
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

19 June 2018

Cabinet

Title: Plastic Free Council

Purpose: To seek approval of a Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan to assist North Ayrshire becoming a “Plastic Free Council” by 2022.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet:

- approves the Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan (Appendix 1) to support the move towards becoming a “Plastic Free Council” by 2022;
- agrees that officers will continue to support the Plastic Free Coastlines Campaign and the ‘Think about Plastic’ initiative on Arran and across the wider North Ayrshire; and
- agrees that officers will continue to work proactively with community partners, local businesses and 3rd Sector Organisations to promote and encourage initiatives and activities to prevent and reduce the impact of single-use plastics on the local environment.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council’s Zero Waste Strategy 2018 – 2022 was approved by Cabinet on 12 December 2017. The Zero Waste Strategy outlines a clear commitment to preventing, minimising, re-using and recycling waste that is produced both externally and internally within the Council and contains a wide range of actions to move North Ayrshire towards being a Zero Waste Council.
- 1.2 In being supportive of the “Final Straw” campaign, the Council’s Facilities Management Team has already pledged not to use plastic straws within Council-owned cafes to help protect the environment and has already progressed a wide range of actions internally to increase our use of more sustainable re-usable and recyclable alternatives.
- 1.3 Officers have also been working with local communities to reduce the impact of single-use plastics on the environment, through supporting community clean-ups and also working with the ‘Think About Plastic’ (TAP) initiative on Arran to support their pledge to become the first plastic free island, through the Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) Plastic Free Coastlines accreditation.

- 1.4 Nationally, there are a number initiatives planned to help reduce the impact of single-use plastics on the environment, including the proposed ban on plastic-stemmed cotton buds. A consultation paper has recently been issued around this proposal. In supporting the proposal it is intended that officers submit a response that supports a change towards a more sustainable alternative. The introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers is also proposed which will look at introducing a refundable deposit on return of plastic, metal and glass drinks containers. A consultation is due out in the summer regarding this.
- 1.5 The attached Plastic Waste Prevention Plan (Appendix 1) will form part of our strategy towards Zero Waste, helping to deliver the waste prevention, minimisation and re-use objectives contained within our Zero Waste Strategy 2018 - 2022, whilst reducing the amount of single-use plastics in our local environment and helping to move towards becoming a "Plastic Free Council" by 2022.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Zero Waste Strategy 2018 – 2022 was approved by Cabinet on 12 December 2017. Being committed to preventing, minimising, re-using and recycling waste that is produced both externally and internally, the Strategy contains a wide range of actions to move North Ayrshire towards being a Zero Waste council.
- 2.2 As part of its commitment to reduce waste and in line with increased international awareness of the environmental impact of single use plastics the Council has undertaken a number of actions.
- 2.3 An initial action has been to support the final straw campaign which has resulted in the removal of plastic drinking straws from all council operated cafes and straws from milk cartons and fruit juice cartons from schools across the area.
- 2.4 'The Final Straw' campaign has received national media interest following the airing of the BBC series 'Blue Planet II' which raised the awareness of the harm plastic is doing to our oceans. Plastics residues were also evidenced in our food chain because of the level to which they have been used and discarded into the natural environment.
- 2.5 There has already been substantial support and sign up for the Final Straw campaign, from individuals, schools and businesses, local authorities and the Scottish Parliament.
- 2.6 Nationally there is a proposal to ban the manufacture and sale of plastic-stemmed cotton buds in Scotland and support for the European Union's proposal to require that all single-use plastics be reusable or easily recycled by 2030. A consultation paper has been issued on the proposed ban on the manufacture and sale of plastic-stemmed cotton buds in Scotland and responses are due for return by 22 June 2018. It is intended that Officers will submit a response to the consultation that supports the proposed ban to enable a change towards more sustainable and environmentally-friendly alternatives.
- 2.7 An expert panel to review environmental charges and other measures that may help in tackling plastic pollution including dealing with disposable cups and plastic straws has also been set up at a National level.

- 2.8 In considering the approved Zero Waste Strategy at its meeting in December 2017, Cabinet also received details of a proposed Scottish Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers. The proposals will look at introducing a refundable deposit on return of plastic, metal and glass drinks containers. The introduction of the system is expected to reduce the amount of litter caused by these materials including reducing the amount of single-use plastics discarded in the local environment. Ministers have also appointed an expert panel to advise on the use of consumer charges, similar to the successful plastic bag charge, with the goal of encouraging long-term and sustainable changes in consumer behaviour. A consultation on the proposals is expected to be issued in the summer.
- 2.9 Depending on the design of the DRS, this could also reduce the amount and quality of recyclable material presented for kerbside collection in both the recycling and residual waste streams. The approach taken when developing the planned changes to the waste collection and recycling system allows more flexibility to respond to the impact of a DRS, however, it will be necessary to assess the potential impact for the services once the full details of the proposals are known. The latest information available suggests the DRS will be implemented by 2020.
- 2.10 Plastic waste is regularly found on our beaches and streets and various forms of plastic are collected from these locations by our Streetscene operatives and indeed by the very active volunteers across North Ayrshire who carry out community clean up events across our towns, villages and beaches. Many of these items are single-use food and drinks related waste. Of these items the plastic straw has become the focus of the Final Straw campaign, as it has been identified as one item that can easily be removed by stopping using it in the first place, however, it is just one example of many similar non-recyclable single-use waste items that can be prevented.
- 2.11 The Island of Arran have further pledged to become the first plastic-free island through the Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) Plastic Free Coastlines accreditation. A steering group has been established which includes 3rd Sector organisations and local businesses to oversee a 'Think About Plastic' (TAP) initiative on Arran. It is understood that two local Elected Members have been invited to attend the group. Officers have and will continue to work closely with the group to support the initiative. Their website can be accessed at <http://www.thinkaboutplastic-arran.co.uk/>
- 2.12 The Plastic Free Coastlines approach works in a similar way to the Fairtrade movement. In following this approach, local communities are challenged to sign up, giving volunteers a set of steps to work through including engaging with their own local council as part of that. The Council fully supports Plastic Free Coastlines, and is committed to plastic free alternatives and supporting plastic free initiatives within the area. Officers will continue to work with the local Arran community and any other interested community to assist in developing the approach. In time, as the approach develops, through this commitment the Council will:
- lead by example by removing single-use plastic items from their premises;
 - encourage plastic-free initiatives and promoting the campaign and supporting events; and

- ensure that a representative of the Council is named on the Plastic Free Coastlines steering group.

2.13 The Plastic Free Coastlines campaign toolkit provides a useful list of ten of the first products to tackle as follows:

- Plastic straws and stirrers;
- Plastic bottles;
- Coffee cups and lids;
- Plastic cutlery;
- Plastic 'food-on-the-go' packaging;
- Plastic bags;
- Bathroom plastics including cotton buds;
- Plastic drinking cups;
- Condiment sachets; and
- Balloons.

2.14 North Ayrshire has one of the most beautiful coastlines in Scotland with stunning coastal locations along our mainland and on the islands of Arran and Cumbrae. The Council is committed to preventing plastic waste and has been supporting the 'Think About Plastic' (TAP) Arran initiative and working with other similar initiatives across the area to protect the environment to make North Ayrshire cleaner and greener for our residents. The proposed Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan incorporates a number of actions supportive of both the TAP initiative and the wider Plastic Free Coastlines initiative.

2.15 Tourism is an important factor in driving forward economic growth within the area and ensuring our beaches and coastline is plastic free will ensure it remains attractive and inviting for visitors and businesses.

2.16 The Marine Biological Research Station (FSC Millport) is located on Cumbrae, which has an international reputation for marine science field teaching. The station allows pupils, students and researchers to carry out invaluable work studying marine science and keeping our coastlines plastic free will help protect and maintain the biodiversity around our coastline to support the important research and learning the station enables. The marine station will be contacted to seek their support in the promotion of the wider Plastic Free Coastlines initiative.

Activity to date on preventing Plastic Waste

2.17 Facilities Management have already made a significant reduction in the use of single-use non-recyclable plastics across their service. This includes the following actions to date:

- An annual reduction of around 800,000 single-use plastic straws by using re-usable drinking cups for providing organic milk and fruit juice to school children;
- Stopping the purchase and use of all plastic straws by switching to paper straws where the use of straws is still required;
- Switching to compostable drink stirrers instead of plastic;

- Drinking water taps have been installed in Cunninghame House to try and reduce the need for staff to bring in plastic bottles and reduce single-use cups used for providing water-at-work;
- Reducing the amount of single-use drink cups and lids used through issuing 900 re-usable drinking mugs to staff in Cunninghame House when purchasing drinks and offering reduced prices for those customers with a re-usable container (90% of drinks sold in the new Savour Cafe have been in re-usable mugs);
- Single-use drink cups that are sold are now made from a recyclable material;
- Reducing the amount of plastic cutlery purchased and used through introducing compostable cutlery with meals with plans to extend this to schools;
- Changing sandwich wrappings and packaging to use recyclable products;
- Biodegradable sacks are in use for the collection of food waste;
- Changing soap dispenser types to prevent the creation of plastic waste from inserts that were previously used in dispensers; and
- Changing soap container purchase to larger refillable alternatives to reduce the creation of plastic waste (a reduction of 6 to 1 achieved).

2.18 Plastic straws and single-use plastics may need to be still made available in care settings, where no other suitable alternative is available. This policy will be kept under ongoing review should suitable alternatives become available.

2.19 The Waste Resources Service has been engaging with schools, community partners and 3rd Sector organisations to encourage the prevention, minimisation, re-use and recycling of plastic waste, activities include:

- Implementing wheeled bin collections where possible to reduce the number of sacks issued and used in waste collection, whilst only using and purchasing refuse and recycling sacks made from recycled content where use is unavoidable;
- Encouraging waste prevention and promoting the re-use and recycling of plastic products through education and awareness activities;
- Engaging with members of the Sustainable Arran initiative to help support Think About Plastic' (TAP) Arrans' aim of achieving Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) Plastic Free Coastlines accreditation;
- Promoting the Final Straw and #NaeStrawAtAw initiatives; and
- Providing new 'Recycling on the Go' containers near to beaches and providing access to recycling centres to allow the recyclables collected during community beach clean-up initiatives to be recycled.

2.20 The Streetscene Service has been working with Keep Scotland Beautiful and local community groups to support community clear-ups by volunteers throughout North Ayrshire to facilitate the removal and recycling of litter and waste items washed up on our beaches, including recent initiatives for litter-picking plastic waste. Across North Ayrshire there is a very motivated network of volunteers who are particularly active in organising and carrying out community litter picking events.

2.21 The Council's Contract Standing Orders already contain clauses to encourage sustainable procurement and incorporate environmental, economic and social considerations into council contracts. The council is legally bound by the Sustainable Procurement duty in the

Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to consider sustainability and procure responsibly and in a way that delivers community well-being, minimises use of resources and prevents environmental degradation. Contracts to procure goods, products or services must not cause unnecessary waste or contain materials derived from threatened species or environments. Procurement will continue to put in place arrangements to identify expenditure on single-use plastics across the council to enable potential interventions to be considered.

2.22 To coordinate and monitor progress towards becoming a “Plastic Free Council”, a Plastic Waste Prevention Plan has been developed and is attached at Appendix 1. The action plan includes the following key actions:

- Developing a phased Communication Plan to engage with all services to discourage the use of single-use non-recyclable plastics and promote the use of sustainable alternatives;
- Identification of all purchases of single-use plastics across the Council to establish a baseline position to enable the success of prevention and reduction initiatives to be monitored;
- Remove single-use non-recyclable plastics from procurement catalogues and advise services where alternative sustainable products are available;
- Preparing a detailed list of all single-use plastic products purchased and identifying and costing the transition to more sustainable alternatives;
- Supporting the Plastic Free Coastlines Campaign across North Ayrshire and the ‘Think about Plastic’ initiative on Arran; and
- Establishing performance and reporting processes to allow progress against the baseline to be regularly monitored.

The action plan will form part of our strategy towards Zero Waste, helping to deliver the waste prevention, minimisation and re-use objectives contained within our Zero Waste Strategy 2018 - 2022, while assisting North Ayrshire to become a “Plastic Free Council” by 2022.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan (Appendix 1) to move the Council towards being a “Plastic Free Council” by 2022.
- 3.2 That Cabinet agrees that officers will continue to support the community in the Plastic Free Coastlines Campaign and the ‘Think about Plastic’ initiative on Arran and across the wider North Ayrshire.
- 3.3 That Cabinet agrees that officers will continue to work proactively with community partners, local businesses and 3rd Sector Organisations to promote and encourage initiatives and activities to prevent and reduce the impact of single-use plastics on the local environment.

4. Implications

Financial:	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report however as part of the implementation of the proposed Action Plan, appraisals of any financial implications of each action will be carried out as necessary.
Human Resources:	There are no direct HR implications arising from this report. However as part of the implementation of the proposed Action Plan, appraisals of any implications of each action will be carried out as necessary, for example additional staff cleaning time may be incurred with a move towards more sustainable alternatives such as re-usable cups only in schools and in catering establishments.

Legal:	In terms of the protected characteristics enshrined in the Equality Act 2010, the proposals in this report give rise to equality issues for people with disabilities, which were considered as part of an Equality Impact Assessment.
Equality: Children and Young People:	An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and it is recognised that there will be times when specific groups may require single-use plastic straws or other single use items for specific reasons, for example medical reasons. We will consult with appropriate services and groups going forward to identify these needs and uses and make appropriate provision in order that no groups are unfairly disadvantaged by the steps set out in this paper. For example, in relation to plastic straws, it is proposed that provision will be made that a selection of alternative straws are available on request for service users with such specific needs.
Environmental & Sustainability:	<p>The action plan will have a positive impact upon the environment in following four ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the amount of waste disposed of at landfill; • Increase in the re-use of materials reducing the impact of re-processing and the use of virgin materials; • Increase in recycling of materials reducing the need to access virgin materials; and • Contributing to less single-use plastic material being present in the local environment. <p>A screening questionnaire relating to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) legislation was submitted to Scottish Government to request the views of the Statutory Authorities on whether a full SEA was required for the Zero Waste Strategy 2018 – 2022, under which the Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan sits. The Statutory Authorities agreed with the Councils’ determination that a full SEA was not required.</p>
Key Priorities:	<p>The North Ayrshire Council Plan sets out five priorities for North Ayrshire, two of which are supported by the Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together to develop stronger communities; and • Protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations.
Community Benefits:	Preventing and reducing single-use plastic waste items will contribute towards making our coastlines plastic free and have a positive impact on the local environment, by improving the amenity of the area for our communities.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 A number of brainstorming sessions were held with Senior Managers as part of the Leadership Conference in March 2018. The sessions included idea generation for actions to prevent and reduce waste including considering more sustainable options for single-use non-recyclable plastics.
- 5.2 A brainstorming workshop was also held in May 2018 with officers and managers from some of the services who will be key in delivering the Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan. This included Waste Resources, Facilities Management, Streetscene, Procurement and Corporate Sustainability.
- 5.3 Further consultation will take place with all council services to quantify where single-use plastics are currently being used, establishing the volumes concerned and the opportunities and costs for moving towards more sustainable alternatives, whilst considering equality needs.

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CRAIG HATTON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **David Mackay, Senior Manager Waste Resources (Strategy & Contracts)** on **01294 317230**.

Background Papers

Zero Waste Strategy 2018 – 2022

Appendix 1 – Plastic Waste Prevention Action Plan

Action No	Description	Due Date	Lead Service(s)
1	<p>Prepare a three phase Communications Plan.</p> <p>a) Phase 1 - Inform services of new policy on single-use plastics to support information gathering exercise to help establish the baseline;</p> <p>b) Phase 2- Engage with suppliers to inform of new approach and gather information on alternative sustainable options; and</p> <p>c) Phase 3 - Produce awareness and promotional material that promotes the use of sustainable alternatives and discourages the use of single-use non-recyclable plastics across the Council.</p>	<p>30 September 2018</p> <p>30 September 2018</p> <p>30 June 2019</p>	<p>Waste Resources / Corporate Sustainability</p> <p>Procurement / Facilities Management</p> <p>Waste Resources / Corporate Sustainability / Procurement / Facilities Management</p>
2	Conduct an internal survey of all council services to establish where single-use plastics are in use to enable more sustainable alternatives to be identified.	31 October 2018	Waste Resources / Service Managers
3	Review and establish initial baseline figures (2017/18) for the amount of single-use plastics that were purchased and used across the council.	31 December 2018	Procurement
4	Prepare a detailed list of all single-use plastic products that are purchased across the Council with a corresponding sign-posted list of more sustainable alternatives.	28 February 2019	Waste Resources / Procurement
5	Prepare forecasted costs for all services changing to more sustainable products and options to remove single-use plastics across the Council.	31 March 2019	Waste Resources / Service Managers
6	Remove single-use non-recyclable plastics from procurement catalogues	30 June 2019	Procurement
7	Advise services where alternative recyclable or compostable products are available where they are required (e.g. paper and biodegradable straws)	30 June 2019	Waste Resources / Procurement
8	Produce a transparent list of any required exceptions for equality purposes (care requirements etc.)	30 June 2019	Waste Resources / HSCP / FM / Procurement

9	Engage with all council services through the use of 'champions' in each service / school to promote and encourage the elimination of all single-use plastics across the Council.	30 September 2019	Waste Resources / Corporate Sustainability / Facilities Management
10	Establish performance and reporting processes for each Directorate/Service to allow progress against the baseline spend to be regularly monitored.	31 December 2019	Waste Resources / Service Managers / Procurement
11	Report progress updates to ELT / Cabinet. Waste Resources will provide update reports as part of the Zero Waste Strategy in collaboration with other services to establish the improvements made.	Annually	Waste Resources / Service Managers / Procurement
12	Eliminate the purchase and use of all avoidable single-use plastics across the Council, where practicable for equality purposes.	31 December 2021	All Services
13	Continue to support the Plastic Free Coastlines Campaign across North Ayrshire and the 'Think about Plastic' initiative on Arran.	Ongoing	Waste Resources / Streetscene
14	Continue to support and promote the Final Straw and the #NaeStrawAtAw initiatives	Ongoing	Waste Resources / Facilities Management / Streetscene
15	Promote and encourage community groups, businesses and 3 rd Sector organisations to pledge to get involved in initiatives and activities to help eliminate and reduce the use of single-use plastics across North Ayrshire.	Ongoing	Waste Resources / Streetscene