

**Environment and
Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



4 October 2019

Single Use Plastics: From Pledge to Practice

Joint Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services and Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a progress report on the work to reduce the use of Single Use Plastics in Durham County Council and County Durham.

Executive summary

- 2 Members will be provided with information relating to progress made against the Single Use Plastic action plan.

Recommendations

- 3 That Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC:
 - a) Receive this report and presentation and comment accordingly; and
 - b) Receive a further presentation and report detailing progress made against the actions identified within the report.

Background

- 4 At its meeting on 12 July 2019 Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work

programme for the ensuing year and included within the work programme are further reports on Single Use Plastics.

- 5 The committee received a report and presentation on Single Use Plastics to a Special meeting on 12 November where the committee heard of the considerable work undertaken in the six months following the County Council resolution.

- 6 It was agreed by the ESCOSC at their special meeting on 12 November 2018 that they would monitor progress against the actions identified in the report. In accordance with that decision arrangements have been made with the Head of Environment to attend the meeting of the Committee on 4 October to provide members of the committee with that information.

Detail

- 7 Since 12 November 2018, the SUP task group (consisting of both internal and external partners) has made significant progress towards the reduction of single use plastics across County Durham which has attracted both national and local publicity. Work to date has included the following:
 - Adopted a bespoke County Durham SUP pledge where residents and organisations can join a growing army of volunteers to reduce and seek alternatives to SUPs. Over 136 individuals and organisations have signed the pledge since March 2019 (which has celebrity endorsement as featured by Matt Baker from the BBC's One Show);
 - A 90% reduction in the use of single use plastic catering supplies used across DCC and its partner organisations e.g. plastic stirrers have been replaced with reusable ones where possible and the use of 'Vegwhere' introduced as an alternative to SUP;
 - A DCC reusable cup has been introduced and promoted to DCC staff – over 600 have been sold to date;
 - Schools across County Durham have been promoting 'plastic free' days and eliminating the use of SUPs across their catering functions by washing, returning and reusing meal trays (BBC, One Show, media coverage);

- Initiatives to reuse plastic containers has been introduced within Durham University catering premises and discount incentives on purchases has been promoted to students (525 reusable containers have been issued to students for reuse);
- Partners have been promoting Northumbrian Waters 'Refill' initiative, over 87 Refill stations are located across County Durham including bars, restaurants and public locations, and residents and staff are encouraged to carry a reusable water bottle at all times;
- Trials of using 6.5 tonnes of unrecyclable plastic within Highway road schemes has been introduced on A689, near Sedgefield, County Durham.
- The Gala Theatre in Durham City has prevented throwing 750kg per year of SUP confetti into the audience per year at the end of each performance by introducing paper confetti as an alternative;
- Leisure Centres across County Durham have stopped providing blue plastic overshoes at the poolside which has saved 2.4 tonnes of SUP going for disposal per year;
- Introduced trails of crisp packet recycling in County Hall via the Walker's crisp packet recycling scheme – over 2,500 crisp packets have been collected. Partners are also supporting this scheme e.g. Beamish Museum and the Land Registry;
- Introduced additional on street recycling containers within Durham City Centre;
- Adopted a SUP logo for Partners and suppliers to give public recognition of their commitment to reduce SUPs across County Durham.
- Encouraged the supply chain via DCC's procurement processes and the North East Procurement Organisation to encourage contractors and suppliers to prevent or seek alternatives to SUPs;
- Shortlisted for both the local County Durham Environment Awards and the national Local Authority Recycling Committee (LARAC) awards (Waste Prevention and Partnership categories).

Conclusion

- 8 This report and attached action plan (appendix 2) provides a comprehensive update on how the actions to reduce single use plastics are being achieved. In addition, the SUP action plan is supported by a Communications Plan (appendix 3).

Background papers

- Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes, 12 November 2018.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable