

Health and Environmental Services Committee

Wednesday, 4th March, 2015

MEETING OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairman);
the High Sheriff (Councillor McKee);
Aldermen Kingston, L. Patterson and Stoker;
Councillors Curran, Clarke, Garrett, Hussey,
Jones, Magee, McNamee and Thompson.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Lead Operations Officer/
Head of Environmental Health;
Mr. S. Skimin, Head of Cleansing Services;
Mr. T. Walker, Head of Waste Management;
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer; and
Miss. L. Francey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Austin, Campbell and Keenan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd February.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Cleansing Services

Update on Street Cleanliness Index, Enforcement, Education Activities and Dog Warden Service

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

- “1 **Relevant Background Information**
1.1 **The figures presented in this report cover the second quarter of the financial year i.e. the period from October 2014 to December 2014. Monitoring figures were measured by Cleansing Services Quality Officers. Enforcement, Dog Warden and Education and Awareness information was supplied by the Customer Support Service, Dog Warden**

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Service and the Community Awareness Section within Cleansing Services, who were responsible for these functions over the period concerned.

- 1.2 The monthly monitoring programme consists of a random 5% sample of streets throughout the city being inspected and graded. From the grading, a Street Cleanliness Index is calculated and plotted for the various areas of the city, and the city as a whole.**
- 1.3 The index range is from 1 to 100; with a Cleanliness Index of 67 being regarded as an acceptable standard by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. The results show the trends on a month to month basis. To alleviate the influence of spurious results on the overall index, the results are averaged over the last 4 surveys. Spurious results may occur for reasons such as adverse weather conditions, seasonal problems etc.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The overall city wide cleanliness index for this quarter is 74. This is a decrease compared to the score for the previous quarter's cleanliness index of 75. The index for the same period in the previous year was 74. A cleanliness index of 74 is above the target set and is considered an extremely good level of cleanliness.**

- 2.2 The breakdown by individual area is as follows:**

2.3 North

The North Cleanliness Indices for October 2014 to December 2014 were 72, 74 and 73 respectively. This represents a decrease for all three months, with October (down 4), November (down 1) and December (down 1) by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 76, 75 and 74 respectively.

The area is however maintaining a good level of cleanliness.

2.4 South

The South Cleanliness Indices for October 2014 to December 2014 were 78, 77 and 76 respectively. This represents an increase for October (up 3), a similar score for November (77), and an increase for December (up 2) by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 75, 77 and 74 respectively.

The area is maintaining a very good level of cleanliness.

2.6 East

The East Cleanliness Indices for October 2014 to December 2014 were 77, 77 and 74 respectively. This represents an increase for October (up 2), an increase for November (up 3) and a decrease for December (down 2), by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 75, 74 and 76 respectively.

The area is maintaining a very good level of cleanliness.

2.6 West

The West Cleanliness Indices for October 2014 to December 2014 were 73, 72 and 71 respectively. This represents an increase for October (up 1), a similar score for November (72) and December (71), by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 72, 72 and 71 respectively.

The area is maintaining a good level of cleanliness.

2.7 Central

The Central Cleanliness Indices for October 2014 to December 2014 were 75, 72 and 73 respectively. This represents an increase for October (up 2), a decrease for November (down 2), and a similar score for December (73), by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 73, 74 and 73 respectively.

The area is maintaining a good level of cleanliness.

2.8 Complaints / Enquiries

There were 1233 enquiries regarding street cleansing during the quarter (by comparison to 1474 last quarter).

2.9 There were seventeen Corporate Complaints (15 Stage One, 1 stage two and 1 Stage Three) during the quarter – two of which related to street cleansing (both stage 1).

2.10 Enforcement

There were 689 Fixed Penalty Notices issued under the Litter (NI) Order 1994, and 115 summonses issued. In addition 1339 Article 20 Notices were issued requesting information in relation to alleged offences.

2.11 Community & Education Projects

During the last quarter, the Community Awareness Team managed the Brighter Belfast environmental awards including Belfast in Bloom. The team also ran the Christmas ELF project with 69 nursery schools participating. The 'Singing Street Sweepers' were out over the festive period singing Christmas Carols on a litter theme, creating a lot of interest in the city centre and social media.

2.12 In the last quarter, the team facilitated 15 community cleanups with 322 volunteers, attended or chaired 13 events at which 4995 people attended, and visited 88 schools with 3018 pupils attending, spreading the anti-litter and dog fouling message.

2.13 Dog Fouling

The overall instances of dog fouling observed by Cleansing Services Quality Officers during the quarter were 192. There is a focus placed on dealing with dog fouling hotspots as a result of complaints and information from staff out on the ground. Cleansing Services and the Dog Warden Service continue to work together to address hot spots when identified.

2.14 Dog Warden Information

During the quarter the following was noted:

1. A total of 29 fixed penalty notices were issued for dog fouling (21 last quarter)
2. A total of 235 dogs were seized for straying (242 last quarter)
3. A total of 156 fixed penalty notices were issued for straying (169 last quarter)

2.15 The Dog Ward service is on target in regard to stray dogs, and continues to work towards meeting fixed penalty targets for dog fouling.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

There are no financial implications in this report.

3.2 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications in this report.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

There are no assets or other implications in this report.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.1 There are no relevant equality and good relations implications.

5 Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.”

The Head of Cleansing Services outlined the high level of cleanliness which had been maintained throughout the City. During discussion, a Member expressed gratitude to the Cleansing Services staff who had responded quickly to a call regarding graffiti at the Ladybrook bus terminus.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Belfast District Policing and
Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP), and the four District PCSPs (DPCSPs), were formally established in May 2012. These Partnerships are facilitated by the Council and overseen regionally by a Joint Committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Policing Board. Membership is made up of elected representatives, independent members (publicly appointed) and statutory/voluntary designated organisations which play a role in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

1.2 In the 2014/2015 financial year, the Joint Committee provided the PCSP with £761,520 of which £486,520 and £275,000 was directed towards service delivery and core costs respectively. Members will also be aware that a further £122,500 of the Health and Environmental Services Department’s revenue estimates was allocated to the (D)PCSPs to support service delivery.

1.3 (D)PCSPs aim to make our community safer. They do this by focussing on the policing and community safety issues that matter most in local areas. They consult and engage with the local community to identify and prioritise issues of concern in relation to policing and community safety and develop plans to tackle these issues. They also monitor

police performance and work to gain the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime; and deliver a reduction in crime and enhance community safety through various interventions and initiatives.

2 Key Issues

2.1 2014/2015

In 2014/2015, the (D)PCSPs have successfully delivered a series of community safety and policing initiatives across the city. Some examples of this work include:

Strategic Contribution

2.2 The role of Belfast PCSP is to develop a strategic citywide response to policing and community safety needs. Some examples of this work are:

2.3 Human Trafficking – Belfast PCSP has continued to develop new and innovative ways of raising awareness of Human Trafficking not only in Belfast but across Northern Ireland. This approach has taken many forms including:

- Frontline Service Providers event attended by 200 representatives from the hospitality industry, taxi drivers, council officers and postal workers. This event was designed to improve knowledge among front line workers of the ‘tell tale’ signs of human trafficking to improve detection.
- The PCSP is represented on the NI Assembly Strategic Group tasked with raising awareness of this issue. This approach has been recognised and supported by the Minister for Justice, David Ford, OFMDFM Junior Ministers Jonathan Bell and Jennifer McCann and the National Crime Agency.
- Hosted in conjunction with the Lord Mayor, the EU Anti-Trafficking Co-Ordinator, Maria Vassiladou to learn about the European approach to the issue.
- Launched the Human Trafficking Gift Box on the front lawn of City Hall. This initiative was the first of its type in Ireland which provided the community with a chance to learn more on this issue.
- Commissioned an awareness raising DVD and online campaign endorsed by the Minister for

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Justice. To date, 1,000 DVDs have been distributed as part of the training package.

- 2.4 Drug Dealing – Belfast PCSP has also taken strategic ownership of an interagency approach to reducing drug dealing. An Advisory Group of PCSP Members, PSNI, Crimestoppers and service providers previously developed a campaign to reduce drug dealing by encouraging people to report suspicious activity to Crimestoppers. This campaign has been further developed by the PCSP this year to include an advertisement on television.**
- 2.5 Furthermore, the Belfast PCSP has led a multi agency approach to the increasing issue of irresponsible disposal of sharps/needles in and around our parks and other public conveniences. This was an increasing problem for both the Parks and Waste Departments.**
- 2.6 These initiatives include the installation of specific sharps bins in four of our most problematic public conveniences. This is the first time this type of intervention has been developed in Northern Ireland. This intervention also included the introduction of ‘One Hit Kits’, an education programme implemented in conjunction with the needle exchanges.**
- 2.7 Night Time Economy – Belfast PCSP has secured the co-operation of all previous ‘Get Home Safe Scheme’ partners as well as night-time volunteer groups to form the Safer Belfast Co-Ordination Team. This Group meets on a bi-monthly basis to discuss ongoing issues and to develop new and innovative ways of dealing with night-time economy issues and to respond to larger events organised by Belfast City Council including Tennents Vital, Belsonic, St Patricks Day and Freshers.**
- 2.8 The Belfast PCSP is currently working with all partners on the development of a Safer Belfast Phone application in order to target those most affected by issues relating to the night-time economy.**
- 2.9 Crime Prevention Event and Youth Awards – Belfast PCSP delivered a citywide Crime Prevention and Safety Event in December, 2014 with over 1,400 participants from across the city. This event provided the community with invaluable safety and crime prevention advice whilst providing a platform for engagement to the public with our statutory partners.**

- 2.10 The Belfast PCSP also delivered its annual Youth Awards, opened by the Minister for Justice, David Ford. The Awards involved 300 young people from across all community backgrounds attending City Hall where they were recognised for some of the outstanding work they have achieved within their communities. The PCSP recognised the Lord Mayor's priorities for the year and helped the First Citizen develop and deliver the first Lord Mayor, 'Best of Belfast' award.

Responding to Local Need

- 2.11 DPCSPs in each of the four areas of Belfast (North, South, East and West) respond to local community safety needs whilst ensuring local accountability of policing. DPCSPs have undertaken this in a number of ways and one example of this work has been outlined below. However, there are also many other examples.
- 2.12 North DPCSP - Since March 2014, the North Belfast DPCSP has co-ordinated a multi-agency group called the Greater Ardoyne Tension Monitoring Group, which was established through Belfast City Council's Peace III funded Tension Monitoring Project. The Group consists of community representatives from Woodvale, Upper Ardoyne, Ardoyne and Lower Oldpark, along with the PSNI, BELB and Belfast City Council.
- 2.13 The Group meets monthly and has developed a Neighbourhood Action Plan that addresses a wide range of issues that impact on local community tensions such as youth provision, communication, policing, diversionary activities, training and capacity building. Through the Group, a number of initiatives have taken place such as funding for a cross community Christmas event at Hillview, which was attended by more than 1,000 young people and support for local diversionary activities at Halloween, which resulted in 3 events. In addition, the Group ensured that information was shared between the communities about employment opportunities arising from the construction of a local nursing home.
- 2.14 South DPCSP - South DPCSP provided funding to the Men's Advisory Project and Women's Aid to develop and update their websites as well as making them mobile friendly. The websites ensure that each organisation has the opportunity to promote their services and highlight local support available to those who are victims of Domestic Violence.

- 2.15 The Partnership supported both organisations to launch their websites in City Hall. The launch event was attended by 120 participants from various community and statutory backgrounds with speakers from Women's Aid, the Belfast Domestic Violence Forum and the Men's Advisory Project. Those in attendance received information on the local services available within South Belfast. The launch event also provided an opportunity to showcase the artistic work of the young children living in the Women's Aid Hostel.
- 2.16 East DPCSP - The Alive and Kicking project was aimed at engaging young people aged 13 to 14 years around issues relating to drugs and alcohol misuse. The project was funded by the East Belfast DPCSP and run in conjunction with the PSNI, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and FASA. The project culminated in the production of a website with the participating children outlining their views on how drugs or alcohol can ruin lives, by using examples of celebrities whose lives have been damaged through the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Strathearn School acted as the pilot for the project and it is now set to be rolled out to another two schools in East Belfast. The website containing the children's input can be viewed at www.aliveandkickingni.com
- 2.17 West DPCSP - West Belfast DPCSP approved and delivered 14 Policing Committee projects. The Projects range from difficult and challenging diversionary and engagement initiatives with young people, particularly in areas where, historically confidence and engagement with the Police has been limited, to work with older members of our communities, providing them with vital advice and practical personal safety equipment to make them feel safer, and to also engage with the Police and each other.
- 2.18 A number of the projects delivered have engaged with and involved participants from across perceived divides in an attempt to create shared experiences and interests which may possibly cement future relationships both with themselves and with the Police. Structured engagement between the Police and our communities across West Belfast has been a vital part of the strategic delivery of the West Belfast DPCSP.

Supporting Local Delivery

- 2.19 Small grants for local groups – 35 groups were supported to provide services at a local level, representing an investment of around £144,000 in our city with the aim of improving co-

operation between communities and local police; as well as supporting initiatives which offer positive opportunities and prevent people from becoming involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour. Some of the initiatives that the (D)PCSPs, supported alongside Neighbourhood Policing Teams, include sporting programmes, arts and culture schemes, education campaigns, cross community and intergenerational projects and community programmes.

2014 onwards

- 2.20** The (D)PCSPs are currently developing Action Plans for the 2015-2016 period for submission to the Joint Committee. While these plans will focus primarily on the allocation of the Joint Committee's funding, they will also outline the (D)PCSPs work with neighbourhoods and organisations across the city that does not require a specific additional resource allocation.
- 2.21** In the coming year, the (D)PCSPs will continue to engage with the public as well as addressing the community safety priorities both on a strategic city-wide basis as well as within each area. It is likely that these will include issues such as anti-social behaviour, drugs and alcohol, burglary, hate crime, violent crime and fear of crime.
- 2.22** The boundary extensions under Local Government Reform will clearly have an impact on the membership and geographies of the new (D)PCSPs. We are currently working with the Joint Committee to plan a process for moving to a new structure and securing appropriate resourcing arrangements.
- 2.23** The Joint Committee are currently in the process of reviewing the report from the Criminal Justice Inspectorate on the operation of PCSP's and its recommendations.
- 2.24** Some the key findings from the report are detailed below:
- There should be one PCSP for each local council area – including Belfast without the need for DPCSPs.
 - In line with the approach to good relations, a series of community safety indices should be developed and agreed. These should form the basis for the ongoing and longer term assessment of the success of PCSPs.
 - From 2015 the local Councils should provide the compliance and assurance framework for PCSPs.

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The Community Plan should be the focal point for delivery of the long-term aims of the PCSP

- **The recruitment process should actively encourage applications from young people and ethnic groups to increase diversity.**
- **Following implementation of the LGR, the cost of administration should not exceed 20% of the budget allocated to PCSPs.**

2.25 The Joint Committee have committed to ongoing engagement with Council and PCSP Members before any final decisions are made on the recommendations.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial Resources

£122,500 of service delivery costs per annum until March, 2016. This has already been agreed via the revenue estimates.

3.2 Human Resources

None.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

None.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 None at present.

5 Call In

5.1 This decision is subject to Call In.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee is requested to note:

- 1. the contents of the report; and**
- 2. that a report on a review of the (D)PCSPs will be brought before the Committee at a later date.”**

During discussion, Members raised a number of issues arising from the report, particularly around the suggestion by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate that the four District Partnerships in Belfast be replaced with one, which in their view was a retrograde step, given the progress which had been made over the past three years, the delay in appointing independent members to the various Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) and the timeliness of funding allocations to them, which meant that there was often insufficient time for programme agreement and delivery.

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The point was also made that advertisements could be placed on the Council's bin lorries to promote the work of the PCSPs and that operational costs for the PCSPs should be reduced.

In response, the Head of Environmental Health undertook to discuss with the Department of Justice the possibility of expediting the process for the appointment of independent members and confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the Policing Board and the Department of Justice around reductions in administration costs. She agreed to raise with the Department of Justice the issues which had been highlighted around the timing of funding for the PCSPs.

In terms of the other issues which had been raised around the replacement of the four District Partnerships with one, and the advertising of the work of the PCSPs, she confirmed that a report would be submitted to the relevant Committee on the future operation of the Policing Partnerships.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Dog Identification Tags

The Head of Environmental Health reminded the Committee that, following the Council meeting on 2nd February, a letter had forwarded to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development requesting that, in the interest of safety, consideration be given to removing the statutory requirement for all dogs to bear the address of their owner.

She confirmed that a response had been received from the Minister which stated that there was a requirement under the Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations 2012 for the keeper of a dog to ensure that it had the name and address of the keeper attached to it, and that that had been a legislative requirement since 1983. The Minister stated in her letter that DARD officials would consider the issue regarding safety concerns within the review of dog licence fees, which would take place in due course.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Renewal of Lease – Port Health Unit, Corry Place

The Committee was advised that the premises at Corry Place, within the Harbour Estate, were currently leased by the Council's Port Health Unit from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. The premises had been designed and approved to meet the requirements of EU legislation for the inspection of high risk foods, including foods of animal origin. The Head of Environmental Health explained that the lease would expire on 31st May, 2015, and that a new lease would be required. The terms of the new lease would be subject to a further report being brought to the relevant Committee for agreement.

The Committee agreed that the Estates Management Unit would enter into discussions with the Belfast Harbour Commissioners to negotiate a lease and to issue a business tenancies notice under the Business Tenancies Order (NI) 1996, if required.

Review of 'Towards Zero Waste' Action Plan 2012 – 2015

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

- “1** **Relevant Background Information**
- 1.1** **At the Health and Environmental Services Committee meeting on 16 Apr 2012, Members approved the ‘Towards Zero Waste’ Action (ZAP) Plan 2012-2015. This plan established a series of actions to improve Belfast’s recycling rate and target dates by which these would be achieved in the period from 2012 to 2015, which provided the Service with an annual programme of work towards reaching a 50% recycling rate and a 35% landfill diversion rate by 2020 as required by European law.**
- 1.2** **This report provides a review of the ZAP plan and outlines the proposed next steps for the Council.**
- 2** **Key Issues**
- Overall Performance**
- 2.1** **The delivery of the projects within the ZAP plan has resulted in an increase in the recycling rate from 32% in 2011/2012 to around 44% in 2014/15 (year end projected figure), a total increase of 12%. This is short of the original target of 50% which was always going to be challenging, not least due to the DOE taking significant action on illegal waste operations which impacted detrimentally upon waste operations across NI, and as the Service adopted a clearer value for money focus when considering how the Council’s waste could best be managed. In recent years, this resulted in a balanced approach for managing the residual waste being used in order to improve both the recycling rate and the amount of waste diverted from landfill, with increases in gate fee prices. Additionally, after six years of declining waste arisings, in 2013/2014 an increase of 4% in the amount of household waste generated was experienced and projections for 2014/2015 suggest that this increase is not a one-off event.**
- 2.2** **Looking at Belfast’s local performance, in the absence of fully validated figures for 2014/2015 and assuming that the current actions deliver as projected, the Council will have increased its recycling rate by 12% over the duration of the ZAP plan, against a regional increase for NI of around 3%.**
- 2.3** **This will mean that the Council will have experienced an average recycling rate increase of 4% per annum between 2012-2015 while the ZAP plan was being delivered, double**

the previous annual increase. In other words, it created a paradigm shift for Belfast.

Benchmark

- 2.4 Due to the population, household numbers, housing stock and social deprivation, Belfast has no obvious regional comparator. To compensate for this, Waste Management benchmarks against similar post-industrial cities elsewhere in the UK and implementing the ZAP plan resulted in significant improvement in Belfast's ranking against these comparators.
- 2.5 In 2010/2011, Belfast was fifth in the benchmark group but by 2013/2014, the city had overtaken its comparators and was ranked first. Consequently, the Service is considering revisiting its benchmarking cluster to identify a new grouping of best-in-class cities within both the UK and Europe against which it can compare performance and learn from.

Projects

- 2.6 A number of projects within the ZAP plan have played a fundamental role in improving the city's recycling rate.
- 2.6.1 *Improvement of Recycling Collection Services for Households*

In 2013/2014, a new contract was awarded to Bryson Recycling Ltd to introduce a kerbside dry recyclables and food waste collection scheme to 55,000 households, mainly in the inner city area. These households had previously received a single box dry recycling kerbside collection service but the new scheme introduced a wider range of materials, greater capacity (two kerbside boxes), and a new food waste collection system. In tandem, the residual waste collection frequency switched from weekly to fortnightly. The scheme was communicated to residents through a doorstep canvassing campaign and considerable work was done to introduce individual solutions for apartment complexes.

The result of this new service has been encouraging with the last year producing 7,200 tonnes, compared with 3,100 tonnes under the previous scheme. This initiative has resulted in an uplift in the recycling rate for Belfast of around 4% per annum. The project won the award for

Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management at an annual awards ceremony in London.

A kerbside glass recycling scheme was initially timetabled for implementation in 2013/2014 however, following a procurement exercise by arc21, the bids submitted were deemed unaffordable. This resulted in the Council introducing an interim, kerbside glass collection to 22,000 households in four locations within the bin dry recyclables area of the city. At the same time, the Council commenced its own procurement exercise for this service which is due to complete imminently.

2.6.2 *Improve Recycling Opportunities at Recycling Centres*

The Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) provide around one quarter of the recycling tonnage for Belfast and provide householders the opportunity to dispose of large bulky household items or waste which cannot be accepted through their kerbside collections.

There is still however a significant amount of residual waste being disposed of at the sites. Following a pilot, the Service entered into a contract with Wastebeater Recycling Ltd to treat the materials from the residual waste skips. This company extracts the recyclables and the remaining waste is processed into a fuel for use in cement kilns, with a small amount of unprocessable residual going to landfill. This new contract contributed around 4% per annum to the recycling rate.

The Service is continually considering opportunities to introduce new materials at the HRCs and the latest addition has been hard plastics. This is traditionally a difficult material to deal with given the limited number of local processors. The Service is also considering how a mattress recovery option could be introduced at the HRCs. Increasing the range of materials at the sites however means that operating practices need to be continuously reviewed as capacity is restricted due to space/container constraints and licensing.

The ZAP plan included the development of a new HRC at Springvale Industrial Estate. An economic appraisal was completed and submitted for consideration in the Council's Investment Plan. The project has, however, been delayed. It should also be noted that it is proposed within the Departmental Plan 2015/16 for the Service to conduct a review of HRC and Civic Amenity site provision throughout the city.

2.6.3 *Use Treatment Facilities to Recover Waste Which Could Have Been Recycled from Black Bins*

Members will be aware that the Council has a legal obligation to progressively divert increasing waste tonnages in order to comply with the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS). This legislation transposes the EU Landfill Directive by annually reducing the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill. Failure to meet NILAS could result in financial penalties of £150 per tonne over and above this reducing threshold limit.

Arc21 is procuring strategic residual waste treatment facilities which will assist its constituent councils in meeting their NILAS requirements; but this has taken longer than initially projected. As a contingency, and to ensure Belfast met NILAS, an interim contract was awarded to Natural World Products (NWP) to treat a proportion of the Council's residual waste so that it is diverted from landfill. NWP receives the waste at one of its treatment facilities, extracts the easily recoverable recyclables and prepares the remaining waste as a Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) for export to EU Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facilities.

This contract has enabled the Council to meet its NILAS obligations in 2013/14 without having recourse to the arc21 transfer of allowances protocol, and a similar outcome is anticipated for 2014/15. Whilst this contract is focused on NILAS, it has still contributed an additional 2% per annum to the Council's recycling rate.

2.6.4 *Develop New Recycling Campaigns & Community Based Recycling Initiatives*

The Service's Education and Promotions section has proven to be a key component in engaging and communicating recycling messages directly with householders and other members of the public. The Section's Behavioural Change Plan 2012-15, has been designed to complement the ZAP plan actions and targets.

Resource Advisors (RAs) have supported delivery of the ZAP plan through several doorstep campaigns, ranging from campaigns targeting low participation in specific wards, up to city-wide campaigns such as the introduction of the inner city kerbside scheme in 2013/14. In a recent

doorstep canvassing exercise aimed at boosting the level of performance in lower performing inner city areas, the average yield per household increased by an average of 8% in seven out of the ten areas targeted, and in the other three there were slight reductions which could be accounted for by the nature of the occupancy of the households; these were primarily student areas. In the control group the level of growth was -1% which indicates that the RAs can have a direct, positive influence on participation and recycling yield. Details of this Section's work, along with images from the current communications campaign, have been circulated to Members.

More recently, this team has been involved in providing information about bin collections and general Local Government Reform (LGR) related messages to householders transferring to Belfast.

To reflect one of the primary recycling drivers, the new communications campaign has focused on the savings which can be made if residents recycle, and how these can be re-invested in other Council services to the benefit of the local community. This campaign has appeared in City Matters and on graphic panels on the sides of the Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs).

In 2013/2014, in line with the commitment in the ZAP plan to introduce community-based recycling initiatives, the Council launched the '*Zero Waste Community Grant*' scheme. The aim of this initiative was to encourage greater community engagement in communicating the benefits of increased recycling, diverting waste from landfill and in delivering projects which could positively contribute to increasing Belfast's recycling rate.

Over three funding rounds, just over £100,000 was allocated to 13 community projects including; recycling events, community education campaigns and bespoke collection schemes targeting items such as hand tools. This has enabled the recycling message to be heard in areas where, historically, engagement has been poorer than anticipated. It is intended that the scheme will be assessed in 2015/16 to quantify the contribution it made to the reduce, re-use, recycle message.

2.6.5 *Increase the Amount of Recyclables Collected from Existing Waste Collections*

An analysis of the various sources and waste streams resulted in the award of a contract to Wastebeater Recycling Ltd to treat the bulky household, parks general and litter bin wastes rather than sending these materials to landfill. This has resulted in a recycling rate uplift of around 0.5% per annum.

While delivering the ZAP plan, it became apparent that the proposed HRC for Springvale would not be delivered within the set timeframe. The Service examined the various waste streams and identified an opportunity to compensate for the loss of tonnage anticipated from this site by targeting street sweepings which were previously de-watered and disposed of to landfill. Following a procurement exercise a contract was awarded to Irish Waste to de-water and recycle these. This innovative project created a niche market as there is only one other company within NI carrying out this type of work, and it is not located in greater Belfast. In 2014/15, the recycling of street sweeps will contribute around 3% per annum to the Council's recycling rate.

2.6.6 *Collect Recyclables from Cityscape*

The Service works with colleagues from other Departments to ensure that, where feasible, recycling collections are included in the city's events programme. This has worked well, for example, with the Continental Market consistently achieving recycling rates over 80%. Other one-off events serviced by Cleansing Services have provided reasonable recycling tonnages (e.g. Giro d'Italia).

One issue highlighted during the behavioural change research is the need for the Council to demonstrate its own commitment to improving waste and resource management through leading by example. The Service is liaising with colleagues to introduce internal recycling systems and, to date, a number of sites have had solutions rolled out, including (i) City Hall (ii) St. George's Market and (iii) the Cecil Ward Building. This project will continue into 2015/16.

2.6.7 Give More Space to Recycle in the Blue Bin & 'Slim' the Black Bins.

In the first year of the ZAP plan, the Service introduced an initiative whereby residents with a 140 litre recyclables bin could upgrade to a larger 240 litre bin. Ultimately, this project involved around 18,000 households and provided increased capacity for householders to use for recycling. It is anticipated that, following several attempts, arc21 will seek to procure a new dry recyclables contract which can accept a wider range of materials in the near future. Inclusion of these materials is projected to uplift the recycling rate by 0.5% per annum. Research shows that restricting the bin space available for residual waste generally results in a compensatory increase in recycling. As a further incentive to encourage recycling, at the Committee agreed to adopt the 180 litre bin as the standard size for residual waste in Aug 2013. This policy was introduced in Jan 2014 after the new kerbside box scheme was implemented, as this signalled that all households in Belfast now had additional recycling capacity through their kerbside recycling schemes.

In adopting this approach, the Council was one of the first to introduce such a scheme locally, demonstrating its ongoing leadership and commitment to improving waste and resource management in NI.

2.7 Outcomes

2.7.1 *Cleaner, Greener City*

The recent improvement in the recycling rate supports Belfast in its strategic objective to create a cleaner, greener place for people to live, work in and visit. It also enhances the reputation of the city as the Council has recently won a number of awards for its recycling success such as:

- the Award for Excellence in Recycling & Waste Management (May 2014) and
- the Sustainable Ireland, Council award for Excellence in Waste Management (Sept. 2014).

2.7.2 *Economy*

A report published by the Green Alliance in Feb 2014 highlights the economic advantages associated with landfill diversion. It identified that between 5-10 jobs are

created/supported for every thousand tonnes of material recycled, compared with 0.1 jobs for the same amount of waste sent to landfill.

Applying the above to Belfast's waste streams would indicate that up to 520 jobs are directly or indirectly supported through the Council's recycling initiatives as around 52,000 tonnes is presently recycled, and a further 33,000 tonnes is recovered. This has resulted in 58% of the city's waste being diverted from landfill.

In recent years, there has been much discussion within the waste industry on the Circular Economy which involves keeping products and resources in use as long as possible through recovery, re-use, remanufacturing and recycling. In addition to protecting the environment, this offers substantial economic benefits which include greater economic stability through increased resource security, and new business and employment opportunities from an expanding sector.

Latest figures from WRAP and the Green Alliance indicate that by 2030, on the basis of the current development path, the Circular Economy could create over 54,000 net jobs in the UK. On a pro-rata basis, this represents around 1,500 local job opportunities; the council is pursuing the development of a Circular Economy on several fronts, such as the Renew project and development of the North Foreshore. This will also underpin any work the Service's proposes on developing a Materials Strategy, aimed at shifting perception of waste into that of being a resource.

2.7.3 *Environment*

The diversion of waste from landfill is of considerable importance as landfill gases are one of the primary sources of methane which, as a greenhouse gas, is over twenty times more potent than carbon dioxide.

The EU Landfill Directive and NILAS legislate to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste disposed of to landfill. Through the NILAS contract with NWP, the Council has met its NILAS obligations in 2013/14 and is confident of achieving a similar result in 2014/15. Annually, this contract treats around 47,000 tonnes of residual waste and diverts approximately 30,000 tonnes from landfill. In terms of measurable environmental benefit, the diversion of the tonnage from landfill to recycling has the equivalent effect

of removing carbon dioxide pollution from just over 13,000 cars.

2.7.4 Reputation

One of the functions of Waste Management is compliance with waste and environmental legislation. Achieving NILAS and improving Belfast's recycling rate has been well received by the media, and various stakeholders such as arc21 and the DOE. Increasingly, the city is becoming a '*case study*' for other towns and cities to visit and learn from, with delegations from Cardiff, Macedonia and Cyprus visiting over the past year to learn from the Service's experiences. The Council is also increasingly referred to in the technical press.

2.8 Next Steps

The ZAP plan finishes in Mar 2015 and it is the intention of the Service to develop a new plan outlining the steps required to meet the recycling target in 2020. It is envisaged that, with the collection infrastructure now largely in place and the '*low hanging fruit*' captured, the next plan will have to consider value for money while focusing on key areas such as; public engagement/behavioural change, targeting poorer performing areas, material specific campaigns and working with colleagues to develop and deliver a Circular Economy for Belfast.

A further report will be developed and presented to the relevant Committee shortly outlining the proposed steps to be taken to develop a new plan.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

There are no financial resource issues related to this report.

3.2 Human Resources

There are no human resource issues related to this report.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no relevant equality and good relations implication.

5 Recommendation

5.1 The Committee is requested to note:

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- **the successful conclusion of the ‘Towards Zero Waste’ Action Plan; and**
- **that a separate report will be presented to Committee shortly outlining the necessary steps to develop a new plan going forward.”**

During discussion, the Head of Waste Management outlined that, due to its population, household numbers, housing stock and social deprivation, Belfast had no obvious regional comparator and, to compensate for that, the Waste Management Unit had benchmarked the city against a range of post-industrial cities in the UK. In 2010/2011, Belfast had been ranked fifth in that group but, by 2013/2014, it had overtaken its comparators and was ranked first. He highlighted that the anticipated year-end figure for Belfast for 2013/14 was predicted to be 44%, but that this figure might change in 2015/16 for several reasons, such as the reduced income from the sale of recyclables. He pointed out also that, through the “Towards Zero Waste” Action Plan, the Council had increased its recycling rate by 12% over the past three years.

Several Members paid tribute to the hard work which had been undertaken by the Waste Management staff, particularly given that the regional increase had been around 3%.

In response to a Member’s question regarding residents who would be transferring to within the new Belfast boundary, the Head of Cleansing Services informed the Members that letters would go out to all new residents in the week commencing 11th March detailing the dates of their first four bin collections. In response to a Member’s question regarding a request for a brown bin facility at Roselawn Cemetery, the Head of Environmental Health agreed to liaise with the Parks and Leisure Department.

A Member sought clarification on the facility which had been proposed for Springvale. The Head of Waste Management explained that an economic appraisal had been carried out and that any future proposal to develop the site would be considered as part of a review of the Council’s Household Recycling Centres, which was scheduled for later in 2015/16, and that that would depend on appropriate funding being made available.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and noted further that a report would be presented to the appropriate Committee outlining the targets for the next number of years.

**Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme
and Customer Service Standards - Update**

The Head of Waste Management provided Members with an update on the Landfill Allowance Scheme and he pointed out that Waste Management Customer Service Standards had remained high during 2014/15.

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The Committee congratulated the staff on the successful figures and noted that a further report would be brought to a future committee regarding the end of year update.

Chairman