



<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Household Recycling Centres & Civic Amenity Sites
<b>Date:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Tim Walker, Head of Waste Management Brendan Murray, Waste Manager (Service Planning & Delivery)

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To present the recommendations from the “ <i>Household Waste Recycling Centres &amp; Civic Amenity Site review</i> ” completed earlier this year by iESE/Waste Consulting.
1.2	As a result of the findings, a number of recommendations are proposed regarding the optimal network of recycling facilities which will contribute to the Council’s cleaner, greener, sustainable city theme within the Belfast Agenda.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to consider the report and agree that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subject to identifying suitable alternative options using an appropriate consultation process, the existing civic amenity (CA) sites at Agnes Street, Springfield Road and Cregagh Road should close to the public on a phased basis and users should be redirected to the better-equipped household recycling centres (HRCs).</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The report’s primary focus was on the Council’s existing provision of HRCs and CA sites. The review outlines a series of recommendations and the following were approved by the Waste Programme Board on 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2016:

### **Civic Amenity Site Closures**

3.2 That, subject to identifying suitable alternative options using an appropriate consultation process, the existing CA sites at Agnes Street, Springfield Road and Cregagh Road should close to the public on a phased basis. These sites facilitate residual waste disposal rather than encourage recycling and require investment to improve their infrastructure and access which will not necessarily redress this situation. The unit cost of managing waste at these sites is also significantly greater than at the HRCs.

3.3 Should no alternatives be identified for the CA sites, users should be redirected to the better-equipped HRCs. Closure of the CA sites could save around £320K per year (and up to £15k revenue in associated premises costs from the Cregagh Road CA site) while redirecting waste to the HRCs could increase the Council's recycling performance and reduce processing costs.

3.4 The Council has four Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) located at:

- Palmerston Road
- Ormeau Park (Park Road)
- Blackstaff Way and
- Alexandra Park.

3.5 The three CA sites are located at Agnes Street, Springfield Avenue and Cregagh Road<sup>1</sup>.

### **Performance & Cost**

3.6 The HRCs are purpose built, split-level facilities operating to high standards with a similar size and layout. Each site is licensed to accept up to 10,000 tonnes per annum and, based on existing use, have the capacity to accept more waste.

3.7 The HRCs offer as wide a range of recycling opportunities as anywhere else in the UK and they are well run, safe and easy to use.

3.8 Total waste managed through the HRCs and CA sites amounts to 27,046 tonnes: 84% passes through the former and 16% through the latter sites respectively. Recycling performance, excluding the additional steps to recover recyclable from the residual waste skips, is around 60% at the HRCs, while at CA sites it averages 18%. The low tonnages presented at the CA sites and poor recycling performance drive up processing costs per

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<sup>1</sup> This transferred to the Council under local government reform

tonne meaning waste costs nearly 42% more than at the equivalent HRCs. The HRCs are relatively close to the CA sites, less than 10 minute drive, and provide more recycling opportunities and better value for money arising from scale. An analysis of performance and costs per site is presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1: HRC/CA Site Recycling Performance**

Description	Total CA's	Total HRCS's	Total
Residual	3,555	9,181	12,736
Dry Recycling	770	10,027	10,797
Green	17	3,496	3,513
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,342</b>	<b>22,704</b>	<b>27,046</b>
Recycling Rate	18.1%	59.6%	52.9%
Cost per Site	£786,726	£2,904,796	£3,691,522
Av. Cost Per Tonne	£181.19	£127.94	£136.49

3.9 The combination of low recycling performance, high cost per tonne, limited provision of facilities and restricted scope to improve demonstrates that the CA sites are not cost effective and have become inconsistent with the recycling practices of the Council. Given that existing users could be re-directed to the nearest superior HRC facilities within 10 minutes, there should be a phased closure of the CA sites to minimise disruption to users, and the sites should be re-purposed.

3.10 Discussions with Cleansing Services has highlighted that they would still require access to both Agnes Street and Springfield Road CA sites which provides appropriate bothy arrangements for their respective areas. This later facility may close once a shared facility with Parks is located in the outer West.

3.11 Cregagh CA site is considered to be surplus to operational requirements at this time. There may be scope for the Council to develop an environmental improvement scheme such as an alternative uses e.g. community garden or, subject to Council wishes, achieve a capital receipt from the sale of the premises.

**Analysis of the Provision of Facilities**

3.12 **Number of facilities per head of population** – Belfast has a population of 330,000, averaging one HRC per 82,500 residents. The WRAP Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Guide recommends that one HRC should serve up to 120,000 householders as a maximum<sup>2</sup>, and/or one per 50,000 households<sup>3</sup>. The Council's HRC provision averaging

<sup>2</sup> This figure was recommended in all but the most urbanised areas

<sup>3</sup> As above

82,500 residents/35,000 households per site fits within these parameters indicating that the current provision is reasonable. Table 2 compares Belfast's provision with other UK authorities by average population and average tonnage per site and, for both metrics, the Council compares well.

**Table 2: HRC Provision in Cities in the UK**

City	Population (rounded to nearest 10,000)	Number of HRCs	Average Population per HRC	Total HWRC National Directory Tonnage	Average Tonnage per site
Belfast	330,000	4	82,500	22,700	5,675
Bristol	442,500	2	221,250	31,352	15,676
Cardiff	350,000	3	116,667	30,000	10,000
Portsmouth	210,000	1	210,000	16,500	16,500
Southampton	250,000	1	250,000	17,500	17,500

3.13 **Distance & drive time** – The WRAP Guide recommends that the catchment radii for a large proportion of the population should be 3-5 miles and/or within a 20 minute drive time for the majority of users. The Council's HRC provision meets this with 85% of Belfast's population being within a 3km radius of a HRC, and 100% within a 5km radius. Appendix 1 shows the distance and journey times between the HRCs – highlighting site proximity.

3.14 The evidence suggests that the current HRC network is sufficient and it would appear difficult to justify any additional provision.

3.15 Following approval at the Waste Programme Board earlier this month discussions have started with the council's Trade Unions to seek to ensure all staffing matters are managed appropriately.

3.16 Following discussions with both the Corporate Policy Unit and the Equality Unit (Legal), the consideration for an appropriate public consultation process to present the iESE recommendations, and provide users the opportunity to present additional information which may have a bearing on the final decision, was highlighted. This consultation exercise would need to present the rationale for the proposal to close the CA sites, along with any supplementary evidence and actions taken to mitigate the impact of the proposed changes, and provide an opportunity to users to present any suitable alternative options which may be suitably considered by the Council.

3.17	<p>The Corporate Policy Unit recommended that this exercise should be planned to take place over a 12 week period and should use the Consultation Institute to help shape the questions and carry out an analysis of the results to ensure that the process was conducted appropriately. Following the consultation process, an equality screen will be conducted and a report including the final recommendations will be presented to Committee after which, subject to ratification, the recommendations will be actioned. An indicative timescale highlighted that these steps would be unlikely to commence before Q1 of 2017/18 at the earliest.</p>
	<p><b><i>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</i></b></p>
3.18	<p><b>Phased CA site closures</b> – it is estimated that this action would result in a net saving to the Council of around £320K per annum.</p>
3.19	<p>A further £15K per annum could be realised from a reduction in rates, electricity, &amp; associated with the Cregagh Road CA site once complete. Should one or more of these sites ultimately be sold, this could represent further income to the Council from the disposal of the land associated with the sites.</p>
3.20	<p>There should also be further efficiencies from the displacement of the CA site waste to the HRCs with their associated lower treatment costs per tonne. The extent of this is unclear so has not been defined at this stage.</p>
3.21	<p>All staffing matters will be managed in accordance with agreed HR policy and procedures in consultation with affected staff and the council's trade unions.</p>
	<p><b><i>Equality Implications</i></b></p>
3.22	<p>Following the consultation process, an equality screen will be conducted in conjunction with the Equality Unit (Legal).</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	Appendix 1 – HRC journey times