

9 February 2022		ITEM: 15 Decision: 110604
Cabinet		
Single Use Plastics Policy		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Andrew Jefferies, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Leisure		
Accountable Assistant Director: Daren Spring, Assistant Director – Street Scene and Leisure		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director – Public Realm		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

In October 2020, the revised Waste Strategy was adopted. The strategy outlined the proposed changes to the Waste Collection service to ensure that it remained compliant with Central Government Policy as well as providing a collection service aimed at maximising the rate of recycling and re-use of materials. An equally important part of the revised strategy, strongly championed by the cross-party waste working group, was a commitment to eliminating and/or reducing reliance on single use plastics within the Council's offices and services. This paper presents the Single Use Plastics Policy for consideration by CGS Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1. Recommendation(s):

1.1 That Cabinet approve the adoption of the Single Use Plastic Policy.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 It is widely accepted that single use plastics contribute adversely to the environment, in their manufacture, disposal and in that they are a widely littered item, in light of that, it seems appropriate and timely that the Council commits to reducing and where possible eliminating those items from its supply chains and activities.

2.2 The Single Use Plastics Policy outlines a clear commitment to the principle of elimination where possible as well as providing some clear examples of the actions that can be taken by all to embed the change.

- 2.3 Work has already commenced with the Council's procurement team who have incorporated awareness of single use plastics and the need for their elimination in procurement documents and processes.
- 2.4 Some examples of single use plastics and where they may be eliminated include:
- Plastic wrapping on individual stock items such as hi-viz jackets
 - Plastic stirrers and cutlery in the café
 - Cleaning wipes for desks and screen that contain plastic
 - Single use water bottles
 - Plastic wrapping on brochures and other Council communications
- 2.5 The challenge for the Council will be for all services to review the items that they use on regular basis and identify viable alternatives that are both less harmful to the environment and cost effective. There may be some items for which alternatives are not feasible. In those instances, the aim will be to minimise use where possible, and continue to review options.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 Adopting this policy would be another clear expression of awareness of the environmental impact of single use plastics as well as a positive first action to address the issue within the Borough.
- 3.2 Through continued work with partners such as Oceans Together, Keep Britain Tidy and the Essex Wildlife trust, the work already started in terms of education relating to single plastics and the need for their elimination will be continued with other organisations within the Borough. This includes schools and businesses.

4. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 4.1 Consultation with elected members was undertaken as part of the Waste Cross Party Working Group convened to oversee the renewal of the Council's Waste Strategy.
- 4.2 The policy was also presented at Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 20 January 2022. At the meeting CGS confirmed support for adoption of the policy. No changes to the policy were requested.

5. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 5.1 The anticipated impact of the policy is a reduction in the volume of single use plastics generated by the Council in its delivery of services. There will be no direct impact on the scope, scale or delivery of those services.
- 5.2 Once the policy has been approved, work will be undertaken with all Directorates and Service areas to understand the source of single use plastics

within their operations. Timescales, actions and appropriate levels of monitoring will be implemented to ensure that there is sustainable and timely change.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Should cost effective alternatives to single use plastics not be available, the aim will be to reduce use and continue to monitor developments and review options.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
Corporate Governance Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer

To reduce the impact on the environment of single-use plastics, the Environmental Protection (Plastic Straws, Cotton Buds and Stirrers) (England) Regulations 2020 bans businesses in England (except for exempt users) supplying certain single -use plastics, including straws, cotton swabs, and coffee stirrers to end users. The Regulations make it an offense to supply single-use plastic stirrers to end users. The Regulations are enforced by local authorities.

The adoption of the proposed policy by the Cabinet would demonstrate that the Council is leading by example in taking action to reduce the use of single plastics in Council Offices and work practices. In addition, it also includes taking action to educate local businesses and others on the ban of single use plastics.

6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development

There are no diversity and equality implications arising from this report.

6.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

- N/A

7. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- N/A

8. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Single Use of Plastics Policy

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