
Report To:	Education and Communities Committee	Date:	14 June 2022
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/29/22/RB
Contact Officer:	Ruth Binks	Contact No:	01475 712748
Subject:	Single Use Plastic Bottles in Education Establishments and Inverclyde Leisure Estate		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Education and Communities Committee with the implications of ceasing to sell or provide single use plastic bottles in Educational Establishments and the Inverclyde Leisure estate.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 At its meeting on 17 February 2022, the council considered a request by Councillor McCabe to cease to sell or provide single issue plastic bottles in any of its public premises, such as Inverclyde Leisure or educational establishments. The Education and Communities Committee were asked to consider the implications of this request.
- 2.2 Officers were already undertaking work alongside educational communities to reduce or cease the use of single use plastic in establishments. The direction of travel and work with the stakeholders are discussed in section 5 of this report. This will result in a total cessation of single use plastic for primary school meals and a significant reduction for secondary schools by academic year 2022/23.
- 2.3 Inverclyde Leisure are committed to reducing single use plastics, they are working with local groups on promoting campaigns and have also reviewed their environmental policy. There will be operational and financial implications if IL cease the use of single use plastic bottles at this time.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Education and Communities Committee are asked to note the ongoing progress made to reduce the use of single use plastic bottles in Educational Establishments and the Inverclyde Leisure estate and to note the practical and financial implications of this.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At its meeting on 17 February 2022, the council considered a request by Councillor McCabe. The full request read as follows:

Following COP 26, Inverclyde Council is aware that we all need to take more responsibility for what we do to our environment. We know that across the UK 7.7 billion single use bottles are used each year and 1 million plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute.

Inverclyde Council currently sells drinks in single use bottles, which contribute to this vast wastage of plastic and litter. As a council, we recognize the detrimental effect that this is having on our environment and our precious biodiversity, and also, the mixed messages that it is sending to our young people.

Consequently, Inverclyde Council believes that it must now lead by example and will become a zero-single-use-bottle council. To accomplish this, Inverclyde Council will cease to sell or provide single issue plastic bottles in any of its public premises, such as Inverclyde Leisure, schools and nurseries. Furthermore, in conjunction with Scottish Water, it will seek to increase the number of water points for people to refill their reusable bottles.

In addition, Inverclyde Council will consider practical and financial incentives to support local businesses to find ways in which they can also back this initiative.

- 4.2 The Council supported the principle of Councillor McCabe's request and remitted to officers to submit a report to the next meeting of the Education & Communities Committee addressing the considerations raised by the request, including cost implications, so that Members could make a decision on the request
- 4.3 This matter has been discussed through a variety of consultation forums. There was already ongoing work that was already in place to reduce plastic and food waste through the food for life ambassador's programme.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 Primary Schools

Work was already in place to reduce the use of plastic in primary schools. Whilst the serving of meals during COVID inevitably had an impact, the service is now almost back to normal and pupils have commented very positively on the initiatives to reduce the use of plastic e.g. the introduction of jugs.

For primary school lunches the hope is that we will be single use plastic free in the academic year 2022/23 and have 100% food waste in primary schools recycled from the Kitchen and dining rooms. No additional costs are anticipated for this.

5.2 Secondary Schools

The service have a commitment to endeavour to reduce the use of single use plastic by approximately half in secondary schools during academic year 2022/23 (although a baseline is difficult to establish due to the increase of use of plastic during COVID). The service will continue to work with young people to raise awareness of waste and to put in initiatives to increase the uptake of meals. This work has already started with the inclusion of school meals in the 2022 Clyde Conversations agenda.

Because of the nature of how secondary school meals are served, the issue of single use plastic bottles is not as straight forward as it is in primary schools. Pupils report that they are committed to reducing the use of single use plastic but also highlighted some practical considerations. National and local research has shown that young people like the flexibility of "grab and go" type meals or snacks, and often choose meals based on convenience and social aspects. This means that secondary pupils may often visit shops near to the school

rather than the school canteen. In some schools, the uptake of school meals can be low across the board and in particular the uptake of free school meals can be low. This means that some families are not taking up their entitlement to a free meal and then can cause an additional financial burden to families. There is ongoing work with the young people to find out how to improve the uptake of school meals but there is a real danger that if we completely eradicate single use plastic in secondary schools, then we could exacerbate the low uptake of school meals causing financial stress to families. If a young person does not access any of their entitlement to free school meals in secondary and opts to go elsewhere then the loss to a family per secondary school child is in the region of £487 each year.

There are financial implications for the council if fewer young people attend for school lunches through the loss of income and the efficiency of running the school kitchens.

5.3 Parent Councils

There is a wide variety of activities and fund raising events that parent councils undertake. In Inverclyde we are very fortunate to have committed parents who voluntarily give up their time to arrange events and raise money for the school. Given the wide variety of types of events it is difficult to give detailed consideration as to the exact cost and implications of a zero use initiative but some of the issues raised during discussions were:

- Parents are committed to working with school communities to reduce the use of single use plastic
- Parents and pupils reported that the use of single use plastic should be considered alongside other eco and waste initiatives linked to sustainability work in schools. Education on environmental matters was identified as very important.
- School fundraisers may often sell water/juice bottles to raise funds for the school. Without this ability there could be implications for fund raising
- Reusable bottles can certainly be given consideration – but the pragmatics of this at a Halloween disco (especially if all bottles look the same) could be difficult to manage
- Spillages can be an issue at events if drinks don't have a top
- For some activities parents will provide each child with a drink. Costs of alternatives, ensuring that the drink can last over a few hours (i.e. not a can) and the ability to store any alternatives also needs to be taken into consideration.

It is recommended that given all of the pragmatic issues identified above, that the education authority work with parent councils to promote the reduction of single use plastic. Chairs of Parent Councils have discussed the issues and will take this back to their individual meetings. This is an initiative that will work best with buy in from communities and the proposed approach is to work with Parent Councils to reduce waste and plastic usage.

- 5.4 During consultations, the young people felt that the issues of usage, waste and litter could not easily be separated. They referred to litter being a problem but also referenced some very positive initiatives which schools have undertaken to reduce this. The young people who were part of the consultation are very committed to reducing litter and to ensuring sustainability but they were aware that this commitment is not shared by all. There was much discussion about raising awareness and changing habits through the curriculum and eco initiatives within their schools.

5.5 Inverclyde Leisure

IL are reviewing recycling at all sites, reviewing products that are sold to reduce single use plastics, reviewing their café and vending operations and reviewing water supplies at sites to encourage environmentally friendly reusable bottles. This process will take time to implement.

If IL cease to sell or use single use plastic completely then this will have a financial impact on them in different ways. IL rely on the profit from the café and vending machines as part of their business model. If this profit is not realised then either the council will have to increase funding or IL would need to reduce some of its activities. IL are in partnership with COSTA

for their facilities and the food and beverage offer available encourages and enhances participation. If this was to become more expensive or to cease to exist then IL would not only lose income from food and beverage but again could lose income from memberships and payment for activities.

Inverclyde Leisure are not in a position to be able to cease the use of single use plastic without additional financial investment. The anticipated cost to implement this would be in the region of £180,000 per annum. However, IL are committed to reducing single use plastics and have been working with the local Literati group by part funding a local advertising campaign and signing a declaration of support. They have also reviewed their environmental policy and have undertaken to review single use plastics that are sold at sites.

As part of the commitment going forward, IL are working with their quality team to ensure best practice when reviewing policy and procedures regarding to single use plastics. As part of this review IL will be training their employees and creating environmental champions at sites as well as working to educate their customers.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

6.2 Legal

N/A.

6.3 Human Resources

N/A.

6.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

6.5 Repopulation

N/A.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 Ongoing discussions are taking place with young people and chairs of parent councils.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A.