

Report to:

EXECUTIVE

Relevant Officer:

John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services

Relevant Cabinet Member:

Councillor Fred Jackson, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Highways

Date of Meeting :

25 February 2019

SINGLE USE PLASTICS POLICY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the adoption and implementation of a Single-Use Plastic Policy for the Council and recommend adoption to the Council's wholly owned companies.

The proposed policy outlines issues relating to Council use of non-recyclable and Single Use Plastics (SUP) (including wholly owned companies) and seeks to examine the potential to make key changes to processes and procedures, including throughout the Council's supply chain, to reduce the use of Single Use Plastics where possible and implement more sustainable alternative options.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To adopt the Single Use Plastics policy attached at Appendix 5a and the Draft Action Plan attached at Appendix 5d.
- 2.2 To request the Chief Executive to sign the charter attached at Appendix 5b on behalf of the Council.
- 2.3 To approve the Communications Programme attached at Appendix 5c.
- 2.4 That subject to 2.1 above, to recommend that the Council's wholly owned companies adopt the policy and charter for Single Use Plastics.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Reducing Single Use Plastics is something the Council stated they expect and value through the approval of a motion at the Council meeting. As a seaside tourist destination, the Council recognises that poorly managed waste plastics pose a threat to the global marine environment. Therefore, within the context of this Policy the Council will commit to minimising its use of plastics, in particular Single Use Plastics and therefore to reducing its impact on the environment.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Not to approve the proposed policy which would mean that the Council did not address the issue of Single Use Plastics which has been identified through a motion at its Council meeting.

4.0 Council priority:

4.1 The relevant Council priorities are both:

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

5.0 Background information

5.1 A notice of motion proposed by Councillor Humphreys was approved at the Council meeting held on the 27 June 2018, stating that the Council should develop and implement a policy in relation to the reduction of Single Use Plastics. It was also stated that a charter version be developed and recommended that the Council's wholly owned companies also adopt the policy. The proposed policy has also been considered by the Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 23 January 2019 which also agreed to receive further updates on the policy as it was implemented.

5.2 An estimated eight million tonnes of plastic waste enter the sea each year. As previously highlighted in this report, devastating evidence of the damage to wildlife and habitats has been shown in programmes such as Blue Planet II on the BBC and Sky's Ocean Rescue campaign. The use of non-recyclable products, in particular Single Use Plastics, is now a prominent issue and one that the Council should be leading the way in minimising its impact where possible.

- 5.3 The Council by its very nature delivers a large number of diverse services from School Breakfasts and Leisure Services to Social Care and Bereavement Services. All these services will make use of Single Use Plastics in carrying out its day-to-day operations.
- 5.4 Items such as coffee cups, plastic stirrers and plastic cups are commonplace among all meeting rooms, schools and leisure centres in most locations across the Council and the policy seeks to address the use of such items. These items can quickly and easily be substituted for more sustainable options, for example, bio-degradable (paper-based) coffee/water cups and wooden stirrers.
- 5.5 Now that Single Use Plastics have been elevated to the level of international concern that it has, this is an ideal time to take action and effect large-scale behavioural change programmes and policies to drive forward positive change and perceptions in relation to how the Council reduces its use, reuse and ultimately recycling or disposal of single-use plastics.
- 5.6 Moving forward, the Council policy seeks to reduce its own use first. The policy will then seek to solicit the co-operation and commitment of local businesses, schools and the community and will be supported by a dedicated media and communications programme.
- 5.7 The Council introduced a corporate recycling scheme in 2007 which is still in place today to separate out recyclable material for collection. These streams are: paper/card, mixed plastic bottles, tins/cans, glass jars/bottles and batteries. There are currently no approved work streams focusing specifically on the issue of Single Use Plastics internally although it is something that is being considered by the wider Lancashire Waste Partnership (LWP) with Lancashire County Council, of which Blackpool Council is a partner in the waste treatment and disposal company, Lancashire Renewables Limited.
- 5.8 Equally, Blackpool Council has been actively working with national charity Keep Britain Tidy. The **“Keep Blackpool Tidy”** campaign focuses on engaging with volunteers from local residents, businesses and community groups with the aspiration of becoming the cleanest seaside resort by 2020. This is extended to the Keep Britain Tidy **“LoveMyBeach”** campaign and the associated Blue Flag status at South Beach.
- 5.9 In addition to the above the Council is also actively supporting the ReFILL scheme, another initiative by **“LoveMyBeach”**. This is specifically aimed at reducing plastic bottles by encouraging free tap water refills of bottles instead of purchasing new, single use bottles. This is a Fylde Coast initiative, which involves participating businesses, who display the **“Re-FILL”** sticker in their window, inviting passers-by to come in and fill up their water bottle free of charge with no pressure to purchase anything. Participating **“Re-FILL Stations”** already include a number of local hotels,

guesthouses, businesses and including a McDonalds. Full details and a list of stations can be found using the “Re-FILL” App.

- 5.10 The above scheme highlights the potential possibilities of involving local businesses in any single-use plastic policies that the Council may consider going forward.
- 5.11 It is worth noting that some of the wholly owned companies have already made significant advancements in this area. For example, Blackpool Operating Company Limited has already replaced all plastic cutlery with wooden and card alternatives, including paper straws. It is proposed to draw on the experiences of where successful implementation of sustainable alternatives have already taken place, in delivering the Council’s solution.
- 5.12 The EU’s Circular Economy Package, which is likely to be transposed in to UK law, is also a key driver in winning the war on plastics. Key issues in relation to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations and, on a local level, organisational Procurement Policies will also play a major role going forward.
- 5.13 Central Government’s much anticipated Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS) was finally published in late December, following a lengthy delay due to Brexit. In support of the Government’s 25 year Environment Plan, the strategy provides a clear focus on plastics, in particular Single Use Plastics.
- 5.14 By introducing new incentives – regulatory and economic, along with better infrastructure and information, these measures help people do the right thing. Moreover, by protecting the natural world, and leaving it in a healthier state for the next generation, it will help uphold the core pledge of the 25 Year Environment Plan. The Government’s Strategy reflects that ambition and cites leaving the European Union is an opportunity to refresh and renew environmental policy, and show domestic and international leadership.
- 5.15 Secondly these new measures support the commitments, in the Industrial and Clean Growth Strategies, to double resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste, both by 2050.
- 5.16 Thirdly and as importantly, the strategy acknowledges that there is an urgent need for new thinking to tackle avoidable waste, particularly plastic.
- 5.17 The government will consult on increasing the successful 5p plastic bag charge to 10p, and extending the scheme to small retailers. It will also consult on introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, to reward people for bringing back bottles and encourage them not to litter their empties. Government has also consulted on banning plastic straws (except for medical use), stirrers and cotton buds.

5.18 However in advance of in any possible changes in primary legislation, the adoption of a Single Use Plastics Policy will allow the Council and its wholly owned companies to take a lead to addressing the issue of Single Use Plastics in the more immediate short-term.

5.19 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.20 List of Appendices:

Appendix 5a– Single Use Plastics Policy

Appendix 5b – Draft Charter

Appendix 5c – Draft Work/Communications Programme

Appendix 5d – Draft Action Plan

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Human resources considerations:

7.1 Implementing the policy and charter will require the co-operation and co-ordination of service heads across the organisation, particularly Procurement and Waste Management as well as the directors of the wholly owned companies.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 In the course of developing this policy, the Council has considered whether there could be unintended adverse impacts on people because of shared characteristics protected by the Equality Act. The policy will not have any indirectly discriminatory effects.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 There may be potential additional costs associated with sourcing suitable sustainable alternative products.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Potential reputational damage due to continued use of Single Use Plastics.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 The policy and charter supports the Council's ethical pursuit of corporate social responsibility and sustainability (including organisational resilience) as well as the Council's core values.

12.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

12.1 None at this stage but may involve further consultations as the policy develops, including wider engagement with the wholly owned companies. The Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has considered the policy, has recommended its approval and will monitor its implementation.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

14.0 Key decision information:

14.1 Is this a key decision? No

14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1

19.0 Date of Decision:

19.1

20.0 Reason(s) for decision:

20.1

21.0 Date Decision published:

21.1

22.0 Executive Members in attendance:

22.1

23.0 Call-in:

23.1

24.0 Notes:

24.1