



CABINET

17TH MAY 2018

AGENDA ITEM (7)

NOTICE OF MOTION - PLASTICS

Accountable Member	Councillor Sue Coakley Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities
Accountable Officer	Claire Locke Group Manager - Council Advisory Services 01285 623000 claire.locke@cotswold.gov.uk

Purpose of Report	To enable the Cabinet to consider a Motion submitted to the Council at its Meeting on 20 th February 2018 requesting that the Council undertakes a number of pieces of work to encourage a reduction in plastic waste and, specifically, single use plastics. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the Chairman of the Council determined that the Motion should stand referred to the Cabinet for consideration.
Recommendation(s)	That the Cabinet considers the Motion and agrees a way forward.
Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)	The Motion has been referred to the Cabinet for consideration and decision.

Ward(s) Affected	All
Key Decision	No
Recommendation to Council	No

Financial Implications	The single use plastics audit may generate options to change products which could result in increased costs for the Council - this would be managed in line with normal decision-making arrangements. The Waste Service Review provides the option to increase recyclable materials collected but this may result in service costs rises; however, this will be subject to a separate options report to Cabinet and Council later this year.
Legal and Human Rights Implications	The Council is the Waste Collection Authority and is committed to reducing waste to landfill and increasing recycling and composting.
Environmental and Sustainability Implications	Reduction in plastic waste and increase in plastic recycling provides environmental benefits.

Human Resource Implications	None
Key Risks	Given the amount of work already undertaken to promote our aims to "reduce, reuse and recycle" all materials, and the high levels of recycling already achieved in the District, there is limited scope for the initiatives identified to result in a change in the amount of plastic waste residents recycle. Lobbying Ministers is likely to have minimal effect as Government are already committed to these initiatives.
Equalities Analysis	Not required

Related Decisions	Notice of Motion - Council - 20 th February 2018
Background Documents	None
Appendices	None

Performance Management Follow Up	Implement any Cabinet decision(s)
Options for Joint Working	<p>The Joint Waste Committee (JWC) is a partnership of Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council.</p> <p>An audit of single use plastics will be carried out across the Publica partner councils.</p>

Background

1. General

1.1 At the Meeting of the Council held on 20th February 2018, the following Motion was Proposed by Councillor Ray Brassington and Seconded by Councillor Nigel Robbins:-

This Council notes with concern:-

- *That 300 million tons of new plastic is made each year, half of which is for single use plastic such as packaging and convenience foods. In many cases, such as plastic straws, takeaway food containers and coffee cups, there are practical alternatives available that are either reusable or sustainable.*
- *That in 2016, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation estimated that by weight, there could be more plastic in our oceans than fish, as soon as 2050. As plastics are durable and strong they will stay in our environment for up to an estimated 600 years. (Columbia University)*
- *That marine plastic leads to coastal / offshore dead zones, entanglement, death through ingestion, toxic transfer and, once degraded into micro plastics, contamination of the food chain - including our own. We are quite literally eating the plastic that has ended up in our seas.*

The Council welcomes:-

- *The significant increase in recycling achieved in the District in the last decade, through improvements to doorstep recycling.*
- *The success of the 'Plastic Bag Levy', put forward by the Liberal Democrats during the Coalition Government, which has led to an 85% reduction in disposable plastic bag usage.*

This Council therefore commits that Cotswold District Council will play its full role in helping to reduce plastic waste, specifically:

- *That the Council will undertake an audit, within existing resources, of single use plastics used by the Authority seek to replace with sustainable or reusable alternatives where practicable.*
- *That the Council will play its role in helping to educate members of the public about plastic waste, specifically by including information for members on the public of reducing plastic waste in both online and written materials.*
- *That the Council will use its membership of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Partnership to work towards increasing the amount of plastic product that can be recycled through doorstep and other recycling.*
- *To write to our Member of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament, and to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, urging them to consider legislation and regulations which will reduce the amount of single use plastic used by society.*
- *To use the links we have with businesses in the Cotswolds to encourage them to reduce the amount of plastic waste produced and specifically to write to each of our major supermarkets asking them to consider introducing a 'plastic free aisle' in their Cotswold store(s) on a trial basis.'*

1.2 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the Motion, having been Proposed and Seconded, was referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

1.3 In the light of such referral, the Proposer and Seconder are entitled to attend the Cabinet Meeting and present it formally to Members. The Proposer will also have an opportunity to respond to the Cabinet debate, immediately prior to final comments from the responsible Cabinet Member and the formal vote.

2. Plastics

2.1 According to Stemming the Tide, a study released by the Ocean Conservancy and McKinsey Centre for Business and Environment, an estimated 8 million tons of plastic is dumped into the world's oceans every year and the majority (60%) of this waste comes from just five countries: China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. As these countries experience rapid economic growth, reduced poverty and improved quality of life, their consumer use of plastic and plastic-intensive goods increases, yet they do not yet have waste management infrastructures that can tackle the accompanying excess waste.

2.2 However, we do note the amount of plastic contamination in English waterways and the significant usage of single use plastic such as coffee cups and straws that have a high impact on litter across our District.

3. Recycling in the Cotswolds

3.1 Cotswold District Council introduced an improved waste and recycling service in 2012 which saw mixed rigid plastics (such as drink, detergent, bleach and toiletries bottles, yoghurt and flower pots, margarine and ice cream tubs & meat and vegetable trays) being collected from the kerbside in addition to paper, glass, cans, cardboard, food as well as a chargeable garden waste service.

3.2 The improvements made to the service have resulted in the Council achieving a combined recycling and composting rate of nearly 60%, the highest in the County and 13th out of 350 Local Authorities in 2016-17. The Council achieved a rise in recycling rate of 1.4% from the previous year, at a time when half of Local Authorities are reporting a reduction in recycling rate. It is anticipated that this growth will increase further in 2018, as the Council has seen a higher than normal increase in residents subscribing to the Garden Waste Service this year.

3.3 The Council collects around 638 tonnes of plastics annually from the kerbside. Whilst the Council will continue to promote recycling, the waste hierarchy highlights that waste reduction is the preferred option and, as manufacturers and retail outlets reduce the amount of plastic packaging used, the Council may see a reduction in plastics being recycled, as there is simply less plastic material in the waste stream.

3.4 The Council reports its recycling performance using WasteDataFow; a web-based system for municipal waste data reporting by UK local authorities to government. The system allows government to monitor progress towards national and local targets, to produce National Statistics on municipal waste, and to provide an evidence base to guide government policy.

4. Single Use Plastics Audit

4.1 The Council has decided to carry out an audit in-house, to be co-ordinated/undertaken by the Council's Energy and Resources Projects Officer. It is not anticipated that many single use plastics will be identified; however, where they are, sustainable or reusable alternatives for items like disposable drinking water cups and beige refuse sacks will be considered. It may not be possible to change all of these items, due to a lack of suitable alternatives or significant cost implications, but this would be fully explored as part of the audit. Based on the success of this audit, we will consider extending it to our suppliers/contractors.

4.2 A similar audit will be carried out across the other Publica partner councils.

5. Reducing Plastics - Online and Written Education

5.1 The Joint Waste Team already completes an annual communications calendar of activities, which supports the partnership's wider action plan. Promotions are completed at key times of the year and seasonal events provide an opportunity to publicise varying messages about waste reduction, reuse and recycling. The team already includes messages surrounding reducing the use of single use plastics as part of these communications, e.g. the recent press release on the inclusion of single use coffee cups at Carton Banks.

5.2 The Council already uses Cotswold News and provides press releases to signpost people to the Council's website for information on how to recycle plastics, and this could include plastic reduction in the future. The Recycle for Gloucestershire website could also be used to explain the wider problem with plastics, and provide further information about the work of the JWC and Councils within Gloucestershire.

6. Increasing Recycling at the Kerbside and from Bring Banks

6.1 As set out in the report to this Cabinet meeting on the 'Cotswold Waste Service Review', the JWC has agreed that its single most significant objective is to align services across the County.

Cotswold is the first authority to consider a service review since this objective was agreed and will therefore lead in driving this initiative forward. As part of this work, the Council will be consulting with the public and other stakeholders on the current collection services and identifying areas where potential improvements could be made in support of the wider aims of decreasing waste to landfill, increasing recycling and aligning services across the waste partnership. There will be a substantial communications campaign for the new service which will not only identify any new service but also reiterate the importance of waste minimisation including minimising usage of single use plastics. Meanwhile, we have enhanced our recycling service, in that single use plastic coffee cups can be recycled at our Carton Banks.

7. Lobbying for Legislative Change

7.1 The JWC is already a signatory to the Courtauld Agreement, committing to a 'circular economy' (an alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) in which resources are kept in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recovering and regenerating products and materials at the end of each service life). The JWC is also considering joining the Resource Association 'End Destinations of Recycling Charter', to further demonstrate to the residents in Gloucestershire our commitment to improving transparency in the recycling supply chain and enhancing public confidence in recycling by improving the information gathering and reporting of what happens to recyclable material.

7.2 In addition, the Council recognises the positive steps that have already been taken by Government with the introduction of the 5p carrier bag charge which has seen an 80% reduction in the amount of plastic bags used. The Government is now considering adding a 20p charge to plastic bottles which would be refundable when they are recycled. The Prime Minister has pledged to ban all avoidable plastic waste by 2042 and has called on supermarkets to introduce plastic-free aisles. The Council welcomes the move by the major supermarkets in our District who have already shown their commitment towards plastic reduction, and examples of the initiatives some of them are working towards are set out below:-

Tesco	By 2025, all its packaging to be recyclable or compostable; and total packaging weight to be halved compared to 2007. Has removed all polystyrene from its fish packaging. Has modified plastic trays, removing 92 tonnes of plastic.
Waitrose	By 2025, own label packaging will be widely recyclable, reusable or home compostable. Has thinned prepared salad bags and reduced cooked salmon packaging by 50%. Charges 30p or 40p for its food to be delivered in plastic bags. Switched to biodegradable cotton buds - estimated saving of 21 tonnes of plastic.
Marks and Spencer	More than 90% of its UK packaging is recyclable. Trialled new materials to replace black CPET plastic packaging and foils for packaging biscuits and crisps. Between 2012 and 2014, food packaging usage decreased by 10%. Looking at using plastics made from plant-based oils.
Co-op	By 2020, 80% of its products will have easily-recyclable packaging. Has replaced polystyrene pizza discs with cardboard. Supports bottle deposit return scheme.
Aldi	By 2022, all packaging of own-label products to be recyclable, reusable or compostable. Will scrap 5p carrier bags and, instead, offer customers bags for life or reusable 9p bags made from back-of-store plastic waste. Supports bottle deposit return scheme.

7.3 In support of this Charter, the JWC Chair could write to the MP and Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and impress upon them the positive steps which are being undertaken in Gloucestershire to target plastic waste, and urge them to legislate and regulate in order to reduce the amount of single use plastic used by society.

8. Encouraging Businesses to Reduce Plastic Waste

8.1 The Council is already a signatory of The Courtauld Commitment, a voluntary agreement aimed at improving resource efficiency and reducing waste within the UK grocery sector. Government-funded, and delivered by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the Commitment supports the UK government's policy goal of a 'zero waste economy' and climate change objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. WRAP is working in partnership with leading retailers, brand owners, manufacturers and suppliers who sign up and support the delivery of the targets. The Council is therefore already supporting co-ordinated work to encourage businesses to reduce packaging.

8.2 WRAP is about to launch a new further ambitious, cross-sector initiative, working together with government, citizens and businesses to transform the way we make, use and dispose of plastic so that we not only retain its value, particularly in reducing food waste, but also prevent it from polluting the environment. Manufacturers and retailers are being urged to support WRAP by signing up to the UK Plastics Pact and committing to their own packaging reduction strategies.

9. Related Developments

9.1 Gloucestershire County Council

9.1.1 A similar Motion relating to single use plastics was also considered by Gloucestershire County Council at its Meeting on 28th March 2018.

9.1.2 The County Council resolved as follows:-

That this Council notes:

- *An estimated 9 million tonnes of plastic enters our seas and oceans every year, causing immense damage to marine life and the environment.*
- *That 'single-use plastics' (SUP) used once before disposal e.g. bottles, cups and straws are not widely recycled.*
- *That studies show that SUPs can take up to 600 years to degrade, breaking into fragments that cause damage to the environment and permeate the food chain (Columbia University).*

That this Council further notes:

- *That the Green Party has historically campaigned for a reduction in the use of SUPs and continues to champion sustainable alternatives.*
- *The success of the 'Plastic Bag Levy', promoted by the Liberal Democrats during the Coalition Government, has led to an 85% reduction in disposable plastic bag usage.*
- *The Conservative Government's recently announced 25-year 'green plan', which pledges to stop all avoidable plastic waste by 2042.*
- *The staggering impact that the BBC documentary 'Blue Planet' has had on public awareness and concern for this crisis.*

That this Council therefore commits to:

- *Eliminate all SUP within County Council managed buildings and facilities by 2020, and seek to encourage the elimination of SUP within its supply chain by 2025.*
- *Asks the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Partnership to consider how they could promote the reduction of SUP across the county and to highlight areas of further lobbying to central government by both collection and waste disposal authorities.*

9.2 Cirencester Town Council

9.2.1 The Town Council held a special meeting on 19th April 2018. To consider the use of plastics as an organisation, and on land within the ownership/management responsibility of that Council.

9.2.2 The Town Council resolved as follows:-

RESOLVED that Cirencester Town Council:

- i) actively seeks to minimise plastic purchases and the use and sale of single-use plastic items;*
- ii) with immediate effect, actively encourage markets, events and vendors to serve food and drink (for immediate consumption) using compostable or re-usable cutlery and containers;*
- iii) prohibit the sale of food and drink (for immediate consumption) using non-compostable cutlery and containers on its land from 31st August 2018;*
- iv) supports plastic-free initiatives in Cirencester.*

9.3 The Government

9.3.1 During the course of the year, the Government has made various announcements and introduced various initiatives on the subject, including:-

- launch of an over-arching 25-year Environmental Plan which sets out steps to tackle a wide range of environmental issues, including plastic waste and the impact it has on the marine environment; and containing a pledge to eradicate all avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042
- plans to extend the 5p levy on plastic bags to all shops
- consideration to be given to imposing charges and taxes on single-use items, for example takeaway containers, coffee cups
- supermarkets to be encouraged to have plastic-free aisles
- a ban on plastic microbeads in cosmetics
- launch of the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance, to work to find innovative solutions that will make a significant difference to the health of our oceans for current and future generations, underpinned by significant funding
- a call for evidence to explore how changes to the tax system or charges could be used to reduce the amount of wasted single-use plastics by reducing unnecessary production, increasing reuse, and improving recycling.

9.3.2 The Gloucestershire Joint Waste Team is currently seeking to identify all such initiatives/strands of work, and produce an information document which will help to inform future work direction.

(END)