



Subject:	Water Refill Points - Response to Notice of Motion
Date:	5 June 2018
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Environmental Health Manager, 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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To report to People & Communities Committee on the feasibility of implementing a bottle refill initiative in Belfast.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The People & Communities Committee is asked to consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether they wish to join a water refill scheme for Belfast.
2.2	<p>If Committee agrees to join a water refill scheme for Belfast, they are asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the next steps outlined in paragraph 3.13 below.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>At the meeting of the Council on 1st February, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Milne and seconded by Councillor Kyle, was referred to the Committee for consideration:</p>
3.2	<p><i>“This Council notes that many cities in the UK and Ireland are taking action against plastic waste by implementing free water refill points. Notably, Bristol has been implementing a very successful refill scheme since 2015, and London has recently pledged to increase the availability of water refill points to help limit the amount of recyclable waste sent to landfill.</i></p>
3.3	<p><i>Not only will increasing the provision of free water refill points help reduce plastic waste, but increased access to water can contribute towards people living a healthier lifestyle.</i></p>
3.4	<p><i>The Council, therefore, agrees to assess the feasibility of implementing a bottle refill initiative. Additionally, it will write to the Belfast Chamber of Commerce seeking to determine whether local shops and businesses can work together to provide access to public drinking water. This could potentially increase footfall within local businesses and even further improve the public relations impact of our business community.”</i></p>
3.5	<p>The People & Communities Committee of 6th February 2018 agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting.</p>
3.6	<p>Current Context</p> <p>Plastic pollution has become an increasingly prevalent issue through the additional media scrutiny on the harmful effects of plastic on the marine environment. China has recently imposed quality restrictions on the import of recyclable materials, in an attempt to address</p>

domestic concerns about pollution and public health. This in effect closes down the export of recyclable plastics and other materials from the world's richest countries. The need to reduce the amount of plastic used has become more urgent.

3.7 Plastic bottles are one of the main sources of plastic pollution within Northern Ireland. It is estimated that 12,000 tonnes of plastic bottles are collected every year in NI, equating to 181 million plastic bottles per year. Although there are no specific estimates for Belfast, an extrapolation of the NI average suggests that 33.3 million plastic bottles are collected every year within Belfast.

Refill Schemes

3.8 In relation to refill schemes, there are two main schemes – **Refill Ireland** and **City to Sea**. Both schemes follow the same concept – premises/organisations voluntarily join the scheme, offering the public to get their bottles refilled for free, get a sticker advertising this placed on the front door or window and get mapped onto the website or app.

3.9 **City to Sea** is the original campaign group (established in 2015) and is more established. Starting in Bristol, it now has over 1,600 refill sites across the UK, including 22 in Belfast (3 of which are Belfast City Council sites – Ormeau Park, CS Lewis Square and Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park). Premier Inn and Starbucks are currently signed up to this scheme and mapped in Belfast. They have a smart phone app, making it easy to find refill points when you are in the city. There is also a rewards system for refilling at the signed up sites with a certain amount of points entitling you to a free refillable bottle.

3.10 **Refill Ireland** is primarily based in the Republic of Ireland, though do have a presence in Northern Ireland – Mount Stewart has six refill points mapped. They do not currently have a presence in Belfast and their map is web based rather than a smart phone app that can easily be accessed when in the city to find the nearest water refill point.

3.11 Given that City to Sea has already established a presence in Belfast (including three BCC sites), draws a lot of national attention and is attracting large scale multi-national companies who have a presence in Belfast to join the scheme nationally, City to Sea is recommended as the preferred scheme for Belfast.

Current Water Refill Sites in Belfast City Council Premises

3.12 Currently, within Belfast City Council sites there are eight drinking water fountains:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ormeau Park (two water fountains); • Connswater Community Greenway (at CS Lewis Square); • Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park; • Woodvale Park; and • City Hall (two water fountains) • The Adventurous Playground, Cavehill Country Park. <p>Next Steps</p> <p>3.13 Should Committee wish to join a water refill scheme, it is recommended that the following steps are undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight BCC sites be immediately added to the City to Sea refill scheme; • Officers will approach our operating partners (GLL and Amadeus) and representative bodies (for example Chamber of Commerce and Retail NI) to ascertain if they are also willing to operate and/or promote the scheme; • Begin to promote the initiative through existing communications channels; • Monitor the uptake of the campaign in Belfast; and • Report to Committee on the success of the campaign in relation to take up by other premises. <p>3.14 <u>Resources Implications</u> There are no additional resource implications contained within this report.</p> <p>3.15 <u>Equality Implications</u> There are no equality implications contained in this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None