



Subject:	Resources and Fleet Waste Update
Date:	10 February 2026
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director (Operational) CNS
Contact Officer:	Brendan Murray, Waste Manager (Waste Management) Peadar Doyle (Waste Collections)

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

☐

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide an update to members on waste collections, management and performance.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are requested to note the report.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Waste Performance & Recycling Rates</u>
3.1	On 11 December 2025, DAERA published the annual Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Report for 2024/25.
3.2	The overall picture for NI was one of; an increasing quantity of waste collected (1,010,410 tonnes, 1% up on previous year), a stagnant municipal reuse and recycling rate (50%) and a significant decrease in the landfill disposal rate, down from 18% to 14%. This landfill diversion is reflected in an uplift in the energy recovery rate from 30% to 34% for the year.
3.3	<p>An examination of the figures for Belfast City Council, indicates the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Waste Arisings - the total amount of waste collected by the Council was 161,320 tonnes, a marginal increase of approximately 200 tonnes (0.1%) on the same quarter the previous year. • Municipal Waste Recycling Rate – the percentage of all waste collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased by 0.6% points to 39.4% • Household Waste Recycling Rate– the percentage of household waste only collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased by 0.8% points to 42.4%. • Landfill Diversion– the percentage of Council waste sent to landfill was 0.9%. • Energy Recovery - the percentage of Council waste sent for energy recovery increased by 1.5% points to 59.5%. <p>In summary, 2024/25 delivered a positive set of results with incremental gains in recycling and continued maximum diversion of waste from landfill.</p>
3.4	<p>Waste Framework Update</p> <p>At the People & Communities Committee meeting of June 2017, Members approved the Waste Framework document. It provides an overview of options on how waste could be managed within 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.</p>
3.5	<p>The Waste Framework focuses on four themes (i) Collection Arrangements, (ii) Infrastructure, (iii) Behaviour Change and (iv) Technology. The following sections provide an insight on the work and initiatives currently being undertaken under the four main workstreams.</p> <p>(i) Collection Arrangements</p>

	<p><i>Kerbside Glass</i></p>
3.6	Members will be aware that phase one of the kerbside glass expansion scheme was rolled out to 23,000 households in April 2025.
3.7	In September 2025, members agreed to the phase two expansion plans which identified the next tranche of 23,000 households to be included on the scheme. Project planning is well under way and it is anticipated that the scheme will be delivered during February - March 2026 with collections commencing shortly thereafter March - April 2026.
3.8	Upon completion of phase two of the kerbside glass scheme, the Service will conduct a targeted kerbside glass campaign aimed at driving increased tonnage through phase one households and the original purple box area (22,000 households).
	<p>(ii) Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Recycling Centres - Containers</i></p>
3.9	Following SP&R approval for capital funding, the Service completed a procurement exercise for a multi-year, container provision contract. Phase 1 of this contract was completed in 2024/25 with the arrival and installation of 40 skips and 6 new compactor units.
3.10	Phase 2 which involved the delivery and installation of 30 skips and 11 compactor units has been completed with one additional compactor unit still to be fully commissioned as it requires adjustments to the electrical load at the site (Ormeau). This infrastructure will deliver an improved health and safety environment at the sites along with increased logistical efficiency from the new compactor units as well as improving the general appearance of the sites.
	<p><i>Recycling Centres and Pedestrian Access</i></p>
3.11	Colleagues in Property & Projects (P&P) have now appointed a contractor to carry out design work and costings on pedestrian access for Palmerston Road and Blackstaff Way recycling centres. Once costings have been received, the Service will progress this work via the Council's capital works programme.
	<p><i>Recycling Centres and Repair Works</i></p>
3.12	Members will be aware that over the course of the last two years, a programme of repairs in relation to the service bays at the recycling centres has been initiated. These are essential repairs aimed at maintaining health and safety on site and securing long-term service continuity for site users.
3.13	On 3 November 2025, Blackstaff Way re-opened to the public following a four-week closure to conduct these repair works. This saw the completion of the two-year programme of works.
	<p><i>Waste Transfer Station</i></p>
3.14	Following a review of traffic management arrangements at the Waste Transfer Station (WTS) a number of health and safety improvements have recently been completed. These improvements include the segregation of vehicular traffic from pedestrians with the installation of a new fence, refreshed road markings, installation of new signage and the inclusion of a small car park on site for staff and visitors. These improvements can be viewed in Appendix 1: WTS Site Improvements.

	<i>arc21 Residual Waste Project and Interim Residual Waste arrangements</i>
3.15	Members will be aware that there is a legal challenge in relation to the award of the arc21 contract pertaining to the treatment of the Council's residual waste by ReGen. The case has been ongoing for over two and a half years and the most recent information suggests that it may be set for hearing in September 2026.
3.16	The arc21 Residual Waste Treatment Project is still being considered by NI Planning Department.
	(iii) Behaviour Change
	<i>Household Waste Recycling Centres – Policies & Intervention Strategies</i>
3.17	Members will be aware that the Service approached the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) requesting assistance in developing a suite of policies and procedures aimed at addressing the challenges encountered by the recycling centres, previously outlined at the members workshop in March 2025.
3.18	WRAP procured and commissioned external assistance through Circulogic, a waste management consultancy. Following a number of meetings with WRAP and Council Officers, Circulogic completed its report towards the tail end of December 2025. Officers are now reviewing the contents of the report and will report back to members in due course.
	Entries/Alleyways Strategy
3.19	The successful implementation of the bin safety campaign has highlighted areas of the city that historically have presented waste management challenges. Officers are working on a strategy the strategy seeks to address the issues that manifest in these areas for both residents and crews. An internal stakeholder workshop took place at the end of January 2026 to develop the strategy, and a draft will be presented to committee in due course.
	(i) Information Technology
	In-Cab Technology
3.20	The in-cab technology contract was awarded to Whitespace in February 2025 and is now being managed through a multi-stage implementation. The core telematics functionality and enhancements have been transitioned successfully into 'Business as Usual.'
3.21	Work is ongoing to prepare for the implementation of the household waste module of the in-cab system itself. Software development work is progressing for the new system to integrate with the corporate CRM and webforms before installation of the in-cab equipment and the training of staff. Staff buy-in is critical to a successful implementation, and a number of mechanisms have been established to familiarise staff with the new system, keep them apprised of progress and invite their input, including a User Group which includes frontline staff, TU and management reps.
3.22	In parallel, some key decisions are being considered with regard to the large-scale redesign of the household waste routes.
	Policy & Legislation
3.23	There are a number of legislative, strategic and financial drivers aimed at delivering a more circular economy and contributing to the climate action plans. These measures will have a significant impact on the future shape of waste management arrangements over the course of the next five years and are outlined in the policy section below.

	<p><i>Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR)</i></p>
3.24	Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging is a UK-wide reform of an existing Producer Responsibility scheme for packaging.
3.25	The aim of EPR is to move the full cost of dealing with household packaging waste away from local ratepayers to the packaging producers (applying the ‘polluter pays principle’). The goal is to incentivise the use of packaging that uses less material and is easier to recycle.
3.26	The scheme administrator for pEPR, PackUK, is responsible for setting EPR fee rates for household packaging materials, invoicing and collecting fees from obligated producers, and then issuing payments to local authorities to cover household packaging waste management costs.
3.27	PackUK issued the first payments to local authorities in December 2025. The second and third payments are scheduled to be made to local authorities during January – March 2026. From April 2026, local authorities will receive four quarterly payments.
3.28	The funding is aimed at assisting local authorities in delivering efficient and effective recycling services, returning packaging materials to the recycling sector and contributing to future environmental targets.
	<p><i>Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)</i></p>
3.29	The Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) aims to tackle littering and increase recycling of containers that are within the scope of the scheme. This will be achieved by introducing a redeemable deposit on single use drinks containers, which can then be claimed back when they are taken to a deposit return point for recycling. DRS is due to go live on 1 October 2027.
3.30	UK Deposit Management Organisation (UK DMO) is the not-for-profit, business-led organisation appointed by government in April 2025, to develop and ultimately deliver the scheme. This body is currently finalising its leadership team before the focus shifts toward finalising scheme design, advancing key procurements and supporting industry readiness across the UK.
	<p><i>Digital Waste Tracking</i></p>
3.31	Digital waste tracking is intended to enable the tracking of all household, commercial and industrial waste in order to reduce the potential for waste crime and ensure good practice in terms of waste management.
3.32	The initial phase of the project is to go live by October 2026 and will involve “waste receiving” sites which will be able to use API to link their in-house software systems to a central, government database or alternatively input information to a spreadsheet and upload to the Digital Waste Tracking system.
3.33	This is likely to have implications for the Waste Transfer Station, either in phase one (Oct’26) or phase two (Oct’27) and we will now work with the regulator (DAERA), our weighbridge software provider and Digital Services to map out the path to compliance.

	<i>NI Waste Strategy</i>
3.34	The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has launched a public consultation to seek views on the draft <i>Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy</i> .
3.35	The draft strategy outlines 10 targets and over 60 actions to help Northern Ireland achieve its vision of “a resource efficient country where we rethink how we deal with resources and waste, reducing and diverting overall waste, extracting the maximum value from recycling materials to deliver a low-carbon circular economy, with recovery and landfill as methods of last resort.”
3.36	Proposed actions include support programmes, statutory and best practice guidance, campaigns, data refinements, and cross-departmental collaboration. The strategy provides a long-term plan for significant environmental change, alongside short-term actions necessary to drive the required outcomes.
3.37	The draft Strategy aims to integrate policy reforms, modern technology, and partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability. It focuses on controlled wastes from households, commercial and industrial premises, and category 3 animal by-products, contributing to recycling targets and Net Zero commitments.
3.38	The proposed new strategy aims to maximise the potential for better use of resources to prevent them becoming waste, or where generated, to ensure they are captured and processed into products that minimise environmental pollution. It builds on previous plans by broadening the range of sectors obligated, presenting actions to achieve the targets, and setting out the plans to meet net zero. The strategy provides a range of drivers and support, based on the recognition of the different levels of potential from all stakeholders in the value chain.
3.39	The actions within the strategy are designed to help Northern Ireland achieve both the Circular Economy Package targets and the recycling target set out in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 that will require contributions from a wide range of sectors. The Circular Economy Package targets include a municipal waste recycling target of 65% and a 10% cap on the amount of municipal waste going to landfill by 2035. The Climate Change Act requires that at least 70% of waste must be recycled by 2030 in Northern Ireland. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically household waste. Therefore, the sectors in scope of the draft Strategy include <i>household waste, non-household municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste</i> .
3.40	The Consultation opened on 15 th January 2026 and closes on 8 th April 2026. Responses are invited, from both individual members of the public and organisations, including Councils The document can be found via the following link; https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy . The Service is in the process of compiling a response to the consultation which will be brought back to committee.
	<i>Rethinking Our Resources</i>
3.41	The government response and outcome of the DAERA <i>Rethinking Our Resources Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in Northern Ireland</i> public consultation exercise is still awaited.

4.0	
4.1	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no financial implications associated with this report.
5.0	
5.1	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.
6.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1: Traffic Management Improvements at Waste Transfer Station