

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date of Meeting:	31 August 2022
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Single Use Item Reductions
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Committee on how the Council is performing against the target to reduce the amount of single use items procured

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress made in the challenge to reduce the procurement of single use items across the Council be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. It was reported to the Council's Executive Committee on 28 February 2018 that the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2017-2018 highlighted the need to further efforts to end the throw away culture by examining how to reduce the demand for single use items such as disposable cups, plastic cutlery and plastic straws.
- 3.2. It was reported at the same meeting that Council Resources have, on an individual basis, been reviewing the use of single use items and seeking to reduce or design out their use. It was agreed that the Sustainable Development Team would coordinate a Council-wide action plan to reduce the Council's reliance on and unnecessary use of single use items.
- 3.3. A position statement was reported to the Sustainable Development Member Officer Working Group on 22 October 2018 and again on 26 February 2019 which included details of action taken to date, further action being taken in schools and South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, awareness raising and employee engagement activities.
- 3.4. It was reported to the Council's Executive Committee on 26 February 2020 that several single-use items had been removed from the procurement catalogues. This was done after considerable consultation with Resources and included single-use plastic cutlery, plastic stemmed cotton buds, plastic straws, plastic water cups and plastic stirrers.

3.5. In line with the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 which came into effect on 1 June 2022, the Council has been actively replacing any single use plastic products affected by this, such as food takeaway boxes, with products made from more sustainable materials such as EPP (expanded polypropylene).

4. Single Use Position Update

4.1. A number of reports from the Council's procurement system, iProc, have been collated in order to accurately establish a baseline of single use item purchases across all Council services. The most appropriate baseline year for most items has been set for 2017/2018 with some items using a 2018/2019 baseline.

4.2. The outcome for the targeted items has been positive as demonstrated in the table below. It should be noted, however, that some of the reductions are directly related to the suspension of some related Council services during the Covid lockdowns.

Item	Baseline year	Pattern
Plastic forks and knives	2017-18	Consistent reduction over 4 years with 72% reduction in 2021-22
Wooden forks and knives	2017-18	Slight increase in 2018-19 but then reductions with 44% reduction in 2021-22
Plastic spoons	2018-19	Consistent reduction over 4 years with 93% reduction in 2021-22
Wooden spoons	2018-19	Increase from baseline but only purchasing 19% wooden alternatives compared with plastic
Plastic and wooden stirrers	2018-19	Consistent reduction over 4 years with 85% reduction in 2021-22
Single use cups (hard to recycle)	2017-18	Similar amounts purchased in first 2 years with reductions of 57% in 2021-22
Straws	2017-18	Consistent reduction over 4 years with 97% reduction in 2021-22
Polystyrene containers	2017-18	Consistent reduction over 4 years with 94% reduction in 2021-22

4.3. All of the above reductions listed above are in line with the objectives as detailed in section 3 but the purchase of cups which are easily recyclable increased throughout the period. This is also in line with our plans to replace those necessary single use items with alternatives, which in the case of cups is paper or biodegradable cups.

4.4. Unfortunately, but in line with national trends, the use of other single use PPE in the fight against Covid has increased. The items of most concern are single use facemasks, gloves and aprons and the absence of suitable reusable alternatives. Over 86,000 masks have been purchased in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, 10 times more single use gloves and aprons were purchased in 2020/2021 compared with 2017/2018 although numbers for 2021/2022 have greatly reduced.

4.5. All of the items listed above will continue to be monitored, to ensure that numbers purchased do not increase as the Council recovers from Covid disruptions and resumes normal service delivery.

- 4.6. Work will continue in raising awareness of not only the need to reduce our reliance on single use items but that when using them to dispose of them properly. The intranet, social media and global staff emails will be used for this and the Committee members are being asked to help reinforce this message.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. All Resources are required to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Climate Change Strategy and the associated actions and targets. Whilst the sustainable development officer and carbon management officer monitor and report the Council's progress many more staff are required to have a knowledge of the issues and understand the actions each individual, service and Resource has to take in order to meet targets.
- 5.2. The target to reduce the Council's reliance on single use items requires an effort from all budget holders and front-line staff of those services using such items.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. A reduction in the purchase of single use items should have positive financial implications although in some instances, if replacing with a recyclable or biodegradable alternative, could have a negative per item purchase price implication

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. Reducing single use items within Council services and encouraging employees to keep items in use for as long as possible would contribute to the Council's duties to support a circular economy and the global sustainable development goals.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. Failure to build resilience and act to the impacts of a changing climate is included in the Council's top risks. The reduction of the procurement of unnecessary single use items is included in the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy action plan.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. Consultation has taken place with Resources to ensure no service or service user is adversely affected by the reduction in these single use items. Plastic straws will still be available for those service users who require them for drinking.

David Booth

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

22 August 2022

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

Values

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable

Priorities

- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places

Outcomes

- ◆ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities

Previous References

- ◆ Report to Executive Committee - 28 February 2018
- ◆ Report to Council's Executive Committee 26 February 2020

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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