

## **Environmental Policy - New Strategy and Action Plan for Plastics**

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, as Chair of the Environmental Performance Board ("the Board")

***Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.***

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Cabinet adopts the Plastics Strategy and Action Plan.

### **1. Summary**

This report presents the Plastics Strategy and Action Plan. The Plastics Strategy contributes to delivering Devon County Council's (DCC) over-arching [Environmental Policy](#), which provides a framework for managing and improving DCC's environmental performance. The Board ensures that strategies and action plans are developed and implemented to deliver it.

### **2. Background**

A Notice of Motion calling for DCC to remove single-use plastic items from its premises was considered at Council on the 5 October 2017, which was referred to Cabinet on the 8 November 2017. It was carried that the spirit of the Notice of Motion, which aims to provide leadership in avoiding single-use plastic items to achieve a 'Plastic Free Coastline', be supported and the Council commit to addressing this issue further through the Authority's environmental performance agenda.

### **3. Proposal**

The Plastics Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix 1) is DCC's response to the issue of plastics accumulating in the environment. The Strategy majors on single-use food and beverage packaging and tableware due to the prominence of this type of waste in marine plastic litter. It has four strategic themes that consider how DCC can use its position and responsibility for service delivery to support collective action on this issue. The themes are: Getting our own house in order; Working with suppliers and contractors; Helping raise awareness across Devon; and Enabling Devon to take action.

The Review of DCC's Single-Use Plastic Consumption (Appendix 2) is our first completed action of the Action Plan. The Review provides a baseline of DCC's consumption of single-use food and beverage packaging and tableware and notes the disposal options available to staff. It continues by describing what action will be taken where economically and practically viable to 1) remove all single-use plastic, food and beverage packaging and tableware by 2020, and 2) ensure appropriate recycling routes are available to capture plastic.

### **4. Financial Considerations**

None of the actions require new financial allocations and will be delivered using existing resources. Devon Norse is content with the commercial implications of providing alternatives to single-use plastics within the scope of the Strategy.

## 5. Environmental and Equality Considerations

In progressing the Strategy, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and is available on the Council's website at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/>, which Members will need to consider for the purposes of this item.

The initiative will have no negative effects on equality considerations and has been designed with the objective of improving environmental outcomes. This will have a subsequent flow of benefits for health and happiness of the whole population and help maintain the flow of natural resources into the local economy.

## 6. Risk Management Considerations

The Strategy has been developed in response to the issue of the global need to improve environmental quality, not least for its intrinsic value, but also for the environment's fundamental role in underpinning our health, happiness and economic prosperity.

## 7. Alternatives

The alternative is not to implement the recommendations. This would not result in the improved environmental performance expected by the Environmental Policy.

## 8. Reason for Recommendation

The Strategy will contribute to delivering the Environmental Policy and will enable the Authority to demonstrate community leadership on environmental best practice with regard to plastics.

Dave Black  
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

### Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services:  
Councillor Roger Croad

*Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity: Dr Virginia Pearson*

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. Impact Assessment	May 2018	<a href="https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/">https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/</a>



# Plastics Strategy

2018

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# 1. Background

Plastic is an incredibly useful material because of its versatility, but it comes with issues that need addressing. One such issue is litter in the environment which ultimately ends up in the oceans. It is estimated that up to 13 million tonnes of plastic leak into the global marine environment every year<sup>i</sup> through deliberate littering, escaping unintentionally from a waste management process, or raw plastic granules (called nurdles) being washed down drains and falling overboard from ships. This has adverse implications for wildlife, the economy and human health.

Entanglement and suffocation are responsible for the death of over 1m sea birds and mammals annually<sup>ii</sup> but the unseen effects are equally concerning: Once in the environment the larger plastics break down into very small particles over hundreds of years and become microplastics which do not biodegrade but instead accumulate in the environment<sup>iii</sup>. Moreover, they are attractive to zooplankton, which in turn are eaten by wildlife higher up the food chain until it arrives on our dinner table. Whilst not yet fully understood, the components used in plastics could harm human health<sup>iv</sup>.

A further issue is that plastic is a non-renewable material, made largely from fossil fuels. Discarding it is an absurd waste of an extremely valuable material.

The problem is growing worldwide. In the UK, plastic waste on beaches is up 140% since 1994<sup>ii</sup>. The direct economic costs of this marine litter to maritime industries, the cost of clean-up and on tourism in the UK are estimated at £103m per year<sup>v</sup>.

Whilst just 2% of global marine plastic originates from Europe and the USA<sup>vi</sup>, these regions need to demonstrate leadership on addressing the issue to influence the other 98%.

This strategy describes how Devon County Council (DCC) will play its part in reducing plastic litter in the environment to support the work of the [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#).

## First Plastic-Free School in the UK

Georgeham CofE Primary School has become the first school to achieve the Surfers Against Sewage [Plastic Free Schools](#) Status in the UK.

- Cling film was swapped for foil in the school canteen
- Sauce sachets were replaced with larger sauce bottles with pumps
- Milk, previously provided daily to each Reception class pupil in a small non-recyclable carton with a plastic straw and wrapper, is now delivered to the school in 2-litre recyclable bottles and served in washable beakers. This has avoided 3,900 waste cartons, straws and straw wrappers every year.
- Individually packaged ice-creams replaced with Arctic Roll
- Supplier of fruit and vegetables now takes back the plastic packaging for recycling

These measures have not cost any extra and are actually saving the school money.



# 2. Policy context

In December 2017, 193 members of the UN [signed a resolution](#) committing to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds by 2025 and to prioritise policies and measures to avoid marine litter and microplastics entering the marine environment.

The EU [Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy](#) was adopted in January 2018. It intends to transform the way plastic products are designed, used, produced and recycled in order to reduce the value of plastic that is lost from the economy each year after a very short use.

Also published in January 2018 is the UK's [25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#). The Plan outlines ways to reduce the use of plastics that contribute to pollution, and broader steps to encourage recycling and the more thoughtful use of resources. The aim is to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042.

The 2017 [Litter Strategy for England](#) aims to change our culture, through education, enforcement and infrastructure provision, to achieve a substantial reduction in littering behaviour.



DCC, as Waste Disposal Authority, is responsible for dealing with Local Authority Collected Waste which incorporates domestic and bulky household waste, waste collected from some commercial sources, litter and fly tipping. The [Devon Waste and Resources Management Strategy](#) sets out how this waste will be managed, including plastic, through the application of the well-known waste hierarchy – reduce, reuse, recycle and compost, energy recovery and final disposal.

DCC's [Environmental Policy](#) and associated 2017 [Corporate Waste Strategy](#) and [Environmental Sustainable Procurement Policy](#) aim to: manage resources in the most sustainable way by encouraging employees, Members and suppliers to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost; and acquire goods and services that not only meet users' needs and deliver long term value for money, but at the same time maximise social and economic benefits and minimise damage to the environment and health.

The policy context is clear that the current level of plastic waste is no longer acceptable. Whilst this is a recently-publicised problem, which may seem overwhelming, the well-understood mantra of 'reduce (avoid!), reuse, recycle' can be applied to start taking meaningful action, now. This Plastics Strategy is DCC's response which complements and contributes to the policies described above.

### 3. Where do marine plastics come from?

Plastic items are prolific in our society and 50% of plastic by weight is 'single-use'<sup>vii</sup>.

The most significant contributor to marine plastic litter is single-use beverage packaging, which makes up a third of marine plastic (Figure 1)<sup>viii</sup>.

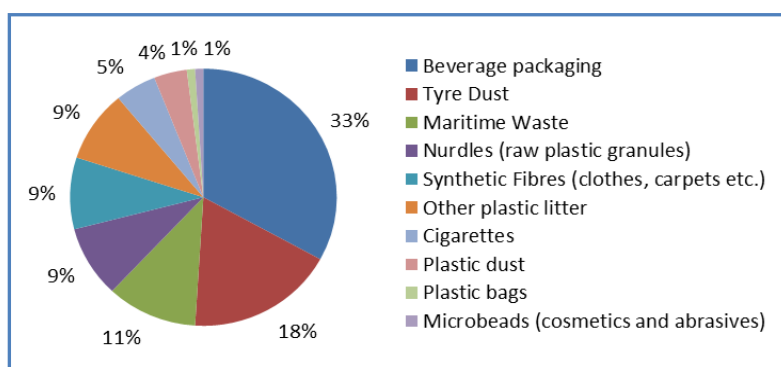


Figure 1 - Marine plastics by source

### 4. Scope of the strategy

Our efforts will focus on the items that will make the most difference to reducing plastics in the environment. Therefore, this strategy will concentrate on addressing the consumption and disposal of single-use-plastic food and beverage packaging and tableware within DCC's sphere of influence but will act on other single-use plastics where a 'quick win' is available.

DCC's sphere of influence includes:

- Getting our own house in order
- Working with suppliers and contractors
- Helping raise awareness across Devon
- Enabling Devon to take action

Local Authority Maintained Schools make local purchasing and waste management decisions and therefore DCC will provide leadership and encouragement to these establishments.

## 5. What are we already doing?

DCC and our partners have a strong record of taking action on single-use plastic items; here are some highlights.

### 5.1. Reducing and avoiding

Desktop-printer cartridges, which, through the switch to multi-function printing devices, have reduced in purchasing volume from over 9000 in 2009 to 500 in 2016 (furthermore, almost 60% are from recycled sources).

Since 2016 a 10p reduction on hot drink prices has been offered in Devon Norse operated cafes at Great Moor House and County Hall to staff that use a reusable cup. This policy, alongside the introduction of a reusable cup available for purchase, resulted in 10,000 fewer disposable cups being used for hot drinks in its first 6 months.

In 2006, as part of the wider roll out of the [recycle@work](#) scheme, a number of DCC offices including the Matford Offices and Magdalen House replaced bottled water with a plumbed-in filtration system that provides both cold and chilled water. Some DCC sites still have bottled water-coolers; the bottles are collected by the supplier for sterilisation and reuse. Single-use plastic cups were removed except in meeting room areas.

### 5.2. Reusing

We are supporting and promoting the [Refill Devon](#) campaign. This is encouraging businesses with public access to enable people to re-fill water bottles for free. All of DCC's main office/administrative buildings have water available to visitors. Schools are being encouraged to join the related Refill Schools initiative.

The supplier of fresh meat to Devon Norse provides meat in plastic crates which are taken away by the contractor when they're finished with and reused, rather than using polystyrene or other disposable plastic packaging.

### 5.3. Recycling

We operate the [Recycle@Work](#) scheme in most of our work locations, which is accessible to 90% of staff. The scheme collects various materials including plastic bottles or mixed plastic recycling depending on location. At the last audit, Great Moor House and County Hall were recycling approximately 80% of waste arisings. The Corporate Waste Action plan intends to improve performance further.

The supplier of fresh fruit and vegetable produce to Devon Norse provides a bag for collection of all recyclable packaging which is collected on the next delivery and returned to the depot for recycling.

Devon is one of the top performers in the country when it comes to recycling, consistently recycling about 55% of local authority collected waste; this puts Devon within the top 5 and even number 1 in 2010/11! This is great news, however there is still more work to be done to get Devon back to the top! The [Don't Let Devon go to Waste](#) campaign aims to improve the recycling rate further.

Plastics collection does vary across the county, as shown in Table 1. This is due to i) the contamination of this sort of plastic with food and liquids, ii) its volume which would require reconfiguration of vehicle collection rounds and collection vessels (and potentially more vehicles) and iii) availability of markets to make it viable. However, Devon is working with the District Councils to provide householders with an aligned, kerbside collection service across all of Devon, which will enable all residents to recycle the same materials. To facilitate this, DCC is using a 'Shared Savings scheme'. This is a method of sharing the savings DCC makes when the districts make changes to their collection systems. E.g. if a district moves from a fortnightly to a 3 weekly black bin collection, DCC has less waste to dispose of and shares its savings 50:50 with the district.

	Bottle	Tub	Tray	Pot	Film	Bags
<b>Teignbridge</b>	•	•	•	•		
<b>North Devon</b>	•	•	• (not black)	•		
<b>Mid Devon</b>	•	•	•	•		•
<b>East Devon</b>	•	•	•	•		
<b>Exeter</b>	•	•	•	•	•	•
<b>Torridge</b>	•	•	• (clear only)	•		
<b>South Hams</b>	•					
<b>West Devon</b>	•					

**Table 1 - Plastic collected at kerbside by Devon's District Councils**

West Devon and South Hams District Councils don't currently collect mixed plastics, but new contracts are currently being tendered and it is hoped that they will be able offer a collection of mixed plastics from 2019.

Most plastics are accepted for recycling at the DCC network of Household Waste Recycling Centres, including rigid plastics such as uPVC used in various household products.

#### **5.4. Raising awareness**

DCC's Waste Education Strategy promotes and encourages reducing, reusing and recycling of waste and the wider sustainability agenda in Devon's schools and their communities. Schools can access a wide range of curriculum-linked workshops and assemblies to raise awareness of the issues surrounding waste, including those associated with plastics and litter. Each year a small number of schools can also take part in the Waste Action Support Programme (WASP). The WASP programme enables schools to take a wholistic approach, conducting a waste audit and supporting the children and staff to create an action plan to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost their waste more effectively. A key element of the WASP programme is that it engages with both the children and a range of school staff, including Senior Management Team, teaching staff, kitchen staff, caretakers and cleaners. This is essential for the schools to make any significant change. The waste education programme also raises awareness of the wider school community via the use of 'take home' sheets and community events.

The Don't let Devon go to waste campaign uses the Recycle Devon website [www.recycledevon.org](http://www.recycledevon.org) and social media to promote waste minimisation, reuse and recycling to the public. The Don't let Devon go to waste campaign launched and promotes the Devon Refill campaign and now has over 500 business signed up to the scheme. The Recycle Devon website is currently being updated with additional web pages to reflect and respond to the growth in interest surrounding disposable plastics. The Recycle Devon team also regularly post and share items from partner organisations about reducing use of disposable plastics.

More broadly, DCC has a role through its environmental partnerships in raising awareness of the issues surrounding marine plastics. Each year the Exe Estuary Partnership organises a spring and autumn Exe Clean-Up. The latest event attracted 111 volunteers who gathered almost 1700 pieces of litter. The North Devon Coastal Creatures Project has been running beach cleans on remote beaches, supporting beach care groups and engaging schools. Active groups that continue to arrange beach cleans have been established at Westward Ho!, Northam Burrows, Woolacombe and Croyde.



## 6. Strategic objectives

The strategy has four strategic themes based on DCC's sphere of influence on the marine plastics agenda. For each theme we have identified a set of objectives:

### Getting our own house in order

DCC is a large, diverse organisation that undoubtedly makes use of a variety of single-use plastic items. In DCC work locations we will, where economically and practically viable:

#### Objective 1

**Remove all single-use-plastic food and beverage packaging and tableware by 2020**

#### Objective 2

**Enable re-use to replace single-use plastic consumption**

#### Objective 3

**Ensure appropriate recycling routes are available to capture plastic**

#### Objective 4

**Encourage all staff to make sustainable food and beverage packaging and tableware choices and ensure use of the workplace recycling systems**

Additionally, we will:

#### Objective 5

**Avoid the release of balloons and lanterns on DCC land and at DCC events**

### Helping raise awareness across Devon

DCC is a member of various partnerships and is in a unique position to use its extensive relationships to help raise awareness of the issues surrounding single-use plastics and encourage action. We will:

#### Objective 8

**Support schools to educate their pupils and to engage with their local communities about waste**

#### Objective 9

**Work with Devon's partnerships and communities to raise awareness**

## Enabling Devon to take action

As a Waste Disposal Authority, DCC works closely with the Waste Collection Authorities to provide households with sustainable options for waste and resource management. We will:

### **Objective 10**

**Continue to work in partnership to allow more residents across Devon to recycle plastic**

### **Objective 11**

**Continue to work in partnership to ensure that littering is discouraged and that litter is collected and disposed of appropriately**

### **Objective 12**

**Encourage and support communities to tackle litter**

## 7. Reporting and review

The Environmental Performance Board is responsible to the Leadership Group for ensuring that the objectives of this strategy are being delivered. It will review progress on a quarterly basis and will publish a synopsis within the annual Environmental Performance Report. It will periodically review this policy to ensure it remains consistent with and relevant to the Authority's vision and targets.

The Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste is accountable for leading and reporting on the implementation of the Plastics Strategy on behalf of the Authority with responsibility for project delivery with the relevant Head of Service.

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<sup>i</sup> Jambeck, J.R. *et al.* (2015) Plastic Waste Inputs from Land into the Ocean. *Science*. 347 (6223) p.768-771

<sup>ii</sup> Surfers Against Sewage (2014) *Marine Litter Report*. Surfers Against Sewage. Available at: <https://www.sas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SAS-Marine-Litter-Report-Med.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Environmental Audit Committee (2016) *Environmental Impact of Microplastics*. Environmental Audit Committee. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmenvaud/179/179.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Talsness, C.E. *et al* (2009) Components of plastic: experimental studies in animals and relevance for human health. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*. 364 (1526) p 2079-2096

<sup>v</sup> Lee, J. (2014) Economic valuation of marine litter and microplastic pollution in the marine environment: An initial assessment of the case of the United Kingdom. Paper presented at the 2015 conference of the UK Network of Environmental Economists. Available at: <http://www.eftec.co.uk/keynotes/envecon-2015/lee-paper/download>

<sup>vi</sup> Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2016) *The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics*. Available at: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications/the-new-plastics-economy-rethinking-the-future-of-plastics>

<sup>vii</sup> Hopewell, J. *et al.* (2009) Plastics recycling: challenges and opportunities. *Phil. Trans. of the Royal Society B*, 364, 2115-2126

<sup>viii</sup> Green Alliance (2017) *Marine Plastics* [online]. URL: [http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/marine\\_plastics.php](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/marine_plastics.php)

## Appendix 1 - Action Plan

### Getting our own house in order

DCC is a large, diverse organisation that undoubtedly makes use of a variety of single-use plastic items. In DCC work locations we will, where economically and practically viable:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 1</b> Remove all single-use plastic, food and beverage packaging and tableware by 2020				
1.1 Undertake an audit of DCC's single-use plastic food and beverage packaging and tableware and develop an action plan	By 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2018	Environment Group, Waste Management, Procurement, Business Services, Devon Norse and Coaver	Within existing	Baseline of single-use-plastic consumption provided in the Action Plan
<b>Objective 2</b> Enable re-use to replace single-use plastic consumption				
2.1 As part of the Re-Fill Devon campaign, enable free water refills at publicly-accessible DCC sites	End of Sep 2018	Estates (lead) and Devon Norse	Within existing	Percentage of publicly-accessible locations offering free re-fills = 100%
<b>Objective 3</b> Ensure appropriate recycling routes are available to capture plastic				
3.1 Maintain the colour-coded recycling system already in place and extend it to further properties where facilities are needed.	Ongoing	Facilities Management teams and Devon Norse	Within existing: This action is already adopted within the Corporate Waste Action Plan	Percentage of DCC staff with access to mixed plastic recycling
<b>Objective 4</b> Encourage all staff to make sustainable food and beverage packaging and tableware choices and ensure use of the workplace recycling systems				
4.1 Update the E-Learning Environmental Sustainability course with plastic issues	End of July 2018	Environment Group	Within existing	Weight of plastic waste collected for recycling per staff member (reliant on data improvements through the Corporate Waste Action Plan)
4.2 Provide hints and tips for plastic-free packed lunches	Ongoing	Waste Management	Within existing	
4.3 Site specific e-mails and occasional articles in DCC newsletter to remind & encourage staff to use the recycling systems correctly	Ongoing	Devon Norse and Waste Management	Within existing: This action is already adopted within the Corporate Waste Action Plan	

Additionally, we will:

<b>Objective 5</b> Avoid the release of balloons and lanterns on DCC land and at DCC events				
5.1 Update the DCC Event Checklist to remind managers not to use balloons or lanterns	July 2018	Communications and Marketing Team	Within existing	No. of events at which balloons or lanterns have been released. Target = 0

5.2 DCC countryside sites will notify visitors via websites and newsletters to avoid balloon and lantern releases	September 2018	Country Park management teams	Within existing	No. of balloon or lantern releases from DCC countryside sites. Target = 0
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## Working with suppliers and contractors

DCC procures goods and services, many of which will come into contact with single-use plastics at some point in their delivery. We will:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 6</b> <b>Work with our suppliers to help us minimise our consumption of single-use-plastic food and beverage packaging and tableware and encourage them to do the same</b>				
<i>Note: Devon Norse is the principal supplier of food and beverages to DCC and is also one of the suppliers to schools. Devon Norse is engaging with Action 1.1 to help DCC get its own house in order.</i>				
6.1 Lobby Crown Commercial Services to update the 'Environmental Issues' section of the standard Invitation to Tender template to prompt all suppliers to think about reducing their use of single-use plastics explicitly.	End of September 2018	Procurement	Within existing	n/a
6.2 Devon Norse's supplier of fruit and veg to schools will take back plastic packaging for recycling. We will market this opportunity to schools.	Ongoing	Devon Norse and Waste Management Team	Within existing	Number of schools selecting to return their packaging
<b>Objective 7</b> <b>Ensure procurement specifications and contractors' activities consider, and where practical minimise, the environmental risks associated with plastics</b>				
7.1 Update the Sustainable Procurement Impact Assessment Tool to include an explicit reference to plastic	End of September 2018	Procurement	Within existing	As part of a 6-month audit, identify the tool's effectiveness
7.2 Raise awareness of plastic issues with the Procurement Sustainability Champions	End of September 2018	Procurement (lead) and Environment Group	Within existing	Percentage of Champions that have attended an awareness session
7.3 Continue to monitor the work of contractors operating DCC Local Authority Collected Waste management facilities and haulage to ensure procedures are in place to minimise plastic escape	Ongoing	Waste Management	Within existing	n/a - Ongoing as part of existing contracts.

## Helping raise awareness across Devon

DCC is in a unique position to be able to use its extensive relationships and partnerships to help raise awareness of the issues surrounding single-use plastics and encourage action. We will:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 8</b> <b>Support schools to educate their pupils and to engage with their local communities about waste</b>				
8.1 Advertise the opportunity to join the Surfers Against Sewage <a href="#">Plastic Free Schools</a> campaign through the Devon Schools Sustainability Bulletin and share Georgeham School's experience.	Ongoing	Waste Management	Within existing	Number of schools signed up to the Plastic Free Schools campaign
8.2 Continue to support the Refill Schools campaign.	Ongoing	Waste Management	Within existing	Number of schools signed up to the Refill Schools campaign
8.3 Promote the new KS1 'Wild Waste Walks', revamp the Key Stage 2 'litter in the environment workshop' and create new litter resources for schools to download.	Summer term 2018	Waste Management	Within existing – Waste Education contract	Number of schools receiving the workshop. Number of downloads for the litter resources
<b>Objective 9</b> <b>Work with Devon's partnerships and communities to raise awareness</b>				
9.1 Become a member of the Plastic Pollution Coalition to show support for plastic-free campaigns and communities in Devon	July 2018	Environment Group	Within existing	n/a
9.2 Support and promote the Refill Devon initiative through the Recycle Devon partnership.	Ongoing	Waste Management	Within existing	Number of businesses in Devon signed up
9.3 Raise awareness and encourage people to act on single-use plastics through the existing communication channels of relevant partnerships that DCC is involved; these include (not exhaustive) Natural Devon, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Jurassic Coast, the SW Coast Path Association, Estuaries' Forums and Recycle Devon.	Ongoing	Environment Group	Within existing	Number of articles/blogs/posts published



## Enabling Devon to take action

As a Waste Disposal Authority, DCC works closely with the Waste Collection Authorities to provide households with sustainable options for waste and resource management. We will:

ACTION	WHEN	WHO	RESOURCES	MONITORING
<b>Objective 10</b> Continue to work in partnership to allow more residents across Devon to recycle plastic				
10.1 Continue to support and incentivise Devon's Waste Collection Authorities to adopt the aligned waste collection option, utilising the agreed Shared Savings Scheme where appropriate.	Ongoing	Waste Management Team and District Councils	Within existing	Number of Waste Collection Authorities working to the aligned collection option
<b>Objective 11</b> Continue to work in partnership to ensure that littering is discouraged and that litter is collected and disposed of appropriately				
11.1 Develop marketing materials for a "We are watching you" anti-litter campaign	By March 2019	Devon Environmental Managers Group	Funds allocated for 2018/19	Number of partners using the template materials
<b>Objective 12</b> Encourage and support communities to tackle litter				
12.1 Work with district authorities to support communities that undertake their own community clean-ups	Downloadable resources and links available on relevant websites by October 2018	Waste Management Team	Within existing	Number of litter picks carried by local communities.
12.2 Determine how to encourage staff to select a beach clean as part of the 'Team One-Day Challenge' scheme	September 2019	Environment Group	Within existing	Number of challenges that select a beach clean as their activity

# Review of Corporate Single-Use Plastics

## 1. Background

This review delivers action 1.1 of Devon County Council's Plastics Action Plan.

The objectives of the review are where economically and practically viable to:

- 1) Remove all single-use plastic, food and beverage packaging and tableware by 2020
- 2) Ensure appropriate recycling routes are available to capture plastic

## 2. Baseline

Table 1 shows the number of single-use food and beverage plastic items used in 2017 in the Coaver Club Bar and the Devon Norse operated Coaver Restaurant, County Hall Shop and Great Moor House Café.

*Table 2 - Single Use Plastic Baseline*

Category	Single-Use Plastic Product	Annual Total	Recycling/Disposal Route available through DCC waste collections
Cutlery	Coffee stirrers	4,000	Energy from waste
	Tea spoon	2,500	Energy from waste
	Knife	4,200	Energy from waste
	Fork	8,000	Energy from waste
	Spoon	2,000	Energy from waste
Cold drinks	Cups – water coolers	36,100	Recycled with mixed plastic
	Straws	2,400	Recycled with mixed plastic
Hot drinks	Take-out coffee cups	21,440	Energy from waste
Packaged drinks	Bottled drinks	114,229	Recycled with mixed plastic
	Wax-carton drinks	11,625	Energy from waste
Food Retail Packaging	Cardboard sandwich/wrap packaging with plastic film	60,650	Cardboard is recycled, plastic film can be recycled with mixed plastic
	Salad pots	11,000	Recycled with mixed plastic
	Sauce sachets	5,400	Energy from waste
	Crisp packets	32,500	Energy from waste
Kitchen Supplies	Milk (2.2 litre bottles)	5,609	Recycled with mixed plastic
	Cling film rolls (300m)	22	Energy from waste
<b>Total</b>		<b>321,675</b>	

Note that tea bags generally contain polypropylene to bind the bags together. Devon Norse establishments use Café Direct, Fairtrade tea bags that do not contain fossil-fuel plastic: They use a starch bioplastic, which is completely biodegradable through microbial action.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of DCC single-use plastic represented by each category and Figure 2 shows the prominence of each management route: Over 70% of single-use plastic items can be recycled in DCC's existing waste collections and the remainder is converted into energy. None is sent to landfill.

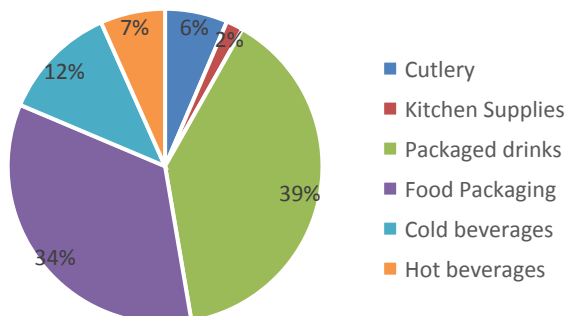


Figure 2 –DCC Single-Use Plastic Items

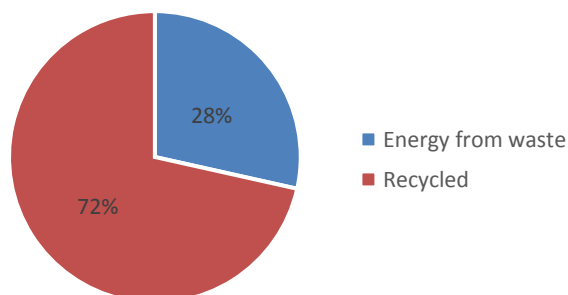


Figure 3 - Waste Management Route Available

### 3. Review

The review has considered whether a viable alternative exists for each single-use plastic item, along with an environmentally-sound recycling or disposal method. For example, switching plastic for vegetable-based alternatives is not a sustainable solution if it ends up in landfill where it will create methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. If a viable alternative is not available, then the review has strived to ensure that an environmentally-sound recycling/disposal method is in place for the single-use plastic.

The review has been undertaken by a task group that included expertise on food preparation, retailing, procurement and environmental sustainability. Factors considered include cost, durability, convenience, hygiene and the availability of appropriate recycling/disposal routes.

#### 3.1 Cutlery

This is generally used by staff for take-out meals to eat at their desk. This will end up as energy from waste, as the mixed plastic collections from County Hall and Great Moor House does not recycle cutlery.

Vegetable-based or wood alternatives are up to three times the price of plastic cutlery – 3p per unit instead of 1p – meaning that the menu pricing would be affected. If these were offered, disposing of this material through energy from waste facilities is acceptable. Rather than increase menu prices, Devon Norse will remove free plastic cutlery and provide an organic equivalent for a small fee to encourage staff to bring in their own cutlery from home.

**ACTION 1:** Devon Norse will determine an implementation period for removing plastic cutlery from the County Hall shop as a pilot, and instead offer organic cutlery for a small charge. If successful, role this out to further sites.

#### 3.2 Cold Beverages

Plastic single-use cups are used for taking water from water coolers in meeting rooms (water coolers in office spaces do not provide cups) at various DCC sites and the ability to avoid their use completely or switch to an alternative material varies between sites.

The plastic cups could be swapped for paper cups but due to the need for a waterproof coating, which itself is often plastic - polyethylene, they are not easily recyclable. Vegetable-based plastic cups are a good alternative but do cost about three times more than fossil-fuel plastic cups and will contaminate the mixed-plastic recycling: they would need to be disposed in the 'general waste' collection through energy from waste.

The fossil-fuel plastic cups can be recycled in the workplace mixed-plastic recycling bins. Therefore, DCC will encourage staff to use their own reusable cup when attending meetings and will also look to replace the plastic cups with alternatives based on the requirements at each premises.

**ACTION 2:** The provision of plastic cups at water coolers will be reviewed within each premises so that specific requirements can be considered. Alternatives will be provided where appropriate with a view to phasing out those that are avoidable by 2020.

**ACTION 3:** The Waste Management Team will encourage staff to bring their own reusable cup or glass via Inside Devon

Plastic drinking straws are not offered by Devon Norse but are provided by the Coaver Bar. These will be recycled through the mixed-plastic recycling scheme. Straws are frequently cited as one of the most problematic single-use plastic items. Fully biodegradable paper alternatives are eight times more expensive. The Coaver Bar will phase out plastic straws completely and retain a paper stock for customers that request one.

**ACTION 4:** The Coaver Club will remove plastic drinking straws from the bar counter-top in April 2018. They will be issued on request until the current stock is finished. The stock will be replaced with paper straws and kept behind the bar.

### 3.3 Hot Beverages

Devon Norse offers staff the option of using their own re-usable cup in return for a 10p discount on the hot-drink price. This has reduced the number of single-use cups issued for hot beverages each year by 50%. Staff can purchase Devon Norse's plastic re-usable cup if they don't already have their own. This reflects best practice and Devon Norse will consider further incentives to enhance performance.

**ACTION 5:** By the end of 2018, Devon Norse will consider options for further incentivising reuse, such as removing disposable cups completely or implementing a charge for single-use, veg-based cups.

**ACTION 6:** The Devon Norse plastic re-usable cup offered for sale will be replaced with a rice-husk re-usable cup once the stock of the plastic version finishes.

### 3.4 Packaged Drinks

Drinks in plastic bottles are sold in the Devon Norse establishments. These are recyclable in the workplace mixed-plastic recycling system.

Most drinks are available in alternative packaging, however the consumer choices experienced by Devon Norse show that bottles are preferred to cans by customers as they are resealable, and whilst aluminium and glass bottles are safer for the environment when littered (as they will not accumulate in the environment like plastic does) they have a higher retail price. The task group questioned which material is more sustainable when considered on a life-cycle basis – e.g. energy input, air and water pollution from manufacture, ease of recycling etc. A quick review of online literature does not provide a definitive answer as much of the research is funded by the plastic, aluminium or glass industries.

DCC will ensure that as much of the plastic bottles are captured for recycling as possible. This will be incentivised when the Government's bottle deposit scheme is introduced, which was announced in March 2018.

**ACTION 7:** The Waste Management Team will raise staff awareness of the mixed-plastic recycling system to ensure as many bottles are recycled and cooperate with the bottle deposit scheme when it becomes available.

Fruit juices are sold in two packaging types: plastic bottles, and 'wax cartons' with a plastic straw. The wax cartons don't use wax at all, but instead use a thin film of polyethylene that is combined with layers of aluminium, paper and cardboard. The wax cartons are currently not recycled from DCC premises and so will become energy from waste, as will the plastic straw.

ACTION 8: Devon Norse will explore commercially-viable options to phase out the wax carton at DCC non-school sites by 2020

### 3.5 Food Retail Packaging

The wrap and sandwich boxes are cardboard bases with a plastic film. If the plastic film is ripped off the packaging, then the cardboard can be recycled in the workplace recycling scheme so long as it is not too soiled. The plastic film is acceptable in the mixed-plastic recycling, also if it is clean. Real-Wrap, the provider of sandwiches, is actively looking at replacing the film with an alternative.

ACTION 9: The Waste Management Team will raise awareness with staff through Inside Devon that clean plastic film can be collected in the mixed-plastic recycling

ACTION 10: Devon Norse will work with the sandwich provider to find an alternative to the plastic film

Take-away salads are sold in plastic pots and will generally be eaten at staff desks. The plastic pots if rinsed are recyclable in the mixed-plastic collection. Vegetable-based plastic alternatives are an option, however it will be difficult to control the potential contamination with the mixed-plastic recycling. This is a greater issue with salad pots than with the water-cooler cups as the latter will be used and disposed within a suite of meeting rooms where it will be easier to control how they are disposed.

ACTION 11: Devon Norse will work with the manufacturers of the salad pots to explore more sustainable packaging

ACTION 12: The Waste Management Team will raise awareness with staff through Inside Devon that clean plastic salad pots can be collected in the mixed-plastic recycling

Sauce sachets are plastic wrappers lined with aluminium. Combined with their extreme contamination with sauce, this means that there is currently no recycling mechanism for them in the UK. These will end up as energy from waste. There are alternatives such as hand-pump dispensers or small bottles. These present challenges, such as the need for overnight refrigeration and regular cleaning, but Devon Norse will run a pilot to see if these can be managed.

ACTION 13: Devon Norse will pilot alternative sauce packaging to sachets by the end of 2019

There is currently no viable alternative to standard crisp packaging. Their popularity means that removing them from sale is not an option. Some manufacturers have targets to implement 100% recyclable or compostable packaging. Devon Norse will encourage suppliers to find alternatives to plastic.

ACTION 14: Devon Norse will encourage crisp suppliers to find alternatives to plastic

### 3.6 Kitchen Supplies

Plastic milk bottles are recycled in the mixed-plastic recycling system. Returnable glass bottles would be the best alternative, but these are considerably more expensive. A small number of Devon Norse catering staff have control over how the plastic bottles are managed, so there is high confidence that these bottles are successfully sent for recycling and therefore this is currently the best solution.

Food is required to be covered during storage and preparation. Devon Norse use a combination of reusable, lidded containers and cling film for this purpose and the cling film is used sparingly. Clean cling film is recycled in the mixed plastic collection.



#### 4. Monitoring

The effect of this action plan will be monitored annually as part of DCC's Environmental Performance Statement that is published online at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/environment/environmental-policy>

#### 5. Conclusion

DCC, Devon Norse and the Coaver Club can demonstrate continued action to reduce the consumption of single-use plastics. This action plan will improve performance further and contribute to reducing the amount of plastic that enters the environment.

Importantly, none of the single-use plastic is wasted in landfill; it is either recycled or used to generate useful energy as part of a circular economy approach.