



Agenda Item

FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

14 October 2021

Report of the Executive Director Adult Social Care and Health

**Single Use Plastics Policy
(Strategic Leadership, Culture, Tourism and Climate Change)**

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 Not applicable.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the County.

3. Purpose

3.1 To seek approval of a Single Use Plastics (SUP) Policy to reduce the use of plastics which are used once or for a short period of time before being disposed of, and to recognise the implications of this policy.

4. Information and Analysis

4.1 The Council is leading a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reduce carbon emissions generated in Derbyshire to help meet ambitious national targets needed to address the global climate change crisis and to reduce the Council's carbon footprint to net zero by 2032, or sooner. The Council wants to go even further to fulfil its climate and carbon reduction pledges and to deliver its Climate Change Strategy, which is

due to be published autumn 2021. This includes building on measures already put in place to remove SUPs from catering at County Hall and minimising the use of SUPs across all the Council's operations.

- 4.2 Plastic is one of the most useful inventions in recent history. In the UK, it is estimated that five million tonnes of plastic are used every year, nearly half of which is packaging which is used just once. The low cost of plastic has encouraged the development of many SUP items.
- 4.3 SUPs can be described as any disposable plastic item that is designed to be used only once or for a short period of time. SUPs are often used in packaging, consumer products, cosmetics, personal protective equipment and healthcare products. Examples include plastic bags, disposable utensils, beverage containers, balloons and wet wipes. The pandemic is causing a rise in SUP items, such as aprons, health care equipment and lateral flow test kits.
- 4.4 SUPs have a number of benefits, including contributing to food safety and hygiene, and reducing packaging weight in transit, thereby reducing energy and emissions that would be generated by using alternative materials. A comprehensive list of SUPs used by the Council can be found at Appendix 2.
- 4.5 However, plastic contributes to climate change - chemicals derived from fossil fuel production are used to make almost all plastics. The more plastic that is made, the more petrochemicals are required, and the more petrochemicals are required, the higher the demand for gas, oil and even coal. By reducing or removing SUPs, the County Council is helping to reduce the demand for fossil fuels, thereby reducing the carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere.
- 4.6 Plastics also often end up as litter resulting in negative aesthetic, environmental and health impacts. Litter gets washed into streams and rivers often ending up in the seas and oceans where animals can become entangled or ingest it. Plastic has been found in the guts of more than 90% of the world's sea birds, in the stomachs of more than half of the world's sea turtles and in the stomachs of whales. Plastics do not biodegrade but break down into smaller and smaller pieces, microplastics, that are ingested by the smallest of organisms which then enter the food chain. To reduce the amount of plastic becoming pollution, it is important, where possible, to avoid the use of SUPs in the first place and, where they are purchased, to use alternative materials or ensure that they contain recycled content and can themselves be recycled.

- 4.7 Whilst plastics have many advantages as packaging for goods and the manufacture of everyday items in our lives, it is a difficult material to recycle and dispose of. Recyclable or readily biodegradable alternatives are not always available. The types of polymers used to produce some items are currently hard to recycle so they often end up as residual waste and are sent for final disposal. In developing a more sustainable planet it is vital to avoid the generation of waste but, where it is produced, it needs to be recognised that all wastes have a value and can be used elsewhere. There is a need to develop alternatives through supporting research and innovation and to develop the circular economy to ensure SUPs are not end products, but part of a cycle. However, SUPs found in many products, e.g. medical supplies, food packaging or cigarette filters, cannot be reused for safety and hygiene reasons.
- 4.8 In 2018, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published '*Our waste, our resources: A strategy for England*' which sets out several plastic waste reduction reforms to help the Government achieve its ambitious plans for a greener future. These include a plastic packaging tax, introducing a Deposit Return Scheme and consistency in household and business recycling collections in England. Successive UK Governments have also signed up to many international agreements aimed at reducing plastic in the marine environment. It is important that the Council plays its part in these agreements as plastic entering the streams and rivers in Derbyshire will end up in our seas and oceans, harming wildlife and communities across the world, as well as leaving a legacy for future generations.
- 4.9 In addition, there are several voluntary initiatives aimed at changing the way that plastics are designed, produced, used, re-used, disposed of and reprocessed by all stakeholders in the plastics chain. Examples of these include:
- the “**Plastics Pact**”, a collaboration of businesses, which has set a target to eliminate unnecessary single-use plastic packaging, for all plastic packaging to be re-usable, recyclable or compostable and for 70% to be recycled or composted by 2025. Derbyshire’s SUP Policy includes key elements from this Pact.
 - The “**Plastics Industry Recycling Action Plan**” (PIRAP), an industry action plan which includes: increased collection of recyclable plastics; improved sorting; and developing end markets for recycled plastics.
 - The “**UK Circular Plastics Network**” (UKCPN), which aims to bring together plastic product users through a programme of networking and knowledge-sharing events.

- 4.10 It is proposed that the Council seeks to reduce the number of SUP items it procures and the plastic waste it generates through the implementation of a Single Use Plastics Policy, a draft of which can be found at Appendix 3.
- 4.11 The Council will seek to reduce SUPs in new procurements and the ongoing contract management of existing contracts. However, the Council recognises that there will be occasions when, for justifiable reasons, the use of SUPs cannot be reduced or removed. It is anticipated that, as markets catch up with the need to reduce SUPs, there may be additional costs incurred by the Council when seeking alternatives and each situation will be evaluated individually to assess whether the Council is achieving value for money.
- 4.12 It is proposed that an action plan is produced setting out key actions for implementing this policy. Implementing the action plan may place additional responsibilities on procurement, waste and climate change officers and it may become necessary, as the strategy is delivered, for additional staffing resource to support delivery of the outcomes. Should additional staffing be required, this will be subject to a business case and approval by the Climate Change and Environment Programme Board. Understanding the wider resource implications of this policy will be presented in a further report.
- 4.13 It is proposed that the SUP Policy is monitored and reviewed annually and that a progress report is presented to Cabinet after the first review.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The proposal to develop a SUPs Policy was presented to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction on 26 July 2021 (Minute No. 02/21 refers). The Committee approved the suggested wording, with the proposal that the review period be amended from every three years to an annual review.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Two alternative approaches were considered. The first was not to adopt a Single Use Plastics Policy and to maintain the status quo. In this instance it is highly unlikely that the Council would see any reduction in the use of SUPs with ongoing negative consequences set out earlier in this report.
- 6.2 The second alternative would be to adopt a complete ban on the procurement of single use plastic items. This would result in the Council

being unable to fulfil its statutory duties particularly, but not exclusively with regards to health and hygiene.

7. Implications

7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Report presented to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction on 26 July 2021, titled 'Proposals for a Single Use Plastics Policy'.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - Implications.

9.2 Appendix 2 - Single Use Plastics used by Derbyshire County Council.

9.3 Appendix 3 - Derbyshire County Council's Single Use Plastic Policy

10. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- a) Approves the Single Use Plastics Policy.
- b) Receives a further report presenting the resource implications of this Policy.
- c) Receives a further report providing an update on the Single Use Plastics Policy in due course.

11. Reasons for Recommendations

11.1 To ensure that the Council has a clear Policy in place to reduce its use of single use plastics.

11.2 To ensure that the implications of approving a Single Use Plastics Policy are understood and that the implementation of the Policy is regularly reviewed and evaluated.

11.3 To ensure that Cabinet is informed of progress of delivery of the Policy.

12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

12.1 No

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Appendix 1

Implications

Financial

- 1.1 It should be recognised that in implementing this policy, there are resource implications and that officer time will be needed to support its delivery and monitoring and that by procuring alternatives to SUPs there are likely to be additional costs.

Legal

- 2.1 All Council procurement and contracting activities need to comply with the applicable public procurement and contracting legislation and law, including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which prescribe processes for public contracts for goods and services above certain thresholds. The 2015 Regulations have been amended in accordance with the terms of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU by the Public Procurement (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020.

Human Resources

- 3.1 Training and guidance will need to be provided for staff to understand the issues involved.

Information Technology

- 4.1 There are no Information Technology implications associated with this report.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 There are no equalities impact implications associated with this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The SUP Policy supports the Council's ambition to be a net zero organisation by 2032, or sooner, and for the County to be net zero by 2050.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 Development and implementation of this policy will improve the environmental sustainability of the Council.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 8.1 None.

Appendix 2

Single Use Plastics used by Derbyshire County Council

What is a single use plastic?

Plastic designed to be used just once and/or for a short period of time before being disposed of such as:

Office Plastics

Laminating Sheets
Windowed envelopes

Bubble envelopes
Bubble film bags
Adhesive tape

Drink and Food Plastics

Drinks bottles and cartons
Yoghurts in plastic pots
Wrapping around outers of drinks
Food and Sandwich wrappers
Coffee machine pods packaging

Milk pods
Stirrers
Disposable cups
Disposable plates
Disposable cup lids

Cleaning Plastics

Cleaning Product bottles
Bin bags

Cleaning Product packaging

Health and Hygiene Plastics

Latex cleaning gloves
Plastic aprons
Disposable aprons
Disposable gloves
Wipes
Air freshener packaging
Food probe wipes
Covid-19 related products

Sample bottles
Clinical wash bags
Laundry bags
Sanitary hygiene bags
Plasters
Sickness bags
Antiseptic wipes

Other plastics

Vinyl banners
Hazard tape

Workwear packaging

Packaging

The packaging that surrounds almost everything we buy. Beware – some packaging will be essential to provide longevity to the product and / or protect the product whilst in transit. But do challenge if it needs to be made of plastic.

Appendix 3

Derbyshire County Council's Single Use Plastic Policy

Derbyshire County Council will act to remove the use of Single Use Plastic (SUP) from its operations and services where practical and to reduce the use of Single Use Plastic where its use cannot be avoided. The Council will work towards finding positive solutions for reducing unnecessary waste across Derbyshire.

A Single Use Plastics action plan will be developed to support the implementation and monitoring of this policy. The action plan will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Derbyshire County Council will:

(i) Lead by example

- Embed the SUP policy into other key Council strategies, policies and plans and support officers to:
 - Understand the acceptable price differential when procuring alternatives to SUPs by providing guidance on the value of sustainability when procuring alternatives
 - Recognise and avoid buying and using SUPs across Council buildings and services
 - Seek more sustainable alternatives to SUPs
 - Ensure that SUPs which are procured have a recycled content of at least 30% and / or can themselves be recycled

(ii) Work with our suppliers and contractors

- Highlight the avoidance of SUPs in the Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy
- Request that suppliers have a SUP policy in place or can demonstrate that they are working to minimise the use of SUP's in their organisation and are finding sustainable alternatives (where appropriate)
- Embed requirements for the reduction of SUP in procurement and tender processes for the Council

(iii) Support the avoidance of SUPs across Derbyshire

- Work with event organisers to reduce and eliminate where possible SUPs across all Derbyshire events held on Council land and property and share guidance for this more widely.
- Raise awareness of the importance of disposing of SUP's properly to reduce the negative impact on wildlife, the environment and health.

- Continue to support local communities and businesses by sharing best practice, supporting and promoting positive initiatives, campaigns and actions for reducing waste

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy approved: XX XXX 2021