or later in 2020.

- 3.10 Responses to the three consultation papers relevant to Northern Ireland have been developed by arc21 and a further review has been undertaken by Council officers to the consultations to add a city perspective to these (see Appendices 2 and 3). They are the subject of this Committee paper and a summary of each is provided below:

**Reforming the UK Packaging Producer  
Responsibility Scheme (PPRS)**

- 3.11 Recognising that the EU impact of packaging is locked in at the design stage, this consultation seeks views on measures to reduce the amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging and increase the amount of packaging that can and is recycled, through reforms to the packaging producer responsibility regulations.
- 3.12 It also proposes that the full net costs of managing packaging waste are placed on those retailers, producers and others within the supply chain who use packaging and who are best placed to influence its design. This is consistent with the polluter pays principle, EPR and promoting a shift towards the Circular Economy.
- 3.13 In the UK, a system of producer responsibility for packaging has been in place since 1997. Starting 20 years ago, this has helped to drive recycling of packaging waste from 25% to 64.7% in 2016. Over this period, the UK has met all of its national and EU packaging waste recycling targets, and the cost of compliance to business has been kept low when compared to other EU Member States.
- 3.14 Like any system that is over 20 years old however it is in need of reform. Stakeholders have expressed concerns over the transparency of the system including how income from the sale of evidence has supported packaging waste recycling; that councils receive limited direct financial support for managing packaging waste; and that there is not a level playing field for domestic reprocessing.
- 3.15 Government's ambitions have increased too and in recent months there has also been a rise in public consciousness when it comes to the need to tackle packaging waste. DEFRA has indicated the need to: reduce substantially unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging; make more packaging designed to be recyclable; have more packaging waste be

recycled; and to have more packaging to be made from recycled material.

- 3.16 DEFRA also wants fewer packaging items to be littered and for it to be easier for people and businesses to recycle their packaging waste. Reforming the packaging waste system addresses these ambitions and the commitments made by all UK devolved administrations.
- 3.17 For Belfast, the response submitted proposed placing greater responsibility onto those within the packaging chain and, should this approach be adopted, under current proposals the Council would receive additional financial support of around £4M per annum to assist in paying for the collection and recycling of packaging, as well as contribute towards some of the costs associated with littering.

Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme  
in England, Wales and NI (DRS)

- 3.18 While waste policy is a devolved responsibility, and the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland administrations can decide policy separately, DEFRA wants to ensure that, as far as possible, their approach to DRS forms part of a coherent UK-wide system. The Government and devolved administrations are therefore working closely together on this policy area. This consultation was undertaken jointly by the UK and Welsh Governments and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in NI (DAERA).
- 3.19 As the Assembly is not sitting, the UK Government, in discussion with DAERA, consulted on their behalf. DAERA officials have informed DEFRA that they have no evidence that NI stakeholders or Ministers would not wish to participate in a consultation on options for a DRS.
- 3.20 The consultation sets out details on how a DRS could be managed, financed and operated. and proposes that the materials to be included in a DRS are PET and HDPE plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans, and glass bottles. It includes a broad range of drinks, including water, soft drinks, juices, alcohol, and milk-containing drinks, when sold in containers made of these materials.
- 3.21 The consultation sets out two options for a DRS, both of which cover the same materials and drinks outlined above, but differ in terms of the size of the drinks containers in-scope. The options are:

- the '*all-in*' model, which would not place any restrictions on the size of drinks containers in-scope of a DRS; and
- the '*on-the-go*' model, which would restrict the drinks containers in-scope to those less than 750ml in size and sold in single format containers. This model would target drinks beverages most often sold for consumption outside of the home (while '*on-the-go*').

**3.22** Responses to this consultation will help DEFRA consider the merits of introducing a DRS. The aim of the UK and Welsh Government and DAERA is to ensure that, should a DRS be introduced, it will be easy for consumers to return drinks containers, leading to increased recycling rates and a reduction in littering. Following the passage of DRS-related legislation, there will be a short period of further formal consultation on specific regulatory measures in early 2020.

**3.23** For Belfast, as highlighted by arc21, the position of NI is different from GB in that there are different considerations (e.g. market conditions, base costs, land border with the RoI, council functions &c.) The key consideration however concerns the timing; introducing a DRS in advance of, or in tandem with Packaging Responsibility Reform is likely to cause great confusion and complexity in the market. From an operational impact perspective, a DRS should only be considered following the introduction of the Packaging Responsibility Reform to compensate for any apparent shortfalls within the EPR scheme.

#### **Plastic Packaging Tax (PPT)**

**3.24** At Budget 2018, government announced that from April 2022 it would introduce a world-leading new tax on the production and import of plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content, subject to consultation. Plastic packaging accounts for 44% of plastic used in the UK, but 67% of plastic waste, and over 2 million tonnes of plastic packaging is used each year. The majority of this is made from new, rather than recycled plastic.

**3.25** The Government's call for evidence last year, which received a record 162,000 responses, highlighted that recycled plastic using is often more expensive than using new plastic, despite its lower environmental impacts. The Government wants to shift the economic incentives involved in the production of more sustainable plastic packaging, encouraging greater use of recycled plastic and helping to reduce plastic waste.

This complements the government's proposals for reformed Packaging Producer Responsibility regulations.

- 3.26 The consultation outlines the Treasurer's proposal for how the tax will work and contains a number of questions relating to this. For example, which packaging should be in scope of the tax, how to assess recycled content, and which businesses will be liable for the tax? Government is seeking views on the best design options.
- 3.27 Ultimately, this proposed tax will act as the '*pull mechanism*' with the Reform of the Packaging Producer Responsibility being the '*push*' to change how plastic packaging is managed. If the proposed measures are introduced it will be important to ensure the balance between the '*pull*' and '*push*' mechanisms are appropriate and can be rebalanced if required. If Government proceeds with this tax, the Council would clearly support arc21 recommendations that the funds received are used in a manner consistent with the measures of the Packaging Producer Responsibility Reform in each of the devolved administrations, particularly regarding supporting councils' endeavours.
- 3.28 In concluding this report, Members may care to note that DEFRA have stated that the responses to these consultations will help inform a new proposals and a further series of consultation exercises. These will be run alongside additional consultations on introducing the Circular Economy into the UK (and NI) and will also call for a review of supplementary legislation, policies and plans. It is anticipated that this batch of consultations will get underway later this year or early in 2020.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.29 While there may be considerable financial implications from introducing these consultations, there are no financial or resource implications associated in responding to them.

#### Equality or Good Relations / Rural Needs Assessment Implications

- 3.30 There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs Implications in responding to the consultations."

The Committee retrospectively approved the following three consultation responses to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), as submitted by the Council and arc21 in relation to Packaging and Packaging Waste:

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- Reforming the UK Packaging Producer Responsibility Scheme (PPRS);
- Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales and NI (DRS);  
and
- Plastic Packaging Tax (PPT).

**Pre Consultation to Seek Views on the Successor Strategy  
to the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services referred to the significant levels of concern in recent years around alcohol and drug misuse in Belfast and the wider region. He explained that, more recently, the inter-dependency between alcohol/drugs and mental health/suicide had been recognised, as had the need for those issues to be considered more effectively together.

In recognition of this, the Department of Health had initiated a pre consultation on the successor strategy to the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2. The full consultation report and was available for download <http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/nsd-pre-consultation>

Several Members of the Committee welcomed the draft Council response that had been prepared by Council officers and made a number of comments and addendums that they requested be incorporated into the draft document in advance of it being submitted. Given the number of addendums requested, it was agreed that officers would liaise with the various Members to ensure that their comments were accurately reflected in the consultation.

As the deadline for the submission of the draft consultation response to the Department of Health (DoH) was 9th August, the Committee agreed to defer submission of the draft consultation response and requested that officers seek an extension from the Department for Health (DoH) to enable the Members' comments to be incorporated into the consultation and further agreed that the amended consultation response would be tabled at the September Committee for its endorsement prior to submission to the DoH.

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Chronic  
Homelessness Action Plan 2019 Consultation**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services referred to the significant levels of concern in recent years around the levels of homelessness in both Belfast and the wider region of Northern Ireland. He explained that, as a result of this, the NIHE was introducing its first Chronic Homelessness Action Plan which set out what the NIHE planned to do with the support of its partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors over the next three years to tackle homelessness.

A representative outlined his concern in relation to the growing homelessness problem in the City and requested that the Council investigate any Council sites that were surplus to Council requirements that might be suitable for social housing. He stated that he felt that this approach would help assist with providing a long term solution to the growing problem.

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The Committee noted that the full consultation report and associated screening documents could be downloaded at <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Working-With-Us/Partners/Consultations> and that the Council's draft response was available [here](#)

The Committee:

- endorsed the draft response to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), relating to the NIHE Chronic Homelessness Action Plan 2019; and
- agreed that that the Council should consider any Council sites, surplus to Council requirements, that might be suitable for social housing.

**Physical Programme/Asset Management**

**Waterworks Pitches (Westland)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 Members are reminded that a new changing pavilion was built at the Westland pitch adjacent to the Waterworks in North Belfast as part of the Pitches Strategy investment. This development made the site more attractive to teams playing in the Northern Amateur Football League (NAFL).**

**1.2 The annual process of pitch allocations facilitated by League Secretaries subsequently saw a significant increase in interest for use of the site from clubs in the area. The issue of pitch allocation was not resolved for the Westland site and was raised with Council by the League Secretaries.**

**1.3 The purpose of this report is to update members of the progress to date in regards to pitch allocation at Westland and to agree the arrangements to bring this pitch into use for the 2019 and subsequent football seasons.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- (i) Agree to enter into a ground share agreement with both Westland Young Men's and St Patrick's Football Club for the Waterwork pitches (Westland).**
- (ii) Agree that this arrangement will be in place for up to five years and will be reviewed annually as part of the pitch allocation process.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1** Members are advised that over the past number of years officers have been working with football clubs, who had initially expressed an interest to League Secretaries and then confirmed this through a formal expression of interest process, for the use of the Westland pitch for Saturday fixtures, with a view to reaching a suitable agreement that would bring the pitch into use
- 3.2** Of the six teams from four clubs who had originally expressed an interest in utilising the pitch over the course of the discussion, three teams (two clubs) have formally withdrawn their interest leaving only Westland Young Men's (1st and 2nd teams) and St Patrick's Football Club (2nd team) with a formal interest.
- 3.3** Since that time officers have also been advised that the Westland Young Men's Club have further redeveloped to now only include one team and a new Westland Football Club has now formed.
- 3.4** By way of context, Members are also asked to note that Council does not directly provide 'home grounds' for sports clubs, however, there are two ways in which clubs have been able to meet the requirements of the Northern Amateur League to enter into the higher leagues.
- 3.5** Firstly, in the past, the Council entered into Facilities Management Agreements and more recently through Partner Agreements with sports clubs and organisations. These agreements were secured through publicly advertised expressions of interest. Successful applicants have used this process to provide preferential use of pitches for clubs and have, through the erection of signage, displayed the impression that these facilities are the home of specific clubs. This ability to manage the allocation process has led to a number of clubs being able to demonstrate control of the site in order to satisfy the requirements of the IFA for entry into the higher levels of the Northern Amateur League.
- 3.6** Secondly, the way in which clubs have secured use of facilities is by bringing investment to the asset, such as the Ulster Council of the GAA, Clarendon Development Association, Suffolk FC etc. Depending on the source of the funding, it is usual for terms and conditions to be attached to the funding / investment. Normally one of the requirements

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will be to have security of tenure, i.e. the funding body will seek to ensure that the funding will be used for the purpose for which it was intended and will seek to ensure that the applicant (recipient of the funding) will secure the benefit of the funding. Therefore sports clubs have sought to secure funding from a variety of sources and have used this to upgrade Council facilities and in return they have sought security of tenure which effectively enables them to secure use of the pitch for their own use and meet the requirements of the IFA for entry to higher levels of the Northern Amateur League.

- 3.7** In an attempt to bring the Waterworks (Westland) discussion to a resolution, officers have hosted a collective meeting with all 3 teams in an attempt to reach an agreement around a potential ground share arrangement.
- 3.8** At this meeting a suggestion for a three way ground share arrangement was discussed and it was agreed that the viability of this would be further explored with league secretaries, who are responsible for the development of the fixtures which includes pitch allocation.
- 3.9** A meeting with a representative from the league secretaries and the N.I Amateur League was facilitated on 13th May 2019 and it was confirmed that a three way ground share arrangement was not a workable solution in terms of the requirement for 'home & away' matches on alternative weeks, however they did confirm that a two way ground share arrangement was a workable solution, which already existed across other Council pitches.
- 3.10** As discussed and agreed at the North Area Working Group in February 2019, if no agreement could be reached then a recommendation should come forward that would enable the pitch to be brought into use for the 2019 football season.
- 3.11** In an attempt to bring this matter to a conclusion officers have referred back to the original expression of interest process and the two remaining clubs that had formally expressed an interest at that stage (i.e. Westland Young Men's and St Patrick's Football Club). Given that the Westland Football Club is essentially a new club, their interest has not been formally registered as part of the initial expression of interest process and therefore was not being further considered as part of this process.
- 3.12** As a result of the above it is recommended that the Council proceed to enter into a ground share arrangement for the

**Westland Young Men's and St Patrick's Football Club to utilise the Waterworks (Westland) pitch beginning with the 2019 football season for a period of up to five years, to be reviewed annually as part of the pitch allocation process.**

**3.13 Financial and Resource Implications**

None.

**3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

**A formal expression of interest process was carried out which was open to all football clubs in the area. Over time a number of clubs/teams have withdrawn leaving Westland YM and St Patrick's FC as the only clubs remaining from the original list."**

A Member raised concern at the lack of community consultation and engagement in respect of the proposal and stated that, as a result, he would be unable to support the recommendation.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Magee,  
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report in relation to the proposed ground share agreement with Westland Young Men's and St Patrick's Football Club for the Waterworks Pitches (Westland).

On a vote by show of hands, ten Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

The Committee noted that any decision would be subject to equality screening.

**Facilities Management Agreement –  
Suffolk Football Club**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 To advise elected Members of the approaching termination date of the Facilities Management Agreement with Suffolk Football Club and to seek approval as to the future relationship with this club.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to recommend that:**

- **The Facilities Management Agreement dated 9th August 2012 be terminated in line with its maximum term of 7 years. It is further recommended that Suffolk Football Club are offered preferential use of facilities at this location for a period of 10 years in recognition of their initial capital investment in development of the pitch and the ongoing management and maintenance of the site entirely at the expense of the club.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 Up until May 2017, Suffolk Football Club had two Facilities Management Agreements (FMA) in place on a number of pitches at the playing fields at Carnamore Park. The FMA from 2008 terminated in May 2017 and control of the three pitches it related to reverted to Belfast City Council.**
- 3.2 A second agreement, in place since August 2012, related to a single pitch at the same site. This pitch had been disused for many years. Suffolk Football Club applied for Alpha funding to carry out the necessary drainage works to bring the pitch back into use. The work was carried out at no cost to Belfast City Council and the reinstated pitch was given into the control of Suffolk Football Club under the seven year FMA dated August 2012. No financial support accompanied the FMA and the club maintained the pitch entirely at their own expense.**
- 3.3 In 2014, as part of the capital programme, the Council improved the facilities associated with the Suffolk Football Club pitch, installing new changing and meeting facilities in the form of modular buildings. These facilities have to date also been managed and maintained by the club at their expense. The club have been playing at IFA intermediate league standard at this site.**
- 3.4 Members will recall that Facilities Management Agreements across sports sites are to be phased out. A report submitted to the People and Communities Committee in August 2016, authorised officers to engage with Suffolk Football Club and other clubs in similar circumstances to regularise arrangements for the management of sites after FMAs terminate.**

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- 3.5 Council officers engaged with Suffolk Football Club over several months and are recommending that the club be offered preferential use of this single pitch at Suffolk Playing fields, in recognition of their considerable financial investment over the last seven years in the management and maintenance of this pitch and its facilities. The offer of preferential use would align the club's position to that agreed by the People and Communities Committee in May 2017 for the facility at Clarendon Playing fields.**
- 3.6 The financial investment of the club into this site in the last seven years, over and above the initial £30,700 grant for pitch improvement works, has amounted to £105,000 made up of annual maintenance and management expenditure of £15,000 on the buildings and pitch.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.7 All income achieved from bookings for this pitch will now revert to the Belfast City Council and will be used to offset the annual maintenance costs, which had previously been the responsibility of Suffolk Football Club.**
- 3.8 The £10,000 transition payment made available to some other FMA holders on termination of their agreement will not apply in this case as the FMA with Suffolk Football Club was not supported by any financial contribution by the Council and the club will not be at a financial detriment by the new arrangement.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.9 There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications associated with this report."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Request for Review of Greater Village Regeneration  
Trust (GVRT) – Blythfield Lease**

The Committee considered the following report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To bring to the attention of Members a request from Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT) in relation to the terms of their lease for Blythfield 3G pitch and pavilion and to request authorisation to review the terms of the lease.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee authorise officers from Estates and City and Neighbourhood Services to engage with GVRT to review the terms of the current lease.**
- **Should relevant officers find cause to support any or all of the requested changes in respect to the issues raised by GVRT as at 3.7 below that these are directly passed to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT) is an urban regeneration charity based in the Village area of South Belfast. It delivers a range of inter-related programmes that seek to improve the quality of life for local residents. Its primary remit is to address housing unfitness, while dealing with educational under-achievement, worklessness, lack of community space, health and well-being concerns and improving community cohesion.**
- 3.2 At its meeting on 19th August 2016 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at the recommendation of the People and Communities Committee, approved the granting of a ten year lease to Greater village Regeneration Trust for Blythefield Open Space. This site is located in an area bordered by Sandy Row and Donegall Road. In 2009 a polymeric MUGA and changing pavilion was provided as part of a regeneration project funded by BRO but on completion and under council management the facility was significantly underused.**
- 3.3 In 2016 GVRT made a successful application to Sport NI for £100,000 funding to convert the polymeric surface to artificial grass (3G) to increase the appeal of the facility to the local community and maximise on its potential to address the promotion of health and wellbeing in the area.**
- 3.4 In order to meet the requirements of Sport NI, GVRT required security of tenure to enable the facility to function for a period of 10 years and to satisfy this requirement it was agreed a lease would be provided from the date of completion**

transferring control of the pitch and small changing room pavillion to GVRT. Works were carried out by a contractor appointed by GVRT and council officers had no part in the project management of the works.

- 3.5 A practical completion certificate was issued by the contractor on 23rd February 2018 and the lease is dated 22nd May 2018. There were, however, a significant number of defects to the pitch which rendered it unplayable until early 2019. A defects correction certificate was finally issued on 30th May 2019.
- 3.6 GVRT pay an annual rent of £1,400 for the pitch and the two room pavilion and the current lease requires the leasee to be responsible for taking out buildings and contents insurance, the current premium being £9,754. The leasee is also responsible for all maintenance.
- 3.7 The trust have approached officers of CNS to request that the lease is reviewed to align the terms to match those of other community focused assets within the department. Specifically:
- The responsibility for premises insurance reverts to the council in order that the current premium can be reduced to divert funds back into programming activity;
  - The council take on the responsibility for maintenance of the small changing pavilion as the trust believe this is outside their expertise; and
  - That the boundary of the lands held under the lease is reviewed.
- 3.8 The trust propose they remain responsible for maintenance of the pitch and with appropriate training will carry out the standard occupier's Health and Safety duties associated with the pavilion building and which largely consist of regular legionella flushing and fire checks.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 There will be an increase in insurance costs of £500pa associated with the council taking on responsibility for the premises insurance for the pavilion building.
- 3.10 There will be a requirement for the Property Maintenance unit and their contractor's team to undertake compliance and inspection duties for this building and potentially to carry out maintenance. Should both of these responsibilities transfer back to the council on review of the lease there will be a small

impact on budgets. This impact would be quantified for inclusion in a report to Strategic Policy and Resources.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

3.11 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Review of Management Arrangements  
for the Pitch at Sally Gardens**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the Management Arrangements at Sally Gardens.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. agree to extend the current management agreement in respect of the 3G pitch and changing pavilion to 31st March 2020 in line with other BCC revenue contracts with the group;
- ii. agree that a review of arrangements is carried out in advance of this period ending to determine the effectiveness of the arrangements and recommend future requirements.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

3.1 The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 9th February 2016 it received a report which set out the arrangements agreed under Local Government Reform in respect of land and facilities at Sally Gardens, which had previously come under the Lisburn City Council boundary.

3.2 In subsequent meetings the Committee approved a pilot management arrangement in respect of the newly constructed 3G artificial turf pitch. It was agreed at meetings in April 2016, September 2016 and in February 2017 to pilot a management process. This was initially piloted and reviewed and

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subsequently extended to allow adequate time to consider the arrangement.

- 3.3** The Committee is reminded that a changing pavilion was completed in August 2017. Jointly funded by the Council and the Department for Communities, this enables matches to be played on the facility thus making it more attractive to users, existing and potential. The opening and closing of the new changing pavilion is undertaken by the Association who also clean the facility. Maintenance is a Council responsibility.
- 3.4** While satisfied with the arrangement, the Association stated that the short term nature of the agreement creates an element of uncertainty and as such it is unable to fully plan ahead. In response to this, Committee reviewed the existing agreement in August 2017 and agreed to extend the period to 3 years, with a review carried out by officers and a report provided to Members in advance of this period ending.
- 3.5** Feedback from the Park Manager and the Council's Booking Office have confirmed that the arrangement with the Association continues to work well and that they have fulfilled the duties required of them. It has also been noted that the Association deals with issues around unauthorised use and reports any damage to the facility, normally the fencing. To address this particular issue the Association has put in place an intervention programme with local young people and while still in its early stages appears to be working.
- 3.6** Committee should note that the Association also manage the Community Centre and is able to provide a joined up offering of services to the community and integrate the pitch with wider community activities. To support the management of the centre and the delivery of the community programme, the Association receive a revenue support grant of £55,183 which is reviewed and agreed annually within council's Community Development support programme.
- 3.7** In order to align the time-frame of this funding agreement with Poleglass Community Association with other BCC funding arrangements with the group, committee are asked to extend the current contract period to the end of this financial year, 31st March 2020. This will permit sufficient time for officers to engage with the Association in order to complete a review of all the existing arrangements with the group to determine their effectiveness, consider alignment with other council arrangements of this type and inform future requirements.

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- 3.8 The monthly management fee of £3,666 includes match bookings. Bookings and income are processed through the Council's Pitch Booking line. An agreed method is in place to deal with last minute bookings on site.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.9 The monthly management fee has been incorporated within the area budget and includes management of the new pavilion.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.10 There are no known Equality or Good Relations/Rural Needs Assessment issues associated with this report."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2018/19**

The Committee was updated in respect of the financial position of the People and Communities Committee for Quarter 4, which confirmed an over spend of £256k for that period. This represented 0.3% of the budget which was well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

The Committee noted that, in financial terms, it had been a difficult year for the Council. The Primark fire and changes to the rules on holiday pay had led to an additional funding requirement of £3.7m. In order to try and protect general reserves, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed not to re-allocate any in-year underspends and to use any year end balances to support the £3.7m funding requirement. The year-end position was that £2.2m of balances were available, arising from overall departmental underspend of £1.1m, capital financing underspend of £1m and specified reserve allocation of £0.15m less rates clawback of £0.05m. This had resulted in £1.5m of general reserves being used to finance the remaining balance. Given this position, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st June, had agreed that no further reallocations or cash flow payments would be considered until the Quarter 1 2019/20 position had been presented to the Committee at its August meeting.

The Committee noted the year-end financial position.

**Operational Issues**

**Proposal for Naming New Streets and the  
Continuation of an Existing Street**

The Committee approved:

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- the naming in respect of Carolan Park, Off Carolan Road, BT7, Rosepark Gardens, Off Upper Newtownards Road, BT4, Diamond Gate, Off Diamond Gardens, BT10; and
- the continuation of an existing street, namely Ormonde Gardens, Off Castlereagh Road, BT5.

**Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs**

The Committee approved the application to erect a second nameplate in Irish at Dunmisk Park and Dunmisk Terrace.

**Request for the Hire of Botanic Gardens  
for a Series of Music Events**

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the use of the Boucher Road Playing Fields and the Great Lawn at Botanic Gardens for a number of music events between 2020 and 2023.

During discussion, several Members highlighted their concern in regard to the number of underage youths who often attended these events and found themselves in vulnerable or dangerous situations. Concern was expressed in regard to the lack of safeguards and precautions that existed to protect both the young people and the Council. A further Member suggested that officers should ensure that the Council would be able to revoke use of the venues if necessary.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the hire of the Great Lawn at Botanic Gardens for a series of music events in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 until September to enable a more detailed report to be submitted to the Committee which would give consideration as to what contractual precautions/safeguards existed in regards to welfare support and to enable the Council to revoke use of venues if necessary.

**Chartered Institute of Waste Management (CIWM) (NI)  
Conference 2019: Life Beyond Plastics?**

The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson (or their nominees) be authorised to attend the CIWM (NI) conference in the Titanic Belfast entitled 'Life Beyond Plastics?' and also, should they wish to attend, the speakers' dinner in the Titanic Hotel on the preceding evening.

**Update on Green Flag and Green Flag Heritage Award**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee of the successful achievement of the twenty Green Flag awards across the City of Belfast in 2019 for the City and Neighbourhood Services Department's parks and open spaces.

The Director then detailed that the cost for submitting the proposed Green Flag applications and assessment was approximately £500 per park and confirmed that this had had been included in the department's budget.

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The Committee noted the achievement of the twenty Green Flag Awards across the City of Belfast in 2019.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Cavity Wall Insulation Research report –  
Councillor Heading to raise**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Heading addressed the Committee and outlined his concern regarding the widespread problems associated with cold homes in Belfast. He specifically referred to the recent Cavity Wall Insulation Report that had been published by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and stated that it would be useful if the NIHE could attend a future meeting to provide an overview of the report.

The Director of City Services reminded the Committee that, following the Committee's request for an official to address the Committee in respect of the Affordable Warmth Scheme, the Department for Community (DfC) had responded and she suggested that representatives be invited to attend a special meeting.

The Democratic Services Officer advised that a special meeting of the People and Communities Committee (Quarterly Housing meeting) was scheduled to be held on Monday, 16th September. Representatives from the NIHE would be attending this meeting to present the annual Housing Progress Report and she suggested that consideration of the NIHE Cavity Wall Insulation Report and an update in respect of the Affordable Warmth Scheme be added as agenda items.

The Committee agreed that:

- consideration of the NIHE Cavity Wall Insulation Report and an update in respect of the Affordable Warmth Scheme would be added as agenda items to the Special People and Communities Quarterly Housing meeting scheduled to take place on Monday, 16th September; and
- given the recent response from the Permanent Secretary, following the Committee's request for an official to address the Committee in respect of the Affordable Warmth Scheme, an invitation would be extended to the Department for Community (DfC) to attend the aforementioned meeting.

**Future Fossil Fuel Development –  
Councillor Smyth to raise**

Following advice from the Director of City Services, Councillors McMullan and O'Hara left the meeting in that there could potentially be a conflict of interest in the future given that they were Members of the Council's Planning Committee.

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Councillor Smyth outlined to the Committee a number of reasons why he felt that the Council should adopt a policy in relation to the rejection of all future fossil fuel extraction planning applications within the Council boundary. He advised that he had been advised by the City Solicitor that the Council could not adopt such a position legally, due to the pre determination of planning applications and he sought a report which would provide some clarity regarding the matter.

It was agreed:

- that advice would be sought from the City Solicitor as to what position, if any, the Council could adopt in relation to the Council agreeing to reject all future fossil fuel extraction planning applications within the Council boundary and that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the appropriate Committee; and
- that the report would consider the position adopted by other Local Authorities in Northern Ireland.

**High Hedge Complaints – Councillor McMullan to raise**

In response to a request from the Councillor McMullan in respect of the cost to ratepayers in making complaints about high hedges, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting:

- that would consider the current charge to submit a high hedge complaint and consider the feasibility of reducing this fee, taking into consideration the fee charged by other Local Authorities; and
- that would provide greater clarity around the current assistance provided by the Council to its ratepayers in respect of mediation and advice and how this could be extended.

**Cloth Nappies – Councillor Mulholland to raise**

In response to a request from the Councillor Mulholland the Committee agreed that officers would submit a report to a future meeting which would consider the feasibility of the Council providing an additional cloth nappy kit for use by Belfast City Council ratepayers.

Chairperson