

Committee(s)	Dated:
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	24 January 2017
Subject: Square Mile Coffee Cup Challenge	Public
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Information
Report author: Jim Graham, Department of the Built Environment	

Summary

This report sets out to members of this committee the Cleansing Services plans for a high profile campaign regarding the recycling of disposable coffee cups which will take place in April 2017.

The City is working with Hubbub, an environmental charity, and Simply Cups, a specialist recycling company, to challenge businesses, workers, visitors and residents in the City of London to recycle one million coffee cups during April 2017.

This will be achieved through a mixture of temporary on street recycling bins during the month and signing up businesses, transport stations and coffee retailers to Simply Cups' recycling service. The campaign is wholly funded by coffee retailers and cup manufacturers which will pay for the on street provision and part fund the provision of collection points and recycling service in businesses that join the campaign.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Contrary to common belief, most disposable coffee cups are not recyclable at the majority of Materials Recycling Facilities due to the plastic inner lining being difficult to separate from the paper composite that makes up outer cup. Not only does this mean they can't be recycled with other materials, they can contaminate the recycling waste stream when mistakenly placed in a mixed dry recycling bin.
2. Understanding of this issue has grown during this year, partly due to a high profile campaign by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's BBC programme War on Waste. With this understanding has also come an increased pressure for coffee retailers and Materials Recycling Facilities to do something about the problem.

3. Whilst we have no definitive figures on the amount of coffee cups used in the City of London per day, with around 400,000 people working in the Square Mile every day we can assume it is a significant amount. After cigarette waste they make up our largest litter issue with around 15% of transects surveyed in our Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) NI 195 environmental condition surveys containing littered disposable coffee cups.

Current Position

4. The Cleansing Team have continuously raised this issue at industry networking events over the past year and as result were approached by Simply Cups and Hubbub in October 2016 to develop a joint campaign that would help raise aware of this problem and create a sustainable infrastructure to recycle cups in the City. The aim is to educate people that disposable coffee cups can be recycled if separated correctly and sent to a specialist recycler and to demonstrate to other cities how coffee cup recycling campaigns can be effective and make a difference.

Proposals

5. The campaign has two main approaches, firstly to recruit as many businesses (targeting those with over 250 employees and who are already members of the Cheapside Business Alliance, Clean City Awards Scheme, Considerate Contractors Scheme and Clean Streets Partnership) as possible to sign up to the Simply Cups recycling service in advance of the April challenge. In addition £22,000 has been secured from coffee retailers to assist in providing businesses with the bins to collect coffee cups and Simply Cups has agreed discounted rates for the initial two years of their service. Secondly, the City will install up to 8 coffee cup shaped on street recycling bins (see Appendix A) and equip all 41 Street Sweepers and Tidy Teams with the ability to collect disposable cups separately for recycling.
6. The Simply Cups service would normally costs companies a £1,000 per annum membership fee and a £1.50 charge per bag of empty cups collected. As most waste collection companies will not take disposable cups as recycling they would need to go in a general waste bag. For comparison Amey are currently charging customers on average £1.72 per bag of general waste. For the campaign Simply Cups are proposing to reduce their bag charge to £1.20 per bag and reduce the membership to £250 per annum for two years. Please note these figures are indicative and may slightly change as the campaign is finalised.
7. The target to collect one million cups during April has been chosen to achieve maximum publicity for the campaign. The collected cups will be counted at Simply Cups recycling facility by weight using an average cup weight to ascertain the total. The real aim behind the challenge is to sign up as many businesses as possible to Simply Cups to create a sustainable infrastructure for the recycling of disposable cups in the City of London.
8. In agreeing the support of main coffee retailers and manufacturers we have also been able to get Costa Coffee and Pret-a-Manger to agree to install recycling

bins in their shops in the City of London, not just for the duration of the campaign but for foreseeable future too. We have also already signed up Network Rail at Liverpool Street (and are due to meet with Managers at Fenchurch Street) to install bins and ensure cups collected by their cleaners are included in the scheme. These two sources of cups, along with those collected by the City street cleansing teams, should provide a sizeable contribution to the target and City of London Officers will continue to seek more high profile partnerships, especially with other coffee retailers, over the next three months.

9. During the campaign month, currently proposed as April, there will be on street promotional events held by our Street Environment Team to raise awareness of the issue and campaign, direct people to the on street recycling bins and provide information about how their company can get involved. These will be held outside major transport hubs with a large banner to draw attention and 2-3 Officers on hand to speak to approach people and provide information.
10. As part of the campaign the City will identify key coffee cup litter hotspots which will be independently surveyed before, during and after the campaign to gauge the impact of this campaign on people's behaviour. We will use our partner Hubbub, personal visits, social media, our website and printed media to promote the initiative. Surveying of people's awareness and perception of the coffee cup recycling and the effectiveness of the campaign will also be carried out.
11. A press event will be utilised to promote the campaign and the ongoing current total during the month will be updated on line and through social media. The campaign will also organise an event at the end of the month for press and all involved to unveil the final target and future plans.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. The campaign fits with the City's strategic aim to create high quality public realm that attracts and responds to new development, enhances the historic environment and is enjoyable to experience.
13. This campaign fits with the Department of the Built Environment's Key Delivery Theme of delivering an attractive inclusive and safe public realm and make the City an even more sustainable place in the future.

Implications

14. The current funding for this campaign has been provided by three coffee retailers, Pret-a-Manger, Costa and Starbucks, along with two coffee cup manufacturers, Bunzl and Huhtamaki.
15. There are no financial costs from Simply Cups to the City for the cups collected on street for recycling during the campaign. There may even be a small cost saving to the City via a reduction in our general tonnage for the month from cups diverted from our on street general waste bins.

16. Officer's time for the on street promotion of the campaign can be combined with current working schedules.
17. Officers have considered the one million cup target and concerns over the PR and reputational issues around not fully achieving this. As we already have three large sources of cups for recycling from the two retailers, Liverpool Street Station, and the City's street cleansing teams, officers believe the target is achievable, and even if it were missed, the amount of cups collected would still be an amount sizeable enough to be proud of achieving. The main aim of this campaign is signing up companies to a cup recycling service, so the legacy of this campaign will not just be the number of cups recycled in April 2017 but also the amount of cups recycled in the future.

Conclusion

18. This campaign has the opportunity to provide the City with not only an ongoing infrastructure to recycle coffee cups but also be a world leader in successfully dealing with this key environmental issue. This opportunity comes at no cost to the City and companies who join the campaign are able to make cost savings on their waste disposal for two years, and then should not see a significant cost increase to continue providing this environmentally friendly disposal service for their staff.

Appendices

- Appendix A – On street coffee cup recycling bin

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Appendix A – On street coffee cup recycling bin



Example of an on street coffee cup recycling bin similar to the ones proposed to be used for the campaign in the City.