

Committee(s):	Date:
Public Relations and Economic Development Sub (Policy & Resources) Committee (for Decision)	29 May 2018
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee (for Information)	22 May 2018
Subject: Plastic Free City	Public
Report of: Carolyn Dwyer – Director DBE	For Information
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Summary

In January 2018 the Port Health and Environmental Service Committee agreed:

- the commencement of a high-profile project in 2018 with the aim to reduce single use plastics within the Corporation and across the City of London.

This report details the progress that has been made so far on developing the project, the various workstreams that have been identified, and the next steps to ensure the successful delivery of these workstreams.

Recommendations

Members of the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Committee are asked to:

- Agree a high-profile project in 2018 with the aim to reduce single use plastics across the City Corporation and wider City of London.
- Support the various workstreams detailed in the report.
- Note the funding approach for the project.
- Agree branding

Members of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Reliance on single use plastics is a key environmental issue that must be tackled to diminish the climate change impact of the production of plastics in large quantities and the resulting plastic pollution. The issue has increased in profile over recent months and coverage in Blue Planet II has dramatically increased public awareness. The City Corporation has a responsibility to encourage the reduction of single use plastics and ocean plastic litter.
2. The City Corporation is in an excellent position to lead by example and help businesses and individuals reduce their use of single use plastics where alternative solutions exist.

Current Position

3. In January 2018 the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee agreed the commencement of a high-profile project in 2018 with the aim to reduce single use plastics in the Corporation and encourage businesses across the Square Mile to do likewise. This campaign will require a collaborative approach across the City Corporation and with businesses, workers and residents to create the behaviour changes necessary to reduce single use plastics consumption and litter across the City.
4. A working group with representatives from across the City Corporation, chaired by the Director of the Built Environment, has been convened to further develop ideas, oversee the project, and engage support from all areas of the organisation.
5. Initial meetings have been held with the communications agency Barley Communications, who worked on the successful “Square Mile Challenge”, to ensure maximum launch coverage. A separate design process has begun for the branding and identity of the project as shown in Appendix A.
6. The following campaign elements and workstreams have been identified to ensure the successful delivery of the project.

Workstreams

7. **Pledge for businesses to reduce single use plastics:** Businesses will be asked to pledge to reduce their consumption of single use plastics, such as straws, bottles, cups, single use coffee pods, cutlery and utensils, sachets, food and takeaway containers, plastic bags, and individual food wraps. As the pledge is voluntary it will initially focus more on assisting businesses reach their goals and share their stories and successes, rather than policing their achievements. Pledged businesses will be listed on the Plastic Free City website and given a certificate and window sticker to publicise the campaign.
8. Alongside pledged businesses the website will feature guidance and resources for individuals and business to assist in reducing single use plastics, share individuals and businesses stories and good practice, along with links to other useful and informative web resources. Upon registration businesses will be asked, where possible, to identify their current annual use of these products to quantify the amount of single use plastic removed by the project. Businesses will initially be approached through current schemes, such as the Clean City Awards Scheme and the Clean Streets Partnership, along with asking others to register interest on the webpage via the launch.
9. The City Corporation will address its own use of single use plastics with a review of where they are currently used within the organisation and plans put in place to remove or replace with alternatives. A working sub group has been set up with representatives from the City Surveyors department as they manage most of the buildings, City Procurement to ensure that these requirements are met by key contractors and suppliers and Cleansing to provide waste management advice. This will also require clear messaging and enforcement from all Senior Management, support for which was agreed at Summit Group in February 2018.

10. **Developing a refill culture across the City:** There is a proposed programme for ten new water refill points across the Square Mile to be installed over the next two years. These points, in addition to the six drinking fountains that already exist, will be mapped and locatable on the City website and on the established nationwide Refill mobile app.
11. The project will work with Refill to sign up a large number (circa 200) of businesses to be registered as water refill points. This will include many licensed premises in the Square Mile, who are currently required to provide water on request. It is also envisaged that many businesses signing the pledge will be encouraged register as Refill points where possible. Whilst the nationwide Refill app will be the main way to find refill points, the project will also look at updating this information on to other resources, such as the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain & Cattle Trough Association's Find A Fountain application.
12. **Campaigns to change behaviour:** As a substantial amount of litter that gets into the oceans starts as litter on land, an essential part of dealing with this problem is by reducing littering in general. To raise awareness of the damage caused by plastic litter getting into the Thames the project will run a highly visible and impactful campaign along the riverfront and the bridges over the summer. This will also be beneficial in enhancing the enjoyment of the environment along the riverfront. Officers will also work with schools to promote the campaign messages as well as supporting Thames foreshore litter picks, in association with Thames21.
13. One of the easiest ways individuals can reduce their use of single use plastics is by increasing their use of reusables. As part of the project there will be a campaign to promote the use of reusable products, not just for water and cups, but food stuffs too, that seeks to normalise and increase their use across the City. It is envisaged we can work with some major food retailers to accept and promote reusable food containers in store, along with promoting this practice at food stalls, markets, and canteens.
14. The launch for the project is intended for June 2018. This will fit with the launch of the new Corporate Plan and demonstrates how the City Corporation is actioning some of the plans key aims around positively impacting people and the environment. Throughout the year we intend to maintain the high profile of the project with planned announcements for newsworthy stories, which might include a competition to design a new fountain, or the installation of a new fountain at the site of the first ever municipal drinking fountain (1867 at Holborn Viaduct). Along with this updates on the amount of plastic reduced by the pledge and the numbers of businesses participating.
15. Consideration is being given to including policies within the new Local Plan that will require new developments to make provision for water bottle refill sites and the project will also look at the possible regulatory powers the City Corporation (and other Local Authorities) have to reduce the amount of single use plastics across the Square Mile, either through licensing or planning regulation.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

16. Section four of the new Corporate Plan sets the aim for the City to positively impact people and the environment by championing responsible practices to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes. This project also shows the City Corporation leading by example; demonstrating our own commitment and achievements as well as encouraging other organisations and individuals to make responsible choices.

Implications

17. A full funding strategy is currently being investigated but it is anticipated that funding and resources for most of the project workstreams will be met from existing budgets, or where applicable, from an application for funding from the Priorities Investment Pot. It is anticipated that some of the funding for the water refill points and drinking fountains (some of which may be within planned street scene projects) will be met Section 106 funds where possible.

Conclusion

18. The current focus on ocean litter presents an opportunity for the City Corporation to position itself as a leading force in sustainable behaviour and provide assistance, encouragement and guidance to residents, workers and businesses about how they can contribute to reducing their consumption of single use plastics.

Appendices

- Plastic Free City – Identity and Brand Design

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Appendix A - Plastic Free City – Identity and Brand Design



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