

Housing, Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Date: 13th September 2018

Subject: #PlasticFreeGM

Report of: Sarah Mellor, Head of Corporate Services, Waste and Resources Team

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to present an overview of the progress made to date on developing a #PlasticFreeGM campaign to eradicate the use of single use plastics in Greater Manchester (GM).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee are invited to comment upon and note the work undertaken to date.

Contact Officer: Sarah Mellor, Head of Corporate Services, Waste and Resources Team,
sarah.mellor@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Government's 25 year Environment Plan

1. BACKGROUND

1. In January 2018 Government launched its 25 year Environment Plan which sets out six key goals to improve the environment. As part of the Plan it also acknowledges that to achieve these goals and maximise the benefits of a healthier environment they also need to manage the pressures on the environment that are a result of human actions. This includes 'minimising waste'.

1.2 The 'minimising waste' section¹ of the Plan contains the following ambitions:

'We will minimise waste, reuse materials as much as we can and manage materials at the end of their life to minimise the impact on the environment. We will do this by:

) Working towards our ambition of zero avoidable² waste by 2050.

) Working to a target of eliminating avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042.

¹ Government's 25 year Environment Plan

² Avoidable means what is Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable

- J Meeting all existing waste targets – including those on landfill, reuse and recycling – and developing ambitious new future targets and milestones.
 - J Seeking to eliminate waste crime and illegal waste sites over the lifetime of the Plan, prioritizing those of highest risk. Delivering substantial reduction in litter and littering behavior.
 - J Significantly reducing and where possible preventing all kinds of marine plastic pollution – in particular material that came originally from land.
- 1.3 Clearly the work outlined within this report describes what we are doing ‘proactively’ undertaking to feed into the ambitions of the Environment Plan through promoting the eradication of avoidable plastics that are currently in existence by switching to more sustainable alternatives, however it should be also recognised that work needs to be undertaken to reduce the types of plastics produced.
- 1.4 Too often plastics are produced, used and discarded without capture of the economic benefits of a ‘circular’ approach and therefore harms the environment. Currently there is only established recycling markets for bottles derived from Poly Ethylene Terephthalate (PET (but not PET trays) and Poly-Propylene (PP) yoghurt pots however not all pots/trays are made of PP, instead cheaper alternate polymers are used which preprocessors do not want.
- 1.5 With the Environment Plan setting out its ambitions to eliminate avoidable plastic waste, Government have taken their first steps by:
- J Launching a call for evidence to examine how charges or changes to the tax system could tackle the problems associated with single-use plastic waste and looks across the lifecycle of single-use plastics to examine systems to reduce waste; and
 - J Announcing the new allocation of £20m of funding to businesses and universities to stimulate new thinking and rapid solutions in this area.
- 1.6 Whilst the above is a step in the right direction, it should be acknowledged that significant investment is required to source alternative solutions to single use plastics and develop new technologies to recycle other types of plastics on a large scale and stimulate market demand.
- 1.7 The need for early Government action is crucial and therefore it is proposed, that an additional work stream is added to the #PlasticFreeGM campaign to lobby Government in this area and it should form part of the remit of Board (see Governance Arrangements and Appendix A).

2. **LAUNCH OF THE #PLASTICFREEGM CAMPAIGN**

2.1 Prior to the Green Summit the Mayor held a meeting, hosted by Marketing Manchester, with a select number of Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) businesses to assess their willingness to make a pledge to reduce the use of single use plastics in their business.

2.2 From that meeting the following pledge was agreed and launched at the Green Summit:

‘Greater Manchester tourism and hospitality sector have set a target to eradicate the use of single use plastics by 2020. Within the next six months as a first step, our business pledges to remove single use plastic straws from our operation in exchange for a much more sustainable paper straw. This is part of a wider scheme to make our industry more sustainable and to propose next steps.’

2.3 Currently over 70 organisations have signed up to this pledge.

2.4 Following the Green Summit, the Mayor met with Corin Bell (Director, Real Junk Food Manchester) and asked her to lead on the T&H pledge programme, stating that his preference would be for this to be public sector led.

3. **#PLASTICFREEGM**

3.1 The interest within the campaign has been so significant that the focus has now been extended to cover seven work streams:

1. Tourism and Hospitality (T&H);
2. Higher Education Institutes (HEIs);
3. Local Authorities (LAs);
4. Residents of GM;
5. Businesses within GM;
6. Volunteers; and
7. Communications.

3.2 Leads in each of these work streams have been established and will be part of a Steering Group (see Section 12: Governance Arrangements) to ensure the campaign is delivered to its maximum potential.

3.3 An overview of activities being undertaken in each of these areas along with next steps is provided in the sections below.

4. **TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY**

4.1 Since the Green Summit, working with Corin Bell, a draft Project Plan has been produced, to engage with the sector and promote the campaign, so that it continues to gain momentum.

4.2 The AGMA Procurement Hub undertook a soft market testing exercise to identify the cost and supply of a suitable alternative for plastic straws. The results of this have been shared with the sector.

4.3 Over 20 businesses attended the latest workshop which was held on 18th June 2018 and along with agreeing the principles of the draft project plan, they discussed the results of the soft market testing and agreed the design of a paper bee straw from a GM distributor.

4.4 Orders have been collected through Marketing Manchester, who contacted all T&H signatories and provided details to the GM distributor, who has now placed the order. The lead time of the order is a minimum of 12 weeks, therefore the straw will be available by end of September/early October.

4.5 Next Steps

4.5.1 Over the next weeks focus will be on finalising the Project Plan (which includes elements of the Volunteers and Communications work streams), the work programme and budget to enable the Lead on this work stream to take this element of the campaign forward.

5. **HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES (HEIs)**

5.1 A workshop with over 70 attendees from each of the GM Universities was held on 18th June 2018 along with representatives from campus franchises and businesses such as Starbucks, Coke and Lucazade.

5.2 Whilst HEIs were generally really positive about setting a target to be plastic free, concerns were expressed about how quickly it could be achieved. There was a willingness to work collaboratively across institutions to set out a blue print of what a plastic free campus would look like and they recognised that they needed to work with the waste industry to discuss disposal options. It was also recognised that total buy-in from the institutes Leadership teams was required to drive the move to becoming plastic free forward.

5.3 Next Steps

5.3.1 To move forward, a meeting is being arranged between the Mayor and Vice-Chancellors to ensure they are fully committed to the campaign, to enable work on a blue print to achieve a plastic free campus to commence.

6. **LOCAL AUTHORITIES (LAs)**

6.1 A number of GM public sector authorities including Bury, Oldham, Tameside, GM Social Care Partnership and TfGM have also made commitments to reduce their single use plastics as well as fire stations.

6.2 Steps have already been taken such as a move to compostable cups (which bio-grade) at the Training and Development Centre. These are now being diverted away from waste incineration plants.

6.3 Clearly the public sector will need to demonstrate visible leadership if the #PlasticFreeGM is to have any scale. With this in mind the AGMA Procurement Hub are currently identifying all of the single use products which are purchased under different contracts.

6.4 Next Steps

6.4.1 Once all the contracts have been identified, work will commence with the AGMA Procurement Hub and GM Procurement Officers to produce a Procurement Plan to procure suitable sustainable alternatives.

7. **RESIDENTS OF GM**

7.1 Due to the number of enquiries from residents of what they can do help GM become plastic free, it is proposed to extend the campaign to include residents.

7.2 Next Steps

7.2.1 Work will commence with the Waste and Resources Communications Team to develop a Communications Plan to inform residents of how they can get involved and inform and raise awareness of alternative solutions to single use plastics, and form part of their overall Communication Plan for 2019/20.

8. **BUSINESSES WITHIN GM**

8.1 Whilst the launch of #PlasticFreeGM was primarily aimed at the T&H sector the reach and aims of the campaign have meant that a large number of businesses within GM are also wanting to make the move to eradicate single use plastics from their organisations.

8.2 Since the summit the Waste and Resources Team have been meeting with these organisations to discuss how they can start making those changes and importantly have the right disposal services to deal with the changes they propose to make.

8.3 Next Steps

8.3.1 To coordinate and make best use of resources the Waste and Resources Team will be working closely with the Growth Hub to ensure that organisations are provided with all the information and services available to make them more sustainable and move to being plastic free of all single use plastics.

9. VOLUNTEERS

- 9.1 As mentioned above (section 5), incorporated within the T&H Project Plan is the recruitment of volunteers to inform and promote the campaign to increase its reach throughout the GM.
- 9.2 To help achieve this objective initial discussions have taken place with voluntary organisations, such as Friends of the Earth, who already promote the plastic free agenda and are keen to get involved in the GM campaign.
- 9.3 Next Steps
 - 9.3.1 To take this work stream forward, further discussions will be taking place to set up a volunteer scheme which will include a training programme and package for everyone who is recruited to ensure there is a consistent approach.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

- 10.1 Critical to the success and delivery of all the above work streams is the Communication Plan to ensure all target audiences have tailored messages and information to make informed decisions and to continue to promote the campaign.
- 10.2 As part of the T&H Project Plan, the development of a website which not only promotes the #PlasticsFreeGM campaign but provides key information such as alternative products to single use plastics is underway. The website will also have case studies of organisations who have started to make the switch as well as having the 'pledge' page for organisations to continue to get involved. Primarily the website will focus businesses (including T&H) however it will sign post people to our other partners' websites, for example Recycle for Greater Manchester, Green Growth Hub, Growth Hub and Marketing Manchester.
- 10.3 Social media will be the main focus of the campaign although other marketing materials such as window stickers will be used to promote the campaign. Coordination of all promotional materials will be led by the Waste and Resources Team and the Green Cities Communication lead.
- 10.4 Next Steps
 - 10.4.1 Currently the main focus for the Communication work stream is to have a 'fit for purpose' website. With the straws being delivered late September/early October, the aim is to launch the straw and website at the same time. To achieve this fact sheets on alternative products are being developed by the University of Salford, Case Studies are being produced as well as the design of the website.

11. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 To ensure the delivery of the #PlasticFreeGM campaign achieves its full potential it is proposed that a Steering Group is set up which brings together the Leads of each work stream to ensure a coordinated approach.
- 11.2 It is recommended that the Leads will produce briefing notes to the meeting on the progress of their area and report key performance data. The Chair of the Group will be the Head of Corporate Services (Waste and Resources Team) who is leading on the overall delivery of the campaign.
- 11.3 The first meeting of the Steering Group will be to set deadlines and work programmes including all the next steps identified within the report along with agreeing key performance indicators from all work streams.
- 11.4 It is also proposed that an additional Board is set up to oversee the direction of the campaign. The membership of the Board will comprise:
 - CLlr Alex Ganotis (Green Cities Lead)
 - CLlr Alison Gwynne (Chair of the Waste Committee)
 - Simon Nokes (Executive Director, Policy & Strategy)
 - David Taylor (Executive Director, Waste & Resources)
- 11.5 The purpose of the Board is to receive progress updates on the overall delivery of the campaign. Terms of Reference are set out at Appendix A.

Appendix 1

#PlasticFreeGM Board

Draft Terms of Reference

Membership: Cllr Alex Ganotis (Green Cities Lead)
Cllr Alison Gwynne (Chair of the Waste Committee)
Simon Nokes (Executive Director, Policy & Strategy)
David Taylor (Executive Director, Waste and Resources)

In attendance: Sarah Mellor (Lead Officer of #PlasticFreeGM)
Work stream Leads as required

Quorum: Two

Frequency: Four times per year

Purpose: To oversee the delivery of the #PlasticFreeGM campaign.

Remit:

1. To set the strategy and perimeters in which to lobby Government regarding achieving a Plastic Free Greater Manchester;
2. To receive quarterly update reports on the progress of the campaign;
3. To approve the KPIs which the success of the campaign will be monitored against;
4. To review performance against the KPIs; and
5. To oversee the strategic direction of the campaign.