

Bath and North East Somerset Council, Full Council Meeting, Thursday 14th March 2019

Conservative Motion: Reduction of Single Use Plastic

This Council acknowledges;

- That plastic is a material with an extremely long lifetime;
- One of the largest proportions of plastic waste in our society is plastic that is used only for a short time – i.e. disposable or single use items. It is also these items that are most likely to pollute the environment in uncontrolled ways, i.e. ending up as litter;
- Questions must be raised as to why we are using a nearly indestructible material for something that is in use for such a short space of time;
- The ambition to significantly reduction global usage of single-use plastic is not about demonising plastic entirely;
- Plastic is also a wonder material - it is cheap to make, lightweight and structurally strong;
- It has enabled a great deal of progress and improved public health in a number of ways including the field of medicine, food hygiene and shelf life of products, it protects things and keeps us safe;
- The critical role that single-use plastic can still play in areas such as the medical setting where some individuals still need to use straws or single use disposable items;
- That the Council has been taking action to reduce single use plastics over the last year, for example: eliminating plastic straws in the GLL run leisure centres and the Heritage Services venues, along with action to switch to metal cutlery at the leisure centres, and tackle supply chain plastic waste by Heritage Services

This Council subsequently notes:

- The prolific use of plastic has led to it becoming an environmental pollution problem on a local, national and global scale;
- Therefore, it is vitally important to continue to recycle plastic at every opportunity.
- It is time for everyone to examine how we can make a shift away from our reliance on plastic;
- Aiming to reduce plastic aligns precisely with the Government's 25-year environment plan and the Government's Waste and Resource Strategy;
- That the Council will continue to lobby Government and the industry to remove unnecessary packaging and make it easier to avoid single use plastics in the first place and develop solutions
- Eliminating single use plastic is a challenge, as here aren't all the answers there yet on alternatives to single use plastics, but there are lots of things that we do as

customers, consumers and businesses to make some positive changes away from single-use plastics;

- Real, tangible progress requires enough local organisations (business, public and community sectors) to sign up to and then demonstrate they have phased out single-use items – e.g. cups, stirrers, straws, condiments sachets;
- There have already been a considerable number of active members of the business community, local community groups and parish council who have been leading the way or who have been involved in activities that support this:
 - Such as cafes incentivising customers to bring their own cups for take away hot drinks;
 - Refill Bath who are working on reducing the need for single-use plastic water bottles and have encouraged local businesses to sign up to the App that offers people a free tap-water refill, whether or not they are a customer in the shop;
 - The Last Straw – encouraging venues to replace plastic straws with sustainable alternatives;
 - No Place for Litter – supporting local groups organise their own litter picks;
 - Plastic Free Communities is a Surfers against Sewage initiative – joining others across the UK to ‘free where we live from unnecessary, single-use plastics’;

Therefore, this Council resolves to;

- Work with the community to ensure that B&NES is able to meet the requirements to qualify for the Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Community Award by April 2020; which includes
- Leading by example locally and continuing to push to remove unnecessary single-use plastic from across the Council workplaces – such as with the water dispensers across the Guildhall that each use single-use plastic cups by June 2019;
- Continue to build on the recently launched ‘Plastic Free BathNES Pledge Campaign’ by signing up local businesses, public and community sector organisations to phase out a minimum of 3 single-use items and helping to make our environment free from plastic waste.