

Environment & Infrastructure Select Committee

10 May 2018

Tackling Single Use Plastics



Purpose of report: To agree how the Select Committee should be engaged in developing Surrey's Single Use Plastic Policy and Strategy.

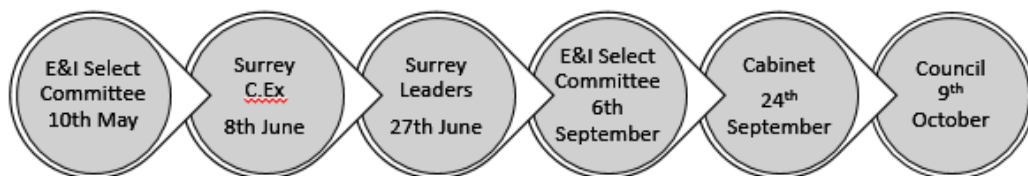
Introduction:

1. DEFRA in their [‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’](#) have a target of achieving zero avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042.
2. The council strongly welcomes the government's commitment to tackle this issue and on 20 March 2018, a motion was passed to continue to develop its plastic use strategy to make Surrey a single-use-plastic-free authority. The strategy is to be developed by working with the Environment Agency, Districts and Boroughs, businesses, E&I Select Committee and other partners.
3. The motion also stated that the council should:
 - 3.1 Immediately start the process to reduce the sale and provision of single-use plastic products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in Council buildings where it is reasonable to do so.
 - 3.2 Investigate the feasibility of requiring pop-up food and drink vendors at large council events to avoid single use plastic as a condition of their contract and work with tenants in commercial properties owned by Surrey County Council to encourage the phasing out of single use plastic cups, bottles, cutlery and straws where it is reasonable to do so.
 - 3.3 Include the reduction of single use plastic items in the list of Corporate priorities for Surrey County Council.
 - 3.4 Write to the Secretary of State for the Environment asking for more information on how the Government is to eliminate single-use plastic by 2042 and how this could be brought forward
4. The issue of single use plastics is high in the public consciousness and the council has a significant opportunity to reduce usage in Surrey - through its roles as service provider and employer and as an advocate. The purpose of this paper is to set out the high level approach to implement the motion passed by Council and to establish the role the committee wished to play.

Approach

1. The motion agreed by Council is ambitious, and has implications for a number of Council services and will require extensive engagement with partners. It is therefore anticipated that it will take at least 12 months to develop a strategy that will deliver the full commitments of the agreed motion.
2. A project manager will be appointed to lead the development of the strategy, and they will develop a project plan, including timescales. If possible, we will aim to develop the strategy sooner so that we are able to start implementing actions to reduce our use of single use plastics as soon as possible.
3. Whilst implementing the full motion will take longer, in the shorter term (Phase 1) we propose to:
 - 3.1 Develop a policy that drives us internally and informs the more immediate steps we can take to reduce our single use plastics usage, for example a campaign to raise awareness amongst our own staff, and the operations of Commercial Services.
 - 3.2 Revise our procurement strategy in line with this policy.
 - 3.3 Develop the project plan for the full strategy (Phase 2).
4. The proposed key milestones for Phase1 are:

High level milestones - Phase 1



This timetable may be subject to change as it is based on our current assessment and the project has yet to be fully scoped.

5. We have already written to the Secretary of State (Appendix A) setting out our position as required by the motion.
6. Appendix B also contains some possible ideas and suggestions for implementation and phasing, although these do require further development. Any changes need to be based on best practice to avoid causing any unintended environmental issues and also to understand any financial impact.

Policy and strategy development

7. There are a number of ways the committee could engage in the development of both the policy in the short term and strategy in the longer term.

The four ways in which the committee could support this work are:

- 7.1 Providing scrutiny of the policy and the strategy.
- 7.2 Supporting the development of the policy and strategy, for example by forming a member reference group or a task group to work with officers
- 7.3 Receiving reports on progress on a six monthly basis
- 7.4 The committee and its members acting as advocates and raising awareness of the issue.

Recommendations:

8. That the committee indicates how it wishes to be involved in the development of the policy and strategy to tackle single use plastics

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Sources/background papers:

Council Motion 20 March 2018

DEFRA in their '[A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)

Appendix A



Cllr Mike Goodman
Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Rt.Hon. Michael Gove MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

9th April 2018

Dear Michael,

Re: Tackling Single Use Plastics

I strongly welcome the Government's commitment to tackling the problem of single use plastics, and in particular the recent announcement introducing a deposit scheme for single use drinks containers. This is an issue that is high in public consciousness and I believe there is a real opportunity to make significant changes to address this. I believe that by working together, central and local government can play a key role in creating the right policy environment and demonstrating leadership.

Last month, Surrey County Council supported a motion to progress its work to eliminate the use of single use plastic by the county council and to encourage others in Surrey to follow suit. We have started work on a strategy for Surrey which we will bring back to Council to review and endorse. This reflects our commitment to tackling this issue and the concern amongst our members and residents about the increasing evidence of the damage that single use plastics do, in particular to our marine environment. We know that this is very challenging, and in some cases will not be possible without changes to national policy.

As part of that motion, I committed to write to you to ask for more information about the Government's plans to eliminate single use plastic and encourage you to consider what could be done to achieve that in the shortest possible time, as every year of delay causes further damage to the environment.

Clearly we are not the only local authority seeking to demonstrate leadership in this area and I would welcome your thoughts on how we could collectively ensure a

consistent approach, working with central government. The County Council is keen to understand in more detail what Defra is planning to do and to work with you to ensure that all tiers of government play their role in eliminating all unnecessary single use plastic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Goodman', written over a horizontal line.

Mike Goodman
Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Appendix B

Ideas and Suggestions for Tackling Single Use Plastics

Definition and impact:

- According to the Institute for European Environmental Policy, single use plastics can include any disposable plastic item which is designed to be used only once. Single use items are often used in packaging, consumer products, cosmetics and healthcare. Examples include: light-weight plastic bags, disposable utensils, beverage containers, coffee capsules, wet wipes, and razor blades.
- International Beach Clean-up data from Ocean Conservancy shows that plastic drinks bottles, food wrappers, plastic drink bottle caps, straws and stirrers, plastic bags and plastic lids are amongst the top ten most common items collected.

Phase 1

Delivery

0 - 12 months

- Internal communication plan to:
 - Encourage behaviour changes needed to support Surrey become a single use plastics free workplace starting by May 2018.
 - Make colleagues aware of what we are doing as an organisation to be a single use plastics free workplace and when things are happening at a corporate level.
 - Raise awareness / remind colleagues about the global issues around single use plastics so they can see why it's important.
 - Demonstrate how colleagues can do things differently to support us to be a single use plastic free workplace
- Carry out an audit to find out all SUP items used and purchased by SCC in order to make decisions regarding what to replace/recycle.
- Stop providing plastic cups – such as those used at water coolers at all SCC premises where reasonable to do so.
- Provide glass jugs of water and glasses instead of plastic bottled water and plastic cups at meetings, including council meetings.
- Stop the use of small SUP milk/cream pots for coffee and tea, instead have milk supplied in a thermos flask.
- Stop providing disposable cups for hot drinks.
 - Ask staff to take their own reusable cup with lid (travel cup) when purchasing coffee and tea from coffee shops at SCC premises.
 - Provide ceramic mugs.
- Ask the coffee shops at SCC premises to stop supplying wooden stirrers and offer spoons to be used at the premises. (Although these are not made of SUP this move will reduce waste.)
- Stop providing disposable food containers at canteens.

- Encourage staff to take their own reusable containers with lids to take away food such as breakfast porridge, lunch etc.
- Review provision of single use plastics in vending machines and place communications next to them asking staff to recycle any plastic in the meantime.
- Ensure where contractually possible that no SUP cups, bottles, straws, plates, cutlery etc. are used by contractors at SCC run events.

**Phase 2
months**

Delivery

0 - 18

- Work with contractors that provide food and drink to SCC premises to minimise SUPs in their supply chain.

Such as:

- Review provision of milk and size of plastic containers used, combined with information/communications to ensure they are recycled by staff.
- Work with the canteens to ensure that instead of sachets sauces such as ketchup and mayonnaise are provided in glass bottles and jars.
- Stop the use of coffee capsules where applicable.
- Cascade approach:
 - Work with partners, businesses, charities and other institutions to encourage and possibly enable them to become 'Single Use Plastic Free' on their premises and in the things they sell to Surrey residents using Surrey as model of best practice and blueprint.

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