



REPORT TO:	CABINET
DATE:	15 th NOVEMBER 2022
SUBJECT:	SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS POLICY
PURPOSE:	TO ADOPT THE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS POLICY
KEY DECISION:	NO
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	LORD G PORTER
REPORT OF:	CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICER
REPORT AUTHOR:	HEATHER PRESCOTT
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	N/A
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

SUMMARY

The production of single use products and the resultant waste from their usage and disposal is one of the greatest environmental concerns we face globally today. A Sustainable Products Policy has therefore been developed to outline the necessary actions required to ensure a sustainable approach to procurement of such items is carefully considered as we work towards a more circular economy. The Sustainable Products Policy sets out the commitment to discontinuing the procurement of single use products as far as possible within our internal operations and finding the best alternative solutions where single use products cannot be eliminated completely.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet are recommended to:

1. Adopt the Sustainable Products Policy in line with the Council's commitments to resource and waste management, and mitigation and adaption to Climate Change.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

South Holland District Council is committed to ensuring a sustainable approach to resource management and adoption of this policy is listed as a corporate priority in the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership Annual Delivery Plan. The Sustainable Products Policy will assist us in establishing practices for a more sustainable procurement future, thereby supporting us in meeting our net zero targets and reducing the environmental impact of our operational activities, in line with the Climate Change Strategy.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Members could decide not to adopt the Sustainable Products Policy however, local authorities have a legal obligation to produce plans and policies to adapt to and mitigate climate change in line with the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. This policy will assist the Council in achieving our net zero targets in line with the Climate Change Strategy, alongside other co-benefits.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** All single use products have an environmental impact and are typically intended to be used just once or for a very short period of time before being disposed of. The manufacture of single use products requires a large amount of energy and resources and largely includes the use of fossil fuels in their production processes. The extraction, production and refinement processes used all cause huge quantities of Greenhouse Gases to be emitted, meaning that their production is contributing to Climate Change, and they are often sent to landfill or take many years to decompose, causing air and water pollution.
- 1.2** Single Use Plastics (SUPs), also known as disposable plastics are one of the biggest contributors to this environmental problem, contributing to Greenhouse Gas emissions at every stage of their lifecycle. At current levels Greenhouse Gas emissions from the plastic lifecycle threaten our global commitment to the Paris Agreement. SUPs do not biodegrade but break down in the natural environment into tiny particles known as microplastics which pollute soils and watercourses, contaminating the food web and causing a hazard to humans and wildlife.
- 1.3** The most commonly recognised single use products include items such as plastic straws, drinks bottles and plastic packaging but also covers a wide range of other things such as milk and sugar sachets, envelopes, disposable gloves, paper towels and drinks cups.

2. REPORT

- 2.1** This policy has been developed as a South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP) document, to ensure the widest influence possible across the sub-region, in line with the strategic aims of the Partnership and the corporate priorities of the three Councils. It is a commitment in the Annual Delivery Plan to bring forward this policy.

- 2.2** Coastal regions such as Lincolnshire are particularly vulnerable to the effects of inappropriate waste disposal, and it is therefore vital that we address the impact of our procurement practices and lead by example. Whilst the issue of Single Use Product litter on our coast extends beyond our organisational remit, it is an important consideration when seeking to understand the wider local picture and act as a community leader who represents the concerns of the broader community.
- 2.3** The Sustainable Products Policy sets out the Partnership's commitment to discontinuing the procurement of single use products as far as possible and finding the best alternative solutions where single use products cannot be eliminated completely. To achieve this, we must embed the Sustainable Products Policy in the Procurement Framework of the Partnership authorities, to ensure an aligned approach to our procurement and establish a culture of reuse and recycling across the Partnership.
- 2.4** A comprehensive audit on the use of single use products will be carried out and will include the identification and potential financial implications of alternative products used both in offices and in Council services and operations. Alternative solutions to single use products should demonstrate best value both in financial and environmental terms, and the reasons for usage of these products should be ascertained and given due consideration. Where items are purchased for Health or Safety reasons, alternatives may not be viable.
- 2.5** Schemes such as the Terracycle scheme for soft-plastics or Refill water stations which could be implemented in Council owned buildings should be investigated, to ensure that we provide the infrastructure and resources required promote and support sustainable resource management at every stage.
- 2.6** Working towards a circular economy (the principle of remanufacture, reuse, repair, recycle) will see us keeping resources in use for as long as possible and allow us to prolong their lifespan where we can, and we must therefore ensure that the Councils' Procurement Strategy incorporates the principles of sustainability and circular economy in line with this policy.
- 2.7** The waste hierarchy (as shown on pg. 5 of the Sustainable Products Policy) provides a guide for considering procurement options and promotes the values of a circular economy. The hierarchy lists prevention as the most preferred option as it eliminates waste and emissions by reducing the procurement of products that aren't crucial to our services or operations.
- 2.8** The second most preferred option is reuse, which has a significant impact both on greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. It provides the means to prevent waste from entering landfill by making use of discarded products and limiting the need for new natural resources to be consumed by manufacturing new items.
- 2.9** If the procurement of a new product is deemed necessary, then the next best option would be recycling. We should therefore purchase products which can be recycled wherever possible. Recycling also reduces the need to harvest new natural resources, reduces our carbon emissions, prevents pollution, and can also create financial savings. Ensuring that recycling facilities are well labelled, easy to access, and that staff and customers are

informed of their location and understand how to use them, will be an important step to enable increased uptake of recycling across the partnership.

- 2.10** Where recycling is not possible it is vital to consider whether the product can be recovered in any other way, and we must be conscious of how items are disposed of at the end of their lives. Where single-use items can't be avoided we must make sustainable choices and promote responsible and appropriate disposal within our organisation.
- 2.11** As a community leader we must also look to support community led schemes which promote recycling and reduction of single use products wherever possible, to ensure that a wider cultural change can be established across the sub-region.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1** If we are to meet our net zero targets, it will be vital that we find ways to reduce our carbon emissions and seek more sustainable options to reduce the waste we generate as an authority. The Sustainable Products Policy highlights the damaging environmental impacts resulting from our consumption and disposal of single use products; and sets out the Partnership's commitment to discontinuing the procurement of these items as far as possible, sourcing the best alternative solutions where single use products cannot be eliminated completely.
- 3.2** The Sustainable Products Policy has been developed to outline the necessary actions required to achieve this, such as the importance of completing a comprehensive audit on the use of single use products. Ensuring that the Councils' Procurement Strategy incorporates the principles of sustainability and circular economy in line with this policy will be crucial to its success, as will use of the Waste Hierarchy as a procurement guide.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

The Sustainable Products Policy has been developed as a cross-partnership policy aiming to assist us in meeting our net zero targets and the aspirations of our Climate Change Strategy, providing reputational benefits through our accountability as a community leader. Improving our waste and resource management also provides environmental and health benefits resulting from reduced pollution levels.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

Our ambition seeks to align activity and action across the three sovereign councils to deliver environmental benefits across the subregion, and shared learning for the benefit of the Partnership.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Sustainable Products Policy has been developed in line with the strategic aims of the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership and the corporate priorities of the three Councils. Adoption of this Policy is listed as a corporate priority in the South East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership Annual Delivery Plan.

STAFFING

None.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Local authorities have a legal obligation to produce plans and policies to adapt to and mitigate climate change in line with the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008 and failure to do so could result in a legal challenge being made.

DATA PROTECTION

None.

FINANCIAL

External funding opportunities will be sought wherever possible whilst ensuring that future expenditure within existing Council budgets seeks to include carbon savings and waste management as part of the procurement and delivery of services. The completion of an audit will confirm whether any increase in expenditure will be required to achieve the aims of this policy however it is often the case that financial savings can be made through reduced waste disposal costs and bulk purchasing. Where a change in line with this policy may incur extra costs, this must be subject to a full cost benefit analysis to consider the needs of the business alongside the financial implications.

RISK MANAGEMENT

None.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

Consultation with Key Officers and portfolio holder have been undertaken.

REPUTATION

Adoption of the Sustainable Products Policy shows our commitment to meeting both our net zero targets and environmental aims, enhancing our reputation as a community leader, and setting a positive example for others to follow.

CONTRACTS

None.

CRIME AND DISORDER

None.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

None.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The Sustainable Products Policy aims to deliver positive outcomes for the natural environment and the health and wellbeing of our communities. Plastic products in particular release chemicals during their degradation which have a negative impact on plant and animal habitats and once released the resultant gas emissions can be toxic, having adverse effects on both the environment and human health.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Commitment to our net zero targets will be crucial, alongside the work of all other authorities, businesses, and individuals in the global battle to reduce our carbon emissions and limit climate change to temperature increases of well below 2% in line with the Paris Agreement. Failure to do so would be catastrophic to the environment with extreme weather events expected to become more frequent and severe.

At current levels, greenhouse gas emissions from the plastic lifecycle threaten our global commitment to the Paris Agreement. This Policy is therefore vital to ensure that we effectively manage our waste and reduce its impact. It is a global problem of which we can only make a small contribution, but we must seek to reduce our operational footprint as far as possible and manage our waste in a considered and environmentally conscientious manner.

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

MISSIONS	
This paper contributes to the follow Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.	
Health	The Sustainable Products Policy seeks to reduce pollution and contamination of the food web thereby reducing hazards to health across the sub-region
Wellbeing	The Sustainable Products Policy supports a more sustainable future for our operations which will lead to improved wellbeing for staff and ultimately residents.
Local Leadership	The Sustainable Products Policy highlights our commitment to meeting both our net zero targets and environmental aims, enhancing our reputation as a community leader, and setting a positive example for others to follow.

ACRONYMS

None.

APPENDICES	
Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -	
<i>APPENDIX A</i>	<i>Sustainable Products Policy</i>

BACKGROUND PAPERS	
Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -	
Document title	Where the document can be viewed
<i>Annual Delivery Plan</i>	
<i>Climate Change Strategy</i>	https://www.sholland.gov.uk/media/20590/Climate-Change-Strategy-Spring-

	2022/pdf/Climate Change Strategy Spring 2022.pdf?m=637868355183700000
--	--

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT	
<i>Name of body</i>	<i>Date</i>
Policy Development Panel	12 th July 2022

REPORT APPROVAL	
Report author:	Heather Prescott Climate Change and Environment Officer
Signed off by:	Christian Allen Assistant Director Regulatory
Approved for publication:	Lord Gary Porter