

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

31 JANUARY 2019

BECOMING A SINGLE USE PLASTIC FREE COUNCIL

Report from: Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer

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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.

An update report was presented in August 2018. This report outlines the progress since then and the following steps.

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 23rd August 2018, an update report was presented with regards to becoming a Single Use Plastic (SUP) free Council with a request that a further review is presented in January 2019.

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

3. Advice and analysis

3.1 The table below specifies the various audiences that need to be engaged in order to become a "single-use plastic free Council and encourage others to do the same. Since the last report, a fourth column titled 'January 2019 Update' has been added as well as an additional audience regarding wider contributions.

Audience	Action	Target date	January 2019 Update
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>	<p>All existing catering providers have been contacted and requested to comply with Medway's Single Use Plastic agenda.</p> <p>Not all caterers have responded to the initial request. Note the Council cannot unilaterally alter contracts. For those that have not responded, when current arrangements end the motion will form a pass/fail criteria and therefore will have to be honoured for future procurements.</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>Medway Norse also uses several vending machines across the borough so these will also need to be addressed.</p>	November 2018 for full reduction where practical.	<p>Medway Norse have successfully introduced initiatives including offering a discount per drink at cafeterias they operate as well as replacing plastic cutlery with wooden alternatives. In 2017/18 Medway Norse used over 100,000 coffee cups and anticipate phasing out stocks over the next six months, introducing a fully biodegradable cup at their catering outlets. In 2017/18 Medway Norse also used over 92,000 pieces of plastic cutlery. Since April 2018, this has been reduced to zero with all items replaced by wooden cutlery and bamboo/paper straws all of which are fully recyclable.</p> <p>All of their waste bags are made from 100% recycled product and are 100% recyclable. The commercial waste is either dry mixed recyclates or general waste that their waste contractor then sends for recovery / energy; none goes to landfill.</p>

<p>Specific corporate projects</p>	<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>	<p>The tender documentation for events infrastructure is being drafted. Single Use Plastics form a pass/fail criteria for the catering service and therefore only compliant organisations will be eligible for contract award.</p>
<p>Future Medway Contractors</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>This can be an immediate incorporation.</p>	<p>All new contractors, where appropriate, are vetted for this requirement and must 'pass' i.e. comply to be eligible for contract award.</p>
<p>Micro Environment – Those in direct contact with Medway Council</p>	<p>Medway is now at a stage whereby the motion has largely been embedded. To develop a wider contribution, it is now suggested that this motion is championed further afield at engagement events and to other local businesses.</p>	<p>On-going.</p>	<p>It should be noted that as Medway has no direct control then advocacy of this is not a matter for Category Management and should reside with the Environmental team instead.</p>

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 continue to motion of becoming 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	Continued challenge for those who have not accepted the policy.
Medway Norse	Continued partnership working and updates with regards to Single Use Plastics.
Specific corporate projects	Consult during the establishment of a framework contract.
Future Medway Contractors	Clear requirements set out in tender documents.
Micro Environment	Representation and presenting at various engagement events / supplier forums.

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 with single use plastic as a requirement is more straightforward.

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

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Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None