

Reduction / Elimination of Single Use Plastics (SUP) - Summary Report:

To Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee:

Update:

The SUP strategy / action plan has been reviewed by EMT & subsequently by Cabinet (05.06.2019) who:

- (i) Noted progress to date in preparing a draft Single Use Plastics Reduction Strategy;
- (ii) Invited the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee to review the Strategy and inform its completion;

Progress - An Officer Group has been established and has met on three separate occasions to review and support the delivery of the action plan. The group consists of 6 officers and meets every two months, an action log is produced and circulated to attendees and EMT.

Group considerations to date - include:

- Development of Baseline Data – some initial work has been undertaken by external support (Keele University students), however further work needs to be undertaken within t various service areas to identify varying SUP usage, e.g. The supply of chemicals, cleaning materials etc. in a range of SUP containers e.g. various size flat top or spray bottles; 1, 5, 10, or 25 litre containers/drums.
- SUP Elimination or Replacements:
 - SUP drinking cups (Council buildings); replaced with multi-use washable plastic glasses; or drinking bottles at J2
 - SUP Waste Sacks (Black Plastic Bags); the alternates available are being examined by officers (e.g. bio-degradable, paper etc.), albeit some issues have been identified;
 - Plastic cutlery, SUP cups, removal from J2cafe facility;
 - Plastic vending cups changed to cardboard cups (albeit question raised on if these are truly recyclable);
- Collection and recycling of SUP:
 - MFD toner cartridges;
 - Plastic Bottles;
 - Disposable gloves (provider available but volumes low);
 - Crisp packets (a recent campaign that will see the internal collection and transfer to Guild Hall – main collection point, where credits will be received linked to the collection);
- Internal & Town Centre Campaigns:
 - Officers are looking to engage with the BID on a number of campaigns with limited success;

- 'Refill' – (Refill is an award-winning grassroots campaign to prevent plastic pollution by making it easier to reuse and refill your bottle with free tap water rather than buy a new one) . We are advised by 'Refill' that the BID are the lead on this campaign and the Council are asked to contact them directly in support of the campaign;
- 'Take Back – Give Away' campaign, working with shop owners in the Town Centre looking at possible ways of utilising food containers/drinking cups, there has been interest to date from three Newcastle shops (Cultural Squatters; Caffe Java Ltd; and The Cakery;) who are offering discounts of their produce where own the customers own container/drinking cup is used;
- Research and identification of alternates to SUP or Polystyrene containers that might be used by stallholders when the council runs Food Markets; Grow-Fest ; or Food-Fest. This work needs to be done without deterring stall-holders from participating at future events;
- Future Challenges:
 - Resourcing the work, which can be time consuming, when researching alternate solutions to SUP, officers are looking to utilise where possible local partner support such as Newcastle College (students); Keele University Sustainability Hub etc.
 - Tackling the impacts of 'unintended consequences' as part of sourcing alternates to SUP;
- Partner support at Future Officer Group Meetings:
 - Positive response to the council's strategy and action plan from Jenny Mason (plastic free newcastle-under-lyme);
 - Dr. Sharon George – Keele University has also been invited to review the strategy and action plan;
- Member Support:
 - Officers are looking for Member support on the various campaigns that are being run, utilising social media where such support is delivered.