

Agenda Item	11
Report No	EDI/72/18

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Environment, Development and Infrastructure

**Date:** 8 November 2018

**Report Title:** Single Use Plastic Strategy and Action Plan

**Report By:** Director of Development and Infrastructure

### 1. **Purpose/Executive Summary**

1.1 This report presents The Highland Council's Single Use Plastic Strategy and Action Plan.

### 2. **Recommendations**

2.2 Members are asked to Discuss and approve the adoption of the Single Use Plastic Strategy and Action Plan.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 At a meeting of The Highland Council on 28 June, 2018, Members agreed that the Council should develop a strategy to ensure that the organisation works towards the phasing out of single use plastic (SUP) from its sites and schools, in an effort to exceed statutory requirements. The Council recognises that discarded plastics, including non-recyclable cups, bottles and straws, are a major environmental pollutant and of detrimental impact to the Highland region and its communities.
- 3.2 This paper presents the Council's draft SUP Strategy and Action Plan, which has been developed by the SUP Working Group and SUP Officers' group.

### 4 Strategy Development

- 4.1 The SUP Strategy and Action Plan (**Appendix 1**) is the Council's response to the increasingly important issue of plastics accumulating in our environment, and outlines what the Council can do in the short to medium term to alleviate this. The strategy has been developed through consultation with various Council teams and officers, including input from the Commercial and Procurement Shared Service, with oversight from the Member-led SUP Working Group. Various external agencies have also been involved in the drafting of this strategy, including Zero Waste Scotland, Changeworks, and Resource Efficient Scotland. In addition, good practice has been identified both within Highland and outwith, and this is reflected throughout the strategy, where relevant.
- 4.2 It was agreed early in the development of the strategy that 4 key themes need to be addressed to meaningfully reduce the volume of SUP consumed across Highland, namely:
- **Getting our own house in order** - The Highland Council (HC) is a large, diverse organisation that currently utilises a variety of single-use plastic (SUP) items. Work is required to improve the Council's leadership role in this respect and incrementally reduce the range and quantities of SUP items used by the organisation over the course of time;
  - **Working with suppliers and contractors** – the Council procures a variety of goods and services, many of which will come into contact with single-use plastics (SUP items and the plastic content of packaging) at some point in their delivery. We will aim to reduce this, wherever feasible;
  - **Helping raise awareness across Highland** – Highland has a population of approximately 240,000 people with high associated consumption of single-use plastics. To reduce the volume of SUP consumption across Highland and better capture the plastic which is consumed, we need to better engage and disseminate information within our communities; and
  - **Enabling Highland to take action** – The Highland Council has a leadership role in respect of reducing single-use plastics consumption within its own estate. However, we will also empower communities to take action themselves.
- 4.3 Various objectives have been identified under each of these key themes, with actions to be undertaken in support (**Appendix 2**). However, it is recognised that the objectives and actions under this strategy are a necessary first step – this is a complex area, and the national and international picture in respect of tackling the issue of SUP is moving at

pace. In addition, the actions detailed within this strategy will require resource (staff time, budgets and infrastructure), in order to deliver them – this will potentially lead to competing priorities, and will need to be carefully managed over the lifetime of the strategy. The Council’s strategy should be treated as a “live” document, which will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes in national policy whilst building on the good work which is already underway in Highland.

## **5 Implications**

- 5.1 Resource – There are various resource implications arising from this report and the draft strategy. Implementation of the strategy and action plan will require staffing resource from across the Council, and this will add additional pressure to already stretched workloads. In addition, there will likely be cost implications in respect of sourcing alternatives to SUP in a catering sundries context. However, cost-benefit analyses will be carried out prior to the selection of any alternatives.
- 5.2 Legal – The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a legal duty on the Council to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets. The implementation of the SUP Strategy and Action Plan will support the Council’s efforts to reduce emissions by decreasing the volume of waste which is sent to landfill whilst raising awareness of these issues across the region.
- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – There are no community implications arising from this report.
- 5.4 Climate Change/Carbon CLEVER – Accurately monitoring and reporting on carbon emissions and climate change will help to focus attention on action to reduce carbon emissions across the Council and the wider Highland region.
- 5.5 Risk – Given increasing public awareness of the issues caused by SUP and the damage it can cause to the environment, there is a reputational risk to the Council from not taking sufficient action to reduce consumption. However, the strategy and action plan demonstrates leadership by the Council, and they provide a structured approach to reducing consumption and impact in the first instance, with an understanding that the Council’s position will need to be updated annually.
- 5.6 Gaelic – There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 22 October 2018

Author: Fiona Daschofsky, Climate Change Officer

Appendix 1

# **Highland Council**

## **Draft Single Use Plastics Strategy & Action Plan**

**November 2018**

## **Contents**

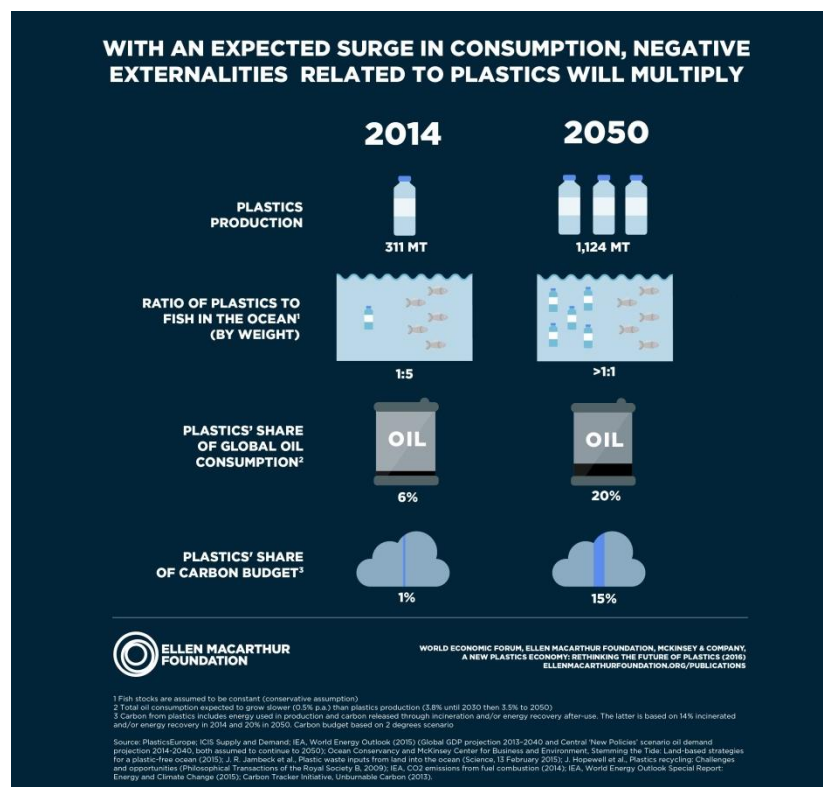
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## **Bibliography**

## 1. Background

- 1.1 According to recent estimates, 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced globally to date, with 6.3bn tonnes of this becoming plastic waste. 79% of the plastic waste ever produced now sits in landfills, dumps or in the environment, while about 12% has been incinerated and only 9% has been recycled. It is estimated that if current consumption patterns and waste management practices continue, then by 2050 there will be around 12 billion tonnes of plastic litter in landfills and the environment.<sup>i</sup>
- 1.2 Much plastic may be single-use, but that does not mean it is easily disposable. For the purpose of this strategy, the term “single-use plastics” (SUP) includes all products that are made wholly or partly of plastic that are typically intended to be used just once and/or for a short period of time before being disposed of.
- 1.3 Most plastics do not biodegrade. Instead, they slowly break down into smaller fragments known as microplastics. Some studies suggest that plastic bags and containers made of expanded polystyrene foam (commonly referred to as “Styrofoam”) can take thousands of years to decompose, contaminating soil and water, and posing significant ingestion, choking and entanglement hazards to wildlife on land and in the ocean.
- 1.4 The best research currently available estimates that there are over 150 million tonnes of plastic waste in the ocean today. At least 8 million tonnes of plastics leak into the ocean each year — which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one refuse truck into the ocean per minute. Without significant action, there may be more plastic than fish in the ocean, by weight, by 2050. Even by 2025, the ratio of plastic to fish in the ocean is expected to be one to three, as plastic stocks in the ocean are forecast to grow to 250 million tonnes by 2025.<sup>ii</sup>
- 1.5 Plastic waste and microplastics, if ingested by fish or other marine life, can enter our food chain. Although in recent years research on the effects of microplastics has been growing, still little is known about the exact impacts on human health.
- 1.6 SUP has a global impact and recent media coverage has moved SUP into prominence. These include the BBC series Blue Planet II, which highlighted the scale of plastic pollution in our seas and oceans. Other images and articles such as giant SUP floating islands in our oceans, and wildlife deaths resulting from SUP, are increasingly being reported by the media. Awareness of the significant environmental damage being caused by SUP has raised in the public consciousness, and there is widespread momentum and support to reduce our dependency on these items.
- 1.7 The issue of discarded plastics and marine pollution is high on the political agenda and there is increasing pressure for business and Government to work together to ‘solve’ the problem. Highland Council recognises that, as the local authority having the longest coastline in Scotland (at 4,905

- kilometres), the region has a key role to play in reducing plastic waste.
- 1.8 Littered plastics are not only a pollutant but also represent a missed opportunity to recover valuable materials for recycling. Plastic is a non-renewable material, made largely from fossil fuels. If the growth in plastic production continues at its current rate, then by 2050 the plastics industry may account for 20% of the world's total oil consumption and 15% of the global annual carbon budget by 2050 (this is the budget that must be adhered to in order to achieve the internationally accepted goal to remain below a 2°C increase in global warming).<sup>iii</sup>
  - 1.9 The economic damage caused by plastic waste is vast. The direct economic costs of this marine litter to maritime industries, the cost of clean-up and on tourism in the UK are estimated at £103m per year.<sup>iv</sup>
  - 1.10 It is estimated that 95% of the value of plastic packaging material, worth \$80–120 billion annually is lost to the economy after a short first use.<sup>v</sup>



## 2. Policy context

- 2.1 Since 1975, the EU has been introducing laws to help minimise the harmful effects of waste and encourage Europeans to conserve natural resources. This has driven waste-management legislation and practices in Scotland, the UK, and every other EU member state.
- 2.2 It is the UK Government's policy that the UK will remain bound by existing EU

environmental law, subject to possible future review, but this is not legally straightforward. There is currently no clarity as to what status Commission guidance will have post-Brexit.

- 2.3 The [European Waste Framework Directive](#) came into force in December 2010. It focuses on waste prevention and on turning EU member states into societies that recycle waste.
- 2.4 Scotland's aim is to become a circular economy where products and materials are kept in high value use for as long as possible. Ultimately, the goal is to eliminate waste from the economy by designing better products and business models and making it easier for people to repair, re-use and recycle goods when they have finished with them.
- 2.5 The Scottish Government launched Scotland's first [Zero Waste Plan](#) in June 2010. The Plan sets out Scottish Government's vision for a zero waste society where all waste is seen as a resource; waste is minimised; valuable resources are not disposed of in landfills, and most waste is sorted, leaving only limited amounts to be treated. It sets long-term targets for recycling and composting 70% of all Scottish waste by 2025, and sending no more than 5% to landfill.
- 2.6 To support these aims, the [Waste \(Scotland\) Regulations](#) were passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2012. These regulations include requirements to separate key recyclable materials, including food waste that comes from homes and businesses in urban areas. There will ultimately be a ban on biodegradable waste going to landfill by 2021.
- 2.7 In December 2017, 193 members of the UN [signed a resolution](#) committing to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds by 2025 and to prioritise policies and measures to avoid marine litter and microplastics entering the marine environment.
- 2.8 The EU Strategy for [Plastics in a Circular Economy](#) was adopted in January 2018. It intends to transform the way plastic products are designed, used, produced and recycled in order to reduce the value of plastic that is lost from the economy each year after a very short use.
- 2.9 **Proposal for a directive on single use plastic packaging** - this proposal targets 70% of items thought to contribute to marine debris through a combination of bans; producer obligations; awareness raising measures; labelling; and consumption and collection targets. The European Parliament has overwhelmingly backed the proposal and this will go to EC for approval.
- 2.10 [The UK Plastics Pact](#) is a collaboration between WRAP, retailers, plastics recyclers, brands, manufacturers, NGOs, Governments and local authorities. The Pact's participants are responsible for more than 80% of the UK's supermarket plastic packaging and this voluntary agreement is the first of its kind the world. It sets out the following targets to be achieved by 2025:
  - Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative delivery models (such as reuse)
  - All plastic packaging reusable, recyclable, compostable
  - 70% of plastic packaging recycled, reused or composted
  - 30% recycled content across all plastic packaging



- 2.11 As a waste collection authority, Highland Council is required to abide by the above legislation and regulations.
- 2.12 The Highland Council has a duty under the [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) to reduce carbon emissions from its operations, including waste. The Act requires that a public body must, in exercising its functions, act:
- In the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets to reduce Scotland's emissions by 42% by 2020, and by 80% by 2050 against a 1990 baseline;
  - In the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and
  - In a way that it considers most sustainable
- 2.13 Following the [Paris Agreement](#), it was recognised that the targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 would not be sufficient to limit global temperature rise to the agreed 2 degrees centigrade (and ideally 1.5C) above pre-industrial levels by 2050. The Scottish Government therefore intends to introduce a new Climate Change Bill proposing even more ambitious targets, including a 56% reduction in emissions by 2020 and a 90% reduction by 2050.
- 2.14 [Highland Council's carbon management plan](#), which was last revised in 2013, is currently being updated to reflect this increased ambition and to better identify ways that the Council can support national, as well as global, climate change ambition.
- 2.15 The recent special report by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) has stressed that in order to keep global warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, rapid and far-reaching transitions across multiple sectors will need to occur. Whilst limiting global warming to no more than 2C above pre-industrial levels has been the de-facto target for global policy makers for many years, it is now recognised this limit will not be adequate to avoid many of the most severe impacts of climate change. The report highlights that, at current rates, human-caused warming is adding around 0.2C to global average temperatures every decade, and recognises that this is the result of both past and on-going emissions. If this rate continues, the report projects that global warming average is likely to reach 1.5C between 2030 and 2052. There is currently a high level of uncertainty in respect of whether keeping within this upper limit can realistically be achieved.
- 2.16 It remains vitally important that the Council continues to do all it can to reduce its emissions, wherever feasible. A key message which comes out of the IPCC report is that many of the types of actions which are needed to limit warming to 1.5C are already underway at the Highland Council, and need to be accelerated.
- 2.17 The implementation of the SUP Strategy and Action Plan will support the Council's efforts to reduce emissions by decreasing the volume of waste which is sent to landfill whilst raising awareness of these issues across the region.

### **3. Scottish Government / Zero Waste Scotland**

- 3.1 [Zero Waste Scotland](#) (ZWS) is funded by Scottish Government and the European Regional Development Fund. They were established to support the delivery of the Zero Waste Plan. ZWS works with businesses, communities, individuals and local authorities to help them reduce waste, recycle more and use resources sustainably.
- 3.2 3.1 Scottish Government (SG) has asked ZWS to propose a plan to eliminate and/or reduce the environmental impacts of single-use items consumed on SG estates. This piece of work will be undertaken by March 2019 and will support and reinforce the Council's efforts to reduce SUP.
- 3.3 ZWS will undertake a procurement and waste baseline in the first instance to quantify the whole-life carbon impacts of single-use items procured across the SG estate and to quantify a baseline contamination levels across all major waste streams (residual, organic, dry mixed recycling etc).
- 3.4 Baseline information will be used to identify practical interventions, which ZWS anticipates will fall into 3 categories. These are presented below in order of preference:

#### **Prevention**

These measures will aim to reduce and/or eliminate single-use items. This may be accomplished through compulsory behaviour change (e.g. banning certain items and compelling users to seek alternatives) or voluntary behaviour change (e.g. alternating the cost, convenience, accessibility or availability of single-use items or their reusable alternatives so the latter becomes preferable; education campaigns).

#### **Waste Management**

These measures will aim to reduce the waste impacts of single-use items by improving the way these items are disposed of, and ultimately treated. Measures are likely to focus on staff engagement and education, particularly around problematic items.

#### **Replacement**

Where specific single-use items cannot be eliminated, more sustainable single-use alternatives will be identified and scoped for procurement based on lifecycle analysis. Where replacement will require new waste treatment outcomes (e.g. switching from plastic to compostable utensils), this will be accompanied by a communications campaign and infrastructure rollout.

3.5 **Deposit return scheme**

The Scottish Government has committed to introducing a [deposit return scheme](#) to Scotland to reduce the volume of single use drinks containers which end up as plastic litter. Zero Waste Scotland has been asked to consider a range of design examples to determine what kind of scheme would work best for Scotland.

## **4. Scope of the strategy**

- 4.1 The most common single-use plastics found in the environment are, in order of magnitude, cigarette butts, plastic drinking bottles, plastic bottle caps, food wrappers, plastic grocery bags, plastic lids, straws and stirrers, other types of plastic bags, and foam take-away containers.<sup>vi</sup>
- 4.2 The Council recognises that discarded plastics, including non-recyclable cups, bottles and straws, are a major environmental pollutant and of detrimental impact to the Highland region and its communities.
- 4.3 Our efforts will focus on the items that will make the most difference to reducing plastics in the environment. The main use of SUP within the Council estate is through catering sundries. Addressing SUP in this sector provides the biggest opportunity to make a meaningful contribution in respect of the Council's efforts to reduce SUP.
- 4.4 Four key themes have been identified which need to be addressed to meaningfully reduce the volume of SUP consumed across Highland:
- Getting our own house in order;
  - Working with suppliers and contractors;
  - Helping raise awareness across Highland;
  - Enabling Highland to take action.
- 4.5 One of the key problems in respect of SUP is that we don't know the scale of the issue. An audit of Highland Council's SUP items and packaging is required to understand the level of consumption across the Council estate which has 1,100 offices/facilities across Highland (this includes buildings operated by High Life Highland. Once we have a baseline of SUP consumption, it will become much easier to set annual targets going forward.
- 4.6 The national and international picture in respect of tackling the issue of SUP is moving at pace. This strategy should be treated as a "live" document, which will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes in national policy whilst building on the good work which is already underway in Highland.

## **5. Highland Council's approach to SUP**

- 5.1 Action should be taken in line with the Council's waste hierarchy which identifies three waste disposal options and ranks them in order of importance. The 3Rs of reduce, reuse and recycle, classify waste management strategies according to their desirability.
- 5.2 Preventing waste has much greater carbon savings than recycling it and should always take first priority. Through preventing waste and by re-using products we remove the need to purchase more goods. The Highland Council is charged for every tonne of waste going to landfill and by reducing our waste this will reduce the costs associated with uplifting waste from our premises.
- 5.3 When waste is disposed of in a landfill site it produces methane gas as it decomposes. Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 25 times more powerful than

carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Reducing consumption and waste generation, and increasing reuse and recycling will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- 5.4 Highland Council has a leadership role to play in communicating to the public the reasons the Council is phasing out SUP, and encouraging them to switch to alternatives. We will support and reinforce good practice already underway in parts of Highland.

#### Case Study 1

The Wildcat Café in Fort William is an excellent example of a local business which is striving, and winning, in the battle to become plastic free. They no longer provide disposable cups, encouraging customers to bring their own cup and thus benefit from a 25p saving per drink. In addition, reusable cups can be purchased from the café, with a free hot drink provided along with every cup. The café also provides the facility to borrow a ceramic cup and return this to a number of collection points in Fort William.

The Café has its own shop, where customers can refill their own bags and containers with sourdough bread, organic vegetables, eco cleaning product refills, and unpackaged dry goods such as porridge oats and wholewheat pasta.

The Manager of the Wildcat Café, Stephen Kershaw said: “Customers have reacted positively to the ban on disposable cups and our customer base has grown by offering packaging-free shopping. We are working to be a zero waste business and always request plastic free packaging when we order from suppliers with the likes of the local bakery, Doughies, who provide our bread loose in returnable trays.

“We previously provided compostable cups, but had concerns about how these are disposed. Improper disposal could result in littering, or if they end up in landfill, they emit more emissions than a standard plastic cup. We decided to implement more sustainable, low carbon solutions, until we can be confident that compostable cups can be collected and treated appropriately.”

The Wildcat Café is also encouraging local business to sign up to the Refill app, which points people towards businesses which are willing to allow members of the public to top up their reusable water bottle at their premises.

#### Case Study 2

The Countryside Ranger Service, High Life Highland, runs a number of events to raise awareness and to tackle the impacts of plastic litter including clean ups with local volunteers, organisations and schools.

“Food in My Belly” is one of the projects the Countryside Ranger Service has run with various schools in Highland, looking at food chains and single-use plastics in the sea. Poetry and art created by pupils in response to what is ending up in the stomachs of marine creatures was displayed at the Highland Environment Forum’s marine conference in October

2018.

Jenny Grant, Wester Ross Countryside Ranger said: “The biggest problem we see, aside from vast amounts of plastics on our coastline, is the disposal of single use plastics in the countryside. Whether thrown out of cars or dumped beside overflowing bins where the wind will take it, there is a need to concentrate effort on educating visitors on the environmental impact of careless actions. We aim to tackle this by educating and exciting people about what is out there, allowing them to care about it and thinking about the consequences of each action. We try and do this in every school and public event we run, thus producing a holistic environmental education approach.”

Highland Council will raise awareness of the Countryside Ranger Service and the good work they undertake.

## 6. Things to consider

### 6.1 Life Cycle Thinking

6.1.1 The current debate around waste plastics has focussed on the impacts on marine pollution and has brought some people to question the long-term viability of single-use throw away society. However, some of the alternatives to single use plastics may be more impactful on climate change. Considering using alternatives such as non-plastics and reusable containers can result in counterintuitive consequences.

6.1.2 Life Cycle Thinking will be essential to ensure that reusable replacement products don't have a greater environmental impact than disposable alternatives. By considering all stages of a product's lifespan, including extraction of raw materials, construction, use and disposal, we can ensure that measures taken at one stage do not lead to unintended consequences in another.

6.1.3 For example, results from life cycle assessments<sup>vii</sup> suggest that:

- Cotton bags need to be used 173 times before they become more environmentally friendly than a single use plastic bag;
- Paper bags can decompose but have a higher carbon footprint than plastic ones, because the process of making them uses more energy; and
- A stainless steel water bottle needs to be used several hundred times before it is better for the environment than a single-use plastic one.

### 6.2 Compostable items

6.2.1 In many sites, including some in Highland, compostable plastics have been seen to be a good alternative to SUP. However, compostable plastics tend to exhibit similar aesthetic and physical properties as non-compostable plastics meaning that they are almost impossible to distinguish at a composting plant. There is no way for plant operators to determine whether they should be accepted in the process or screened out as contamination. Conversely, this same confusion arises at plastics recycling facilities which cannot differentiate between compostable and mainstream target plastic types.

6.2.2 It is unclear if there would be sufficient value in the market for compostable items to

merit investment in equipment to separate these from other waste streams. For example, it is estimated that around 208 million disposable coffee cups (DCCs) are thrown away each year in Scotland, resulting in approximately 3,000 tonnes of waste. However, this represents a tiny fraction of total Scottish waste or waste emission impacts. The relatively small mass makes it economically impractical to recycle DCC in Scotland using present technology. It should also be highlighted that the potential benefits from eliminating this highly visible material from the litter stream could have significant benefits but the potential carbon and tonnage benefits are relatively minor.<sup>viii</sup>

- 6.2.3 A key limitation of compostable plastics is that a period of six months is required to break down the material. This is unlikely to be realistic for composting facilities in the UK which typically process material over an eight to twelve-week period.
- 6.2.4 In principle, compostable cups appear to be environmentally preferable. However, under current arrangements it is likely that the majority of compostable cups end up in landfill where their breakdown produces methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more damaging than carbon dioxide.
- 6.2.5 In light of the above, Zero Waste Scotland recommends focusing on waste prevention via reuse as the preferred option for cups. If Highland Council opts to use compostable items, then the only way to ensure these are correctly disposed of is to have compostable facilities onsite.

## 7. Strategic objectives

The strategy has four strategic themes. For each theme we have identified a set of objectives:

### **Getting our own house in order**

The Highland Council (HC) is a large, diverse organisation that currently utilises a variety of single-use plastic (SUP) items. To promote HC's leadership role and incrementally reduce the range and quantities of SUP items used over the course of time, in HC locations we will, where economically and practically viable:

#### **Objective 1**

**Reduce environmental burdens through litter and carbon emissions by removing non-essential single use items**

#### **Objective 2**

**Encourage alternative practices and behaviours which will reduce the use of single use plastic items**

#### **Objective 3**

**Ensure appropriate recycling routes are available to capture plastic**

#### **Objective 4**

**Encourage and promote the use of sustainable food and beverage packaging and tableware choices to all staff and enforce appropriate use of workplace recycling systems**

#### **Working with suppliers and contractors**

HC procures goods and services, many of which will come into contact with single-use plastics (SUP items and the plastic content of packaging) at some point in their delivery. We will:

#### **Objective 5**

**Work with our suppliers to help us minimise our consumption of single-use plastic food and beverage packaging and tableware and encourage them to do the same**  
**Helping raise awareness across Highland**

Highland has a population of approximately 240,000 people with relatively high associated consumption of single-use plastics. To reduce the volume of SUP consumption across Highland and better capture the plastic which is consumed we will:

#### **Objective 6**

**Support schools to educate pupils about the impact of single-use plastic litter and to engage more generally with their local communities about waste**

#### **Objective 7**

**Raise awareness through pre-existing campaigns such as the Step Count Challenge**

#### **Objective 8**

**Support collaborative efforts to reduce single-use plastics amongst community planning partners**

#### **Objective 9**

**Increase awareness around waste hierarchy amongst Highland residents**

#### **Enabling Highland to take action**

The Highland Council has a leadership role in respect of reducing single-use plastics consumption within its own estate. However, we will also empower communities to take action themselves by:

#### **Objective 10**

**Promoting and encouraging community initiatives to remove plastic waste and litter from the environment**

#### **Objective 11**

**Encouraging re-use to replace single-use plastic water bottle use**

## **8. Reporting and review**

8.1 The strategy and action plan will be reviewed and updated annually. An update will be presented to the Council's Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee on an annual basis in November.



## Appendix 2 – Action Plan

### Getting our own house in order

The Highland Council (HC) is a large, diverse organisation that currently utilises a variety of single-use plastic (SUP) items. To promote HC's leadership role and incrementally reduce the range and quantities of SUP items used over the course of time, in HC locations we will, where economically and practically viable:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 1</b>				
<b>Reduce environmental burdens through litter and carbon emissions by removing non-essential single use items</b>				
1.1 Undertake a survey of council staff to provide an estimated baseline of HC single-use plastic items	By March 2019	Climate Change team  Eco Officers	Staff time	Analysis of staff survey results
1.2 Consider eliminating or reducing specific single-use items taking lifecycle analysis into account	Ongoing	Procurement  Eco Officers  Scotland Excel	Staff time Training	Uptake of alternatives
1.3 Identify any single-use plastic items that can easily be avoided or substituted from Council buildings, and remove them. Cost-benefit analyses will be carried out prior to the selection of any alternatives	Ongoing	Catering team  Procurement	Staff time Revenue Budgets	Uptake of alternatives
1.4 Baseline SUP item consumption where feasible with a view to setting targets for reduction under next iteration of Action Plan	November 2019	Catering team	Staff time	Outcomes of study
1.5 Pilot the use of compostable items in HQ / other venues	December 2020	Waste Awareness team	Infrastructure  Staff time  Revenue	Levels of recycle captured Staff survey

			budgets – no budget has been identified to deliver this, at present.	
<b>Objective 2</b>				
<b>Encourage alternative practices and behaviours which will reduce the use of single use plastic items</b>				
2.1 Provide Elected Members with reusable cups whilst removing all plastic alternatives	January 2019	Climate Change team  Business Gateway	74 x reusable cups	Survey Use of cups
2.2 Offer incentives for staff using their own cups and crockery e.g. discounted drink/meal, every tenth drink free	December 2019	Catering team	Revenue budgets	Level of uptake
2.3 Reduce the visibility and prevalence of plastic cutlery item options in canteen(s)	April 2020	Catering team	Alternative items Revenue budgets	Spot surveys Reduction in spend on plastic cutlery
2.4 Lochaber High School to explore opportunities for sponsorship towards purchase of reusable bottles	November 2019	Lochaber High School	Staff and pupil time	Level of funding secured
<b>Objective 3</b>				
<b>Ensure appropriate recycling routes are available to capture plastic</b>				
3.1 Review numbers and locations of waste and recycling bins at HQ to ensure they support recycling aims with a view to developing case study for roll out elsewhere. Improve signage and advice to make it clear what materials can be recycled	December 2019	Waste Awareness team  Eco Officers	Infrastructure  Staff Time  Resources – funding – ideally, a central budget should be identified to support this.	Increased capture of recycling

3.2 Pilot onsite compostable facilities at HQ and Lochaber High School with a view to establishing proof of concept	December 2020	Waste Awareness team  Lochaber High School	Infrastructure Staff and pupil time	Level of recyclate captured
<b>Objective 4</b> <b>Encourage and promote the use of sustainable food and beverage packaging and tableware choices to all staff and enforce appropriate use of workplace recycling systems</b>				
4.1 Site specific emails, information on Intranet and features in Highpoints magazine to remind and encourage staff to use the recycling systems correctly	December 2019	Eco Officers / Waste Awareness team	Staff time	Number of communications issued  Survey
4.2 A dedicated campaign focussing on single-use plastics will be undertaken by the Eco officer network pulling together all the key themes from the strategy	May 2019	Climate Change team  Eco Officers	Staff time	Feedback from Eco Officers

### Working with suppliers and contractors

HC procures goods and services, many of which will come into contact with single-use plastics (SUP items and the plastic content of packaging) at some point in their delivery. We will:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 5</b> <b>Work with our suppliers to help us minimise our consumption of single-use plastic food and beverage packaging and tableware and encourage them to do the same</b>				
5.1 Identify relevant national frameworks due for renewal and participate in User Intelligence Groups to lobby for increased sophistication in sustainability credentials	On going	Procurement  Catering Team  Climate Change Team	Staff time  Training	Frameworks examined

5.2 Engage with Scotland Excel and key suppliers to identify and promote a broader range of cost neutral sustainable alternatives to SUP items and encourage purchasers to adopt the most sustainable options	On going	Procurement Catering Team	Staff time	No. of alternatives identified
5.3 Through contract specifications and community benefits, look to reduce the plastic content of packaging and promote the responsible disposal of packaging by suppliers where this would be “proportionate and relevant” to the subject matter of the contract	On going	Procurement Purchasing teams	Staff time Training	Ongoing monitoring of community benefits
5.4 Further develop shared sustainability good practice with Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council and to identify areas for operational and strategic collaboration	On going	Procurement Climate Change team Aberdeen City Council Aberdeenshire Council	Staff time	Annual Public Bodies Climate Change report

### Helping raise awareness across Highland

Highland has a population of approximately 240,000 people with relatively high associated consumption of single-use plastics. To reduce the volume of SUP consumption across Highland and better capture the plastic which is consumed we will:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 6</b> <b>Support schools to educate pupils about the impact of single-use plastic litter and to engage more generally with their local communities about waste</b>				
6.1 Roll out Highland Climate Challenge	October 2019	TBC	Budget	Waste captured through portal

gamification portal to all primary schools in Highland			Staff time	
6.2 Run a competition for schools to develop a suitable brand to be used in all anti-waste campaigns across Highland	September 2019	Climate Change team	Staff time	Volume of responses
<b>Objective 7</b> <b>Raise awareness through pre-existing campaigns such as the Step Count Challenge</b>				
7.1 Encourage participants in Step Count Challenge to photograph litter, deposit in nearest bin and upload image to Open Litter Map	May – July 2019	Climate Change team H&S team	Staff time	Litter captured via Open Litter Map  Number of participants
<b>Objective 8</b> <b>Support collaborative efforts to reduce single-use plastics amongst community planning partners</b>				
8.1 Work with community planning partners (CPP) to encourage the uptake of mutually-reinforcing strategies to reduce plastic pollution in a catering sundries context	On going	CPP Chief Officers' Group  Climate Change team	Staff time	Uptake of strategies and actions by CPP  Annual Public Bodies Climate Change report
8.2 Present an update on the Council's work to reduce single-use plastics to a Highland Environment Forum (HEF) meeting in 2019	March 2019	Climate Change team	Staff time	Feedback from HEF meeting
<b>Objective 9</b> <b>Increase awareness around waste hierarchy amongst Highland residents</b>				
9.1 Undertake focussed campaign to re-engage public about the importance of the waste hierarchy	October 2019	Waste Awareness team	Staff time  Revenue budgets	Survey

## Enabling Highland to take action

The Highland Council has a leadership role in respect of reducing single-use plastics consumption within its own estate. However, we will also empower communities to take action themselves by:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 10</b>				
<b>Promoting and encouraging community initiatives to remove plastic waste and litter from the environment</b>				
10.1 Share examples of best practice through press releases and social media	On going	Climate Change team Corporate Communications	Staff time	Social media "hits" Number of press releases/features
10.2 Create a network to link proactive businesses and communities together to share best practice	November 2019	Climate Change team Web Development team	Staff time	Number of sign-ups
10.3 Collaborate with Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) to investigate whether Zero Waste Town initiatives can be replicated in Highland	On going	Climate Change team	Staff time	Outcomes of research
10.4 Collaborate with ZWS to publicise funding opportunities e.g. Action on Plastics Fund	On going	Climate Change team Waste Awareness team	Staff time	Levels of funding uptake
<b>Objective 11</b>				
<b>Encouraging re-use to replace single-use plastic water bottle use</b>				
11.1 Research feasibility of setting up "Refill" Highland scheme in public spaces in collaboration with Scottish Water and others	October 2019	Climate Change team Scottish Water	Staff time Match funding (potentially)	Launch of scheme Number of sign-ups

## Bibliography

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- <sup>i</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, [Single-Use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability](#) (2018)
- <sup>ii</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation , [The New Plastics Economy - Rethinking the Future of Plastics](#) (2016)
- <sup>iii</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation , [The New Plastics Economy - Rethinking the Future of Plastics](#) (2016)
- <sup>iv</sup> Jeo Lee, [Economic valuation of marine litter and microplastic pollution in the marine environment: An initial assessment of the case of the United Kingdom](#) (2015)
- <sup>v</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation , [The New Plastics Economy - Rethinking the Future of Plastics](#) (2016)
- <sup>vi</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, [Single-Use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability](#) (2018)
- <sup>vii</sup> Resource Futures and Nextek, [Eliminating avoidable plastic waste by 2042: a use-based approach to decision and policy making](#) (June 2018)
- <sup>viii</sup> [Zero Waste Scotland submission of 27 April 2017](#) in response to petition PE01636 calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce legislation requiring that all single use drinks cups (including all sleeves, labels & lids) be 100% biodegradable.