



# Rethinking Our Resources:

Measures for Climate Action  
and a Circular Economy in NI

Abridged version

March 2024



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

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working, active landscape  
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<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-measures-climate-action-and-circular-economy-ni-consultation>

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## Ministerial Foreword

Our landmark Climate Change (NI) Act 2022 has set the direction and ambition for environmental protection and tackling the ever-increasing impacts of the climate crisis we now face. We are committed to achieving Net Zero by 2050. It is now imperative that all the people of Northern Ireland come together and actively contribute to reaching this crucial goal.



Our current linear economy, where we **take, make, use and waste**, means that [92.1% or 33.6 million tonnes](#) of material is not cycled back into the economy in NI. While some of these materials are used for buildings and infrastructure which last for a long time, unfortunately, most of these precious resources end up as waste rather than being reused, refurbished, re-manufactured or recycled.

### **We need to change this.**

Reducing the amount of waste we generate, the amount we send to landfill together with managing our resources more sustainably by increasing the quality and quantity of our recycling will allow a move to more closed-loop, local recycling systems. This move will not only have benefits in the reduction of greenhouse gases from the waste sector but will also provide significant economic benefits to NI, helping drive a transition to a low carbon, Circular Economy and aligning with the NI Executive's over-arching draft Green Growth Strategy.

**My vision for Northern Ireland is a strong, green economy which values its resources and actively closes the loop by putting as many of those resources back into the system as possible.**

We have made great strides in dealing with our waste and reducing our reliance on landfill in Northern Ireland over the past two decades. We have achieved 50% household recycling by 2020 and reduced the quantity of municipal waste to landfill by three quarters since 2007.

### **We now need to go further.**

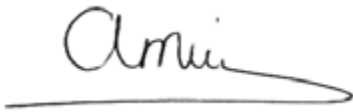
I fully recognise the importance of recycling as part of tackling our waste problem, which is why I proposed the amendment to the Climate Change Act, laying down a requirement for at least 70% of waste to be recycled by 2030. This consultation is an important step in delivering on that ambition.

This means not only making improvements to the way we recycle at home, but also looking at how we manage our resources at work, at school or in other settings. Recycling is the right thing

to do and shouldn't be difficult. With that in mind, I am proposing, through this consultation, to introduce recycling to those organisations and businesses that produce waste which is similar in nature to that produced by households and propose to implement collection systems which mirror those in households to make dealing with our recycling easy and consistent no matter where we are in NI or what we are doing.

This consultation seeks responses to twenty-six proposals focused on household recycling and 'non-household municipal' recycling or business recycling. Parts of this document are complex and technical; it is therefore not necessary for every respondent to answer every question. Please only answer the questions you feel are relevant to you, your business, or your organisation.

Responses to this consultation will be used, along with expert advice and evidence, to develop new policy and legislation with the goal of improving resource and waste management in Northern Ireland, aiding the transition to a low carbon, Circular Economy and tackling climate change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Muir', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Andrew Muir MLA**

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

## Executive Summary

The Climate Change Act incorporates several actions for the decarbonisation of the waste sector and in particular sets out a clear requirement of achieving at least **70% of waste recycled by 2030**. In addition to this requirement, amendments made in 2020 to the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (WCLO) introduced new municipal recycling targets - for households and businesses who produce waste like households. The WCLO requires NI to **achieve a 65% recycling rate for municipal waste by 2035 and a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill** by the same year.

Reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill and managing our resources more sustainably, by increasing the quality and quantity of our recycling will allow a move to more closed-loop, local recycling systems. This move will not only have benefits in the reduction of greenhouse gases from the waste sector but will also provide significant economic benefits to NI, helping drive a transition to a low carbon, Circular Economy and aligning with the NI Executive's overarching Green Growth Strategy.

In June 2020, a discussion document 'Future Recycling & Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland' was consulted on to inform options for the way forward. A summary of responses was published in 2021 and an overview of short-, medium- and long-term options to improve recycling was published in September 2022. In the interim period, between the publication of the Discussion Document and the launch of this consultation, ongoing and fruitful engagement with stakeholders provided useful feedback used to help inform the development of the proposals in this document.

We have made great strides in dealing with our waste and reducing our reliance on landfill in Northern Ireland over the past two decades. We have achieved 50% recycling by 2020 and reduced the quantity of municipal waste to landfill by three quarters since 2007. However, there is no greater challenge facing us today than climate change, and there is an urgent need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors including waste. Increasing our recycling and reducing landfill can contribute to this and the proposals in this consultation can assist in achieving this.

This abridge version of the consultation is sets out the proposals to improve commonality in collections from households and Non-Household Municipal premises.

DAERA would now like to hear your views on how Northern Ireland can take steps towards improving the quality and quantity of household and non-household municipal recycling, how to improve reductions in food waste, how to cut landfill rates and how to get businesses on board to increase recycling rates. The aim of this consultation is to bring forward new policy options for an incoming Minister and questions focus on issues such as how new measures might best

be implemented, considering views on practicality, economic barriers and how the future of recycling in Northern Ireland might look.

You can find a copy of the questions associated with this consultation at Annex A. It is **not** essential for everyone to answer every question, rather, we would prefer you to **only** answer the questions you feel are relevant to you or the organisation you are responding on behalf of.

We are encouraging everyone to respond to this consultation through our Citizen Space website as this makes analysing the responses and any future decision making more consistent and provides better data outputs. However, if you cannot respond using the website and would like to submit your response using a different format, please contact [wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk) to discuss this.

**For more information on responding to this consultation and a link to the Citizen Space website please see Section 10 of this document.**

We look forward to hearing your views on these important issues.



# 1. Introduction

The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is consulting on how the future of our resources and recycling in Northern Ireland (NI) might look. We want to improve the quality and quantity of household and non-household municipal recycling, reduce food waste, decrease the amount of waste we send to landfill and help enhance the services offered to households and businesses.

Resource and waste management has a key role to play in helping to tackle climate change and the transition to a low carbon, Circular Economy. We have ambition for change and key targets to meet, set out in legislation. We believe that the proposals set out in this consultation will help empower the waste sector to lead the way for other sectors through innovation and change, tackling emissions and improving our resource efficiency.

Previous engagement with stakeholders in 2020 provided positive responses to options that could change the way we manage our resources. Engagement with stakeholders has been ongoing since then, and in this formal consultation we are seeking to build on and further improve NI's successful track record on recycling over the last 20 years.

This consultation builds on our previous successes and addresses how changes to help futureproof the waste and resources sector can help us achieve the necessary reductions. The document has nine parts:

1. A call to action;
2. Support for Change, Building on Success and our Legislative Framework;
3. Policy Rationale;
4. Funding;
5. Stakeholder Engagement;
6. Audience;
7. Proposals to Improve Commonality in Collections from Households;
8. Proposals to Improve Recycling of Non-Household Municipal Waste; and
9. Responding to the Consultation.

The aim of this consultation is to gather your views on the proposals so that we can make changes in a practical, cost effective and environmentally sustainable way.

## 2. Part 1: Proposals to Improve Commonality in Collections from Households

In this consultation, 12 proposals are presented to seek views on improvements to collections from households, with an intention to improve commonality, drive up recycling rates and improve the quality of materials collected. These proposals are set out in sections 2.2 to 2.12.

### 2.1 Economic Impact Assessment/Regulatory Impact Assessment

Through our engagement with all eleven councils, extensive modelling has been carried out on household waste and recycling to help support these proposals. As a result, an economic impact assessment been produced to inform policy development.

The three options outlined in the [Regulatory Impact Assessment](#) (RIA)<sup>1</sup> were consolidated from a long list of scenarios. The underlying assumptions were tested with Councils and the top ranking, in terms of cost savings and performance, have been written up as part of the RIA. These options were considered in the Discussion Document and are based on the potential impact on recycling rate, reduced landfill tax, greenhouse gas avoidance, as well as giving indicative capital, operational and transition kerbside recycling and waste collection costs for NI overall.

Table 1 below summarises the net costs and savings of each scenario. All results are shown with constant prices and, where relevant, applying an annual discount rate of 3.5% per year<sup>2</sup>. The analysis follows the Aqua book principles throughout<sup>3</sup>.

Following analysis of responses to Discussion Document and supporting analysis in the Impact Assessment the options on which we are now consulting include:

- Restriction to residual waste capacity in household collections.
- Enhancements to household recycling capacity; and
- The development of a set of minimum service standards for local councils on delivering household recycling collections.

<sup>1</sup> Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA).

<sup>2</sup> HM Treasury, 2018, The Green Book: central government guidance on appraisal and evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> HM Treasury, 2015, The Aqua Book: guidance on producing quality analysis for government.

Summary of impacts of considered policy options (discounted, against baseline) Costs (+) savings (-)	Option 1 HH: Restricted or 3 weekly residual, multi-stream recycling and separate food NHM: DMR + separate food waste + separate glass	Option 2 HH: 3 weekly residual, multi-stream recycling and mixed food and garden waste NHM: DMR + separate food waste + separate glass	Option 3 HH: 3 weekly residual, two-stream recycling and separate food NHM: DMR + separate food waste + separate glass
Municipal recycling rate achievable	74% ** (61% HH, 84% NHM)	74% ** (62% HH, 84% NHM)	72% ** (57% HH, 84% NHM)
Additional LAs net waste management costs(+)/savings(-) from changes in dry recycling and food waste collections for all HHs	£60-80m: £76-101m capital and transition costs, -£16-21m savings on ongoing costs (one year) *	£49m: £66m capital and transition costs, -£17m savings on ongoing costs (one year)*	£72m: £75m capital and transition costs, -£3m savings on ongoing costs (one year)*
Net waste management costs (+)/savings(-) to NHM businesses under increased recycling collections	-£13.5m	-£13.5m	-£13.5m
Monetised benefit of avoided carbon emissions <sup>4</sup>	-£82-87m	-£84m	-£81m
Reduction in government landfill tax receipts (benefits to municipal )	£40-41m	£38m	£43m

Key: \* Cumulative savings would be seen over the life span of a vehicle (assumed 7 years) in options 1 and 2 that could offset the capital and transition costs. \*\* Contamination removed. + Costs. -Savings.

Table 1: Summary of impacts of considered policy options (discounted, against baseline).

<sup>4</sup> HM Treasury, 2021, Valuation of greenhouse gas emissions: for policy appraisal and evaluation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

## 2.2 Restriction of Residual Waste Capacity in Household Collections

**Proposal 1: To restrict the residual waste capacity for households in Northern Ireland to a maximum of 90 litres per week, delivered either via a 180 litre wheeled bin collected fortnightly or a 240 litre wheeled bin collected every three weeks. Councils would decide on the most appropriate methodology for their own circumstances.**

Around 55% of what people put in their residual waste bins is potentially recyclable material. A [waste composition analysis](#) of kerbside collected household waste conducted in 2017, suggests that although there is separate kerbside food waste collection provided by Councils to all households, just under 25% of the residual waste bin is food waste. Just over 15% of our residual waste is paper and cardboard and 7% is glass.

These figures indicate the real opportunities to further reduce waste to landfill and increase recycling in Northern Ireland.

These figures indicate the real opportunities to further reduce waste to landfill and increase recycling in Northern Ireland. We are now consulting on restricting residual waste capacity in household collections. Councils across the UK (including in NI) who have already implemented restrictions on residual waste have typically achieved this through lower frequency collections or by reducing the volume of the residual waste container. [Research shows](#) that where a well communicated, high quality complementary recycling service is provided, restrictions to residual waste can deliver overall financial savings to the council, increase the capture of key, quality recyclable materials, and promote upward movement of resources within the waste hierarchy whilst maintaining high levels of public satisfaction.

Most councils in the UK that have already restricted residual waste capacity have done so by reducing the frequency of collections, shown in Table 2, as this does not require a wholesale purchase and distribution of replacement, smaller containers (and potentially the retrieval of spent containers) where wheeled bins are in operation.

	2009/10 - number of UK LA's	2021/22 - number of UK LA's
Weekly residual collections	245	158
Fortnightly residual collections	219	219
Three or four weekly residual collections	0	32

Table 2: Frequency of residual waste collections operated by UK local authorities in 2009-10 and 2021/22. Source WRAP.

WRAP's [2020 Recycling Tracker survey](#) found that there is a strong correlation with good recycling performance and restricted residual capacity. Almost three quarters (74%) of those with a 3-4 weekly collection of residual waste use a food waste recycling service, as do 62% of those with an effective residual waste capacity of 90L or less per week. Many councils have enhanced their recycling collections at the same time as the restriction to residual waste is implemented.

Currently in NI, most councils collect the equivalent of 120 litres of residual waste per week (normally 240 litre wheeled bins collected fortnightly). Average residual waste capacity provided by Councils in Wales, the highest performing recycling nation in the UK, shows that households have less than 100 litres per week for residual waste<sup>5</sup>. Four factors, are expected to further reduce the residual waste presented for collection by households across NI namely; pEPR; DRS; and clear and consistent communication and engagement with people.

## The Core Set

We are consulting on a comprehensive “core” set of recyclable materials to be collected from all households across all council areas in NI, which will mean that people have fewer materials to dispose of in their residual waste - key to growing the Circular Economy. The benefits of a core set are standardised communications to people and businesses/ organisations; opportunities for higher recycling and lower contamination rates; environmental benefits; and economic benefits to NI.

Proposal 6 in the Discussion Document set out that all Councils in NI should be required to restrict capacity for residual waste from households to help divert more materials from disposal and into the recyclable waste streams. The overall response was extremely positive, with 88% of those who answered agreeing that residual waste capacity should be restricted. Most respondents also believed the restriction of residual capacity should be accompanied by enhanced recycling services.

### 2.3 Options to Ensure Consistency in the Range of Dry Recyclables Collected from Households

***Proposal 2: To require local Councils to collect a core set of dry recyclables from households to help avoid confusion and improve consistency and the quality of recyclable material.***

DAERA considers it is now time to implement changes so that the same range, or “core set,” of materials is collected for recycling from every household in NI. Ensuring a common set of materials will help avoid confusion, enable harmonious communications to be promoted, improve consistency and quality in recycling which in turn supports more local reprocessing of material and the transition to circularity.

Proposal 9 in the [Discussion Document](#) set out that the core set of materials should be glass bottles and containers, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots, tubs and trays, and steel and aluminium tins and cans. Respondents demonstrated a strong belief that those materials should be included in the core set but phased in over time.

<sup>5</sup> Swansea Council provides [60 litres per week](#).

Given the strong support shown in responses to the 2020 discussion document DAERA proposes to legislate that local authorities in NI be required to collect a ‘core set’ of dry recyclable materials from the kerbside of all households, including flats. This core set shall include the materials set out in Table 3.

Material type	Examples of items by material type
Glass bottles and containers	Drinks bottles, condiment bottles, jars etc. and their metal lids, which can easily be extracted.
Paper and card	Newspaper, cardboard packaging, writing paper etc.
Plastics	Bottles including drinks bottles, detergent, shampoo and cleaning products containers, and plastic pots, tubs and trays etc., plus cartons (such as Tetrapak®) which are treated as plastics in recycling collections, due to the plastic layer in the laminate.
Metal packaging	Aluminium cans, foil, aerosol and aluminium tubes such as those used for tomato purée, steel cans/ tins and aerosols.

Table 3: Materials to be included in the core set for household recycling collections.

Table 4 shows that in 2021/22, most councils in NI are already collecting the majority of these materials at the kerbside.

Material	Aerosols	Cartons	Card	Foil	Glass	Metal lids	Metals (cans/ tins)	Mixed plastic film (all)	Paper	Plastics: bottles, pots, tubs & trays
<b>Percentage of households provided with recycling collections of certain materials</b>										
2021/22	100%	100%	97%	93%	75%	65%	100%	0%	100%	100%

Table 4: Households in NI receive collections for recyclable material in 2021-22. Source: WRAP.

Recognising that there may need to be some changes to kerbside collection services, we would expect all councils to be able to provide a kerbside collection of the core dry recyclables within two years (24 months) of notification of a statutory requirement by which time implementation is expected to be complete.

In the [Discussion Document](#), there was agreement that the core set of materials collected at the kerbside should be regularly reviewed and possibly expanded, provided certain conditions are met.

The range of materials would only be added to the core set when supported by evidence that materials can reasonably be collected for recycling and can reasonably be recycled. By this, we mean that there is capacity locally in NI, GB and Ireland or if necessary, further afield into Europe, that it can technically be recycled and that the cost of reprocessing is not prohibitive.

### 2.3.1 Flexible Plastic Packaging (Plastic Films)

***Proposal 3: That additional materials are added to the core set over time when feasible, with flexible plastic packaging set to be collected from households by the end of the financial year 2026/2027***

The UK nations have previously consulted on the introduction of films and flexible packaging to kerbside recycling collections by 1st April 2027 in all nations as part of the pEPR scheme, (published in the [consultation response](#) March 2022). This obligation will be set in forthcoming regulations which will be applicable in NI, with the cost being met by packaging producers.

The core set would be reviewed at this juncture and flexible plastic packaging added. Flexible plastic packaging is defined as “plastic film and plastic packaging which is not rigid”. On this basis all local councils should provide a kerbside collection service of flexible plastic packaging as soon as possible and no later than two years (24 months) of notification of a statutory requirement to collect. We are also consulting on the circumstances which may delay implementation of changes to collections.

## 2.4 Enhancements to Improve Commonality in Recycling Services - Options for Collections from Households

***Proposal 4: To highlight NI’s unique legislation on the quality of dry recyclable materials, the proposed term QualiTEE should be adopted to describe the exceptions to collecting dry recyclable materials separately.***

[Research](#) on glass and [plastic](#) recycling<sup>6</sup> shows that greater separation of materials increases the likelihood of these resources being used in closed-loop recycling processes which significantly enhances the environmental and economic benefits. Furthermore, WRAP’s analysis of [WDF](#) shows that separately collected paper and card is much less likely to be exported beyond the EU for reprocessing but retained closer to its point of production, as also evidenced in 2020 by the [Confederation of Paper Industries](#). This provides vital raw materials for businesses, creates green jobs and infrastructure improvements and supports change by businesses to meet the ambitious 70% recycling requirement set out in the [Climate Change Act](#).

Shorter material supply chains, end destination visibility and reporting, and higher quality outputs are all conducive to the emerging requirements of producers and these will only become more of a priority as pEPR evolves. The [existing legislation](#) asserts that to achieve the high-quality recycling necessary for a Circular Economy and ensure we can reprocess as much of it as

<sup>6</sup> See also [A closed-loop system for recycled plastic bottles saves materials and CO2](#) • [Plastics Europe](#).

locally as is possible, the core recyclable waste streams must be collected separately from each other. The exceptions to this default position are where separate collection is not **Technically feasible**, would entail disproportionate **Economic costs**, or would not deliver the best **Environmental outcome** with the threshold set at meeting just one of these requirements for an exemption to be applicable.

Amendments to the WCLO sets out that any exceptions to the default separate collection position must produce recyclables of a **comparable Quality**. This is unique to NI. No other devolved administration in the UK has material quality enshrined in legislation. As a combined concept, DAERA is interested in your views on naming these exceptions **QualiTEE**, with the notion of comparable quality being fundamental to this new test whilst retaining the technical, economic and environmental aspects of the assessment.

With the legislation set out as it is, Councils that already operate fully separate collections would not need to conduct a QualiTEE assessment.

## 2.5 Establishing the Default Position on Dry Recyclable Collections

***Proposal 5: The default position for collection of dry recyclables from households is in four separate streams.***

DAERA would like your view on whether all councils should be required to introduce a 'multi-stream' collection of the core materials in the dry recycling stream to comply with the separate collection legislation. .

'Multi-stream' here means the separate collection of, as a minimum, (i) paper/card, (ii) plastics, (iii) metals, and (iv) glass at the kerbside, in appropriate containers **which need not be a separate container for each material**. Innovation in collection systems means that new containers have been developed to minimise the number of recycling containers that people use and the footprint that they occupy for households. Examples include 240l bins with inserts for the separate streams or stacker boxes. Please note that Proposal 9 outlines a proposed exemption for separate collection of metals and plastics, where we also are seeking your views.

## 2.6 Justifying Why Collections of Dry Recyclables Cannot Be Separated, While Ensuring Quality and Environmental Benefits

***Proposal 6: Standardised written assessments are prepared by councils where two or more dry recyclables are mixed during the collection process, evidencing why separate collections are not practicable and that Commingled recycling delivers recyclable material of comparable quality.***

There is an existing requirement in [The Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#)<sup>7</sup>, in Section 18 part (2) on local councils, *when collecting waste paper, metal, plastic or glass [to] take all such measures to ensure separate collection of that waste as are available to it*. At present

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<sup>7</sup> Which was amended by the [2020 Regulations](#).



however, there is no standardised template, nor a legislative requirement for waste collectors to assess TEEP compliance, nor to provide details in a written document. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is responsible for ensuring compliance with the duties set out in The Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011.

DAERA wants to ensure that written assessments are consistent and avoid unnecessary financial and resource burdens on Councils and NIEA. The aim is to improve the consistency of written assessments and the circumstances in which the exceptions apply as well as making them easier and less time consuming to complete. Where collection circumstances change, we would expect written assessments to be reviewed.

## 2.7 Details on the Exceptions to the Separate Collection of Dry Recyclables (QualiTEE) for Household Recycling

***Proposal 7: A set of conditions should be set out that define comparable quality, best environmental outcome, technical feasibility and disproportionate economic cost-“QualiTEE”. Where conditions are met, an exception may apply, and two or more recyclable waste streams may be collected together from households.***

***Proposal 7a: Similar guidance on MRF sampling, to that used in England and Wales, should be introduced in NI to ensure that the quality of input and outputs for MRFs can be quantified.***

There are clear trends for a requirement for higher quality secondary materials in the global market such. To reduce NI's reliance on overseas markets and to maximise the capture of high-quality recyclables to grow the NI Circular Economy further, the highest value possible must be extracted from these materials. In order to achieve this the materials need to be of the highest quality.

DAERA wishes to see materials reprocessed as close to their place of production and collection as possible. The details of where there may be exceptions to the separate collections of dry recyclables (QualiTEE) are included in legislation and are set out below.

### Disproportionate Economic Costs

This refers to separate collection which does not cause excessive costs in comparison with the holistic cost of collecting and sorting of a co-collected recyclable streams, taking into account the cost of dealing with contamination and the added recyclate value likely to be observed for separately collection fractions.

Financial impacts could be evaluated in wider economic terms, where we seek your views.

The economic impact assessment linked to this consultation has incorporated real life values provided by councils and calculated average costs (see Annex C), categorised according to

principal recycling collection methodology. A similar meticulous modelling approach could be used to compare the costs of different types of collections and determined on a per household basis, or at an individual council level.

To determine and quantify, we need to understand from stakeholders what they consider a reasonable cost differential to be, and this may differ according to their context.

### Technically Feasible

By **technically feasible** we mean that the separate collection may be implemented through a system which has been proven to function in practice. Some factors may present technical issues in the short term, for instance depot space or availability of suitable containers. These issues could be resolved however through investment and time, in which case the factor is then economic. Where this is the case, consideration of factors in economic terms should be addressed in the relevant economic section of the written assessment, rather than technical.

Examples where local circumstances mean that it is not technically feasible to have separate collection could include, but are not limited to factors such as:

- Storage of containers at premises, outside of individual dwellings.

Note that the following issues are not considered by DAERA as within the scope of 'technically feasible' for the separate collection of recyclable materials:

- People or historical preferences; and
- Rurality - this should be considered in terms of the comparable quality, economic or environmental factors where relevant.

### Best Environmental Outcome

To make the case that separate collection of recyclables does not deliver the **best environmental outcome** compared to the collection of recyclable waste streams together, evidence could include a variety of sources, on which we seek your views.

Various sources of [information](#) demonstrate that greater separation of materials promotes closed-loop recycling processes, which significantly increases the overall environmental benefits gained. Producers who, through pEPR, will be funding a higher proportion of collection and reprocessing costs of packaging material, and with packaging recycling targets to attain, will require evidence that the recycling of packaging material is optimised. Evidence factors should be provided, to demonstrate the difference in environmental outcomes from mixed collections versus separate. Standard default values and data with clearly referenced sources would be provided by DAERA.

## Comparable Quality

It is proposed that two of the evidence factors outlined above are used to determine whether collecting paper, metal, plastic, or glass together results in output from those operations which is of comparable quality to that achieved through separate collection. Standard default values and data with clearly referenced sources could be provided by DAERA in conjunction with Industry. The factors could be comparable quantities (+/-2%) of each material stream sent for closed loop recycling; and comparable quantities (+/- 5%) of each material stream sent for open loop recycling.

### 2.8 Establishing Common Service Standards to Ensure Recycling Quality

***Proposal 8: The quality of recyclate for reprocessing is important and needs to be improved through changes to collections and clear measures should be set to describe quality.***

The co-mingled collection of some materials may result in environmental benefits similar to those observed for separate collection of the four recyclable streams (Proposal 5). Potential costs and technical feasibility notwithstanding, views are sought on material streams that could be co-collected and effectively still generate output material for recycling of a quality comparable with separate collection. Four options are set out for consideration.

Expanding the core set of materials collected for recycling will make more secondary material available for local reprocessors. This expansion cannot be to the detriment of recyclate quality. More restrictive export markets for dry recyclables in recent years have highlighted the need to improve the quality of recyclable materials collected to ensure access to suitable outlets. Higher quality secondary materials enables more closed-loop recycling, as part of our transition to a more Circular Economy.

### 2.9 Other Forms of Partially Separate Collections of Recycling

***Proposal 9: Commingled collection of plastics and metals should be exempt from requirements to collect these materials as separate fractions.***

Most UK Local Authorities that operate multi-stream recycling collections mix the metal and plastic streams in one compartment on the collection vehicle. These materials can be sold to reprocessors as one commodity or can be separated at a depot/transfer station or at a MRF. Co-mingled collection of plastics and metals in this manner is accepted by reprocessors as not having a significant impact on the quality of output material.

DAERA proposes to allow an exemption from the regulations where only plastic and metal is co-collected.

## 2.10 Food and Garden Waste Collections from Households

***Proposal 10: Revisions to household food waste collections to increase capture rates and improve the diversion of food waste from disposal should be introduced, ensuring all householders, including those living in flats, can recycle more and in time have access to separate, weekly food waste recycling collections.***

Annual waste statistics indicate that a significant amount of food and garden waste from households continues to end up in landfill, despite a comprehensive organics collection service being in place to approximately 98% of households in NI. This percentage is based on council's data supplied to WRAP.

If collected separately from residual waste, food and garden waste can be sent for in-vessel composting (IVC) or anaerobic digestion (AD). When treated at an AD plant, food waste breaks down in a controlled way and the methane can be converted into gas (biomethane) that can be fed into the national gas grid, used to generate electricity and/or heat, or used as a vehicle fuel. IVC can be used to treat food and garden waste mixtures where the organic matter breaks down into a material suitable for use as a soil conditioner. DAERA regards the move to AD for the treatment of separately collected food waste as an integral part to the greening of NI's energy infrastructure.

Improvements to food and garden waste collections and the diversion of more of this type of waste from landfill represents one of the biggest opportunities for decarbonising the waste sector and contributing to NI's net zero by 2050 target.

Currently, all councils in NI offer a collection of food and garden waste separately from residual waste. [UK research](#) shows that collecting food waste mixed with garden waste fortnightly can lead to lower yields compared to a weekly separate food waste collection when accounting for comparable residual waste collection systems and comparable levels of deprivation.

Where food and garden waste are collected separately, it is not necessary for garden waste to be treated at an IVC plant and in most cases, it is treated via Open Windrow Composting, a lower cost form<sup>8</sup> of treatment compared to IVC. DAERA is keen to build upon the existing infrastructure and well-established consumer behaviours for dealing with food and other organic wastes from households.

A key challenge for many NI councils is the range of pre-existing long-term contracts that may preclude a change in the short term to separate food waste collections. Taking account of these factors and the current starting point, DAERA is keen to hear views on a range of scenarios for separate food waste and other organic waste collections. Further waste composition analysis is being undertaken to check total quantities and capture rates of food waste.

<sup>8</sup> WRAP's Gate Fee survey does not collate prices for OWC which remain relatively stable at £25-£30 per tonne as quoted in [letsrecycle.com](https://letsrecycle.com)

## 2.11 Mechanisms to Ensure Recycling is Undertaken Correctly by Households

***Proposal 11: Through collaboration with Councils, we will set out proportionate and robust guidelines for compliance and enforcement that enable Councils to enhance their waste and recycling services.***

Most of us want to do the right thing when we recycle. Even with greater consistency of what can and cannot be recycled, sometimes people will make mistakes. Feedback on when wrong items have been placed in containers is vital to improve the quality of recycling and to reduce contamination. Effective communication with people when they're not recycling correctly will ultimately lead to more interventions from, and potentially more resource requirements for, Councils. Therefore, DAERA wishes to understand more on what appropriate enforcement mechanisms might look like.

Through dialogue with DAERA, Councils have highlighted potential challenges with [current regulations](#) and sought further clarification concerning how proportionate and robust enforcement can support them with service improvements. We are proposing to amend these regulations to set out clear circumstances in which councils can take action against people who continually fail to recycle correctly.

## 2.12 Tools to Expand the Opportunities to Recycle More Materials with the Aim of Standardising Services

***Proposal 12: Non-Statutory Guidance will be provided to councils to expand the opportunities to recycle more materials and to embed best practice in existing services.***

DAERA wishes to provide Councils with a framework on good practice for collections from kerbside and communal dwellings, HWRCs and bring sites as Statutory rules and Non-Statutory Guidance. It is intended that the Non-Statutory Guidance would cover a broad range of waste streams which may include hazardous waste, textiles, batteries, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), cooking and engine oils and AHPs (absorbent hygiene products such as nappies and incontinence pads).

## 3. Part 2: Proposals to Improve Recycling of Non-Household Municipal Waste

### 3.1 Municipal Waste - the New Definition

Municipal waste is defined as waste from households and waste from other sources, such as retail, administration, education, health services, accommodation and food services, and other services and activities, which is similar in nature and composition to waste from households. .

### 3.2 Non-Household Municipal Recycling

***Proposal 13: The scope of the revised definition of municipal waste would include mixed waste and separately collected waste from other sources, where such waste is similar in nature and composition to waste from households. Specifically, wastes from production, agriculture, forestry, fishing, septic tanks and sewage network and treatment, including sewage sludge, end-of-life vehicles or waste generated by construction and demolition activities, are excluded.***

Although many businesses already recycle a lot of their waste, there are a large proportion of organisations (hereafter, NHM sector) that have the potential to significantly increase the quality and quantity of recycling by utilising recycling collection services, as found in the [Municipal Recycling Potential in NI](#) report.

To grow the Circular Economy, it will be necessary to increase the collection for recycling of dry recyclables and food waste from the NHM sector. In the absence of reliable NHM sector data, WRAP carried out extensive research in 2019 to estimate the quantity of NHM sector waste in NI. WRAP have updated the key data findings from the report, which are highlighted in the box below.

Updated data gathered by WRAP on the [Municipal Recycling Potential in NI](#) report

- A wide range of private and public sector organisations were identified as generating municipal waste. Within the proposed definition of NHM obligated organisations are various sectors and we are focusing on the sectors producing waste most similar in nature to that produced by households. The sectors in focus are Hospitality, Retail & Wholesale, Transport & Storage, Food Manufacturing, Education, Healthcare (not including clinical waste), Offices and other services (cinemas, libraries, sports centres, tourist information, etc).
- Indicative assumptions suggests 57,920 businesses appear to be generating waste as defined. Around 767,044 tonnes of waste is estimated to be generated each year from the obligated NHM sectors.
- From these 767,044 tonnes, it is estimated that 341,529 tonnes could be collected as dry material recyclates (including glass), c.176,898 tonnes represent total food waste available for recycling with an estimated 124,308 tonnes of non-recyclable materials.
- While some large businesses are already collecting a significant proportion of their waste for recycling, the majority of small business are either recycling small quantities of waste or none at all, with a calculated average NHM recycling rate of 40.6% across all NHM sectors.
- We are also aware that some small businesses take home their waste for recycling or waste disposal, which contravenes [Duty of Care requirements](#) that apply to businesses.

### 3.3 Options to Increase the Amount of Recycling from the Wider NHM Sector

***Proposal 14: Businesses and the wider non-household municipal (NHM) sector will be required to segregate from residual waste a core set of dry recyclables, to improve recycling behaviour and activity and ensure consistency between what people can recycle at home, at school and at work.***

Alongside the separate collection of food waste from all businesses, DAERA is proposing that all organisations that generate municipal waste be required to segregate a core set of dry recyclables from residual waste for collection. This core set of dry recyclables will include glass, paper and card, metals, and plastics as set out for household dry recycling. It mirrors that which we propose to collect from households, ensuring commonality between what people can recycle at home, at school and at work.

[Responses to the Discussion Document](#) found that 95% of respondents agreed that all organisations that produce municipal waste should be required to segregate dry recyclable material from residual waste so that it can be collected and recycled. 64% of respondents to the Discussion Document indicated that it should be practicable for businesses to segregate waste for recycling in all circumstances.

Additional responses showed that 89% of respondents agreed with the proposal for the core set of materials collected at the kerbside to be regularly reviewed and possibly expanded, provided certain conditions are met.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.4 Flexible Plastic Packaging Recycling from Businesses and the NHM Sector

***Proposal 15: Subject to the costs being covered by packaging EPR (pEPR) and confirmation that the material can reasonably be collected for recycling, additional materials will be added to the core set over time, with businesses and NHM producing premises to be required by legislation to segregate flexible plastic packaging for recycling no later than March 31st 2027.***

Changes for business and NHM sectors are required as a result of agreed and emerging EPR policies for packaging materials. The addition of new materials to the core set of recyclables should only be made when supported by evidence which demonstrates that the material can reasonably be collected for recycling and can reasonably be recycled.

For flexible plastic packaging to be added to the core set of recyclables, the costs of collection and sorting will need to be covered by producer payments under pEPR, which is required from 31st March 2027. We are seeking views on timelines, practical solutions, and barriers to segregating flexible plastic packaging from residual waste for recycling from business and NHM sectors. Flexible plastic packaging, more commonly known as plastic film, refers to the lightweight material used mostly in food packaging to extend the life of fresh food products, reducing food waste.

### 3.5 Non-Household Municipal Waste - Food Waste Collections

***Proposal 16: The Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 will be revised to require all NHM premises which generate food waste, to be required to segregate food waste from their residual waste for recycling. An additional two years to implement such changes will be granted for small and micro sized businesses.***

In the Discussion Document, DAERA sought views on a range of proposals designed to increase recycling in the NHM sector. This included a proposal to review [The Food Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#) to ensure obligated businesses segregate food waste for separate collection. The proposal also sought views on extending the Regulations to all

<sup>9</sup> No respondents disagreed with the proposal, 1 respondent was not sure and 5 respondents didn't not answer this question. Thus in total, across all respondents to the question, 98% answered "yes".



business categories, not just food businesses. [88% of respondents](#) agreed that The Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 should be reviewed to ensure that obligated businesses segregate their food waste for collection. Currently, the Regulations only place an obligation on food businesses producing more than 5kg of food waste per week to present it for separate collection. DAERA is now proposing that the Regulations be extended to include all businesses, regardless of size and amount of food waste generated.

DAERA proposes to provide any newly obligated businesses with a notification of at least two years for the statutory requirement to segregate their food waste for recycling and are consulting on whether micro-firms and small firms should be exempt from such requirement or phased into the requirements a further two years later, providing them with four years to implement the required changes. Alternatively, the quantity of food waste produced by a business could be used to determine if the Regulations apply and we are also seeking views on this approach.

### **Anaerobic Digestion as the Preferred Method of Food Waste Treatment**

***Proposal 17: For separately collected food waste from businesses and the wider NHM sector, anaerobic digestion is our preferred method of treatment.***

If collected separately from residual waste, food waste can be sent for in-vessel composting (IVC) or anaerobic digestion (AD) as described in section 2.10. As food waste will be collected separately from businesses and the wider NHM sector, we propose that AD is the preferred good practice treatment for food waste from the NHM sector. Your views on this proposal are welcomed.

### **3.6 Justifying Why Collections of Dry Recyclables from Businesses and the NHM Sector Cannot be Separated While Ensuring Good Quality and Positive Environmental Outcomes**

***Proposal 18: Recyclables produced by businesses and the NHM sector should be collected separately from residual waste, and separately from each other, unless comparable quality is achieved through commingled collection of materials beyond plastics and metals only, and separate collection is not technically feasible, incurs disproportionate economic costs or does not deliver the best environmental outcome; or if a permitted exemption to this requirement is set out in legislation.***

Requirements set out on separate collections for household waste in The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 apply equally to carriers of controlled waste<sup>10</sup> as they apply to district Councils as set out in section 20 of [The Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#).

<sup>10</sup> Controlled waste includes NHM waste, but is a broader term encompassing agricultural waste and construction and demolition wastes, for example.

As we [set out in our proposals for household recycling](#), to achieve the high-quality recycling necessary for a Circular Economy and to ensure we can reprocess as much of it as locally as possible, the core set of dry recyclables must be collected separately from each other, except where comparable quality is achieved through co-mingled collection of materials beyond plastics and metals only and separate collection is not technically feasible, would entail disproportionate economic costs or does not deliver the best environmental outcome.

### 3.7 Details on the Exceptions to the Separate Collection of Dry Recyclables (QualiTEE) from Businesses and the NHM Sector

***Proposal 19: Proposals on conditions where an exception may apply, and two or more recyclable waste streams may be collected together from businesses and the wider NHM sector, which would be required two years following a requirement in legislation to collect NHM recycling separately. In the interim, waste carriers would be encouraged to have regard to the principle of QualiTEE.***

As set out for household recycling collections in sections 2.8 and 2.8, DAERA wishes to see materials reprocessed as close to their place of production and collection as possible. The details of where there may be exceptions to the separate collections of dry recyclables (QualiTEE) are included in The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, which amends the Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, are set out below:

#### Disproportionate Economic Costs

Disproportionate economic costs refer to separate collection which does not cause excessive costs in comparison with the holistic cost of collecting and sorting of a co-collected recyclable streams, taking into account the cost of dealing with contamination and the added recycle value likely to be observed for separately collected fractions.

DAERA considers that while it is up to an individual NHM obligated organisation to decide if economic cost differences between separate or mixed recycling collection schemes are disproportionately higher, this should not result in some NHM organisations paying unnecessary additional costs. This is particularly pertinent in the case of NHM organisations that are hard to reach, or that generate waste in such small quantities that collections may be uneconomic for waste carriers to operate services.

Councils have a duty to offer services to NHM organisations that request waste and recycling collections (article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997). Where Councils are requested to provide separate collections of recycling to NHM organisations that are costly to operate, we would be interested to hear your views on the economic impacts of separate recycling collections. We need to understand from stakeholders what contextual factors will create disproportionate economic costs to operate separate collections.

The contextual factors for consideration are distance of an organisation from other NHM obligated organisations is more than 3 miles, quantity of all core recyclable materials is less than 3 kg per week - roughly equivalent to average yields for an individual household; and use of survival sacks<sup>11</sup> to be collected alongside residual waste.

Where the contextual factors indicate that the distance to travel and/ or the quantity of recycling is very low, we would be pleased to hear your opinions on whether the requirement for separate, or any, recycling collections could be waived, and councils could direct organisations to alternative facilities.

Expanding the breadth of materials collected for recycling will make more secondary material available for reprocessors. Yet just as pressing is the need to improve the quality of recycle collected for reprocessing, ensuring that contamination levels from non-target or non-recyclables materials are reduced, and where possible, eliminated.

It is DAERA's aim to maximise the capture of recyclables, improve the quality of what is collected, and ideally process them back in the local economy. When considering significant environmental benefit and [comparable quality](#), the use of the resulting recycle collected i.e., entering closed or open-loop recycling, process loss and contamination levels should be ideally considered as evidence factors. However, information on these factors is **not** currently required to be gathered for NHM recycling, although plans [for future UK-wide digital waste tracking](#) set out to address this. Therefore, waste carriers are encouraged to consider the broader principles of environmental benefit and comparable quality when determining collection systems for NHM recycling.

### Technically Feasible

A range of circumstances are included and excluded by DAERA as [Technically Feasible](#). Some factors may present technical issues in the short term, for instance depot space or availability of suitable containers.

Note that the following issues are not considered by DAERA within the scope of 'technically feasible' for the separate collection of waste:

- NHM sector or collector preferences; and
- Rurality - this should be considered in terms of the quality or environmental factors where relevant.

As data on two of the four QualiTEE factors are not yet available, we propose that for the first two years of implementation of requirements for separate collections of NHM recycling, that waste carriers have regard to the principle of QualiTEE. It is proposed that waste carriers would conduct QualiTEE assessments after this two-year period if they wished to collect two or more recyclable materials mixed.

<sup>11</sup> A survival sack is often brightly coloured and easy to pull out from other materials at a MRF or other facility. It will contain materials targeted for collection that are exceptions from the normal collected set.

### 3.8 Written assessments from Waste Collectors for Recycling Collected from Businesses and the NHM Sector.

***Proposal 20: Written assessments should be completed by waste collectors that co-collect dry recyclables from NHM premises, evidencing why separate collections are not practicable and that commingled collection delivers recyclable materials of comparable quality to those collected as separate fractions. Collectors must ensure that where they deviate from a standardised template, their output information attains the same evidential threshold. Regular reviews of such assessments should be undertaken to ensure that they remain accurate and up to date.***

At present however, there is no standardised template, nor a legislative requirement for waste collectors to assess **QualiTEE** compliance and provide details in a written document. NIEA is responsible for enforcing compliance with the duties set out in [The Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#). DAERA wants to ensure that written assessments for the NHM sector are consistent and avoid unnecessary burden on waste collectors and the NIEA. Additional guidance could also be provided on what criteria may be included in the written assessments based on the regulations.

To provide guidance to waste collectors on the type of assessment required, we have provided a template for a written assessment in Appendix 3 of the main document, which waste collectors could adapt where appropriate. We anticipate that this template could include default values provided by DAERA, for example on greenhouse gas emissions, to allow standardised calculations to be made.

Collectors can choose to use the provided template written assessment or choose to use an adapted version; however, they must ensure an appropriate level of evidence-based detail is provided, to justify why dry recyclable streams cannot be separately collected.

Where collection circumstances change, which may be more commonplace for recycling collections from businesses, written assessments should be regularly reviewed. Waste collectors should also complete one version of the written assessment form for each set of premises for which they intend to rely on one of the exceptions (comparable quality, technical feasibility and best available environmental outcome), to set out why the exception applies.

### 3.9 Establishing NHM Service Standards to Improve Recycling Collections

***Proposal 21: To introduce, or where existing, improve NHM recycling collections.***

In the Discussion Document, [63% of respondents](#) indicated mixed dry recycling, separate food waste recycling and separate glass collection as their preferred option (as opposed to 7% in favour of mixed dry recycling, separate food waste recycling, no glass recycling). In addition, 23% of respondents favoured options that were not neatly described, with some suggesting fully mixed collections of dry materials or a combination of no glass, separate glass, or a commingled collection.

Positive responses to options in the Discussion Document, warrant your further views, namely:

**(i) mixed dry recycling and separate food waste**

This option would require all businesses and public sector organisations to separate the following streams from residual waste: a) food waste; and b) dry mixed recycling comprising plastics, paper & card and cans.

It was estimated this could deliver a recycling rate of over 70% for the NHM sector as calculated in the [Regulatory Impact Assessment](#) (Annex C).

**(ii) mixed dry recycling, separate glass, and separate food waste**

In this option, all businesses and organisations would be required to collect separately from residual waste: a) food waste; b) dry mixed recycling comprising plastics, paper & card and cans; with c) glass collected as a separate fraction where this material is generated in quantities above the capacity of a 120 L wheeled bin per week<sup>12</sup>.

It was estimated that this option could deliver a four-percentage point uplift in recycling performance where glass is required to be collected separately from residual waste and other dry recycling streams, but in all other respects is unchanged from option (i).

### 3.10 Reducing Barriers to Recycling for Non-Household Municipal Waste Sector

***Proposal 22: We will continue to review and investigate options to reduce costs for businesses and NHM premises where possible to maximise their recycling behaviour and activity.***

DAERA recognises the challenges faced by some businesses and the barriers that exist to achieving higher recycling rates, particularly for small and micro-firms. We want to improve access to recycling, reduce the costs for businesses as far as is feasible and remove or reduce these barriers. Such barriers might include:

- financial constraints;
- binding contractual terms preventing changes to a service, in that contracts are usually a minimum of 1 year in length and changes are not usually possible;
- space for segregation of waste, particularly at smaller premises;
- lower levels of staff engagement and knowledge to segregate waste; and
- limits to services offered by waste contractors.

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<sup>12</sup> The maximum weight of material that can be accommodated in [one manufacturer's example](#) of a 120l wheeled bin is 48 kg. The bulk density, [estimated by WRAP](#), of uncompacted glass in a box is 276kg/m<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the weight of uncompacted glass in a 120l bin would be approximately 33kg. With the weight of an empty bin at 8kg, we feel that 120l provides appropriate containment for glass than can be safely handled and well within the quoted tolerance of 48kg.

There may also be additional barriers to recycling faced by businesses in rural locations, businesses based in homes and non-domestic premises. Understanding legislative changes and requirements can also be more difficult for some types of businesses.

In the [Discussion Document](#), DAERA sought views on options to maximise business recycling whilst alleviating the cost burden on businesses where possible. DAERA has hosted a series of workshops with local councils, waste sorters, collectors and reprocessors, trade bodies and business support organisations to outline potential changes to waste collections.

We would like to hear views on the type(s) of business support that would be most useful for obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations to ensure they understand their obligations and enable them to recycle more of their waste.

A key learning point from responses to the Discussion Document was a call for more information on recycling in workplace or NHM settings. Whilst DAERA recognises the challenges that exist, there are opportunities through networks that can be used to disseminate information on planned future reforms to waste collection services. DAERA will continue to engage with these networks and explore dissemination routes with stakeholders.

### 3.11 Arrangements for Micro Firms or Small Firms

***Proposal 23: Businesses and the NHM sector will be provided with a minimum two-year notification of a statutory requirement to collect dry recyclables as separate streams, segregated from residual waste, with a further phasing of such legislative requirements for small and micro businesses producing NHM waste.***

Recognising that greater barriers may exist for small firms and micro firms with further barriers to recycling potentially faced by those businesses operating in rural locations, businesses based in homes and non-domestic premises, we wish to receive views on options which could exempt micro or small firms from the changes or provide them with additional time to prepare. We wish to receive your views on these two options: **Option 1** Micro and small firms/producers of NHM waste should be exempt from the requirement and **Option 2** where micro and small firms/producers are phased into the proposed recycling commonality requirements.

We are also consulting on the barriers to waste collectors' abilities to collect the required dry recyclable streams from all of the NHM sector, including from small and micro firms, in the time frame proposed.

### 3.12 Waste Franchising / Zoning: To Review Collection Zoning and Franchising for Businesses and NHM Premises

***Proposal 24 - to review collection zoning and franchising to reduce costs to businesses and NHM premises.***

Franchising or zoning of waste or recycling collection services could be used as an approach to alleviate cost on businesses, where partnerships or local councils would collect waste from businesses and other similar organisations in particular areas of a defined geographic area (e.g., town), through an awarded contract.

DAERA proposes to continue to explore options to potentially reduce the cost burden for NHM waste producers and are seeking further views on waste zoning/franchising and collaborative procurement options. We continue to develop these and other cost reduction options consulted on previously.

In the Discussion Document, we asked for views on regional procurement of services to enable economies of scale and potentially reduce charges levied on businesses. [75% of respondents](#) said that regional procurement would be very likely or likely to reduce charges levied on businesses.

If a franchising/zoning scheme were to be introduced, we are interested in your views on the recyclable streams that should be included under a potential franchising/zoning scheme available for NHM.

Similarly, opinions are sought for the types of zoning, the sizes of zones and/or collaborative procurement options.

As part of the consultation on franchising and zoning, we wish to know what the roles of stakeholders could be. We see the stakeholder groups as being DAERA, NIEA, BIDs, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), waste producers, Councils, and trade bodies, although there may be other groups too.

### 3.13 Options to Provide NHM Waste Bring Sites and/or Access to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) for Businesses and the Wider NHM Sector

***Proposal 25: To establish commercial waste bring sites and/or to increase the access to HWRCs for businesses, public bodies, and other organisations to encourage more recycling and better waste management.***

As well as dedicated collections from business or NHM premises, extending the range of facilities where waste or recyclables could be taken for disposal or recycling could help small or micro firms to recycle more, whilst increasing convenience, reducing costs and any space

issues. Such facilities could be developed for small firms to deposit high quality recyclables or could be attached to other waste management facilities such as HWRCs.

By allowing smaller businesses access to HWRCs, councils may be able to limit the operational challenges of providing collections to smaller businesses. Good practice information can be found in [“drop-off” guide](#). The opportunity to implement charges is in line with existing legislation and waste classifications as detailed in [The Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations \(NI\) 2013](#).

The Department would also like to receive views on the viability of commercial waste bring sites, to facilitate an increase in recycling for businesses and the NHM sector. We are seeking to explore the types of barriers regarding the creation and operation of commercial waste bring sites, such as lack of suitable location(s), access restrictions and risks of misuse of sites or contamination of recycling.

### **3.14 Non-Household Municipal Waste - Compliance & Enforcement**

***Proposal 26: Amendments will be made to Article 5 of The Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 to ensure compliance with the post-consultation requirements to segregate a core set of dry recyclables and food waste by obligated businesses and the wider NHM sector.***

We propose to extend Article 5 of The [Waste and Contaminated Land \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#) to ensure compliance with the requirements that will be set out subsequent to this consultation, to segregate a core set of dry recyclables and food waste by obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations. The Article relates to the Duty of Care of waste producers and requires DAERA, following consultation, to prepare and issue a code of practice. We are seeking your views on this. We are also interested in opinions on the appropriate level of penalty for non-compliance. By comparison, the fixed penalty on a waste carrier or producer for not supplying documents is currently set at £300.



## 4. Responding to the Consultation

### 4.1 Responses

You can find a copy of the questions associated with this consultation at Annex A. It is **not** essential for everyone to answer every question, rather, we would prefer you to **only** answer the questions you feel are relevant to you or the organisation you are responding on behalf of.

You can respond to this consultation online by accessing the consultation at the following link:

<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/daera/rethinking-our-resources>.



We are encouraging everyone to respond to this consultation through our Citizen Space website as this makes analysing the responses and any future decision making more consistent and provides better data outputs.

Written responses should be sent by email to: [wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Or to postal address: Resources & Waste Strategy Team,  
Environmental Resources Policy Division,  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs,  
Jubilee House,  
111 Ballykelly Road,  
Ballykelly, Limavady,  
BT49 9HP

When responding, please state whether you are doing so as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of its members were assembled.

### 4.2 Closing Date

Responses should be submitted by **5pm on Thursday 30th May 2024**.

### 4.3 Confidentiality

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, the Department in this case. This includes information provided in response to this consultation.

The Department will publish a synopsis of responses to the consultation. This will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not personal names, addresses or other contact details.

The Department cannot automatically consider information supplied to it in response to a consultation, to be confidential. However, it does have a responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to a consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public, please include an explanation in your response. Please be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, it won't count as a confidentiality request.

Should you respond in an individual capacity the Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties should you request confidentiality.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioners Office (see its website at [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#)).

Resources and Waste Strategy Team  
Environmental Resources Policy Division  
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111 Ballykelly Road  
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BT49 9HP

Email: [wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk)

## Annex A – Questions posed via Citizen Space for consultation.

### GENERAL

1. What is your name?

Mark McAdoo

2. What is your email address?

mark.mcadoo@midulstercouncil.org

3. Are you responding to this consultation representing an organisation you work or volunteer for?

Yes. Skip to Question 5.

No

4. You selected “no” to Question 3. This means that you are responding to the consultation as an individual householder/member of public. If this statement does not describe how you wish to respond, please amend your answer to Question 3. If you are happy to proceed, please select Yes. If you select No, the survey process will end.

Yes. I am responding as a householder/member of public. Please proceed to Proposal 1.

No

5. Which category best represents you from the list below?

Category	Please Select
Trade Body (Waste Sector)	
Local Council	✓
Local Council Sector Body	
Waste Management Company (Collectors, Sorters, Infrastructure Operators of Treatment Facilities for various streams)	
Reprocessors (End Destination)	
Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)	
Businesses and Non-Household Municipal (NHM) producing organisations	
Trade Body (representing business sectors)	
Other	

If applicable, please state the name of the organisation you are responding on behalf of.

Mid Ulster District Council

### Part 1: Proposals to improve commonality in recycling from households

**Proposal 1: To restrict the residual waste capacity for households in Northern Ireland to a maximum of 90 litres per week, delivered either via a 180-litre wheeled bin collected fortnightly or a 240 litre wheeled bin collected every three weeks. Councils would decide on the most appropriate methodology for their own circumstances.**

- 1. Do you agree with the proposal to restrict the capacity of residual waste for average households to a maximum of 90 litres per week? Some households may require additional containment or alternative arrangements. See question 6.
  - Yes -agree.
  - No
  - If no, your response should include clear evidence as why residual waste capacity should not be restricted. Evidence with justification to extend timescales should be provided, if appropriate.
  - Unsure

MUDC agrees that a restriction on residual waste is necessary to achieve higher recycling levels of 65%-70% if these are to be achieved on an individual Council basis. However if the higher municipal waste recycling targets are to be achieved collectively by Councils and businesses and the wider NHM sector then this may not be necessary. MUDC has achieved an average HH recycling rate of 58.25% over the past four years which is higher than the HH 57% rate required in option 3 of the policy options presented (and close to the 61% and 62% required in conjunction with NHM rates for option 1 and 2 respectively). It is therefore possible that MUDC could achieve the HH rates identified in all policy options without residual waste restrictions but with marginal increases in mixed dry recycling and biowaste kerbside collections and/or increased Recycling Centre performance. See further information provided in Annex 1.

- 2. Some Councils may not be able to restrict the capacity of residual waste by the date proposed (within 24 months of notification of a statutory requirement). In this table we set out some circumstances which may delay changes to residual waste restriction. Please complete the table, providing evidence with justification as to why timescales should be extended, as appropriate.

Not all rows need to be completed. Please use N/A where not applicable.	
Contracts for residual waste treatment	
Procurement processes for new containers	
Manufacturing capacity for new containers	
Projects outcomes from residual waste reduction action	✓
Cost burdens	
Ability to resource & mobilise within the required timescale	✓
Other – please describe Route optimisation project required	

3. If the proposal to restrict the capacity of residual waste for households is adopted, what is your preference for how this should be delivered? If other, please provide an explanation in the box below.

180 litre capacity bins collected fortnightly.

240 litre capacity bins collected three weekly.

Other

Unsure

If you responded other, please set out your reasons, with clear evidence in the box below.

4. Do you agree that forms of restricted capacity for residual waste collections should apply to all households, including those dwellings such as flats and houses in multiple occupation where citizens share a communal bin?

Yes

No

Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below. Your response should include clear evidence, relating to collection of residual waste from communal settings, such as residual waste yields per dwelling per year and learnings or project outcomes from action to reduce residual waste in communal settings.

5. Do you agree that restricted capacity for residual waste collections should be rolled out across NI simultaneously (or as near as possible) to assist local councils with communicating the changes to households?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below. Your response should include clear evidence as to why a staggered roll out is preferable.

6. Do you agree that households who demonstrate that they meet the following criteria could be provided with more than the maximum of 90 litres per household per week?

	Yes agree	No disagree		Unsure
Household comprises more than 6 residents	✓	If selected, please define the number of citizens in a household where exclusions should apply, with evidence to justify your response.	8 or more (as per existing MUDC policy)	
Households where citizens have medical conditions which produce additional waste, such as produce to manage incontinence	✓	If selected, please provide evidence to justify your response.	As per MUDC policy	
Households where there are more than two children using disposable nappies		If selected, please provide evidence to justify your response.		✓
All households in the collection subsequent to the Christmas break, where presentation of a restricted amount of side waste is acceptable.		✓	Side waste not allowed under MUDC policy	
Other (Please detail). If selected, please provide evidence to justify your response.				

**Proposal 2: To require local Councils to collect a core set of dry recyclables from households to help avoid confusion and improve consistency and the quality of recyclable material.**

1. Do you agree that the core set of materials comprising dry recycling collections by councils should comprise as the list below, as a minimum?

	<b>Agree. All items listed in the row should be included</b>	<b>Disagree. All items listed in the row should not be included. Please state which ones and why.</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
Paper and card, including newspaper, cardboard packaging, writing paper etc.	✓		
Glass bottles and jars – including drinks bottles, condiment bottles, jars, etc. and their metal lids	✓		
Metal packaging: aluminium cans, foil and aerosols, and steel cans [and aerosols], aluminium tubes	✓		
Plastic: bottles including drinks bottles, detergent/ shampoo/ cleaning products; pots, tubs, and trays; plus cartons (such as Tetrapak®)	✓		

2. Do you agree with our proposal that will require the kerbside collection of the core set of dry recyclables within 24 months of notification of a statutory requirement?

- Yes
- No - If no, your response should include clear evidence as to which materials you consider should not be incorporated within the list and why. Evidence with justification to extend timescales should be provided, if appropriate.
- Unsure

3. Some Councils may not be able to collect the core set of dry recyclables by the date proposed. In the table below we set out some circumstances which may delay changes to recycling collections. Please provide evidence with justification why timescales should be extended, as appropriate.



<b>Not all rows need to be completed. Please use N/A where not applicable.</b>	
Contracts for dry recyclable collection	
Sorting or reprocessing	
Procurement processes for new containers or vehicles	
Manufacturing capacity for new containers or vehicles	
MRF infrastructure or capacity	
Container distribution	
End Market volatility/lack of end markets	
Other – please describe	✓
All of the core set of dry recyclables are already efficiently collected by Mid Ulster District Council via a commingled bin.	

**Proposal 3: That additional materials are added to the core set over time when feasible, with flexible plastic packaging set to be collected from households by the end of the financial year 2026/2027.**

- As plastic films will need to be added to the core set of dry recyclables by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027, please state how you propose plastic films should be collected at the kerbside, ensuring quality and quantity of other dry recyclables. Select one of the options below (tick box)
  - Collected as a separate stream from all other recyclables, and from residual waste i.e., in a dedicated bag or container,
  - Collected in a container alongside other plastics – bottles, pots, tubs, and trays,
  - Collected mixed with other dry recyclables in the same container,
  - Unsure
  - Other (please detail and explain your reasoning for this proposal with supporting evidence)

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- Collecting plastic films by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 may be challenging for some Councils. In this table we set out some circumstances which could affect a Council’s ability to collect plastic film by this date. Please provide evidence with justification detailing why this timescale will be challenging.

<b>Not all rows need to be completed. Please use N/A where not applicable.</b>	
Contracts for plastic film collection	✓
Sorting or reprocessing	✓

Procurement processes for new containers or vehicles	
Manufacturing capacity for new containers or vehicles	
MRF infrastructure or capacity	
Container distribution	
End Market volatility/lack of end markets	✓
Factors relevant to collections from flats and houses in multiple occupation, where citizens share communal containers	
Other – please describe	

3. Do you agree that the list of materials to be collected as a minimum by councils should be regularly reviewed, and providing certain conditions met, expanded?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal then please provide the reason for your response below with clear evidence on why you do not agree with regular reviews of the minimum list and why the list should not be expanded, provided certain conditions are met.

EPR and DRS will most likely affect the composition of packaging with a move towards more recyclable materials. It is therefore recommended that the list of materials to be collected for recycling should be reviewed with the input from Local Authorities and the waste treatment / reprocessing sector to ensure any new materials collected for recycling can be viably collected and have a proven market.

4. If the proposal for a minimum list of materials to be collected for dry recycling were to be adopted and regularly reviewed, do you agree that the frequency of review should be every two years.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you answered “No,” then please provide the reason for your response below. Your response should include clear evidence as to what frequency of review would be more appropriate.

A longer frequency between reviews would be required as many local authority contracts with the private sector are 2 or more years in term. Any mid contract changes would attract cost increases under contracts that would not be budgeted for by local authorities. Furthermore, the implementation of new collection containers and the education of householders would take more than 2 years to implement. This potential frequency of changes to the system would be difficult for Councils to resource and for the residents to understand / keep up to date with.

5. What, if any products or materials do you consider should be also included in the core list of materials to be collected by councils? Please provide your response in the box below as to why the list should include the material (s).

Mid Ulster District Council currently collects the proposed core set of recyclables and is a top performing Council in terms of recycling rate. This is achieved through the efficient use of the commingled system. Plastic film could be an option for future collection and recycling. However, prior to this being implemented it would need to demonstrated that there is a clear market and value for recovered plastic film.

6. Do you agree that the materials comprising the items below should be *excluded* currently from the minimum list of materials for collection by councils within dry recycling collections?

Type	Examples	Agree. Items listed in the row should be excluded from recycling	Disagree. Items listed in the row should be <u>included</u> for recycling. Please state which items should be included and why	Unsure
<b>Glass</b>	Ceramics, for example crockery, earthenware Drinking glasses Flat glass Glass cookware including Pyrex® Light bulbs and tubes Microwave plates Mirrors Vases Window glass	✓		

<b>Metal</b>	Laminated foil, for example pet food pouches, coffee pouches General kitchenware, for example cutlery, pots, and pans Any other metal items, for example kettles, irons, pipes, white goods			✓
<b>Plastic</b>	Any plastic packaging or non-packaging items labelled as “compostable” or “biodegradable” (including but not limited to coffee pods and cutlery) with the exception of food waste caddy liners in food waste recycling collections Plastic pouches with laminated foil layer for example pet food pouches, coffee pouches Plastic bottles containing white spirits, paints, engine oils and anti-freeze Bulky rigid plastics such as garden furniture, bins, and plastic toys Polystyrene (expanded and high impact) Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) packaging	✓		
<b>Paper and card</b>	Absorbent hygiene products (AHPs) including nappies, period products and incontinence items Cotton wool, make up pads Tissue/toilet paper Wet wipes for example for nappy changing times, kitchen/ bathroom cleaning	✓		
<b>Any other items – please state which items and why they should be specifically excluded from recycling</b>				

7. Do you agree that the core list of materials in the dry recycling stream should apply to all households, including flats and houses in multiple occupation, where citizens share communal containers?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below. Your response should include clear evidence, relating to issues with collection of named materials from communal settings such as containment, contamination, engagement with citizens.

***Proposal 4: To highlight NI's unique legislation on the quality of dry recyclable materials, the proposed term QualiTEE should be adopted to describe the exceptions to collecting dry recyclable materials separately.***

1. Do you agree with our proposal that the term QualiTEE should be used to describe the process of determining if there may be an exception to collecting dry recyclable materials separately?

- Yes  
 No - If no, your response should include clear evidence as to why the term QualiTEE is not your preference. Evidence with justification for alternative terminology should be provided.

Unsure

MUDC is concerned that the new concept of QualiTEE was not raised in the previous Discussion Document, nor in the workshops held with Councils. The QualiTEE terminology by definition appears to place a primary focus on the quality (as opposed to quantity) of recycle material and less emphasis on the other technical, economic, and environmental considerations.

In one sense the term for the assessment is irrelevant. However clear and transparent metrics for quality to be assessed against are required so that Local Authorities can ensure the clear quality standards can be transposed into contracts. Prior to the implementation of the QualiTEE assessment DAERA would need to engage with Local Authorities and waste processors to clearly define the benchmark of +/-2% for closed loop recycling and +/-5% for open loop recycling.

***Proposal 5: The default position for collection of dry recyclables from households is in four separate streams.***

1. As per the default position do you agree that councils should be required to collect “multi-stream,” with at least: (i) fibres (paper/card), (ii) plastics, (iii) metals, and (iv) glass separately from each other in the dry recycling collection?
- Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, then please provide the reason for your response below. Ideally, your response should include clear evidence of how recyclables streams can be successfully collected including methods to preserve quality for recycling, the quantities and proportions of materials sent for recycling, both for closed and open loop processing.

MUDC is very concerned that the default position proposed i.e. four separate streams, goes beyond the options raised in the previous Recycling Discussion Document and in the workshops held with Councils. The separate options proposed previously were limited to keeping glass and/or paper separate from the other materials, which whilst challenging, would not be as difficult as collecting four separate waste streams. The Transition Cost Survey did not examine the option of four separate waste streams and therefore the validity of this report is now questionable.

Over the past ten years MUDC has been the top performing Council in relation to household waste recycling and has nearly reached a recycling rate of 60%. This has been achieved through the commingling of mixed dry recyclables which has proven an exceedingly high level of performance mainly due to the willingness of the public to participate in this scheme. The commingling option would follow the legislative travel of England following their release and recent updates of the Simpler Recycling guidance which has also been defined by DEFRA as the ‘common-sense approach that is both easy and effective for everyone.’ It is our view that the complex multi stream collection is not well accepted by the public and a forced implementation of this scheme will result in a reduction in recycling. It is our opinion that with a reduced frequency residual collection and continued/enhanced commingled recycling collections that MUDC could achieve a recycling rate of 65%-70%.

See further information provided in Annex 1.

2. Do you agree with our proposal that will require the core set of dry recyclables to be collected separately from each other in the dry recycling collection (i.e., multi-stream) within 24 months of notification of a statutory requirement and/ or notification of Extended Producer Responsibility funding allocation?
- Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, then please provide the reason for your response below. Your response should include clear evidence as to why the dry recyclables cannot be collected separately from each other within the proposed timeframe. Evidence with justification to extend timescales should be provided, if appropriate.

MUDC strongly holds the view that a commingled collection system provides material of comparable quality and, importantly, higher quantities of material for recycling in comparison to separate collections. Therefore MUDC suggests that providing increased capacity for co-mingled collections to households, in the form of a second 240 litre blue bin, will make the greatest contribution to achieving recycling targets.

The costs to implement and operate a kerbside sort/box system for MUDC (estimated at £70m over 7 years) is considered cost prohibitive for the Council. The performance of the system is also less than the performance of the current commingled system. Therefore MUDC will not be investing in a change to the kerbside sort system for a decrease in efficiency. It is considered a more reasonable solution is to further invest in the current system to further increase its performance. This may include increased recycling capacity and reduced residual capacity (a trial scheme for same was previously refused funding by DAERA).

MUDC has embraced the positive health and safety aspects of one armed collection vehicles. MUDC has heavily invested in one armed vehicles and now has 9 in its fleet with a further 3 due for delivery this year. Each of these vehicles cost £230k and have a replacement cycle of 10 years. Therefore, this fleet will not be due for replacement until 2030 to 2034. These vehicles are used to carry out rural collections right across the district and are not compatible with kerbside sort systems. It is our opinion that kerbside sort is not a suitable collection method for our workforce and fleet.

See further information provided in Annex 1.

**Proposal 6: Standardised written assessments are prepared by councils where two or more dry recyclables are mixed during the collection process, evidencing why separate collections are not practicable and that co-collection delivers recyclable material of comparable quality.**

1. Where councils cannot collect each dry recyclable waste stream separately, do you agree that the council should produce a written assessment and make available to the NI Environment Agency to outline the exception (s) to the requirement, on the basis of Comparable Quality, Technical Feasibility, Economic Costs and Environmental Outcomes (QualiTEE).
  - Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, then please provide the reason for your response below.

MUDC disagrees with this approach. This approach is a significant diversion from the Simpler Recycling guidance put forward by DEFRA. We believe that an imposed separate collection of recyclables or further administrative burden to justify the use of the current best performing system, commingling would add significant cost burden on Council finances. The only way that Councils can recoup this money is through District Rates increases at a time when household finances are already stretched with the current cost of living. See further information in Annex 1.

2. Where councils cannot collect the dry recyclable waste streams separately, do you agree that the council should provide a written assessment based on the template shown in Appendix 2 to outline the exception (s) to the requirement?
  - Yes
  - No – further content should be added.
  - No – content should be removed.
  - Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal then please provide the reason for your response below, including your suggested amendments to the template.

MUDC notes the outcome of the DEFRA Consultation on Consistency in Household Recycling in England which states “We propose to provide a further exemption to allow all dry recyclables (paper and card, plastic, glass, and metal) to be collected together in one recycling bin. If using an exemption, waste collectors would not be required to produce a written assessment to co-collect”. Given these statements from DEFRA, MUDC would request that similar exemptions be introduced in Northern Ireland rather than the imposition of the onerous QualiTEE assessment. See further information provided in Annex 1.



3. Do you agree or disagree with the recommendation that Councils should review and re-submit written assessments at least every 7 years?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree, please select one of the following statements that best describes why:

- Revising written assessments every 7 years is too frequent (please state how frequently you think they should be revised and evidence why)
- Revising written assessments at least every 7 years is too infrequent please state how frequently you think they should be revised and evidence why)
- Other (please detail)

Please refer to Annex 1 for greater detail on the performance of the commingled system. It would be proposed that once a collection system is agreed for a Council then it should be for the Council to manage the collection system that best fits their circumstances. DAERA should stick with the legislating what should be achieved in terms of targets. It should be for the individual Councils then to assess and determine how best to collect waste to achieve the targets set by DAERA.

***Proposal 7: A set of conditions should be set out that define comparable quality, best environmental outcome, technical feasibility and disproportionate economic cost- “QualiTEE”. Where conditions are met, an exception may apply, and two or more recyclable waste streams may be collected together from households.***

***Proposal 7a: Similar guidance on MRF sampling, to that used in England and Wales, should be introduced in NI to ensure that the quality of input and outputs for MRFs can be quantified.***

1. In terms of disproportionate economic costs, to demonstrate if there is an excessive cost to collect recyclable waste in separate waste streams, do you agree that the following factors should be provided and evidenced by the council:

Factors	Yes agree	No disagree. If you disagree, please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear evidence of why the factors should be included/ excluded.	Unsure
Gate fees and material income	✓		
Salaries and staff numbers - including supervision	✓		

Container costs, numbers, and replacements	✓		
Vehicle types, costs, finance, depreciation, hire, running costs	✓		
Quantities of materials collected, frequency of collection	✓		
Associated overheads including depot costs	✓		
Contract length, penalties associated with variations	✓		
Other (please detail)			
The quantity of waste left in the residual collection and the associated costs of dealing with a greater volume of residual waste. Costs associated with staff training and sick days / claims associated with manual handling injuries			

2. Do you agree that the following factors should be considered when evaluating economic costs:

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Yes agree</b>	<b>No disagree - please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear evidence</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
Adverse environmental costs	✓		
Adverse health impacts	✓		
Potential for efficiency improvements	✓		
Revenues from sales of secondary raw materials	✓		
Application of the polluter pays principle	✓		
Application of Extended Producer Responsibility	✓		
Other – please detail			

3. Do you agree that economic costs could be considered to be disproportionately excessive on a method of calculating an average cost per household deviation from a standard separate collection system cost?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If no, please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear examples of alternative approaches to define excessive cost differences between systems, including a value you consider appropriate to differentiate economic impacts.

Due to the different ways Council report costs it is not possible to benchmark Council waste collection costs. Differences between what is included in Council costs will mean it is impossible to provide a meaningful benchmark. Waste collection and management costs account for the biggest Council expenditure each year. Given the current economic climate any costs over and above the current collection costs are undeliverable without 100% funding of the extra costs.

- 4. Please detail examples of technical challenges, with any supporting evidence, which you believe demonstrate that a separate collection of dry recyclables will not be feasible in circumstances for some or all properties.

Please refer to Annex 1.

- 5. In order to make the case that separate collection does not deliver the best Environmental Outcome-compared to the collection of recyclable waste streams together, do you agree that the-overall impact of the management of the household waste stream evidence should be provided on the-measures listed but not limited to the following:

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Yes - agree</b>	<b>No disagree - please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear evidence</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
Quantities of materials collected;	✓		
Quantities of materials classed as contamination and not recycled;	✓		
Quantities of materials lost from sorting processes at a MRF;	✓		
Vehicle emissions from collection rounds;	✓		
Vehicle emissions from bulk transportation to sorting and reprocessing both in NI and overseas;	✓		
Emissions from disposal/ treatment including savings	✓		

arising from landfill diversion; and			
Carbon savings from using recycled materials rather than virgin materials	✓		
Other factor to be added – please describe			
Impact associated with the production of waste associated with broken collection containers and carbon impact from the manufacture and replacement of collection containers			

6. Do you agree that the following evidence factors should be provided by a Council to demonstrate that materials are of comparable quality.

<b>Evidence Factors</b>	<b>Yes - agree</b>	<b>No disagree - please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear evidence</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
Comparable quantities (+/-2%) of each material stream sent for closed loop recycling			✓
Comparable quantities (+/- 5%) of each material stream sent for open loop recycling			✓
Other factor to be added – please describe			
Clear and transparent metrics are required for the benchmark values for comparable quantities sent for closed and open loop recycling.			

7. Do you agree standard default values and data that have clearly referenced sources (that cover comparable Quality of materials, Environmental outcomes, Technical feasibility or Economic Costs) which could be used to support a written assessment, would be useful?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree, please provide the reason for your response.

Standard default values or data are rarely representative of all Councils in Northern Ireland given different populations and housing densities. Any values used should be a clear representation of the costs relevant to each individual Council. These costs should also be sourced from Northern Ireland and should not be generic WRAP UK figures.

8. Do you agree with the principle that MRFs in NI should follow the same input and output sampling guidance used as part of Environmental Permitting Regulations in England and Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- If no, your response should include clear evidence as to why similar sampling protocols to England and Wales should not be followed in NI?

***Proposal 8: The quality of recyclate for reprocessing is important and needs to be improved through changes to collections and clear measures should be set to describe quality.***

1. Which of the following options are your most preferred scenarios concerning the mixing of materials? Please rank the following options 1 (most preferred) to 4 (least preferred). If you consider that some options are not viable, please do not include these in your ranking, in which case, please rank only one, two or three option(s). Please focus on comparable quality of materials, rather than economic costs or technical feasibility of collections. You will note that we have set out clearly in the options which streams are separate, and which are mixed. If you are not sure or have no preference, please skip this question.

Options	Ranking (1 – most preferred; 4 - least preferred). Leave blank for option(s) you consider are not viable	Please provide clear evidence in support of your selection for this ranking
<b>Option A – “three stream”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate stream of glass bottles &amp; jars; with</li> <li>• Separate stream of paper &amp; card; with</li> </ul>	4	

Options	Ranking (1 – most preferred; 4 - least preferred). Leave blank for option(s) you consider are not viable	Please provide clear evidence in support of your selection for this ranking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed stream of: metal packaging and plastics bottles, tubs, and trays</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Option B – “two stream: fibres out”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate stream of paper &amp; card; with</li> <li>Mixed stream of: metal packaging, plastic bottles, tubs and trays and glass bottles &amp; jars</li> </ul>	3	
<p><b>Option C – “two stream: glass out”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate stream of glass bottles and jars; with</li> <li>Mixed stream of: metal packaging, plastics bottles, pots &amp; trays, and paper &amp; card</li> </ul>	2	
<p><b>Option D –“fully co-mingled”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed stream of: metal packaging plastics bottles, pots, tubs &amp; trays, paper, card, and glass bottles &amp; jars</li> </ul>	1	Please refer to Annex 1 for details on the performance of the fully comingled system

***Proposal 9: Commingled collection of plastics and metals should be exempt from requirements to collect these materials as separate fractions.***

- Do you agree that Councils may have an exemption from the regulations where they mix plastics and metals, thus should not be required to prepare a written assessment to seek an exception from the regulations where these two materials

are collected together? Note that a Council may still select to collect these recyclable waste streams as separate materials.

- Yes
- No – all material streams should be collected separately.
- No – more mixing of materials should be permissible.
- Unsure

If you answered no, please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear evidence as to why you consider all material streams should be collected separately, or more mixing should be permissible.

DAERA's own evidence, the LACMW Annual Reports show that commingling including glass has the highest dry recycling rate of all collection options utilized by NI Councils. In addition DAERA's 2017 Waste Compositional Analysis shows that when kerbside sort systems are utilized a greater % of recyclable materials are left in the residual bin. Furthermore, DEFRA through their Simpler Recycling guidance are supporting the commingling of recyclates stating it is the 'common sense approach'.

2. What, other exemptions would you propose to the requirement to collect the recyclable waste streams separately, where it would not significantly reduce the potential for recycling? Please provide your evidence in the box below.

Whilst being supportive of exemptions, MUDC would query how these are permissible under the unique legislation referred to in Northern Ireland and why, if this is possible, such exemptions cannot be granted for other materials? Therefore, on the basis that exemptions are possible, MUDC requests that such exemptions be extended to permit all of the core materials to be collected together (as is now the case in England – see previous responses for proposals 4 & 6). In other words, an exemption should be included that permits the commingling of paper, card, plastic, metals and glass when there is clear evidence that the performance of the system collects the greatest volume of dry recyclates, and the materials are produced to a standard accepted by NI, UK and EU reprocessors.

If an exemption for fully commingled is not possible then an alternative exemption should be considered which would permit card/plastic and glass/metal to be collected together in a second blue bin which would permit more balanced/efficient collection routes to be designed.

**Proposal 10: Revisions to household food waste collections to increase capture rates and improve the diversion of food waste from disposal should be introduced, ensuring all householders, including those living in flats, can recycle more and in time have access to separate, weekly food waste recycling collections.**

1. We have listed possible collection methods for food waste from kerbside properties below, some of which we consider are suitable short term. How would you rank the following options for food waste collections, where 1 is most preferred and 4 is least preferable? If you consider that some options are not viable, please do not include these in your ranking, in which case, please rank only one, two or three option(s).

Options	Ranking (1 – most preferred; 4 - least preferred). Leave blank for option(s) you consider are not viable	Please provide clear evidence or statements in support of your preferred selection for your ranking
A <b>separate weekly</b> collection of food waste with additional arrangements for garden waste	4	
A <b>weekly mixed</b> food and garden waste collection.	2	
A <b>separate fortnightly</b> collection of food waste with additional arrangements for garden waste.	3	
A <b>fortnightly mixed</b> food and garden waste collection.	1	Please refer to Annex 1 regarding the performance of the mixed food and garden waste collection
Other – please detail		

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2. Do you agree with our proposal that all kerbside properties should in future have access to a least a weekly collection for food waste to increase capture rates of food waste?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure



If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below, with clear evidence.

Evidence shows that the current fortnightly collection of food and garden waste captures comparable quantities of food waste to a separate collection. Measures should be implemented to encourage a greater diversion of food waste from the residual bin through restriction of residual waste capacity and funding to allow the provision of caddy liners free to all households in N Ireland.

WRAP has previously acknowledged that the commingled biowaste schemes in N Ireland are amongst the best performing in the UK. Indeed the results of the last full NI Waste Compositional Study carried out in 2017 showed that during the first (summer) phase more food waste (1.07kg/hh/week) was collected from commingled schemes compared to separate collections (0.92kg/hh/week). When an average of the first (summer) and second (winter) phases are taken the difference is marginal with an average of 1.2 kg/hh/week from commingled schemes compared to 1.28 kg/hh/week from separate food waste collections

MUDC therefore does not agree that weekly food waste collections are necessary. Reference is made to “UK” research which “shows that collecting food waste mixed with garden waste fortnightly can lead to lower yields compared to a weekly food waste collection”. MUDC believes that NI specific data is required to support this argument and would request the results of the recent composition studies undertaken in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and Derry and Strabane Council).

See further information provided in Annex 1.

3. Do you agree that all households, including those dwellings such as flats and houses in multiple occupation where citizens share a communal bin should have access to at least a weekly collection for food waste?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below, with clear evidence.

As above. The current collection system captures comparable quantities of food waste as a weekly collection. However, all households including flats and houses in multiple occupancy should have access to a means of collecting food waste on at least a fortnightly basis.

4. Do you agree that councils should be required to implement a weekly food waste collection service from kerbside properties, keeping food and garden waste separate, by the points in time listed below?

Time Period	Yes	No	If you answered no, please provide the reason for your response with clear evidence such as collection contracts, treatment contracts, treatment infrastructure capacity (AD/IVC), cost burden, reprocessing, end markets.	Not sure
24 months from notification of a statutory requirement		✓	A separate weekly food waste collection could not be implemented without full funding of the capital and revenue costs associated with the operation being funded in full. A separate weekly food waste collection would compromise the viability of the garden waste collection which could result in garden waste not being collected and ending up in the residual bin. The maintenance of the garden waste collection is imperative for NI recycling rates as more than half of the current NI recycling rate is derived from the collection of household garden waste. Prior to the implementation of a separate food waste collection the AD capacity to treat the volume of separate food waste would need to be implemented. The separate collection of food waste would also need to be aligned with the end of current contracts for the composting of the mixed food and garden waste stream. See Annex 1 for further information.	
3 to 4 years from notification of a statutory requirement		✓		
More than 4 years from notification of statutory requirement		✓		
Never	✓			
Other – please detail				

5. Do you agree that guidance should be provided on caddy liners, including on caddy liner material types?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below, with clear evidence.

6. Do you agree that caddy liners should be provided free of charge to citizens that participate in food waste collection? (Please select only one option)

(1) Yes, via Council offices, libraries, leisure centres etc	✓
(2) Yes, as in (1) and via citizens adding their own note to their food waste containers to request new liners which crews deliver	
Yes, as in (1) and via a tag supplied in the roll of caddy liners that is attached to the food waste container by the citizen when their supply is low. Crews deliver new liners.	✓
Other method – please detail	
No – citizens should purchase their own liners	
Not sure	

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below, with clear evidence.

***Proposal 11: Through collaboration with Councils, we will set out proportionate and robust guidelines for compliance and enforcement that enable Councils to enhance their waste and recycling services.***

1. Do you agree that section 21 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, as amended, should be clarified to set out the circumstances in which Councils can enforce householders to place items of waste and recycling in certain receptacles and the levels of fixed penalty notice that could be levied where householders do not comply?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below, with clear evidence.

2. Do you agree that the following options should be adopted to help to improve the quality of recycling collected from households:

	Yes	No – if no, please state why	Unsure
Issuing standardised information in the form of leaflets to citizens at least annually	✓		
Crew training on how to manage containers with the wrong items	✓		
Oversight of crew working practices		✓Operational issue for Councils	
Better support to crews and recognition of their work			✓
Clear and updated visually appealing websites	✓		
Other – Provision of internal recycling bags to encourage segregation of recyclables from residual waste within the households (as per MUDC)			

3. If a Fixed Penalty Notice system were to be levied where people continue to put the wrong items in their recycling containers, which of the values proposed for the Fixed Penalty Notice do you consider to be appropriate?

	About right	Too low	Too high	Unsure
£50				
£75				
£100 (existing value)	✓			
£150				
£200				
Other value you feel is appropriate – please detail				

Any other comments – please detail	MUDC believes that enforcement should only be used as a last resort. See Annex 1 for further information.
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**Proposal 12: Non-Statutory Guidance will be provided to councils to expand the opportunities to recycle more materials and to embed best practice in existing services.**

1. Do you agree that Non-Statutory Guidance would be useful as a framework on good practice collections from kerbside and communal dwellings, HWRCs and bring sites?
- Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below, with clear evidence.

MUDC would welcome the provision of Non-Statutory Guidance and is of the view that all outcomes in relation to the proposals in the consultation should be on the basis of Non-Statutory Guidance as Councils are best placed to make decisions of their Waste Collection Systems and Policies based on their local knowledge and circumstances

2. Do you agree that the following topics should be included in Non-Statutory Guidance to Councils on collections:

Topic	Yes	No – if no, please provide details on why you consider this topic not to be relevant	Unsure
Collection of hazardous waste from HWRCs	✓		
Collection of textiles, batteries, WEEE from the kerbside and communal properties		✓Not collected at the kerbside	
Collection of cooking and engine oil from the kerbside		✓Not collected at the kerbside	
Collection of AHPs (nappies, incontinence products) from the kerbside	✓		
Standardised arrangements for assisted collections from the kerbside	✓		
Standardised price ranges and arrangements for bulky waste collections	✓		
Standardised arrangements for replacement containers	✓		
Standardised arrangements for excess recycling		✓Dependant on Council policy	
Other – please detail			

## PART 2: PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE CONSISTENCY IN RECYCLING FROM BUSINESSES AND THE WIDER NHM SECTOR

**Proposal 13:** *The scope of the revised definition of municipal waste would include mixed waste and separately collected waste from other sources, where such waste is similar in nature and composition to waste from households. Specifically, wastes from production, agriculture, forestry, fishing, septic tanks and sewage network and treatment, including sewage sludge, end-of-life vehicles or waste generated by construction and demolition activities, are excluded.*

1. Do you agree with the list of **out-of-scope** waste producers, who will **not** be obligated to segregate a core set of dry recyclables from their residual waste?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, please provide the reason for your response below, with clear evidence.

MUDC agrees with the revised definition of municipal waste and exclusions. However MUDC would query how municipal waste currently collected for recycling by private sector operators e.g. food waste from schools, is recorded? Also whilst dry recyclables and food waste is referenced in the proposal is there not also an opportunity to capture a significant proportion of garden waste from premises such as education and health estates?

**Proposal 14:** *Businesses and the wider non-household municipal (NHM) sector will be required to segregate from residual waste a core set of dry recyclables, to improve recycling behaviour and activity and ensure consistency between what people can recycle at home, at school and at work.*

1. Do you agree with the contents of the list below, detailing the materials that should be included in the core set of recyclable streams collected separately from businesses and NHM producing premises by waste collectors, as a minimum?

	<b>Agree. All items listed in the row should be included</b>	<b>Disagree. All items listed in the row should <u>not</u> be included for recycling. Please state which ones should be excluded and why.</b>	<b>Unsure</b>

Paper and card, including newspaper, cardboard packaging, office, writing paper etc;	✓		
Glass bottles and jars – including drinks bottles, condiment bottles, jars etc and their metal lids	✓		
Metals: aluminium cans, foil and aerosols, and steel cans [and aerosols], aluminium tubes	✓		
Plastic bottles – including drinks bottles, detergent/ shampoo/ cleaning products; pots, tubs, and trays plus cartons (such as Tetrapak)	✓		

2. Do you agree with the contents of the list below, detailing those materials that should be excluded currently from the core set of dry recyclables and therefore not collected by waste collectors from obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations, as a minimum?

Material	Items proposed to be excluded	Agree. All items listed in the row should be excluded from recycling	Disagree. Items listed in the row should be <u>included</u> for recycling. Please state which items should be included and why.	Unsure
<b>Glass</b>	Ceramics, e.g., Crockery or earthenware Drinking glasses Flat glass Glass cookware including Pyrex Light bulbs and tubes Microwave plates	✓		

	Mirrors Vases Window glass			
<b>Metal</b>	Laminated foil i.e., pet food pouches, coffee pouches General kitchenware i.e., cutlery, pots, and pans Any other metal items, i.e., kettles, irons, pipes, white goods	✓		
<b>Plastic</b>	Any plastic packaging or non-packaging items labelled as “compostable” or “biodegradable” (including but not limited to coffee pods and cutlery) with the exception of food waste caddy liners in food waste recycling collections Plastic pouches with laminated foil layer i.e., pet food pouches, coffee pouches Plastic bottles containing white spirits, paints, engine oils and antifreeze Bulky rigid plastics such as garden furniture, bins, and plastic toys Polystyrene (expanded and high impact) Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) packaging	✓		
<b>Paper and card</b>	Absorbent hygiene products (AHPs) including nappies, period products and incontinence items Cotton wool, make up pads Tissue/toilet paper Wet wipes for example for nappy changing times,	✓		



	kitchen/ bathroom cleaning			
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3. Do you agree that the list of materials to be collected as a minimum should be regularly reviewed, and providing certain conditions met, expanded?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree with this proposal, then please provide your reason with supporting evidence in the box below.

MUDC agrees with this proposal, however, would query how this relates to or differs from the requirements of the existing Waste Regulations (NI) 2011 (section 20) which states *“the duties under regulations 18 and 19 shall apply equally to a person required to be registered as a carrier of controlled waste for the purposes of the Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 as they apply to district councils”*.

4. If the proposal for a minimum list of dry recyclable materials to be collected for recycling were to be adopted and regularly reviewed, do you agree that the frequency of review should be every two years.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you answered “No” please provide the reason for your response. Your response should include clear evidence as to what frequency of review would be more appropriate.

A 2 yearly review is too often and would place a significant cost burden on businesses with limited time for previous changes for collection systems / materials to bed in. The frequency for review should be kept in tandem with household waste reviews. This will ensure measures for collecting recyclates are embedded through the same process in the household and workplace.

5. What, if any, other products or materials do you consider should be also included in the minimum list of materials to be collected by waste collectors from obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations? Please provide your response in the box below and clear evidence as to why the list should include the material(s).

N/A

**Proposal 15: Subject to the costs being covered by packaging EPR (pEPR) and confirmation that the material can reasonably be collected for recycling, additional materials will be added to the core set over time, with businesses and NHM producing premises to be required by legislation to segregate flexible plastic packaging for recycling no later than March 31st 2027.**

1. Do you have any views on how plastic film should be collected from obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations?
  - Collected as a separate stream from all other recyclables, and from residual waste i.e., in a dedicated bag or container,
  - Collected in a container alongside other plastics – bottles, pot, tubs, and trays,
  - Collected mixed with other dry recyclables in the same container,
  - Other (please detail and explain your reasoning for this proposal with supporting evidence)
  - Unsure

See previous comments in relation to proposal 3. MUDC would also highlight the existing UK wide network of in-store collection points operated by Tesco UK dedicated to the collection of flexible/soft plastic packaging as an alternative route for the disposal of this material.

2. Collecting plastic films from all obligated businesses, public bodies and other organisations by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 may be challenging. Using the list below please select those reasons which you believe will affect the ability to collect plastic film by this timeframe from businesses and NHM producing premises.

Please provide evidence with justification, as appropriate. <b>Not all rows need to be completed. Please use N/A where not applicable.</b>	
Collection and treatment contract limitations	
MRF infrastructure and/or capacity	✓
Inability to resource and mobilise within the timeframe	
Cost Burden to obligated businesses, and NHM producing premises	
Reprocessing availability	✓
End Market volatility/lack of end markets	✓
Other – please describe	

***Proposal 16: The Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 will be revised to require all NHM premises which generate food waste, to be required to segregate food waste from their residual waste for recycling. An additional two years to implement such changes will be granted for small and micro sized businesses.***

1. Do you agree with our proposal that will require the separate collection of food waste from all businesses and the wider NHM sector within 24 months of notification of a statutory requirement?
- Yes
- No - If no, your response should include clear evidence as to which materials you consider should not be incorporated within the list and why. Evidence with justification to extend timescales should be provided, if appropriate.
- Unsure

2. Do you agree that the Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 should be extended to require all obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations to segregate food waste for separate collection?
- Yes, I agree - the Regulations should be extended to cover all obligated businesses, public bodies and other organisations, no matter of their size or nature. (If yes, go to Q7)
- No, I disagree – the Regulations should not be extended to cover all obligated businesses, public bodies or other organisations, no matter of their size or nature, some exemptions or phasing should apply.
- Unsure

3. If you disagreed, do you believe that exemptions to the Regulations should apply based on the amount of food waste produced by obligated businesses, public bodies, or other organisations?

- Yes
- No (If no, go to Q5)
- Unsure

If you have answered no, please explain why you have this view, supplying evidence to justify your opinion.

4. If you believe that exemptions to the Regulations should apply based on the amount of food waste produced by obligated businesses, public bodies, or other

organisations, what parameter should be used to determine the de minimis amount? Please select from the list provided.

- 0-5kg of food waste per week
- 5kg+ food waste per week
- Other (please specify and provide evidence to support your proposal)

5. If you disagreed, do you believe that exemptions or phasing should be applied to the amended Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 for some obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations? Please select the option that most closely represents your view and provide evidence to support your comments.

- **Option 1** - All obligated small (businesses, public bodies and other organisations that employ between 10-50 FTEs) and micro-firms (businesses, public bodies and other organisations that employ up to 9 FTEs) should be exempt from any requirement to segregate food waste from other waste streams.
- **Option 2** - All obligated small (businesses, public bodies and other organisations that employ between 10-50 FTEs) and micro-firms (businesses, public bodies and other organisations that employ up to 9 FTEs) should be given two additional years to comply with the new requirements (i.e., compliant 4 years post the legislative enactment)

If neither of the above options represents your view, please detail your view providing the reason for your response, and indicate if appropriate how long obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations, would require before they can segregate a core set of recyclables for recycling.

6. If you disagreed, do you believe that some obligated businesses, public bodies, or other organisations should not be required to segregate food waste for collection due to their nature, please detail the reason for this view, supplying evidence to justify your opinion.

7. To what extent do you agree that the measures we have proposed will increase the recycling of food waste from obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations? Please provide evidence to support your answer if possible.

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

8. Are there any further measures that you would like to see included over and above our proposals that would improve the recycling of food waste by obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations? Please provide supporting evidence for any proposed measures.

***Proposal 17: For separately collected food waste from businesses and the wider NHM sector, anaerobic digestion is our preferred method of treatment.***

1. We propose that anaerobic digestion is the preferred method for treating separately collected food waste, where suitable, but composting is also permitted. Do you agree with this view?
- Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

If you disagree, please explain why you have this view and provide supporting evidence.

MUDC would highlight that it currently does not offer a separate food waste collection service for NHM properties (only offers a co-mingled food and garden waste collection to households). Therefore if it were obligated to provide a service to NHM properties it could only offer a co-mingled service and the material collected would have to go to in-vessel composting for treatment (as it is not suitable for anaerobic digestion).

***Proposal 18: Recyclables produced by businesses and the NHM sector should be collected separately from residual waste, and separately from each other, unless comparable quality is achieved through co-collection of materials beyond plastics and metals only, and separate collection is not technically feasible, incurs disproportion economic costs or does not deliver the best environmental outcome; or if a permitted exemption to this requirement is set out in legislation.***

1. Do you agree that obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations should be required to segregate each of the following dry recyclables for collection and recycling?

Core dry recyclable	Example	Yes, agree	No, disagree	Unsure/ no opinion
Separate glass bottles and containers	Including drinks bottles, condiment bottles, jars, etc.		✓	
Separate Paper and card	Including newspaper, cardboard packaging, writing paper, etc.		✓	
Separate Plastics and metals	Including drinks containers, detergent, shampoo and cleaning products, pots, tubs & trays, etc. Steel and aluminium tins and cans, including aerosols Drinks cartons (i.e., Tetrapak)		✓	

2. Do you have any other comments to make on the separate collection of dry recycling from businesses and the NHM sector?

See previous comments in relation to proposals 5, 6, 7 and 8 on this issue. Notwithstanding previous comments in businesses (food and hospitality) were glass forms the largest volume of recyclable waste then this could potentially be collected separately in bring/bottle banks. However, in other sectors where the waste is more similar in nature to a household dry recyclable mix such as shops and offices the most efficient and cost effective means of collecting these materials for recycling would be commingling the materials in kerbside collections (as per household collections).

***Proposal 19: Proposals on conditions where an exception may apply, and two or more recyclable waste streams may be collected together from businesses and the wider NHM sector, which would be required two years following a requirement in legislation to collect NHM recycling separately. In the interim, waste carriers would be encouraged to have regard to the principle of QualiTEE.***

1. Please detail examples of technical challenges, with any supporting evidence, which you believe demonstrate that a separate collection of dry recyclables will not be feasible in circumstances for some or all NHM sector premises.

MUDC would highlight that whilst Councils have a duty to offer services to NHM organizations that request waste and recycling services they can only do so on the basis of cost recovery and existing design of services i.e. service provided would have to mirror that provided to households. Therefore if a Council carries out an assessment which concludes that it cannot provide separate collections due to technical, environmental or economic considerations, the NHM organisation should be required / directed to seek the services of a private sector waste collector.

Similarly Councils should be able to apply the existing exception in Article 20 of the WCLO as it relates to the non-collection of household waste *“which is situated at a place which in the opinion of the council is so isolated or inaccessible that the cost of collecting it would be unreasonably high, and as to which the council is satisfied that adequate arrangements for its disposal have been or can reasonably be expected to be made by a person who controls the waste”*.

Many town/city centre business are restricted for space and therefore may not have the capacity for multiple bins for a separate collection of recyclables. Many of the NHM are provided with a collection service by the private sector. This includes a residual waste collection, mix dry recyclables collection and separate food waste collection to those obligated businesses.

- To make the case that separate collection does not deliver the best Environmental Outcome compared to the collection of recyclable waste streams together, do you agree that evidence on the overall impact of the management of the NHM sector waste stream should be provided on the measures listed but not limited to the following:

	Yes - agree	No disagree - please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear evidence	Unsure
Quantities of materials collected;	✓		
Quantities of materials classed as contamination and not recycled;	✓		
Quantities of materials lost from sorting processes at a MRF;	✓		
Vehicle emissions from collection rounds;	✓		
Vehicle emissions from bulk transportation to sorting and reprocessing both in NI and overseas;	✓		

Emissions from disposal/ treatment including savings arising from landfill diversion; and	✓		
Carbon savings from using recycled materials rather than virgin materials	✓		
Other factors to be added – please describe			

3. Do you agree that the following evidence factors should be provided by a waste carrier to demonstrate that NHM sector recyclable materials are of comparable quality?

	Yes - agree	No disagree - please provide information as to why you disagree, providing clear evidence	Unsure
Comparable quantities (+/-2%) of each material stream sent for closed loop recycling			✓
Comparable quantities (+/- 5%) of each material stream sent for open loop recycling			✓
Other factors to be added – please describe	Further detail required on comparable quality		

4. Do you agree with the distance factor of more than 3 miles from another obligated NHM organisation, whereby collectors should not be required to collect recycling separately?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If no, your response should include evidence as to why the distance factor is not appropriate and if relevant, supply information on an alternative distance.

5. Do you agree that if the quantity of all core materials for collection is less than 3kg per week from one NHM organisation, then collectors should not be required to collect recycling separately?

- Yes
- No



Unsure

If no, your response should include evidence as to why the quantity is not appropriate and if relevant, supply information on an alternative amount.

6. Which is your preferred option for collectors when requested to collect recycling where the distance to an obligated NHM organisation is above 3 miles or where the quantity of all core materials is less than 3kg per week? Please rank your preference where 1 is most preferred:

Preferred Option	Select Ranking (1-4, where 1 is most preferred)
Mixed recycling collections	2
Separate recycling collections using different coloured "survival sacks" which are collected in the same vehicle as residual waste, then managed apart from the residual waste after the vehicle tips off.	3
No recycling collections required, and a collector could direct organisations to alternative facilities.	1
Something else - please detail.	

7. Do you agree standard default values and data that have clearly referenced sources (that cover comparable Quality of materials, Environmental outcomes and Technical feasibility) which could be used to support a written assessment, would be useful?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree, please provide the reason for your response.

Standard default values or data are rarely representative of all Councils in Northern Ireland given different populations and housing densities. Any values used should be a clear representation of the costs relevant to each individual Council. These costs should also be sourced from Northern Ireland and should not be generic WRAP UK figures

***Proposal 20: Written assessments should be completed by waste collectors that co-collect dry recyclables from NHM premises, evidencing why separate collections are not practicable and that co-collection delivers recyclable materials of comparable quality to those collected as separate fractions. Collectors must ensure that where they deviate from a standardised template, their output information attains the same evidential threshold. Regular reviews of such assessments should be undertaken to ensure that they remain accurate and up to date.***

1. Where waste collectors do not collect dry recyclable waste in the permitted three segregated streams, do you agree that the collector should produce a written assessment based on the template shown in Appendix 3 to outline the exception (s) to the requirement?

- Yes  
 No – further content should be added to the template.  
 No – content should be removed from the template.  
 Unsure

If you responded No, please provide the reason for your response below, including your suggested amendments to the template.

The draft written assessment templates provided in appendix 2 and 3 of the consultation (for household and NHM respectively) are confusing as the NHM template is much more detailed consisting of 8 pages compared to only 3 pages in the Household version.

2. Do you agree that reference to standard default values and data that have clearly referenced sources, which could be used to support a written assessment, would be useful?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure

If you disagree, please provide the reason for your response with supporting evidence in the box below.

Standard default values or data are rarely representative of all Councils in Northern Ireland given different populations and housing densities. Any values used should be a clear representation of the costs relevant to each individual Council. These costs should also be sourced from Northern Ireland and should not be generic WRAP UK figures

3. Do you agree that waste carriers for NHM recycling should be encouraged to have regard to the principle of QualiTEE (and not required to conduct a written assessment) during the first two years following the introduction of legislation requiring separate NHM recycling collections?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure  
 If no, please provide information as to why you disagree.

MUDC would highlight that it acts as a waste carrier / collector for NHM organisations and it would appear that the “bar” for not undertaking co-collections has been set much lower than in relation to household collections and would argue the same lighter touch should be applied for household collections i.e. collectors only required to have regard to the QualiTEE principle.

4. Do you agree with the recommendation that waste collectors should review and re-submit written assessments at least every 2 years?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure

If you disagree, please select one of the following statements that best describes why:

- Revising written assessments every 2 years is too frequent (please state how frequently you think they should be revised and evidence why)  
 Revising written assessments at least every 2 years is too infrequent (please state how frequently you think they should be revised and evidence why)  
 Written assessments should be revised every time changes are made to the collection services delivered by the waste collector or the treatment facility, they use i.e., collection methodology utilised, access to a new recycling facility.  
 Other (please detail providing evidence to support your opinion).

5. Using a template to produce a written assessment and using standardised data should reduce the burden on waste collectors. What other ways to reduce the burden on waste collectors should we consider for the written QualiTEE assessment?

Evidence from MRF's that confirm that the quality of recyclates produced are within the permissible comparable quantities for the separate collection of materials

6. Do you agree with the content of the written assessment template for collection of waste from obligated businesses, public bodies or other organisations as provided at Appendix 3?

Yes

No

Unsure

If you disagree, please select any of the following that best describe why:

Further content should be added (please comment)

Content should be removed (please comment)

Other (please comment)

7. Do you have any other comments on the content for the written assessment template for non-household municipal collections?

The draft written assessment templates provided in appendix 2 and 3 of the consultation (for household and NHM respectively) are confusing as the NHM template is much more detailed consisting of 8 pages compared to only 3 pages in the Household version.

8. We are proposing that a waste collector should only need to produce one written assessment for each set of premises or rurality that they intend to employ an exception for. For 'set of premises', we have suggested that this would include at a national level, groups of premises on a collection route or type of premises, for example hospitality premises. Do you agree with the examples listed for 'set of premises'?

Yes

No

Unsure (please comment)

If you disagree, please select one of the following statements that best describes why:

Other examples should be added to the list (please comment)

Examples should be removed from the list (please comment)

Other (please comment)

9. What other factors, if any, should be taken into consideration and included in the written assessment? For example, different premise type in a service/geographical area, costs of breaking existing contractual arrangements and/or access to treatment facilities.

Available space for separate bins

**Proposal 21: To introduce, or where existing, improve NHM recycling collections.**

1. Do you agree that the range of proposals set out by DAERA in this consultation once implemented, will sufficiently ensure that NHM recycling collections focus on segregating recyclable waste from residual waste alongside improving the quality and quantity of recycling?
- Yes
  - No - If no, your response should include clear evidence as to why you have this.
  - Unsure

MUDC, as a public sector organization would request a variation on option (i) to separate the following streams from residual waste (subject to the amendments shown in brackets) as these match the existing collections:

- a) Food waste (co-collected with garden waste where necessary) and
- b) Mixed recycling comprising plastics, paper, card and cans (and glass)

**Proposal 22: We will continue to review and investigate options to reduce costs for businesses and NHM premises where possible to maximise their recycling behaviour and activity.**

1. What are the main barriers that obligated businesses (small and micro-firms in particular), public bodies and other organisations face when trying to recycle? Please select one option for each barrier listed.

	Major Barrier	Some Barrier	Little/No Barrier	No opinion
Financial		✓		

Contractual		✓		
Space	✓			
Engagement		✓		
Location	✓			
Time and expense of staff training		✓		
Enforcement			✓	
Lack of awareness or understanding of how to recycle more waste		✓		
Other				

Please provide further detail of these barriers and how you believe they can be overcome alongside any supporting evidence.

Many city and town centre businesses do not have the storage space for a large number of separate waste bins. Therefore, a 3 bin model with comingled dry recyclates, food/garden waste and residual waste will offer business the best option to segregate their waste in the space / bin stores they have. The time and effort training staff in waste separation and maintaining this system may be cost prohibitive. Online support may be useful to help business cover some costs of staff education and awareness.

2. Which type(s) of business support do you believe would be most useful for obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations to ensure they understand their obligations and enable them to recycle more of their waste? (Select any number of responses)

	Very useful	Useful	Neutral	Not useful	No opinion
1:1 support provided/offered to obligated businesses and organisations		✓			
National, regional, or local communications campaigns		✓			
National guidance and good practice case studies		✓			
Dedicated website including online business support tools (e.g., online calculator and good practice guidance)	✓				

Other (please specify)	
------------------------	--

3. If adopted, and it became a legal requirement for obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations to segregate a core list of dry recyclables for collection alongside food waste, how do you believe such regulatory change should be promoted or communicated?

	Please tick all that apply
National, regional, and local communications campaigns i.e., TV adverts, social media campaigns, adverts in trade, national or local press, webinars	✓
Guidance and/or notification provided directly to all obligated businesses and organisations via the relevant regulatory bodies (local councils, NIEA) i.e., emails, written notification	
Guidance and/or notification provided to obligated businesses and organisations via their existing waste or recycling collector	✓
Guidance and/or notification provided to obligated businesses and organisations via relevant trade bodies or umbrella associations, Chambers of Commerce etc. i.e., newsletters, social media, workshops, conferences, or webinars	✓
Other (please specify)	

4. Do you have any views on how Government could support businesses, public bodies, or other organisations to procure waste management services more collaboratively?

	Tick all the options which you think should be considered
Promote existing collaborative opportunities relating to waste management so that businesses and NHM producers can access these easier	
Develop new procurement framework opportunities for waste management services that businesses and NHM producers can use collaboratively to gain best value	✓
Develop standard contract templates that businesses and NHM producers can utilise to collaboratively source waste management services	✓

Collaborate with key industry organisations or accredited associations to develop waste management framework opportunities suitable to specific industry sectors i.e., transport, retail, hospitality	✓
Other (please detail and provide examples if possible)	

**Proposal 23: Businesses and the NHM sector will be provided with a minimum two-year notification of a statutory requirement to collect dry recyclables as separate streams, segregated from residual waste, with a further phasing of such legislative requirements for small and micro businesses producing NHM waste.**

- Do you agree with our proposal that will require the separate collection of the core set of dry recyclables within 24 months of notification of a statutory requirement?
  - Yes
  - No - If no, your response should include clear evidence as to which materials you consider should not be incorporated within the list and why. Evidence with justification to extend timescales should be provided, if appropriate.

Unsure

- Do you agree that small and micro firms should be required to implement a separate collection of the core set of dry recyclables, by the points in time listed below? Tick the point in time which you think should apply.

	Yes	No	If you answered no, please provide the reason for your response with clear evidence detailing why small and micro firms need more time to accommodate the changes.	Not sure
24 months from notification of a statutory requirement	✓			
3 to 4 years from notification of a statutory requirement				
More than 4 years from notification of statutory requirement				



Never				
Other – please detail				

3. Are there any other obligated businesses, public bodies or other organisations in your opinion that should be exempt from the proposed requirements?  
Please provide evidence to support your view.

4. Some waste collectors may not be able to collect the required dry recyclable streams from all obligated businesses, public bodies and other organisations within the timeframe proposed. In this table we set out some circumstances which may delay changes to dry recycling collections. Please select the circumstances which you believe will create challenges and provide evidence with justification detailing why timescales should be extended, as appropriate.

<b>Not all rows need to be completed. Please use N/A where not applicable.</b>	
Collection and treatment contract limitations	
MRF infrastructure and/or capacity	✓
Container procurement and distribution challenges	
Reprocessing availability	
End market volatility/lack of end markets	
Cost burdens to collectors of setting up new or expanded collection services	✓
Other – please describe	

**Proposal 24: To review collection zoning and franchising to reduce costs to businesses and NHM premises.**

1. Which recyclable waste streams do you believe should be included under a potential franchising/zoning scheme available for use by obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations?

For each option, please select whether you agree, disagree, or are not sure/do not have an opinion/not applicable.

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure/No opinion/Not applicable
Dry recyclable material streams (glass, metal, plastic, paper, and card)	✓		
Food Waste	✓		

Other Items, for example oils, hazardous waste, bulky waste (please specify)			
--	--	--	--

2. Which of the below options, if any, is your preferred for zoning and/or collaborative procurement? Please select only one option that most closely aligns with your preference.
- Encouraging two neighbouring businesses to share the same containers under a contract.
  - Encouraging businesses to use shared facilities at a site/estate or equivalent.
  - Business Improvement Districts/partnerships tendering to offer a preferential rate (opt-in).
  - Co-collection – the contractor for household collection services also delivers the NHM service.
  - Framework zoning – shortlist of suppliers licensed to offer services in the zone.
  - Material specific zoning – one contractor collects food waste, one dry recyclables, one residual waste.
  - Exclusive service zoning – one contractor delivers the core recycling and residual collection waste services for the zone.
  - None of the above.
  - Other (please detail)

3. Do you have any views on the roles of stakeholders in implementing a potential zoning/franchising scheme. Please **tick** where you think the named stakeholder should have a role in each of the following activities:

	DAERA	NIEA	Councils	Business Improvement Districts	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations	Waste producers i.e., businesses, public bodies etc	Trade body, Umbrella Associations, Accredited bodies	Other – please detail
Procurement of services						✓	✓	
Scheme/collection service design						✓		
Admin and day to day management						✓		
Enforcement (ensuring zoning rules are adhered to)		✓						
Business support/advice	✓							
Development of tools & guidance	✓							
Delivery of communications campaigns	✓						✓	
Other activities (please detail)								

4. If you think that there is a role for any other stakeholders not already listed, please name the stakeholder below and state what activities you believe they should be involved in.

5. Do you have any further views on how a potential waste or recycling collection franchising or zoning scheme could be implemented?

MUDC would again highlight that it can only provide services to NHM premises on the basis of cost recovery and existing design of services. Councils should not be obligated to tender for Collection Zones as existing routes/vehicles may already be operating at full capacity servicing households and so this should be left to Councils to decide to participate.

***Proposal 25: To establish commercial waste bring sites and/or to increase the access to HWRCs for businesses, public bodies, and other organisations to encourage more recycling and better waste management.***

1. Do you agree that obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations would find the provision of commercial waste bring sites useful to facilitate an increase in recycling?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you disagree, please explain why you have this view and provide supporting evidence.

2. Are there any barriers which we should be aware of, regarding the creation and operation of commercial waste bring sites?

- Lack of suitable location(s) to accommodate commercial waste bring sites.
- Access restrictions – time, availability, vehicular access, noise
- Risk of abuse which may cause recycling containers to fill up quickly.
- Risk of contamination to recyclables meaning collected materials are less likely to be recycled.
- Sites encourage fly-tipping or litter.
- Other (please specify)

Will commercial waste bring sites have to be staffed to prevent unauthorized disposal of waste e.g. asbestos

3. Do you agree that obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations should be permitted to use HWRC's to dispose of their waste or recyclables?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure

If you disagree, please detail the reason for this view, supplying evidence to justify your opinion.

If you agree, what benefits do you believe access to HWRCs will provide to obligated businesses, public bodies, or other organisations? (Select as many benefits as are appropriate)

- HWRC access will provide a trusted, legitimate disposal route for our waste and recyclables.  
 HWRC access will provide a cost-effective disposal route for our waste and recyclables.  
 HWRCs will provide access to disposal routes for our waste and recyclables at times which suit our organisation (in line with the opening hours of the facility)  
 HWRC access will enable us to recycle more of our waste due to the range of accepted materials.  
 Other (please specify)

4. Are there any barriers, which we should be aware of, should HWRCs be made accessible to obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations?

- HWRC network has limited capacity for waste or recyclable storage - would be unable to accept predicted increase in volumes.  
 Council(s) has/have insufficient resources to handle the anticipated increase in numbers of visits, waste volumes, payments or permits needed to cope with acceptance of commercial waste or recyclables.  
 Existing Environmental Permit or planning condition for HWRC network would not permit a service expansion.  
 Other (please specify)

MUDC currently accepts commercial waste for disposal at its three main Recycling Centres where a weighbridge is in place to facilitate payment. Commercial waste is also accepted for recycling at the other/smaller sites where no payment is required. However it would not be practicable to permit disposal of residual commercial waste at the smaller sites due to space and capacity restraints.

MUDC therefore believes that the Department should revisit the previous recommendation put forward in the NI Waste Management Strategy 2006 to 2020 (Section 2.3 – Assisting Small Businesses) which stated:

*“The consultation document proposed that district councils should encourage small businesses to participate by accepting their commercial & industrial waste for recycling at a minimum of one civic amenity site per council area, and that a reasonable charge should be made in return for the use of such facilities. There was broad support for this proposal from consultees. Therefore, the Department strongly encourages district councils to make such provision, so that on a regional basis SMEs can access a civic amenity site within a reasonable distance. Provision for this should be included in the development of future waste management plans”*

***Proposal 26: Amendments will be made to Article 5 of The Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 to ensure compliance with the post-consultation requirements to segregate a core set of dry recyclables and food waste by obligated businesses and the wider NHM sector.***

1. Do you agree that our proposal to extend Article 5 of the Waste & Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 will be sufficient to ensure compliance with the proposed requirements to segregate a core set of dry recyclables and food waste by obligated businesses, public bodies, and other organisations?

Yes

No

Unsure

If you disagree, please explain why you have this view and provide supporting evidence.

Agree on the basis that co-mingling of recyclable waste is permitted

2. Do you agree that the existing penalty of £300 for non-compliance for obligated businesses, public bodies and other organisations is severe enough to ensure compliance?

Yes

No

Unsure

If you have answered No, what value do you feel the fixed penalty notice for non-compliance should be increased to?

Proposed new penalty value	Please select one answer
£400	
£500	
£600	
£700	✓

If you believe another value should apply to fixed penalty notices for non-compliance, please specify the value you feel the fixed penalty should be set at and explain why, as well as providing supporting evidence.

The fixed penalty notice should be increased to a minimum of £1000 to create the necessary deterrent for compliance given the significant cost of waste management.



## DEARA Rethinking Our Resources Consultation - Annex 1

**Proposal 1: To restrict the residual waste capacity for households in Northern Ireland to a maximum of 90 litres per week, delivered either via a 180-litre wheeled bin collected fortnightly or a 240 litre wheeled bin collected every three weeks. Councils would decide on the most appropriate methodology for their own circumstances.**

### **RESPONSE:**

MUDC agrees that a restriction on residual waste is necessary to achieve higher recycling levels of 65%-70% if these are to be achieved on an individual Council basis. However if the higher municipal waste recycling targets are to be achieved collectively by Councils and businesses and the wider NHM sector then this may not be necessary. MUDC would seek the department to legislate on the requirement for achieving these levels of recycling. MUDC has achieved an average HH recycling rate of 58.25% over the past four years which is higher than the HH 57% rate required in option 3 of the policy options presented (and close to the 61% and 62% required in conjunction with NHM rates for option 1 and 2 respectively). It is therefore possible that MUDC could achieve the HH rates identified in all policy options without residual waste restrictions but with marginal increases in mixed dry recycling and biowaste kerbside collections and/or increased Recycling Centre performance.

MUDC notes the recent comments (November 2023) contained in the Government response to the outcome of the DEFRA Consultation on Consistency in Household Recycling in England which appear to be at odds with this proposal as stating *“the government is committed to delivering comprehensive, frequent rubbish and recycling collections. Through statutory guidance, we propose requiring local authorities to collect residual (non-recyclable) waste at least fortnightly, if not more frequently, to protect local amenity and prevent unintended consequences of cutting residual waste collection frequency”*. Further information on this policy update can be accessed via the below link:

[defracollectionandpackagingreform.cmail19.com/t/t-e-edltdn-jkijdjruh-z/](mailto:defracollectionandpackagingreform.cmail19.com/t/t-e-edltdn-jkijdjruh-z/)

If a restriction on residual waste is required MUDC preference would be for three weekly collection of 240 litre residual bins rather than the provision of smaller containers as not only does this not require a wholesale purchase and distribution of replacement containers, but this also creates spare capacity within existing collection rounds which potentially can be utilized in providing enhanced recycling collections.

MUDC welcomes the acknowledgement in this proposal that *“Councils would decide on the most appropriate methodology for their own circumstances”* and feels this pragmatic approach should be adopted in relation to all proposals in the consultation i.e., DAERA should set the targets but let individual Councils decide on how best to achieve them.





**Proposal 2: To require local Councils to collect a core set of dry recyclables from households to help avoid confusion and improve consistency and the quality of recyclable material.**

**RESPONSE:**

Mid Ulster District Council agrees with the concept of a core set of materials from the point of view of avoiding confusion but would question if this will lead to a significant improvement in the consistency and quality of recyclable material collected given Table 4 of the consultation questions confirms that most Councils in N Ireland are already collecting the majority of these materials at the kerbside.

**Proposal 3: That additional materials are added to the core set over time when feasible, with flexible plastic packaging set to be collected from households by the end of the financial year 2026/2027.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC agrees with this proposal however would question if there has been engagement with the reprocessing sector to determine if there will be suitable and adequate infrastructure/capacity in place by 2026/27.

MUDC welcomes the confirmation (on p31 of consultation) that the *“range of materials would only be added to the core set when supported by evidence that materials can reasonably be collected for recycling and can reasonably be recycled. By this, we mean that there is capacity locally in NI, GB, and Ireland or if necessary, further afield into Europe, that it can technically be recycled and that the cost of reprocessing is not prohibitive”* and would encourage that this same pragmatic approach, particularly in relation to location, is also adopted with regard to the processing of existing dry recyclable material collected at the kerbside.



**Proposal 4: To highlight NI's unique legislation on the quality of dry recyclable materials, the proposed term QualiTEE should be adopted to describe the exceptions to collecting dry recyclable materials separately.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC is concerned that the new concept of QualiTEE was not raised in the previous Discussion Document, nor in the workshops held with Councils. The QualiTEE terminology by definition appears to place a primary focus on the quality (as opposed to quantity) of recycle material and less emphasis on the other technical, economic, and environmental considerations.

MUDC notes the recent comments (updated 21st November 2023) contained in the Government response to the outcome of the DEFRA Consultation on Consistency in Household Recycling in England which confirms *“on further examination of the evidence base, we consider that there is sufficient evidence that the co-collection of dry recyclable materials will not significantly reduce their potential to be recycled, so long as dry recycling is collected separately from residual and organic waste. Based on available data, co-collection does not have a significant impact on recycling rates. Six of the top 10 local authorities in terms of ‘household waste’ recycling rate in England in 2021 to 2022 provided a co-mingled service for dry materials”*.

MUDC notes that the unique legislation in Northern Ireland on Separate Collections (referred to on page 22) does not include card/cardboard (regulations only reference waste paper) and therefore queries why card / cardboard should have to be collected separately from other recyclable materials.



**Proposal 5: The default position for collection of dry recyclables from households is in four separate streams.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC is very concerned that the default position proposed i.e. four separate streams, goes beyond the options raised in the previous Recycling Discussion Document and in the workshops held with Councils. The separate options proposed previously were limited to keeping glass and/or paper separate from the other materials, which whilst challenging, would not be as difficult as collecting four separate waste streams. The Transition Cost Survey did not examine the option of four separate waste streams and therefore the validity of this report is now questionable.

Over the past ten years MUDC has been the top performing Council in relation to household waste recycling and has nearly reached a recycling rate of 60%. This has been achieved through the commingling of mixed dry recyclables which has proven an exceedingly high level of performance mainly due to the willingness of the public to participate in this scheme. The commingling option would follow the legislative travel of England following their release and recent updates of the Simpler Recycling guidance which has also been defined by DEFRA as the '*common-sense approach that is both easy and effective for everyone.*' It is our view that the complex multi stream collection is not well accepted by the public and a forced implementation of this scheme will result in a reduction in recycling.

Table 1.1 offers a comparison in average set out rate between the 3-Stack Kerbside Sort Scheme and the Commingled Bin (including glass) Scheme. These figures were sourced from the DAERA Waste Composition Analysis Study 2017 and WRAP reports on trial performance. It is evident that the public set out rate for the commingled bin system is much higher in comparison to the kerbside sort scheme. It is our opinion that by simplifying the sorting process for users and maximising convenience, it encourages greater participation and thus leads to higher recycling rates.

**Table 1.1 Average Set Out Rate.**

Council	Scheme Type	Average Set Out %
Lisburn & Castlereagh	3 Stack Kerbside Sort Scheme	59.8
Antrim & Newtownabbey	3 Stack Kerbside Sort Scheme	65.15
Mid Ulster	Commingled Bin Including Glass	87.3
Fermanagh & Omagh	Commingled Bin Including Glass	88.43

MUDC strongly holds the view that a commingled collection system provides material of comparable quality and, importantly, higher quantities of material for recycling in comparison to separate collections. Therefore MUDC suggests that providing increased capacity for co-mingled collections to households, in the form of a second 240 litre blue bin, will make the greatest contribution to achieving recycling targets.



Table 1.2 below presents the NIEA Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (LACMW) 2022/23 household waste dry recycling rates achieved by each local authority. This was sourced from the NIEA LACMW 2022/23 Data Tables. MUDC have achieved the fourth highest household dry recycling rate for 2022/23, thus demonstrating that the commingled system is effective in the collection of dry recyclables. It is evident that those Councils operating the commingled system (including glass) have achieved the highest dry recycling rates. Those Councils partially or fully operating the kerbside sort system have subsequently achieved the lowest dry recycling rates. It is our opinion that this stems from the public participation in each scheme, highlighting that a higher participation rate can be expected for the commingled including glass scheme and thus a higher dry recycling rate is the result.

**Table 1.2 NIEA LACMW Household Waste Dry Recycling Rates**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Household waste dry recycling rate</b>	<b>Collection System Used</b>
1	Derry City & Strabane	27.9	Commingled including glass
2	Fermanagh & Omagh	26.6	Commingled including glass
3	Causeway Coast & Glens	25.7	Commingled including glass
4	Mid Ulster	24.2	Commingled including glass
5	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	24.2	Commingled including glass
6	Antrim & Newtownabbey	24.2	50% kerbside sort 50% commingled no glass
7	Newry, Mourne & Down	23.1	Commingled including glass
8	Belfast	21.9	Large portion kerbside sort remainder commingled no glass
9	Ards & North Down	20.8	Commingled with separate glass collection
10	Lisburn & Castlereagh	18.9	Large portion kerbside sort remainder commingled no glass
11	Mid & East Antrim	18.9	Kerbside sort

The commingled bin offers the greatest flexibility for changes to the composition of recyclable materials. The increase in online shopping combined with proposed EPR changes have increased the percentage cardboard in the dry recycling collection. The small 40 litre box for paper and cardboard in the kerbside sort option in our opinion will struggle to provide effective capacity for the volume of paper and card produced.



An economic model was created to understand the capital and operational costs associated with a change to the Kerbside Sort System. The results from this economic assessment are presented in Table 1.3 below. Considerations for this economic model include the following:

- Vehicle number assessment and replacement cycles.
- Container purchase, assembly, delivery, and container replacements.
- Collection and disposal of existing commingled containers.
- Need for storage of containers prior to roll out.
- Communications
- Operational staff costs
- Vehicle maintenance/running costs taking account for fuel, vehicle tax, PSV wash and test fees, vehicle insurance, tyre cost, and vehicle repairs.
- Based on known market rates and gate fees.

**Table 1.3 Economic Model for Change to Kerbside Sort**

<b>Capital Costs</b>	<b>£</b>
Stillage Vehicles	6,660,000
Replacement Cycle for RCVs	2,200,000
Storage Facility Rental	315,000
Communications Campaign	107,891
Triple Stack Box Assembly & Delivery	2,629,288
180 L Bin Assembly & Delivery	1,205,828
Collection & Disposal of Comingled Bins	163,242
<b>Total Capex</b>	<b>13,281,249</b>
<b>7 Year Operational Cost</b>	<b>£</b>
Staff	29,414,000
Vehicle Running Costs	4,833,542
Gates Fees	26,160,114
Potential Revenue Share on Recyclates	2,464,286
<b>Total Opex</b>	<b>57,943,370</b>
<b>Total Cost Over 7 Years</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Total Cost Over 7 Years</b>	<b>71,224,619</b>

The costs to implement and operate the system are considered cost prohibitive for Mid Ulster District Council. The performance of the system is also less than the performance of the current commingled system. Therefore MUDC will not be investing in a change to the kerbside sort system for a decrease in efficiency. It is considered a more reasonable solution is to further invest in the current system to further increase its performance. This may include increased recycling capacity and reduced residual capacity (a trial scheme for same was previously refused capital grant funding by DAERA).

MUDC has embraced the positive health and safety aspects of one armed collection vehicles. MUDC has heavily invested in one armed vehicles and now has 9 in its fleet with a further 3 due for delivery this year. Each of these vehicles cost £230k and have a replacement cycle of 10 years.



Therefore, this fleet will not be due for replacement until 2030 to 2034. These vehicles are used to carry out rural collections right across the district and are not compatible with kerbside sort systems. It is our opinion that kerbside sort is not a suitable collection method for our workforce and fleet.

The Glasgow Caledonian and Greenwich Universities 'Body Mapping' report presents a case study undertaken to identify levels of MSD (Musculoskeletal Disorder) in relation to the methods of waste collection. The report notes the increased MSD related risks associated with the use of boxed or bagged collection services. It notes that wheeled bin collection services were the least likely to cause injuries/ musculoskeletal disorders.

3 surveys were conducted as part of this research report using the same local authority service. The first survey was conducted during the original waste collection system in 2010 which was primarily:

- Weekly collection of refuse in 140l wheeled bin;
- Fortnightly collection of paper, cans, and plastic in two 33l baskets;
- Monthly collection of glass in 50l boxes.

The second (2013) and third (2014) surveys were conducted after the implementation of a new system primarily;

- Fortnightly collection of refuse in 140l wheeled bins;
- Fortnightly collection of glass, paper, cans, and plastic in 240l wheeled bins;
- Weekly food waste collection in 20l mini bins;
- A paid for fortnightly garden waste service using 240l wheeled bins.

The key findings resulting from this conducted survey include:

- The parts of the body with highest Average Pain Count (APC) were the shoulder and neck/upper spinal which decreased from 0.91 to 0.19 with manual handling reduced after the removal of boxes and baskets.
- Lower back pain remained high for all three surveys (associated with vehicle driving), but also reducing after removal of boxes and baskets, from 0.86 to 0.64.
- Loaders who handled and sorted materials in 2010 contained in boxes and baskets (arm including elbow, shoulder/neck,) with the activity involving bending lifting and twisting had an APC of 2.08.
- The findings confirm links between awkward occupational postures and low back pain, in effect bending and twisting and lifting boxes and sorting recycling into different components and bins.

Ensuring the health and safety of our staff members is paramount in all operations conducted by MUDC. Therefore, introducing a waste collection system involving repetitive bending, turning, and lifting of boxes poses a significant threat to the well-being of our employees due to the potential for musculoskeletal disorders. The kerbside sort system also involves the loading of waste into the stillage vehicle from both sides which would place the collection crew in a live lane of traffic on a regular basis. We therefore cannot agree with compromising their safety for the sake of operational changes to a system that has shown to achieve the lowest participation rates (as evident in Table 1.1), dry recycling rates (as evident in Table 1.2) and has proven to increase health and safety risk.



MUDC believes the four stream approach is not deliverable within or compatible with a primarily rural district like Mid Ulster and is clearly aimed at the promotion of a kerbside sort system which may only be available from one local service provider which could potentially be anti-competitive.

**Proposal 6: Standardised written assessments are prepared by councils where two or more dry recyclables are mixed during the collection process, evidencing why separate collections are not practicable and that co-collection delivers recyclable material of comparable quality.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC disagrees with this approach. This approach is a significant diversion from the Simpler Recycling guidance put forward by DEFRA. We believe that an imposed separate collection of recyclables or further administrative burden to justify the use of the current best performing system, commingling would add significant cost burden on Council finances. The only way that Councils can recoup this money is through District Rates increases at a time when household finances are already stretched with the current cost of living.

Table 1.4 below demonstrates the efficiency of the commingled collection method in collecting the highest rate of recyclates at the kerbside. These figures exclude recyclates collected at recycling centres, focusing solely on the performance of each Councils' kerbside collection system. It is evident that the highest capture rate is being achieved by MUDC and full commingled systems.

**Table 1.4 Dry Recycling Capture Rate (T/HH/Annum)**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Dry Recycling Capture Rate (t/HH/Annum)</b>	<b>Collection Method</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Mid Ulster	0.195*	Comingled including glass	1 <sup>st</sup>
Fermanagh & Omagh	0.180*	Comingled including glass	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Newry Mourne & Down	0.171*	Comingled including glass	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Derry & Strabane	0.161*	Comingled including glass	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ards & North Down	0.158*	Comingled separate glass	5 <sup>th</sup>
Causeway Coast & Glens	0.157*	Comingled including glass	6 <sup>th</sup>
ABC	0.148*	Comingled separate glass, comingled no glass & kerbside sort	7 <sup>th</sup>
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0.125	Kerbside sort and comingled no glass	8 <sup>th</sup>
Mid & East Antrim	0.116	Large proportion with kerbside sort	9 <sup>th</sup>



Council	Dry Recycling Capture Rate (t/HH/Annum)	Collection Method	Rank
Lisburn & Castlereagh	0.107	3 stack boxes*	10 <sup>th</sup>
Belfast	0.089	3 stack boxes*	11 <sup>th</sup>

\*Figure after contamination has been removed

MUDC notes the recent comments (updated 21st November 2023) contained in the Government response to the outcome of the DEFRA Consultation on Consistency in Household Recycling in England which confirms “*The Secretary of State has the power to set an exemption from the requirement to separately collect in relation to 2 or more recyclable waste streams, if satisfied that doing so does not significantly reduce the potential for the waste streams to be recycled or composted. We propose to provide a further exemption to allow all dry recyclables (paper and card, plastic, glass, and metal) to be collected together in one recycling bin. If using an exemption, waste collectors would not be required to produce a written assessment to co-collect*”. Given these statements from DEFRA, MUDC would request that similar exemptions be introduced in Northern Ireland rather than the imposition of the onerous QualiTEE assessment. If this is imposed MUDC would request that this should only apply to new collection systems, not to existing systems, given the enormous cost involved in changing collection systems.

It would be proposed that once a collection system is agreed for a Council then it should be for the Council to manage the collection system that best fits their circumstances. DAERA should stick with the legislating of what should be achieved in terms of targets. It should be for the individual Councils then to assess and determine how best to collect waste to achieve the targets set by DAERA.





**Proposal 7: A set of conditions should be set out that define comparable quality, best environmental outcome, technical feasibility, and disproportionate economic cost- “QualiTEE”. Where conditions are met, an exception may apply, and two or more recyclable waste streams may be collected together from households.**

**Proposal 7a: Similar guidance on MRF sampling, to that used in England and Wales, should be introduced in NI to ensure that the quality of input and outputs for MRFs can be quantified.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC is concerned at the limited reference to health and safety in the proposed assessment. The four stream approach proposed, which can only be implemented via a kerbside sort system, would have significant health and safety implications (as detailed in previous response to proposal 5). MUDC prioritises the health and safety of its employees and has invested millions of pounds in a move to one armed vehicles (OAVs) i.e. single person operated vehicles to collect bins in rural parts of the district. The use of one-armed vehicles for commingled bin collection offers significant advantages in terms of reducing labour costs and mitigating health and safety risks associated with manual collection. With a driver operated mechanical system handling all collection tasks, the need for manual labour is greatly reduced, resulting in cost savings for the Council. Additionally, the risks of musculoskeletal disorders among staff members is significantly lowered as they are not required to manually sort recyclables at the kerbside. This system also enhances safety by removing operator exposure to live traffic lanes (vehicles travelling at speeds of up to 60 mph on busy rural roads). In contrast, a kerbside sort approach would necessitate increased labour costs due to the manual sorting required by crews. This not only adds to operational expenses but also exposes staff to potential dangers such as vehicle collision and other traffic-related accidents. By adopting a one-armed vehicle system, MUDC can prioritise the safety of their workers whilst also optimising efficiency and reducing operational risks associated with waste collection.

Section 18 of the Waste Regulations (NI) 2011 includes one of the conditions as “*separate collection of the waste is not technically feasible taking into consideration good practices in waste collection*”. MUDC considers the use of OAVs to be best practice in waste collection from a health and safety perspective and has recently received a WISH award in relation to the use of OAVs. These vehicles are not compatible with four stream or two stream collections, however MUDC considers employee health and safety to be a higher priority than any perceived increase in material quality achieved through separate collection of recyclables.

MUDC is also very concerned that DEARA considers that “*people or historical preferences*” is not within the scope of technical feasibility as public participation in recycling schemes is the key to their success. Councils have a statutory approach to take into account the views of their residents in the delivery of services and to carry out related Equality Impact Assessments and Rural Needs Analysis. The separate collection of wastes (which may require up to seven separate containers) would not be publicly acceptable in Mid Ulster, where residents have indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the current three bin collection system. If separate collections were mandated this would lead to reduced public participation and decreased recycling rate.



**Proposal 8: The quality of recyclate for reprocessing is important and needs to be improved through changes to collections and clear measures should be set to describe quality.**

**RESPONSE:**

Please refer to Tables 1.2 & 1.4 which demonstrate the performance of the fully commingled system.

MUDC agrees that the quality of recyclate is important, however the quantity of recyclate collected should be viewed as being equally important if higher recycling targets are to be achieved. MUDC believes a fully commingled system provides material of comparable quality to the other systems (as evidenced by the fact there are markets for the material) as well as a higher quantity of material.

MUDC is concerned at the lack of detail in the consultation (one paragraph) on what constitutes “comparable quality” and further clarity is required on how this is to be assessed e.g. how will this differ from “as appropriate to meet the necessary quality standards for the relevant recycling sectors” as stated in the original Waste Regulations (NI) 2011?

On review of our reports from contractors processing our commingled materials recovered recyclates such as paper and plastic is of comparable quality to kerbside sort material and is entering local and UK reprocessors such as Huhtamaki, Cherry Polymers and Saica UK. Therefore, MUDC believe the commingled material from our collections is achieving a comparable quality as the kerbside sort material.

MUDC has the highest yield of kerbside dry recycling per household (as confirmed by Waste Dataflow statistics) and most of the other highest performing Councils in Northern Ireland operate commingled systems. MUDC is of the opinion that if some local reprocessors were to invest and upgrade their facilities e.g. use of more robotic equipment supported by AI then they could accept and accommodate material from commingled systems.

MUDC also believes that if glass were to be included in a future DRS scheme with sufficient incentives this would remove the majority of this material from kerbside collection schemes and further reduce any requirement to collect this material separately from other streams.

Furthermore, if glass is removed from the commingled collection this will most likely still be contained in the bin as a contaminant. Therefore, MRF’s will still need to be designed to effectively remove glass from other materials even if a separate glass collection is introduced.



**Proposal 9: Commingled collection of plastics and metals should be exempt from requirements to collect these materials as separate fractions.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC agrees with the proposed exemption to permit plastic and metal being collected together. Whilst being supportive of exemptions, MUDC would query how these are permissible under the unique legislation referred to in Northern Ireland and why, if this is possible, such exemptions cannot be granted for other materials? Therefore, on the basis that exemptions are possible, MUDC requests that such exemptions be extended to permit all of the core materials to be collected together (as is now the case in England – see previous responses for proposals 4 & 6)

If an exemption for fully commingled is not possible then an alternative exemption should be considered which would permit card/plastic and glass/metal to be collected together in a second blue bin which would permit more balanced/efficient collection routes to be designed.



**Proposal 10: Revisions to household food waste collections to increase capture rates and improve the diversion of food waste from disposal should be introduced, ensuring all householders, including those living in flats, can recycle more and in time have access to separate, weekly food waste recycling collections.**

**RESPONSE:**

Table 1.5 below outlines the volume of food waste resulting from both a commingled food and garden waste collection and a separate food waste collection. These figures were gathered from Volume 2 of the NI Waste Composition Analysis 2017 Report.

**Table 1.5 Food Waste Collection**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Kg/HH/Week Food Waste in Comingled Collection</b>	<b>Kg/HH/Week in Separate Food Waste Collection</b>
Antrim & Newtownabbey	0.7.- 2.6	0.8
Ards & North Down	1.0 – 1.5	
ABC	0.6 – 1.2	1.3 – 1.9
Belfast	1.8 – 1.8	0.4 – 1.4
Causeway Coast & Glens	0.7 – 0.7	1.8 – 2.0
Derry & Strabane		0.7 – 1.5
Fermanagh & Omagh		0.4 – 1.3
Lisburn & Castlereagh	0.9 – 1.5	
Mid & East Antrim	1.5 – 2.2	
Mid Ulster	0.9 – 0.9	
Newry Mourne & Down	0.5 – 0.7	
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.95 – 1.45</b>	<b>0.9 – 1.62</b>

As indicated in the Table 1.5 above, a commingled food and garden waste collection obtains a similar quantity of food waste per household when compared to a separate food waste collection. Table 1.5 points to a variation across each Council rather than between the collection method operated. The variability likely stems from the methods of communication to the public and how each household is encouraged to refrain from disposing of their food waste in the general residual waste bin. Considering the capacity of the commingled food and garden waste bin at 240 litres in contrast to the 23 litre caddy bin collected on a weekly basis, it is our opinion that implementing a Northern-Ireland wide restriction on the capacity of the residual bin would be most effective in diverting food waste away from general waste bin collections. This approach is believed to have a greater impact in food waste diversion compared to implementing a weekly collection of food waste.



MUDC therefore does not agree that weekly food waste collections are necessary. Reference is made to “UK” research which “*shows that collecting food waste mixed with garden waste fortnightly can lead to lower yields compared to a weekly food waste collection*”. MUDC believes that NI specific data is required to support this argument and would request the results of the recent composition studies undertaken in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and Derry and Strabane Council).

WRAP has previously acknowledged that the commingled biowaste schemes in N Ireland are amongst the best performing in the UK. Indeed the results of the last full NI Waste Compositional Study carried out in 2017 showed that during the first (summer) phase more food waste (1.07kg/hh/week) was collected from commingled schemes compared to separate collections (0.92kg/hh/week). When an average of the first (summer) and second (winter) phases are taken the difference is marginal with an average of 1.2 kg/hh/week from commingled schemes compared to 1.28 kg/hh/week from separate food waste collections.

It would therefore be difficult to justify the massive capital expenditure and operational/revenue costs involved in changing to separate/weekly collections of food waste. Also consideration has to be given as to what would happen to the garden waste currently collected at the kerbside (currently accounting for 75-80% of the biowaste material in commingled schemes) should separate/weekly collections be imposed. The continued separate kerbside collections of garden waste would no longer be feasible and what impact would this (unintended consequence) have on overall recycling rates in Northern Ireland?

With regard to the provision of caddy liners MUDC is the only local authority in N Ireland which does not provide these free of charge to households (instead they are sold at a cost of £1 per roll). This does not appear to have adversely affected the performance of the kerbside biowaste collection scheme. However if funding were to be provided or budget made available to provide liners free of charge it is possible that the capture of food waste could be achieved at a level beyond that of separate collections.

**Proposal 11: Through collaboration with Councils, we will set out proportionate and robust guidelines for compliance and enforcement that enable Councils to enhance their waste and recycling services.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC believes that enforcement should only be used as a last resort, following comprehensive education and awareness raising activities. MUDC has an existing policy outlining action to be taken in relation to contamination which is adequate in the dealing with the majority of cases. The use of fines could have an adverse impact and lead to a negative public reaction to recycling schemes and related reduction in participation and quantity/quality of material collected.

MUDC agrees that the existing challenge with the current regulations in relation to the acceptance of waste at Recycling Centres need to be clarified/addressed in order to assist with enforcement issues in relation to the acceptance of commercial waste (so that it is the carrier of the waste rather than the source of the waste which determines the classification of the waste brought to the site).



**Proposal 12: Non-Statutory Guidance will be provided to councils to expand the opportunities to recycle more materials and to embed best practice in existing services.**

**RESPONSE:**

MUDC would welcome the provision of Non-Statutory Guidance and is of the view that all outcomes in relation to the proposals in the consultation should be on the basis of Non-Statutory Guidance as Councils are best placed to make decisions of their Waste Collection Systems and Policies based on their local knowledge and circumstances.