

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 7th May 2019

Report Title: Management Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Review on Single Use Plastics

Report By: Jane Hartnell
Director of Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of Report

To respond to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny review team on Single Use Plastics

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That Cabinet thank the scrutiny review team for their report**
- 2. That Cabinet approve the responses to the review team recommendations as part of our broader commitment to tackling climate change**

Reasons for Recommendations

The Single Use Plastics Overview and Scrutiny review team have worked with officers to arrive at their recommendations and it is important that a considered response is given and situated in the context of our wider commitment to tackle climate change.

Introduction

1. As part of the 2018/19 overview and scrutiny annual work programme a review was undertaken into council work to date on phasing out single use plastics (SUP).
2. The [review team report](#) identifies the motion passed by Full Council in [April 2018](#), calling for 'phasing out the use of SUP within all Council buildings and services, with the aim of achieving zero use by the end of 2019,' as a key driver for their work.
3. The review team made 14 recommendations and this report considers how these can be potentially taken forward, subject to Cabinet approval.
4. The Council has recently further reiterated commitment to the wider agenda in which this scrutiny review is situated.
5. This commitment manifests through recent approval by full Council in late February 2019 of:
 - a. The 2019/20 [corporate plan](#) that includes 'tackling climate change' as one of its key programmes
 - b. A [motion](#) committing the Council to becoming carbon neutral and ensuring tackling climate change where possible underpins all that the council does.
6. These further commitments are highlighted as they set the context in which the response to the review team's 14 recommendations is considered.

Setting the context

7. The recent approval of the 2019/20 corporate plan and budget, highlight our ongoing financial challenges that continue to prompt difficult and unpalatable decisions on the extent to which the Council allocates resources to meet its must do and choose to do commitments.
8. Full Council approval of the motion and the corporate plan has formally confirmed that tackling climate change is a must do activity and the 14 recommendations made by the review team contribute to this commitment.
9. The challenge going forward will be to continue to balance use of resources to also meet other council commitments, while working to ensure that intentions in the motion are actioned and tackling climate change underpins all the Council does.
10. To achieve this, officers now need to take stock and review existing efforts to tackle climate change to date as a basis to arrive at a refreshed plan to best respond to those recent commitments made.
11. Such a plan will assist in reporting to Overview and Scrutiny and local people how the Council is doing against those commitments made in the motion and the corporate plan.

12. A parallel review of the other key commitments made in the corporate plan will likely be required so that where appropriate it is clear how Council aspirations to tackle climate change are embedded in all that the Council does and, can potentially be measured and performance monitored by Overview and Scrutiny in line with the intentions in the [motion](#).
13. Subject to Cabinet approval, the following responses to the 14 recommendations made by the Scrutiny review team will where appropriate be integrated within such a wider plan as this is developed and firmed up.

Management response

14. Each of the review team recommendations are considered in turn below.
15. The **first** recommendation made by the review team is **‘to review the Council’s sustainable procurement policy and actions to support reducing our purchase of SUP.**
16. This recommendation is supported, will be led by the Sustainability Manager and reviewed with appropriate colleagues during quarter 1, 2019 with a revised policy (if appropriate) drafted, approved and published by start of quarter 3, 2019.
17. The **second** recommendation is **‘explore how to reduce the use of plastic cutlery, food containers and cups for drinks e.g. re-usable stackable cups, at large scale events in the town. Investigate other local authorities sustainable events guide e.g. Brighton.’**
18. This recommendation is supported, the Sustainability Manager will liaise with services responsible for licencing and agreeing events, to scope and identify current practice and what is possible from a licencing and events agreement perspective during quarter 1, 2019.
19. If appropriate, working with communications colleagues, the Sustainability Manager will draft a sustainable events guide based on [Brighton’s model](#), seek approval and publish accordingly on the council’s website by close quarter 2, 2019.
20. The **third** recommendation is supported **‘carry out an audit of single use plastics in the Council’s operational buildings identifying which items are our own purchases or part of our contractors services e.g. office cleaning and create a single use plastics policy for the Council.’**
21. Again the proposal is that the Sustainability Manager will lead this work. There is a need to firstly agree a definition of SUP as a basis to draft a policy. This will be undertaken in quarter 1, 2019 and coincides with the first recommendation. Based on an agreed definition an audit will then be undertaken with business support colleagues.
22. Work for quarter 2, 2019 will require seeking approval for a SUP policy and work plan to then phase out/ replace SUP items used in HBC operational buildings where cost effective alternatives are available, building on the work of business support colleagues already underway.

23. Quarter 3 would potentially see an extension of the audit, and the Sustainability Manager will work with appropriate senior managers to identify which contractors to potentially engage in phasing out SUP where possible and cost effective to do so.
24. **Recommendation 4: 'The Business Improvement District – could initiatives be developed with the town centre BID to reduce the use of plastics in local businesses e.g. take away food containers such as polystyrene boxes & plastic straws'**
25. Currently there is not sufficient officer capacity to lead on the development of initiatives with the town centre BID. However it is understood that associated work is already underway by the BID. Appropriate officers will liaise with BID colleagues to ensure that associated work is complementary. As part of recommendation 2 & 3, appropriate officers could promote the SUP policy and prospective guide to the BID and local businesses once agreed/published, using existing communication channels. Councillors may also wish to assist in this regard once our policy and prospective guide is complete.
26. **Recommendation 5: 'Discussions were held around the viability of phasing out other SUP inside Council offices, to meet the 2019 commitment as part of the motion to Council. Further analysis and consideration of alternative options should be undertaken, by consulting with services across the council to clearly identify where SUP use is most significant, and how this might be achieved.'**
27. This recommendation will be supported through the work proposed above in relation to recommendations 1, 2 and 3.
28. **Recommendation 6: 'To review the Council's Environmental Policy to make sure it addresses current environmental pollution issues such as the use of SUP.'**
29. This is in part addressed through the work proposed for 1, 2, 3 and 5. The Sustainability Manager will lead work on reviewing the Environmental Policy in light of the SUP and climate neutrality motion to Council by end of quarter 2 and seek approval of any revisions of the Policy by end of quarter 3, 2019.
30. This work will coincide with work in developing, communicating and implementing an action plan as introduced in paragraph 10, which will have corresponding implications for our partnership working and place shaping.
31. **Recommendation 7: 'Find out what local businesses are doing and could do to support a 'plastics free Hastings' and explore the potential to create a 'green rating' for local businesses like 'scores on the doors.'**
32. At present it is suggested that this good idea is noted. There is insufficient officer capacity to engage with businesses specifically on this but should the idea of a 'green rating' be viable then there would certainly be a need to consult locally on the ramifications of this. It is therefore suggested that this form part of the broader work to sure up an action plan as introduced in paragraph 10.
33. If the Overview and Scrutiny committee form the panel requested by the motion...

“Establish an ongoing Climate Change working group (as a panel of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee), which will scrutinise the council’s policies and actions to make sure they take into account the climate change impact of everything we do.”

34. Then this panel will likely be interested in the refreshed plan identified in paragraph 10 and will want to take a view on where a ‘green rating/scores on the doors’ scheme proposed in recommendation 7 is prioritised in a refreshed plan.
35. **Recommendation 8: ‘Create a sustainable event guidance note for local events which provides advice about eliminating single use plastics at events.’**
36. Please see above response to recommendation 2 that also addresses this recommendation.
37. **Recommendation 9: ‘Find out more information about Newport Waste Savers Trust and how it is operated to see if there is anything that can be replicated in Hastings.’**
38. Learning about what works from elsewhere is certainly welcomed, however given points made relative to some of the above recommendations around staff capacity it is proposed that the Chair of the review team progress this with the lead councillor for waste and recycling to see what we can learn from the New Port Waste Savers Trust in the context of the Council’s new waste collection arrangements.
39. **Recommendation 10: ‘Promote the local refill project’**
40. While this is a good idea it would require further scoping as to the scale of such promotional activity and needs to potentially be prioritised relative to other key actions to arise from a refreshed action plan introduced in paragraph 10.
41. A light touch approach could make use of the council’s social media channels to encourage participation, perhaps by reposting/signposting to those in the voluntary and community sector that have already taken the lead on such [promotion](#). There may be complementary marketing opportunities relating to promotion of water fountains and potentially the White Rock fountain and water play project, should this funding bid be successful.
42. **Recommendation 11: ‘For councillors to research about the ‘Plastics Pact’ promoted by WRAP.’**
43. This will be for councillors to decide, prioritising this in relation to their other commitments as officers are doing, to plan how best they can deliver against commitments in the motion and the corporate plan. It is suggested that the chair of the review liaise with the lead councillor for waste and recycling to consider how this might best be done among councillors or if there is already some learning to be shared on this.
44. **Recommendation 12: ‘Can the Council promote and expand the water fountains available in town? Can these be highlighted on a tourist map?’**
45. See response to recommendation 10.

46. Recommendation 13: **‘Community beach cleans and neighbourhood litter picks – how else can the Council support these events?’**
47. Again (see response to Recommendation 10) there could be scope to use the Council’s social media channels to promote such important work done in the voluntary and community sector and build on community support to complement our new street cleansing team.
48. In terms of community beach cleans, the Council provides litter pickers and sacks and organises waste collection post community clear up, so there maybe scope to promote this contribution as part of broader town wide combined efforts.
49. Given the Council success in a FLAG Direct Service Organisation bid to tackle marine litter and provide specialised bins on the shingle beach, together with our new waste arrangements, there is now further scope to promote this alongside the invaluable beach cleans and neighbourhood litter picks done by local voluntary and community groups as a combined effort should this be desirable?
50. The review team report also mentions an emerging Energy Strategy. Once the council develops and agrees what is intended to be a town wide strategy then this can potentially serve as the umbrella under which all local collective efforts can potentially (subject to the buy in of local people) be recognised, connected and promoted.
51. This could form part of a wider communications plan associated with the refreshed plan highlighted in paragraph 10.
52. Recommendation 14: **Organise a visit to the Newhaven waste to energy facility**
53. It is suggested that the chair liaise with the lead councillor for waste and recycling to explore the feasibility of this. If appropriate this could be pursued through the Member Training and Development Group but would require a clear brief for the purpose of the visit and this would then need to be pitched against other councillor training and development commitments.

Conclusion

54. By way of conclusion, the review team in their report set their recommendations in the context of broader associated projects at the time of writing, namely:
- “...income generation plans for renewable energy, an emerging Energy Strategy for the town and its response to the IPCC climate change report calling for action to limit global temperature to 1.5°C, and the launch of our in-house street cleaning service and partnership with the new household waste contractor.”
55. In addition, these further commitments have been consolidated and extended through the recent full Council approval of the motion and the corporate plan introduced at the outset of this report from paragraph 5.
56. Fully and formally committed, it is now imperative that the Council carefully refresh and coordinate an associated plan of action to ‘tackle climate change’ as suggested in paragraph 10 to include priorities, timescales and resource allocation.

57. Should this be acceptable to Cabinet then there will be repercussions for the proposed activities, resources and timeframes suggested in order to respond to the review team recommendations set out above.

Timetable of proposed next steps

58. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
1. Review the Council's sustainable procurement policy (see paragraph 16)	Review commenced Policy revised and if required then approved.	Q1(April- June 2019) Start Q3 (Oct 2019)	Sustainability Manager
2. Review licencing and events procedures 3. Produce revised sustainable events guide (see paragraphs 18/19)	Review concluded. Guide produced if appropriate and approved accordingly.	September (2019)	Sustainability Manager
4. Audit of SUP in Council buildings (see paragraphs 21/22)	Initial audit complete. Procedure to address with contractors identified (if appropriate)	June 2019 October 2019	Sustainability Manager
5. Flag these review intentions with the BID to ensure work is joined up	BID contacted. BID plans relation to SUP clearly understood by HBC to support	TBD.	TBD.

and complementary where possible	action 6 below.		
6. Promote SUP Policy (see paragraph 25)	TBD	TBD	Sustainability Manager + communications colleagues with councillor input.
7. Tackling Climate Change action plan produced. (see paragraph 10)	Commitments in the appropriate motions incorporated. Breadth of whole council impact identified. Supplementary communication plans produced.	Q1 -2 2019	TBD.

Wards Affected

All.

Implications

Relevant project tools applied? Yes/**No**- to be applied subject to Cabinet approval.

Have you checked this report for plain English and readability? Yes/No

Climate change implications considered? **Yes**/No

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)

Risk Management

Environmental Issues

Economic/Financial Implications

Human Rights Act

Organisational Consequences

Local People's Views

Anti-Poverty

Additional Information

Hyperlinks to key documentation are inserted in the main body of the report.

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