

	SINGLE USE PLASTICS
Committee	Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee
Committee Date	19 June 2018
Significant Decision	No
Responsible Officers	Andy Pritchard, Strategy and Development Manager 01452 427014; andy.pritchard@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Main Consultees	None
Purpose of Report	To summarise activities relating to single use plastics in Gloucestershire.
Recommendations	It is recommended that the Committee notes the report.
Resource Implications	None

1. Context and communications

- 1.1 Recent months have seen increased media coverage of the growing problems caused by plastic waste in our towns, landscapes, rivers and oceans. This has caught the public eye and there is momentum growing in many areas, as local level actions and debate around policy measures gather pace.
- 1.2 The Joint Waste Team (JWT) is engaging in this directly by the delivery of a number of communications and campaigns on the subject. Traditionally the JWT undertakes a seasonal campaign on waste reduction and recycling at times of summer sporting events, when people may gather together for parties, barbeques and other social events. The football World Cup presents us with this opportunity this year, and a campaign has been prepared to remind people to recycle their plastic containers as well as their drinks bottles and other packaging. This has been complemented with weekly 'Waste Free Wednesday' social media posts, highlighting simple steps that people can take to cut back on their plastic waste.
- 1.3 Further campaign activity will be undertaken locally in support of WRAPs national recycle week at the end of September. This year's theme will be: '**Recycling. We do. Because it matters.**' The theme is designed to capture attention and put across simple but important messages about why recycling matters. Partners will have the opportunity to bust myths and demonstrate why recycling is beneficial – keeping materials in use, and out of our environment. The JWT will utilise these messages and campaign materials within Gloucestershire to further reinforce our commitment to reducing plastic waste.

2. Wider council commitments

- 2.1 Both Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council have agreed to work to reduce the amount of single use plastics in circulation.
- 2.2 At the Meeting of Cotswold District Council held on 20th February 2018, Council noted the positive impact of recycling services and the plastic bag levy. It also agreed:
- I. to undertake an audit of its own use of plastics and to take steps to replace these with reusable alternatives.
 - II. to play a role in educating the public.
 - III. to increase the amount of plastics recycled through its collection services.
 - IV. to lobby government to introduce tighter regulations on the use of plastics.
 - V. to encourage local businesses to reduce their use of plastics, including the sale of these items in supermarkets.
- 2.3 At the meeting of Gloucestershire County Council held on 28th March 2018, Council noted the negative impact of single use plastics and the positive impact of the plastic bag levy. It also agreed:
- VI. to become a 'single-use plastic free' council across all sites.
 - VII. to establish a working group to examine all options for the above.
 - VIII. to demonstrate leadership in educating Gloucestershire's residents.
 - IX. to lobby government to introduce tighter regulations on the use of plastics.
- 2.4 Through the communications programme outlined above, the Joint Waste Team will contribute to the implementation of these objectives, and will continue to consider and develop recycling services which further these aims.
- 2.5 There has also been recent interest both nationally and locally on the recycling of single use beverage cups (takeaway coffee cups). These are not widely recycled due to the difficulty in separating the laminate materials that they are often made from. Some recycling outlets are becoming available, but are not widespread. Larger coffee shop chains have introduced take-back schemes, but coverage varies. Some local businesses have begun providing compostable coffee cups as an alternative. If these can be kept separate from other wastes then they are technically recyclable and could be recycled in commercial composting and anaerobic digestion facilities within Gloucestershire. Key to this is ensuring that these products are kept separate and free from contamination. The most preferable option, in terms of waste prevention, is to avoid single use products and use a reusable container whenever possible.

3. WRAP plastic pact

- 3.1 Leading brand manufacturers, industry bodies, campaign groups and the Welsh and Scottish governments have signed up to WRAP's new 'plastic pact'. The UK Plastics Pact is a collaboration which brings together businesses from across the entire plastics value chain. Pact members are at the forefront of generating a fundamental change in the way plastics will be designed, produced, used, re-used, disposed of and reprocessed.
- 3.2 The Pact aims to stimulate innovative new business models to reduce the total amount of plastic packaging. It will also help build a stronger recycling system, where we take more responsibility for our own waste, and ensure plastic packaging can be effectively recycled and made into new products and packaging and, with the support of governments, ensure consistent UK recycling is met. The immediate focus will be on identifying the priority projects that will deliver greatest impacts in the short and long term, such as overcoming barriers to increasing the amount of recycled content

used in new packaging, developing reusable packaging and working with partners to overcome the issue of un-recyclable black plastic.

- 3.3 The Pact aims to deliver significant change over the next few years, aiming to achieve the following by 2025;
- 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.
 - 70% of plastic packaging to be recycled or composted.
 - take actions to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single use packaging items through redesign, innovation or alternative (reuse) delivery models.
 - 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging.
- 3.4 The Pact is a positive step, bringing together key supply chain decision makers and influencers. If successful, it will facilitate improvements at all stages of design, supply, use and end-of-life, and will significantly improve recycling and disposal options, supporting reprocessing markets and therefore helping local authorities in delivering their own ambitions. The JWT has enquired how local authorities can get involved and await further information from WRAP on how we might be able to engage with the pact in future.
- 3.5 The Governments Waste and Resources Strategy review, due to be published at the end of the year, is expected to contain complimentary objectives. The JWT will maintain a view on the development of this strategy as it emerges and will report back to the Committee at a later date. The new national strategy will also provide the context for the review of Gloucestershire's Joint Waste Strategy, which is to be reviewed in 2019/20.