



Subject:	Waste Collection Update
Date:	8 August, 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Tim Walker, Head of Waste Management, City & Neighbourhood Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update on waste collection services and, in particular, implementation of the Route Optimisation exercise.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the issues which have occurred with waste collections and the actions which are being taken to improve the service.
3.0	Main report
3.1	In February 2015, the Council commissioned a route optimisation exercise to review and improve the efficiency of its waste collection services. This methodology is used by the majority of

Councils. The new, optimised, collection routes were implemented in October 2016. Members will be aware of the previous issue around the delivery of letters to households, leading to a period of confusion as many residents' collection days changed and this had not been properly communicated. This was rectified as quickly as possible and the Council apologised to those affected.

3.2 The route optimisation mapping exercise shifted the Council from the previous area based working to a much more detailed, individual property-based (Pointer) system. It also incorporated the additional 22,000 properties transferring to Belfast arising from Local Government Reform. As part of this exercise, the route optimisation mapping and route design, the Pointer Plus and Ordnance Survey data provided the actual number of households in Belfast, which now stands at around 165,000.

3.3 As with the introduction of any new route and/or collection system, it was anticipated that there would be an initial impact on the general public as they and staff sought to familiarise themselves with the changes. It was previously reported to members that the initial issue with the letter drop impacted further on this settling in period. In order to ensure that any potential difficulties during this transition period were operationally managed, especially important in the run up to Christmas when residual waste arisings increase, additional temporary squads were introduced. The agreed approach was to reduce the number of these squads over a phased period as collection routes started to normalise. The phased reduction of these squads has been impacted upon, for example by the gradual increase in residual waste which has been occurring since 2014 (the base data year for the route optimisation exercise), but also by the introduction of the "No Food Waste" campaign.

3.4 In April 2017, the former Head of Cleansing Services retired and responsibility for Waste Collection transferred to the Head of Waste Management. Members will be aware that the Waste Management team have been drafting the recently approved Waste Framework to identify options so that emerging legislative requirements, changes in the local marketplace, Arc21's residual waste treatment facilities or alternatives, and Brexit could all be addressed over the next decade. Several of the options identified have a bearing upon Waste Collection arrangements and were integral to the drafting of the Framework. The Service has been considering how expenditure could be minimised, efficiency savings could be delivered and revenues maximised, using scenarios to achieve a 50% household waste recycling target and aligning with the Belfast Agenda objective to create jobs.

It is worth reiterating that further changes associated with Waste Collection are likely to be needed to support aspects of the Waste Framework. Some of these proposals will be issued for

3.5 public consultation in Qtr. 3 this year.

Food Waste Collections

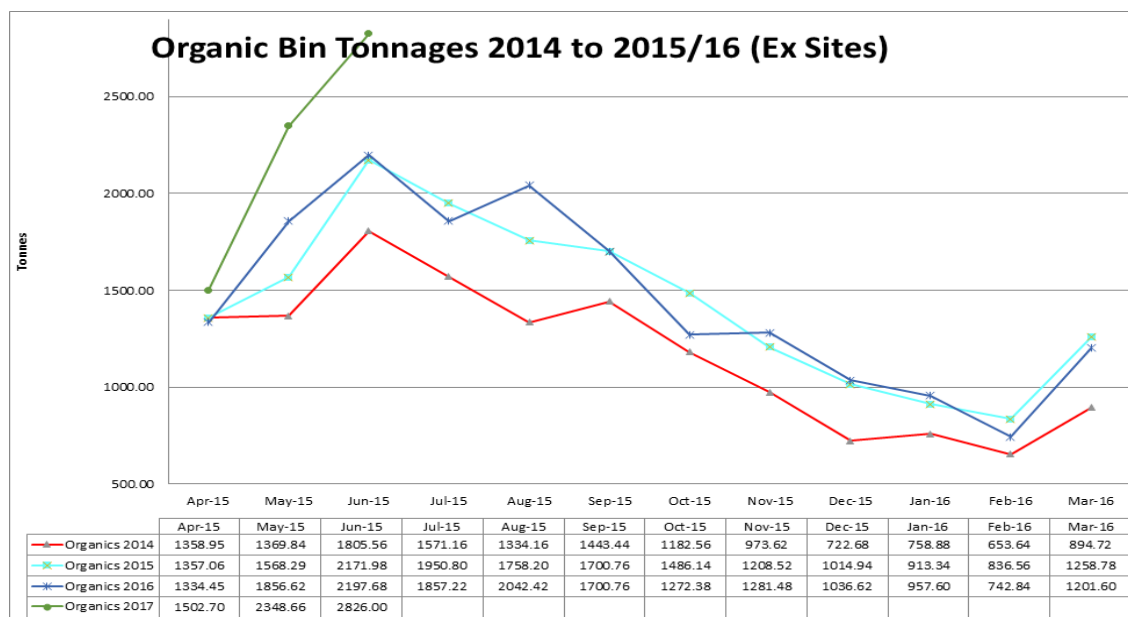
3.6 The introduction of a “No Food Waste” campaign aimed at tackling the amount of food waste contained in the residual bin was estimated to increase the Council’s recycling rate by 1% and result in a reduction in expenditure of around £75,000 per annum, excluding incidental costs.

3.7 This campaign was launched at the end of April 2017 and resulted in a surge of interest requesting information, new containers and food waste bags. The Service’s calls to the waste helpline increased from around 3,500 per month, to approximately 27,000 in May. The campaign also resulted in the delivery of an additional 5,000 brown bins, 16,000 kitchen caddies and over 4,000 kerbside boxes and external food waste bins. Since then, calls and requests are returning to a lower level, albeit higher than before the food waste introduction.

3.8 Table 1 shows that this scheme is beginning to produce significant results. In Qtr1, kerbside organic bin tonnages are up 24% on the same period last year. However, given that this coincides with the peak growing season, which may mask the impact of the food waste campaign, a more prolonged time frame is required to determine the full impact of the campaign and when available it is the intention to bring a more detailed analysis to Members.

Table 1: Increased kerbside organic tonnages collected in Qtr. 1

3.9



Despite this relatively short time frame, what is apparent, is that the No Food Waste campaign has delivered a shift in residents’ behaviour with a sizeable proportion of the food waste which is

3.10 now being collected separately in the brown bin or green external food waste caddy, previously simply dumped into the residual waste bins. Therefore, the distribution of materials in the different bins has started to change. Should this desired behaviour be maintained longer term it is essential that a re-balancing of resources amongst the collection fleet is conducted in order to achieve the optimum resource levels for the dry recyclables, organic and residual crews. Given the changing nature of waste, collection systems, housing stock and population trends It is highly likely that recalibration of collection rounds and resources will be required on a more regular basis than previously.

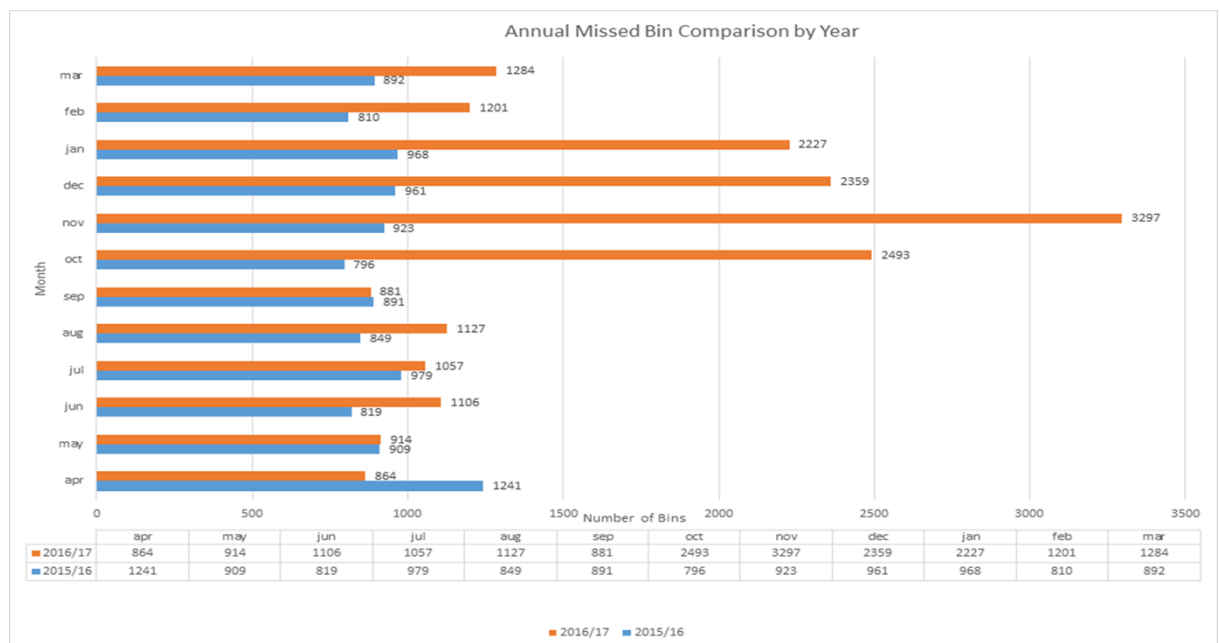
Performance

Missed Collections

3.11 In terms of total numbers, there are approximately 8 million bin collections in Belfast annually, of these over 18,000 missed bins (blue, brown & grey) were recorded in 2016/17. This was an increase of around 7,800 on the previous year’s figure although still less than 1%. As shown in Table 2, much of this increase is related to the impact of the route optimisation exercise which commenced in October 2016 and the impact of the letters. Comparing the last two years’ data, the level of missed bins increased by around 25% at the half year mark, but this rose to double the level for the second half of the year, coinciding with the introduction of route optimisation.

Table 2: Comparison of Missed Household bins (15/16 v 16/17)

3.12



Missed bin collections spiked during Oct 16 – Jan 17. Since then the picture has improved markedly. Comparative analysis of Qtr. 1, this year shows that missed bin collections are up

3.13 around 23% on the previous year (pre-route optimisation). In particular, missed collections rose in May & Jun of this year, primarily due to the increased demands on the brown bin collection crews as a result of the No Food Waste campaign (as noted above) and the onset of the growing season. Worth noting is the fact that residual waste bin missed collections actually fell by 11% during the same period last year. In terms of the number of customer complaints for Qtr. 1, this year versus last year (pre route optimisation). As expected, the complaints trend mirrors that of the missed collections.

Review of Route Optimisation exercise

3.14 In order to also provide an independent view on the impact of route optimisation Resource Futures was contracted by BCC to review the council's waste collection services in order to assess the potential causes of the crews being unable to complete their allocated rounds and identify potential solutions that could be implemented to resolve these issues. Their review has concluded that the route optimisation project has been successful in achieving the expected route analysis, and taking into account the subsequent change in collection days due to the Christmas period, the Council were very much in line with industry norms for the length of time we had experienced service delivery issues.

3.15 The report also recognised that there is room for improvement in productivity with the general waste squads. The data analysis can be used as a useful tool for improving performance management of the squads going forward and from which continuous improvement can be driven. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have also been drafted to help drive that improvement. An action plan will be developed which will be key to maintaining commitment to, medium and long-term view of operational improvement and will enable the success of the project to be more wholly realised.

Immediate Action

3.16 Experienced officers have been tasked with immediate effect internally, from City and Neighbourhood Services to address this and focus on resolving the missed bins issue and improve the customer experience. A detailed action plan will be brought back to committee identifying the medium and long term changes which will help to improve productivity and take into account the new Waste Framework which will require significant decisions on collection methods in the future.

It should also be noted that Audit Governance & Risk Services (AGRS) will be conducting a review of waste collections in this financial year. The objective of this audit will be to evaluate

3.17	<p>and improve the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes within waste collections. This will include recommendations for improvement which will be agreed between AGRS and City and Neighbourhoods. This will provide Members and senior management with assurance to assist them in fulfilling their duties to the organisation and its stakeholders and helps to ensure that Corporate objectives will be achieved.</p> <p>HR/Financial/Asset/Equality Implications</p> <p>There are no human resource, financial or equality implications associated with this report however there may well be human resource and financial implications associated with any future route re-balancing exercises, along with asset implications arising from the implementation of the</p>
3.18	<p>Waste Framework.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None