

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 AUGUST 2018

BECOMING A SINGLE USE PLASTIC FREE COUNCIL

Report from: Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer

Author: Michael Kelly Head of Category Management

Summary

In January 2018, Council agreed to request Cabinet to:

- become a 'single-use plastic-free' Council by phasing out the use of unnecessary 'single use plastic' (SUP) products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in all Council buildings and at all Council events as soon as is reasonably practical;
- to encourage our facilities' users, local businesses, stakeholders and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives.

This report outlines the progress to date.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The policy to become a single use plastic free Council was agreed at a meeting of full Council .

2. Background

2.1 Single use plastics are plastic products which are only used once prior to being thrown away or recycled. As the material is not biodegradable, it typically goes into landfill.

2.2 In January 2018, the Council agreed the following:

"This Council notes:

- *An estimated 9 million tonnes of plastics enters our seas and oceans every year, causing immense damage to marine life and the environment;*
- *The success of the Government's introduction of the 5p plastic bag levy in England in 2015, which has led to an 85% reduction in the number of plastic bags used;*

- *The Government ban on microbeads from most cosmetics, which is due to be implemented from July 2018.*

This Council further notes:

- *a huge proportion of the plastic entering our oceans is ‘single-use plastic’ (SUP) and plastic bags and microbeads make up only 2% of SUPs.*

This Council therefore requests the Cabinet to:

- *become a ‘single-use plastic-free’ Council by phasing out the use of unnecessary ‘single use plastic’ (SUP) products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in all Council buildings and at all Council events as soon as is reasonably practical;*
- *to encourage our facilities’ users, local businesses, stakeholders and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives.”*

2.3 At Business Support Overview and Scrutiny on 5th July 2018, a request was made to review the progress made against becoming a Single Use Plastic (SUP) free Council.

2.4 This report outlines the progress to date as well as the next steps.

3. Advice and analysis

3.1 The below table specifies the various audiences that need to be engaged for the motion to be successful. It goes further to detail the action plan and indicative target dates.

Audience	Action	Target date
Existing Catering Providers	<p>All of Medway Council’s existing catering contractors will be contacted and requested to change the materials so they are in line with corporate requirements.</p> <p>This means that where possible, plastic materials will be phased out and replaced with more sustainable materials.</p>	<p>The existing catering providers are currently being analysed.</p> <p>Due to the intricacies of some contracts, a conservative timeframe for delivering this would be December 2018.</p>
Medway Norse	<p>Medway Norse have already successfully introduced initiatives to this effect by offering a discount per drink at cafeterias they operate as well as removing plastic cutlery in lieu of wooden materials.</p>	<p>November 2018 for full reduction where practical.</p>

	Medway Norse also uses several vending machines across the borough so these will also need to be addressed.	
Specific corporate projects	<p>The establishment of an 'Events Infrastructure' framework. Medway Council would create a framework agreement (a legally compliant list of approved contractors) to deliver future events.</p> <p>The framework will also provide a means for other Local Authorities to access a provision to also become SUP free.</p>	<p>It is envisaged that the events infrastructure framework would be awarded and operational in April 2019.</p> <p>Thereafter a pilot event for SUPs would be chosen and assessed.</p>
Future Medway Contractors	All of Medway's future contracts, regardless of the requirement, will include a pre-requisition for adherence to the Council's SUP free ambition. As such, all contractors will be working towards the same outcome and this will be devolved to their supply chains respectively.	This can be an immediate incorporation.

4. Risk management

4.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Reputational	Medway fails to become a SUP free Council	Adherence to the action plan as outlined above.	2E (Major threat with Very Low Likelihood)
Environmental	Medway fails to implement a SUP free motion and retains the in situ adverse negative environmental impact from pollutants.	Thorough investigation of uses and adherence to implementation plan.	2D (Major threat with Low Likelihood)

Supply chain	Medway's change to becoming SUP free outpaces supply chain developments and becomes unfeasible.	Market appraisal and understanding of developments to ensure success.	3D (Moderate threat with Low likelihood)
--------------	---	---	---

5. Consultation

5.1 The following consultation plan for both internal and external stakeholders is outlined below:

Audience	Communication/Consultation Plan
Existing Catering Providers	Written request to change materials used followed by negotiation where required.
Medway Norse	Face to face and collaborative approach to incorporate appropriate changes.
Specific corporate projects	Consult during the establishment of a framework contract.
Future Medway Contractors	Clear requirements set out in tender documents.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There is no cost (apart from officer time) associated to the implementation of the Single Use Plastic Free motion. However, should the framework mentioned be successful, then this can be 'sold' to other Local Authorities to generate an income back to Medway Council.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Varying a contract requires acceptance of both parties and as such, the action of retrospectively altering existing provision may not be possible.
- 7.2 The establishment of future contracts will be more easily incorporated as they forewarn of their inclusion.

8. Recommendation

8.1 The Committee is requested to note the update in this report on progress made to becoming a single use plastic free Council.

Lead officer contact

Michael Kelly – Head of Category Management
Michael.kell@medway.gov.uk - 01634 332284

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None