



Subject:	Hubbubb #Circle City 'Recycling On The Go Pilot'
Date:	9 th January 2024
Reporting Officers:	David Sales, Strategic Director City Operations
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services (OSS Portfolio Lead)

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	At its February 2023 meeting, Committee approved the request from Hubbub for Belfast to take part in a trial recycling on-the-go campaign and noted that a report would be taken back to committee following the pilot. This report provides members with an update on the pilot.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to note the content of the report and the planned next steps.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Campaign Overview BCC worked with environmental charity Hubbub, funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation, to introduce effective recycling on-the-go in Belfast city centre. The campaign introduced 25 new dual litter and recycling bins to the city centre and to four parks in the different areas of the city Falls Park, Victoria Park, Waterworks and the Botanic Gardens. See Appendix one.</p> <p>3.2 Based on Hubbub's approach to recycling on-the-go the campaign focused on making the bins easier and simpler to use and collecting plastic bottles and cans as the primary target materials. The bins have just two options, one for litter and one for plastic bottles and cans. This is in contrast to the previous bins, which had four compartments (litter, plastic, paper and metal separately).</p> <p>3.3 Activities and communications The project launched on July 27th and was featured in the Belfast Telegraph, Belfast Live and Belfast Media. (See Appendix 2) On-the-ground promotion included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person by the CNS Environmental Education and awareness team, who attended events during the summer to engage with the public • The Singing Street Sweepers' were present in the city centre and sang recycling-inspired songs • The BIDs and other local business stakeholders were informed of the campaign. • Additional vinyl stickers added to the lids of the bins to reinforce the target materials. (See Appendix 3) <p>Online and print promotion included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feature in City Matters, with a question to engage residents on the specific issue that coffee cups cannot be recycled. This received over 400 entries. • Hubbub led a targeted, paid, social media campaign • An online quiz to educate the public about recycling with the opportunity to win a Belfast City gift card. The quiz was viewed 1,150 times, and completed by 252 people. • The council promoted the campaign through their channels, with the most popular post being the Singing Street Sweepers, with content receiving 204 likes on Instagram and Facebook. • In total, across the council and Hubbub activity, the social media posts reached 138,690 people, with engagement of 2064. <p>3.4 Campaign Impact The campaign was assessed by collecting public feedback, feedback from the street cleansing teams, and an external waste audit. The post-campaign survey is ongoing but early results have recorded that:</p> </p></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47.8% of people had seen the new bins • 63% of people agreeing that 'it's clear what can be recycled in them' • 78% of people agreeing they are more noticeable than the old bins. • 58.7% satisfied or very satisfied with recycling on street in Belfast <p>3.5 A number of people left comments expressing their interest in seeing more recycling bins in Belfast. In person surveying led by the engagement team found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People seemed to like the bins and really liked the yellow colour. • They also thought the messaging was really clear in terms of what can go into each side. • Most people say that they recycle at home but really good to see option of doing it on the street/in town. <p>3.6 An external consultancy was recruited to undertake a five-day waste composition analysis of the bins from all 25 bins across Belfast. They looked at both compartments of the bins, with bags taken from the general waste side and recycling side. The recycling survey's timing coincided with a week of poor weather. This meant footfall levels were lower, and in previous Hubbub campaigns poor weather has been shown to increase levels of contamination. Whilst ideally, data would be collected over a longer period, taking into account people's behaviour at different times of the year and weather, it does offer an insight into a potential baseline, giving some sense of the performance of the bins under less-than-ideal conditions.</p> <p>3.7 The audit showed that, an overwhelming majority of people were successfully placing the plastic bottles and cans in the recycling. Given the relative lightness of a plastic bottle and can in comparison to other items, analysing by weight, the standard measure for waste and recycling, does not always clearly demonstrate the composition accurately. For example, one small glass bottle weighs around 200 grams, in comparison to a plastic bottle or can could weigh 10-15 grams.</p> <p>3.8 Therefore, an item count was undertaken for key categories to establish a capture rate. This is defined as how much targeted recyclable material is found in the recycling as opposed to the general waste stream.</p> <p>3.9 From the bags sampled, the capture rate by count of the target materials was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 731 plastic bottles out of 862 (84.9%) were found in recycling, with 131 plastic bottles ending up in the general waste • 721 out of 885 aluminium cans (81.5%) were counted in recycling, with 164 ending up in the general waste. <p>3.10 This demonstrates that target materials were ending up in the right place and across these five days 1452 items were collected for recycling. Across a year, you might expect to see around 70,000 items collected. This does not take into account the behaviour on periods of good weather when footfall is higher in the parks and city centre.</p> <p>3.11 When the audit looked at the average composition of both the general waste and recycling side of each bin, it found that by weight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the general waste bin, 4.4% of the material collected was plastic bottles and cans
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- Whilst the recycling, 29.8% of the material collected was plastic bottles and cans, rising to 43.8% when you include plastic bottles that still contain liquid.

3.12

The table below represents the composition, by weight, of the recycling.

Category	Detail	Percentage
Recycling-on-the-go target materials*	Plastic bottles (empty and full) and drinks cans	43.8%
Recyclable at the kerbside (excl. target)	Recyclable at the kerbside but not targeted (recyclable paper & card, drink & food cartons, other plastic packaging, plastic cups, cup lids, glass bottles & jars and other recyclables	12.4%
Not recyclable at the kerbside	Residual waste material, disposable vapes, coffee cups, soft drinks cups, compostable packaging, loose liquid, recyclable paper & card contaminated and other plastic packaging contaminated	34.5%
Loose liquid	From open containers and incoming rain	9.3%
Total		100%

* Plastic bottles that contained liquid, which often may not be recycled as they are deemed too heavy by the automated sorting process but are commonly believed to be recyclable.

3.13

Despite the successful capturing of the correct target materials there were still some issues with contamination. One item in particular that was binned incorrectly was coffee cups. However, the capture rate for this ending up in the recycling (incorrectly) was just 17.2%, showing that in most cases people were correctly disposing of these in the general waste. In the parks, some residual waste included a pair of football boots and other non-recyclable waste.

3.14

More generally, and most importantly, the contamination levels were low enough that the recycling could be sent for further processing.

What's next

3.15

Members should note that additional monies have been identified through the climate fund to support the rollout of these bins into the four quadrants of the city. A report will be taken to the climate board at the end of January and following that plans will be made to purchase and install the bins. It is proposed the bins will retain the same branding and stickers etc. Any rollout will include a communication and awareness raising plan. This plan will also target reducing contamination in order to maximise the quality of collected recycling from these bins.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.16	<p>The costs of the pilot were met by Hubbub with no additional OSS costs incurred. Members should note there is £45,000 secured from the climate fund for the purchase and installation of the bins for the next phase. The Council's Open Space and Streetscene service is currently considering how the collection and servicing of the new bins will be carried out long-term and the cost implications of this.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.17	None
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached