

Subject: Phasing out single use plastics (SUPs)
Date of Meeting: 29 March 2018
Report of: Nick Hibberd
Contact Officer: Name: Mita Patel Tel: 01273 29 3332
Email: mita.patel@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 This report provides a progress update on work that has begun in phasing out single use plastics (SUPs) across council buildings and services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Policy, Resources and Growth Committee notes:

2.1 The report and work progress detailed in section 4.

2.2 That it will receive a more detailed report on progress in July 2018

2.3 The conclusions and next steps provided in section 6.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 On 2 November 2017 two Notices of Motion, one by the Conservative party (Appendix 1) and the other by the Green party (Appendix 2) were passed at Full Council. Both Notices of Motion were calling for the phasing out of SUPs across council buildings and services.

3.2 One Motion requested that the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee make recommendations to the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee, however, it was agreed at the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 28 November 2017 that one report addressing the requests made in both Notices of Motion would be considered by Policy, Resources & Growth Committee alone.

3.3 Around eight million tonnes of plastic makes its way into oceans each year, posing a serious threat to the natural and marine environment. There is now a growing acceptance locally, nationally and globally of the negative impact plastic waste is having upon our environment and particularly to marine life. Businesses, local authorities, communities and individuals across the country and beyond are uniting in their efforts to respond by adopting policies and practices and sharing best practice and knowledge for reducing the use of SUPs and in tackling the plastic waste pollution problem.

- 3.4 Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to supporting the local environment and is lead partner for the UNESCO Biosphere programme, The Living Coast^[1], that serves as an international demonstration area for sustainable development. The Biosphere programme works to connect people and nature to pioneer a positive future; conservation and enhancement of our local environment – including the sea and coast – is a principal objective and focus for its work.
- 3.5 Historically, the council has collaborated on successful city initiatives to reduce waste. This includes the #StreetsAhead¹ campaign led by CityClean – an anti-litter initiative in partnership with the environmental charity Hubbub² which aims to raise awareness on the damaging impacts of plastic waste and encourage responsible disposal of litter.
- 3.6 The council's efforts in this work is being recognised at a national level and was recently mentioned at the British Plastic Federation conference and at the national Keep Britain Tidy network conference, both held in February 2018.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Officers are currently consulting with services across the council to identify where SUPs use is the most significant, where they can be easily removed or alternatives identified and where there are challenges in finding alternatives.
- 4.2 Alongside this, there is continued collaboration between council teams, external organisations and plastic free campaigns groups across the city to support them in their efforts and to join forces where possible to have greater impact.

Key areas of progress in the council

- 4.3 The Procurement Team have taken some immediate steps for responding to the council's ambitions on removing SUPs through our procurement process. Following the two Notices of Motion that were brought to Full Council in November (Appendix 1 & 2), SUPs were discussed at the Procurement Advisory Board (PAB) on 11 December 2017. As a result of these discussions at PAB the following information was added to the Procurement page of the council website:

Banning of single use plastics

The Brighton & Hove City Council Procurement Team encourage its suppliers to be more responsible regarding 'single use plastics' following a Notice of Motion carried unanimously at Council on 2 November 2017 which requested Brighton & Hove City Council to consider a ban on the purchase of 'single use plastics' in all its buildings and agencies³.

^[1] www.thelivingcoast.org.uk

¹ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/streetsahead-campaign-launches-clean-brighton-hove>

² <https://www.hubbub.org.uk/>

³ www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/contracts-tenders/sustainable-procurement.

Furthermore, the Procurement Team was consulted in February 2018 to identify what measures could be taken to influence service providers in reducing or finding alternatives to their use of SUPs. The outcome of this consultation is now being used to devise actions to understand suppliers' current use of SUPs, and encourage its suppliers to be more responsible in their use.

- 4.4 Hospitality providers to council buildings are being approached to encourage them to eliminate SUPs in their service provision in council buildings, encourage customers to use alternatives and reduce SUPs in their premises and at their point of sale.
- 4.5 The council's Communications team are leading on work to support greater staff awareness and engagement in helping to eliminate SUPs across the council. To facilitate this, a communications platform has been launched inviting staff to complete a short survey and share ideas and on the council's intranet. (This is also being shared to those teams in the council buildings that do not have access to the intranet). This will enable greater involvement and ownership of staff and building users, and success in phasing out SUPs across the organisation. It will also serve to feed into work targeting service providers led by the Procurement team outlined in section 4.3.
- 4.6 The corporate Building Users Group led by the Council's Premises Team is being consulted and will be actively engaged in any activities and work streams identified.
- 4.7 A tap water project community engagement and awareness project is currently being developed under the Biosphere programme. The project is a collaboration between Southern Water and the council's Public Health, International & Sustainability Teams, the city's Plastic Free Pledge and Refill campaigns. The project will promote the health benefits of drinking tap water to the wider public, and raise awareness to the fact that our tap water is filtered through the local chalk aquifer in the ground beneath us. It also aims to reduce plastic waste by targeting large and small organisations and venues as well as outdoor events in the city to encourage them to eliminate plastics bottles and offer tap water instead. This project is being branded under The Living Coast⁴ Biosphere programme and will be an opportunity to link with and support other initiatives in the city that aim to increase the tap water offer, reduce the need for plastic bottles and encourage greater use of reusable water and drinks containers.
- 4.8 Engagement with large venues will include replacing water bottles with project branded water carafes for the provision of drinking water. This was trialled at a senior level event that Southern Water had with the water regulator Ofwat earlier in March at the Amex stadium. The event was an opportunity to test the messaging and approach for rolling out at other large venues.
- 4.9 Work around events will include replacing plastics cups and bottles with reusable options; bottle return schemes; enabling greater access to standpipes for providing access to free drinking water; and encouraging event goers to bring

⁴ www.thelivingcoast.org.uk

their own reusable water bottles. Early discussions and engagement with key city events are already underway.

- 4.10 The Biosphere tap water project is positively engaging with seafront bars, restaurants and businesses that are keen to eliminate plastics, offer alternatives and significantly reduce beach litter. This is an exciting opportunity as plastic waste from these establishments contributes to a considerable amount of plastic litter found on our beaches. The project will also link with the council's #StreetsAhead project led by CityClean and in collaboration with the Seafront Team, in continuing to support further litter picks and anti-litter initiatives along the promenade and on the beach.
- 4.11 The #StreetsAhead programme for 2018 will include:
- Monthly beach cleans February-October with Pier2Pier Beach Clean group
 - 'A drop in the ocean': research and creative design project using plastic bottle tops from along the seafront. Tops will be collected via collection bottles hosted by businesses, via beach cleans, as well as CityClean seafront staff during their cleans. Tops will be used to create an installation which will be displayed in Kemptown beach
 - Launch of #StreetsAhead in parks, together with the Tidy Up Team, the weekend of GB Spring Clean. With more collaboration and plans to tackle litter in other parks to follow.
 - Continue to support beach clean groups and litter picking events in Brighton and Hove by arranging for the equipment and promotion of the events.
- The Biosphere tap water project will link to all these elements of the #StreetsAhead programme to make the best of opportunities for collaboration.
- 4.12 Freedom Leisure have recently announced that they will be actively reducing their plastic waste and increasing recycling across all their centres⁵. The Biosphere tap water project will be actively engaging with them to include them in the project.
- 4.13 Linked to the Biosphere project, an awareness raising initiative in schools for eliminating/ reducing SUPs (in schools) is also being developed. This will be a collaboration between the Brighton & Hove Environmental Education (BHee)⁶ programme, the Eco-Schools programme, the council's Public Health Schools team and CityClean. Some schools are already developing policies and projects for eliminating SUPs in their buildings and surroundings. These include:
- Stanford Junior School who recently ran initiatives including Plastic Free February and a plastics free pledge;
 - Fairlight Primary School – who working with CityClean to raise awareness on plastic waste including having an educational session on plastics waste and have done beach cleans as part of this.
 - St Christopher's (a private school in Hove) have introduced a 'no single use plastic bottle' policy;
 - Goldstone Primary School is planning a similar 'no single use plastic bottle' policy as well as a 'protest against plastic' campaign.

⁵ <https://www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/press-centre/coffee-cup-waste/>

⁶ www.BHee.co.uk

The council collaboration will provide a more coordinated approach for supporting more schools in the city in delivering such initiatives and will also collaborate with the schools officers from the Public Health team to make close links to the health agenda that promotes greater access to tap water in schools.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation is being planned with council contract managers as outlined in 4.3.
- 5.2 Consultation and engagement with staff will be supported as mentioned in 4.5 and 4.6.
- 5.3 The Biosphere tap water project as mentioned in 4.6 to 4.12 is also consulting and engaging with organisations and other anti-plastic initiatives to ensure all opportunities are realised.
- 5.4 Consultation and best practice sharing with other local authorities, businesses, and organisations is ongoing. Tackling the SUPs problem is high on everyone's agenda and is a problem shared by all UK cities. There is a strong appetite for sharing learning and best practice and officers are seeking to do this through existing networks and sustainable city groups that the council are linked with. The council is involved in planning a small meeting in London in May to bring interested local authorities and organisations together for sharing best practice and collaborate where relevant. Council officers will also be participating in a larger seminar and networking event hosted by Aviva Investors in London in autumn 2018.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Phasing out SUPs from across the council is a significant and on-going piece of work. It is going to take time to fully capture all SUPs that are used across council services and in our buildings. In many cases, solutions for removing them will be able to be identified and action will be taken to remove these from use immediately. But in some cases it may not be possible to find a suitable alternative at the current time.
- 6.2 This work achieves both a demonstration of leadership locally and it will also have a ripple effect upon all our service providers, partner organisations and to the wider city public. It supports greater partnership working between departments and with organisations and anti-plastic initiatives across the city.
- 6.3 The PRG report in July 2018 will provide a progress update and set out further detail on measures and actions for phasing out SUPs both in the areas referred to in this report and in additional areas. The service areas include: Procurement, Events, Seafront, City Infrastructure, Housing, Premises, Public Health and Adult Social Care. Progress will also be provided on work being done to target sectors that are outside of our immediate control including businesses and schools.

Next steps

- 6.4 A programme board will be set up to support governance and accountability on this work moving forward.

6.5 A corporate SUPs policy will be drafted and brought to committee for member approval.

6.6 Next steps for the Biosphere tap water public engagement project includes:

- An official launch in early May 2018 to coincide with the start of the Brighton Festival and Fringe festivals.
- An online app and map for guiding members of the public towards participating organisations and businesses offering free water bottle refills.
- Greater numbers of businesses, venues and events engaged and signed up.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report, however, the financial impact of using alternative materials and phasing out SUP's through the procurement of contracts will need to be considered within the award of each contract. The financial impact of using alternative materials for revenue services, agencies, and supply chains will also need to be considered within the scope of their respective revenue budgets. The promotion of the Biosphere project and awareness initiative in schools will be met from the Public Health, council and schools existing budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen

Date: 16/03/2018

Legal Implications:

7.2 This is a high level report and there are no legal implications to note at this stage. Detailed legal implications will be provided when more detailed measures and actions for phasing out SUPs are set out. This is expected to be in the report to this Committee in July 2018.

Lawyer Consulted: Sarita Arthur-Crow

Date: 16/03/2018

Equalities Implications:

7.3 The Biosphere tap water project supports greater promotion and public access to free drinking water.

7.4 Equalities and impacts to building users and members of the public that any of the initiatives and work areas outlined in this report or that is identified, moving forward, will be considered. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken as and where identified necessary.

Sustainability Implications:

7.5 This project supports a great many areas of sustainability. More specifically, through minimising SUP waste and litter it will be an effective approach for reducing the negative impacts these can have upon the local environment,

nature and biodiversity. Encouraging the reuse of bottles and materials and finding alternatives to SUPs will also have a positive impact upon reducing carbon emissions as there is a significant amount of embodied energy that goes into the production, manufacturing, use and disposal of SUPs.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 None identified.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.7 By taking leadership and being pro-active in its ambitions to phase out SUPs, where it can, the council is reducing its risk in getting negative publicity in its response to a growing local and global problem. There are many positive initiatives that are currently being delivered in plastic waste reduction, both at a grassroots and national level. There is currently widespread public concern and a growing desire to take action on SUPs now. The council's strong position on tackling the SUPs problem supports this cause. Its efforts in engaging with wider stakeholders and the public in these efforts, demonstrates that it is making the most of this opportunity.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.8 A key element of this work is in the delivery of the Biosphere tap water project which aims to promote greater drinking of tap water, and the positive health benefits this can have for residents, workers, and visitors in Brighton & Hove.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.9 Activities will be supported through the development of a policy document. There will be ongoing consultation with building and service users to ensure that any reduction in SUPs do not present a negative impact to staff and the working environment.
- 7.10 This report includes projects that aim to have a positive impact upon the wider public, businesses, and other city stakeholders. All projects will involve stakeholder engagement and consultation to ensure that any potential negative impacts to the wider city community are considered and mitigated against.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Notice of Motion from the Conservative Group, 2 November 2017
2. Notice of Motion from the Green Group, 2 November 2017

