

<b>Report on</b>	Consultation on Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 September 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Mark McAdoo, Head of Environmental Services
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<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To brief members on the content of a discussion document on the "Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland" and to seek approval for a consultation response to be submitted to central government.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) published a discussion document on the "Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland" on 26<sup>th</sup> June and is seeking the views of stakeholders across the local waste industry by the closing date of 4<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p>This year will see the introduction of a range of new requirements relating to the management of waste as part of the Circular Economy Package. This includes requirements around recycling and the separate collection of waste. In particular, businesses who produce mixed waste and waste which is similar in nature and composition to waste from households will be required to present their waste for recycling. As with households, businesses will be required to facilitate the separate collection of the main household waste streams such as paper, metal, plastic and glass (although this will not extend to waste resulting from production).</p> <p>DAERA has stated that this discussion document does not introduce any new policies, but rather is seeking views on steps towards improving the quality and quantity of household and non-household recyclate in Northern Ireland and cutting landfill rates whilst having minimal impact on businesses and householders. It is seeking views on a series of proposals for what our recycling environment could look like in the future and makes suggestions on possible ways to improve the quality and quantity of municipal waste recycled in Northern Ireland.</p>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>																																				
3.1	Whilst the discussion document is to be welcomed there is a concern that this document is being discussed in the absence of an up to date Waste & Resources 'Strategy' or NI Waste Management Plan based on the Circular Economy Package																																				
3.2	A general overriding concern is that the Department is encouraging Councils in particular directions for example in terms of the completely separate collection of some waste streams including food and dry recyclables. Therefore, the Department by default is encouraging Councils towards particular collection systems that may prove favourable to some processors over others therefore creating potential competition and procurement issues.																																				
3.3	Essentially the Department is straying into telling Councils how to collect waste and resources as opposed to sticking to setting Waste & Resource Policy Objectives, associated Targets and Timescales for Councils to achieve. Whilst one size doesn't fit all convergence of communications strategies, waste collection approaches and methodologies is a desirable objective if correctly developed.																																				
3.4	<p>There are 17 key proposals on which views are being sought as to how to increase both non-household and household recycling; these are listed in the below table:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Proposal</th><th>Detail</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>Business food waste</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>Segregating waste</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>Rural Needs Impact</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>Maximising business recycling whilst alleviating cost burden</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>Business waste data</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>Restricting residual waste</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>Food waste from households</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>Changes to core set of materials</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>Definition of core materials</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>Review of core materials</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>Separate collection</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>Separate collection and local decision making</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>Information on the end destination of recyclable materials</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>Improving transparency of information on recycling</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) reporting requirements</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>Performance indicators</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>Developing additional recycling metrics</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Proposal	Detail	1	Business food waste	2	Segregating waste	3	Rural Needs Impact	4	Maximising business recycling whilst alleviating cost burden	5	Business waste data	6	Restricting residual waste	7	Food waste from households	8	Changes to core set of materials	9	Definition of core materials	10	Review of core materials	11	Separate collection	12	Separate collection and local decision making	13	Information on the end destination of recyclable materials	14	Improving transparency of information on recycling	15	Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) reporting requirements	16	Performance indicators	17	Developing additional recycling metrics
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3.5	Proposals 6-14 and 16-17 are those of most relevance to Council waste services and these generally are non-contentious but with three very notable exceptions.
3.6	Proposal 6 states that “ <i>All Councils in Northern Ireland should be required to restrict capacity for residual waste from households to help divert more materials into the recycling waste streams</i> ”. This would require the introduction of smaller residual (black) bins or a reduction in the collection frequency of existing black bins neither of which would prove popular with householders unless there were clear demonstrable benefits delivered via related improvements to recycling schemes.
3.7	Proposal 7 states that “ <i>By 2023 we propose to legislate for Councils to provide all kerbside properties and flats with access to at least a weekly collection service for food waste</i> ”. As members will be aware Mid Ulster District Council operates a very successful kerbside scheme for the <u>fortnightly</u> collection of mixed garden and food waste. This has contributed significantly to the Council achieving a household waste recycling rate of 59.17% in 2019/20, the highest rate achieved by any of the eleven Councils in Northern Ireland. We are of the view that the additional yield, if any, from the introduction of a weekly collection of food waste could not justify the huge capital expenditure and operational changes required to implement same.
3.8	Proposal 11 states that “ <i>We propose to review the separate collection of materials in Northern Ireland and supporting guidance to help clarify the position on current and future collections to help Councils and waste operators in decision making on separate collection</i> ”. From the structure/tone of the discussion document and the supporting WRAP report it is clear that this proposal is leaning in favour of kerbside sort box schemes for dry recyclables (as mainly operated by Councils in the greater Belfast area) instead of a commingled blue bin scheme as operated mainly by Councils in the west of the province including Mid Ulster District Council. We do not feel that a kerbside box scheme would be practicable to operate in a primarily rural district and the capital cost of changing to such a scheme would be enormous
3.9	<p>The above comments have been reflected in our draft response to the consultation which is presented as appendix for consideration. Our response was supported by a series of online workshops which were held by DAERA to assist stakeholders.</p> <p>Full copies of the consultation documents are available via the below link</p> <p><a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/discussion-future-recycling-and-separate-collection-waste-household-nature-northern-ireland">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/discussion-future-recycling-and-separate-collection-waste-household-nature-northern-ireland</a></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>Some of the proposed measures, if implemented, would require very high levels of capital expenditure and substantial subvention funding from central government.</p>

	Human:  Some of the proposed measures, if implemented, would necessitate a change to the current methods of refuse/recycling collection and associated staffing levels.
	Risk Management:  Some of the proposed measures, if implemented as envisaged, could potentially have health and safety implications e.g. manual handling of kerbside sort boxes.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: The third proposal in the discussion/consultation addresses Rural Needs Impact
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note and comment on the content of this paper and to approve the submission of a consultation response to DAERA as outlined.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix - Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland – Draft consultation response from Mid Ulster Council