



Subject:	Resources and Fleet Waste Update
Date:	6 th May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Operational Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	John McConnell, City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet)

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>To provide an update to members on waste Collections, management and performance, including data on the ongoing pilots in relation to difficult to access streets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Park With us in Mind Pilot• Small Vehicles for Difficult to Access Streets
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Key Issues</p> <p><u>Waste Performance & Recycling Rates</u></p> <p>The most recent waste statistics published by the NIEA are the July to September 2024 quarterly statistics. The report is a snapshot of the second quarter of the 24/25 financial year versus the same period for the previous year.</p>
3.2	<p>The overall picture for NI was one of; an increasing quantity of waste collected (267,145 tonnes collected, up 0.9%), a static municipal reuse and recycling rate (52.9%) combined with a decrease in the landfill disposal rate, down to 15.5%.</p>
3.3	<p>An examination of the figures for Belfast City Council, indicates the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal Waste Arisings - the total tonnage of all types of waste collected by the Council was 41,883 tonnes, an increase of approximately 1,109 tonnes (2.7%) on the same quarter last year.• Municipal Waste Recycling Rate – the percentage of all types of waste collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased by 0.7% to 41%.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household Waste Recycling Rate– the percentage of household waste only collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased by 0.9% to 44.2%. • Landfill Diversion Rate – the percentage of all Council waste sent to landfill was 0.2%, a further reduction on the 0.6% figure for the same period in the previous year.
3.4	The provisional year-to-date position at Q2 shows the Local Authority Collected Municipal Recycling Rate at 40.86%, up 1% on the same period the previous year. The main contributor to the uplift in the figures was the increased tonnage of recyclables captured through the arc21 interim residual waste treatment contract, being delivered by Regen, in Q1 of 24/25.
3.5	<p>As noted within this report and brought to the attention of Members through various consultation responses, there are a number of legislative, strategic and financial drivers which are going to shape future waste management arrangements. Whilst we await further and clear guidance from DAERA, the full nature and implications of these policy drivers still remain somewhat unclear and in the absence of sufficient clarity, radical, systemic change aimed at delivering significant improvements in NI environmental targets is unlikely.</p> <p>Waste Framework Update</p>
3.6	As a reminder, at the People & Communities Committee meeting of June 2017, Members approved the Waste Framework document. It provides an overview of options on how waste could be managed within the city over the next decade. It was developed to align with the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and Resourceful Belfast (Circular Economy), designing out waste, improving the quantity and quality of recycling and supporting local jobs.
3.7	<p>The Waste Framework focuses on four themes (i) Collection Arrangements, (ii) Infrastructure, (iii) Behaviour Change and (iv) Technology. The following sections provide an insight on the work and initiatives currently being undertaken under the four main workstreams.</p> <p>(i) Collection Arrangements</p> <p>Kerbside Glass</p>
3.8	As part of the 2024/25 revenue estimates setting process, Members committed to delivering phase one of this scheme which involves an expansion of kerbside glass to approximately 23,000 households. Internal funding and support funding from DAERA under the Household Recycling Collaboratives Change Programme was secured to deliver phase 1 of the project.
3.9	Kerbside collections commenced to all low-rise households during February and March 2025. At the time of writing, a delay on the delivery of the wheeled bins for apartment properties has resulted in a delay to the roll-out to these properties. It is anticipated that the apartment roll-out will now be completed by 30 April 2025.
3.10	Initial kerbside surveys indicate lower than anticipated set-out rates and tonnages. Once the apartments have been onboarded the Service will conduct a full set-out survey and tonnage assessment.
3.11	As part of the rates setting process Members agreed to the phase 2 expansion plans which will see an additional 23,000 households included on the scheme in 2025/26. Officers have

	<p>started the initial planning stages for phase 2 and will present a report in the near future regarding the proposed streets.</p> <p><i>Community Repaint Scheme</i></p>
3.12	<p>East Belfast Mission (EBM) has been appointed as the contractor for the Repaint scheme. This initiative, delivered through the Household Waste Recycling Centres went live with a soft launch on 1 April 2025. This will now be promoted through the Council's usual communication channels.</p> <p><i>Laptop Reuse</i></p>
3.13	<p>At the members workshop on Household Waste Recycling Centres held on 5 March 2025, officers were requested to provide information on the laptop reuse scheme operating from Ormeau recycling centre.</p>
3.14	<p>The project set a target figure of 100 units to be refurbished and re-used at Ormeau. During the course of the initiative (1/9/22 -31/3/24) 47 units were prepared for re-use with distribution to digitally excluded individuals or organisations. A number of possible factors influenced the lower than anticipated figures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following feedback from the initial trial at Ormeau HWRC the scheme was revised to accept laptops and tablets which were no more than 5 years old as these were more likely to be repairable and upgradeable but this more selective approach may have influenced numbers disposed of • The cost-of-living concerns may have resulted in increased retention of laptops and people less likely to purchase new models and hence dispose of their older models. • Increase in the number of retail outlets and online suppliers offering cash-back when customers purchased new laptops or tablets.
3.15	<p>While the number of laptops captured were below the target figures, the project has delivered some key benefits;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a circular economy project delivering environmental and social benefit. • Increased awareness of the importance of re-use amongst staff and external partners • Delivering on one of the recommendations of the More Circularity, Less Carbon report (Prevention & Reuse) • Supporting local economy/repair outlet via the contractor • Reducing digital exclusion for those individuals in receipt of the laptops
3.16	<p>The Service is exploring the potential of linking in with Digital Services in a future computer and laptop reuse and recycling contract aligned with the disposal of BCC Equipment.</p> <p>(ii) Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Recycling Centres & Dargan Road WTS</i></p>
3.17	<p>Following SP&R approval for capital funding, the Service has completed a procurement exercise for a multi-year, container provision contract. Phase 1 of this contract has been delivered in 2024/25 with the arrival and installation of 40 skips and 6 new compactor units. The 2025/26 financial year will see a similar investment and the conclusion of this</p>

	<p>refurbishment exercise. This will deliver an improved health and safety environment at the sites along with improved logistical efficiency from the new compactor units.</p> <p><i>Recycling Centres and Pedestrian Access</i></p>
3.18	<p>The service has requested that colleagues in Property & Projects (P&P) commission a feasibility study regarding pedestrian access for Palmerston Road and Blackstaff Way HWRC. A procurement exercise has been initiated by P&P for this work and further updates will be provided as this project moves through the governance process.</p> <p><i>Recycling Centres and Repair Works</i></p>
3.19	<p>Members will be aware that at the committee meeting of 8 October 2024, it was noted that Park Road/Ormeau HWRC and Palmerston HWRC would have to undergo temporary closures in order to carry out essential repair works to the service bay aimed at maintaining health and safety on site and securing long-term service continuity for site users.</p>
3.20	<p>The works at Park Road recycling centre were completed as planned within the three weeks with the site re-opening on the 10 March 2025. Palmerston recycling centre closed on 10 March 2025 and following the service bay repairs, re-opened on Friday 4th April 2025, ahead of the scheduled date of 7th April 2025.</p>
3.21	<p>The Service intends to work with colleagues in Property & Projects to complete this programme of essential repair works with the inclusion of Blackstaff Way in 2025/26.</p> <p><i>arc21 Residual Waste Project and Interim Residual Waste arrangements</i></p>
3.22	<p>Members will be aware that there is a legal challenge against the award of the arc21 contract pertaining to the treatment of the Council's residual waste by ReGen. An indicative date of 9 June has been put forward for the hearing of this case.</p> <p>(iii) Behaviour Change</p> <p><i>Household Waste Recycling Centres - Workshop</i></p>
3.23	<p>A members workshop was held on 5 March 2025, to examine the performance of HWRCs and the challenges they face, particularly in light of policies and procedures adopted by neighbouring councils, ranging from simple proof of residency within the council catchment area to online booking systems for all users and fair use policies.</p>
3.24	<p>At present, other than a pre-booking system for light goods vehicles, the Council lacks similar policies aimed at ensuring only permitted, household waste is disposed of at the recycling centres aimed at improving recycling performance and to ensure safe, efficient operational practices at the sites.</p>
3.25	<p>During the course of the workshop, members discussed the key issues summarised as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booking systems • Waste access & acceptance policies including fair use policies • Impact of policies on fly-tipping • Counter systems • Opportunities for further circular economy initiatives and materials

	<p>Members agreed that the Service should investigate the above with a view to bringing back a report to committee.</p> <p>(iv) Information Technology</p>														
3.26	<p>As previously reported to Committee a project to procure an 'inCAB' technology system was progressing to modernise processes and controls around Waste Collections, vehicle monitoring and efficient routing, with the potential to amongst other things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold all safety information on vehicles and routes. • incorporate live time information flows to and from the operating centre to crews. • capture all the functionality of the Report IT App • optimise routes as the city grows to ensure operational efficiency. • link in with Customer Hub software to deliver customer service. • monitor vehicle condition and driver behaviour. 														
3.27	<p>A contract was awarded in February 2025 to Whitespace, a well-known expert company in this field of work. The project has now moved from procurement phase to implementation phase. One of the first key steps in this process is to ensure that all Waste Collections Route data covering in excess of 500 routes is cleansed and verified before being uploaded into the new system. Thereafter work will begin on a route balancing exercise, the review all routes and ensure balanced workloads for crews. At the same time multiple workstreams are being developed to fully implement the full operational capabilities of the new system over the next 12 months.</p>														
3.28	<p>Further updates will be brought to Committee as the project team develops its detailed work plan</p>														
3.29	<p>Restricted Access Streets Pilots Updates</p> <p>Members will be aware that this pilot was launched on 6th May 2024, The overall scheme envisaged three 'cycles' in these areas over a period of approximately 18 months. A report was presented to People and Communities Committee in December 2024 after the first cycle.</p>														
3.30	<p>Since then, the second cycle was planned as follows and is now complete.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th><th>Start Date</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Stranmillis Rd Area</td><td>21/10/2024</td></tr> <tr> <td>Donegall Road / Village Area</td><td>18/11/2024</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cregagh / Loopland Area</td><td>16/12/2024</td></tr> <tr> <td>Springfield Road Area</td><td>13/01/2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lower Ormeau Road/ Park Road Area</td><td>10/02/2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>Iveagh / Broadway Area</td><td>10/03/2025</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Area	Start Date	Stranmillis Rd Area	21/10/2024	Donegall Road / Village Area	18/11/2024	Cregagh / Loopland Area	16/12/2024	Springfield Road Area	13/01/2025	Lower Ormeau Road/ Park Road Area	10/02/2025	Iveagh / Broadway Area	10/03/2025
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3.31	<p>Officers are now in a position to provide some analysis and data to compare both crew reports and customer contact levels covering the 6 weeks prior to intervention, the results from the first cycle and now the results from the second cycle.</p>														
3.32	<p>As before, the data comes from two sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational crew reports of not being able to access streets or blocked alleyways, entrances etc 														

- Customer contact data in relation to residents in the relevant streets reporting non collections

Table 1 summarises the data from both sources and is illustrated in Chart 1 and Chart 2

Table 1 Reported instances by crews and Customers

Area	Crews via Report it App						Customer Contact					
	Pre Pilot	1st Cycle	% change	2nd Cycle	% change		Pre Pilot	1st Cycle	% change	2nd Cycle	% change	
Stranmillis	29	21	28%	21	28%	↓	6	8	-33%	10	-67%	↑
Donegall Rd / Village	10	7	30%	8	20%	↓	3	2	33%	5	-67%	↑
Cregagh / Loopland	13	6	54%	4	69%	↓	38	13	66%	14	63%	↓
Springfield Road	9	4	56%	10	-11%	↑	13	7	46%	8	38%	↓
Lower Ormeau /Park Road	9	2	78%	1	89%	↓	20	1	95%	8	60%	↓
Iveagh / Broadway	3	7	-133%	2	33%	↓	13	17	-31%	4	69%	↓
Totals	73	47	36%	46	37%	↓	93	48	48%	49	47%	↓

Chart 1 Reports by Crews by target area

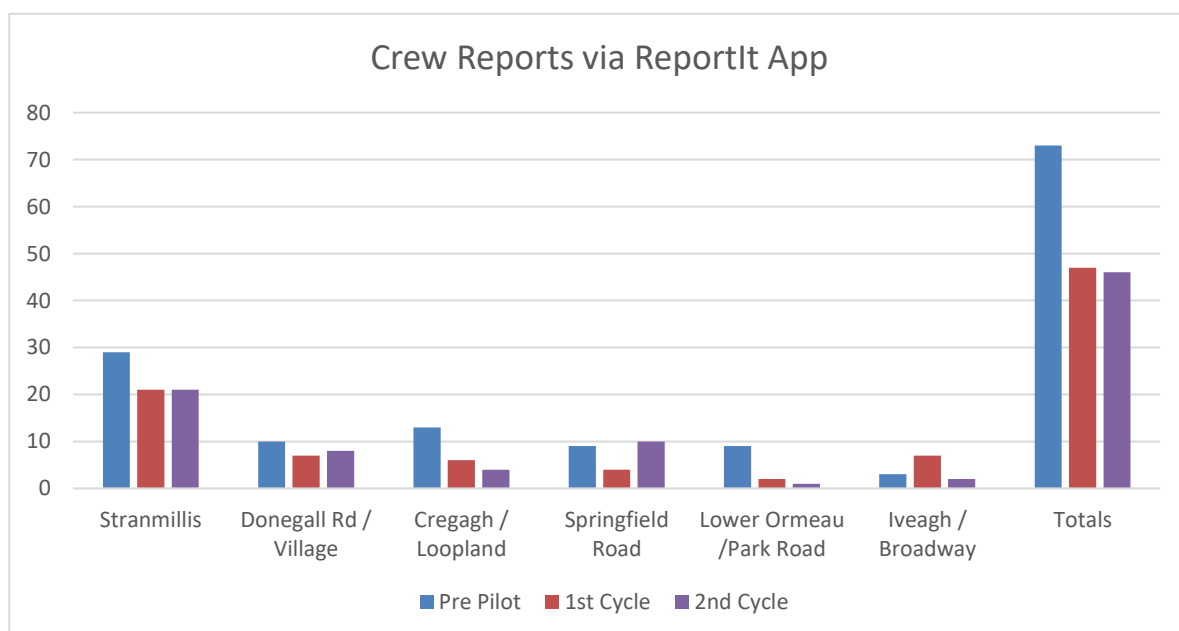
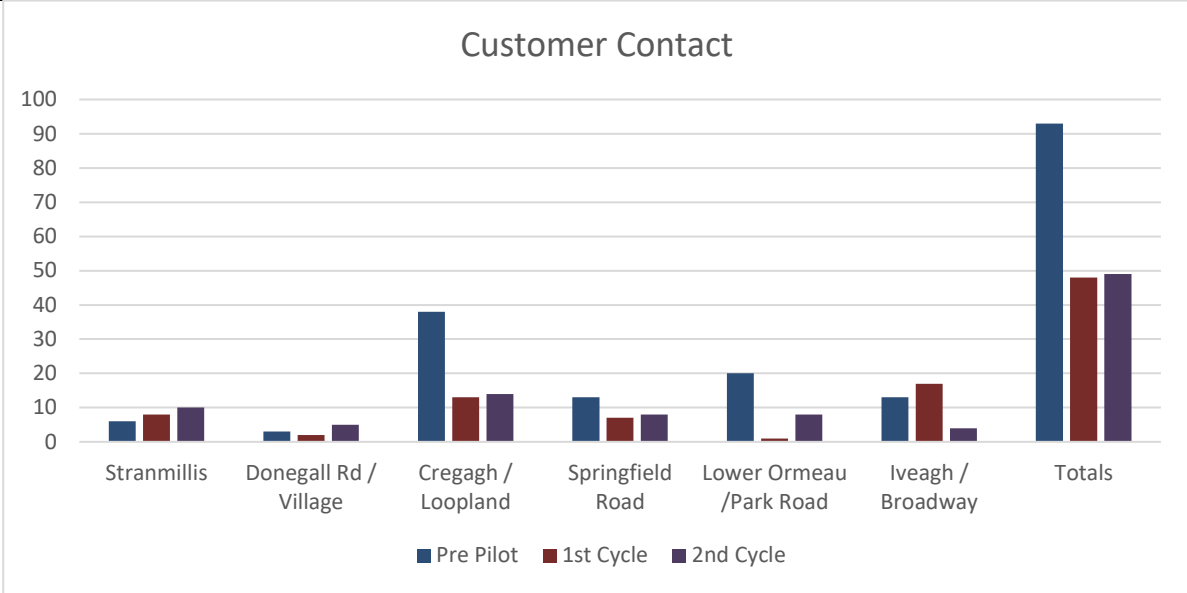


Chart 2 Customer contacts from residents for missed collections

3.35



3.36

From this set of data it would seem that the improvements in relation to both crews reporting issues and from customer contacts has been maintained during the second cycle of monitoring and enforcement by DFI.

- In 5 of the 6 areas crew have reported less instances of non-access with an overall reduction of 37% compared to the 6 week period prior to pilot launch. There has been an improvement in the Iveagh/ Broadway area but there has been a slight increase in the Springfield Road area.
- In 4 of the six areas there was a reduction of customer contacts with an equivalent overall reduction of reports by 47% against baseline. There was again an improvement in the Iveagh / Broadway area, exceptions to this are in the Stranmillis and Donegall Road / Village areas.

3.37

An officer review meeting with BCC and DFI will take place at the in May to discuss the data and to see if any improvements can be introduced to improve on the first cycle.

Introduction of Small Vehicles for Difficult to Access Streets

3.38

Members will be aware that the pilot for this initiative, consisting of two leased 18 tonnes Dennis Eagle Refuse Collection Vehicles and temporary crews, commenced collection in identified and agreed difficult to access streets on 12th August 2024. The pilot has been full rolled out since December 2024.

3.39

Following the initial success of the first three months of the pilot, reported to the Committee in December 2024, officers submitted a growth proposal for the addition of two additional crews and vehicles to make this scheme permanent, and members approved this proposal as part of the 2025/26 rate setting process. Resources and Fleet are now working through the financial governance process to procure vehicles and recruit staff on a permanent basis.

3.40

In all, the number of streets being serviced by the two smaller vehicles is as follows in Table 2

Bin Type	Streets with Bin Type
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Black/Grey Non-recyclable	126
Brown Food/ Garden Compostables	84
Blue Dry Mixed Recyclables	77

3.41 The latest data is outlined below in Table 3. The table shows the performance of the pilot in the last three months against the three months before pilot launch and the equivalent three months of the prior year. Again, two measures are captured in relation to this; crews reporting issues via Report It App and customers raising service requests received via the Customer Hub.

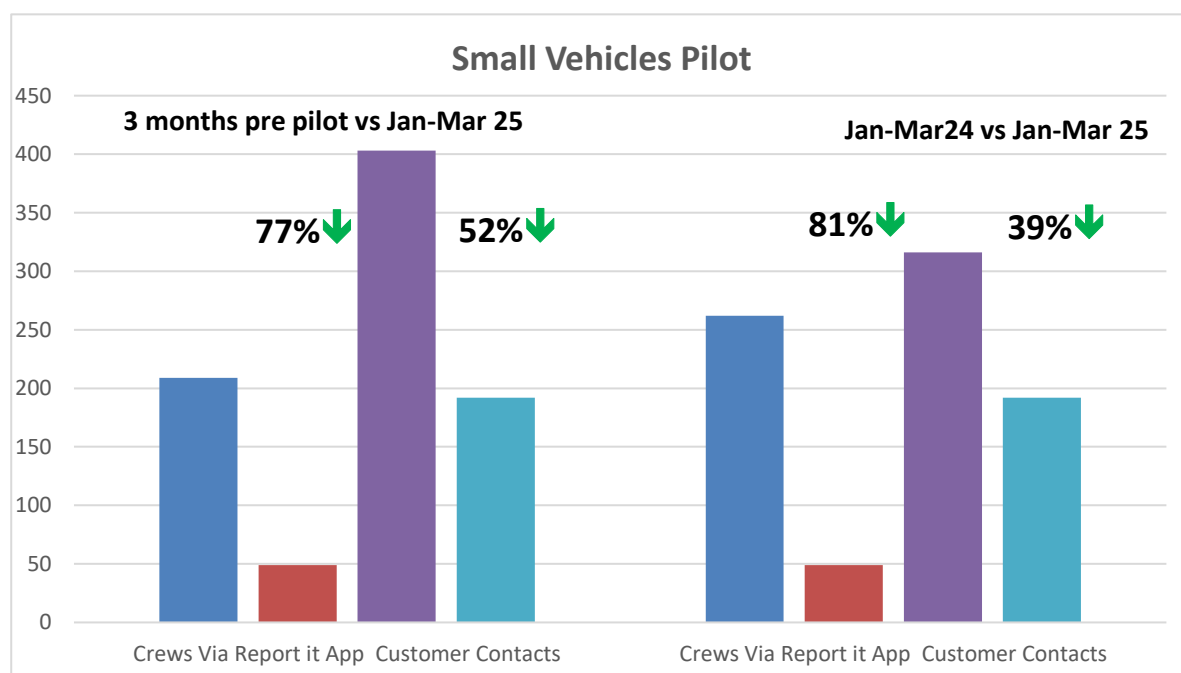
3.42 Data has been produced comparing the amount of crew reports and customer contacts in relation to missed collections as follows

- The latest three months of small vehicles in operation against the three months immediately prior to their introduction
- The latest three months in operation against the same period the previous year (Jan-Mar 24 vs Jan-Mar25)

3.43 **Table 3 - Reported incidents 3 months prior and three months same time last year**

	3 months pre pilot	3 months Jan-Mar 25	% reduction		3 months Jan-Mar 24	3 months Jan-Mar 25	% reduction	
Crews Via Report it App	209	49	77%	↓	262	49	81%	↓
Customer Contacts	403	192	52%	↓	316	192	39%	↓

3.44 **Chart 3 - Incidents Jan-Mar 25 versus 3 months prior to pilot launch and Jan-Mar 24**



3.45	<p><u>Retrieval of empty bins post waste collection</u></p> <p>A Member requested information in relation to the legislative powers the Council has in relation to enforcing the (non) retrieval of bins after waste collection.</p>
3.46	<p>In relation to this matter, relevant legislation outlines several powers the council has in relation to the collection of Waste from Households (and Commercial entities). They include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the council may require the occupier to place the waste for collection in receptacles of a kind and number specified. Separate receptacles or compartments of receptacles may be required to be used for waste which is to be recycled and waste which is not. 2. In making requirements as respect to receptacles, the placing of the receptacles for the purpose of facilitating the emptying of them, and access to the receptacles for that purpose including the placing of the receptacles for that purpose on roads.
3.47	<p>It can be seen that the Council can ask for receptacles (bins) to be placed on roads for collection purposes. Specifically, however, in relation to the retrieval of receptacles from the street, the legislation does not give the Council any powers of enforcement.</p>
3.48	<p>It is our understanding that enforcement powers in relation to the removal of obstructions from the pavement or from roads the public are under the remit of the Department for Infrastructure.</p>
3.49	<p>As the Council has no powers to enforce retrieval, the service has for many years tried to engage with residents on a local basis, through the use of tags and stickers on bins, leafleting and lettering households. On occasions where it has finally been determined that a bin has been abandoned, then arrangements may be put in place to remove it permanently.</p>
3.50	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></p>
3.51	<p>There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p> <p>Nil</p>

