

**Report of: Chief Officer, Environmental Services**

**Report to: Inner South Community Committee**

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Chief Officer (Environmental Services), Communities, Housing &  
Environment Directorate**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

**To note**

**Title: Waste Strategy Update and Local Refuse Performance Report**

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## **Purpose of report**

1. To provide the Inner South Community Committee with an update on the development of the revised Leeds Waste Strategy and Recycling Plan including:
  - a. implication of requirements set out in the Environment Act (2021);
  - b. update on DEFRA's proposals for a national Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging (including glass) and Deposit Return Scheme (DRS);
  - c. baseline work undertaken in Leeds to understand the current household waste composition, in particular recycling material and glass that is being put in the black bin;
  - d. development of a Leeds carbon impact model covering waste collection, disposal and recycling services provided by Leeds City Council;
  - e. what that means for kerbside collection in Leeds in the short, medium and long term
2. To provide an update on current local refuse performance and an opportunity for Members to feedback on the existing issues/challenges faced in how kerbside collections are delivered and enable a discussion on local solutions.

## **Main issues**

### **3. Implication of the requirements set out in the Environment Act (2021);**

In 2018 DEFRA launched consultation on its draft Resource and Waste Strategy for England that focussed on 3 main stated objectives to:

- preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy
- minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully
- deal with waste crime

In terms of refuse/household waste, the focus of the strategy was the introduction of a greater “consistency of household collections” and therefore the roles and responsibilities of both “producers” and “collectors” of the materials presented as waste.

An initial, outline response to consultation was published by DEFRA and the government went ahead with the introduction of the Environment Act which received Royal Assent in 2021.

The more detailed Government response to the consultation, including the important detail on a number of key issues relating to how new requirements on councils will be implemented and supported, was delayed due to Covid and is now expected in early 2023. DEFRA have recently indicated that they expect to be communicating a “commencement date” for the new requirements of around April 2025 (i.e. for 2025/26).

What the Environment Act does set out is that Councils will be legally required to collect separately at the kerbside these main waste materials:

- a) glass;
- b) metal;
- c) plastic;
- d) paper and card;
- e) food waste;
- f) garden waste.

Currently (and until the commencement date for the relevant sections of the Environment Act 2021) neither food or glass have a legal requirement to be collected separately from households – they are in effect classified as general household waste and can therefore be collected in the residual/black bin. There is currently no requirement to offer a free collection of garden waste (indeed the majority of councils charge for this service where it is offered).

In Leeds we currently collect glass through an extensive network of several hundred bottle/bring banks – achieving the collection for recycling of around 13-15,000 tonnes a year of glass. The vast majority of which (approx. 90%) gets directly recycled into new bottles and jars at the facility operated by URM in Knottingley.

In terms of food, we do not currently collect this separately at the kerbside; instead we allow this to be put in the black bins and the contents are taken to the Recycling and Energy Recovery (RERF) facility where they are incinerated and the resultant energy either converted into electricity or piped through a district heating network to homes and businesses. No food from households goes to landfill in Leeds.

It is worth reiterating that 99.5% of all household waste collected across Leeds in the black, green and brown bins and at the 8 household waste sites is already either recycled, composted, or sent to energy recovery facilities where even the ash is

“recycled” in road/constructions aggregates. Only 0.5% of all household waste in Leeds goes to landfill.

Leeds is the largest collector of garden waste from households in the UK. Over 215,000 households receive this discretionary fortnightly service, about 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the city. The majority of councils charge for this additional service; Leeds does not.

The reasons the results of the consultation are so critical to how councils will decide/plan how to meet these new requirements include; the need for clarity about how DEFRA will allow councils to vary their collection models according to local needs and infrastructure, how any new burdens/requirements will be funded (which remains a key commitment from Government) and what the timescales will be for each requirement.

For example, the 2021 Act allows for councils to agree variations to how they collect these waste streams according to a revised “technically or economically practical” test. For example this may allow recyclable household waste in two or more recyclable waste streams to be collected together. This will be crucial to Leeds in all three of the main new requirements:

- **Glass** – will DEFRA consider the way Leeds collects through a bring back system sufficient and actually a better way than requiring all households to be offered a new bin?
- **Food** – what restrictions and funding arrangements will DEFRA apply to options to co-mingle food collection with garden waste, and what exceptions will be allowed for streets/buildings where presenting food waste separately at the kerbside and with the requirement of another bin will cause other issues?
- **Garden** – garden waste collection becomes mandatory and so will DEFRA remove the ability for Councils to charge for these collections, and if so will councils instead be funded to deliver this service?

#### 4. **Update on DEFRA’s proposals for a national Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging (including glass) and a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS);**

##### ***(a) Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme (EPR)***

The national Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme will require producers to pay the full net costs of managing and recycling the packaging waste they produce. The overall aim is to improve circular economy by reducing unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging and increasing recycling. The headline objectives/features are:

- producers pay the full net costs of collecting and processing/sorting the packaging waste they produce;
- incentivises the reduction of "excessive" packaging;
- packaging recyclability increased and therefore more packaging gets recycled;
- increased quality of material for recycling (and when considered alongside “consistency of collections” requirements);
- less packaging is littered.

DEFRA consultation indicated that EPR regulations will apply to all UK organisations that handle and supply packaging to consumers and to businesses. The suggestion is this will apply to any individual business, subsidiary or group with an annual turnover of

£1 million or more which carries out any “packaging activities” and is responsible for more 25 tonnes of packaging in a calendar year.

The indications from DEFRA are they remain keen to introduce the EPR scheme as soon as they are able to.

To do this they will first need to have a transparent and workable process in place with the companies that produce the packaging to monitor what they produce and what income that would generate through modulated fees. They then need a process in place by which they pay councils for the collection and processing of that waste, for recycling as much as is possible. The original proposals covered both household waste and waste collected in litter/street bins, though recent indications are that EPR will focus on household waste only to start with.

Consultation on the implementation of EPR with producers and councils/collectors is ongoing. Implementation was originally planned for 2023 and that was pushed back to 2024 last year.

Leeds City Council is working closely with DEFRA to offer help and advice on how waste and financial data is currently gathered to assist with the development of a national model and approach.

#### **(b) Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)**

In January, DEFRA described the proposed Deposit Return Scheme for “recycling plastic bottles and drink cans” as:

“Through small cash deposits placed on single-use drinks containers, people will likely be incentivised to recycle their drinks bottles and cans, reducing litter and plastic pollution. The scheme would include special machines, known as reverse vending machines, and designated sites where people can return their bottles and receive their cash back. In most cases it would be the retailers who sell drinks covered by the scheme who would host a return point. The new scheme, covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is set to be introduced in 2025, following extensive work with industry to prepare for the necessary changes – including setting up infrastructure and amending labelling. It aims to ensure 85% fewer drinks containers are discarded as litter after three years of its launch.”

In England the scheme will be limited to plastic bottles and drink cans of probably between 50ml and 3 litres (to be confirmed), with a likely initial deposit value of around 20p (to be confirmed); but has moved away from including glass (which will be included in the scheme for Scotland and Wales). In England the requirement in the Environment Act (2021) for the separate collection of glass at the kerbside through the Consistent Collections/EPR scheme will be the main way the glass waste stream will be managed.

DEFRA is currently consulting on the implementation plans for the scheme, with the intention of launching it in 2025.

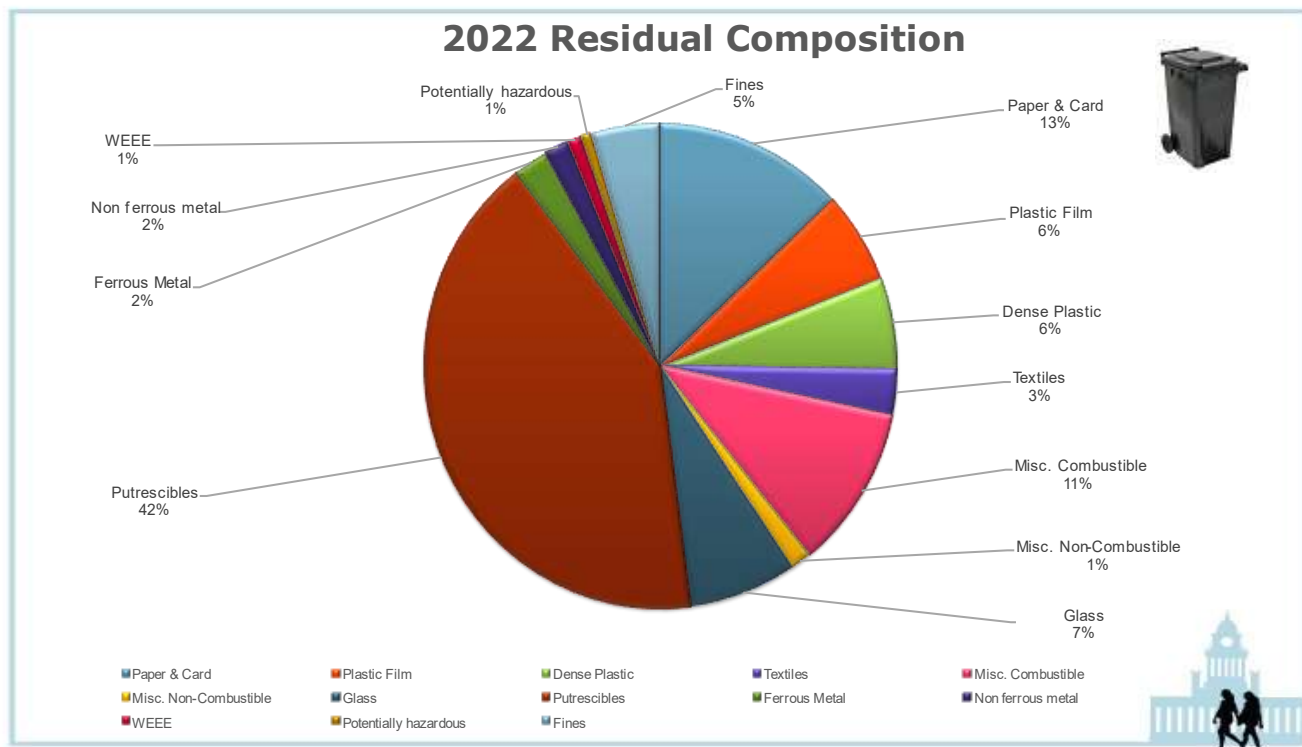
#### **5. Baseline work undertaken in Leeds to understand the current household waste composition, in particular recycling material and glass that is being put in the black bin;**

Whatever the final details are of how and when new collection requirements set out in the Environment Act (2021) and the proposed Deposit Return Scheme are to commence,

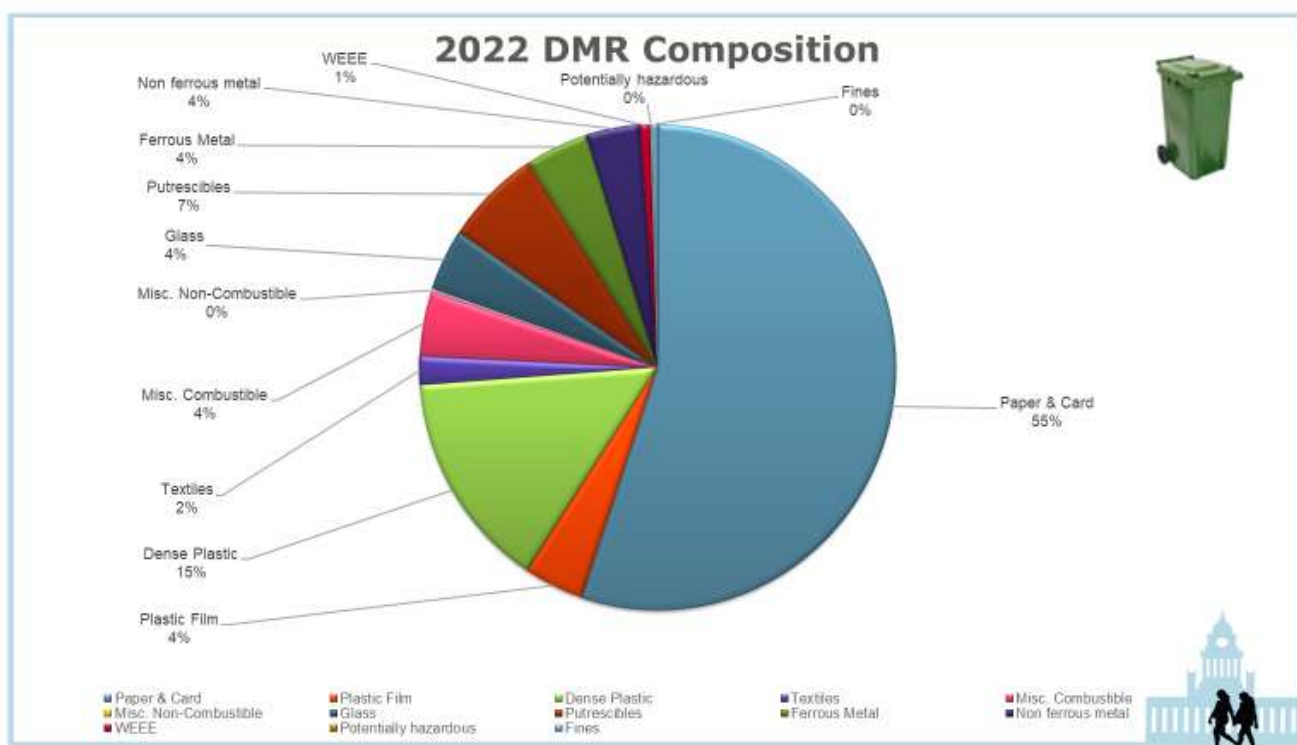
we need to understand what household waste Leeds residents currently produce and which bin they put it in. Irrespective of future requirements to do with glass and food, if nothing else we need to get more stuff in the green bin that people are still wrongly putting in the black bin.

In 2022, we commissioned an independent consultant to do a statistically sound analysis of waste being presented in Leeds black and green bins. The results were (based on an analysis by weight, not volume):

### BLACK BIN ANALYSIS



### GREEN BIN ANALYSIS



The analysis shows that about 14% of what currently goes in the black bin could be instead put in the green bin and recycled in Leeds. This is equivalent to about a 9% increase in the city's overall recycling rate.

Other notable headlines are: 67k tonnes of food is put in Leeds black bins each year and 14k tonnes of glass is put in the (mainly) black and green bins (which is about the same as put in the bottle banks).

A further breakdown and explanation of the various waste categories shown in the pie charts can be provided on request (please email [john.woolmer@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:john.woolmer@leeds.gov.uk)).

Although most of the detail is still awaited from DEFRA, we now know enough to make some assumptions about how future requirements to collect waste differently will affect various waste streams and therefore existing and future collection models and contracts. Leeds City Council is therefore currently in the process of producing a detailed waste flow model through an independent, expert consultant. This will help inform future household kerbside collection options and procurement.

When most of the food and glass is taken out of the residual waste stream (the black bin), together with getting more existing stuff out the black bin into the green bin, added to the implementation of the national Deposit Return Scheme (which will remove most of the plastic bottles and drink cans from household bins), there will be significantly less waste in black bins in the future. The waste flow model will allow us to predict what future frequencies of collections will be required.

This bin composition analysis will be repeated annually in Leeds; to help inform campaigns to recycle more in the green bin, to understand the effect from changes to how each waste stream is managed (including DRS) and what the implications are for maintaining an efficient and effective refuse service across Leeds.

## **6. Development of a Leeds carbon impact model covering waste collection, disposal and recycling services provided by Leeds City Council;**

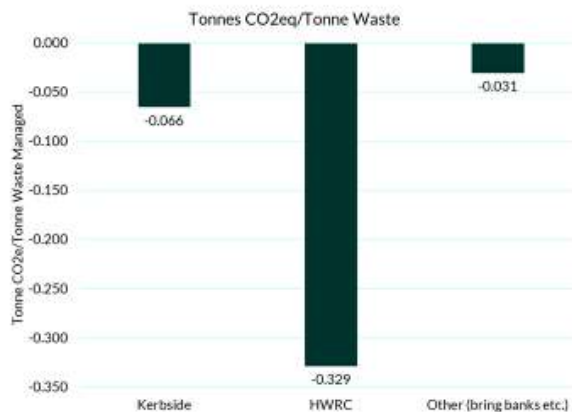
We commissioned Eunomia, a national environmental consultant used by Government and other councils, to develop a Leeds model for our Environmental Services; allowing us to assess the carbon impact of all our operations and the effect that changes to how/what we collect and recycle waste would have. We want to use this to help inform decisions in the future, rather than just to focus on weight-based recycling rates. It is important to also make the point here that any future changes to service provision in Leeds needs to consider the practicalities in streets/locations already struggling to cope with the number of bins and of course affordability.

What it told us for the current position is that across the whole service we have a net reduction (benefit) in CO2 to contribute towards the city's zero carbon ambitions of about 31,000 tonnes a year. Broken down as follows:

## Draft Baseline by Service (2019/20)

Carbon Baseline by Service Line for Residual Waste Treatment and Recycling Carbon Benefits, Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e per Tonne of Waste Managed

	Kerbside	HWRC	Other (bring banks, street cleansing etc.)	Total
Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	-15,717	-14,560	-980	<b>-31,258</b>
Tonnes of waste managed	239,246	44,296	31,815	<b>315,358</b>
Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e/tonne waste managed	-0.07	-0.33	-0.03	<b>-0.099</b>



\*Subject to minor adjustments due to an improvements of the accuracy of the model as work progresses



It should be noted that the carbon benefit figure attributed to HWRCs does not take into account travel to the sites (usually by cars). We are working with Eunomia on having something in the model that calculates that (which brings with it many complexities relating to issues such as would that car journey have been made anyway to do something else too and what assumptions are made about EVs), but their advice is that the effect will be relatively small anyway.

It is also worth noting the net carbon benefit calculated for kerbside collections includes the energy recovery at the RERF based on current offsetting rates for proportion of fossil fuels that feed the national grid – as this proportion reduces over time, so will the carbon benefit calculation for the RERF.

### 7. What that means for kerbside collection in Leeds in the short, medium and long term.

- along with all councils we eagerly await further info from DEFRA, particularly around funding – detail is important, not just to councils but to the producers and the contractors providing much of the infrastructure nationally to process and recycle;
- perhaps a focus on glass first in Leeds, with a trial area(s) – to better understand the pros and cons of offering a household collection service; in particular how much extra glass gets collected above the 50% already being achieved through bottle banks and any effect on contamination rates of the glass taken for recycling;
- publish a revised Leeds Waste Strategy and consult on options to improve reuse and recycling for households, with greater consideration to the carbon impact and what the longer term waste flow modelling is predicting for residual waste (black bins);
- likely some form of separate food collection will be required – the challenge in Leeds is the different housing stock (eg terraced housing, high rise), communities and practicalities presented by additional bins. Some councils already collect food with their garden waste – should we do the same given 215,000 households already have a brown bin (more than any city in the UK), but what is the environmental benefit as opposed to anaerobic digestion of food and we are advised that DEFRA will insist we

collect it weekly as per the Environment Act so routes would need redesigning. We may look at a co-mingled trial to understand the pros and cons better and to get customer feedback.

- we can collect more recycling with our existing green bins and bottle banks regardless of future requirements; what more can be done to encourage more use?;
- what role does the Community Committee want to play in improving recycling and re-use locally using the infrastructure already in place – and what data would help?

**8. To provide an update on current local service performance and an opportunity for Members to feedback on the existing issues/challenges faced in how kerbside collections are delivered and enable a discussion on local solutions.**

The table below provides the recorded missed collection rates for all 33 wards across the city for the calendar years 2021 and 2022. The table is presented with the ward with the largest missed collection rate at the top.

The three Inner South wards are identified. There are about 2.65 million bins emptied each year across the 3 wards in the Inner South area (equivalent to 50,000 bins emptied every week across Inner South). The figures show a 99.94% successful collection rate for the Inner South area in 2022.

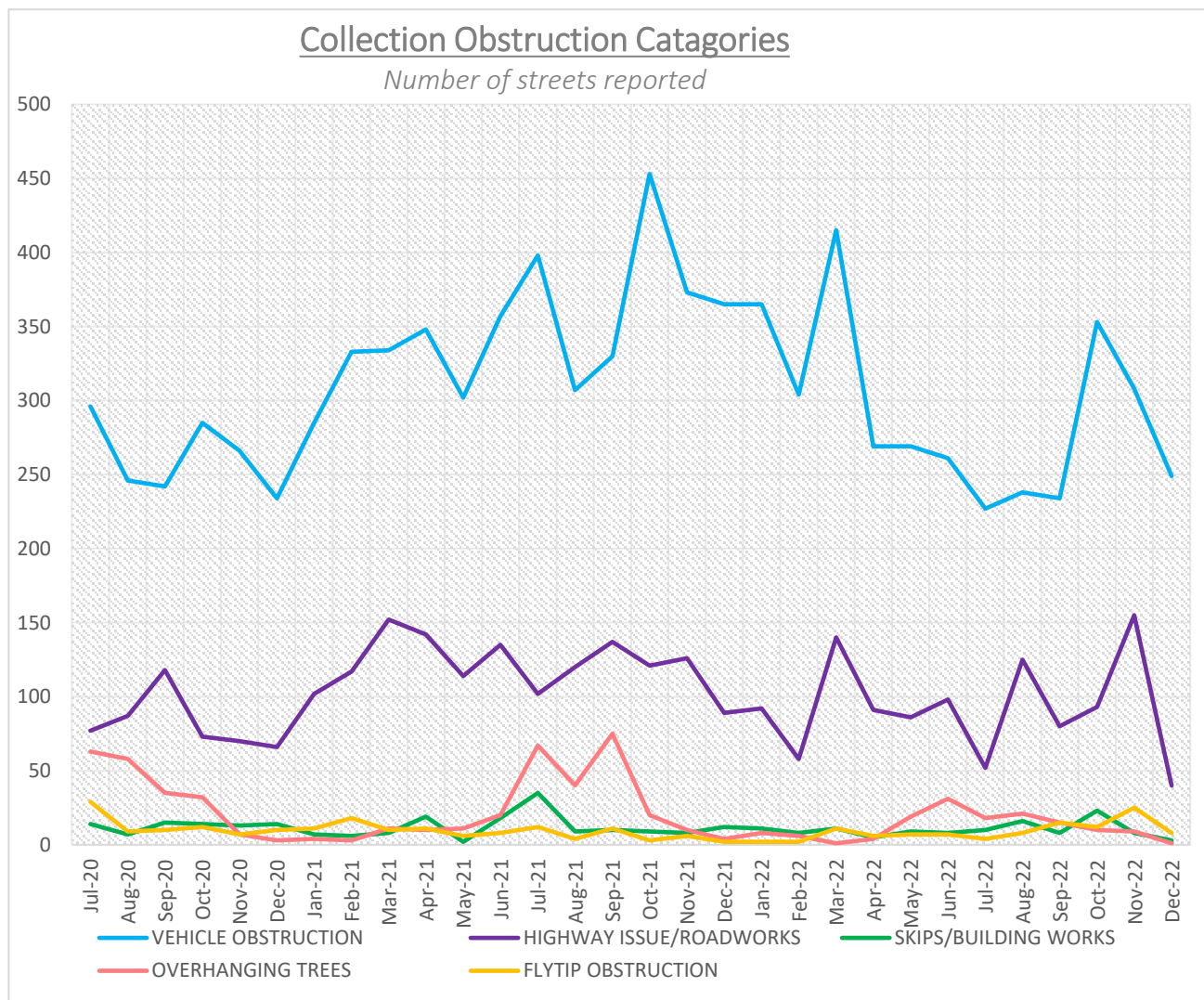
Customer Service Requests for Missed Bins during calendar years 2021 and 2022						
	Ward	Estimated number of scheduled collections (full year)*	2021 Total Missed	2022 Total Missed	2021 as a percentage of estimated total number of scheduled collections	2022 as a percentage of estimated total number of scheduled collections
1		722,774	1,449	1,656	0.20%	0.23%
2		696,774	998	1,376	0.14%	0.20%
3		729,729	2,221	1,355	0.31%	0.19%
4		826,651	1,111	1,523	0.13%	0.18%
5		686,660	1,382	1,186	0.20%	0.17%
6		739,096	1,298	1,265	0.18%	0.17%
7		650,748	1,160	1,092	0.18%	0.17%
8		717,581	1,193	1,163	0.17%	0.16%
9		767,579	2,142	1,243	0.28%	0.16%
10		794,040	1,364	1,268	0.17%	0.16%
11		818,942	1,457	1,302	0.18%	0.16%
12		688,064	1,069	1,056	0.16%	0.16%
13		655,272	819	975	0.13%	0.15%
14		686,628	978	982	0.14%	0.14%
15		748,976	1,006	998	0.14%	0.13%
16		556,940	1,112	736	0.20%	0.13%
17		832,234	1,051	981	0.13%	0.12%
18		678,529	830	667	0.12%	0.10%
19		860,399	1,666	840	0.20%	0.10%
20		696,085	504	656	0.07%	0.10%
21	Middleton Park	850,974	1,170	789	0.14%	0.09%
22		695,682	540	639	0.08%	0.09%
23		673,667	931	595	0.14%	0.09%
24		684,827	998	599	0.15%	0.09%
25		710,320	655	578	0.09%	0.08%
26		682,052	1,273	523	0.19%	0.08%
27		752,603	1,204	544	0.16%	0.07%
28		627,211	710	431	0.11%	0.07%
29		986,128	727	585	0.07%	0.06%
30		629,051	493	333	0.08%	0.05%
31	Beeston and Holbeck	935,643	667	457	0.07%	0.05%
32		1,319,175	570	521	0.04%	0.04%
33	Hunslet and Riverside	948,181	371	342	0.04%	0.04%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,049,206</b>	<b>35,119</b>	<b>29,256</b>	<b>0.14%</b>	<b>0.12%</b>

\* Estimate as at Dec 2021



The main reasons for bins not being emptied on their scheduled day of collection relate to difficulties in safely accessing streets due to obstructions either on the street itself or at the entry/exit junctions to a street. As the chart below shows, the majority of this is due to parked vehicles blocking safe access.

The chart also shows how the number of missed collections due to obstructions rose during the Covid-19 pandemic as we saw more people working from home, but has started to reduce in 2022.

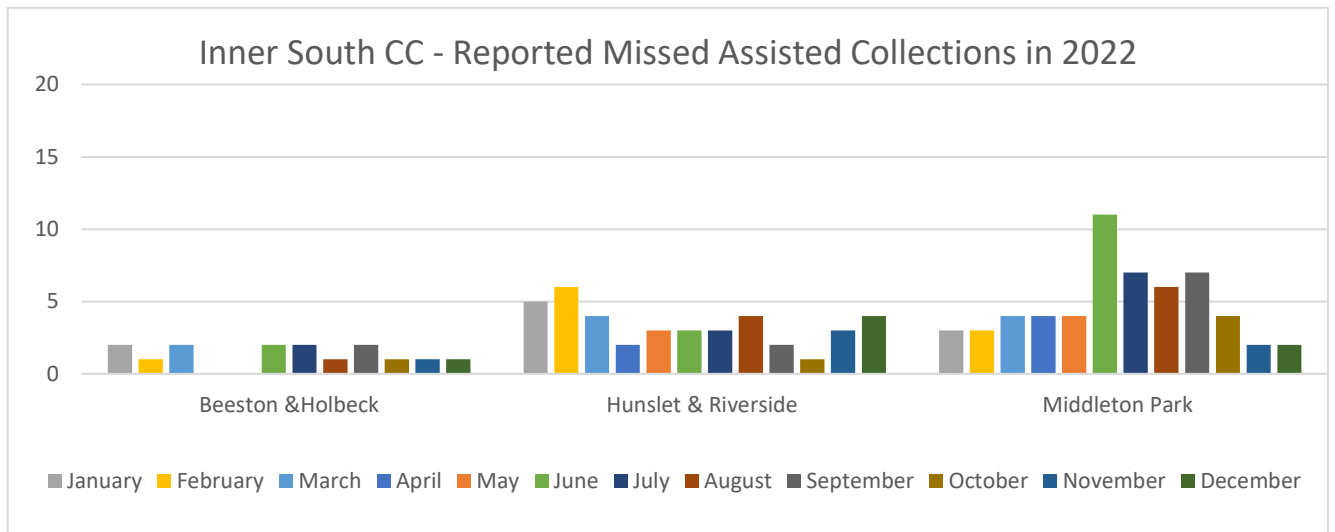
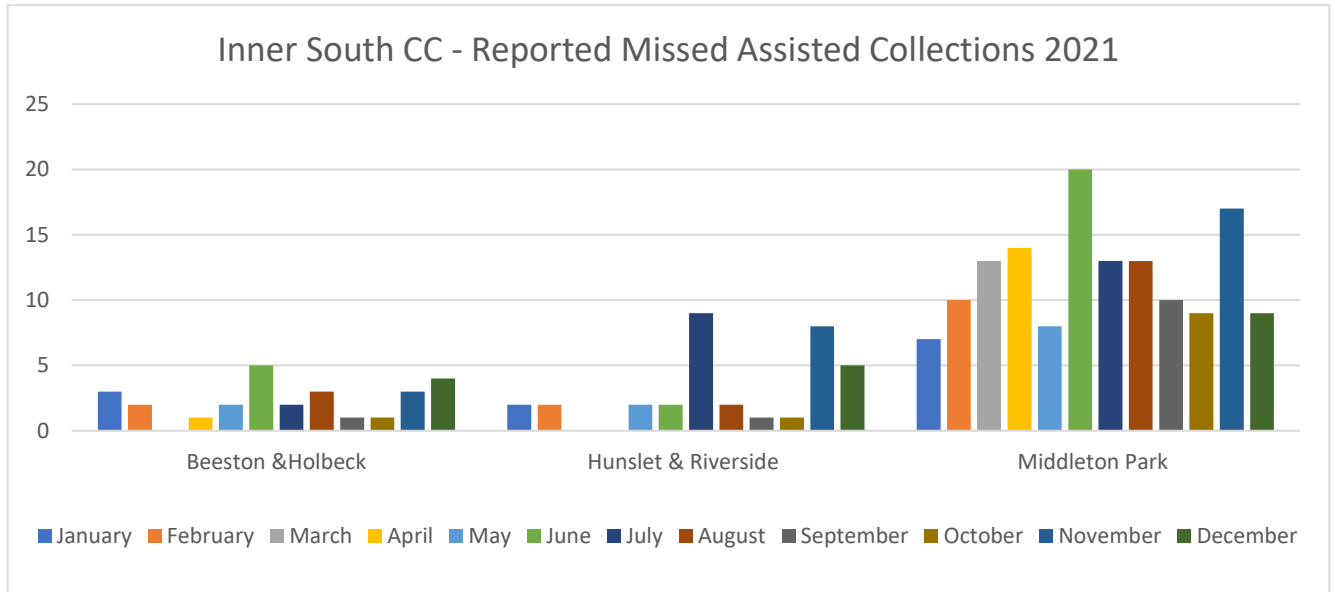


The council offers a free assisted bin collection service for households where there is no-one in that household physically able to take out and bring back in the bins. Across the city there are over 5,800 households who receive this service each week, equating to about 320,000 assisted collections a year for black, green and brown bins.

In the Inner South area this is split by ward as follows:

- Beeson & Holbeck 161 households/8,552 assisted collections per year
- Hunslet & Riverside 129 households/8,130 assisted collections per year
- Middleton 372 households/19,334 assisted collections per year

The following two tables provide a monthly analysis by Inner South wards of the number of reported missed assisted collections during the 2021 and 2022 calendar years. The figures show that in 2022 there was a 99.5% successful collection rate.



## Recommendations

- The Inner South Community Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and to offer feedback from a local perspective on the likely implications from the Environment Act (2021); including the main issues created by how household waste is currently managed/collected and what role the Committee could play to encourage residents to recycle and reuse more through the existing infrastructure provided.