

## POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel		
DATE:	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2019		
TITLE:	<b>Report of the Single Use Plastics Informal Working Group</b>		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Policy Development		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Environment		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Members of the Informal Working Group and Officers		
OPEN/EXEMPT	OPEN	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	No

### **REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE**

<p><b>PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:</b></p> <p>At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the Environment and Community Panel established the Single Use Plastics Informal Working Group with its Terms of Reference being to investigate, in depth, issues raised by the Panel regarding single use plastics.</p> <p>This report summarises the work carried out by the Informal Working Group and presents their recommendations for consideration by the Environment and Community Panel.</p>
<p><b>OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reject the recommendations put forward by the Informal Working Group.</li> <li>2. Support some/all of the recommendations and present them to the relevant Cabinet Member for consideration and/or submission to Cabinet if required.</li> </ol>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An Officer Focus Group be established, as detailed in the report, to promote internal best practice, make improvements where necessary and to address the issues below. The group to provide updates to the Environment and Community Panel on an annual basis, or more frequently if required.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) How to limit the use of single use plastics in buildings under its control and encourage employees and Members to reduce the amount of single use plastics used on council premises.</li> <li>b) In liaison with the Waste and Recycling Manager, Communications Manager and relevant Portfolio Holder, draft an internal code of good practice, which can be presented to a future meeting of the Environment and Community Panel for consideration.</li> <li>c) Work with procurement to source products which come with less packaging and generate less waste where possible.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. The relevant officers be instructed to produce guidance as appropriate on the following:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Guidance to Parish Councils on how they can reduce the use of single use plastics within their own areas and events associated with them to reduce single use plastic use across the Borough and to create a common strand of better waste collection at public events.</li> <li>b) Information to be included in Tourist Information guides to include messages encouraging a reduction in the use of single use plastics and better recycling which will begin to address the increases in litter and waste collection during the tourist season.</li> <li>c) Information to be provided to holiday lets to display information about reducing plastic use and how recycling is done in West Norfolk with the aim to reduce the</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

amount of waste material generated in holiday lets. This will ensure that people from different parts of the country know how the recycling system works in West Norfolk.

d) A Code of Good Practice be provided, via the Planning Department, to builders and developers to encourage good practice at development sites so that potential litter, including plastic, is kept secure and recycled or safely disposed of with the aim of avoiding waste, particularly plastic wrapping and building materials, from blowing off site and entering the environment.

3. The Waste and Recycling Manager to review how waste generated at holiday parks is managed so that recycling is optimised.

4. The Council to support and promote:

a) The Refill initiative which allows people to refill water bottles at cafes and other appropriate outlets, as practiced in Hunstanton.

b) Good practice relating to reducing plastic waste which some small local business are adopting.

c) appropriate initiatives and projects being undertaken by partners and other local relevant organisations.

5. That the Council give consideration to marketing campaigns, promoting the following:

a) The food waste service, and that residents can line their caddies with newspapers if they did not have any bags.

b) The 'Selling to us' page on the borough council's website be amended to encourage recycling and reduction of the amount of single use plastics.

c) Christmas Wrapping paper campaigns.

d) Support Norfolk Waste Partnership campaigns including OPRL promotion.

6. The Leader be invited to appoint a Member Champion for Single Use Plastics.

7. The Environment and Community Panel work with the Portfolio Holder for Environment to ensure that they consider and respond to any appropriate Government consultations with regards to Single Use Plastics.

8. The Waste and Recycling Manager and the relevant Portfolio Holder investigate ways to increase recycling levels in tourist areas, including trialling different types of recycling bins. Part of this investigation would be to determine why recycling bins were unsuccessful when trialled previously in this area.

9. The relevant Portfolio Holder, and Member Champion (if appropriate) keep a watching brief and work with, as appropriate, the Norfolk County Council Task Group looking at single use plastics, feeding back to the Environment and Community Panel as required.

10. The Borough Council to hold a design competition in schools regarding the importance of recycling and the use of single use plastics and the winning design could be wrapped onto the bin collection vehicles.

11. The Environment and Community Panel to schedule updates in its Work Programme on the work of the Norfolk Waste Partnership via the Waste and Recycling Manager and relevant Portfolio Holder.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To respond to the emerging national concern regarding single use plastics.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### **1. Introduction**

A report on Single Use Plastics was presented to the Environment and Community Panel on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018. This was following a request from several Members. At this meeting the Environment and Community Panel established the Single Use Plastics Informal Working Group with its Terms of Reference being to investigate, in depth, issues raised by the Panel regarding single use plastics.

Issues raised at the Environment and Community Panel meeting included, the environmental impact of single use plastics, littering, personal responsibility, behavioural change, campaigns and publicity.

Since formation of the Informal Working Group increasing action has been taken by many organisations and there is a desire to reduce the use of plastics, recycle them more effectively, and certainly to prevent them from entering the environment. This report recommends what officers and Members could do to help reduce the use of single use plastic and also improve recycling.

The Informal Working Group has conducted research and learnt a lot about what can and cannot be done and have recognised that good practice needs to be exemplified, publicised and published and bad practice clearly identified.

### **2. Membership of the Informal Working Group**

Councillors Parish (Chairman), Bower, Bubb, Fraser and Westrop were appointed to the Informal Working Group.

The meetings were also attended by Councillor Devereux, Portfolio Holder for Environment and supported by officers.

Councillor Mrs Squire attended meetings under Standing Order 34.

### **3. Meetings Held**

Seven meetings of the Group have been held on the following dates:

12<sup>th</sup> July 2018  
4<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
27<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
1<sup>st</sup> November 2018  
6<sup>th</sup> December 2018  
16<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
12<sup>th</sup> February 2019

### **4. Contributions from other organisations**

4.1 The Informal Working Group held a discussion with Kirstie Edwards from Plastic Free Falmouth. Plastic Free Falmouth was a successful organisation which had worked with the Local Council, businesses and individuals. More information on the discussion held is available in the notes from the Informal Working Group meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018 and information on the campaign is available at [www.falmouthmarineconservation.co.uk](http://www.falmouthmarineconservation.co.uk).

4.2 Members of the Informal Working Group also carried out their own research, involving Parish Councils and businesses and provided feedback to the group at each meeting.

Comments from Parish Councils included introducing a recycling code to engage with businesses and individuals. The Informal Working Group discussed the potential introduction of a code of good practice and felt that this would be a good document for educational purposes. The Informal Working Group will therefore put this forward as one of their recommendations.

## **5. Summary of Items discussed by the Informal Working Group**

### 5.1 Food Waste Collection

The Waste and Recycling Manager provided the Informal Working Group with information on the Food Waste Collection Service. The Group supports ongoing promotion of the service and that residents be informed that it is acceptable to line the caddy liner with newspaper.

### 5.2 What the Council is already doing

The Informal Working Group received a lot of information from the Waste and Recycling Manager on the waste and recycling process.

West Norfolk accepted quite a lot of recycling and if the On Packaging Recycling Label (OPRL) on products had 'widely recycled', or 'check locally', they could be recycled in West Norfolk. The Informal Working Group suggests that this information should be publicised to households and note that Norfolk Waste Partnership are planning on promoting this information.

The Informal Working Group feels that it is very important that education work in schools continue.

Members need to consider the balance between the impact of production, against contaminating the environment, considering things such as transport, manufacturing, storage and distribution. Information received from the Waste and Recycling Manager was noted in that recycled material is not always best the quality and can deteriorate quicker.

The Informal Working Group note that good practice was already adopted by many staff and departments and they want to promote this and become an example to others.

### 5.3 The Bigger Picture

The Informal Working Group have kept a watching brief on what is being done nationally, including the UK Plastics Pact Road Map which had been produced by WRAP and potential government campaigns, and the Group suggests that the Environment and Community Panel should be involved in any future consultations in liaison with the relevant Cabinet Member. The Group also noted that Norfolk County Council had set up a Task Group to look at Single Use Plastics and there may be opportunities in the future to work together.

Members of the Informal Working Group had held informal discussions with businesses and retailers. Much of their packaging was dependent on what was provided by wholesalers and the costs involved. Certain produce had to be packaged in plastic for preservation purposes. Plastic was the cheaper option for many businesses.

The Informal Working Group looked at examples from other areas and noted that several small businesses and organisations in the area were making changes to limit the use of single use plastics. The Informal Working Group applauds this work and encourages the Council to recognise good practice within the Borough. They suggest that examples of good practice could be relayed to the local media so that examples can be publicised with the hope that others will follow suit.

#### 5.4 Recycling Campaigns and Education

The Informal Working Group suggest that, linking in with educational work already carried out in schools, the Borough Council hold a design competition in schools regarding the importance of recycling and encouraging reduced use of single use plastics and the winning design could be wrapped onto the bin collection vehicles. Barry Brandford explained that as part of the Waste Collection contract the Council still had some 'wrap' space to be used on vehicles and this would be an opportunity to utilise this as well as educating children.

#### 5.5 Council Procurement Policies

The Informal Working Group received information from the Procurement Officer and were kept up to date on any further developments relating to the reduction of plastic waste. The Informal Working Group note that the borough council's website has a 'selling to us' page and suggest that information to encourage recycling and reducing the amount of single use plastic could be added onto this webpage.

The Informal Working Group encouraged the Procurement Officer to raise awareness with suppliers used by the Council and at regional and national level as appropriate. They would like to see the Council procure products which come with less packaging and overall generate less plastic waste. They acknowledge that costs and availability of products need to be balanced.

#### 5.6 Corporate Responsibility

The Informal Working Group recognises the importance of 'leading by example' and held many discussions on what could be done corporately. The Group note the successful work carried out by 'Member Champions' who are non remunerated Members and suggest that a Member Champion be appointed for single use plastics.

#### 5.7 Survey of staff and Members

A Survey has been created and circulated to staff and Members. Staff were asked if they would be willing to participate in officer focus group. The Informal Working Group propose that an officer working group be established to look at the following:

- How the Council can limit the use of single use plastics in buildings under its control including water bottles, plastic cups, straws and cutlery.
- How to encourage employees and Councillors not to use single use plastics on council premises. This could include hints and tips in staff newsletters.
- Codes of good practice for staff.
- Procurement and purchasing.
- Definition of what constitutes a single use plastic.

Members of the Informal Working Group would be prepared to work with officers from the focus group as required.

The Informal Working Group also propose that the Environment and Community Panel receive annual updates on the work of the officer group.

#### 5.8 Events

The Informal Working Group discussed events held in the Borough and how to encourage recycling and not using single use plastics. They felt that a Code of Good Practice could be provided to event organisers during the booking process. It was noted that the Council did not have control over what external event organisers did, but they could encourage good practice.

## 5.9 Impact of Tourism

Recycling bins in Hunstanton had been trialled but had not been successful because of lots of contamination. The Informal Working Group suggest that the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Waste and Recycling Manager give further consideration to other ways to encourage recycling in tourist areas. This could include information being included in Tourist Information guides to encourage a reduction in the use of single use plastics and better recycling.

The Informal Working Group are aware of the refill initiative which was practised in Hunstanton and allows people to refill water bottles at cafes and other appropriate outlets. They encourage the expansion of this practice across the Borough to reduce the use and waste of empty drinking water bottles.

The Informal Working Group discussed how waste from holiday lets was considered to be trade waste and that recycling facilities were not always available. The Informal Working Group suggest that guidance be provided to holiday lets including information about reducing plastic use and how recycling is done in West Norfolk. It would also be beneficial to review how waste materials generated on holiday parks was managed and determine if there was scope to increase recycling levels.

## 5.10 Code of Good Practice

It is noted that the Borough Council does not currently provide guidance to staff, parish councils, event organisers, businesses or the public on good practice when it comes to the use of single use plastics. The Informal Working Group suggest that the Waste and Recycling Manager and Communications Manager work with the relevant Portfolio Holder to produce such a code, with a draft version being presented to the Environment and Community Panel in the future for consideration.

Further to this it is also suggested that information be provided via the Planning Department, to developers and builders to promote good practice at building sites so that potential litter, including plastic, is kept secure and recycled or safely disposed of to avoid waste, particularly plastic wrapping and building materials from blowing off site and entering the environment.

## **6. Recommendations put forward by the Informal Working Group**

1. An Officer Focus Group be established, as detailed in the report, to promote internal best practice, make improvements where necessary and to address the issues below. The group to provide updates to the Environment and Community Panel on an annual basis, or more frequently if required.

- a) How to limit the use of single use plastics in buildings under its control and encourage employees and Members to reduce the amount of single use plastics used on council premises.
- b) In liaison with the Waste and Recycling Manager, Communications Manager and relevant Portfolio Holder, draft an internal code of good practice, which can be presented to a future meeting of the Environment and Community Panel for consideration.
- c) Work with procurement to source products which come with less packaging and generate less waste where possible.

2. The relevant officers be instructed to produce guidance as appropriate on the following:

- a) Guidance to Parish Councils on how they can reduce the use of single use plastics within their own areas and events associated with them to reduce single use plastic use across the Borough and to create a common strand of better waste collection at public events.
- b) Information to be included in Tourist Information guides to include messages encouraging a reduction in the use of single use plastics and better recycling which will begin to address the increases in litter and waste collection during the tourist season.
- c) Information to be provided to holiday lets to display information about reducing plastic use and how recycling is done in West Norfolk with the aim to reduce the amount of waste material generated in holiday lets. This will ensure that people from different parts of the country know how the recycling system works in West Norfolk.
- d) A Code of Good Practice be provided, via the Planning Department, to builders and developers to encourage good practice at development sites so that potential litter, including plastic, is kept secure and recycled or safely disposed of with the aim of avoiding waste, particularly plastic wrapping and building materials, from blowing off site and entering the environment.

3. The Waste and Recycling Manager to review how waste generated at holiday parks is managed so that recycling is optimised.

4. The Council to support and promote:

- a) The Refill initiative which allows people to refill water bottles at cafes and other appropriate outlets, as practiced in Hunstanton.
- b) Good practice relating to reducing plastic waste which some small local business are adopting.
- c) appropriate initiatives and projects being undertaken by partners and other local relevant organisations.

5. That the Council give consideration to marketing campaigns, promoting the following:

- a) The food waste service, and that residents can line their caddies with newspapers if they did not have any bags.
- b) The 'Selling to us' page on the borough council's website be amended to encourage recycling and reduction of the amount of single use plastics.
- c) Christmas Wrapping paper campaigns.
- d) Support Norfolk Waste Partnership campaigns including OPRL promotion.

6. The Leader be invited to appoint a Member Champion for Single Use Plastics.

7. The Environment and Community Panel work with the Portfolio Holder for Environment to ensure that they consider and respond to any appropriate Government consultations with regards to Single Use Plastics.

8. The Waste and Recycling Manager and the relevant Portfolio Holder investigate ways to increase recycling levels in tourist areas, including trialling different types of recycling bins. Part of this investigation would be to determine why recycling bins were unsuccessful when trialled previously in this area.

9. The relevant Portfolio Holder, and Member Champion (if appropriate) keep a watching brief and work with, as appropriate, the Norfolk County Council Task Group looking at single use plastics, feeding back to the Environment and Community Panel as required.

10. The Borough Council to hold a design competition in schools regarding the importance of recycling and the use of single use plastics and the winning design could be wrapped onto the bin collection vehicles.

11. The Environment and Community Panel to schedule updates in its Work Programme on the work of the Norfolk Waste Partnership via the Waste and Recycling Manager and relevant Portfolio Holder.

## **7. Background Papers**

Agendas and Minutes from the Informal Working Group – available on Mod Gov.