

Appendix 4 Single Use Plastic Action Plan 2023/24

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council recognises that single use plastics (SUP) are a threat to our natural environment and reducing such plastics are a key factor in reducing the Council's impact on the environment. This work is being aligned with the Council's Climate Change Action Plan as a reduction in single use plastics will also reduce the Council's indirect (scope 3) carbon emissions.

The Council has committed to working towards the following principles:

- Ending the provision of unnecessary single use plastics across council buildings and events
- Providing a supportive internal policy environment to allow appropriate purchasing with reducing single use plastics in mind
- Using recycled or re-usable plastics where complete removal of plastic is currently unfeasible
- Developing internal and external awareness campaigns to reduce the use of single use plastics across the Borough
- Supporting our residents to take action
- Working in partnership with our supply chain and partners to develop innovative solutions to reduce single use plastic use.

Key progress 2023/24

- Council Officers have undertaken an audit of all single use plastic within all 68 Council buildings and the majority of Council services. A finalised list of remaining items, some of which are being run down is included below.
- A single use plastic reduction plan has been identified following this audit which details specific areas for reduction and where items may be considered necessary until a suitable solution is available.
- Engagement of stallholders at the Rotherham show has been undertaken to establish a baseline for reducing single use plastics at events.
- Work has been undertaken throughout 2023 via the BDR Community Education and Liaison Officer, the Love Where You Live programs and internally to increase community awareness of various topics relating to single use plastics, recycling and reducing waste.

COUNCIL USE					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date	Progress Update	Status
Understand the Council's SUP provision.	Extend audit of buildings to include Council services and analyse results to identify specific departmental targets for reduction and removal.	Climate Change Team/ Service Leads	August 2023	This has been completed by the Climate Change Service Leads across the Council and confirmed via internal survey. This list, included below will be used to focus action on SUP moving forward.	
Remove use of any unnecessary SUP where feasible from Council use.	Set targets and monitoring for immediate removal or run down of specific unnecessary single use plastics where feasible alternatives exist. There may be situations where it is not yet feasible to remove some types of SUP e.g., PPE. These should be documented, justified and periodically reviewed.	Climate Change Team/ Service Leads	March 2024	A list of items and their status within the Council has been collated. This includes items for replacement and/or run down where possible as well as items deemed essential with no current alternative and those where more research is required. This next stage will be undertaken in the coming year.	
Work towards Council events being SUP free.	Work with supply chain to identify suitable options for replacement and calculate impact. Options available for delivery of this target may be limited by suppliers available and their supply chains.	Climate Change Team/ Events	March 2024	The Council had intended to use the Rotherham Show as a showcase event, however this became unfeasible as many catering outlets were running down stocks of previously purchased SUP food containers in light of the imminent ban which came into force October 2023. Events teams worked to share information and encourage stall holders to reduce their impact and further work is planned in 2024/25. Improvements were also made to waste management to encourage better recycling on site.	
Council contracts are free from unnecessary SUP provision	Work with individual services and suppliers to review and implement changes to new contracts where SUPs are provided e.g. vending machines through Facilities Management.	Climate Change Team/ Service Leads / Procurement support	March 2024	Products currently included within the vending machines at Riverside House have been reviewed and discussed with suppliers. Where there are costs involved a business case will be put forward in 24/25 detailing full implications of the changes recommended.	

	Procurement support may be required for advice on altering existing contract terms and conditions and on the best way to improve moving forward.			Further work on incorporating single use plastic measures into future procurements is required.	
	Ensure single use plastic plates, trays, bowls* are no longer procured through Council contracts by October 2023. *Excluding pre-packaged food items at present.	Climate Change Team/ Facilities	October 2023	This has now been implemented in line with recent legislation.	
POLICY					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date		
Council policies complement our ambition to eliminate SUPs	Integrate SUP into Climate Change Plan, ensuring that SUP objectives are embedded into other relevant policies and plans.	Climate Change Team	August 2023	A study has been implemented using Clifton Park museum as a pilot. This includes decarbonisation activity, engagement, and possible single use plastic reductions identified as part of a site visit. This template will be used by the climate team moving forward to inform services of possible actions to reduce their carbon footprint and tackle single use plastics.	
	Develop and allow for consultation on a Single Use Plastic Policy to enhance measures already recommended within the Council's Social Value Policy.	Climate Change Team/ Policy	March 2024	A Single Use Plastics protocol has been developed and has been consulted on internally. This is aimed at commissioning officers and encourages early thought about the types of products the Council buys, whether there is a need for these items in the first place and if so what the most environmentally friendly solution is for use. It also raises awareness and sets out the Council's commitment to reducing single use plastics.	

INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date		
Ensure staff understand the impact of SUPs	Develop an e-learning module / toolbox talk for all staff about the impact of SUPs and how to minimise their usage.	Climate Change Team	December 2023	An e-learning module and toolbox talk for those without PC access has been created and will be accessible on the Council's e-learning platform in March 2024.	
Encourage staff to make informed decisions about what they use, and what they bring to their working environment	Create an internal Single Use Plastic Campaign to support staff to reduce their SUP use at home and at work.	Climate Change Team/ Communications	March 2024	An intranet page has been developed and shared via corporate communications which provides hints and tips to reducing single use plastic in the home and the workplace and how best to deal with waste products. This activity will continue as part of business as usual moving forward.	
	Keep staff informed of best practice and initiatives through internal communications, e.g., by taking part in WRAP Recycling campaigns.	Climate Change Team/ Communications	March 2024	The Council celebrated WRAP's annual Recycle Now week and shared internally and externally information about single use plastics and those items which are regularly not well recycled. Communications relating to single use plastic campaigns will be incorporated into the annual climate change engagement calendar moving forward.	
ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR COMMUNITIES					
Objective	Key actions 2023/24	Service	Target Date		
Promote awareness of sustainable waste management practices	Continue to work with schools to provide educational workshops relating to waste and SUPs through linking into existing programmes	Waste via BDR Partnership	Ongoing	The council has worked with a number of schools through the Love Where you Live initiative and BDR waste partnership throughout the year to undertake litter picking activities and share recycling messages. BDR provision through the Community Education Liaison Officer has reduced throughout 2023 due to resourcing but a number of engagement activities have still been undertaken.	
	Encourage schools to commit to reductions in	CYPS	March 2024	Materials have been shared via the ROSIS Circular which shares information about events and materials	

	single use plastic through awareness raising and signposting to appropriate schemes e.g., 'Plastic Free Schools' or 'Eco-schools'.			and through our neighbourhoods team with specific community groups. This includes the Recycle Now week and the associated activities created for schools on this topic. This activity will be incorporated into business as usual moving forward.	
Encourage communities to develop Single Use Plastic-free initiatives	Continue to promote community initiatives such as Love Where You Live.	Neighbourhoods / Environmental Services	Ongoing	Love Where you Live is now active on several social media accounts including Facebook and X. This serves to increase awareness of the activities and value of the hardworking volunteers but also to raise awareness of environmental issues and community events. As part of the annual Big Spring Clean Week in 2023, 120 litter picks took place, picking 3738 bags over three weeks producing approximately 41 tonnes of waste. Regular litter picks are ongoing throughout the year supported by Council officers and approximately 1600 volunteers from across the Borough. This programme, which engages schools, families and businesses throughout Rotherham will continue into 2024/25.	
	Continue to utilise the BDR Community Education Liaison Officer (CELO) initiative.	Waste via BDR Partnership	Ongoing	Communications resulting from this partnership are run through the Love Food Hate Waste social media accounts and include messages such as reducing waste, preventing contamination, encouraging composting and links to seasonal hints and tips.	
	Develop a programme of works to encourage local businesses to sign up to go plastic free, ready for roll out in 2024/2025.	Climate Change Team	March 2024	A single use plastic campaign which encourages businesses to think about their use of single use plastic and reduce them where necessary is being developed for roll out in 2024/25. In line with the Rotherham Together Partnership Climate And Nature Charter, consultation with local businesses around single use plastics was undertaken which indicated that guidance and ideas for replacement products and a shared supply chain approach would be beneficial.	