

SINGLE USE PLASTIC ACTION PLAN 2019 - 2024



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Version control

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Strategic Alignment

The Single Use Plastic Action Plan supports our priority to 'Enhance participation, capacity and empowerment across our communities' and helps deliver two underlying ambition statements.

Ambition 16: Transform our natural environment to support wellbeing and inward investment and enhance it for current and future generations.

Ambition 17: Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe and attractive.

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foreword

In these challenging times, it is essential that we recognise the importance the environment plays in our ambition that North Lanarkshire is **the** place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit.

I am delighted to present the Single Use Plastic Action Plan for North Lanarkshire. The plan is an integral part of the Environment Strategy which brings together separate but related strategies, policies and plans to ensure a one council approach to the environment.

Plastic is popular because it's lightweight, durable and inexpensive compared to other materials. The problem is that it is designed to last forever, but we often use it only once. These single use plastic items are having a disproportionate impact on the environment. On average, each Scottish household is binning 27kg of food and drink plastic that could have been put in the relevant recycling bins. This plastic could have been worth £5.7 million if recycled, but instead costs an estimated £5.3 million to send to landfill.

As a council, we realise the influential role we play in setting an example to our employees and communities. This plan sets out how we aim to achieve reductions in our use of single use plastic over the next five years.

Please support our plan and help play your part in caring for our future generations.

Michael McPake

Convener of Environment and Transportation Committee

introduction and context

1.1 North Lanarkshire Council

North Lanarkshire is Scotland's fourth largest local authority area and is ideally situated in the heart of Scotland with excellent transport links to the rest of Scotland and beyond. We have a resident population of 339,390, and the most favourable estimate for population growth in 10 years, even before our significant growth targets are considered.

Our population is expected to increase by 1% by the year 2026, compared to a growth of 3.2% in Scotland. The population is then predicted to decrease by 0.9% (3,188 people) between the years 2026 to 2041.

We have one of the strongest and fastest growing economies in Scotland with Gross Value Added (the measure of the value of goods and services produced) increasing by 2.2% between 2015 and 2016, and rising from £6.38billion to £6.52billion. And we have higher levels of employment with unemployment figures reducing from a high in 2012 of 11.2% to 3.6% in 2019.

We are not complacent, however, and have a vision that North Lanarkshire is the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest, and Visit. We are driving inclusive economic growth, increasing skills, and generating jobs and training opportunities. Large scale regeneration and infrastructure projects are planned and we will put local people first to maintain and improve facilities, services, and supports. We aim to ensure that the benefits of economic growth and prosperity reach all of our communities with a fairer distribution of wealth across North Lanarkshire.

1.2 National Context

This century must see urgent action to tackle global environmental challenges – climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, resource depletion and waste – to safeguard the wellbeing and prosperity of people around the globe. Current patterns of consumption and production are simply not sustainable. If everyone in the world lived as we do in Scotland, it would require the resources of more than three planets.

We need to adapt to prosper – socially, economically and environmentally – within planetary limits: to work towards a world where no country uses more resources than the Earth can support and to replenish the natural systems that sustain us. This transformation will require commitment, collaboration, innovation and political leadership.

In individual areas of environmental policy, Scotland already has strong, ambitious strategies in place. In particular the Government outlined the following six draft outcomes which it would aspire to achieve the following.

1. *We are a climate leader and play our full role in limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C.*
2. *We are a zero waste, resource efficient nation.*
3. *Our biodiversity is protected and enhanced, supporting healthy ecosystems.*
4. *Our air, freshwater, seas and soils are of excellent quality.*
5. *Everyone can access, enjoy and connect with nature.*
6. *The global footprint of our consumption and production is sustainable.*

The Scottish Government also pledged to reduce our plastic waste and to make all plastic packaging reusable or recyclable by 2030. Over the past 50 years, the role and importance of plastics in our economy has grown consistently. Global production of plastics has increased twentyfold since the 1960s, reaching 322 million tonnes in 2015. This is expected to double again over the next 20 years.

It is important therefore that the local ambitions of the council reflect these national ambitions, where appropriate.

A 2016 Scottish Government strategy 'Making things last' aims to move the country towards a more circular economy, aligning its economic and environmental objectives. It aims to bring together business sectors and individuals to jointly work towards that goal.

In a circular economy, systems are designed to make better use of valuable products and materials - changing the way they are produced and managed to have less impact on finite natural resources, and create greater economic benefit.

In relation to food and beverage retail packaging this means buying materials which are from a recycled source, making sure they are capable of being recycled and then ensuring they are recycled.

1.3 Local Context

In April 2019, the council approved an Environment Strategy which brings together ten separate but related strategies, policies and plans. This ensures these are not implemented in isolation but take account of common factors to maximise their impact and contribute to a one council approach to the environment.

The Single Use Plastic Action Plan (SUPAP) is a sub policy of the Environment Strategy, demonstrating its vital contribution to our ambitions for the environment. It will deliver on our priority to '*Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities*' and its underlying ambition statement to '*Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe, and attractive*' as detailed in the Plan for North Lanarkshire.

The Carbon Management Action Plan is a separate sub policy of the Environment Strategy which focuses on council projects and activities during 2019-2022 to achieve national carbon reduction targets. The SUPAP has obvious links to this action plan so we will work together to ensure each complements, and does not duplicate, the work of the other.

North Lanarkshire Council declared a climate emergency at a full council meeting on 20 June 2019. The council agreed that climate warming has reached such an unprecedented phase that an emergency declaration is justified. The Carbon Management Action Plan, the Single Use Plastic Action Plan and the other eight policies that comprise the Environment Strategy will ensure the carbon reduction agenda is embedded throughout the organisation.

The council is working to the Scottish Government's Household Waste Recycling Charter which intends to achieve a more consistent and better quality recycle. Recent figures show an improvement in our recycling rate from 39% in 2017 to 44% in 2018, our highest ever recycling rate. This is still short of where we need to be but could easily be improved; as of February 2019, audits show that more than 50% of waste in our grey bins is recyclable. As a percentage of the residual waste collected, 30.6% of food waste, 14.3% of paper and card, 6% of glass, 5.5% of metal and 3.9% of plastic bottles are not being recycled.

Single Use Plastic

2.1 Tackling the issue

Plastic is an incredibly useful material because of its versatility but it has disadvantages. It often ends up as litter where it breaks down into very small micro plastics which do not biodegrade but instead accumulate. Plastic is also non-renewable, made largely from fossil fuels, and discarding it is an extreme waste of a valuable resource.

Seeking alternatives is not a straightforward task and decisions need to be influenced by the full life cycle of the proposed alternatives.

There has been much negative publicity about Single Use Plastic (SUP) in the media however, as a result, residents in North Lanarkshire may be more receptive to change. This plan records some of the actions already taken to remove, reuse and reduce SUP along with future plans. We recognise this is phase one on our journey to reduce single use plastic from within our council and is focused mainly on catering items.

The Scottish Government is taking action and any targets or stats referred to in this document come from this source. In addition, proposed changes mean that suppliers have come on board and are actively seeking their own solutions.

In particular, the Scottish Government is introducing legislation on a broad spectrum of waste issues, including the Return Deposit Scheme. This will affect how we deliver products and services in the future and we will need to revisit some action points as changes are introduced.

How we tackle waste in our communities will also be subject to change. The Scottish Government target is that by 2025 only 5% of waste can end up in landfill. North Lanarkshire Council, along with other local authorities, will be using a new 'energy from waste' facility from December 2019. This will reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, further helping to ensure that the small amount of plastic that we cannot recycle or remove will not break down into micro plastics and pollute our environment.

Within food and beverage retail packaging, SUP refers to any plastic item which is designed to be used only once; in the council this includes, but is not restricted to, the following.

- Coffee vending cups
- Plastic lids
- Plastic cutlery
- Food containers
- Straws
- Condiment sachets
- Soft drink bottles
- Bottle tops
- Water cups

Our aim is to reduce or eliminate single use plastics on a phased basis. We will:

- identify current use;
- develop alternatives;

- raise awareness, and
- implement change.

Where we have to use SUP, we will ensure these are recyclable – as far as possible.

Reduce

We have removed loose plastic drinking straws, plastic water cups from water fountains and plastic coffee stirrers from purchasing templates and replaced with paper, where still required.

At our café outlets, we offer a 25p reduction to customers purchasing hot beverages who bring their own cup. We have also introduced a reusable cup available for purchase. These measures are helping to reduce the use of single use disposable cups by up to 29% in some of our staff food facilities.

Reuse

We are working with our butchery supply partner to supply meats in reusable trays that the contractor removes after delivery to reuse, rather than using polystyrene or other disposable plastic.

We are replacing plastic water cups with polycarbonate reusable cups in cafes and at water coolers.

We have twenty five pilot primary schools trialing the following reductions in SUP.

- Cuplets which use a hard plastic straw are no longer sold at break time and Aqua Juice which also uses a hard plastic straw has been removed. Juice at lunch time is served from a jug into reusable polycarbonate tumblers.
- Removal of single use plastic tubs used to serve fruit pots, cheese and coleslaw products are now served in reusable polycarbonate bowls.
- Sandwiches are now served from a sealable container on to a reusable plate, rather than in a plastic sandwich corner.
- Foam cups and lids for soup have been removed and are now sold in a hard plastic cup with lid.

The pilot is in the evaluation stage and may be further impacted by forthcoming HMIe regulations which will remove fruit juice from primary schools.

Recycle

Following advice from Muller Milk & Ingredients, who supply our schools with individual milk in tetra pak containers with attached plastic straw, pupils have been encouraged to push the straw into the carton at the end of service. This means the straws do not end up as litter. The company is working on a paper straw capable of piercing the container ready for introduction by end of 2020. This will make the container fully recyclable.

Our current fruit and veg supplier delivers all products to Culture NL on recyclable cardboard trays that have already been recycled from the Glasgow Wholesale Market.

We have introduced recycling waste stations within the main offices throughout the council separating landfill, light recycling and food waste.

We have included our waste partners within the scope of the policy to ensure that when no credible alternative products are available, that these can be easily recycled and don't end up in landfill.

2.2 Action Plan

Action	start	timescale
Identify current use		
Audit SUP in catering services within council and ALEO buildings and, where feasible, set reduction targets to be reviewed in future action plans.	April 2019	September 2019
Identify main SUP products within the catering service at our Primary Schools which could be reduced or limited on a phased basis without affecting budgets and the day to day running of the school.	June 2019	December 2020
Identify main SUP products within the catering service at our Secondary Schools which could be reduced or limited without affecting budgets and the day to day running of the school.	September 2020	August 2022
Identify easily removable single use items within catering and look at implementing 'work arounds' or alternatives to eliminate their use within staff and public catering sites.	June 2019	August 2022
Develop alternatives		
Research alternative products taking lifecycle analysis and ease of recycling into account. This will ensure that the alternative does not have a higher environmental impact post use, than the product it replaces.	April 2019	Ongoing as industry develops solutions
Work more closely with our waste partners to identify potential issues with recycling and collection of replacement/future products and consider the financial impact.	May 2019	Ongoing as industry develops solutions
Research actions taken by other councils and large corporate organisations	May 2019	November 2019
Reduce the availability of SUP cutlery from all Culture and Leisure NL Ltd sites and pilot alternative actions such as deposit schemes in main council buildings.	Aug 2019	December 2019
Remove all SUP service trays within the CNL Food & Hospitality Service to all council meetings taking place in any council controlled venue.	September 2019	December 2019

Work with internal council event organisers and aim to reduce single use plastics at council led events and consider alternatives.	September 2019	December 2019
Work with large scale event organisers who work with/alongside the council, raising the profile of recycling and looking at alternative products to SUP.	Oct 2019	April 2020
Pilot use of single serve sauce sachets and replace with dedicated pump action dispensers then roll out to all NLC sites.	September 2019	October 2020
Raise awareness		
Organise council wide campaign with Corporate Communications to advise on environmental impact	December 2019	October 2020
Work with all education establishments to advise/promote of work being done to reduce SUP in the school kitchens	August 2019	Ongoing
Review recycling points throughout council buildings (in line with asset management reduction) and review signage to clarify what materials can be recycled.	Sept 2019	Ongoing
Raise awareness within catering kitchen facilities about what food packaging can be recycled and how to recycle it with laminated information posters within each outlet.	October 2019	August 2020
Implement change		
Liaise with Scotland Excel through regular contact or User Intelligence Group meetings to include and increase awareness and eliminate where possible the use of SUP and sustainability credentials for suppliers.	July 2019	As tenders renew through monitoring meetings
Engage with current suppliers to encourage them to reduce the amount of SUP in packaging and change to recyclable and multi-use alternatives.	July 2019	As tenders renew through monitoring meetings
Reduce identified SUP items from purchasing templates using lifecycle, cost and environmental impacts of the alternatives as part of the process.	July 2019	Ongoing
Support Scottish Government initiatives including the return deposit scheme.	2020	Ongoing

Oversight and Impact

3.1 Governance

The Single Use Plastic Action Plan will be monitored by the council's Environment and Transportation Committee and approved by Policy and Strategy Committee.

3.2 Performance

Performance will be reported at appropriate intervals to the relevant council committee.

3.3 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

Our corporate commitment to equality is outlined within the council's Single Equality Scheme, which sets out our approach to meeting the duties laid out by the Equality Act 2010. An equalities impact assessment (EQIA) has been completed to assess the impact of the action plan on these groups. The assessment concluded that the impact assessment carried out did not produce any significant issues to warrant further actions. The outcomes of this action plan will also not have any effect on the Fairer Scotland Duty.

3.4 Risk Management

The action plan will be subject to standard risk assessment. The following needs to be considered when looking at this plan.

- Lifetime cycle versus SUP cost – The key indicators of environmental impact have several variables when it comes to rating the overall impact of a product.
 - Production – what it takes to produce, input of energy and natural resources, transportation of raw materials and the finished product and any emissions and other pollutants from manufacturing.
 - Use – how use of the product impacts humans or our environment, impact on health, lifespan of the product and the environmental impact of use (if any) – for example: washing of reusable cups
 - Post use – how disposal of the product impacts the environment, pollution, emissions from disposal (gasses from landfill or incineration) and the cost of recycling.
- Possibility of higher labour costs to wash reusable products and an increased staff resource required to implement changes as pilots are rolled out.
- Increased costs due to spillages, increased detergent costs, increased blue roll costs and the environmental impact of their increased use versus the reduced cost to procure the SUP product they replace.
- Customer perception is that single use plastic disposables are 'cleaner' than reusable products.
- Staff perception and negativity to change is possible as there may be an increase in work load.

3.5 HR and Legislative

The action plan will comply with any relevant legislative requirement.

3.6 Environmental

The action plan will have its own specific focus to directly impact on the environment.