



<b>REPORT TO:</b>	PEFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL
<b>DATE:</b>	23 <sup>RD</sup> JULY 2024
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS POLICY
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	TO REVIEW PROGRESS AND ENSURE THE NEW POLICY IS ACHIEVING ITS INTENDED AIMS
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	N/A
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	CLLR SNEATH
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR REGULATORY
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	HEATHER PRESCOTT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICER
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	N/A
<b>EXEMPT REPORT?</b>	NO

## **SUMMARY**

Following the adoption of the Sustainable Products Policy in November 2022, a subsequent action plan of monitoring measures was taken to Performance Monitoring Panel in March 2023. This plan identified a number of measures to monitor the successful implementation of the new policy and improve sustainability across our operations by embedding the Sustainable Products Policy in the procurement framework and discontinuing the purchase of single use products where possible.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Committee note the progress towards the monitoring measures outlined in the action plan which support the successful implementation of 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 was listed as a corporate priority in the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership Annual Delivery Plan. The Sustainable Products Policy and associated monitoring measures will assist us in establishing practices for a more sustainable 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**

None. 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 this policy and the associated monitoring measures 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** The Sustainable Products Policy made a commitment to discontinuing the procurement of single use products within our internal operations, as far as possible, and finding the best alternative solutions where single use products could not be eliminated completely. To achieve this, we sought to embed the Sustainable Products Policy in the Procurement Framework of the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP), to ensure an aligned approach, establish a culture of reuse and recycling across SELCP and improve sustainability across our operations.
- 1.2** Following the adoption of this policy, an action plan of monitoring measures was developed to monitor progress towards the successful implementation of this policy, and this report seeks to provide a progress update on the actions identified in the monitoring measures action plan to ensure the policy is fit for purpose and delivering on its intended outcomes.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1** Since the implementation of the monitoring measures action plan, bi-monthly meetings have been held between the Head of Procurement and Contracts and the Climate Change and Environment Officer. These meetings have assisted with knowledge sharing between these departments and have provided a channel to inform on progress towards the adoption of the Procurement Strategy, ensuring that sustainability is given appropriate consideration during the development of this strategy. The Head of Procurement and Contracts has also begun sharing of quarterly reports which provide an overview of procurement movements, to the Climate Change and Environment Team, assisting with the development of a wider understanding of purchasing behaviours.
- 2.2** A physical audit at Priory Road Offices was undertaken and the Climate Change and Environment Officer liaised with the Facilities Team and West Marsh Depot supervisor to identify the products routinely purchased by the team, and better understand their purchasing habits and the reasons behind purchasing decisions. This also provided an

opportunity to raise awareness of the Sustainable Products Policy and improve understanding of the reasons the audit was being carried out.

- 2.3** The remit of this audit and the subsequently identified 'top ten suppliers' list included any products which were single use or had single use packaging, and therefore had a focus on consumables such as cleaning products and equipment, stationary, PPE and clothing.
- 2.4** As part of this audit, procurement card and Unit 4 records were also scrutinised to provide as complete a picture as possible of procurement activities across the organisation. However, we found that limited descriptions recorded for p-card purchases meant that we could only get an overview of the suppliers used for the most part, and unfortunately had limited access to data around products purchased in these transactions. A more consistent use of Unit 4 finance system would enable better recording of purchasing data and encourage purchasing from preferred suppliers with known environmental and social value credentials.
- 2.5** During the course of the audit, a number of efficiency measures were found to already be in place with some consideration given to sustainability, for example the Facilities Team advised that cleaning materials are purchased in five-litre containers and then transferred to smaller bottles for use. However, it also became apparent that many procurement decisions were being taken in an ad-hoc manner, leading to a heavy reliance on companies such as Amazon, as well as many similar products being purchased from a number of different suppliers.
- 2.6** Whilst it is recognised that sometimes it will be necessary for last minute purchases to be made via P-cards, a more organised, streamlined, and consistent approach to purchasing decisions would reduce this reliance and enable increased bulk buying from a small number of 'preferred suppliers' which would potentially allow better rates to be negotiated and a reduction in packaging and deliveries to be achieved.
- 2.7** Following completion of the audit, a single-use products register and most used suppliers list (identified by spend) were developed, and we have now engaged with the companies which supply stationary and other materials, with a view to assessing their environmental and social value credentials, as well as exploring the opportunities and opening the dialogue around more sustainable alternatives. The Procurement Team are also currently looking at entering into a contract with one supplier for PPE across the Partnership, and therefore they will look to address suppliers environmental and social value credentials as part of these discussions.
- 2.8** The Climate Change & Environment Team have now begun work towards similar auditing approaches at East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council and it is therefore felt that it would be most beneficial for a cross partnership Sustainable Products Transition Group to be established once these audits near completion, with a view to enabling focussed, consistent, and tangible actions to be taken forward to promote behavioural change across the SELCP.
- 2.9** It has been identified that a battery collection service is offered at Priory Road and the Podback scheme has now also been taken up, with recycling bags provided to the Facilities

Team for use in association with their coffee machine. A communications piece is also now being developed to raise awareness of these services to ensure maximum uptake.

- 2.10** Other recycling products such as the 'Vape Vessel' have also been identified and could be considered in the future. Terracycle options are also currently being explored with a view to siting recycling bins for crisp packets at our operational buildings wherever drop-off points allow.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1** In conclusion, whilst some consideration to sustainability is already being given in our procurement decisions, the completion of the audit and development of most frequently used suppliers list have allowed us to identify a number of areas of opportunity to improve the sustainability and efficiency of our practises. These areas of opportunity include a potential reduction in packaging and costs through increased bulk buying, increased engagement with suppliers and evaluation of their sustainability credentials to enable preferred suppliers to be identified, as well as exploration of alternative products which will enable us to reduce the environmental impact of our purchases.
- 3.2** A more centralised approach to purchasing and a reduced reliance on Amazon and P-cards would assist with improving our sustainability credentials and enable better recording of procurement data to be achieved. In particular, stationary ordering is currently being undertaken departmentally and is primarily being sourced from Amazon, however a shift to centralised purchasing from preferred suppliers with better environmental credentials would reduce the number of deliveries required and improve the sustainability of such purchases, whilst achieving costs savings through reduced carriage fees and discounted public sector rates. A more centralised approach to the procurement of other commonly purchased items such as toilet rolls would also likely realise similar benefits and additionally, South Holland could look to cease procurement of hand towels in line with the decision taken by East Lindsey District Council at The Hub.
- 3.3** The alignment and uptake of recycling schemes such as Podback, Terracycle, and the battery collection service also encourage staff to take responsibility for their waste disposal practises and seek to establish a culture of reuse and recycling across the Partnership, and we are seeking ways to broaden this offer.
- 3.4** The work undertaken to date has already started to identify a number of opportunities to deliver against the policy. The monitoring plan and review processes already in place demonstrate that the adopted policy is fit for purpose and on track to deliver on its aims.

### **EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP**

The Sustainable Products Policy was 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 procurement processes, and resource and waste management also provides environmental and

health benefits resulting from reduced carbon emissions and pollution levels. The implementation of the monitoring measures action plan is crucial to ensure that the Sustainable Products Policy is successfully embedded and that these benefits are realised.

## **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 and associated monitoring measures were 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 the Sustainable Products Policy was listed as a corporate priority in the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership Annual Delivery Plan and the monitoring measures identified will assist with its successful implementation.

### **STAFFING**

None. This work is currently encompassed with the existing Climate Change and Environment Team.

### **WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are potential implications to implementing additional recycling facilities e.g. Terracycle as this would likely require waste being taken to approved locations so this will need to be fully explored before any decisions are made.

### **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**

The efficiency measures identified will likely enable financial savings to be realised through bulk purchasing, reduced carriage fees and negotiation of reduced public sector rates with preferred suppliers. Improving the sustainability of products purchased may also lead to reduced waste disposal costs in the longer term.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

None.

### **STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES**

Consultation with Key Officers and portfolio holder has been undertaken.

## REPUTATION

Adoption of the Sustainable Products Policy and the subsequent uptake of monitoring measures which seek to ensure the successful implementation of this policy, highlight 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

At current levels, greenhouse gas emissions from the plastic lifecycle threaten our global commitment to the Paris Agreement. Successful implementation of 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

<b>MISSIONS</b>	
<b>This paper contributes to the following Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.</b>	
<b>Health</b>	The Sustainable Products Policy seeks to reduce pollution and contamination of the food web thereby reducing hazards to health across the sub-region
<b>Wellbeing</b>	The Sustainable Products Policy supports a more sustainable future for our operations which will lead to improved wellbeing for staff and ultimately residents.
<b>Local Leadership</b>	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>	Sustainable Products Policy - Monitoring Measures Action Plan
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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Where the document can be viewed</b>
Sustainable Products Policy	<a href="https://www.sholland.gov.uk">Sustainable Products Policy - South Holland District Council (sholland.gov.uk)</a>

**REPORT APPROVAL**

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