

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Executive – 13 December 2023

Subject: Avoidable Single Use Plastic Free by 2024: Action Plan

Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer

Summary

Manchester City Council has made a commitment to eradicate avoidable single-use plastic (SUP) on the public estate, along with influencing in order to change behaviour across the city by December 2024.

This report provides an update on work being undertaken across the Council on Single Use Plastics (SUPs) as part of action within the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25, which includes work to develop the 'Avoidable Single Use Plastic Free Action Plan' and 'Single Use Plastics Policy'.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Executive endorse the approach set out in the 'Avoidable Single Use Plastic Free Action Plan' – referred to as SUP Action Plan in this report – and the Single Use Plastics Policy.

Wards Affected - All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	The Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25 sets out the actions that will be delivered to ensure that the Council plays its full part in delivering the city's Climate Change Framework 2020-25
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	Actions set out in the Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25 recognise the need for just and equal delivery of climate action across the city, focusing on the areas such as community engagement, accessible transport, access to green spaces and tackling fuel poverty.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The transition to a zero carbon city will help the city's economy become more sustainable and will generate jobs within the low carbon energy and goods sector. This will support the implementation of the Our Manchester Industrial Strategy and Manchester Economic Recovery and Investment Plan
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Manchester is one of a small number of UK cities that have agreed a science-based target and is leading the way in transitioning to a zero carbon city. It is envisaged that this will give the city opportunities in the green technology and services sector.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Transitioning to a zero-carbon city can help to tackle fuel poverty by reducing energy bills. Health outcomes will also be improved through the promotion of more sustainable modes of transport, improved air quality and easy access to green spaces.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Becoming a zero carbon city will help to make the city a more attractive place for people to live, work, visit and study.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	A zero carbon transport system would create a world class business environment to drive sustainable economic growth.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

It is not expected that there will be any financial consequences to the Revenue budget that should arise from the content of this report.

Financial Consequences – Capital

It is not expected that there will be any financial consequences to the Capital budget that should arise from the content of this report.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25
Manchester City Council Climate Emergency Declaration July 2019
Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 Updated 2022
Manchester City Council: Progress to date on the Council's commitments on Single Use Plastics (SUPs) December 2022
Manchester City Council: Progress to date on the Council's commitments on Single Use Plastics (SUPs) October 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council has committed to the GM Plastic Free Pact to eradicate avoidable single use plastic (SUP) by the end of 2024, which has been reflected in the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25.
- 1.2. A dedicated resource has been allocated to this area of work (since 2022) to drive engagement across the organisation to deliver on this commitment. A SUP Working Group, with representation across all Directorates is now in place. The Group have developed an Action Plan that sets out progress to date along with further actions needed.
- 1.3. This is applicable to eradication of avoidable single-use plastic (SUP) on the Council's estate, along with action externally to fulfil the Council's leadership role in influencing behaviour change across the city.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Council committed to take action on SUP in signing the GM Plastic Free Pact in 2019: to eradicate avoidable single use plastic by the end of 2024. Our commitment has been reflected in the MCC Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25 (CCAP) under Workstream 3: Reducing Consumption Based Emissions and Influencing Suppliers. Our pledge is to eradicate avoidable SUPs.
- 2.2. Our definition of avoidable is where an item is non-essential or where there is a viable alternative, such as a reusable item. At this time, not all SUPs in use will be avoidable.
- 2.3. A post was established in 2022 to lead on the Council's work to reduce SUPs. Since then, scoping has been carried out to identify progress, SUPs still in use across the public estate and opportunities for the Council to influence across the wider city. A SUP working group has been established and a SUP Action Plan drafted (see Appendix). Manchester City Council has a real opportunity to lead in Greater Manchester and nationally on this agenda.
- 2.4. The Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee have been updated on progress in December 2022 (on initial scoping and early wins) and in October 2023 (on establishment of Working Group and Action Plan development; national ban on SUPs; and communication and engagement within and beyond the Council).
- 2.5. Leadership support has been secured to ensure Senior Managers across MCC are championing this. This will further enable and encourage officers to embed actions needed to meet the SUP 2024 commitment, as well as embed SUP reduction as a standard way of working.
- 2.6. A summary on key issues with plastic usage and waste:
 - It contributes significantly to global pollution, as well as climate change (as plastics are made using crude oil).

- Items such as plastic bags can block waterways and sewers, leading to an increased risk of local flooding.
- It causes a major risk, sometimes fatal, to many marine species who mistake plastic objects for food and/or can become entangled in plastic waste.
- SUP items are often difficult to recycle, so often end up as landfill or burnable waste.
- Plastic waste as litter isn't biodegradable so will take hundreds of years to decompose into tiny pieces known as microplastics, potentially releasing embedded chemicals also.
- Microplastics (from degradation of larger pieces of waste plastic) have now been found in our food, waterways, clouds and the human bloodstream.

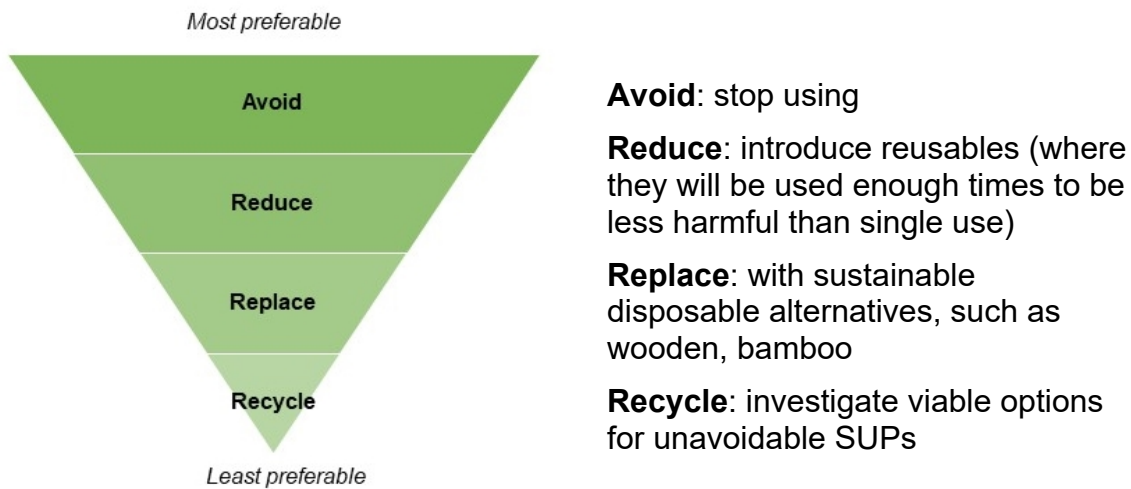
2.7. The picture on single-use plastics is complex. It is not as straight forward as removing or replacing all SUPs, as for some there is no viable alternative. This may be for health and safety or healthcare reasons, financial motivations, lack of suitable products in the marketplace, or avoiding food waste (of perishable products) for example. Consideration for the environmental impacts of alternative materials is also needed, including weight, transportation (especially important for packaging), recycled content and disposal route.

3. **Avoidable Single Use Plastics Free Action Plan**

3.1. The working group have developed an approach, which ensures we fully embed SUP reduction practices in decision making across Council services, as well as fulfil our influencing and leadership role outside of the Council. There are three levels of control, which underpin the action plan:



3.2. The waste hierarchy provides the underlining principle for SUP usage:



3.3. The SUP Action Plan sets out objectives across six areas, along with two cross-cutting areas, which allows a focus on the overarching aim of 'eliminating avoidable SUPs by 2024', helps with target setting and facilitates good practice sharing between teams (who are trying to reduce the same type of SUP items):

Core Areas	Cross cutting
Office and operations Catering Markets Events Care (adults, children and homelessness) Construction	Comms and engagement Data analysis

3.4. It is challenging to benchmark actual SUP usage in order to set quantifiable reduction targets. Scoping of data availability has shown this to be resource intensive and requires assumptions to be applied that undermine the integrity of the data. There are additional complexities such as the SUP packaging on other non-SUP items, therefore analysis of purchase ledger data would not be helpful. For the most part, the recommended approach is to define KPIs that are more reflective of the process outlined in the SUP Action Plan.

3.5. All directorates are represented in the SUP Working Group, with members from across services using SUPs or with opportunity to influence SUPs usage. The group are in the process of developing detailed Directorate SUP Action Plans that will ensure the SUP Action Plan core objectives can be achieved, with measurable KPIs where possible though this is challenging. Target date for completion of plans is end of December 2023, outlining actions to end of 2024 to ensure SUP reduction becomes standard practice.

4. Next steps

4.1. Some examples of action taken to date, along with future action needed to give context to the SUP objectives are:

- Offices and operations (direct purchases) target: ‘Reduced plastic cleaning supplies’
Progress and next steps: work had already been done since 2019 to use bulk bottles instead of smaller bottles where possible. Further engagement with main supplier of cleaning products has allowed a target to be set of 60% of products to come in bulk containers by end of 2024, along with review of recycled content of other plastic products (currently 17% of cleaning products are supplied in bulk containers)
 - Catering (indirect purchases on public estate) target:
Progress and next steps: Cafés in Parks have embedded SUP reduction into catering concession agreements, and requirements to eradicate avoidable SUPs will be included in the tender for ice cream concessions in 2024, along with all relevant tenders thereafter. Quantification of reduction in plastic is more challenging as third party data needed. The focus for contract management is to ensure compliance is regularly reviewed.
 - Care (direct and indirect purchases) target: Reduce avoidable non-sterile PPE across all services, ie where not a H&S requirement
Progress and next steps: As context, 2 million items of PPE were used post-pandemic (over 12 month period). Following the closure of the PPE Hub (March 2023), work is currently underway with key stakeholders to understand current usage levels and put in place plans to reduce, though it is challenging to monitor usage levels without the central hub function. The focus is on behaviour change through initiatives such as ‘Gloves off’ training and other workforce engagement on the need to ensure PPE is only used when essential, for food preparation or personal care tasks. Public Health can also support this in terms of infection control expertise.
- 4.2. The IC&P unit has a forward plan of upcoming procurement activity. This plan will be used to identify and prioritise opportunities for future reduction in avoidable SUPs, working with service units, to ensure that achievable targets are set in contracts, aligned to SUP Policy and that achievement against these targets is monitored over the life of the new contract.
- 4.3. Further guidance is to be included within the Sustainable Procurement Toolkit for staff that manage contracts, due to be available by start of 2024. This will also be a feature of the training available to Procurement staff, commissioners and contracts managers.
- 4.4. New procurement regulations will come into effect from October 2024 and guidance and documentation for inclusion in tenders is to be developed before mid-2024. This will include requirements to eradicate avoidable SUPs as per policy so will incorporate guidance for suppliers to help them provide relevant responses including how to develop and implement action plans that are appropriate to the service / goods being procured with achievable targets.
- 4.5. Continued communications and engagement actions will be fundamental to the success of the SUP Action Plan by:
- developing cross-organisational understanding of SUP reduction through

collaboration between Corporate Communications, the Zero Carbon Workforce Development Manager (HROD&T) and the Zero Carbon Team. Along with targeted workforce engagement as identified by the SUP Working Group.

- continuing engagement with key external stakeholders and sharing of good practice and data with partners through GM networks and nationally as appropriate, fulfilling the Council's leadership role.

5. Recommendations

5.1. The recommendations are set out at the beginning of this report.

6. Contributing to a Zero-Carbon City

6.1. Action 3.2 and Action 3.6 of the CCAP set out the need to ensure the Council reduces avoidable SUPs by 2024 and meet UK Government legislation. Overall delivery of the Avoidable Single Use Plastic Free by 2024: Action Plan will drive a reduction in use of (plastic) resources which will generate CO₂ savings from scope 3 emissions.

7. Contributing to the Our Manchester Strategy

(a) A thriving and sustainable city

The transition to a zero carbon city will help the city's economy become more sustainable and will generate jobs within the low carbon energy and goods sector. This will support the implementation of the Our Manchester Industrial Strategy and Manchester Economic Recovery and Investment Plan

(b) A highly skilled city

Manchester is one of a small number of UK cities that have agreed a science-based target and is leading the way in transitioning to a zero carbon city. It is envisaged that this will give the city opportunities in the green technology and services sector.

(c) A progressive and equitable city

Transitioning to a zero-carbon city can help to tackle fuel poverty by reducing energy bills. Health outcomes will also be improved through the promotion of more sustainable modes of transport, improved air quality and easy access to green spaces.

(d) A liveable and low carbon city

Becoming a zero carbon city will help to make the city a more attractive place for people to live, work, visit and study.

(e) A connected city

A zero carbon transport system would create a world class business environment to drive sustainable economic growth.

8. Key Policies and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

There are no equal opportunity issues to note that should arise from the content of this report.

(b) Risk Management

The key risk is to successful delivery of the Council's Zero Carbon 2038 objectives.

(c) Legal Considerations

There are no legal issues to note that should arise from the content of this report.

9. Appendices

- Avoidable Single Use Plastics Free Action Plan
- Appendix: Avoidable Single Use Plastics Free Action Plan (Objectives)
- Single Use Plastics Policy