



Subject:	Resources and Fleet Waste Update
Date:	4 November 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director Resources, Fleet and Open Spaces & Streetscene
Contact Officer:	Brendan Murray, Waste Manager (Waste Management) Peadar Doyle, Logistics Manager (Waste Collections)

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

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

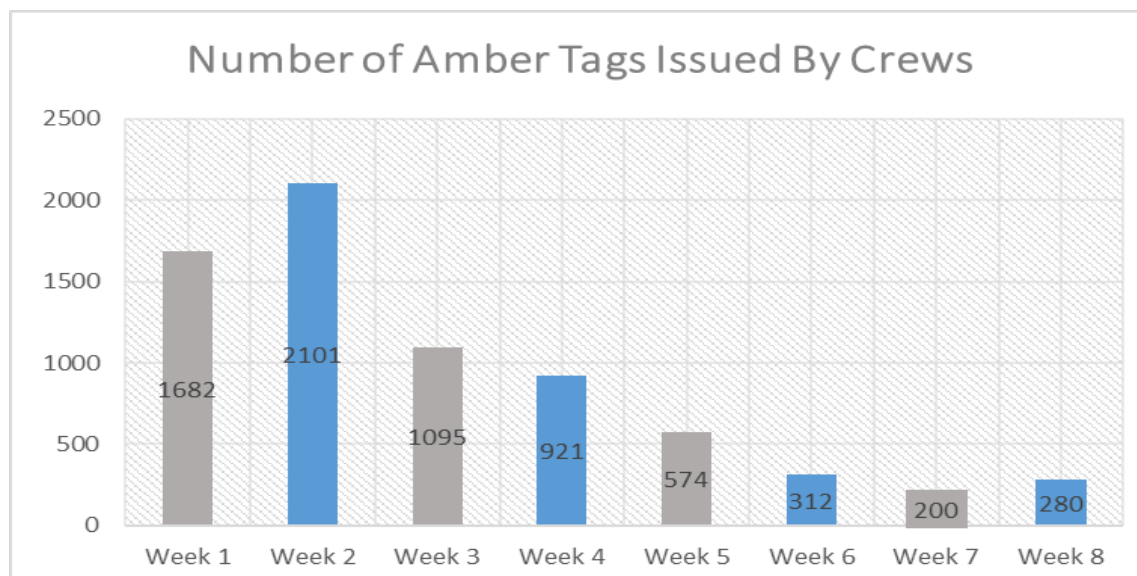
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide an update to members on waste collections, management and performance.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are requested to note the report.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Waste Performance & Recycling Rates</u>
3.1	The most recent waste statistics published by the NIEA are the April to June 2025 data set. The report is a snapshot of the first quarter of the 25/26 financial year versus the same period for the previous year.
3.2	The overall picture for NI was one of; a decreasing quantity of waste collected (269,429 tonnes collected, down 0.8%), a lower municipal reuse and recycling rate (53.2% down 0.6%) and a significant decrease in the landfill disposal rate, down from 15.8% to 5.5%. This landfill diversion is reflected in an uplift in the energy recovery rate from 30% to 41% for the quarter.
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 41,882, a decrease of approximately 700 tonnes (1.6%) on the same quarter the previous year. • Municipal Waste Recycling Rate – the percentage of all types of waste collected by the Council re-used, recycled or composted, remained unchanged at 41.5%. • Household Waste Recycling Rate– the percentage of household waste only collected by the Council re-used, recycled or composted, remained static at 45%. • Landfill Diversion– the percentage of Council waste sent to landfill was 0.1%. • Energy Recovery - the percentage of Council waste sent for energy recovery remained unchanged at 58%.
3.4	The provisional year end position for 2024/25 shows the Local Authority Collected Municipal Recycling Rate at 38.9%, similar to the previous year (38.8%). The full, validated figures for 2024/25 are due to be published in November.
3.5	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. 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.
3.6	<p>Waste Framework Update</p> <p>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</p>

	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><i>Kerbside Glass</i></p>
3.8	Members will be aware that phase one of the kerbside glass expansion scheme rolled out to 23,000 households in April 2025.
3.9	The analysis on the performance of the scheme has now been updated for the period April – September 2025. Kerbside surveys conducted to date indicate lower than anticipated set-out rates, ranging from 9% -20% for phase one. In terms of tonnage, 312 tonnes of glass was collected from the kerbside which when extrapolated, would result in an annual figure of approximately 625 tonnes and an average yield per household of around 28 kg per annum. This is slightly below the target figure of 31 kg per household.
3.10	In September 2025, members agreed to the phase two expansion plans which identified the next 23,000 households to be included on the scheme. Officers have started the planning stages for phase two and anticipate full roll-out by 31 March 2026.
3.11	<p>Upon completion of phase two of the kerbside glass scheme, the Service intends to conduct a targeted kerbside glass campaign aimed at driving increased tonnage through phase one (23,000 households) and the original purple box area (22,000 households). Further details will be provided to members through future waste update reports.</p> <p>(ii) Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Recycling Centres - Containers</i></p>
3.12	Following SP&R approval for capital funding, the Service completed a procurement exercise for a multi-year, container provision contract. Phase 1 of this contract was completed in 2024/25 with the arrival and installation of 40 skips and 6 new compactor units.
3.13	Phase 2 will see the remaining 30 skips and 11 compactor units installed and operational by the end of Q3 25/26. This will deliver an improved health and safety environment at the sites along with improved logistical efficiency from the new compactor units as well as improving the general appearance of the sites.
3.14	<p><i>Recycling Centres and Pedestrian Access</i></p> <p>The service has requested colleagues in Property & Projects (P&P) to commission a feasibility study regarding pedestrian access for Palmerston Road and Blackstaff Way recycling centres. The procurement exercise has been completed by P&P for this work and the appointment of the contractor responsible for carrying out the feasibility study is imminent. Further updates will be provided as this project moves through the governance process.</p> <p><i>Recycling Centres and Repair Works</i></p>
3.15	Members will be aware that over the course of the last two years, a programme of repairs in relation to the service bays at the recycling centres has been underway, with Alexandra, Ormeau

	and Palmerston all completed. These are essential repairs aimed at maintaining health and safety on site and securing long-term service continuity for site users.
3.16	On 1 October 2025, Blackstaff Way recycling centre closed temporarily in order for these works to be carried out. Members in the DEA were informed and Corporate Communications updated the Council web site and issued social media notifications. Appendix 1 provides information on the site closure notifications. Site staff were also temporarily dispatched to support other sites Blackstaff Recycling centre is scheduled to re-open on 3 November 2025.
3.17	<p><i>arc21 Residual Waste Project and Interim Residual Waste arrangements</i></p> <p>Members will be aware that there is a legal challenge in relation to the award of the arc21 contract pertaining to the treatment of the Council's residual waste by ReGen. The case has been ongoing for over two years and a definitive date has yet to be determined for the hearing.</p> <p>(iii) Behaviour Change</p>
3.18	<p><i>Household Waste Recycling Centres – Policies & Intervention Strategies</i></p> <p>The Service has approached the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to assist in developing a suite of policies and procedures aimed at addressing the challenges encountered by the recycling centres previously outlined at the members workshop in March 2025.</p>
3.19	<p>Following a procurement exercise conducted and funded by WRAP, external assistance has been commissioned via Circulogic. This company has been briefed on the project and is in the process of compiling a report due for completion in Q3 25/26, following which the Service will present via the usual governance process.</p> <p>Bin Safety Campaign</p>
3.20	Updates on the Bin Safety Campaign were provided to Members in August and September. This section builds upon those reports now that the Service has moved into the "red tag phase" - collecting to policy.
3.21	The Project Team incorporating; Waste Management, Waste Collection Operations, OSS, Customer Hub, Enforcement and Corporate Communications continue to meet weekly to share learning, review issues, crew reporting data and complaints to determine areas of the city/zones where additional resources may need to be deployed.
3.22	The weekly review was set up when collecting to policy began so that resources from within the CNS Department could align responses and resources to issues that have come about as a direct result of the campaign. Whilst general communications and outreach proposals will form part of the response, some areas may require a more nuanced approach depending on the specific problems highlighted in those areas.
3.23	On Monday 4 August 2025, the campaign started with amber tagging (bedding in period) for 8 weeks. Collections continued as normal (i.e. overfilled bins and bins with liners were still collected) with amber warning tags placed on bins and reported by crews. Resource Advisor Teams were on the ground raising awareness.
3.24	Whilst the Report it App (RIA) was initially to be used to report and gather data on tag use and areas/rounds where the issues are more pronounced, that approach encountered operational challenges including the fact that many of the containers presented for collection do not have an identifiable address. RIA was used for non-collection instances, but amber tag usage was instead summarised based on crews reporting the number of tags issued.

3.25 For the amber period, graph 1, shows the number of tags issued over the course of the eight weeks. The percentage of collected bins which were tagged during the period was less than 2% overall. Table 1, provides more granular detail on the amber tag metrics.

3.26 Graph 1 – Amber Tags Issued



3.27 Table 1 – Amber Phase Key Metrics

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4
Number of Amber Tags Issued	3783	2016	1495	480
Percentage of Bins Emptied Tagged	2.34%	1.24%	0.92%	0.30%
WPV Reports	0	0	0	0
Total number of houses posted	23917	31553	43164	58000
Number of Black Bins Ordered	296	276	251	256
Number of Boxes Ordered	1043	827	839	635

3.28 Monday 29 September 2025, saw the commencement of the red tag phase - collecting to policy. Overfilled containers have been tagged, not collected, and instances reported through RIA. Temporary, additional, Special Collection Teams (SCTs), Resource Advisors, OSS staff and Enforcement Officers are now deployed in the targeting of areas that remain persistently non-compliant with policy.

3.29 Additional Resource Advisors have been deployed since Monday 21st July. In terms of direct communications, they covered 1,650 streets, equating to 58,000 households with each household receiving communications regarding the campaign, centred around bin safety and recycling. These temporary Resource Advisors will be maintained throughout the bin safety campaign and also to deal with some business-as-usual issues which have been highlighted during the course of the campaign and outlined below.

3.30 A temporary collections resource has been established in the form of Special Collection Teams (SCT) to support the campaign and deal with cases where the issuing of a red tag has been caused by an operational issues e.g. vehicle breakdown, rather than excess waste presented by the resident. In such instances, a crew will be dispatched to remove excess waste from the bin in order for it to be collected. From 29 Sept – 24 October (two full collection cycles) the SCT was

deployed on 71 occasions. The requirement for this resource will be monitored as the campaign progresses.

3.31 The campaign has magnified some of the business-as-usual issues at certain collection sites and areas e.g. overfilled euro bins and lidless/damaged euro bins at apartments. These issues are relatively small in number and being noted in the issues log and managed on an individual case basis by the Service.

3.32 The communications and engagement on the ground is having an impact. Resource Advisor visits to conduct assessments for additional bins increased significantly as have orders for containers. For example, in the seven weeks leading up to the start of the bin safety campaign, the average number of recycling box orders per week was around 240 units. In the twelve weeks since the start of the campaign this has risen to around 418 units per week. Increases in orders and requests for service suggest a positive trend around better recycling messaging and hopefully in due course this will translate into increased recycling tonnages.

3.33 In total, 1,484 red tags were issued during the first two full collection cycles (4 weeks). Table 2, Red Phase Key Metrics, provides further breakdown of this figure. Issues to highlight are;

- non-collection due to bin liners is a relatively minor issue in terms of number of cases reported.
- the percentage of red-tagged bins to overall bins collected, is around 0.5%.
- only 37 bins received their second consecutive red tag after the first two, full collection cycles.

3.34 Table 2 – Red Phase Key Metrics

	Oct-13	Oct-14	Oct-15	Oct-16	Oct-17		Oct-20	Oct-21	Oct-22	Oct-23	Oct-24
1st Cycle red tagged	125	184	109	51	27		49	59	124	55	38
Same bin tagged 2 cycles in a row	1	7	14	2	1		0	2	8	1	1
2nd Cycle red tagged	70	146	66	42	35		34	52	112	62	44
1st Cycle Sep29-Oct10	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri
Overfilled	120	184	109	46	26		47	59	82	53	31
Liner	5	0	0	5	1		2	0	42	2	7
2nd Cycle Oct13-Oct24	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri
Overfilled	69	144	66	42	35		33	52	112	60	43
Liner	1	2	0	0	0		1	0	0	2	1

(iv) Information Technology

In-Cab Technology

3.35 The in-cab technology contract was awarded to Whitespace in February 2025 and is now being managed through a multi-stage implementation. The core telematics functionality has been transitioned successfully, with some enhancements now being embedded into 'Business as Usual.'

3.36 A test in-cab system (with limited access/ functionality) was made available for household waste in June 2025 and work continues to prepare for the eventual full implementation. There is significant process and software development work to be done in order for the new system to link in with the corporate CRM and webforms before installation of the in-cab equipment and the training of staff. In parallel, a familiarisation exercise is required on the route planning software in preparation for large-scale redesign of the household waste routes, to deliver a more balanced and efficient suite of routes.

	Policy & Legislation
3.37	<p>As noted above, there are a number of key legislative, strategic and financial drivers which will not only shape waste management arrangements for the next decade but seek to contribute to a more circular economy and environmental targets.</p> <p><i>Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR)</i></p>
3.38	<p>Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging is a UK-wide reform of an existing Producer Responsibility scheme for packaging.</p>
3.39	<p>The aim of EPR is to move the full cost of dealing with household packaging waste away from local ratepayers to the packaging producers (applying the 'polluter pays principle'). The goal is to incentivise the use of packaging that uses less material and is easier to recycle.</p>
3.40	<p>The scheme administrator for pEPR, PackUK, is responsible for setting EPR fee rates for household packaging materials, invoicing and collecting fees from obligated producers, and then issuing payments to local authorities to cover household packaging waste management costs.</p>
3.41	<p>PackUK is in the process of invoicing packaging manufacturers and the first payment to local authorities is scheduled for November 2025. The second and third payments will be made to local authorities during January – March 2026. From April 2026, local authorities will receive four quarterly payments.</p>
3.42	<p>This funding will assist the Council in delivering efficient and effective recycling services and contribute to future environmental targets including the NI municipal waste recycling rate target of 65% by 2035.</p> <p><i>Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)</i></p>
3.43	<p>The Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) aims to tackle littering and increase recycling of containers that are within the scope of the scheme. This will be achieved by introducing a redeemable deposit on single use drinks containers, which can then be claimed back when they are taken to a deposit return point for recycling.</p>
3.44	<p>DRS is due to go live on 1 October 2027. The deposit will apply to all single-use drinks containers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are made wholly or mainly from aluminium or steel, or polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic. • have a capacity of between 150 millilitres and 3 litres. • are likely to be used only once or for a short period of time. <p>Containers with a lid made from other materials are still included.</p>
3.45	<p>UK Deposit Management Organisation (UK DMO) is the not-for-profit, business-led organisation appointed by government in April 2025, to develop and ultimately deliver the scheme.</p>
3.46	<p>This body will create the necessary infrastructure and operational logistics regarding DRS. This covers everything from managing how cans and bottles are collected, sorted and processed, to the financial operations such as collecting and reimbursing deposits, as well as ensuring that recycling rates improve over time. This organisation will also set the deposit rate to be paid by customers purchasing the drinks.</p>

3.47	Retailers will function as return points i.e. the place where people can return their containers and reclaim their deposit. However, the UK, NI and Scottish governments have stated that retailers in urban areas will be exempt from hosting a return point if they have a retail space of less than 100m ² , although they can still apply to be a voluntary return point if they wish to do so.
3.48	Retailers can also apply for an exemption if their business is close to another return point, or it is not possible to host a return point due to the location, layout, size, design or construction of the premises.
3.49	<p>While the aims of DRS are to reduce littering, increase recycling levels overall and improve quality of recyclables, there are a number of potential issues which local authorities should be aware of and consider their impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as materials shift from the kerbside collection to the DRS scheme, while total municipal recycling rates may increase, the recycling rates reported by local authorities could decline. • these materials (particularly aluminium) generate income for the Material Recycling Facilities (MRF) and local authorities who have an income sharing model with the MRF. As the tonnage shifts to DRS, this income stream is reduced and the cost per tonne of operating the MRF increases. This could be reflected in increased gate fees for local authorities. • for the in-scope containers which remain in the kerbside schemes, it has yet to be determined how a local authority will be able to redeem these deposits efficiently. • DRS schemes can result in bin scavenging in order to retrieve plastic bottles and cans, creating a litter issue in some areas. <p><i>Digital Waste Tracking</i></p>
3.50	Digital waste tracking is intended to enable the tracking of all household, commercial and industrial waste in order to reduce the potential for waste crime and ensure good practice in terms of waste management.
3.51	The project has been delayed on a number of occasions and this has resulted in a revised, phased approach to its delivery. In summary, rather than requesting all parties involved in the collection, transportation, storage and treatment of waste to enter data onto a bespoke, government database, the initial phase will involve only the “waste receiver” who will be able to use API to link their in-house systems to a central, government database. This approach reduces risk due to its phased nature and should also reduce the administrative burden on the sector by enabling the continued use of existing waste management software systems.
3.52	The intention is that by April 2026, secondary legislation will be laid across UK government and devolved governments to mandate the use of the service by permitted and licensed receiving sites by 1 October 2026. This may have implications for the Waste Transfer Station and we await determination by the regulator if this facility will come within the scope of the legislation. Should that be the case, the Service will initiate discussions with its weighbridge software provider and Digital Services to map out the path to compliance.
	<i>NI Waste Strategy</i>
3.53	Discussions with DAERA representatives suggest that public consultation on the NI Waste Strategy is scheduled to be launched before the end of the year.
	<i>Rethinking Our Resources</i>

3.54	<p>The government response and outcome of the DAERA <i>Rethinking Our Resources</i> public consultation exercise is still awaited.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.55	<p>There are no financial implications associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></p>
3.56	<p>There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	Appendix 1. Blackstaff Way – Temporary Closure Notifications