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Block 2, Floor 6,
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Dublin 8.**

24th November 2022

**To Each Member of the
Climate Action, Environment and Energy Strategic Policy Committee**

**Strategy/Approach for changing the presentation of waste in “designated bagged
street areas” of Dublin City.**





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1.0 Executive Summary

The central objective of this report is to agree an approach on how to improve the presentation and collection of waste from designated “bagged street” areas in Dublin City Council Administrative Area.

For some time now the presentation of waste in plastic bags has been causing considerable litter problems for Dublin City and the Waste Management Department as a result of the ease at which the existing plastic bags provided for by the private waste collectors can be torn by seagulls and other urban animals.

This report considers some of the possible solutions on improving the presentation of waste, which we now present to the SPC for discussion and agreement on how to progress.

The Waste Management Department have consulted extensively with the private operators in the waste collection industry and with municipal authorities in other jurisdictions.

We propose to prohibit the presentation of all waste in “unprotected” plastic bags, and to offer the private waste collectors alternative options on how all waste streams should be presented within these “designated bagged street areas”.

The options been considered consist of presenting waste in:- (i) gull proof bags, (ii) caddy’s (iii) wheelie bins (iv) bagged bins

We propose to complete a trial/pilot, using “Gull Proof Bags” in street(s) where there has been extensive litter problems, and then assess the effectiveness of this proposal before reverting to the SPC on the findings.

We hope to be in a position to commence the trial/pilot in Q1 of 2023.

Bagged bins have already being assessed and findings published, and caddy containers are currently being trialled by a waste collector.

2.0 The Nature and Severity of the Problem

Dublin City Council exited the waste collection market in January 2012 but continues to manage a network of bring centres, civic amenity sites and bottle banks for the recycling of a range of waste from household and commercial premises.

Waste collection has been outsourced to private operators within the waste industry, and who are free to engage and offer waste collection contracts to all private commercial and residential customers throughout Dublin City. There is a regulatory regime in place which governs these private waste collectors and this waste presentation and collection process, and which includes:- NPWCO Permit Conditions; Waste Management Act; Litter Pollution Act; and Dublin City Council Bye Laws.

Bag presentation in designated areas of the city has been in place for many years to support businesses and house householders who have limited space for the traditional means of storage and presentation of waste which has been in wheelie bins. The private waste

collectors are free to seek customers from within these designated bagged areas of the city, and offer their own “marked” single use bag for collection. There are approximately 950 streets throughout Dublin City which have designations to present waste in single use bags, and which includes a large section of the commercial district of the city.

It is the presentation of waste in these single use plastic bags on the city’s streets and pavements, which is causing a significant litter issue due to the inability of these bags to withstand tearing by seagulls and other animals, resulting in most cases, food waste being strewn over the city’s pavements. This is leading to additional costs being incurred by Dublin City Council in cleaning this litter. In addition there is an increasing prevalence of invalid labels appearing on these marked bags which leads to an inability to trace bags/litter to households/private businesses, thus impacting on possible enforcement proceedings.

Further, the proliferation of litter emanating from these single use plastic bags has the potential to impact negatively on our business community, visitors, health and the reputation of our capital city. We believe effective systems are now needed to deal with this ongoing problem, so that we can protect and maintain the high quality environment for our residents and public realm areas, which is needed to support the continuing economic progress of our commercial district.

3.0 The Proposal: To ban the presentation of Waste in “Unprotected” Plastic Bags

The Waste Management Department are recommending that Dublin City Council ban the use of “unprotected” single use plastic bags throughout the designated “bagged area” of the city. We believe this prohibition order is needed to eliminate the significant litter problem which is resulting from the use of these plastic bags and their inability to withstand tearing by small urban animals and seagulls, thus exposing the waste and creating significant litter problem.

While we accept that the lack of outside or suitable storage space for many of the commercial premises and residential properties in the designated bagged area of the city prohibits the use of the traditional wheelie bin, we feel a more robust “Gull Proof” bag is needed along with a small caddy or plastic container for the presentation and storage of waste in these parts of the city. The use of wheelie bins is allowable should acceptable off street storage facilities exist.

These new proposals are a significant departure from the existing options for presenting and collection of waste and this is further complicated by the fact that Dublin City Council do not manage the waste collection process, as it has been outsourced to private waste collectors. However, we do have influence over some of the regulatory framework that governs the waste presentation and collection process, and it is here and in consultation with the waste collectors that we propose to advance the proposals for change.

Due to the significance of the change and change processes that we are recommending, there are a number of steps that need to be completed in order for a successful and full implementation, which we will discuss later in this report.

4.0 The Options Being Considered

The options being considered for the presentation of waste within the designated bag areas of the city in consultation with the private waste collectors include the following:-

- I. Gull Proof Bags
- II. Caddy (Plastic) Containers
- III. Wheelie Bins
- IV. Bagged Bins.

We anticipate that as we move forward in this process there may be one or more presentation options suitable to a customer, which will depend on location, frequency of collection and type of waste being presented.

4.1 Gull Proof Bags (GPBs)

It is the intention of the Waste Management Department to propose, in agreement with the private waste collectors, that reusable gull proof bags are trialled in a busy commercial street and used as a protective bag which can contain the single used plastic bags currently used to store waste. Waste Management staff recently visited Edinburgh Municipal Authority to see at first hand this method of waste presentation, and to determine if a similar option would be suitable for Dublin.

These reusable Gull Proof Bags or sacks were first introduced by Edinburgh Municipal Authority for the presentation of waste in 2011 as a result of persistent seagull and urban fox interference of single use plastic bags, and due to their success have been extensively used ever since. They have been used as a protective bag, are more robust, and are used to contain disposable plastic bags for non-recyclable waste.

The picture below shows a reusable gull proof bag being presented for waste collection on the streets of Edinburgh. The municipal authority in Edinburgh use the existing railings to secure the bag/sack in place while it is being emptied. These bags/sacks contain up to 6 standard plastic bags and protect the primary plastic waste bags from interference from seagulls or other urban animals.



The picture below shows the same bag as above, after the waste collectors have emptied the contents. The bags are left secure to the railings and then removed by the customer to be filled again prior to the next waste presentation period.



The recent trip to Edinburgh provided a good insight into the use of these bags/sacks, and some of their limitation for use by the municipal authority. Within the World Heritage Streetscape of the City of Edinburgh customers must have railings to qualify for using these bags/sacks. During waste collection, the bag/sack is opened and the plastic waste bags are removed for disposal while the bag/sack remains secured to the railings of the property. Once the bag/sack is emptied, it is then left secured to the railing and so it is not subject to inclement weather conditions and so does not end up littering the streets.

In the suburbs of Edinburgh where railings aren't common "gull proof" bags are used which have weights in the base of the bags and prevents the bags from moving around in high winds. These are used in conjunction with other waste containers such as caddy's.

White "Gull Proof" bag below with grey "Caddy", used in the suburbs of Edinburgh.



Due to the nature of the both the residential and commercial premises in Dublin City, many properties do not have railings and so to fully investigate whether the presentation of waste in these "gull proof" bags/sacks is a possible solution we feel a trial/pilot is warranted to determine the merits of this proposal. The trial/pilot would test the merits of the standalone "gull proof" bag/sack.

Each bag would be presented for collection in a spot outside the persons household or business premises similar to the existing option of presenting waste in plastic bags. The bag would need a weight big enough to keep it in situ post collection (not heavy enough that it becomes unmanageable) until the bags are removed from the public street/pavement

There are other options that could be utilised to hold these bags/sacks in place and which may be trialled during the pilot phase, and which are detailed in the following photographs.

Typical technical specifications for gull proof bag include:-

- Size 48*48*90cm (200 litre) (this is variable dependent on the household size and the waste stream)
- Made from highly durable extra thick woven poly propylene sack

- Adjustable Velcro straps and lid seals when waste inside
- Holds approximately 6 standard bin bags (size is variable)
- Base includes a 500gram integral rubber weight to stop blowing away
- Tying device also prevents from blowing away
- Just as effective as wheelie bins

Gull Proof Sack/bag connected to street bollard in photograph below



Gull Proof Sack/ bag connected to lamp post in photograph below



A lock could also be used to attach the gull proof bag/sack to a hook attached to a building. This would only require a screw eye hook to be inserted into the wall of the building which would stay permanently connected to the building. The seagull proof bag and lock would then be removed post collection.

If Dublin City Council proceed with the use of a Gull Proof Bag, then the council would require the householder/ business/waste collector using the gull proof bags, to place a marking on the bag so that it can be easily traced back to their owners. This will help with enforcement issues should they arise.

4.2 Caddy (not to be trialled)

Another option for consideration for the presentation and storage of waste is the caddy or plastic container. The use of a caddy or plastic container is not a new phenomenon for the presentation of waste and are used predominantly for food waste. They are used extensively in Europe and other jurisdictions and indeed some of the waste collectors have trials in operation at this time. We believe that the waste collectors should be offering caddy's for use by their customers in some instances to replace the presentation of food waste in single use plastic bags.

The caddy would appear to be more suitable for the residential customer where food waste is presented in smaller quantities than that of the larger commercial properties and food outlets that are predominantly located in the commercial district of the city. There are of course other variables to consider when using and offering caddy's for waste presentation and one of which is the frequency of the collection service which will determine the size of caddy being presented. It is important to add that the caddy must be securely locked to prevent interference from urban animals when presented on the pavement/street for waste collection

The typical caddy has a capacity of 45L compared with a wheelie Bin of 120L or 80 L and so is suitable for indoor use. Caddy's are also available in 25L capacity, but size is very much dependent on the volume of waste produced and frequency of collection and should be agreed between customer and waste collector. The details below offer some technical specifications on the caddy:-

Technical specifications for caddy containers:

- Material: 100% recycled and recyclable polypropylene resistant to household chemical detergents and biological matter; UV rays resistant
- Process: injection moulding
- Body: rectangular-based and slightly tapered, with rounded corners; the sides and back are reinforced with a special geometrical design, while the base is also reinforced and

features a handy grip for emptying; ergonomical rear lifting handle; designed to be fitted with transponder; comb receiver compliant with standard UNI EN 840-1:2012

- Lid: anchored to the body with a double hinge; fully opening to 270°, convex central surface with sloped water drainage channels to the sides; anti-tamper device locks the lid when the handle is in the forward position
- Posting flap: hinged to the lid; opens to 90° to insert material into stacked containers
- Handle: made of polypropylene with air-moulding technology, tubular section, high resistance to twisting, ergonomic grip, lid-locking function, stop in the vertical position for “trolley”-style transportation and to facilitate the waste collector, easily unlocked from the vertical to the back resting position
- Wheels: for “trolley”-style transportation, diameter 70mm, width 20 mm, with easy-to-clean "propeller" profile
- Colour: grey for the bodies; lids: grey, green, blue, yellow, orange, white, brown
- Printing: 15x9 cm printing area on front body and or on flap
- Optionals:
 - UHF label transponder to be fitted to the reflector
 - reflectors

Capacity	Width	Depth	Height	Empty weight
45 l	400 mm	488 mm	483 mm	2.70 kg

Packing :

PIECES	PACKING	DIMENSIONS	NET	GROSS	VOLUME
100 (lids and wheels unassembled)	Pallet	1200x800x23 30 mm	260 kg	275 kg	2,78 m3

Examples of 45L Caddy's being used in Dublin and currently undergoing trial by waste collector



4.3 Wheelie Bin

The wheelie Bin is an acceptable method for storage and presentation of waste, however, the lack of space and inability to store this container inside can prohibit the use of Wheelie Bins in the designated bag street areas of the city, which prompted the use of single use plastic bags in first instance.

4.4 Bagged Bin

Trials were undertaken of the “bagged bin” during 2021/22, and results are still inconclusive as to whether it can be considered a definitive alternative option to single use plastic bags. There are issues with the storage of these bagged bins once the waste is collected and options have been put forward which would involve fitting some form of street furniture for storing the bins between collection periods/times and which has proven contentious, with lower levels of support for the trialled methodology than we would like.

5.0 Timing: Programme for implementation of trial and location of scheme

In conjunction with the waste collectors and their customers, we are proposing to conduct a trial using the Gull Proof Bags for some time commencing in Q1 of 2023. We are proposing to conduct the trial on Capel Street and/or Castle Market/Drury Street, as all these streets have multiple commercial properties who currently present significant quantities of single use plastic bags for collection from the various waste collectors.

It is the intention to conduct this trial over a 2/3 month period which should provide a sufficient length of time for measurable data to be obtained, and to determine the strengths and weaknesses of this option, while at the same time seeking the opinion of waste collectors and their customers on the merits of the gull proof bags.

As this is a voluntary trial, we do not propose to change any of the text included in the regulatory framework concerning the presentation and collection of waste. However, should we decide to pursue a change in how waste is presented, and recommend changes to the waste receptacles, then changes will have to be made to the waste permit license in conjunction with the NPWCO.

6.0. Communications Strategy/Stakeholder Engagement

The communication strategy adopted is very much dependent on which phase of the process or steps we are undertaking. We are still in the trial phase of the project, and so consultation is planned with the SPC, and further consultation is planned with waste collectors and business owners seeking agreement on the approach that is being proposed. Once agreement has been reached to conduct the trial, we would then be in position to provide

communications around the trial, and which would include providing social media content, letter drops to business owners, notice on DCC website, notice on Waste Collector website etc.

If the trial is successful, then it would be our intention going forward to prohibit the use of “unprotected” single use plastic bags in these designated bagged street areas. This would require changes to the regulatory framework, and significant operational changes for the waste collectors and their customers. A much more detailed and coordinated communication strategy and extensive stakeholder engagement would be required then.

A partner, such as the Ballymun Rediscovery Centre , may prove valuable in such a communications exercise.

7.0 Proposed Changes to the Regulatory Framework including: Waste Permits, and City Councils Waste Presentation By Laws and consideration of timing for waste presentations and waste collections,

For the purpose of trialling the use of the “Gull Proof Bags”, we do not need to alter the regulatory framework. The presentation of the Gull Proof Bags by the customer/public will be subject to the same regulations as detailed in 2.3 and 2.5 of the City Councils Waste Presentation Bye Law. The Council’s Waste Bye Laws deals with the responsibilities of those presenting waste, waste disposal, participation, segregation, timings of presentation and specifies container/waste receptacle type.

Notwithstanding, it is our opinion that changes are needed to this regulatory framework which will reduce the opportunities for littering and lead to a more effective and efficient approach to the presentation and collection of the city’s waste.

Regulation 2.3 deals with “Location of Container Storage” and states:-

Other than on the day before and the designated waste collection day outside the Central Commercial District and on the designated waste collection day only within the Central Commercial District, containers used for the presentation of kerbside waste shall be held within the curtilage of the premises where the waste is produced. They shall not be stored on a roadway, footway, footpath or any other public place unless the location has been expressly authorised in writing by an authorised person. (Emphasis added)

Regulation 2.5 deals with the “Presentation Times and Container Removal” and states:-

(a) Subject to paragraph (b), kerbside waste presented for collection shall not be presented for collection earlier than 5.00 pm on the day immediately preceding the designated waste collection day; (b) In the Central Commercial District the prescribed time for kerbside waste to be presented shall be not before 5.00 pm on the designated waste collection day. All containers used for the presentation of kerbside waste and any uncollected waste shall be removed from any roadway, footway, footpath or any other public place no later than 10:00am on the day following the designated waste collection day, unless an alternative arrangement has been approved in accordance with bye-law 2.3

There is a significant difference between the time period for presenting waste within the commercial district area of the city and outside this area. At present, a person or business living/operating within the Central Commercial District (CCD) can present their bagged waste for a period of 17 hours while in contrast, a person/ business outside the CCD could present their bags for a period of 41 hours.

This “window” of presentation is an area that we would like to alter and reduce as we feel a reduction in presentation time reduces the opportunities for littering, and is something that we will be recommending for change going forward. This will require a change to the regulatory framework and so will be the subject of separate action for the waste management team.

The collection times for household waste for the registered waste collectors operating within the administrative area of Dublin City Council are governed by the Waste Management (Collection Permit) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 Section 20.2.G which states:-

(vi) ensure that household kerbside waste only be collected on or after 1 July, 2016— (I) between the hours of 6am and 10pm in areas where a 60 kilometre per hour or lower speed limit applies, or an extended timeframe if agreed between the nominated authority and the local authority in which the collection activities will take place, or (II) at any time, in areas where an 80 kilometre per hour or higher speed limit applies.

This regulation does not currently apply to the collection of Commercial waste but with the passing of the 2021 Circular Economy Act, the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWPCO) can now attach similar regulations to the permits of waste collectors for the collection of Commercial waste. The National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO) regulates the waste operators and grants permits for waste collection.

We would strongly advocate for a reduction in the “window” for collection time period, governing the collection of commercial waste in any future discussions with the NPWPCO, and which will be a further action for the Waste Management Team. While we accept any change to legislation can be contentious, the proposals that we are suggesting will significantly reduce the opportunities for littering and in our opinion warrant serious consideration when amendments are being drafted.

8.0 Conclusions/Recommendations

We acknowledge that change is needed in the presentation of waste and the waste collection regime on our city’s streets, and it is our opinion that this change process should commence now. This is a significant and contentious issue to resolve and one which involves agreement and consultation with a number of parties including:- Dublin City Council, the householder, business owner/operators, private waste collectors and other statutory authorities who manage the regulatory framework in dealing with waste.

Due to the limitations of using wheelie bins and the well documented litter issues when using single use plastic bags we must pursue alternative options for the presentation of waste. The

Gull Proof bag has proven a success in other jurisdictions and so we propose to the SPC that this option is trialled in a busy commercial street, in agreement with the waste collectors and business owners. Once this trial has been concluded and we have sought the opinions of business owners and the waste collectors, we will revert to the SPC with our findings and options for waste presentation throughout the designated bagged street areas. We anticipate that there may be more than one waste receptacle type proposed, which will depend on the customer, type of waste, frequency of collection and location in the city.

We propose the following steps and timeline to move this process forward:-

1. Consultation with SPC, November 2022
2. Implement final trial project (Q1 of 2023, 2/3 months) on the use of Gull Proof Bags in commercial areas
3. Assess findings in consultation with waste collectors and business community, Q2 of 2023
4. Report to SPC with findings and recommendations for waste presentation and collection, Q3 of 2023
5. Develop new policy for the presentation and collection of waste Q3 of 2023
6. Policy presented to SPC and full council Q4 of 2024
7. Once policy approved implement full roll out across city.

In addition to the operational and procedural steps highlighted above, we recommend that we commence to advocate for changes to the regulatory framework. This process should proceed in tandem with the programme above, and any proposals made here should complement the operational changes we recommend.

Finally, there are other issues to consider in terms of “RFID reader” chips which we intend will become mandatory for all waste receptacles. The use of RFID chips will allow us to move from casual relationships between waste presenters and the Waste Collector’s to a more formal arrangement which will have significant benefits for Waste Management in the City.

Also, further legislative changes are due which will make it mandatory to segregate waste for commercial properties and which will further impact on waste presentation and the waste collection process, and which will have to be considered as we move forward with this process.