



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

2nd MARCH 2022

**REDUCING THE USE OF SINGLE USE ITEMS IN ALL COUNCIL CONTRACTS
AND PREMISES**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, IN DISCUSSION WITH
THE CABINET'S CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION (COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS)**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 Provide members of the group with an update of the progress made to reduce the use of single use plastics/items across the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members of the Group:

- 2.1 Note the progress made in respect of removing the ability to order single use items from the Council's online ordering system across the Council, where there is a suitable alternative product.
- 2.2 Acknowledge the impact that Covid-19 has continued to have since the previous report to the Group, in relation to tackling single use plastics/items within the school sector.
- 2.3 Note the work that is progressing with broader 'supply categories' where single use plastics/items are being purchased, with a focus on the Council's cleaning and janitorial contracts.

3. UPDATE – SINGLE USE PLASTICS / ITEMS

- 3.1 Within the previous report (October 2020), the results of an in-depth audit on high use single use plastics was provided which focused on the Council's food and catering sector. Following this review, some immediate steps have been taken, with further analysis and progress required in other areas. Given the desire to achieve a sustainable approach to the Council's supplies, the review



has broadened to include other single use items (i.e. not just plastics) where a more sustainable alternative could be sourced.

- 3.2 Delivering a reduction in single use plastics/items in the food and catering sector for the corporate and school environments has not achieved all the immediate outcomes hoped for during the period as Covid-19 measures continued to have a direct impact, particularly in schools. In the school's sector for example, the disruption caused in respect of temporary closures, reduced menus and supply chain issues faced by our suppliers has hindered progress. However, the following single use plastics have been removed from the online catalogues used in the non-school sector:

Item Description	Quantities previously ordered in a financial year:
7oz Cold Water Cup	42,000
Std Plastic Knife	2,000
Std Plastic Fork	5,000
Std Plastic Stirrer	5,000
Food Box	1,800
4oz White plastic Dish	1,000
Oval salad Pack	3,000

- 3.3 Additional items that have been recently removed from the Council's Purchasing system are listed below (note that these are not classed as single use plastics, but single use items, where alternative or more sustainable options are available):

Item Description	Quantities previously ordered in a financial year:
Paper Plate	8,000
Trifle Dish White	3,000
Single Use Cups	6,500
Wooden Stirrers	2,000

- 3.4 Whilst good progress has been made in this area, not all items can be removed at this stage until suitable alternatives are sourced. For example, the food compartment trays and plastic food pots used by the Meals on Wheels service cannot be removed. These products are recyclable however and should be recycled at kerb side in residential homes. Proactive discussions are taking place with the current supplier, to review the use of suitable alternative products.

- 3.5 The continuing impact of Covid-19 in relation to our schools, and the suppliers that provide us with stock for schools has meant that we've not been able to



progress this work as swiftly as we had hoped. However, we now plan to take action to review the use of single use items across our schools. The key enablers to this being done effectively are:

- To liaise with our suppliers to identify suitable alternative products.
- Ensure that our waste management colleagues at Amgen are included to help us assess whether any suitable products are recyclable.
- Ensure key service areas from the Council are consulted (i.e. Catering Direct).
- To begin the process of engaging with a selection of eco-committees in schools with the aim of raising awareness and ensuring young people contribute to the solutions and their ideas and thoughts are gathered.

3.6 This work will begin imminently.

3.7 In addition to the catering sector, the cleaning and janitorial sector is now being reviewed. Consumables used in this service are typically provided to us in the form of diluted (ready to use) products - in plastic containers.

3.8 Usage data will now be used to liaise with service areas with a view to building a pilot initiative with our current supplier. This will require engagement with our Cleaning Services Colleagues. It is intended that the pilot will trial the use of dissolvable pods containing a concentrated product for certain items that are used on a regular basis. The pod can be put into a pre-existing container (it will need to be thoroughly cleaned prior to use) and dissolved in water, therefore reducing the need to purchase further plastic bottles. In addition to the environmental benefits, the pods are also lower in cost and therefore will offer better value.

3.9 These products are currently being piloted in a neighbouring Authority and we're in the process of liaising with them with the aim of learning.

4. ADOPTING A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO SURPLUS PRODUCTS

4.1 In addition to the review of single use items, it is also important that consideration is given to what happens to items when they come to the end of their useful life for the Council. Adopting a responsible and sustainable approach to managing products that we no longer have a use for is important. Simply sending everything off for disposal is not acceptable. Two examples are provided below.

I.T Equipment

4.2 With a large digital reliant workforce that delivers a wide range of services, the Council endeavours to adopt a modern approach to helping ensure that our staff have access to I.T equipment that suits their needs. Maintaining the performance of I.T equipment is essential, along with adhering to stringent



controls in respect of data security. As a result of this, the Council has a rolling programme of replacement in respect of its I.T equipment.

- 4.3 When I.T equipment reaches the end of its useful life with the Council, for example – it may be due for renewal or some items may have developed a fault, it is passed to an approved local supplier. The supplier is:
- An accredited contractor of ADISA (Asset Disposal and Information Security Alliance).
 - This helps ensure that the Councils assets are processed in accordance with the industry's highest standards which reflect current best practice for handling data, performing high-security data destruction, carrying assets and WEEE (Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment) recycling services.
 - Operates a 'zero landfill' policy.
 - Re-uses as much hardware as possible for professional refurbishment, and re-sale.
 - Devices that are unable to be refurbished are stripped of parts and either:
 - Stocked for the suppliers refurbishment programme, or
 - Down streamed to partners for use.
- 4.4 Of the assets passed to the supplier during 2021:
- *35% were refurbished, and sold on by the supplier,*
 - *20% were stripped for re-use, and*
 - *45% were recycled.*
 - *The recycled percentage includes all items that were stripped as much as they could for re-use before being down streamed for further disposal/recycling, plus all assets shredded to 6mm such as failed hard drives, phones and tablets.*

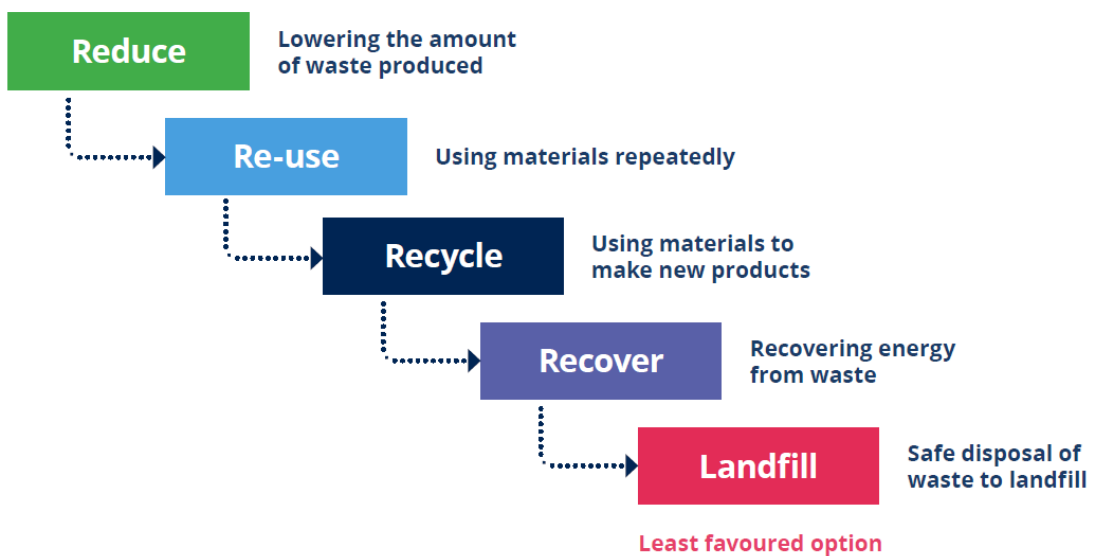
Office furniture, fixtures and fittings

- 4.5 The Procurement Service is working closely with Corporate Estates to develop a strategy that aligns the Council's objective to have modern agile/shared office space facilities for its staff whilst at the same time managing old furniture, and surplus furniture that is currently held in storage. The increasing transition by our services to digital storage solutions, has also reduced the requirement for local physical storage hardware.
- 4.6 The Council has engaged with the Ministry of Furniture Ltd in recent years who have helped us deliver modern facilities whilst also re-purposing our old stock.
- 4.7 Recent examples include the office refit at Ty Oldway and Porth Plaza where the objective was to utilise existing furniture from our offices (and our storage) and have them upcycled into modern furniture that is fit for purpose. A case study for a different site is provided in this [LINK](#).

4.8 In addition to our surplus/old furniture, the refurbishment of our Ty Oldway Office also identified the opportunity to engage with a contractor to collect the floor tiles from the building, take them away and clean them, and re-use them in the office.

4.9 Clearly the examples provided within this report are consistent with the waste hierarchy of the Waste Framework Directive (2008). **i.e. re-use and recycle:**

Most favoured option



Source: EU Waste Framework Directive, 2008

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/ SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio economic implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Welsh language implications as result of the recommendations contained within this report.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in the report at this stage.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 Currently, there are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations made within this report.



9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal or legislative implications emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 This report sets out the changes that have been implemented to reduce the Council's use of single use items. It also identifies further work that is required to reduce the use of single use items further. This work supports the Council's ambitions to be environmental responsible, which contributes to the Council's ambitions to be Net Zero by 2030.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This report sets out the activity that has taken place, together with the planned activity which aims to reduce and eliminate (where practicable) single use plastics/items across the Council.
- 11.2 The Council is committed to addressing this important issue in support of the Council's ambitions to be net zero by 2030.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972

as amended by

THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Background Papers: None.