

Committee(s):	Date:
Port Health and Environmental Services	16 January 2017
Subject: Plastic Free City	Public
Report of: Carolyn Dwyer – Director DBE	For Decision
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Summary

As the Thames Port Authority and a riverside local authority, the City of London has a responsibility to encourage the reduction of marine plastic litter. A large source of these plastics is from single use products such as straws, bottles and cups. In recent months there has been an increased focus on this issue with particular high profile publicity from the Blue Planet documentary and the GLA draft London Plan.

This report sets out the scope for a multifaceted project where the City of London can use its unique position to lead by example and show what possibilities there are for a local authority to raise awareness of the issues and reduce the volume of single use products across the City. The project will also have the added benefit of reducing waste and promote the circular economy.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Agree 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.

Main Report

Background

1. Reliance on single use plastics is a key environmental issue that needs to be addressed to help mitigate the adverse impact on climate change resulting from the increasing production of single use plastics and consequential high levels of marine pollution and public realm littering.
2. The issue has become increasingly high profile over recent months with coverage in Blue Planet II dramatically increasing public awareness. December 2017 has also seen the UN declare ocean plastic a 'planetary crisis' with a resolution published including an agreement that all parties need to commit to stopping plastics entering the ocean.
3. As the Port Authority for the Thames and a riverside authority, the City of London has a responsibility to proactively encourage the reduction of ocean plastic litter.

A large source of these plastics is from single use products such as straws, bottles and cups. The City of London can use its unique position to lead by example, to show what possibilities there are to raise awareness of the issues and reduce the volume of single use products across the City. By working in close collaboration with private and 3rd party sectors across the City will further increase engagement and commitment to encourage and embed alternative solutions.

4. The Greater London Authority has published its draft London Plan for consultation which supports identifying suitable locations for water fountains and bottle-refill stations in new or redeveloped public spaces, such as town centres, shopping malls, parks and squares to help reduce single use plastic water bottles.

Current Position

5. The increasing issue of single use plastic will require a range of solutions and initiatives to effectively reduce their use. Over the course of 2018 the Department of the Built Environment wishes to lead on these projects and encourage participation across the City of London, from the business community, workers, residents and visitors.

Proposals

6. A significant increase in the installation of public drinking fountains would ensure the City of London were at the fore front of providing additional facilities London-wide. These could be located in a range of suitable locations such as parks, retail squares or close to transport hubs. Additionally, the City should be encouraging licenced premises, members of the Community Toilet Scheme and Clean City Award Scheme to register as a “bottle refill station” with a scheme such as “Refill”. This app based map enables users to locate the nearest free water refill facility across the UK. There are currently only two locations registered on Refill in the City. As the provision of free water is already a licencing condition within the City this could be quickly and substantially expanded.
7. The City of London should also look to reduce the provision of single use plastics across the Corporation finding alternative solutions. This will require significant commitment from departments across the Corporation with the City Surveyors department introducing and managing initiatives across all City owned or managed buildings, City Procurement ensuring that any new requirements are met by key contractors and suppliers. In order to have maximum long term effect all senior managers should be proactive in ensuring new practices are embedded and maintained by all staff.
8. With the City leading by example in reducing its own plastic use, businesses within the City can be encouraged to commit to the same approach. This can be achieved by the creation of a “pledge” scheme asking members to commit to reducing their use of single use plastics (for example, pubs not providing plastic drinking straws). The scheme will also be a way of sharing best practice and

successes with other businesses to encourage greater reduction of single use plastics.

9. As a substantial amount of litter deposited in the Thames starts as litter on land, it is an essential to introduce effective ways of reducing litter in general. To raise awareness of the damage caused by marine plastic litter the Cleansing Service would run a highly visible campaign along the riverfront and the bridges during the summer. This will also be beneficial in enhancing the enjoyment of the environment along riverfront.
10. One of the easiest ways individuals can reduced their use of single use plastics is by increasing their use of reusables. As part of the project the City will promote the use of reusable products, expanding on water containers and cups, to include food and snacks. The Cleansing Service will run a campaign raising awareness and establish business partners who are willing to join with the City in creating a scheme to encourage, normalise and reward the use of a whole range of reusable products.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

11. This project supports the Corporations strategic aim to provide modern, efficient and high quality local services. It also supports our Key Policy Priority of developing and improving the physical environment around our key cultural attractions.

Implications

12. Funding for these projects is intended to be found from current budgets. Following initial approval, a subsequent report will be submitted to committee detailing full implications, costs, aims and methods of measuring associated benefits.

Conclusion

13. The current focus on ocean litter presents an opportunity for the City to position itself as a leading force in sustainable behaviour, building on the achievements of previous campaigns such as last year's coffee cup recycling campaign and the Square Mile Challenge. This can be achieved by running a multifaceted campaign focusing on reducing single use plastics and littering, increasing the use reusables and the availability of water fountains and waster refill points across the City.

Appendices

- None

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