

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 12th September, 2023

## HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bell, Bower, R. Brooks, Canavan,  
Cobain, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly,  
R-M Donnelly, Flynn, Kelly, Magee, Maghie,  
McAteer, McCusker, Ó Néill and Verner.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;  
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services;  
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies were recorded from Councillors Black and Bunting.

### Minutes

The Committee was asked to note that the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of 8th August had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th September, subject to the following amendments:

- Under the heading Pitches Strategy Update, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading "Pitches Strategy Update" be amended to reflect that a report was being undertaken by Council officers in relation to the use of micro plastics, which would include Health and Safety Risks, and the duties and obligations of the Council, in this regard; and
- Under the heading The Bullring DFC/BSC Capital Project, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to a future Committee meeting in relation to the operation of the Divis Back Path Facility and the reinstatement of the temporary facility management agreement that had previously been in place.

**Request for Matter to be Taken Back for Further Consideration**

**Responsible Dog Ownership**

- under the heading “Responsible Dog Ownership”, the Council agreed that the minute be taken back to the Committee for further consideration, and to allow further information on the issue to be provided.

**Sustainable Period Product Scheme**

- under the heading “Sustainable Period Product Scheme”, the Council agreed that the minute be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

**Street Sign Format**

- under the heading “Street Sign Format” the Council rejected the minute and accordingly, the Council agreed that the report requested on the issue would not be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

The minutes of the meetings of 8th August were taken as read and signed as correct, subject to the amendments as outlined.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in agenda item 4b Matters referred back from Council - Sustainable Period Products Scheme as he had previously collaborated with the Council regarding this scheme.

**Item Withdrawn from Agenda**

The Committee noted that agenda item 5 (d) Belfast City Council (BCYC) Terms of Members and Recruitment had been withdrawn from the agenda.

**Restricted**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following three items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following 4 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

**Presentation**

**All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care**

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. P. Pinto and Ms. K. Charnley representing the All-Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care on what was Palliative Care Week, an annual public awareness campaign that was held each September.

Ms. Pinto commenced by thanking the Committee for the opportunity to present on the work of the Institute. She advised that it had been established in 2011, as a membership organisation that sought to promote excellence in palliative care. It had a total of 28 members, which included hospices, health and social care organisations, charities, and universities on the island of Ireland.

She advised that the Institute undertook work in research, education and practice, and policy and engagement. Through those areas it sought to improve the palliative care experience of people with life-limiting conditions and their families, through the following measures:

- involvement of service users, carers and communities in palliative care delivery and development, particularly through its volunteer group, Voices4Care (54 individuals across the island of Ireland, some of them service users, carers or former carers and interested citizens; inform and guide the work of the Institute);
- working to integrate palliative care across the health system so people were supported as early as possible; and
- supporting the development of specialist palliative care services for everyone who required it.

She detailed that they were currently on the third day of the 10th annual Palliative Care Week campaign. She highlighted that this week was very important because there were many misconceptions about palliative care, often meaning that people who could be benefiting from the services and having a better quality of life did not. Palliative care was usually associated with end-of-life care and cancer, however, she explained that it was much more than that. It was also for symptom management, providing respite for carers and family members and that it could be provided upon diagnosis and for several years, not just at end-of-life. It was also important to highlight that it was not just for cancer, it was also for other conditions such as heart failure, motor neurone disease and dementia, amongst others.

Whilst this campaign was led by the Institute it was very much driven and informed by the palliative care sector. She advised that there were many different events, in person and online, taking place across the island to try and bring more awareness and knowledge to the general public.

She thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present to highlight and publicise the issue and she encouraged the Members to have conversations around death, dying,

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bereavement and advance care planning to ensure that the public was well informed and able to avail of the available services when and if they should need to avail of them.

Noted.

**Financial Reporting - Quarter 1 2023/24**

The Director of City Services summarised the contents of the report which presented a Quarter 1 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, including a forecast of the year end outturn. She explained that the Quarter 1 position for the Committee showed an underspend of £1.2m, representing 0.7% of the net expenditure budget. She also advised that, while the Quarter 1 forecasting was early in the financial year, it obviously fell short of the Corporate targeted £3m in year savings required to deliver a Council balanced budget.

The Members noted that work was ongoing with departments to review plans to ensure that service expenditure was within cash limits by the year end and that revised forecasts would be included in the Quarter 2 finance report.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

**Update on Local Government  
Regional Resilience Function**

The Director of City Services asked the Committee to note the updated Local Government Regional Resilience function and to grant approval of the reviewed Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Belfast City Council.

She reported that the update proposal had been presented to the NI branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) at its meeting in August 2023 and all 10 councils had subsequently been asked to review and approve.

She also referred to an update on SOLACE which provided a summary of a few key current work priorities, the Covid-19 Inquiry, Martyn's Law, an update of the review mechanism for regional partnership arrangements and also upcoming multi agency training. She advised that, in relation to routine work, all councils were active members of the sub regional Emergency Preparedness Groups, and all Council Emergency Planning lead officers met regularly via the Local Government Emergency Planning Group.

A Member welcomed the progress that had been made regarding Martyn's Law and the impact that it was having.

The Committee noted the terms of the updated SLA and agreed that Belfast City Council sign the updated agreement to enable the ongoing support for the regional resourcing model for local government civil contingencies.

**Mullaghglass site update**

The Director of City Services provided an update the Committee in terms of the ongoing legal proceedings regarding the Mullaghglass site.

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A Member advised that complaints had also been received regarding odour emanating from another separate site.

The Committee:

- noted the update on legal proceedings and granted approval for officers to enter into without prejudice discussions with the legal representatives of Alpha Resource Management Ltd. to explore the resolution of this dispute on a consensual basis, based on the advice from Senior Counsel; and
- agreed to submit a report to a future meeting regarding odour nuisance investigation and engagement with other agencies.

**Matters referred back from the Council/Motions**

**Responsible Dog Ownership**

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 8th August which had been referred back to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 4th September. An extract of the minute is set out hereunder:

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**Responsible Dog Ownership**

***The Committee considered the following report:***

***“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues***

***1.1 To provide members of the People and Communities Committee with an update on addressing better responsible dog ownership, in particular:***

- ***The Committee noted the previous update at the meeting on 7 March 2023 and requested a Members’ Workshop to discuss the issues and potential solutions to dog fouling in the city in more detail.***
- ***Actions taken following the Members’ Workshop on 25 April 2023 on Tackling Dog Fouling in the City; and***

- *The deferred decision regarding proposed changes to Fixed Penalty Fines for dog fouling offences and littering offences.*

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 *The Committee is asked to:***

- *Note the actions and outcomes following the Members' Workshop on 25 April 2023.*
- *Reconsider Options 1 – 3 in relation to the new fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and agree a preferred option.*
- *Consider Option 4 - applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences.*

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 PART 1 – Members' Workshop**

**3.2** *A Members' Workshop on responsible dog ownership and the tackling of dog fouling in the city took place on 25 April 2023. An overview of the Dog Warden Service was followed with fouling statistics and trends; the challenges when tackling dog fouling and updates from the various teams in the Council with responsibility for tackling dog fouling.*

**3.3** *Sixteen actions have been grouped under eight headings and since the workshop, officers in the Dog Warden Service, Environmental Education and Outreach Team, Corporate Marketing and Communications, Open Spaces and Streetscene and the Performance and Improvement Unit have held further workshops and been working through these actions.*

**DATA**

**3.4** *ACTION 1 – Consider how best to use data from street inspections / street index data or other data sources to identify hot spots and look at impact. Consider how best to provide data to Members.*

**3.5** *A full analysis of the available data was carried out and the key findings were:*

- *Customer complaints in relation to dog fouling increased by 14% from 21/22 (889) to 22/23 (1013).*
- *The data from the Council's Quality Monitoring Survey evidences a seasonal trend to dog fouling, where there is increased dog fouling in the winter months (December –*

*February) compared with the summer months (June – August). This same seasonal trend has been identified in customer complaints recorded by the Customer Hub. It shows from about November to March in both 2021/22 and 2022/23 there was a sharp rise in complaints.*

- *The number of fixed penalties and revenue from the fines are currently low. Fouling detection patrols are resource intensive and are carried out in pairs. We are continuing to review the opportunity for fouling detection patrols against the other demands on the Dog Wardens time.*
- *There was a greater number of people with dog licences pre-pandemic than post pandemic.*

**3.6** *Outcome 1 - We will continue to use the data from complaints (via public and Members) and the Quality Monitoring Surveys to target hot spot areas and direct resources. Resources permitting, additional fouling patrols will operate between December and February. We are continuing to work towards pre-pandemic levels of enforcement activity. A licensing intervention has been introduced with an additional resource secured to tackle the backlog. Open Spaces and Streetscene will review the available data and determine how best to circulate future performance information.*

**3.7** *ACTION 2 – Benchmark other locations with good practice.*

*We restricted our benchmarking to Northern Ireland as we felt that other NI authorities would provide information that was most relevant to Belfast in managing these issues. 8 of the 10 councils responded. We asked a series of questions about fouling patrols; dog enclosures; dog control orders; signage; stencilling; provision of free poo bags and use of dispensers. We also reviewed the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Briefing 2019 which collated a list of good ideas from local authorities across the UK:*

- *The Green Dog Walkers Scheme*
- *Rewards for residents reporting fouling*
- *Chalk stencils with messages being painted onto pavements*
- *Highlighting fouling with bright coloured sprays*
- *Glow-in-the-dark posters to target night-time fouling*
- *Dog Watch Schemes – inspired by Neighbourhood Watch Schemes*

- *A Council reporting app that allows individuals to identify the location of fouling*

**3.8** *Outcome 2 – Where appropriate the benchmarking findings have been included in the relevant actions below.*

**3.9** *ACTION 3 – Survey / updated research*

*We reviewed available research including that commissioned by BCC and carried out by QUB (Canine Behaviour Centre, School of Psychology) in 2004 and 2009. We have re-engaged with QUB and are hoping to work with the university in the coming academic year to draw up a strategy for new research that will be tailored to our needs. However, the university has stressed that resources are limited and any research will need to be conducted within very tight parameters.*

**3.10** *We also reviewed the most recent research from the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Briefing 2019 which included findings from local authorities across the UK. It notes dog fouling is one of the most prevalent issues for local authority environmental services. It is particularly difficult to tackle for a number of reasons:*

- *People are aware they could be fined, but many do not think they will ever be caught;*
- *Fouling can happen at any time of day or night, so patrolling often will not catch the offenders;*
- *Residents are (rightfully) hesitant to confront residents who persistently allow their dog to foul;*
- *Prosecution requires good evidence;*
- *Attempts to introduce new dog controls to combat dog fouling can lead to a public*
- *backlash;*
- *The public is still largely unaware that (in many areas) they can dispose of dog waste in any available local authority litter bin;*
- *Many people do not consider leaving dog waste bags on the ground fouling.*

**3.11** *Outcome 3 – We will continue to engage with QUB regarding opportunities for bespoke research. We will seek to increase awareness of successful prosecutions and will work to address the difficulties listed above through our education programme.*

**MESSAGING - EDUCATIONAL MESSAGING VIA LEAFLET DOOR DROPS**

**3.12 ACTION 4 – Build on current leaflet drops with public awareness messaging in identified hot spot areas.**

*This is a cost effective and visible action. However, it does have limitations. If we leaflet a street with significant dog fouling, it is not necessarily the residents of that street that are allowing dogs to foul in their own street. In an attempt to mitigate for this we will normally leaflet several surrounding streets. Fouling in gated alley ways can be attributed to specific houses with access to the alley way and only those houses would be targeted through leafleting.*

*Outcome 4 – Dog Wardens will continue to leaflet houses in hot spot areas. Colleagues in our Enforcement Team, who tackle littering, will continue to assist with leaflet drops.*

**3.13 ACTION 5 – Humanise the message, make messaging local. Harder hitting – health impacts / implications, especially to children.**

**3.14** *The ‘think again’ dog fouling campaign was launched during October/November 2022, with a second burst of activity in February 2023 and it has recently been shortlisted for a CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations) Pride Award for best Integrated Campaign. Our objective was to create a campaign using real insights and research to help influence behaviour change by encouraging dog owners to pick up after their dog, take responsibility and Think Again! The campaign used integrated communications consisting of heavyweight advertising, social media and innovative PR.*

**3.15** *Independent research was commissioned to evaluate the paid for advertising element of the campaign and it found that 93% recalled the message; 80% said the artwork was understandable and 72% said its greatest benefit was encouraging dog owners to take responsibility. As the ‘think again’ campaign is so new Marketing and Corporate Communications have recommended that we do not invest in a new campaign creative until 2025/26 in order to let the ‘Think Again’ campaign embed and percolate. The current campaign shows the consequences of not cleaning up after your dog. Future campaigns could focus on the perpetrator (hopefully the QUB research will help us identify main perpetrators) and creative approach would also be reviewed at this time to incorporate feedback from the workshop such as the possibility of having Belfast identifiable images within advertising assets.*

3.16 *Outcome 5 – We plan to develop a new campaign creative in 2024/25 (for use in 2025/26) and will use up to date research to identify who to target and how best to deliver the message.*

3.17 **ACTION 6 – Use of social media in future campaigns, particular focus on targeting hot spots, males under 30 etc. and the evaluation of impacts.**

*Our integrated marketing campaigns already use a wide range of media formats (including social media) to target people during all aspects of their life, when at home before they walk their dog, when they are out walking their dog, when they are online and travelling to and from work. Hotspot areas are currently targeted within current dog fouling campaigns for example during the ‘think again’ campaign Adshel posters were located at hot spot areas.*

3.18 *Outcome 6 – Marketing and Corporate Communications team will select the most appropriate media channels in future campaigns to target hot spot areas based on findings/feedback and select the most effective ways of reaching perpetrators based on any new research findings.*

3.19 **ACTION 7 – Further promotion of the Green Dog Walker scheme to reward positive behaviour.**

*Our Environmental Education and Outreach Team promote this scheme in our parks during summer fun days with Scoop Dog and also support this scheme with social media activity. (See Appendix 1 & 2) Anyone signing up to the scheme must have a licence for their dog so the scheme is raising awareness of the licensing requirements too. By taking the Green Dog Walkers' pledge and using a Green Dog Walker's lead, owners commit to:*

- *always clean up after their dog;*
- *carry extra dog waste bags;*
- *give free dog waste bags to other dog walkers.*

3.20 *Outcome 7 – We will continue to promote our successful Green Dog Walker scheme.*

3.2.1 **MARKETING – SIGNAGE**

**ACTION 8 – Signage in parks / on street, consider positioning / visibility and work with communities on location.**

*Our Open Spaces and Streetscene colleagues in parks will continue to use signage at appropriate locations throughout our parks. Whilst we appreciate the role of signage and agree with Members that location is important, we are reluctant to encourage*

*excessive signage. We believe the current level of street signage throughout the city is sufficient. We will however still consider requests for additional signage but need to be cognisant of the requirement for permission from the Department for Infrastructure should we want to erect signage on its property. As an alternative to street signage we have designed a poster (see Appendix 2) which we can be distributed to local communities in hot spot areas for indoor use.*

- 3.22 *Outcome 8 – Open Spaces and Streetscene will continue to use signage in our parks. The Dog Warden Service and our Environmental Education and Outreach Team will continue to engage with communities and raise awareness of the new poster.*
- 3.23 **ACTION 9 – Signage: Consider materials, design bespoke signs for specific areas. Consider CCTV message as a deterrent, wardens patrolling this area etc.**

*Through our benchmarking we have determined that all councils in NI use signs with a variety of construction materials including metal, Perspex, cortex and banners. There was a difference of opinion as to whether graphic signage or cute dogs were the best way to engage with dog owners. Some include the level of the fines on signage and others do not. Given the limitation to use Dfl property for additional signage we have instead continued to develop our banners (See Appendix 4) that can be used on park and school railings. We will take account of all of the benchmarking information when developing our next campaign during 2024/25.*

*Members had suggested CCTV signage (similar to PSNI speed camera signage) to be used as a deterrent. We have taken advice and use of such signage, when we have no CCTV would mean we would intentionally be misleading the public and it would put us at odds with our own Code of Conduct. We already use social media as a deterrent by advising of current and future dog fouling patrols.*

- 3.25 *Outcome 9 – We will consider the benchmarking findings on signage when developing our next campaign. We will continue to use social media about dog fouling patrols as a deterrent.*
- 3.26 **ACTION 10 – Chase Dfl for permission to stencil. Review stencilling and its impact on changing behaviour.**

*Through our benchmarking we have determined that 7 of the 8 councils that responded use or have used stencilling. Anecdotally, it is considered to be better at raising awareness in the summertime. We have now received confirmation from Dfl that it does not object in principle to stencilling. However, we are*

*required to contact the appropriate area manager for each location, to obtain permission, in advance of any stencilling. This is because stencilling can cause damage to certain pavement surfaces. We have already carried out a small pilot of stencilling at schools in East Belfast and are now waiting on permission from DfI for hot spot schools in North, South and West Belfast. A Quality Monitoring Survey will be carried out before and after in N, S and W and we will then evaluate the effectiveness of stencilling.*

**3.27** *Outcome 10 – Provided we obtain permission from DfI we will undertake a small pilot of stencilling when the new school term starts and evaluate its effectiveness.*

**3.28** **MARKETING – COMMUNITY**

***ACTION 11 – Actively encourage reporting, make reporting process for residents straightforward. Consider pros and cons of providing bag dispensers in certain locations for emergency use.***

**3.29** *In the last year we have amended our online dog fouling reporting form. It has been broken down into several questions which prompt more detailed information and we have found the information provided is more useful for targeting hot spots / individuals. The ‘think again’ campaign also encouraged reporting and our colleagues who manage the social media channels always make a response when fouling is reported.*

**3.30** *We recently ran a Billboard Challenge focused on dog fouling in Spring/ Summer School Term and had an excellent response with 19 schools participating. The Key Stage 2 pupils received an interactive, curriculum-based talk around dog fouling and the issues surrounding it. The pupils then designed their own billboards, and we had 4 winners (N/S/E/W) who had their artwork displayed on a local billboard. (See Appendix 5 & 6). The entries were such high quality we added 4 runners-up, who will receive their entries as a banner for their school. We received positive media coverage of this project.*

**3.31** *From our bench marking all the responding councils provide free poo bags in variety of ways e.g. at pop up events, when on fouling patrols, via Green Dog Walker Scheme, in community centres and when sending out licence renewal letters. There were reports of complaints when supplies at council buildings ran out as dog owners mistakenly thought it was the council’s role to provide bags. In Belfast we will continue to supply all community centres with free dog bags and a poster encouraging centre users to pick up free bags there.*

- 3.32 *Based on the costings for the dispensers that were installed in Belfast during the COVID pandemic we estimate each dispenser would cost in the region of £800 - £1000 to purchase and install. There would then be on-going refilling and maintenance costs. We have over 50 parks and open spaces and most have multiple entrances. The bench marking findings demonstrated some difficulties where poo bag dispensers were located outside – in one trial in 4 parks all the dispensers were either destroyed or stolen, another reported that dispensers were ‘robbed’ almost as soon as they were filled and vandalised dispensers are no longer being replaced. There is the potential when free poo bags are provided in parks for those observed committing an offence to use the lack of poo bags in the park dispenser as a defence. We firmly believe that purchasing poo bags is the responsibility of all dog owners and whilst provision of them at events or during fouling patrols is beneficial, the cost to provide them via dispensers is prohibitive and contradicts the message of responsible dog ownership.*
- 3.33 *Our Dog Wardens will continue to engage with the public to encourage reporting of dog fouling and to provide free poo bags where appropriate. Our Park Wardens will do the same within our parks.*
- 3.34 *Outcome 11 – We will continue to encourage reporting and to provide free dog poo bags at events, at community centres, during fouling patrols and in our engagement with visitors to our parks.*
- 3.35 **SERVICE DELIVERY**
- ACTION 12 – Continue to deliver a visible response to reports of fouling.**
- 3.36 *Through our benchmarking we determined that none of the 8 responding councils patrol 7 days a week as is the case in Belfast. All councils had some scope for variations in the timings of patrols to take account of problem areas, time of year etc. Two of the responding councils have used WISE Enforcement (an external, self-funding company) to enhance / support their Dog Warden fouling patrols. There was no agreement about the best time of day to detect fouling and it was considered to be extremely difficult to detect and more opportunistic in witnessing rather than at planned locations and times. There was a mix of high viz and low viz patrols across the 8 councils with 3 using a blend of both.*
- 3.37 *Outcome 12 – We will continue to deliver a visible response to reports of fouling with the use of social media to highlight our activities.*

- 3.38 **ACTION 13 – Consider dog enclosures in parks; more bins; more resources to deal with dog fouling; and more FIDO machines.**
- 3.39 ***Bench marking revealed that 5 of the 8 responding councils have separate dog enclosures in their parks. Within Belfast there are 2 dog enclosures – one at the Grove and one at Stormont. Previous Committee approval was granted in August 2018 with regards to pilot dog enclosures in the West, South & East, however, due to financial pressures, resourcing and Covid this was not progressed. The financial and resourcing pressures still exist, however, this will be refreshed and updated and taken back through the Area Working Groups and then to Committee for approval.***
- 3.40 ***Outcome 13 – Officers to revisit and refresh the 2018 report and to include graffiti and other pressures such as Anti-Social Behaviour.***
- 3.41 **ENFORCEMENT**
- Action 14 – Bring back report to Committee on increasing dog fouling fine to maximum of £200.**
- 3.42 ***Outcome 14 – See Part 2 of this Committee Report.***
- 3.43 **LEGISLATION**
- Action 15 – Consider if new legislation is needed.***
- 3.44 ***There is provision within the existing legislation for Councils to decide to introduce Control Orders for specific scenarios and in Belfast we have one for dog fouling and one for the maximum number of dogs that can be walked by one person. A legal process which involves public consultation must take place before a council makes a dog control order. Back in 2012/23 the Council did consider Dog Control Orders for dogs on leads and exclusion zones but ultimately decided that more information / consultation was needed prior to introducing additional Dog Control Orders.***
- 3.45 ***All but one of the responding councils have dog control orders including dog exclusion zones and dogs on leads. They apply at various locations e.g. in parks, cemeteries and other specified land owned by the Council and if appropriate at various times. They are restricted to Council owned land because the legislation states: ‘No offence is committed where the person has a reasonable excuse for failing to keep the dog on a lead, or the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the person failing to do so.’***

**3.46** *The primary consideration is to balance the interests of those in charge of dogs against the interests of those affected by the activities of dogs, bearing in mind the need for people, in particular children, to have access to dog-free areas and areas where dogs are kept under strict control, and the need for those in charge of dogs to have access to areas where they can exercise their dogs without undue restriction. Those who responded provided anecdotal evidence that fouling is less likely to happen when a dog is on a lead and our own Dog Wardens agree.*

**3.47** *Outcome 15 – We already have Byelaws that require dogs to be kept on leads on certain council owned land but there are difficulties with enforcement (including lack of a fixed penalty) however a feasibility study could be carried out regarding the introduction of a Control Order for Dogs on Leads in our parks, cemeteries etc.*

*This is to be considered as part of the update report in Action 13.*

**3.48** **FINANCE**

*Action 16 – Report back to Committee in August with costings of options where appropriate.*

**3.49** *Where appropriate, estimated costings have been included under the relevant actions throughout the report. In addition a separate Committee Report, including costings for Action 13 will be submitted at a later date.*

**PART 2 - PROPOSED CHANGES TO FIXED PENALTY FINES FOR DOG CONTROL OFFENCES**

**3.50** *In our report for Committee on 7 March 2023 we provided details of The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which came into force on 30 December 2022 and amend the previous 2012 Regulations. The effect is to alter the amount of a fixed penalty capable of being specified by the Council for certain fixed penalties. We detailed 4 options for the Committee to review and after some discussion it was agreed to defer until a future meeting. 4 councils in NI have already increased their fines and we would ask that the options below are considering again.*

**3.51** **OPTIONS**

- *Option 1 – no change*
- *Option 2 – increase to maximum of £200 with reduction if paid within 10 days. Suggested reduction to £100 as an*

*incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly and avoid court action.*

- *Option 3 – increase but not to maximum with reduction if paid within 10 days. Could be anything from £90 - £190, with any level of reduction.*
- *Option 4 – Consider applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences. The Council previously agreed to set the level of fixed penalty fine for littering at £80, reduced to £60 if paid within 10 days. There would be no additional signage costs as most signs include information about dog fouling and littering.*

### **3.52 Finance and Resource Implications**

#### **Part 1**

*There is currently no additional budget available to implement any of newly the suggested outcomes in this report.*

#### **Part 2**

*There are cost implications if changes are required to signage. We do already have a budget for signage and cost varies depending on the size of the sign and the method of mounting but is in the region of £20 - £25 plus VAT each. The livery on some council vehicles would also need to be removed or updated.*

### **3.53 Asset and Other Implications**

*None*

### **3.53 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment**

*None.”*

*The Committee thanked the Director of City Services for the update report and detailed discussion ensued regarding the ongoing issues that had been highlighted at the workshop.*

*During discussion the following issues were, once again, discussed/highlighted:*

- *The lack of dog off lead facilities in parks and open spaces*
- *Undertaking a feasibility study for dog off lead facilities, citing Wallace Park in Lisburn as a good example;*

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- *Noted the introduction of a new streamlined digital process and the rates charges for concessionary fees for dog licencing;*
- *Enhancing and localising the dog foul media campaign and also promoting and publicising the need for dog licences;*
- *Welcomed the stencilling campaign in east Belfast and sought to extend it to the south, north and west of the city (to include liaison with DfI in this regard);*
- *Discussion regarding the provision of free dog foul bags in problem areas within park locations and not just via community centres and publicising that they were available;*
- *Ensuring adequate bins for disposal were available for the disposal of dog waste and noted the importance of the location of these bins;*
- *The use of Fido machines and need to benchmark with other Councils;*
- *Ensuring adequate staff resources, with costings sought for what would be deemed to be necessary to improve the service;*
- *A suggestion that officers promote and give out advice regarding the Dogs Trust neutering scheme, which was available at a cost of £50 for dogs belonging to owners on means-tested benefits (for a restricted number of breeds);*
- *Sought the location and details of how many people had signed up to participate in the Green Walkers Scheme; and*
- *The development of responsible dog ownership campaigns in the Council's parks and playing field locations.*

*The Director highlighted to the Committee that it had previously decided not to increase the fixed penalty limits for dog and litter offences and asked the Members whether they wished revisit this again in light of discussions.*

*A number of Members stated that they would be opposed to increasing the fees at this stage and would be keen to see some of the other initiatives implemented prior to this measure being further considered.*

*Following discussion, it was*

*Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,*

*That the Committee agrees to introduce option 2 and option 4, as detailed in the report.*

*On a vote, 6 Members voted for the proposal and 13 against and it was declared lost.*

**Further Proposal**

*Moved by Councillor de Faoite,  
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,*

*That the Committee agrees to introduce option 2.*

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***On a vote, 11 Members voted for the proposal and 8 against and it was declared carried.***

***The Committee therefore:***

- ***agreed to adopt Option 2 in respect of fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and dog fouling offences - to increase the fine to a maximum of £200, with a reduction of £100 if paid within 10 days as an incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly;***
  - ***agreed not to apply any changes to littering offences at this time and noted that an update report would be submitted to committee in due course.***
- 

Following consideration of the aforementioned minute, it was

Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Councillor R. Brooks,

“This Council recognises that dog fouling is a continuous problem in our city, with many streets experiencing persistent instances of dog fouling throughout the year.

The Council notes that many responsible dog owners will pick up after the dog, but for many who continue to allow their dogs to foul a change in behaviour is needed.

The Council is asked to undertake a feasibility study on providing street bins in areas where fouling has been a persistent problem. This will include using data from members of the public, elected members and data gathered through the customer hub to identify hot spots within our communities where dog fouling is a problem.

This feasibility should include:

- An initial trial period across four areas of the city where dog fouling is a persistent problem.
- Benchmark across other councils on the use of street bins to deal with dog fouling.
- A cost/benefit analysis to determine ongoing administration costs of providing a street bins scheme.”

The Members agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting regarding the Council undertaking a feasibility study on providing street bins in areas where fouling had been a persistent problem and added that this should also include consideration of the erection of lamppost bins in certain hotspots areas.

In regard to the minute that had been referred back to Committee, the Director asked that consideration of the minute from the 8th August Committee be deferred to enable officers

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to prepare a report on the various options available regarding fixed penalty fines and the Members were in agreement.

A further Member asked for an update on FIDO machines to be included in a future report.

**Sustainable Period Product Scheme**

Extract from Minutes of:-

HYBRID MEETING OF THE  
PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8th August, 2023

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**Sustainable Period Product Scheme**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the success of the Period Waste Scheme (March 2022 - current) and seek direction on future delivery.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and make a recommendation that the Environmental Education & Outreach team will cease provision from April 2024 given that:**

- **current demand appears to have been met through the first two pilot programmes;**
- **there is no available budget to run a third programme**
- **provision will be established through the new legislation**

**2.2 The Committee is also asked to authorise the Director of City and Organisational Strategy to submit a formal written response on behalf of council, as outlined at 3.13, to the TEO consultation on the provision of free period products.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

- 3.1** The aim of the Period Waste initiative was to raise awareness and encourage increased use of reusable period products. This will have an environmental benefit as it will reduce the amount of period waste that is entering our waste stream and being landfilled, and it will also reduce plastic waste. Disposal of single use menstrual products - tampons, pads and applicators generates 200,000 tonnes of waste per year in the UK<sup>1</sup>. In addition, sanitary waste can be made of up to 90% plastic.
- 3.2** In the most recent BCC Waste Composition Study (2014) it was found that 1.87% of all miscellaneous combustible waste (the largest category of waste we collect) was of a sanitary waste nature (including other absorbent hygiene products but excluding nappies). This means each household was producing on average 3.38Kg of this type of product waste per year.
- 3.3** This project was primarily focused on waste reduction but also had the benefit of providing a sustainable resource for those affected by period poverty which is an added pressure on individuals and families as a result of the current cost of living pressures.
- 3.4** The pilot scheme was launched on 30 March 22 to unprecedented demand and in less than 24 hours the pilot had to be closed because of demand. Through the scheme we provided free access to reusable period products to 3,159 people in the Belfast area. Council worked with the social enterprise, 'Hey Girls'. ([www.heygirls.co.uk](http://www.heygirls.co.uk)) to deliver the scheme, where participants could register and order reusable sanitary products online.
- 3.5** Social media coverage and feedback on the scheme was also very positive. Commentary praised Belfast City Council for bringing the initiative forward. Over 95,000 people were reached through Council social media on the topic with over 225,000 people having viewed twitter posts promoting the scheme.
- 3.6** Market research targeted at participants of the pilot found that 94.2% of respondent use the products they received all or some of the time. 43.5% said they no longer use single use period products and 86.9% say it has lessened their use of single use products. The project has recently been awarded the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful 'Behaviour Change Award for Tackling Single Use Plastic' for 22/23.

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<sup>1</sup> Calculation by Natracare 2018

- 3.7 In August 22, SP&R approved expansion of the project and an additional budget allocation so that another tranche of the pilot could be delivered. This was launched in January 2023 and is currently ongoing. To date, 1770 individual orders of products have been processed during this phase of the pilot. As would be anticipated, the rate of requests for products has significantly decreased, given that products are reusable and therefore repeat orders from individuals would not be expected. This pilot continues to be promoted and it is projected that the remaining budget will be utilised by March 2024.
- 3.8 In addition to the extension of the pilot, a project with support from the Climate Change Fund was launched in June 2023. This project engages with partners in the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) to provide them with reusable sustainable solutions to period poverty which they can then pass on to their service users. Officers have been engaging through women's groups and other CVS groups and have shared information with the Women's Steering Group as well as promoting the initiative through council's social media. Any group interested in becoming involved should email [EnvironmentalOutreach@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:EnvironmentalOutreach@belfastcity.gov.uk)

#### Future Considerations

- 3.9 Period products are essential items for personal care to address a normal biological need and should therefore be available to everyone who needs them, regardless of their economic status.
- 3.10 In recognition of this, the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (NI) was made by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2022 and requires that period products will be made available from May 2024. The requirements of the Act go beyond seeking to make provision for those in financial difficulty, there is a recognition that period products are necessary and essential items that should be available free of charge and accessible by all persons who need to use them.
- 3.11 The Executive Office (TEO) is currently undertaking a public consultation process which is seeking views on how best the Executive Office (TEO) can ensure that period products are 'obtainable free of charge' by 'all persons who need to use them', 'while in Northern Ireland'. Further detail on the background is contained in the full consultation document available here: [www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-free-period-products](http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-free-period-products).
- 3.12 A reasonable choice is required by the Act. Within the Act 'products' are defined to include tampons, sanitary towels and articles which are reusable. It is anticipated that there will be an

expectation that council will be a partner in the delivery of this service though no details are available at this stage.

- 3.13 The TEO consultation survey is predominantly seeking the views of those who use period products and/or who buy products on behalf of other family members. Therefore, whilst it would not be appropriate for council to answer the TEO these questions, it is recommended that council should submit a letter of response outlining our support for the need for period products to be offered to everyone as they are essential items for personal care to address a normal biological need and should therefore be available to everyone who needs them, regardless of their economic status. In addition, we will request early engagement with Council to explore our role in any delivery mechanism which is envisaged. Our response will also highlight the learning we have gained from our pilot initiatives on period poverty (as part of our Gender Equality Plan and linked, Belfast City Council launched a pilot offering free period products for the public in council buildings and facilities and free access to reusable period products and) and stress the importance of ongoing collaboration around this issue.

#### **Recommendations for Reusable Period Product Pilot**

- 3.14 The legislative requirement to be introduced by the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 will ensure that period products are available to individuals to ensure period dignity. The reasonable choice element will supersede the reusable period product pilot in that individuals can request reusable items within the legislation.

The Committee agreed 'in principle' to support the scheme, subject to funding. It, therefore, referred the matter to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to ascertain if funding could be secured, it was noted that the report would detail the options available, and that the level of funding, if any, that was allocated would determine whether the scheme could be supported and at what level.

#### **Notice of Motion - Urban Wildflower Meadows**

The Committee was advised that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 29th August, the following motion on Urban Wildflower Meadows, which had been proposed by Councillor R. McLaughlin and seconded by Councillor Long, had been referred to the Committee for consideration.

*"This Council reaffirms its commitment to enhancing our city's ecological credentials. Therefore, this Council is dedicated to a pilot project that will aim to identify one site for wildflower cultivation in each quadrant of the city. These sites must adhere to one of the following criteria: a) Owned by the Council itself, b) Owned by another Government Department, or c) Currently unadopted.*

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*The precise locations for these pilot projects will be presented for discussion during the inaugural convening of the area working groups.*

*This Council comprehends the benefits that Urban Wildflower Meadows can bring to our city, ranging from reduced maintenance to supporting our climate change ambitions, and ultimately leading to Belfast becoming a more biodiverse city.”*

A Member stated that, whilst he welcomed the motion, he felt that much of this had already been included in a previous motion which had been adopted by the Committee in September 2022 in respect of a Herbicide Reduction Policy.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to a future meeting.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Tree Strategy (including a short Presentation on the Strategy)**

(Mr. A. McHaffie, Senior Woodland and Recreation Officer, and Ms. M. McAleer, Performance and Improvement Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. K. Rogers, Project Lead, Treeconomics.

Mr. Rogers commenced by providing an overview of the key aspects of the Belfast Tree Strategy 2022 – 2032, this included detail regarding the consultative process that had taken place with the various stakeholders, including the public.

He referred to the future vision for woodlands, hedges, and tree provision in the city, advising that the strategy had incorporated the aims of the Council and its key city partners and was reflective of existing programmes, such as, Belfast One Million Trees, the Belfast Local Development Plan and the Belfast Agenda. It had also connected with the Belfast Resilience Strategy, Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan with the aim of delivering 37 key actions over the next ten years.

He drew the Members’ attention to the vision of the Belfast Tree Strategy and how this vision would be achieved, noting that the strategy would have a 10-year life span from its launch date and would set out a commitment to delivering key priorities and actions through a fully resourced action plan which would be reviewed at approximately three yearly intervals.

The representative concluded by drawing the Members’ attention to the targets, priorities and actions that had been identified, along with specific detail as to how these would be delivered through the strategy, a copy of which was available [here](#).

The Committee then considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issue**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the outcome of the Belfast Tree Strategy public consultation and to seek approval for publication of the final strategy.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Consider this report along with a presentation on the development of the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan from Kenton Rodgers, co-founder of Treeconomics and to give approval for the publication of the new Belfast Tree Strategy.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

**At its meeting of the 8 November 2022 members of this committee received a report (copy at Appendix 1) on the development of the Belfast Tree Strategy. A public consultation commenced on 24 January 2023 and concluded on 24 April 2023. This included engagement with communities across Belfast with five workshops at the following venues:**

- **Girdwood Community Hub**
- **Falls Park Bowling Pavilion**
- **Avoniel Leisure Centre**
- **2 Royal Avenue Belfast**
- **Malone House Belfast**

**3.2 In total over 900 people attended the workshops during the 12- week period and 500 free trees were distributed along with practical advice on planting and maintenance from Council staff.**

**3.3 This second phase of consultation also contained a survey delivered via the Your Say Belfast Platform on the Council Website. This received 119 responses.**

**3.4 The key findings from the second phase of consultation were as follows:**

- **97% of respondents definitely agree or agree with the vision of the Belfast Tree Strategy.**

- 103 responses came from members of the public.
- Consultation responses were received from every DEA.
- 90% of respondents definitely agree or agree with the Councils targets, priorities and action on Trees and Urban Forest Structure, community framework and sustainable resource management.
- 89% agree with the 23 commitments the Council has set out with the strategy.

3.5 The commentary and feedback during the public consultation phase also included a wider range of views and asked for Council focus on the following areas:

- More trees and green spaces within the City Boundaries and City Centre
- Encourage volunteering and adopt a tree warden scheme to support the delivery of aims of the strategy.
- Stricter targets for native planting within each Council ward
- That the strategy is ecologically vital.
- Tree parks need to be created for peace and tranquility.
- More advice for people planting trees in their own gardens.
- Council to consider the maintenance, including pruning and mixed tree planting.
- More tree planting in working class communities in North Belfast and around the new university.
- Set aside land for orchards.
- Encourage DFI to adopt additional trees or landscaping within their schemes and address issues relating to maintenance (tree roots) in streets.
- Please remember to include native trees and wildflowers, which help pollinators.
- Strongly agree with the aim of developing a new biodiversity action Plan

3.6 Other important stakeholder engagement took place through presentations to and discussions with Belfast City Council Disability Advisory Panel and Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Board. The BBC Radio Ulster Gardening Programme also covered the development of the tree strategy and the public consultation events.

#### National Recognition

3.7 Belfast City Council's progressive approach to the development of the Belfast Tree Strategy has been noted at a national level and the Senior Woodland and Recreation officer has been invited to present a paper on the Belfast Tree Strategy at two conferences:

1. National Tree Officers conference – Reading, England on the 7th of November 2023
  2. European i-Tree conference – Dundee, Scotland on the 20th of June 2024
- 3.8 The development process of the Belfast Tree Strategy was selected in July 2023 by researchers from the University of Cambridge as a case study for their research project on the Management of Physical Infrastructure Systems in Cities to Protect Public Health from Climate Change-Related Hazards.

**Belfast Tree Strategy Action Plan – Development and Delivery**

- 3.9 The Belfast Tree Strategy is accompanied by a 5 year action plan and a copy is attached at Appendix 3. This sets out in more detail the work that must be done to deliver the strategy, its aims, priorities, and commitments, including the actions and resources required for delivery starting from Oct 2023. A number of key actions are prioritised as follows:

1. Move from a 5 to a 3 year tree health and condition inspection Programme for all semi - mature to fully mature park trees, and from a 5 year to a 2 year tree health and condition tree inspection Programme for the Department for Infrastructure street trees which the Council manage on behalf of the DfI.
2. Undertake a detailed canopy cover assessment including woodlands and hedges.
3. Create an ‘opportunity tree planting plan’ for both hard and soft landscape areas across the city.
4. In partnership with the Woodland Trust – undertake a tree equity mapping exercise.
5. Coordinate collaborative arrangements to meet the objectives of the Council’s One Million Tree initiative.
6. Set up and establish a Tree Warden scheme across the city.
7. Coordinate collaborative arrangements to meet the objectives of the plan, including skills building, potential courses and feed into apprenticeship schemes.
8. Develop and manage trees within woodlands and assign a management plan for each woodland.
9. Undertake a Capital Asset Value for Amenity trees of trees owned by the Council
10. Commit to developing a new biodiversity action plan

**Equity Mapping**

- 3.10 One of the actions of the Belfast Tree Strategy highlighted above will be to undertake an Equity Mapping exercise across the city.

- 3.11 Equity Mapping looks at tree canopy cover in terms of health, air pollution, education, employment etc. Typically, lower income areas have fewer trees, and this is something which is acknowledged within the Tree Strategy, and it's recognised that trees should be made available to everyone in all areas of the city. The Woodland Trust are working with American Forests to bring Tree Equity Scores to the UK. This will help cities to assess tree cover and to prioritise areas where trees can be planted to provide the greatest benefits to local communities.
- 3.12 As a result of the close working relationship between the Woodland Trust and Belfast City Council, Belfast along with Birmingham City Council has been chosen by the Woodland Trust and American Forests to test the Tree Equity scoring model before its roll out across all UK cities. It would be important to note that this project will not incur any cost to the Council. As part of the Tree Equity Mapping project, the Woodland Trust would like to mark the launch of this initiative through a tree planting event in Belfast sometime between the end of November and December 2023 with some form of commemorative tree(s) in either a street, or a park such as Ormeau, Falls, Water Works or within a number of local school grounds, all of which has yet to be agreed upon and confirmed.
- 3.13 Discussions are ongoing with the Woodland Trust and if a park is the preferred option to plant a tree(s) we would seek Members approval to proceed, and the Woodland Trust has confirmed they will cover all costs associated with any tree planting.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 The development of the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan to date has cost £30K. The Council has contributed £20k with provision for this made from existing revenue estimates in 2022. The remaining £10k was kindly provided by the Woodland Trust in the same year. Resourcing of staff and equipment required to deliver the strategy and associated activity is detailed within the action plan. Committee are asked to note that delivery of the action plan will require additional resources and investment in the Woodland & Recreation team. A subsequent bid for resources will be submitted as part of the Council budget estimates process for 2024/25.

#### Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments

- 3.15 There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs Implications identified at this point."

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A Member highlighted that he had specifically raised the installation of tree pits as road chicanes in residential areas to increase overall tree coverage, slow the speed of traffic, promote road safety, and support the development of active travel yet he did not see this specifically referenced within the strategy.

The Senior Woodland and Recreation Officer advised that this was part of the ongoing work of the Council regarding street trees, he confirmed that Council officers liaised regularly with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) which was also keen to plant more trees but that both were trying to give awareness to the location of utilities. He confirmed that they were also keen to increase the areas with tree canopy cover throughout the city, however, they needed to be mindful that, equally as important, was ensuring that there was a proper maintenance programme, and that staff and utility providers were properly educated.

The need for utility companies and developers to try and find better alternatives when accessing sites, to avoid cutting down established trees, was also discussed.

The Committee discussed the issue of Tree Protection Orders and acknowledged that these were within the remit of the Planning Committee. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Planning Committee that it consider the options available during the planning application process to encourage developers not to remove existing trees from sites (trees that were not covered by Tree Protection Orders (TPOs)).

The Committee also discussed the success of the Tree Warden Scheme and Forest of Belfast Initiative and the need for these to be citywide initiatives as they had previously been limited to specific areas of the city.

At this stage in proceedings the Chairperson thanked Mr. Rodgers for his input, following which he left the meeting.

The Committee noted the presentation and report on the development of the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan and granted approval for the publication of the new Belfast Tree Strategy.

### **Waste Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 To provide an update to members on Waste Collections Management and performance.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- **Note the contents of the report.**
- **Provide feedback on the current consultation on the draft regulations for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR for packaging scheme).**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**Waste Performance & Recycling Rates – 2022/23 Year to Date**

- 3.1** DAERA has recently published the Northern Ireland, Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics for Q4 (Jan-Mar'23) 2022/23. The general picture is one of a stagnant recycling rate (46%) combined with a slightly increased energy recovery rate (28%) and corresponding decreasing reliance upon landfill (24%) as a disposal route.
- 3.2** An examination of the 12-month rolling figures for Belfast City Council, which in this instance can act as a proxy for the annual figures, indicates the following:
- **Municipal Waste Arisings** – the total tonnage of all types of waste collected by the Council was 158,000 tonnes. This is a reduction of 10,000 thousand tonnes (6%) on the previous year.
  - **Municipal Waste Recycling Rate** – the percentage of all types of waste collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, declined by 1% to 37%.
  - **Household Waste Recycling Rate**– the percentage of household waste only collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, remained unchanged at 41%.
- 3.3** The validated annual figures will be published by NIEA later in the year and an analysis will be provided to Members following their publication.
- 3.4** As noted within this report, there are a number of legislative, strategic and financial drivers which are going to shape future waste management arrangements. Until there is sufficient clarity around this environment, radical, systemic change aimed at delivering significant improvements in the recycling rate are unlikely.

In the interim the Service is exploring initiatives which could be delivered, such as communications campaigns and doorstep engagement, aimed at reversing the trend, aligning with policy drivers and improving performance.

### Waste Framework Update

- 3.5 At the People and 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 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.
- 3.6 The Waste Framework focuses on four themes (i) Collection Arrangements, (ii) Infrastructure, (iii) Behaviour Change and (iv) Technology.
- 3.7 Resources and Fleet continue to look at initiatives and opportunities to develop methods of collection and introduce new schemes to encourage the reuse and recycling of waste as a resource. The following provides an insight on the work and initiatives currently being undertaken under the 4 main workstreams.

### Persistent Organic Pollutants

- 3.8 Members will be aware that at the February 2023 meeting of the Committee the issue of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) was discussed. These are chemicals which can remain intact in the environment for long periods, and if not disposed of properly can have harmful impacts on human health and on the environment. In relation to the handling and treatment of waste these pollutants are to be found in many types of soft furnishings such as chairs, sofas etc as fire retardants or indeed within clothing items with water /fire resistant properties.
- 3.9 In 2022, the Environment Agency in England issued a Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) lasting until end of December 2023 informing Local Authorities that it would be implementing a more robust enforcement regime regarding the treatment of POPs in such waste streams. This is an issue which continues to exercise English Local Authorities as they consider the collection, storage and treatment of these materials, as the RPS states that items with these materials (suspected or otherwise) should be collected, stored internally and transported separately from other waste streams and cannot be put into landfill but be destroyed by permanently changing their chemical make-up i.e through incineration.

- 3.10 In Northern Ireland, the NIEA has yet to issues a Regulatory Position Statement in regard to POPs. Council Officers have requested clarity at several meetings of the Government Waste Working Group, but still await definitive guidance on the matter. The lack of an RPS is of concern to officers as there may be serious consequences in terms of lack of Council infrastructure (collection and storage facilities) and additional costs in relation to the final treatment of the particular waste – in all likelihood the transport to mainland UK or abroad for incineration, hopefully as part of a Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF).
- 3.11 Until such times as a Regulatory Position Statement is issued by NIEA, all identified POPs items collected by the Council will be dealt with under the new Interim Residual Waste Contract which commenced on 1st July 2023, i.e. all residual waste is being pre-treated before export as RDF to energy from waste plants in Europe.
- (i) Collection Arrangements

**Inner City Recycling Scheme Update**

- 3.12 The aim is to transition to a weekly, segregated collection of dry recyclables and food waste, combined with a restriction on residual waste. This was arrived at based on the NI Recycling Gap analysis (WRAP) and BCC bespoke options appraisal (Resource Futures).
- 3.13 A detailed financial evaluation (green book appraisal) on the Council's kerbside recycling collection schemes was completed in October 2021. This was considered at the Waste Programme Board meeting of 8th November 2021 and subsequently presented to Party Group Briefings/Leaders and SP&R Committee in June 2022.
- 3.14 Members requested that Resources and Fleet conduct a feasibility study regarding Option 5 of this report, namely the in-housing of all kerbside recycling, while at the same time commencing a procurement exercise to ensure service continuity in the 'inner city' area beyond August 2024, which is the expiry date for the Bryson contract. The transition from the current two box scheme to the 'wheelie box' solution for the inner city is also considered within this work. The feasibility study on Option 5 is well progressed with an indicative completion date of September 2023, following which it will then be subject to normal governance arrangements.

- 3.15 Resources and Fleet has also initiated the procurement exercise for the continuation of kerbside recycling provision in the inner city. The market engagement exercise has been concluded and officers are developing the contract specification document with the intention to issue Sep/Oct 2023.

**Carpet Recycling**

- 3.16 In November 2021, supported by capital funding from the DAERA Collaborative Change Programme, Resources and Fleet initiated separated collection arrangements for carpets at all Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).
- 3.17 The contract for treating the carpet was provided by USEL Recycling Solutions, an organisation specialising in employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Carpets were brought back to the USEL site in Belfast for quality checking and baling. Before being shipped for further reprocessing with the resultant material being sold into the equine sector as flooring / bedding, across the UK and Ireland. In the first year of operation the target was exceeded with 406 tonnes captured.
- 3.18 Following on from the emerging issues around POPs the contractor for carpet recycling has informed BCC that their treatment outlet is no longer accepting this material if it cannot be declared as free of POPs. Despite seeking alternative arrangements, the contractor has to date been unsuccessful at sourcing an alternative provider as there is a view within the marketplace that carpets will be included in the next tranche of POPS related enforcement and as such companies are seeking to disengage from the recycling of this material. Officers continue to liaise with USEL and DAERA (funding provider for the carpet skips) regarding this matter, but it is envisaged that the solution may result in this material being sent for energy recovery. While this is disappointing, it should be noted that it would be an improved situation vis-a-vis the pre-pilot disposal route which was a mixture of landfill and energy recovery.

**Reuse of Laptops & electrical equipment**

- 3.19 In December 2021, in collaboration with colleagues in Community Services, a small trial of reusing unwanted smart technologies commenced at Ormeau Household Waste Recycling Centre.
- 3.20 Resources and Fleet has taken on board the learning from the pilot scheme and is now, with the assistance of Climate Change funding, looking to expand the duration of the initiative while at the same time develop a more sustainable model not solely reliant

upon external funding. The scheme was launched at Ormeau recycling centre on 5th September 2022.

- 3.21 Despite the efforts of Corporate Communications at promoting the scheme, uptake remains much slower than anticipated. This could be down to a number of factors; cost of living crisis with people holding on to their technology for longer and also the increased number of retail outlets now providing incentives on second hand technology. The Service will assess this scheme at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

*Pre-loved Toys*

- 3.22 Given the resounding success of this scheme last year, at the March 2023 committee meeting, Members agreed to run the pre-loved toys scheme again this year. In line with the recommendations of the report, planning work has commenced earlier this year to explore the general approach and delivery model.

*Kerbside Glass*

- 3.23 A feasibility study on the expansion of kerbside collection of glass was reported to committee in June 2022. Internal discussions are ongoing regarding the financing and delivery plan for such a scheme and will need to be considered in the revenue estimates and rates setting process for 2024/25.

*Community Repaint Scheme*

- 3.24 The Service is exploring the potential for a Community RePaint scheme at HWRCs. Not only would this seek to reduce the amount of paint being treated and disposed of through the sites but it may provide a useful resource to community groups.
- 3.25 In January 2023, Members agreed to the establishment of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in principle with the Community RePaint scheme. The service has launched phase 1 of this initiative which is an assessment of the preferred approach and level of demand. It is anticipated that phase 1 will be completed by October 2023 and phase 2 will then commence, a procurement exercise to appoint the delivery partner, implement communications and launch. This scheme is also supported by the Council's climate fund for 23/24.

(ii) Infrastructure

*Recycling Centres & Dargan Road WTS*

- 3.26 The Service has identified the need for capital funding to replace aged containers (compactors & skips) at recycling centres. A sum

of £160k of non-recurrent funding was allocated to commence this project and the Service purchased six compactors for cardboard which were installed by 1 April 2023. An application for tranche 2 funding has been submitted to the Financial Oversight Board.

**Recycling Centres and Pedestrian Access**

- 3.27 A detailed feasibility study on the potential for pedestrian access to Alexandra recycling centre was presented to Committee in September 2022.
- 3.28 An additional site visit was conducted to assess the potential impact on the trees within the vicinity of the proposed works. This tree study has been completed and the access point has been agreed. The Service is liaising with colleagues in Property & Projects to obtain a time frame for the works.

**arc21 Residual Waste Project and Interim Residual Waste arrangements**

- 3.29 Following the refusal of planning permission by the Minister for Infrastructure in April 2022, arc21 submitted an application for judicial review against this decision. On 31 May 2023, the High Court issued an agreed Order reflecting that the Department for Infrastructure had conceded that this decision to refuse the proposed development of residual municipal solid waste treatment infrastructure was unlawful (on the grounds of irrationality) could not be sustained and was therefore to be quashed with immediate effect. Ecological surveys required by the Habitat Directive are being updated as is other information supporting the application. Clarification on the administrative process for getting the re-determination process underway is currently being sought by arc21.
- 3.30 Due to the prolonged timescales regarding the residual waste treatment facility at Hightown, arc21 initiated a procurement exercise to secure future services for the treatment and/or disposal of constituent councils' residual waste. This service was broken down into a number of lots to reflect the different time scales and material requirements of the constituent councils.
- 3.31 Arc21 awarded the Belfast City Council lot to ReGen with an effective contract commencement date of 1 July 2023. The Council's contractor at that time, River Ridge Recycling challenged this decision through the courts and sought an injunction. On the 26 June 2023, the court refused to grant an injunction to stop the implementation of the contract and the contract for services related to interim residual waste disposal for use by Belfast City Council commenced as planned

on 1 July 2023. It should be noted that while the injunction to prevent commencement of services was not successful, there is still a legal challenge by River Ridge against the award of this contract by arc21. The time frame for this case has still to be determined.

**Connected Circular Economy - Shared Island Project**

- 3.32 The Service continues to work with colleagues in the Economic Development Unit and Climate Team along with Dublin City Council to deliver a feasibility study into a "Connected Circular Economy." This will include the sharing of knowledge and good practice initially, with the ambition for the development of hubs in Dublin and Belfast to support the growth of the circular economy island-wide, leading to a Connected Circular Economy. The final report is due November 2023.

(iii) Behaviour Change

**Recycling Communications Campaign**

- 3.33 Following a request at Party Group Leaders in December 2022 to look into the possibility of a recycling campaign the Marketing and Corporate Communications team has developed an integrated campaign to create awareness around recycling. The campaign "Be Bincredible Belfast" is positioned to inspire and energise people to consider recycling as a mature and responsible act. The campaign messaging sets about getting citizens to think about recycling as a social responsibility, not just a personal one.
- 3.34 The campaign call to action is to make recycling feel like a larger, community-wide effort and encourage people to do a little bit more and recycle the right way. "Be Bincredible Belfast" is very much about celebrating those who have already been putting in the work and letting them know that their efforts are appreciated. The second phase of the campaign is based on increased education and a "back to basics" approach to getting recycling right first time, delivering increased capture of materials and improved quality from an operations point of view. Marketing and Corporate Communications have been working closely with both the educational team and the operations team in the development of the campaign.
- 3.35 The first phase of the campaign will be delivered via an integrated advertising campaign encompassing outdoor, radio, digital (video on demand) and social media and will go live w/c 25th September and will run for approximately 3 weeks. In terms of the educational piece and encouraging citizens to recycle correctly, this will be delivered beyond the initial advertising campaign

using channels such as social media and assets such as City Matters and will be supported via roadshows delivered by the Environmental Outreach Team.

**Waste Access & Acceptance Policies at HWRCs**

- 3.36 A Service Working Group was established with the primary aim of improving the recycling rates achieved at the recycling centres and CA sites. This group looked at the development of effective, Waste Access & Acceptance Policies to assist staff in managing waste on site.
- 3.37 The draft policy has been developed and provided to Legal Services and we await a formal response. Once this has been received, engagement with the Departmental Policy team will take place to carry out an equality assessment and determine the level of public consultation required.
- 3.38 Before this document is finalised, the Resources and Fleet will seek to engage with Members to visit recycling centres and see first-hand the positive work which goes on at the sites and the challenges encountered by staff.

**Tackling multiple black (residual) bins.**

- 3.39 Through previous Committee reports, Officers have asked for support from Members to tackle the complex issues around collections and recycling, and to be aware of the current Waste Collection Policies as Officers look at how these can be applied effectively.
- 3.40 Current policy is that BCC will collect one residual waste bin per household unless an assessment of further need has been carried out and approved by officers. Multiple studies have recognised that one of the most effective ways to increase domestic recycling is to limit the volume of residual waste capacity (per week equivalent) to 'encourage' residents to divert their waste towards recycling waste streams (blue, brown or glass receptacles, including bring banks). Indeed, this is likely to be a major recycling improvement initiative in the DAERA considerations around their proposed Common Collections Guidance, to be published for consultation in due course during 2023.
- 3.41 A working group within the Service carried out a project to target, on a crew-by-crew basis, those addresses identified as presenting multiple bins. To date, several small pilot areas have been completed and learning captured. In recent months this project has been suspended due to other competing priorities (Full Shift cover and Report-It APP). It is envisaged that this project will re-

commence following the DAERA public consultation and the working group will consider how the exercise could be suitably scaled up and accelerated to deliver the anticipated benefits.

(iv) Information Technology

In-Cab Technology

3.42 Following the successful deployment of the Report IT App, Resources and Fleet are currently looking to build on the opportunities modern software systems can deliver. A project is currently underway to potentially procure a system which can:

- Hold all safety information on vehicles and routes.
- incorporate live time information flows to and from the operating centre to crews and vice versa.
- capture all the functionality of the Report IT App
- optimise routes as the city grows to ensure operational efficiency.
- link in with Customer Hub software to deliver customer service.
- monitor vehicle condition and driver behaviour.

3.43 An Outline Business case will be presented to the Financial Oversight Board in September for consideration of capital requirements for 2023/24 financial year.

Operational update - Access Issues

3.44 Members may be aware of 2 ongoing pieces of ongoing work to look at addressing the issues around access to certain streets for our collection vehicles.

3.45 Following the single item Committee meeting in March 2023 to discuss access issues, officers have engaged with officers from the PSNI and DFI to look at what measures might be available within their remit to assist collection crews. BCC officers have identified the most affected streets, based on crew reporting and residents' calls. These streets have been prioritised by difficulty and sorted by post code for the other agencies to consider how to move this forward.

3.46 These streets have also been presented to the Waste Collections operations team in a high level assessment to identify, in their opinion if

- they have current parking restrictions that are not being adhered by motorists or

- they have no current / insufficient parking restrictions where the addition of same might be of benefit.
- 3.47 We will continue to engage throughout the autumn to develop a targeted action plan. This will involve a stepped process that might include member engagement, leafleting of impacted streets, enforcement support and further work on those streets that are difficult to access but do not currently have any parking restrictions.
- 3.48 Secondly, we are in the final stages of agreeing a final report on the possible costs and benefits of utilising smaller refuse collection vehicles within these narrow streets across the city. We intend to have the final report approved in time for consideration within this year's estimating process to bring forward as a potential growth proposal for the 2023/24 financial year.

#### Inter Council / DAERA Collaboration

- 3.49 Council Officers continue to engage with DAERA counterparts in the formulation of policy required to deliver the legislative targets set by Central Government. It has recently been announced that the introduction of the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme (EPR) for packaging has been delayed for at least 1 year and that the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) has been delayed likewise following the difficulties incurred in its introduction in Scotland.
- 3.50 In England, the delay in the EPR scheme also means a delay in the introduction of Common Collections Guidance (CCG) for Local Authorities in England, i.e., EPR is a precursor to CCG. As it currently stands, however, DAERA continues to develop its policies on Common Collections Guidance for NI Councils and officers await notification of a final timetable for any proposed Guidance.

#### Carbon Budget

- 3.51 The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 received Royal Assent on 6th June 2022. It provides Northern Ireland with its first climate change legislation.
- 3.52 The Act contains a legal requirement for all NICS Departments to ensure that targets and carbon budgets are met. This legal duty is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland to recognise the need for strong collaboration in tackling climate change.

The headline elements of the Act are:

- Net zero target by 2050
- Carbon Budget to be set every 5 years.

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- Climate Action Plan to be published every 5 years.
  - Establish a NI Climate Commissioner (being led by TEO)
  - Just Transition Commission and a Just Transition Fund for Agriculture
  - Sectoral Plans (not timebound)
  - Requirement to bring forward Public Body Reporting legislation.
- 3.53 Officers from Resources and Fleet (along with other Councils counterparts) have been attending DAERA stakeholder workshops to contribute to a response to the DAERA consultation on Northern Ireland's 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets. The process is also aimed at informing DAERA on Councils views on the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) [Advice Report: The Path to Net Zero Northern Ireland](#) published on 2 March 2023.
- 3.54 This 16-week exercise, running from 21 June to 11 October 2023, aims to receive feedback on the proposed first three carbon budgets 2023-2027, 2028-2032 and 2033-2037 as well as 2030 (48%) and 2040 (77%) interim targets.
- 3.55 DAERA has stated, 'This consultation provides an opportunity to talk about what we need to do to respond to the threat presented by climate change and about the opportunities that might emerge. Work is progressing at pace in developing Northern Ireland's first ever Climate Action Plan and all NICS departments have a legislative duty to set out how they will reduce emissions. This consultation and the conversations that will take place will be used to help inform the draft Climate Action Plan.'
- 3.56 The following informative slides are taken from the DAERA stakeholder workshops.
- 3.57 As demonstrated in the graphic below, it is estimated that the Waste Sector in Northern Ireland is responsible for approximately 4% of current NI emissions and has reduced its emissions by 61% since 1990 base year. However, the Waste sector is still responsible for approximately 799 CO<sub>2</sub>e kilo tonnes of emissions each year. It is clear that the waste sector still has an important part to play in the reducing emissions overall.

## Waste Sector - Current Emissions

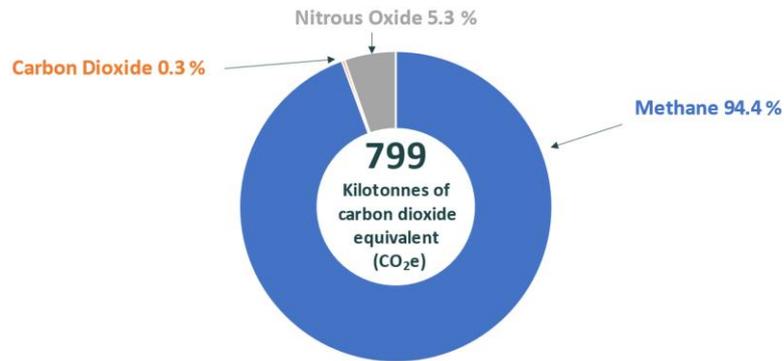


NI's 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets & Views on the CCC's Path to Net Zero



- 3.58** In terms of what the remaining emissions consist of, we can see that the vast majority from the slide below that Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) has the lion's share of the total amount of GHG's attributed to the waste sector at just over 94%, the majority of which originates from the landfilling of waste, especially biodegradable waste. This makes tackling these types of GHG's a priority for the first carbon budget.
- 3.59** The next largest contributor is Nitrous Oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) at 5.3%, Nitrous Oxide is a key challenge for the wastewater sector as it represents a significant component of 'Scope 1' type emissions for the mechanical treatment and storage of wastewater treatment. However, solutions to dealing with this GHG are presently cost prohibitive.
- 3.60** Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) represents only a small fraction of the total GHG emissions within the waste sector.

## Waste Sector – Current Emissions

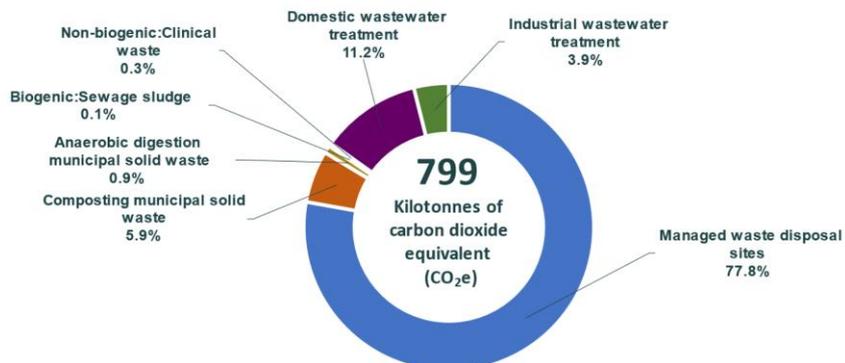


NI's 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets & Views on the CCC's Path to Net Zero



- 3.61 Finally, it can be seen that the source of these emissions are primarily from Managed Waste Disposal Sites, i.e. landfill
- 3.62 This will inevitably reinforce the demand to reduce the amount of waste to landfill in the future through new policy, but there is also the need to address the emissions that are already there, exploring new technologies and innovations to help deal with that.

## Waste Sector – Current Emissions



NI's 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets & Views on the CCC's Path to Net Zero



3.63 These challenges will feed into DAERA prioritisation of policy making in the short and medium term. Stakeholders were informed that it is likely that DAERA priorities will be as follows:

3.64 **Immediate actions**

- Legislate and implement a ban on all landfilling of biodegradable municipal and non-municipal waste from 2025.
- Accelerate investment plans for councils to put in place universal municipal waste recycling collections (Common Collections Guidance)
- Set the 70% NI recycling target for recycling.

3.65 **Medium Term Actions**

- Mandatory business food waste reporting by 2022 (Overdue)
- Phase Out Waste exports by 2030.
- Eventual diversion of all wastes from landfill
- Increased methane capture and oxidation
- Examine the impact of waste reduction and recycling targets on the utilisation of (and need for further) EfW plants.
- New waste conversion plants must be built with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) or CCS ready.

**Consultation**

3.66 DEFRA has launched a public consultation on draft regulations for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging scheme.

3.67 The link to the consultation is as follows  
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/extended-producer-responsibility-team/consultation-on-the-draft-producer-responsibility/>

3.68 This consultation seeks views on how well the proposed 2024 Regulations reflect the Gov response published in March 2022 (which was generated by 2019 consultation on reforming UK Packaging Producer Responsibility System and the 2021 Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging). Please also use in conjunction with the impact assessment published in March 2022

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1063588/epr-final-impact-assessment.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063588/epr-final-impact-assessment.pdf)

3.69 The 2024 regulations will revoke and replace the 2023 Regulations as well as PRO Regulations 2007.

3.70 The draft Regulations also include provisions to:

- Enable the appointment of a Scheme Administrator.
- Allow a Scheme Administrator to raise fees from obligated producers to cover local authority costs for the management of household and binned packaging waste, the costs of public information campaigns, and its operational costs.
- Set recycling targets on producers covering all types of packaging waste (i.e., primary, shipment, secondary, tertiary; household and non-household). • Require certain types of packaging to be labelled to indicate recyclability.
- Introduce a mandatory takeback and recycling requirement for fibre-based composite cups.
- Require all reprocessors and exporters of packaging waste to register with a regulator and to report data, and, for those that choose to, to become accredited and issue recycling evidence.
- Enable regulators to effectively monitor compliance and enforce the draft Regulations.

3.71 The consultation closes on 9th October and our response is being coordinated by our Waste Officer (Compliance and Research), Jennifer Stephens. The questions within the consultation are quite technical and relate to draft legislation. These technical questions are laid out in Appendix 1. Officers will formulate and submit the response and report back to members at the October P&C Committee meeting. However, should any member wish to contribute any views on the questions, please contact Jennifer via email in the first instance to ensure that these views are full captured [stephensj@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:stephensj@belfastcity.gov.uk) .

#### Financial and Resource Implications

3.72 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

#### Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments

3.73 There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.”

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The Committee noted the report and:

- agreed to provide feedback within the timeline on the current consultation on the draft regulations for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR for packaging scheme);
- noted that a report was scheduled to be submitted to the October meeting considering the introduction of additional smaller waste tonnage vehicles, which would include a cost benefit summary of the potential savings in not having missed collections;
- noted that the pedestrian access to the Ormeau Road Recycling Centre was being progressed, however, a different option would be necessary to ensure suitable disability access, an update would be provided in due course; and
- agreed that a site visit would be organised to a Council recycling facility to provide an opportunity for Members to familiarise themselves with the services provided, the challenges faced and the opportunities available to support the local circular economy.

**People and Communities Committee Plan**

The Committee agreed to defer the report to the October meeting to enable the Members to consider its content in more detail.

**Response from DAERA Re: Air Quality Detailed Assessment**

The Director of City Services drew the Members' attention to correspondence that had been received from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in response to a letter that had been forwarded from the Committee in August seeking Air Quality Monitoring Stations to be erected around Primary Schools.

The Committee was advised that, in her response, the Head of Air and Environmental Quality in DAERA had advised that the Air and Environmental Quality (AEQ) Unit had considered the Council's request for funding support for a dedicated ambient air quality monitoring programme to be implemented outside of schools as part of the councils 2023/24 LAQM Grant application. She advised that it fully recognised the importance of monitoring, and this had been reflected in the revised priorities for the new grant.

She referred to the increased rates of funding available for some aspects of the grant which had been determined in an effort to assist all Councils as much as possible, at a time of both financial and funding pressures, and within the correspondence she set out, in detail, the priorities for this year's grant, which included the following key measures:

- Maintenance of existing monitoring;
- Staff costs;

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- Expansion of monitoring; and
- Behavioural change/education campaigns.

The correspondence concluded by stating that she hoped that the funding offered this year, in particular, for the Schools 'idling vehicle' air pollution monitoring and awareness raising project, would go some way to help obtain a better understanding of ambient air quality in the vicinity of schools and to assess the beneficial impacts of mitigation measures.

The Committee noted the correspondence and that the Air Quality Officer would look at the program of monitoring in year and submit an update to the Committee in due course.

**Operational Issues**

**Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs**

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Stockmans Drive, Whiterock Gardens, Dermott Hill Drive, Dermott Hill Park, Linview Court and Thornberry Glen.

**Proposal for Naming New Street**

The City Solicitor drew the Members' attention to an application to name a new street in the city off the Monagh By Pass, as Black Ridge View. She advised that a late request had been received from the developer seeking permission to erect a second nameplate in Irish. She advised the Committee that, should it choose to, it was able to use its Residual Discretion to permit the developer as there was currently no residents on the street to survey.

A Member stated that she did not agree with this approach as it could ultimately result in other developments also being permitted dual language street signs without being surveyed and this might make a development less appealing to some sections of the community.

Following discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to the erection of a dual language street sign at Black Ridge View, off the Monagh by Pass.

On a vote, 14 Members voted for the proposal and 3 against and it was declared carried.

The Committee agreed the application to name a new street in the city at Black Ridge View, off Monagh by Pass, BT11, and agreed to use its Residual Discretion to permit the developer, as per a late request, to also erect a dual language street sign, given there was no residents on the street to survey.

**St Oliver Plunkett Football Club –  
Request for Container**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To advise members of a successful funding application made by St Oliver Plunkett FC to the Irish Football Association/DCMS Grassroots scheme and to seek approval for a one-off funding contribution by Council to help secure the drawdown of this external funding.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Committee note the successful application and agree to permit the installation of a container at Lenadoon Millennium Park for exclusive use of SOPFC for the storage of equipment purchased using the IFA funding. The proposal is that the costs of the concrete base to support the container (Circa £5k) would be provided from revenue budgets as a funding contribution from Council, while the Club will meet the costs of the container itself and that this approach will enable £25k of external funding to be secured.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 St Oliver Plunkett FC has been successful in an application to the Irish Football Association/DCMS for sporting equipment at a value of £25,000. The majority of the club's bookings are made at Council's Lenadoon Millennium Park which is managed under a FMA by the Lenadoon Amateur Sports Community Interest Company. The CIC were supportive of the application.
- 3.2 The club's award is conditional on adequate secure storage being provided and to satisfy this condition the club is requesting permission to install a container on council land at the site. The container would be purchased by the club and placed in a location to be agreed between the club, Council and the CIC. Given ground conditions at the site enabling works will be required to support the container and it is proposed that Council will meet these costs (circa £5k) from current revenue budgets.
- 3.3 Members may recall that at a previous meeting of this committee in December 2022 it was agreed that no further requests for the installation of club owned containers would be considered until a

formal policy had been adopted. Unfortunately, a resource to take forward this work has not yet been identified and in the interim, East Area Working Group made an award of £30k LIF funding to eight soccer clubs in East Belfast for containerised storage in March 2023.

- 3.4 Members are therefore asked if they would wish to accede to the request from St Oliver Plunkett FC to help secure the clubs draw down of the external IFA funding.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

The cost of providing the container at Lenadoon would be met by the club. The cost for the enabling works (£5k) would be met by Council from existing revenue budgets. This approach will secure £25k of external funding for the club.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.5 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation at paragraph 2.0 of the report.

**Issues Raised in Advance by a Member**

**Request to Receive a Presentation – Councillor Flynn**

At the request of Councillor Flynn, the Committee agreed to receive a presentation at its October meeting from Causeway Coast Dog Rescue.

**Policy regarding Bilingual Signage for  
New Developments – Councillor Ó Néill**

At the request of Councillor Ó Néill, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted a future meeting which would consider, as a matter of practice, the Council amending its current policy on naming a new street to permit Developers/Housing Associations to request Bilingual signage as a part of an application for a new street, with the final sign-off being with the People and Communities Committee.

Chairperson