

Environment and Communities Committee

Date of Meeting:	4 th August 2022
Report Title:	Single Use Plastics in the Council
Report of:	Jayne Traverse, Executive Director of Place
Report Reference No:	EC/12/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The Environment and Communities Committee resolved on 7th March 2022 that *the original motion from 2018, to ban single use plastics proceed and that officers produce a report on the current use of single use plastics across the council for this Committee.* This report fulfils this requirement.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council has been actively involved in reducing single use plastics throughout its estate and operations, this report gives an update. .

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That members consider the information provided in the report.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. This report is responding to the committee resolution to provide an update on the current use of single plastics across the Council.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. Not applicable.

6. Background

- 6.1. The Council are seeking to reduce the use of single use plastics and have been active in this for a number of years. Some of the actions taken include:

- 6.1.1. Procurement – this continues to include [The Social Value Policy](#) and [Social Value Framework](#) that apply to the Council's commissioning and procurement activities. This is an important aspect of our drive to remove

single use plastics from our supply chain and highlights to bidders that we take this matter seriously and that it will impact their scoring. The requirements are:

- Plastic recycling rate on the contract (e.g., to reduce microplastics)
 - Single-use plastic packaging eliminated through reusable packaging solutions or schemes on the contract.
- 6.1.2.** Facilities Management – prior to 2018 some single use items were available as part of the catering service and at the drinks stations but most of these have now been removed. The only items are milk sachets because this reduces the amount of milk that would be thrown away each day.
- 6.1.3.** School catering – Do not accept unnecessary packaging for fruit and veg; significantly reduced use of items such as yogurt pots; frozen yoghurt ice-cream tubs now changed from a plastic container to a paper based one that is fully compostable.
- 6.1.4.** The Adults and Health Commissioning Team specifies that providers complete a sustainable development plan prior to commencing delivery. This document is reviewed at least annually. The relevance of single use plastics to this plan very much depends on the type of service being provided and is especially pertinent for areas such as Community Equipment.
- 6.1.5.** Leisure Centres – the majority of single use plastic materials have been removed. The items that remain serve important purposes such as items in the first aid kits, chemical bottles and overshoes for going onto poolside.
- 6.1.6.** A campaign and community toolkit was developed to provide information on how to reduce plastic use in everyday life. The Council’s website gives examples of what has been done [Life with less plastic \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk) and has the downloadable toolkit readily available [A Life with less plastic - Toolkit](#).
- 6.1.7.** It is important to note that there are instances where plastic is the best material to use and that it is often the disposal of the plastic, rather than the material itself, that causes the issue. Food that is plastic wrapped is preserved for longer and therefore care needs to be taken when replacing this, since it could lead to greater food waste. Detailed information on plastics is readily available from a link on the Council’s website to the national charity WRAP, who have produced an extensive range of information on all things plastic. The [What waste goes where \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk) page has been updated with a link to [Clear on Plastics – Cutting through the confusion on plastics](#).
- 6.1.8.** One of the means of capturing single use plastics has been the provision of recycling bins. The trial of the ‘on the go’ recycling bins in West Park (Macclesfield) and Queens Park (Crewe) has provided valuable information on the best locations and processes involved. The introduction of any new

processes requires both users and staff to change behaviours. Important lessons include there being a limited amount of plastic used over the winter period, but this is set to increase in the warmer months, that pairing the recycling bins with a normal litter bin is important to reduce contamination. As anticipated, there has been some contamination of the recycling, a common item being dog waste. To resolve this, we have been working with the bin manufacturer so that the new 'on the go' recycling bins will have flaps fitted that should dissuade dog owners from using them. Work continues on improving signage on the bins and using clear bags for the recycling.

- 6.2.** In the wider national context, the Plastic Packaging Tax has come into force from 1 April 2022 with a £200/tonne levy on plastic packaging that has less than 30% recycled content. The Extended Producer Responsibility scheme is beginning to take shape and will be driving producers of packaging to design materials that are easier to recycling. Producers will be paying for the full cost of disposal of their materials to a central scheme administrator who will then be passing on these payments to the council (planned introduction 2023-24).
- 6.3.** Historically councils have been the ones to bear the financial burden of managing packaging materials, but these changes mean producers will have to pay for this. The changes will contribute to a changing landscape of waste management where plastics will be seen as a valuable resource that can be reused and recycled.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1.** There are no legal implications

7.2. Finance

- 7.2.1.** There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7.3. Policy

- 7.3.1.** This report supports the vision within the Corporate Plan for an open, fairer, greener Cheshire East and the goal to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

7.4. Equality

- 7.4.1.** There are no equality implications.

7.5. Human Resources

- 7.5.1.** There are no human resources implications.

7.6. Risk Management

- 7.6.1.** There are no risk management implications.

7.7. Rural Communities

- 7.7.1.** There are no rural communities' implications.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. There are no implications for children and young people/cared for children.

7.9. Public Health

7.9.1. There are no public health implications.

7.10. Climate Change

7.10.1. The removal of single use plastics helps to move the Council away from using disposal items to those that are far more sustainable. The removal of single use plastics from the supply chain should result in there being less chance of plastics escaping into the environment and breaking down.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Ralph Kemp, Head of Environmental Services Ralph.kemp@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	Agenda for Environment and Communities Committee on Monday, 7th March, 2022, 10.30 am Cheshire East Council