

**RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION: DRAFT SINGLE USE  
PLASTIC POLICY AND ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE THE USE OF  
SINGLE USED PLASTICS IN CARDIFF COUNCIL PREMISES  
AND SUPPORT REDUCING THEIR USE ACROSS CARDIFF**

**CLEAN STREETS, RECYCLING AND ENVIRONMENT  
(COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MICHAEL)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 3**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To respond to the motion presented in March (full details in Appendix C) requesting the Council produce a report outlining plans to reduce single use items on Council premises such as cups, wrapping, bags etc.
2. To respond to citizen demands to reduce the use of single use plastic in Cardiff.
3. To consider the draft policy and associated action plan for further consultation prior to implementation of the single use plastic policy.

**Background**

4. Single-use plastics (SUPs) are disposable plastics which are only used once before they are thrown away or recycled. These items are things like plastic bags, cotton buds, coffee stirrers, straws, water bottles and food packaging.
5. There has been a great deal of press surrounding single use plastics in recent months, and the fact that a large percentage of them are not recycled, therefore causing damage to the environment. Alongside this, there has been a big push to ban single use plastics altogether.
6. There needs to be an improvement in the understanding of recycling as some materials can only be recycled a finite number of times before they are unusable and have to go to landfill.
  - Every time paper is recycled the fibres shorten. It is estimated paper can be recycled 4-6 times.
  - Plastic has fibres a bit like paper, and the fibres shorten each time it is recycled. This means plastic can be recycled 7-9 times before it is no longer recyclable.

- Glass, steel and aluminium lose no quality during recycling and can be recycled endlessly.
7. In May 2018, the EU began to bring forward regulation around single-use plastics in an aim to reduce marine litter. The legislation focuses on the following items: cotton buds, cutlery, plates, stirrers, straws, sticks for balloons, balloons, packets and wrappers, beverage containers (including lids), wet wipes and carrier bags. The Directive called for:
- i. specific products to be banned,
  - ii. education for consumers on the harmful effects of SUPs; the benefits of alternative sustainable products; available re-use systems and waste management options for all these products
  - iii. increased producer responsibility;
  - iv. increased recycling collection and infrastructure and a proportionate approach to alternatives.

These regulations are still emerging, but the Council has considered the products listed and the EU Directive core principles in the development of the Council's policy and associated action plan.

## Issues

8. In response to the motion and the EU Directive an action plan has been developed to ensure that the Council considers all steps to support the reduction of single use plastics to an absolute minimum and outlines methods to support the many community groups who are working hard to make their places plastic free.
9. Many single use plastic products are not recyclable or their lightweight nature makes them a blight on the environment when incorrectly disposed of. Once in the waterways or countryside they can take hundreds of years to breakdown. There has been significant media coverage of the harmful impacts of single use plastics and increasing evidence of the negative impacts they have on our environment and wildlife when not correctly recycled or disposed of.
10. Single use plastics are designed for one use and many cannot be readily recycled. For example, hot drink containers are often cardboard lined with plastic and this makes them difficult to recycle. Although, the Council is able to promote recycling of this type of product by key stakeholders such as Costa and Starbucks.
11. It is also worth noting that there is confusion as to which alternatives are actually sustainable options. For example, there has been promotion of biodegradable alternatives in the market place but these are not necessarily the best option, as they cannot be recycled, nor are they accepted for composting at all processing facilities. They only have a place if there is an end market for the material within the locality, or they are from a more sustainable source than a single use plastic product.

12. A sustainable material needs to be either recyclable or compostable. Wood for example is sustainable but manufactured wood is currently not accepted as compostable material, albeit branches and twigs from gardens are accepted. The reason for this is the difficulty of education and understanding by citizens that leads to unsuitable wood products, like a chest of drawers, being presented as compostable waste.
13. Some plastics will degrade but the material will not change. This means we create micro plastics that are extremely difficult to manage or cleanse.
14. It is important to consider the knock on effect of banning certain single-use plastics. Prevention is not always beneficial: for example, if certain food is not packaged appropriately in plastic it would have a limited life and food waste and the cost of food would increase. This does not relate to all food types and buying of fruit, such as apples and pears, in paper bags does provide a move to a more sustainable approach.
15. If there is no suitable alternative, or the alternative still ends up in landfill, banning single use plastics altogether will keep levels of waste going to landfill the same, and may decrease the amount of material recycled.
16. The best approach is to adopt the waste hierarchy placing prevention at the top and disposal at the bottom, with recycling and reuse playing an important role in between;
  - i. reduce – is a straw even needed
  - ii. reuse – use refillable water bottles
  - iii. recycle – purchase products that can be readily recycled e.g milk bottles. This also contributes to the local circular economy.
  - iv. disposal – single use biodegradable products are better when no other alternatives are available.
17. It should also be considered that in areas where infection and disease control are the priority, single use plastics have a place as they are critical to people's safety. These will be noted but outside the scope of the proposed policy. As are those used to support a medical or disability need.
18. Given the wide range of services offered by the Council, and our extensive work with citizens and partners, the use of single use plastics will be relevant to every directorate across the Council.
19. The proposed policy and supporting action plan aims to set out the Council's response to the motion and outline the Council's desire to be proactive in light of the emerging regulations.
20. The policy and supporting action plan focus on more efficient resource use and an overall more effective and circular plastics economy with better economic and environmental performances. The policy aligns with the following principles:

- Identify all single use plastics purchased and used across the Council
- Proactively promote the benefits of reuse, recycling plastics and correct disposal of litter
- Work across the Council to make sensible choices towards plastic purchases and reduce the single use plastic dependency
- Explore the viability of a cup deposit reuse scheme in all Council catering facilities
- Improve access to free drinking water, helping to reduce the number of single-use plastic bottles in the capital
- Work in partnership to tackle the single use plastic issues.
- Continue the work to collect plastic from our coast and rivers via Love Where You Live volunteering; such as the Cardiff Rivers Group.

Full details can be found in appendix A and B.

#### Motion – Working with partners

21. The draft policy and action plan fully supports the need to work with partners to develop more sustainable solutions to single use plastics.
22. The Council will work with Cardiff's Public Services Board (Cardiff PSB) to align and shape the policy with the city's public service providers. Cardiff PSB brings together the city's public service leadership and decision-makers to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Cardiff by strengthening joint working across the city's public services.
23. The Council has already under taken a partnership arrangement with Keep Wales Tidy, Love Where You Live volunteer groups and Terracycle to remove, collect and recycle plastics from our waterways and bay area.
24. The Council will commit to support, work with and promote like-minded campaigns in the work to reduce the negative impacts of single use plastics. A list of these partners, which include the Cardiff based "No Straw Stand" can be found in Appendix B.

#### Motion – Refill stations

25. Cardiff is already working with Refill to support the concept of refill stations. Participating businesses display 'refill' stickers in their windows to let people know they offer free tap water and that there is no need to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed asking for it. Participating organisations also appear on the [Refill app](#), making the nearest Refill point easy to locate. Those who sign up to the app can refill their water bottles for free, and also earn points each time they refill to get a free gift to help towards a more 'refillable life'.
26. There are currently over 10,000 Refill Stations across the UK and 72 in Cardiff. All the Council libraries/hubs have now registered with Refill and

several of the chain coffee shops are also registered with them. Where the water utility infrastructure is compatible, the Council will seek funding with a view to install refill stations in busy public locations such as the Transport Interchange and Cardiff Castle.

27. Welsh Government have a post funded for 12 months to promote Refill across Wales and work has begun to promote refill in Cardiff with a partnership launch to take place in Cardiff by the end of 2018.

#### Motion - Difficult materials

28. The motion also called for the continued exploration of recycling of previously difficult materials such as Car Tyres; Single use coffee cups; uPVC Double Glazing, including doors and facias; Polystyrene Mattresses etc. The recycling of car tyres, hard plastics and mattresses already are in place at the Household Waste Recycling Centres. A polystyrene recycling trial has been undertaken, but due to volume to weight ratio of the material, a viable recycling collection method is currently not available in the market place, but the waste management team will keep this under review. The Council are also currently seeking a viable partner to enable the recycling of uPVC windows via the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

#### **Proposed consultation**

29. Consultation will take place with Local Members on the new policy and action plan.

#### **Reason for Recommendations**

30. To respond to the motion and develop the Council's policy position on single use plastics.

#### **Financial Implications**

31. There will be no direct financial implications for undertaking the consultation. The financial viability of specific initiatives that emerge from the action plan will need to be considered when these plans are developed and prior to implementation.

#### **Legal Implications**

32. Administrative law and good governance require that the Council should consult with key stakeholders upon the draft Policy and Action Plan. Effective consultation must provide sufficient information to allow for a proper and informed response from consultees, and allow adequate time for a response. The Council must take consultation responses into account in a conscientious and open minded way.
33. In making decisions the Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Council must have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of

opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief

34. It is also possible that the proposals will impact upon groups with specific protected characteristics such as disability.
35. It will be necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council has understood the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to its duties. The Cabinet must have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment in making its decision.

### **HR Implications**

36. There are no direct HR implications for this report regarding staffing. Any changes to ways of working or procurement of supplies will be consulted on with the Trade Unions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to approve the draft single use plastic policy and associated action plan for consultation with Members and note that following consultation, a final policy will be presented to Cabinet for approval.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>ANDREW GREGORY</b> <b>Director of Planning, Transport &amp; Environment</b>
	9 November 2018

*The following appendices are attached:*

- Appendix A – Draft single use plastic policy
- Appendix B - Single use plastic action plan to support the Policy
- Appendix C – Motion approved by Council

The following background papers have been taken into account:

Directive of European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment (issued 25.05.2018)