**BELFAST TELEGRAPH**

**DEBATENI**

**Jeff Dudgeon**

**Bin collections in Belfast**

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Belfast council’s waste management department is making radical changes to bin collection across the inner city. Some 55,000 homes are losing their weekly black bin round and have been issued instead with four vari-coloured ‘Kerby’ boxes.

A green one is for food waste. It has a separate brown inner segment or ‘caddy.’ ‘Plastic pots,’ whatever they are, can now be collected as well as Tetrapak cartons and should be placed in maroon or black boxes, in a confusing mix. These will be emptied every week by Bryson Recycling, as at present.

Big savings are expected in landfill charges. However no mention is made of any rates reduction given that large numbers of cleansing staff will only have work every other week. Will there be job losses? On this aspect we need assurance and a promise of lower rates.

However inner city south Belfast, where I live, is not the same as the leafy suburbs. Wheely bins there are perfectly presented with the right recyclable material in the correct receptacle. This however is a zone replete with HMOs - houses of multi-occupation - where even having a wheely is an achievement and, if existing, are often placed illegally on the pavement, creating difficulties for the disabled and those with prams.

During the council’s, now fortnightly, rounds, we are told “additional black bags, or side waste along with the bin, will not be collected”. The black bag is far from a rarity on HMO streets while they and wheely bins are vulnerable to teams of hokers who run a personal recycling service - without a tidiness protocol.

The peremptory tone from the council about the changes would be tolerable if it works. But after a few weeks you only need to look at some of the streets to know. The Kerby boxes lining the pavement are stuffed with waste of every vile description and thus go unemptied by Bryson, while the wheelies are overflowing on the eighth day. The result is litter strewn all over the streets and the pavements blocked. And I fear much less material for recycling, instead a soggy mass.

It won’t work in HMO areas. I just hope the council has a review mechanism and a reverse gear but given the three year contracts I won’t be holding my breath.