

## REPORT OF THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

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The Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment met on 26 February 2018 and 19 March 2018.

### **1. Notice of Motion: Elimination of avoidable plastic waste**

1.1 The following notice of motion has been submitted by Councillors Nick Bennett and Colin Belsey:

*“The County Council supports the Government ambition to eliminate avoidable plastic waste (particularly single use plastic) over the next 25 years. In support of this ambition the County Council will review the use of plastics in its own supply chain and the plastic recycling facilities available on its estate, to identify and increase the opportunities to reduce, re-use or recycle more plastic”.*

1.2. In line with County Council practice, the matter was referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion.

1.3 Plastics are an important and versatile material in the global economy. They are key components of a very wide range of products, including food packaging, toys, heat-saving domestic insulation and life-saving medical innovations. Consequently the use of plastics, of which there are many different types, has increased 20-fold in the last 50 years and is expected to double again in the next 20 years.

1.4 Many of the properties that make plastics a safe, secure, hygienic and cheap material also make it a tough and long-lasting material, which has an impact on the environment and public health. A significant amount of energy is required in the manufacture and transport of plastic products. After use, an estimated 12 million tonnes of plastic waste ends up in the world's oceans every year, which imposes an economic and social burden by impacting on the productivity of fisheries, shipping and tourism, enters the food chain and imposes a clean-up cost. For example, recent surveys found that over 70% of UK tap water was contaminated with plastic fibres and a third of fish caught off the south coast contained plastic.

1.5 An increasing volume of plastic products are single-use, for example bottles, cups and straws, which means that the beneficial properties of plastics are not being maximised and an estimated £65 billion of material value is lost from the global economy every year. In addition, the recent ban by China on the imports of plastic waste for recycling from countries such as the UK means that the cost of disposal of plastic waste may increase in the short term, whilst the amount being recycled may decrease, as lower-grade plastic waste may have no market to go to.

1.6 There is an extensive range of legislation covering plastic waste and recycling, including from packaging, electrical and electronic equipment, end of life vehicles, and the use of recycled plastic in food packaging. Nearly all local authorities collect some common types of household plastic waste, with an estimated 58% of plastic bottles and 32% of pots, tubs and trays being collected for recycling. The UK has a plastic packaging recycling target

of 57% by 2020, which helped to drive a doubling of UK plastic reprocessing capacity between 2010 and 2015.

1.7 Plastic waste remains a highly visible pollutant of public concern. The government's 25 Year Environment Plan, published in January 2018, includes a target to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042, in support of the separate Clean Growth Strategy, published in October 2017. The Plan points to the success of the 5p plastic bag charge in reducing the use of carrier bags by 85% and commits the government to removing all single use plastics from the central government estate offices.

1.8. A review of the County Council's use of plastics in its own supply chain and the plastic recycling facilities available on its estate will require Officer time. The recommended measures from this review may lead to new costs, for example, alternative materials to single-use plastics or additional recycling facilities for plastics, though this may be partly off-set by a reduction in the cost of handling and disposing of plastic waste.

1.9 The role that the County Council can play in reducing the impact of plastic waste includes reviewing the use of plastics in its own supply chain and the plastic recycling facilities available on its estate, to identify and increase the opportunities to reduce, re-use or recycle more plastic. This will add to the work that the County Council has already undertaken, for example the recent introduction of fully compostable packaging on the majority of goods sold in the café at County Hall. The scope of the work will need to be agreed with relevant sections of the County Council, to ensure that resources are focused where they can achieve the best results, and may require changes to some County Council procurement, practices and staff behaviours. If these are considered acceptable then it is considered that the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Bennett should be agreed, and a progress report submitted to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in 12 months' time.

1.10 The impacts of plastic waste on the environment and human health are recognised by the County Council. In order to contribute to measures that reduce these impacts, the Lead Member recommends that the County Council agree the Motion.

1.11 The Lead Cabinet Member **recommends** the County Council –

☆ (1) to agree the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 1.1.

## **2. East Sussex Statement of Community Involvement**

2.1 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications. The SCI should be regularly reviewed and accordingly revised in order to ensure that it is kept relevant. Any revisions made to the SCI need to be subject to public consultation. This public consultation has been undertaken and a revised SCI has been prepared for adoption.

2.2 The County Council's SCI needs to cover the consultation and engagement arrangements for the Local Plans the Council intends to prepare, as set out in the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme. It also needs to cover the consultation and engagement arrangements for all planning applications for minerals and waste (County Matters) and for the County Council's own service development (e.g. schools, roads and libraries).

2.3 There have been a number of changes to the planning system since the previous SCI was adopted in 2013 and it is therefore in need of revision. In addition, the SCI needs to be updated following changes to the delegation arrangements regarding the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and the work that was previously undertaken by the County Council on its behalf.

2.4 The revised SCI has been developed following experience of public consultation undertaken during both the development of the Waste and Minerals Plan and Waste and Minerals Sites Plan, and the determination of planning applications during recent years.

2.5 The revised SCI sets out how and when communities can become involved in planning matters and the methods of engagement the Planning Authority will use. It further establishes the minimum public consultation and publicity standards the Council is required by law to meet and sets out how and when these will be exceeded.

2.6 The Lead Member agreed at the July 2017 Meeting to publish the draft revised SCI for public consultation. The Planning Authority received four responses during the eight week consultation period. Responses were received from Southern Water, the Environment Agency, Rother District Council and Highways England, none of which were suggesting amendments to the draft SCI. On the basis of the response, no changes have been made to the draft SCI that was presented to Lead Member in July 2017. However, some minor amendments have been made to the SCI to remove the details relating to the consultation which appeared in the draft version.

2.7 The revised SCI is attached as Appendix 1.

2.8 The Council has to meet the statutory requirement to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The draft revised SCI updates the existing document to take into account changes in national Government planning policy and the Localism Act and reflects experiences in undertaking public consultation over the past four years. It also reflects the changes to development management delegation arrangements within the South Downs National Park. Following Lead Member agreement, the draft document has been published for public consultation. The document now needs to be adopted by Council and used as the basis for community engagement undertaken by the planning authority.

2.9 The Lead Cabinet Member **recommends** the County Council to –

☆ (1) agree the response to representations on the draft Statement of Community Involvement and agree the proposed changes to the document; and

(2) adopt and publish the revised Statement of Community Involvement.

19 March 2018

NICK BENNETT  
Lead Cabinet Member for  
Transport and Environment