

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 July 2022

Report of the Assistant Director Travel, Environmental and Countryside Access Services

Single Use Plastics

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the status of Single Use Plastics following a report to North Yorkshire County Council's Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2021.

2.0 Key Background Information

- 2.1 Since December 2020, the Council has taken a more proactive stance on the matter on reducing single use plastics both within its own affairs and also, by influencing others, the affairs of external organisations such as schools and suppliers.
- 2.2 An update was provided to Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2021. At that point in time some progress had been made across the action areas, it was noted that significant demand for Council resources existed, notably exiting from COVID-19 lockdown measures as well as Local Government Reorganisation. However, some opportunities were highlighted, for example with staff returning to office space the profile of this agenda could be raised to help move it forward.
- 2.3 It was also agreed that this agenda be rolled into the Beyond Carbon initiative and monitored through that arrangement. So, whilst this update is stand alone on the agenda, in future it will be covered through a broader set of environmental measures.

3.0 Recent Progress and Update

- 3.1 The recommended actions are split into short and medium term considerations however the action is best captured under three categories: 1) Procurement & Contract Management, 2) Property & Facilities and 3) Public Engagement (education). It should also be recognised that Council resources continue to be strained across a number of significant areas, notably Local Government Reorganisation and the emerging issue of pay and staff retention.

Procurement and Contract Management

- 3.2 The current procurement and contract management strategy expires at the end 2022, having been in place for four years. This had a clear focus on bringing category management to the Council's third party spend of approaching £500M per year and in the delivery of £1.275M of targeted savings.

- 3.3 A refresh to the strategy has commenced, led by the Council, with initial conversation with the procurement functions within all the borough and district authorities. To date two common themes have been identified:
- i) Working with local SME / VCSE. Defining what local means for the new council and how the balance between delivering social value and commercial pressures is aligned.
 - ii) Delivery of a sustainable future. Commencing with baselining the current supply chain against the aspirations of the new council and taking forward those requirements in a staged and practical manner as we approach 2030.
- 3.4 The refreshed strategy intends to be a roadmap, taking steps including the immediate compliant delivery of the new council, moving forward towards the better engagement of SME alongside delivery of carbon neutral targets. As the new council's directions are crystallised and made clear the refreshed strategy will need to map and evolve to those aspirations.
- 3.5 The anticipated reform to public sector procurement in 2023 will be included in the strategy roadmap. The expected change to the requirement for the acceptance of the most economically advantageous tender to simply the most advantageous tender which will add transparency to enable wider considerations of value.
- 3.6 Other aspects of the developing refreshed strategy are on the elimination in use of problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging, diversity in the supply chain, biodiversity and minimisation of environmental impact.

Commercial lifecycle

- 3.7 While in development of a procurement, encouragement is made with stakeholders to implement best practice with regards to sustainable procurement and contract delivery. Going beyond the minimal legislative standards cannot be currently enforced by the Procurement and Contract Management Service and reliance on deliverables remains with the commissioning service.
- 3.8 Contract performance is the next key aspect in the transition to carbon neutrality and delivery of social value. The outcomes promised in any contract must be managed, monitored and reported upon to ensure they are delivered otherwise their opportunity may be lost and value eroded.
- 3.9 With an ongoing focus on contract management, the Service encourages all contract stakeholders from the Senior Responsible Officer to the operational lead to undertake training via the toolkit offered. The Service continues to work with the Government Commercial Function in developing its approach to contract management best practice.

Property and Facilities

- 3.10 Internal staff communication is a useful aid to help raise the profile of single use plastics and the impact they have on the environment. As an example, The Big Plastic Count (<https://thebigplasticcount.com/>) has recently been promoted through the intranet and internal communications (shown in Appendix 1).
- 3.11 To date, the water dispensers at Council offices have been provided with single use plastic cups, steps have been taken to wind down that provision. Whilst 'compostable' cups will be provided instead, messages will continue to be communicated that people should use their own drinks cup (e.g. re-usable bottle, mug, etc...) and only use the provided cup sparingly. For catered meetings, glasses will be provided on the catering trolleys. The Workplace team are the responsible service and budget holder. They have worked together with Procurement colleagues to source the compostable cups and are now identifying appropriate disposal options / green waste contracts at each site.

- 3.12 Plans are in place to re-open the County Hall staff canteen. As part of that planning, steps are being put in place to minimise single use plastics. In a similar way to the water dispensers, the message will be to bring your own re-useable mug or bottle for take-away coffees.

Public Engagement

- 3.13 This area is focused on outward facing messages and engagement. Since the last update, a number of communications have been launched. Some examples are shown in Appendix 1 as well as the following links:
<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/how-cut-back-single-use-plastics-work-and-home>
<https://www.refill.org.uk/refill-schemes/start-a-scheme/>
<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/north-yorkshire-rotters>
- 3.14 Through its role, the Council has been engaging with schools more broadly to support and promote their own environmental sustainability agenda. Council officers have been speaking with schools and signposting to resources available to help them. Some examples include:
<https://www.pect.org.uk/projects/blueprint/>
<https://plasticfreeschools.org.uk/>
'Plastic Clever' schools award – created by 2 children [Kids Against Plastic](#).
- 3.15 The Council has also been working with supermarkets to promote the use of plastic wrap recycling points at their shops. Whilst not directly publicising the need to reduce single use plastic, by encouraging shoppers to use recyclable material instead and also making easy to do so, then it is more likely they will be conscious of what packaging they are buying.

4.0 National Intervention

- 4.1 In addition to the activity taking place by the Council, it is important to recognise the broader picture and that through the Resources & Waste Strategy, the government is looking to intervene and see improvements in this area.
- 4.2 Through that strategy, there are a variety of different measures many of which will not have a direct impact on single use plastics. However, the most relevant one is what's called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Quoting government:
“Extended Producer Responsibility is an established policy approach adopted by many countries around the world, across a broad range of products and materials. It gives producers an incentive to make better, more sustainable decisions at the product design stage including decisions that make it easier for products to be re-used or recycled at their end of life. It also places the financial cost of managing products once they reach end of life on producers.”
- 4.3 In other words, the cost for processing and disposing of product packaging will be borne by the producer. It is expected that cost will be passed on to the customer thereby a direct incentive to produce less packaging waste. This policy and therefore charging will come into force from 1 April 2024.

5.0 Finance

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising specifically, however, some of the direct steps the council is taking through its procurement strategy and supply chain management could have financial implications for the Council and these would be picked up as part of specific decisions in these areas.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council recognises the importance of reducing single use plastics both within its own affairs and also, by influencing others, the affairs of external organisations. It continues to take steps to promote the issue and provide guidance and resources where appropriate. It is also taking direct steps through its procurement strategy, supply chain management and use within its facilities to reduce availability and consumption of the material.
- 6.2 Looking ahead, this agenda will feature as part of the Beyond Carbon programme rather than be presented as a standalone item.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that:
- Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the update on Single Use Plastics provided through the report, and
 - Recognise this theme within the wider Beyond Carbon programme.

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Date: 11 July 2022

For further information, contact the author of the report

Examples of social media communication

The Big Plastic Count 2022

Submitted by Charley Christopher on Mon, 16/05/2022 - 11:06

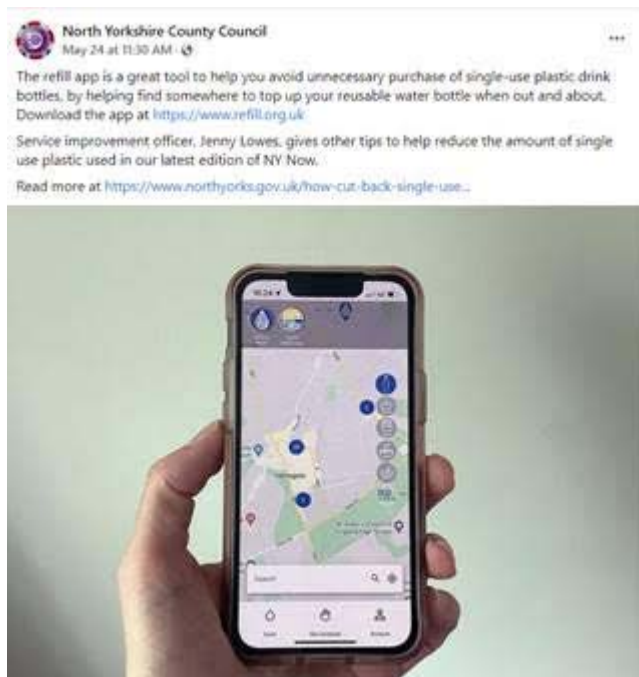


Count your plastic for one week - 16-22 May 2022.

This week, across the country, households of all shapes and sizes, schools, community groups and businesses, will gather new evidence. How much plastic are we really having to throw away, and what happens to it?

We're going to show the government it's time to commit: reduce single plastic use by 50% by 2025 by switching to reusable options that work for everyone - and ban sending our waste to other countries.

To get involved follow the link: [The Big Plastic Count](#)
You'll be sent a fantastic digital pack with a tally sheet to enable to you keep track of your plastic!





northyorkscrc • Following

northyorkscrc Alerton Waste Recovery Park recently found that 12% of rubbish was plastic wrap and films. We often don't realise how much plastic wrap there is in the kitchen - biscuits, crisps, bread bags, frozen food bags, yoghurt lids, cereal bags...

It's now easier than ever to recycle these at most supermarkets.

Find your nearest participating supermarket at: <http://www.recydenow.com/peatthecycle>

Supermarkets collect the plastic film at the front of the store and then use "reverse haulage" so that when new stock is delivered, the empty lorry takes away all their plastic wrapping. The plastic is recycled at UK reproducers, which use it to make recycled plastic carrier bags and rubbish bags.

Plastic bags and wrapping are lightweight plastics that cannot be placed in recycling bins at home, here's what to do:

- Clean it - First, rinse your packaging out.
- Scrunch it - Now, scrunch it up tight - if it pings back, that's a useful indicator it's soft plastic.
- Recycle it - Pop it into one of the soft plastics recycling units in a supermarket near you.

#Recycling #Recycle #PlasticRecycling #NorthYorkshire #NorthYorks #Yorkshire

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