

Report on	Recycling on the Go
Date of Meeting	11 th January 2022
Reporting Officer	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director – Environmental Services
Contact Officers	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director – Environmental Services

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members of the implications of introducing Recycling on the Go schemes.
2.0	Background
2.1	At the Council meeting on 25 th November it was requested that a paper be brought back to the Environment Committee on the possibility of installing recycling litter bins in the main town centres in Mid Ulster. This is commonly known as Recycling on the Go (RotG)
3.0	Main Report
3.1	RotG involves having on-street recycling bins for individual materials situated in public places where people frequently visit or pass by i.e. town centres, tourist attractions etc. Whilst the RotG concept can promote the wider recycling message and provides the ability to recycle when out and about experience shows that it has rarely been a success.
3.2	Contamination of the contents of RotG bins has been found to be a very big problem. Contamination is the term used to refer to an item of non-target material in the RotG container that accepts only specific types of material for recycling e.g. paper, glass etc. Contamination can also arise in the form of target material that is not in an appropriate condition for recycling e.g. packaging still containing food or grease-stained cardboard etc. Liquid from hot and cold drinks containers leaking into other dry materials is also a significant cause of contamination. A study by Valpak found that 50% of the contents of RotG bins was contamination (non-target materials) including food waste and dog foul.
3.3	Indeed a separate UK wide study completed four years ago by RECOUP found that contamination was a major issue and that overall the costs of RotG outweigh the benefit. In addition to contamination the report also cited the following as barriers to RotG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant budget required for ongoing support communication and education • procurement (a RotG bin can cost up to £850 depending on size and design) • maintenance and collection costs (existing mobile collection carts are not suitable)
3.4	A number of local Councils have tried RotG schemes, many of which have ceased due to the difficulties experienced and those that are still ongoing reported very limited success. Recent feedback from some of our neighbouring local authorities is detailed below:

	<p>Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council previously had RotG bins in place but found the scheme to be very unsuccessful. The bins were mainly used as general litter bins, especially at night, with very high levels of contamination. This gave a negative image with residents as it portrayed that the Council did not actively recycle due to the fact that such severe levels of contamination were seen. They also found that bins were very costly to purchase and were damaged/vandalised frequently so it was not an option to continuously replace them. The bins also involved additional keys for staff to carry and additional bins to empty which led to issues with getting bins emptied frequently enough. Overall, it was felt that the scheme was very hard to manage and not something they would recommend based on their experience.</p> <p>Fermanagh and Omagh District Council introduced RotG bins in 2013 which are currently situated across a selection of their towns and villages. They experience high levels of contamination mainly in the form of take away containers and as a result the contents from RotG bins often have to be disposed of within residual waste.</p> <p>Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council have RotG bins in place in Ballymoney Town Centre only, with intermittent success reported. They have concluded that unless bins are well labelled, monitored and an educational/media awareness campaign is run, the chances of bins being correctly used with little contamination is very limited indeed.</p>
3.5	<p>It is also important to highlight that the litter collected in litter bins across Mid Ulster is sent for processing alongside the residual waste collected in wheeled bins and a portion of same is extracted at the processing facility for recycling. It is equally important to be aware that one of the main aims of the planned Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) in the next couple of years is to reduce “on the go” littering via reverse vending which, if successful, would remove any need for RotG schemes as this would increase the quantity and quality of material collected for recycling in a much more efficient manner.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: There is significant financial investment required to purchase and install RotG bins and based on UK wide study and other Councils experiences it can be concluded that the costs outweigh the benefits.
	Human: Additional staff time and resources required to facilitate emptying of RotG bins.
	Risk Management: None
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: None
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is therefore recommended based on the finding of this report and feedback from other Councils that Recycling on the Go litter bins are not introduced in the Mid Ulster district.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	None