

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

REDUCING SINGLE USE PLASTIC IN TELFORD & WREKIN

REPORT OF: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: COMMERCIAL SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR HILDA RHODES, CABINET MEMBER FOR PARKS, GREEN SPACES AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Reducing plastic pollution is one of the biggest challenges facing the future of our planet. It is estimated that up to 13 million tonnes of plastic enter the global marine environment every year and we all have our part to play in helping to safeguard the environment for future generations.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the adverse impact that plastic pollution is having, both globally and locally, and the important role that local authorities can play in addressing this issue. On 25 July 2019, the Council approved a motion to support the Plastic Free Communities Campaign and made a number of specific commitments, as set out in Section 4.1.5 of this report.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on progress to date in reducing single-use plastic from the Council's operations and activities and to seek approval for an action plan setting out how the Council will make further improvements over the next year.
- 1.4 The report also seeks approval to establish a community taskforce. The taskforce will enable the Council to work in partnership with local businesses and organisations to deliver our aspiration for Telford & Wrekin to become officially certified as a plastic free community by following a framework set out by Surfers against Sewage (see Section 4.2.3).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes progress to date with reducing single-use plastics from the Council's operations and activities and approves the action plan set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the proposal to establish a community taskforce as set out in Section 4 of this report.

3 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<i>This initiative will contribute to the following community priorities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Keep neighbourhoods safe, clean and well connected;</i> • <i>Protect and champion our environment, culture and heritage.</i>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	April 2023.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p><i>The plan set out in appendix 1 details the actions that will be put in place to support the reduction of single-use plastics from Council operations.</i></p> <p><i>While the majority of actions and ongoing costs can be met from within existing resources, a small amount of one off investment is required, and capacity funding of £15.9k has been approved to meet these costs. Those actions identified as being deliverable within existing resources will need to be monitored.</i></p> <p><i>There is the potential for savings to be made by the Council as a result of some of these changes although it would not be possible to quantify the extent of them at the current time.</i></p> <p><i>PT 29/8/19</i></p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<i>Part of the strategy may necessitate introducing standardised contractual requirements (where practical and economical). The Government has announced that a ban on the distribution and sale of certain single use plastics will come into force in April 2020. The specific legislation by which this ban will come into effect has not been published yet. The ban will be enforced through civil sanctions under Part 3 of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008. The Council can introduce the strategy</i>

		<i>further to the general power of competence set out in Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The strategy accords with Central Government policy.</i>
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	Yes	<i>The aim of this initiative is to have a positive environmental impact by reducing single use plastic within the Council and across the Borough. A key priority will be to audit current single use plastic usage within the Council so that we can establish a baseline against which progress can be measured and reported on. The action plan in Appendix 1 also includes specific measures that we will use to show the impact of action taken.</i>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	<i>Local businesses, organisations and residents are major stakeholders and need to be engaged effectively in the development and delivery of this campaign. In addition, this engagement will provide an opportunity for the Council to learn from innovative solutions that other local organisations have already developed and implemented.</i>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	<i>Borough-wide impact</i>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4 INFORMATION

4.1 Background

4.1.1 Plastic is an extremely useful material due to its versatility, durability, cheapness and availability. However, 50% of the plastic produced is used only once and these single-use plastics (SUP) have a high environmental impact which needs to be addressed. Plastics are accumulating in the natural environment and threatening wildlife and damaging ecosystems. This has a devastating impact on our oceans and marine life and the wider environment, for example:

- 13 million tonnes of plastic pollution go into the ocean each day;
- There are 5,000 items of plastic pollution for every mile of beach in the UK;
- Single-use plastic bottles account for 40% of all litter (by volume);
- 1 in 4 fish caught for human consumption now contain plastic, meaning that the average seafood consumer in the UK ingests 11,000 plastic particles every year.

Pollution caused by single-use plastics has become an increasingly topical issue and is now starting to form part of Government policy. For

example, in October 2018, the Government published a consultation on proposals to ban the distribution and/or sale of plastic straws, plastic - stemmed cotton buds and plastic drink stirrers in England. On 22 May 2019 the Government confirmed that the ban would go ahead, starting from April 2020, subject to some specified exemptions.

4.1.2 In addition, there are a growing number of villages, towns and cities that have reduced the use of avoidable single-use plastics in their community and have been recognised as plastic free communities by Surfers against Sewage (www.sas.org.uk). There are approximately 602 communities (registered including those certified) in the UK (August 2019), who have followed the Surfers against Sewage framework (see Section 4.3.2). Becoming a plastic free community is not about removing all plastic; it is very much focused on avoidable single-use plastics, such as:

- Plastic bottles;
- Coffee cups and lids;
- Plastic cutlery;
- Straws and plastic stirrers;
- Plastic bags;
- Plastic drinking cups;
- Condiment sachets;
- On-the-go packaging;
- Bathroom plastics e.g. cotton buds, shampoo sachets etc.;
- Balloons.

4.1.3 The impacts of climate change and plastic pollution together are causing serious damage around the world. As 99% of plastics cause climate change, there is a direct link between plastic pollution and climate change and so the Council has resolved to address both issues as a matter of urgency and in a holistic way.

4.1.4 The Council recognises that single-use plastics are having a significant impact on the environment world-wide and are directly affecting our own community. The Council also recognises that it should be leading the way, in educating the public, encouraging our staff to take action and providing an example of what can be achieved in replacing single use plastics with more sustainable alternatives in our own organisation.

4.1.5 Therefore, a motion calling for the Council to support the Plastic Free Communities Campaign was considered and approved at Full Council on 25 July 2019. This was a combined motion alongside the declaration of a climate change emergency. The motion included the following specific commitments relating to single-use plastics:

- Make a commitment to remove single-use plastics from the Council's operations and activities, replacing them with sustainable alternatives, by 2023;
- Continue to support national plastic-free campaigns such as Refill;

- Develop an action plan that sets out how the Council will reduce its own use of single-use plastic, and how the Council will encourage and promote plastic-free initiatives borough wide;
- Establish a community group to help achieve our aspiration for the borough to become a certified Plastic Free Community;
- Report back to Council with a report on progress in September 2019.

4.1.6 Building on this motion, our strategy is divided into two main parts:

- Single-Use Plastic Free Council;
- Single-Use Plastic Free Community.

4.2 Single-Use Plastic Free Council

4.2.1 The Council is already making progress with reducing and removing single-use plastics from its operations and activities, for example:

- Signing up to support Refill (www.refill.org.uk), a national campaign that promotes 'Refill Stations' where people can fill water bottles with drinking water for free – Council libraries across Telford & Wrekin are now official Refill stations (Wellington, Madeley, Newport, Southwater One and Oakengates) and there are five other Refill Stations within Council buildings;
- Trialling the use of mobile drinking water fountains at the Armed Forces Day event in June 2019;
- Banning the use of balloons at Council-run events, which has also recently been extended to external organisations who want to hold events on Council-owned land;
- Stopping the use of single use plastic cups and water bottles at Council meetings and the use of single use plastic glasses for events at the Place Theatre;
- Working with the theatre brewery supplier to replace plastic bottles with recyclable glass and can alternatives;
- Encouraging vendors at events to not sell bottled water and also consider sourcing stock in glass and can alternatives. This will be a condition we will look to enforce going forward (see Appendix 1);
- Removing plastic stirrers, straws and condiment sachets at Café Go at Addenbrooke House and Telford Ice Rink;
- Selling re-usable mugs and using fully compostable plant-based takeaway cutlery and cups at Café Go;
- Replacing 2ltr semi skimmed milk plastic containers with a Pergal milk dispenser in Café Go (each Pergal dispenser replaces 48 x2 litre plastic bottles);
- Ceasing the use of disposable cleaning cloths by the Council's Cleaning Service (apart from during infection control);
- Ceasing the use of a range of single-use plastic products such as cotton buds within residential care settings run by the Council's My Options Service;
- Recycling bins in all main Council offices (Borough wide the Actual Recycling Outturn for 18/19 is 44.8%);

- Incorporating single use plastics into Council's Social Value Guidance used for procurement exercises.

4.2.2. The Council has also started a communications campaign to promote its commitment to tackling the issue of single-use plastics, starting with National Refill Day on 19 June 2019. The campaign generated 57,000 impressions in just over two weeks. Four of the ten most popular posts in June by reach across the corporate Twitter and Facebook channels in June were about single-use plastics, showing the level of interest in the community.

4.2.3 The campaign has also generated good engagement from Council employees. Staff engagement internally has been a real success with employees continuing to put forward suggestions and ideas on how single use plastics can be replaced or reduced within their services areas.

4.2.4 Alongside this, an internal project group has been set up to identify what else we could do as a Council should do. The project group has considered the employee suggestions and have also researched what other local authorities are doing.

4.2.5 This has formed the basis of an action plan (See Appendix 1). The action plan sets out what will be delivered over the next 12 months and will be updated annually until 2022/23. The action plan contains three main sections:

- Replacing single-use plastics from Council activities and operations with sustainable alternatives;
- Building Single-use Plastic Free Telford & Wrekin into Council policy and processes;
- Encouraging employees and residents to reduce their use of single-use plastic.

4.2.6 One of the first actions we intend to take is to facilitate an action day in October 2019 to promote the Refill scheme more widely across the Borough. The action day will focus on increasing the number of Refill Stations in Telford & Wrekin. This is an opportunity for communities, businesses and local organisations to come together and create awareness of the campaign to reduce single-use plastics. Volunteers will be sought internally within the Council and also through the community taskforce (see Section 4.3). Future action days, which could include community clean-ups, plastic-free picnics and fundraising events, will be organised in conjunction with the taskforce.

4.2.7 Intranet and web-pages will also be launched to promote this initiative and connect with internal and external audiences locally and further afield. The web-page will form part of an over-arching Sustainable Telford & Wrekin Website, promoting the Council's wider environmental

agenda and all the initiatives and campaigns that the Council are leading on, including climate change.

- 4.2.8 The web-page will include an online pledge feature to enable people to sign up to a menu of actions to support the campaign, such as reducing personal use of single-use plastics or volunteering at an action day. The pledges will be promoted via a range of social media platforms that will feed into the web-page.
- 4.2.9 Whilst the web-page is being developed, we will trial a 10-week plastic-free challenge within the Council, encouraging employees and members to sign up to five ways they will personally reduce their use of single-use plastic (introduced fortnightly over the challenge period). If successful, we will roll-out externally from January 2020.

4.3 Single-Use Plastic Free Community

- 4.3.1 The Council is committed to continuing to play a key role in reducing the effects of single-use plastics within the Borough and further afield. However, we cannot do this alone and so we want to work collaboratively with a wide range of local organisations to ensure the impact is borough wide. The Council recognises and welcomes the work that a growing number of local organisations are already doing to address this issue. There are already many organisations in Telford & Wrekin who are working on reducing single-use plastics, as illustrated by the following case studies:

Case Study – Sustainable Newport

Sustainable Newport Shropshire is a group of residents from [Newport](#) and the surrounding villages concerned about plastics, pollution, climate change, fossil fuel dependency and how to live more sustainably. Their aim is to increase awareness of the impact people are having on our world and help businesses and residents find ways to reduce their impact (<http://sustainablenewportshropshire.org/>)

Case Study - Refill Madeley

Madeley Town Council has recently joined the national Refill scheme and branded itself as “Refill Madeley”. They are passionate about being a sustainable Council and have already signed up many local businesses to join the scheme, including Greggs and the Wellbeing Madeley Community Café (<http://madeleytowncouncil.gov.uk/refill-madeley/>).

- 4.3.2 The Council's aspiration is for Telford & Wrekin to become a recognised, certified Plastic Free Community, in accordance with the Surfer's against Sewage framework (www.sas.org.uk). This would involve evidencing that 5 objectives have been met:

- Local Governance – Telford & Wrekin Council passes a resolution to support plastic-free community status, leads by example to remove single-use plastics from Council premises and also promotes the campaign in the community;
- Local Businesses – a target number of businesses commit to removing at least 3 single-use plastic items;
- Community Groups and Organisations – a flagship employer and a range of other community organisations (educational establishments and community groups) support the campaign;
- Community events – run at least two community events a year to promote reduction of single-use plastics;
- Steering Group – set up a steering group with representatives from across the community (this group would then submit the application for plastic free community status and develop future plans).

4.3.3 Section 4.2 of this report sets out our approach to delivering the local governance objective. To move forward on the other objectives, we feel that it is essential that we first establish the steering group to ensure that future plans are community-led and that we can ultimately achieve the goal of becoming a Plastic Free Community. We are therefore seeking approval to establish a community taskforce, bringing together local champions who are passionate about driving and leading this agenda. The aims of the taskforce would be to:

- Promote and increase participation in existing plastic-free initiatives going on in the community;
- Encourage organisations from different sectors to commit to reduce the use of single use plastic;
- Engage with different parts of the community to identify and take forward new initiatives;
- Organise community events/action days;
- Gather evidence of the impact of local initiatives in order for Telford to become a certified plastic free community.

4.3.4 To ensure that we continue to develop our approach and embrace new ideas, it is proposed that membership of the taskforce is refreshed annually. The following representatives have agreed to join the taskforce for the inaugural year:

- Sustainable Newport – Simone Whitfield;
- Refill Madeley – Helena Morgan (also representing Madeley Town Council);
- Telford Shopping Centre – Fran Woffinden;
- Veolia – Ruth Jones;
- Harper Adams University – Lavinia Moroz-Hale and David Nuttall;
- University of Wolverhampton – Ray Flynn;
- Telford Priory School – Stacey Jordan
- Hollinswood Primary School – Susanne Bearblock

- Telford & Wrekin Council representative – Lead Cabinet member (Hilda Rhodes)/Assistant Director (Fliss Mercer);
- Wrekin Housing Group – Jean Jarvis;
- AO - Dave Ware;
- Transition Telford – Lynn Mann and Lucy Roberts.

4.3.5 Subject to member approval, the first meeting will take place in late September 2019 where Terms of Reference (TOR) will be agreed with taskforce members.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

5.1 None.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None.

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Appendix 1 – Single-Use Plastic Free Council Action Plan (Year 1 – September 2019/20)

ACTION	WHO	TIMEFRAME	SUCCESS MEASURE
Replace all bin liners within Council sites and schools (including school kitchens)* with compostable alternatives (*schools where Telford & Wrekin Council provide Cleaning/Catering Service)	Cleaning Services - Group Manager	September 2019	Number of bin liners replaced with a more sustainable alternative
Waste audit within Addenbrooke & Darby House to measure waste/recycling levels. This will be followed by an internal communication campaign and a bin purge (remove excess bins from floors within Council buildings) to encourage waste reduction and greater use of recycling bins.	Facilities Management - Team Leader	October-December 2019	Increased weight of plastic waste collected for recycling plus a reduction in number of plastic bin liners used
Install mains-fed water dispensers in public/reception areas of 7 key buildings to enable visitors and employees to refill and reduce use of plastic water bottles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darby House • Wellington Civic and Leisure Centre • Oakengates Leisure Centre • Newport Pool • Horsehay Golf Centre • Madeley Ski and Snowboard Centre • Telford Ice Rink 	Facilities Management - Team Leader	November 2019	Usage of water fountains per site (will require sub-meters to be installed)
Install an outdoor water dispenser in Southwater (as above) and review usage to assess costs and benefits of installing additional dispensers in key outdoor locations e.g. Town Park/Ironbridge/T50 walking route	biT - Building Services Engineer	April 2020 (tbc with Severn Trent Water)	Usage of water fountain
Plastic-free event trial – with single use plastics to the furthest extent eliminated by insisting all vendors and suppliers consider their usage of single use plastic from bottles and receptacles to	Culture & Well Being - Arts & Culture Manager	September 2019 (Festival Hub – Dale End Park,	Reduction in plastic waste collected

zip ties and straws. This would mean vendors would need to commit to source glass and aluminium drinks bottles and reusable cups and drinks containers. We will also run a refill scheme (either by hiring mobile fountains or through a standpipe) and will trial a deposit return cup scheme. Waste will be collected by a company that will sort and recycle all event waste.		Ironbridge)	
Replace plastic stationary purchased through the corporate contract with more sustainable alternatives, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cardboard ring binders - Compostable dividers and document wallets 	Procurement & Commissioning - Procurement Team Leader	December 2019	Reduction in single use/limited use plastic stationary purchased through corporate contract
Run a pilot deposit scheme for re-usable coffee cups in Café Go and if successful, assess the costs and benefits of rolling out a borough-wide scheme (to be discussed with taskforce)	Catering Services - Group Catering Manager	September 2019	Number of cups being purchased/returned
Extend replacement of single use plastic items implemented in Café Go (straws/milk containers/condiment sachets) to school sites (where the Council provides the Catering Service) – also to cease the use of cling-film across the Catering Service	Catering Services - Group Catering Manager	September 2019	Reduction in single use plastic used in school kitchens
Provide an option for Council employees to purchase milk in plastic free containers, delivered to Council Offices	Catering Services - Group Catering Manager	October 2019	Take-up of offer by Council employees
Remove plastic packaging from ICT equipment delivered from hardware suppliers for laptops and mobile phones	ICT Services	January 2020	Reduction in plastic packaging from ICT hardware deliveries (compared to October-December 2019 baseline)

Conduct an audit of all single use plastics within Council service areas	Procurement & Commissioning - Procurement Team Leader	October-December 2019	Usable baseline of single use plastic consumption (that can then be updated annually)
All Council tender evaluations to include 10% weighting for environmental impact (to include climate change and plastic pollution)	Procurement & Commissioning - Procurement Team Leader	October 2019 and ongoing	Environmental changes recorded in successful bidders' document (now incorporated into contract monitoring documents)
Environmental impact to be included in the summary impact assessment section of Cabinet reports to ensure that consideration is given to climate change and the impact of single-use plastics	SMT - Commercial Services / Business Development & Employment	November 2019 Cabinet and ongoing	Ongoing review of reports and information provided related to environmental impact.
Deliver Refill action day	PFTW Project Lead	October 2019	Number of refill stations added on Refill App/social media coverage and engagement
Promote the 'single-use plastic challenge' (10-week challenge to encourage people to commit to making 5 changes to reduce their single use plastic usage)	Corporate Comms - Communications Officer	Pilot with Council employees from 23 October 2019/external launch January 2020	Number of people participating in the challenge
Develop and launch web pages to promote Single-Use Plastic Free Telford & Wrekin campaign:	Corporate Comms -	Intranet page (September	Site statistics and usage reports

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intranet page (for Council employees) - External webpage (as part of over-arching new Sustainable Telford & Wrekin Website) 	Communications Officer	2019)/Website (January 2020)	
Develop an online pledge feature on webpage	Corporate Comms - Communications Officer	Internal soft launch (November 2019)/ External launch in line with Website (Jan 2020)	Number of pledges made (broken down by service area for employee pledges)