

# COUNCIL

## Reducing Plastic Bottles/Disposable Cups Working Party – Update

11<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### Report of Chief Officer (Environment)

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update of the work undertaken so far.

**This report is public**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Council notes the work of the Reducing Plastic Bottles/ Disposable Cups Working Group to date
- (2) That Council approves the location of drinking water fountains in Williamson Park and Happy Mount Park, using existing budgets.
- (3) That Council thanks the local businesses and Lancaster University Staff who have contributed to the work of the group via the Low Carbon Innovation Forum.

#### (1) INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In the September 2017 a motion was introduced into full council on the issue of plastic bottle waste.

The motion was passed as follows:

***“Resolved unanimously:-***

Council notes the amount of plastic that ends up in landfill and in our oceans, and is a growing hazard to marine life. Every year millions of single use plastic bottles, nationally are disposed and estimated only 7% are recycled. Council also notes the fact that 2.5 billion coffee cups are thrown away every year in the UK – 10,000 in just 2 minutes.

To protect the environment and in furtherance of our Clean and Green Places priority under the Corporate Plan, Council resolves to:

- (1) Ask officers to refer back to the 2007 Overview and Scrutiny report about pollution in Morecambe Bay.
- (2) Promote public awareness of the issue and take steps to reduce plastic bottle use. This could include our partner agencies in primary health care, and local education.
- (3) Request officers to prepare a report on the practicalities and costs of installing drinking water fountains at key city centre locations in Morecambe and Lancaster.
- (4) Support a scheme where our local food and drinks outlets provide refills or free drinking water.
- (5) Investigate the viability of the City Council launching a promotional Lancaster refillable water container to sell at tourist outlets.
- (6) Work with businesses and other organisations to promote the use of reusable coffee cups including investigating the viability of a Lancaster district reusable cup, and encouraging businesses to use genuinely recyclable or eco-friendly cups.
- (7) Establish a working party to oversee this motion, comprised of Councillors, representatives from the retail sector, and officers, as appropriate.”

Council 28 February 2018 further resolved-

*“the addition of a budget of £30,000 to be used to implement the recommendations of the working group set up to reduce the use of plastic bottles and disposable cups, with the budget being financed from the Budget Support Reserve and its allocation being delegated to the Chief Officer (Environment) in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.”*

## **(2) WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

- 2.2 Since September 2017 the Councillor led working party has been regularly meeting to consider how to best deliver the intended aims of the motion.
- 2.3 In parallel the issue of plastic waste has been highlighted in the national and local media thus helping raise awareness of the issue.
- 2.4 At its first meeting the working group asked officers to seek advice from Lancaster University as to what support could be given. From this, the Low Carbon Innovation Forum (comprising representatives from a number of Lancashire based SMEs) were requested to consider the problem and make recommendations to the Council.
- 2.5 What was apparent from the work of the forum was that –
  - The scale of the problem is much bigger than people realised (as demonstrated by a visit to the Middleton transfer station to see a

- morning's worth of collected plastic waste).
  - The problem is so big addressing it effectively requires intervention at global, national, local and individual levels.
  - There are many examples of good practice already in place.
- 2.6 The main finding from the forum was that the problem is such a massive one, global / national solutions will take time to realise. In order to avoid being overwhelmed it is best to work on the principle of controlling what you can. Therefore the group considered the extent to which inroads could be made at a local level.
- 2.7 Lancaster City Council's role in this was considered to be pivotal. The forum drew the conclusion that what was best provided from the City Council was leadership, influencing, drawing in partners, coordination etc.
- 2.8 The forum pointed to numerous examples of local businesses and organisations who already had identified the problem and were working well to address it.
- 2.9 Based on this the Council could usefully provide the following -
  - Setting of ambitions for the District. Token efforts have a negative effect. Aiming to be a national example in this regard is very realistic and can be done within existing resources.
  - Raising awareness of the issue and seeking buy in/ positive contribution from other partners- County Council, United Utilities, Lancaster University, MPs, local media, Chamber, BIDs
  - Development of an ambitious but clear and straightforward strategy for reducing single use plastics in the District. For the strategy to ring true it needs to be combined with lots of practical and visible actions
  - Set an example in its own operations. Eg procurement policy for Council café operations, policies for events on public land
  - Provide public land for infrastructure (eg drinking water fountains) using its influence to get funding for this from other stakeholders.
  - Communicate the message of what we are seeking to achieve and how it is being achieved
  - Use its influence, networks, community leadership etc to build on existing good practice in the District and engage with schools, community groups, individuals.

### (3) CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- 3.1 **Strategy / Planning / Communication** - Having considered this the working group is currently developing a very ambitious but straightforward strategy/ action plan, which will be reported to a future Council meeting. This will also include plans to communicate, engage and educate. The strategy will look at what the Council can do directly but also and more importantly how it can use its role to influence others- eg scheme where businesses provide free water, promotion innovative ideas from the District.
- 3.2 **Practical Actions** - The group recognises the importance of quick wins. Drinking water fountains have been used in many other places as a visible and easy way of drawing attention to the issue and creating a practical means of providing drinking water in public spaces. Ironically the Council already

provides drinking water for pets in some of its parks. Suitable locations have already been identified in Williamson and Happy Mount Park. Besides reducing plastics this will impact positively on other Council priorities like health and wellbeing and helps contribute to the delivery of parks business plans and applications for accreditation (eg Green Flag). Part of the plan will be to put in further place drinking water fountains on public land. Officers are currently identifying potential sites in Lancaster city centre, Morecambe town centre and Carnforth town centre.

- 3.3 **Setting an Example-** Williamson Park café is already promoting the use of reusable cups and procuring café products that are bio degradable. The learning from this will help inform future policy for all our operations which will be recommended at a later date.
- 3.4 **Engaging and influencing key stakeholders-** will be key to delivering the strategy. Different stakeholders will require different approaches. Consideration is being given to who the key stakeholders are and how best to engage with them.
- 3.5 **Support from all Elected Members-** The group is keen to harness the ideas, networks and connections that all Elected Members have.

**(4) PROPOSAL DETAILS**

- 4.1 That at this stage Council approves the location of suitable drinking water fountains in Williamson Park and Happy Mount Park, funded from within existing public realm budgets.

**(5) DETAILS OF CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 As outlined in the report

<b>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK</b> As outlined in the report this initiative contributes to the priorities of 'clean and green' and 'health and wellbeing'.
<b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health &amp; Safety, Equality &amp; Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):</b> As outlined in the report
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b> Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comments.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b> The total cost of installing fountains at Williamson Park and Happy Mount Park is estimated at

£7,200 and this amount can be managed within existing Public Realm budgets. However, some reprofiling of planned works maybe required to accommodate this request.

The ongoing associated revenue costs (water supply and various safety checks) are expected to be minimal and can also be managed through existing utility budgets.

As detailed in the report, Council agreed to provide £30,000 to be used to implement the recommendations of the working group as they develop. Further decisions are still to be taken and the associated financial implications will be considered as expenditure is planned.

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:**

As outlined in the report

**DEPUTY SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Deputy Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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