
PURGE ON PLASTICS ANNUAL STATEMENT

Committee: Full Council

Date: 11th April 2019

Author: Jo Brooks, Director, Operations

[T244]

1.0 **ISSUE**

1.1 To provide Members with an Annual Statement on progress made against the Purge on Plastics Statement of Intent.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Members are requested to note the contents of progress made.

3.0 **BACKGROUND/OPTIONS**

3.1 At its Full Council meeting on 19th April 2018 Members approved a Purge on Plastics Statement of Intent as a commitment to reducing the reliance on single-use plastics across the District. The Statement of Intent set out the Council's ambition and is as follows:

- (i) That this Council endorses the Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" including the commitment to achieve zero avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042.
- (ii) That the Council acknowledges it has an important part to play in meeting these ambitious targets by taking action now to act as an exemplar for public, private, voluntary bodies and individual members of the community.
- (iii) That this Council commits itself to reduce the reliance on Single – Use plastics across the District.
- (iv) The Council is committed to a 'Purge on Plastics' by 'leading from the front' by working towards the removal of all consumer single use plastics in our workplace.
- (v) That the Council will continue to make it easier for people to recycle building on the success of the second blue recycling bin.
- (vi) That the Council repeats its commitment to achieving a 60% recycling rate in our district.
- (vii) That the Council will work positively with residents and businesses in our area to promote our 'Purge on Plastics'.

(viii) That the Council approves the Statement of Intent attached and instructs the Chief Executive to provide an Annual Statement to Council on our progress in achieving these objectives.

3.2 This report advises Members of progress made during the past 12 months.

4.0 ACTIONS TAKEN

4.1 Service Leads throughout the Council have completed audits within their respective departments to promote the reduction of single use plastic. These audits have resulted in Council employees using reusable shopping bags, water bottles and coffee cups in every effort to achieve zero avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042. The Councils ICT team recycle all old toner cartridges and re-use parts from unserviceable equipment.

4.2 Efforts have been made by the Council to ensure that both its employees and residents of its district have every opportunity to recycle the waste they create. Throughout the Grange multiple recycling points have been made available. This includes a paper recycling bin in every office and recycling points in every kitchen for officers to use to guarantee recycling is easy.

Due to the fact that some materials that are recyclable but currently cannot be processed alongside the materials collected in kerbside collections, ECDC has introduced a crisp packet and battery recycling point in their reception foyer in their commitment to ensure residents can recycle as much as possible.

4.3 As part of its commitment to reduce the reliance on Single – Use plastics across the District, ECDC has sought to replace, where practicable, all single use plastic products with one that are made from biodegradable materials or recycled plastic. This includes disposable gloves, shoe covers, cups, cleaning products and a commitment to change the packaging of the milk provided alongside the coffee machines at the Grange to reduce the use of single use plastic by 50%. Over the past 12 months, ECDC has recycled approx. 18 tonnes of waste.

The Councils trading arm, East Cambs Street Scene, is in full support of this commitment and has shown this by purchasing a refuse sack to be used by the residents as part of their household waste collections, which reduced the amount of plastic sent to landfill by 40 tonnes.

4.4 To make certain that its residents have enough capacity to recycle all necessary waste and ensure recyclable material is not diverted to landfill, the Council, from April the 1st 2018, started to offer a second blue bin to households for a one off fee of £25. This allowed residents to recycle all necessary waste they produced and assisted in the prevention of recyclable waste being landfilled. Over 700 additional bins have been issued to residents since 1st April 2018.

4.5 Ely Markets is committed to reducing plastic use on the market, launching the #BringYourOwn campaign in April 2018 to encourage shoppers to bring their own re-usable bags, cups, containers and even cutlery with them to fill with market produce. Ely Markets offer #BringYourOwn Goody Bags to purchase, as prizes and as an example of how shoppers can make up their own re-usable shopping kit.

- 4.6 Ely Markets are continuously working with traders and shoppers to support them in reducing and eliminating plastic use. An initial survey of traders has demonstrated many are already taking considerable steps to reduce plastic use and substitute sustainable alternatives. For example, food and drink traders have shown that since launching the campaign, around 45% of their customers now bring their own re-usable cup for drinks. The remainder are served with drinks in fully compostable biodegradable cups. Fruit and vegetable market traders have seen a marked increase in customers bringing their own re-usable bags and street food traders and cake vendors are providing food in biodegradable cardboard containers and other sustainable alternatives or placing goods straight into shoppers' own tubs brought with them for the purpose. Ely Markets also work with new traders to require the use of non-plastic or no packaging where appropriate.
- 4.7 Social Media outlets have proven vital in relaying the Councils message surrounding recycling and the reduction of single use plastics to both residents and local businesses. Michael Recycle and his two friends Taylor the Swift and Hester the Hedgehog have been prodigious spokespersons in support of the Councils communication of recycling and the protection of our environment. Michael's Twitter, Facebook page and Blog continually share information with all his followers around recycling and the positive impact it has and has supported the Councils educational campaigns however he can.
- 4.8 Communication to residents has been imperative in ensuring fundamental information is relayed to residents. The Councils Sustainability Officer has carried out numerous talks with community organisations centred on recycling and the reduction of single use plastics.
- 4.9 East Cambs involvement with RECAP has afforded the Council opportunities to be involved in County wide promotional campaigns. It also ensures that East Cambs has a voice following the release of the Governments Waste Strategy.
- 4.10 The creation of ECSS and bringing the waste collection back "in house" has awarded the Council full control of the service delivered to its residents. Since April the 1st 2018, ECDC has made necessary improvements to its collection process in its fight on reducing recycling contamination resulting in an average contamination rate of 5.36%. Improvements to existing processes and the continuous education of both residents and collections crews has resulted in an average recycling rate of 57%. With continued communication and updates on changes and developments with recycling, the ongoing education of residents on the reduction of single use plastics and the constant improvements of the waste collection service, the Councils commitment to achieve a 60% recycling rate and a contamination rate under 5% for the district, will be met.
- 4.11 The Council has worked closely with Sanctuary Housing to assist in the education of their tenants. Following this working relationship, Sanctuary have included a clause within their tenancy agreements ensuring residents actively participate in recycling their waste appropriately.
- 4.12 Today's younger generation is tomorrow's future and because of that, Michael has carried out numerous visits to local schools spreading the recycling message and letting teachers and pupils know the importance of reducing the amount of plastic consumed and ensuring all possible waste is reused or recycled. Michael has taken

his campaign to many local events in the district even making an appearance at Ely Aqua Fest and often visits Ely Markets to talk and answer questions from residents.

5.0 OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- 5.1 The Council will continue to support Michael's Purge on Plastics and his awareness and educational campaigns in his fight to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle waste.
- 5.2 Following the completion of the Low Performing Area Study, a focused educational campaign will be designed. These facts will allow the Council to tailor the information included in its promotional and educational campaigns to deliver to a wide variety of local groups and organisations to fast track the district recycling rate.
- 5.3 Leading on from the success the Council has had working with Sanctuary Housing, it will continue to support them in the education of tenants, to achieve high quality recyclable waste and will expand this relationship to other housing providers within the district.
- 5.4 Within 2019 an independent survey covering household waste will be carried out across certain parts of the district. This survey will highlight the types and quantity of waste that is incorrectly being sent to landfill instead of the correct items to be recycled. This will highlight necessary areas of focus for campaigns and will assist in evidencing what needs to be done to ensure the Councils recycling performance rate is achieved. This will in turn, reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill every year and the negative impact that this has on the environment.
- 5.5 The Council is committed to support the Government in the implementation of its Waste and Resource Strategy. The strategy proposes a levy on heavy producers of plastics which will actively encourage the overall reduction of use and distribution. It also promotes consistency of collections across all Waste Collection Authorities to reduce the confusion on residents and ensure recycling is simple and easy to do.
- 5.6 The implementation of the Governments Strategy brings a possibility of the introduction of a third wheeled bin for household waste in East Cambs. The introduction of this wheeled bin will atomically reduce the amount of plastic waste sent to landfill by East Cambs as there will no longer be a need to procure and distribute millions of plastic sacks to residents each year. It will also limit the amount of household waste a resident can throw away and therefore, promote the necessity to recycle.
- 5.7 Ely Markets are partnering with ECSS and the Re-Inspire, Re-Imagine Resource Centre at Witchford in a series of initiatives to reduce and re-use waste from the market. Currently the Centre is developing a "mini Ely Market stall" as an educational tool to take to schools to help children learn through role play about sustainable shopping, where food comes from and how they can be part of reducing and eliminating plastic use in their everyday lives.
- 5.8 Ely Markets are also currently working with ECSS and Michael Recycle on a forthcoming promotion to encourage shoppers and makers to take away and re-use vegetable boxes and crates from the Thursday Charter Market. Ely Markets' commitment to reducing and eliminating plastic is an integral part of their operational ethos.

5.9 As with the introduction of the crisp packet recycling box located in their foyer, East Cambs Council will be introducing a similar system for coffee machine pods in its commitment to achieve a 60% recycling rate in the district and act as an exemplar for public, private, voluntary bodies and individual members of the community.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report

6.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) not required

Background Documents

Location

Room 101B
The Grange
Ely

Contact Officer

Jo Brooks
Director, Operations
(01353) 616498
E-mail:
jo.brooks@eastcambs.gov.uk