

Item No. 14.	Classification: Open	Date: 30 April 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Removal of Single Use Plastic from Operational Estate	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councilor Stephanie Cryan, Housing Management and Modernisation	

FOREWORD – COUNCILOR STEPHANIE CRYAN, HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MODERNISATION

In 2018 the television programme Blue Planet 2 brought to the public’s attention the scale of environmental damage caused by the use of single use plastics. Southwark’s council assembly recently declared a climate emergency and as part of our aim to be a greener borough we are committed to the removal of single use plastic in all of our council buildings. As a council we have a responsibility to limit our environmental impact so that current and future generations can live in a cleaner, greener and safer borough. We have already taken steps to minimize and reduce the use of single use plastics and this report sets out the framework and timescales for us to be a “plastic free” council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the draft single use plastic strategy for the council’s operational estate as set out in Appendix 1 is agreed.
2. That the responsibility for implementation of the action plan set out in Appendix 2 is delegated to the strategic director of housing and modernisation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Southwark Council is committed to the removal of single use plastic (SuP) across its operational estate, and is also working to identify and limit its use of all single use items such as paper, packaging, cleaning materials that may have an environmental impact so that future generations can live in a cleaner, greener Southwark. Where possible council staff will be encouraged to reduce, reuse and recycle items as a priority rather than dispose. This paper supports the council’s commitment to end the use of single use plastic by 2021.
4. The council has already taken steps to reduce the use of SuP across its operational estate with some of the more obvious examples being plastic cups, stirrers, plastic cutlery and is leading on a London Councils learning network to reduce the use of such plastics.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Strategy Overview

5. The council's SuP strategy commits the council to the removal as far as practical of single use plastic across the council's operational estate. The operational estate being those non-housing properties that corporate facilities management (CFM) is responsible for directly supporting.
6. Those buildings that corporate facilities management (CFM) is not responsible for managing or supporting are not included in this strategy, but as far as practical, the communication plan will extend to these properties, along with providing advice, guidance and support to those responsible for managing those properties.
7. Whilst the strategy does not cover SuP items being brought into council buildings by staff and visitors, the council will also seek to engage with staff and visitors and educate them on the benefits of reducing the use of SuP.
8. In seeking alternatives to SuP, the council will ensure that any alternatives identified do not in themselves cause environmental damage and where possible they will reduce usage, reuse and recycle items as a priority rather than disposing. For instance, there are certain alternatives on the market that whilst termed biodegradable do not in fact degrade for a number of years. Other examples are where plastics are termed recyclable however they cannot be recycled in mainstream recycling sites, and require specific recycling arrangements not readily available in the United Kingdom.
9. In addition, the council will ensure that alternatives are appropriate and do not create any additional risks or have disproportionate cost implications. For instance, the use of glass as an alternative will have to be carefully considered as there may be health and safety implications. In addition, certain alternatives will have a significant increased cost, and a cost benefit analysis will need to be undertaken in those instances.
10. There will always be some examples of SuP where there is simply no reasonable alternative. The strategy will ensure that the council continues to review and monitor industry for alternatives and implement these as and when they become available.
11. Whilst there are a number of definitions of SUPs, the council has adopted a definition that is in line with the United Nations and other international and national bodies:

'any plastic items which are either designed to be used for one time by the consumer before they are thrown away or recycled, or likely to be used in this way.'
12. The council has developed a route map to the removal of single use plastic (SuP). The key steps are:
 1. Identify where we are using SuP
 2. Assess impact of removal and alternatives
 3. Make recommendations on removal

4. Implement recommendations.
13. The route map also outlines the continuous approach to communication, review, promotion and incentive.
14. The council will also measure the success of the strategy via a series of key performance indicators.

Action plan

15. The strategy is supported by an outline and action plan (Appendix 2) that explains how the council will achieve its strategy and also sets out the key actions to be taken, outcomes, responsibility and timeline. Ultimate responsibility for the action plan rests with the strategic director of housing and modernisation.
16. Progress has already been made on removing SuP. The Tooley Street café have taken steps to remove plastic cutlery, containers and are seeking an alternative for coffee cups and their associated lids. Plastic cups and other plastic materials have been removed from the Tooley Street and Queens Road staff kitchens.
17. Corporate facilities management have led on a pan-London local government learning network on SuP, consisting of a series of seminars, with further seminars planned, these share experience, discuss best practice and seek industry solutions. The objective being to arrive at a collective approach to the replacement of SuP, CFM will also seek to identify and liaise with other plastic free groups in the borough.
18. The action plan sets out a short, medium and long term plan. In the short term, and by December 2019, the council will remove single use plastic from the largest sites with the highest concentration of staff, including Tooley Street, Bournemouth Road, Sumner House, 47b East Dulwich Road, Curlew, Talfourd Place and the Queens Road complex. A communication plan will also be developed.
19. It is intended that additional London wide seminars will be held, which will include representation from industry. The City of London have a plastic free charter, further investigation will be made into applying for and achieving a standard that supports the removal of these plastics. This will enable the council to benchmark themselves against other organisations.
20. In the medium term, up to June 2020, the remaining sites in the corporate facilities management property portfolio will have plastics removed. A review of progress will be undertaken after 12 months. New alternatives to these plastics are quickly being developed and introduced so it will be important for the council to keep up to date of new developments in this field.
21. In the longer term the project will be extended to all remaining buildings including those where corporate facilities management does not have direct responsibility for maintenance, this will be done in consultation with the relevant department. CFM will also develop and communicate training material for the community schools estate and other related sites, to help them develop their own strategy to assist with the removal of SuP.

Policy implications

22. The strategic director of housing and modernisation leads on the strategy, to remove single use plastic (SuP), this is also a key deliverable as outlined in the department's business plan. Corporate facilities management has responsibility for providing facilities management support at the majority of the council's operational estate, and has been tasked to lead on the implementation of the strategy.
23. As a new strategy, this strategy does not replace any earlier strategies. It is however linked to a number of council initiatives, including work being undertaken by the environment and leisure department who are responsible for reducing the use of single use plastics across the borough.
24. The strategy will also seek to align to the Fairer Futures Procurement Strategy, to enable the council to where possible influence contractors and suppliers.

Community impact statement

25. Section 149 of the Equality Act, lays out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. The council's approach to equality ("the approach") commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.
26. The report author has considered this report and the supporting strategy have identified no specific equality implications.

Resource implications

27. There is sufficient resource within current budget provision to accommodate the work required to implement this strategy. The head of CFM will oversee the implementation of the action plan, with the division's programme office coordinating the delivery of the action day to day with support from other CFM staff as required.

Legal implications

28. There are no significant legal implications. There will however be proposals for changes to the council's procurement strategy to incorporate the SuP strategy, and the head of procurement will be involved in this process. Advice will be sought from officers in legal services should any potential legal issues arise during the development and implementation of the strategy.

Financial implications

29. It is anticipated that costs in relation to actions arising from the implementation of the SuP strategy across the council's operational estate will be contained within existing budgets. However, should this not prove to be possible, the source of any additional funding requirement will be confirmed by the strategic director of housing and modernisation as part of the action approval process.

Consultation

30. Consultation has taken place with environment and leisure in connection with their related initiatives, and also with the head of procurement in connection with changes to the procurement process in support of the strategy.
31. Further consultation with the head of procurement may be required. Departmental site responsible officers will also be consulted through the process on plans to remove SuP from sites under their direct control.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

32. The council's strategy on single use plastics is noted in this strategy. If approved, it will work with externally procured service contracts to ensure that any use of these is highlighted as part of the procurement process and the cost implications assessed as part of the evaluation process. Cost implications and decisions on these, will be highlighted in the Gateway 2 contract award report. For contracts with a value above the current threshold in the Public Contract Regulations (2015) this expectation will be highlighted, as well as the need for innovation during the life of the contract should more sustainable /cost effective alternatives become available.

Director of Law and Democracy

33. The council has the power to establish this strategy in accordance with section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (the general power of competence for councils to do anything that individuals generally may do). Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 is also relevant as this gives a local authority powers to do "any thing ...which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions" and this strategy will support other statutory functions that the council is performing. Exercise of Localism Act powers is an executive function of the council which the cabinet will determine in accordance with the council's scheme of delegation.
34. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in making this decision the cabinet must comply with its public equality duty. However, there are no identified implications in this report for individuals with particular protected characteristics under the Equality Act for the cabinet to have due regard to.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

35. The financial implications are contained in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Council – Single Use Plastic Strategy
Appendix 2	Outline and Action Plan

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Housing Management and Modernisation	
Lead Officer	Paul Symington, Head of Corporate Facilities Management	
Report Author	Maureen McBain, Head of CFM Business Strategy	
Version	Final	
Dated	11 April 2019	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Head of Procurement	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	11 April 2019	