



Glasgow City Council
City Administration Committee

Item 8

23rd January 2020

Report by Councillor Anna Richardson, City Convener for
Sustainability and Carbon Reduction

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PLASTICS REDUCTION STRATEGY

Purpose of Report:

To present the Committee with a strategy and action plan for reducing plastic usage and waste in the city.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) approves the appended strategy and action plan; and
- (b) agrees that the Council signs up to the Eurocities Environment Forum declaration on curbing plastic waste and littering.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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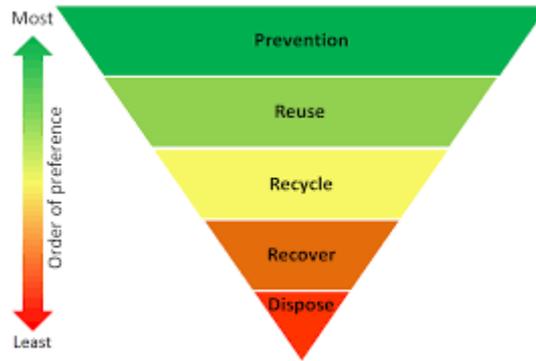
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1. Plastics – the challenge

- 1.1 Members of the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee have previously asked for more work to be done to prevent and reduce plastic waste. An update report on work to combat plastic waste in the city was previously considered at the Committee meeting of 30 April 2019 and can be accessed at:
<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=P62AFQDN0G2UNTNTT1>
- 1.2 Members have noted that plastic waste is a significant issue of public concern, particularly because of its harmful effects on marine life when it finds its way into the world's rivers and oceans. It represents a highly visible sign of a throwaway culture that will bring the planet to the edge of ecological catastrophe if not addressed.
- 1.3 In this light, it was agreed that a strategy and action plan on reducing plastic waste would be presented to the committee before the end of 2019. The appended plan was therefore developed for members' consideration. It states actions which the Council itself can take as a large organization in Glasgow, whilst also looking to support the exercise of leadership by the Council within the city in order to influence the actions of residents, businesses and other agencies.
- 1.4 As Glasgow builds momentum towards hosting COP26, the plastics strategy sends out a strong signal of the Council's commitment to the sustainability agenda. It both recognizes the challenges which a throwaway society places on the city itself, whilst also acknowledging the key role which the city must play in its own stewardship of the natural environment. The strategy therefore engages closely with the broader global debates on our planetary future which will be fostered as part of COP. It draws on a sense that Glasgow's plastic waste is a blight on Glasgow – and that the city's plastic waste is a threat to the global ecosystem on which all Glaswegians ultimately rely.
- 1.5 On [26 November 2019](#), the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee considered the strategy and action plan. At that meeting, the Committee agreed to recommend the report to the City Administration Committee for approval.

2. Developing the strategy

- 2.1 The perspective used throughout the strategy has been based on the key principles of the waste hierarchy, which are especially focused on reduction, reuse and recycling. The diagram below illustrates how this hierarchy works. The strategy is accompanied by an initial action plan, which aims to provide more specific and targeted activities over the next year or so on which the Council and city partners can work.



- 2.2 Consultation with targeted organisations and with the Glaswegian public has taken place in order to inform both the themes in the strategy and the actions emerging from them. The latter has taken the form of a survey which invited residents' views and suggestions on this important agenda. It took place over the early summer and received 1,578 responses. An earlier public survey on behalf of the Climate Emergency Working Group also highlighted issues around plastic waste, which have been taken into account in drafting the strategy.
- 2.3 The response has indicated overwhelming support for work to reduce single use plastic (SUP) consumption, with a number of key areas raised where respondents want to see more action. The principal ones are for:
- The provision of more information/education for residents and visitors.
 - Better and more visible infrastructure.
 - Incentivising positive behaviour change in conjunction with a potential ban on the most significant and prevalent SUP items.
- 2.4 A consultation also took place with a selection of groups in the public and third sectors which have a clear interest in the plastics agenda. This provided material which informed the emerging themes and specific activities of the plan and also gives a degree of confidence that the draft itself is likely to be supported by a broad range of potential delivery partners.
- 2.5 Alongside this local work, consideration has been given to best practice from other peer cities from across the UK and internationally. This has particularly benefited from the shared learning provided by a recent Eurocities Environment Forum meeting, which focused on this issue and produced a declaration on curbing plastic waste and littering for member cities to sign up to.
- ### 3. Action Plan
- 3.1 The plastics reduction strategy is based on a set of actions designed to reduce, reuse and/or recycle SUPs. The guiding vision is for the city to remove all unnecessary plastics by 2030 – with an intermediate step to phase out all single use plastics by 2022. It is acknowledged that action must start now in order to achieve such an ambition, alongside exploration of the feasibility and cost of addressing such issues in a robust way.

3.2 An initial set of actions is stated in the plan across the coming year. These will give elected members, key partners and Glaswegian residents a sense of the areas where efforts will principally be focused in 2020. It is proposed that further annual action plans should be drafted in collaboration with partners over future years as progress is made, barriers identified, and further momentum gathered.

3.3 Some of the key actions proposed in the strategy include:

City-wide action

- Undertaking a feasibility study into a city-wide ban on certain single use plastics items.
- Working towards Glasgow's first plastic free shopping zone, commencing with an audit to get a plastics baseline amongst retailers.
- Increasing the number of top up water taps across the city. This will be done in conjunction with significant promotion and roll out of the 'Refill' initiative, encouraging residents and visitors to top up their reusable water bottles free of charge.
- Working to support pilot projects which assist with reducing marine plastics, such as the trialing the 'Bubble Barrier'. This innovative technology offers an opportunity to remove plastics in the River Clyde in a sustainable way, allowing for a reduction in marine litter and the potential for circular opportunities or reuse of the plastics.
- Undertaking a focused engagement piece with young people, opening out a plastic reduction conversation with a view to creating Glasgow's first plastic free school.

National action

- Working to make representation to the Scottish Government on tightening legislation on SUP, including plastic bags, and plastic packaging.

Behaviour change

- Undertaking a communication and education campaign to inform and educate residents and visitors on best practice and how to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics – with the goal of moving away from our current throwaway society.

Internal work – leading the way

- The Council will work to explore options to deliver a more sustainable approach to school catering, minimizing any SUP.
- Ensure that procurement policy engages with the plastics reduction agenda.
- Continue to explore options to reduce the number of SUP items used within Council and Encore cafes and increase the use of sustainable alternatives.
- Provide a GOLD Course for staff on plastics reduction.
- Continued roll out of the Glasgow Cup Movement, including incentives for staff behavior change and a shift in focus from recycling to reuse.

3.4 This work builds on and enhances existing Council activities in this area, which were noted in the previous Committee report. They include active engagement in the Glasgow Cup Movement, with the Council being the first organisation in the city to sign up to this initiative. As a result, a number of units have been introduced to the Council cafes in the City Chambers and within staff locations to allow recycling of coffee cups and lids for the first time ever. The Council was also the first Scottish city to become a member of the Refill branded approach, which provides opportunities for the public to refill their water bottles from participating outlets.

4. Next steps

4.1 Work has begun on drawing partners together to support the actions proposed in the attached strategy. Further discussions will take place across Community Planning and other partnerships in order for the Council to generate city-wide support for action and to exercise a leadership role for Glasgow.

4.2 The actions proposed in the strategy will help to maintain the city's position as a leading local authority in Scotland and Europe on sustainability issues. They will deliver on some of the key recommendations made by the Climate Emergency Working Group and ensure that, when the eyes of the world turn to Glasgow for COP26, the city is acting in an exemplar role on these important matters.

5. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: Financial implications for the Council will be further clarified in relation to specific actions as they are developed.

Legal: Legal implications for the Council will be further clarified as particular actions are developed.

Personnel: These actions will be undertaken using existing staff resources.

Procurement: The strategy on plastics specifically considers challenges in relation to more sustainable procurement practices.

Council Strategic Plan: This report supports the Council's strategic objective to become a more Sustainable City and recommendations from the Climate Emergency Working Group.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22 Not applicable.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? An [EQIA screening](#) has been undertaken. A need has been identified to maintain the availability of plastic straws for some disabled citizens.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage. Not applicable.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: This report will have a significant positive impact upon the environment by actively raising awareness and educating citizens and staff members about the need to reduce plastic use. This will also support actions designed to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics within the Council and wider city.

Social, including opportunities under Article 20 of the European Public Procurement Directive: There is the potential for positive social impacts should plastic alternatives be sought from local suppliers.

Economic: This report supports the city's broader ambitions to grow the circular economy.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts: This report has no impacts upon privacy or data protection.

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) approves the appended strategy and action plan; and
- (b) agrees that the Council signs up to the Eurocities Environment Forum declaration on curbing plastic waste and littering.