

# Report

# 14

Report to:	<b>Executive Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>28 February 2018</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Single Use Items</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Committee on the work done to date on reviewing single use items across the Council
- ◆ approve the development of an action plan to co-ordinate the continued reduction in the use of single use items through the Sustainable Development Member Officer Working Group, with progress being reported through Committee

## 2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the content of the report be noted; and
- (2) that the development of a single use item action plan is developed and progress reported through Committee.

## 3. Background

3.1. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2017/2018 highlights the need to further efforts to end a 'throw-away' culture by examining how to reduce the demand for single-use items, such as disposable coffee cups, plastic cutlery and plastic straws.

3.2. In recent months there has been significant media attention around the use of non-recyclable plastics that end up in landfill or littered with many ending up in our seas and on beaches, causing harm to wildlife, marine life and blight our landscape. There have also been a number of high profile campaigns promoting the reduction in single-use items including:-

- ◆ The Last Straw campaign
- ◆ #wildbottlessightings (Marine Conservation Society)
- ◆ Have You Got The Bottle (The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland)

3.3. The first ever Europe-wide strategy on plastics was adopted by the European Commission on 16 January 2018 as part of the transition towards a more circular

economy. Under the new plans, all plastic packaging on the EU market will be recyclable by 2030, the consumption of single-use plastics will be reduced and the intentional use of microplastics will be restricted. The Scottish Government has pledged to match the EU ban on single use plastics by 2030.

3.4. The Scottish Government has also announced a range of other initiatives including:-

- ◆ the introduction of legislation to ban the manufacture and sale of plastic stemmed cotton buds with the proposals to be put to public consultation and if implemented would position Scotland as the first country in the UK to legislate against these environmentally damaging items
- ◆ a commitment to a deposit return scheme
- ◆ establishing an expert panel to consider environmental levies on single-use items such as disposable coffee cups

#### **4. Current Position**

4.1. Council Resources have, on an individual basis, been reviewing the use of single use items and seeking to reduce or design out their use. These items can range from plastic stirrers to refuse sacks and can have a significant impact on the environment e.g. estimated that 550 million straws are used in the US and UK every day with the average use time being 20 minutes but they take 500 years to break down when its thrown away.

4.2. By way of example of action already implemented within the Council the following have been implemented:-

- ◆ removal of plastic straws from corporate catering venues
- ◆ removal of plastic cutlery from corporate catering venues (phase 1), these now need to be requested
- ◆ piloting of biodegradable food containers in corporate catering venues and secondary schools.
- ◆ removal of plastic stirrers from procurement catalogue, replaced by wooden
- ◆ discussion with Scotland Excel and suppliers who produce products with plastic straws which are attached
- ◆ move to online provision of reports and documents
- ◆ purchase of recyclable/biodegradable products e.g. food liner bags

4.3. It is proposed that the Sustainable Development Members/Officer Working Group would co-ordinate the collation of a Council Wide action plan to reduce the Council's reliance on and use of single use items. The aim would be to remove the item completely, however, if this is not practical then a suitable replacement item will be identified, if possible that has a lesser impact on the environment.

4.4. Where items cannot be removed or a more appropriate replacement identified, the service will investigate the most environmentally friendly way to dispose of the item.

4.5. The development of a single use item action plan, which will also identify the financial implication of any proposed changes, would be co-ordinated through the Sustainable

Development Member/Officer Working Group and progress reported through Committee on a 6-monthly basis.

## **5. Employee Implications**

5.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report at this time.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report at this time, but any changes proposed within the action plan will include the associated financial implications and these will be outlined in future reports to committee.

## **7. Other Implications**

7.1. There are no risk implications in terms of the proposals contained within this report.

7.2. The benefits of the actions already in place outlined in paragraph 4.2 and the proposed development of a single use item action plan will have a positive impact on sustainability going forward.

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

**Michael McGlynn**  
**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

7 February 2018

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

◆ Develop a sustainable Council and communities

### **Previous References**

◆ None

### **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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