



Subject:	Resources and Fleet – Abandoned Bins Protocol and Improvements to Bulky Waste Collections
Date:	11 th August 2026
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director (Operational) CNS
Contact Officer:	Peadar Doyle (Logistics Manager) R&F

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update committee on the development of an abandoned bins protocol, improvements to the council's domestic bulky waste collection service and plans to consider the issue of bagged waste raised at it's June meeting.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Abandoned Bins Protocol The council currently provides all domestic recycling and food waste containers free of charge to remove barriers to recycling. Black/General Waste Bins Black bins are also provided but incur a charge depending on the size of the bin. Whilst the council does supply most householders' bins, householders can procure them privately online or through established providers such as hardware stores.
3.2	Black general waste bins remain the legal property of residents and cannot simply be removed without their consent or knowledge. All recycling bins and containers provided by the council, remain the property of the council and as such, are straightforward to remove/uplift. The council continues to provide recycling containers free of charge, so residents are never negatively impacted financially if a recycling container needs to be replaced. The opposite is true of general waste containers if they are removed or disappear without warning, householders will incur a cost in the replacement of that container.
3.3	Currently, Waste Management issue "Bring Your Bin Home" (BYBH) letters to areas where multiple containers are left out for periods of time obstructing public pavements, public entry heads, or the street. This function previously sat with Enforcement but was transferred to the Resource Advisor team in 2021. Resource Advisors issue letters containing relevant information, sign posting and collection information specific to their property. This informs residents to remove their bin to their property and when their next scheduled collections are due.
3.4	The issue of abandoned bins is more common in densely populated urban areas and is often associated with entries and communal collection points which can sometimes involve non-domestic premises. While the standard BYBH approach is effective in some areas, persistent hot spots show repeated non-compliance and complaints from residents in areas where abandoned containers are a problem. Some of the abandoned bins encountered are damaged or without a lid, factors that can encourage owners of the bins to abandon them in the first place. It can also cause the bins to attract pests as the waste is more accessible if the bin is damaged.

3.5	A strengthened and more robust response is required to address persistent issues, ensure compliance, and support long term behavioral change and improvements to the environment in those areas is outlined in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 are sample BYBH stage 1 and stage 2 letters issued to households. The stickers required to support the protocol are in development with Corporate Comms and should be in hand and operationally deployable in September 2026.
	Bulky waste collection service
3.6	Belfast City Council offers a free bulky waste collection service for households, facilitating residents to dispose of unwanted household items.
3.7	The service is not available for businesses. Residents can book collections up to three months in advance, and the council will confirm the collection date within two working days. Collections run Monday to Friday, excluding bank and public holidays, and reminders are sent via email or text the day before collection to residents who have provided a mobile number or e-mail address. More detail on the service provided and how to access it are included in Appendix 4.
3.8	Bulky Waste collections are managed through the council's Priority Waste team.
3.9	Current bulky waste collection vehicles include: – • 3 x Compact vehicles – disposes of items that can be ‘compacted’ in the back of this vehicle i.e. Sofas, armchairs, mattresses, cabinets etc • 3 x Open vehicles – these vehicles have a tail lift, which aids with the collection of ‘white goods’ i.e. Fridge freezers, washing machines, TVs etc • 1 x HIAB vehicle – this vehicle has a large crane that assists with the collection of bulkier items such as American fridge freezers, pianos, oil tanks etc
3.10	Bulky Waste collections are planned and managed through a route optimization software application called Elogii. The Elogii systems sequence the running order for collections, which has improved efficiency and removed the need for daily manual route planning by the driver. The system also sends out a reminder notification to the resident a day before their scheduled collection. The collections plan in terms of split of vehicles and territories is outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Bulky Waste Collection plan

Vehicle	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Compact 1	West	West	North & Central	West	North
HIAB	West	N/A	North	East, South & Central	N/A
Open 1	West	North	North	East	South & Central
Open 2	North	East & South	South	West	Central
Compact 2	East	South	North	East	North
Compact 3	*SR's	East	*SR's	*SR's	East

- 3.11 Reports of longer lead times for bulky services in East Belfast were raised with officers earlier this year. On reviewing these officers identified that the response time in the East was significantly higher than in other areas of the city. Additional bulky waste slots were added in June 2026 to improve performance in the East. East Belfast is one of the more densely populated quadrants of the city and as such, demand is higher, so this adjustment should serve to better meet that demand and reduce lead times. Lead times before implementing this change are highlighted in Table 2 and lead times after the additional capacity was added in June 2026 are shown in Table 3.

Table 2 – lead times before changes were made

Pre Additional Capacity						
Average Lead Time - 12/01/26 to 10/06/26 (prior to additional capacity)						
Area	Comp1	Comp2	Hiab1	Open1	Open2	Area Avg
Central	5.04		5.67		4.91	5.21
East		17.82	18.85	4.65	5.79	11.78
North	4.4	4.25	9.29	5.48	6.05	5.89
South		7.96	18.7	3.84	4.37	8.72
West	5.23		6.03	6.57	7.25	6.27
Veh Avg	4.89	10.01	11.71	5.14	5.67	

Table 3 – lead times after changes were made

Post Additional Capacity							
Average Lead Time - 11/06/26 to 05/08/26 (after additional capacity added)							
Area	Comp1	Comp2	Comp3	Hiab1	Open1	Open2	Area Avg
Central	5.53			6.85		5.08	5.82
East		9.41	8.67	5.75	5.03	6.11	6.99
North	4.2	4.14		13.05	4.96	5.87	6.44
South		7.73		8.35	3.33	3.87	5.82
West	4.5			6.5	8.15	8.64	6.95
Veh Avg	4.74	7.09	8.67	8.10	5.37	5.91	

3.12	These steps have improved response times in the east and balanced performance across each of the four quadrants. This has led to a slight increase in collection times in some quadrants of the city. Officers are keeping this under review. The current domestic bulky waste collection service will be decanted to Whitespace and Incab functionality after the introduction of Incab to the council's domestic routes, which will present an opportunity for a broader review of bulky waste service provision and will look to improve even further collection times across the city. This will also feed into the wider Transformation and efficiency review of Waste Services. Collection of bagged waste
3.13	At last month's meeting an issue was raised in advance regarding bagged waste been left out for collection on pavements. Officers will undertake to look at this practice as part of the Transformation and efficiency programme and reports will be brought back to members for their consideration. <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.14	None – drawn from existing resources and budgets. <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.15	None
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – Abandoned Bins Protocol Appendix 2 – BYBH 1 Sample Letter Appendix 3 – BYBH 2 Sample Letter Appendix 4 – Bulky Waste Additional Information.