



Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel



A Review of the Council's Use of Paper and Plastics

February 2020 (Updated July 2020)

Task Group

Councillor(s)

Mancyia Uddin – Chair

Robyn Hattersley

Linda Mussell

Bisi Osundeko

Charlie Preston

Table of Contents

Chair's Foreword and Acknowledgements	3
Recommendations	4
Introduction and Terms of Reference	6
Methodology	6
Background	6
Local	6
National.....	7
Global - Plastics.....	8
Global – Paper.....	9
Global – Industry Standards	10
Findings – Online Research.....	10
Other Local Authorities	10
Tips to reduce paper and plastics use	11
Findings - Meetings with Officers	14
IT Services.....	14
Procurement	16
Councillors and Council/Committee Meetings.....	16
Schools	18
Schools Catering	19
Depot Services	19
Recycling	20
Conclusions.....	20
Sources	23

Chair's Foreword and Acknowledgements



Councillor Mancyia Uddin
Chair of the Scrutiny Task Group

As humans, we play an essential role in protecting the health and well-being of our planet. Overtime, our relationship with the earth has become distant and detached. For centuries, humans have been driven by financial capital, overexploitation and overconsumption. The result of this has had an excruciating impact on our earth and climate, devastating many communities across the world. Human actions are responsible for the climate crisis and it is our collective human actions can go a long way in repairing the damage. While the Council alone cannot solve the global climate crisis, we can and should use the influence we have as a Council to encourage our staff, partners and communities to be more conscious of the environment and be mindful in the choices they make.

Whilst the onset of coronavirus has had devastating impacts, it has enlightened us to new and flexible ways of working that I hope we can continue as we emerge from this pandemic. We have been given the opportunity to review and transform the way we work tackling both the climate crisis and the health crisis.

Conducting this review has been enlightening and allowed the task group to explore the many ways in which the Council use paper and plastic (P&P). It was encouraging to see throughout the process the number of ways in which the council is already making positive strides towards reducing our P&P use and this report aims to push us further towards that goal. The findings from our research allowed us to come up with recommendations that go far beyond simply reducing our P&P use; enabling the Council to further explore and act on different aspects of the climate crisis.

The climate crisis is important to our council and the passion for this was evident throughout this review process. I would like to thank everyone who participated in the task group for sharing with us their valuable knowledge and experience. I hope this report goes some way in reaching our shared vision for an environmentally friendly future.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mancyia".

Recommendations

The Task and Finish Group recommends:

- A. That the use of disposable paper or plastic cups for Council meetings (e.g. Cabinet, Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees) be phased out and that reusable cups be provided.
- B. That Councillors be requested to bring their own reusable cups/bottles to meetings held at the Town Hall and that provisions for storage of these cups/bottles be made in the Members' Room.
- C. That all agendas, presentations and documents provided during Council meetings and training courses should be provided electronically in advance of the meeting/training session. Paper copies should only be provided to Councillors and Officers if specifically requested or if required due to additional needs.
- D. That as of the May 2021 local elections, councillors' induction packs be provided digitally and not in paper format unless specifically required due to a councillor's individual needs.
- E. That the Council no longer produce paper diaries containing dates of Council and Committee meetings and that Officers and Councillors be encouraged to use their digital calendars.
- F. That the role of a 'green advocate' be developed and officers from each directorate be encouraged to become an advocate and actively engage in initiatives to reduce the Council's paper and plastics use.
- G. That a Climate Action working group be established to lead on developing and implementing initiatives to reduce the Council's paper and plastics use. The working group should include councillor representation and engage with green advocates.
- H. That the Council appoints an accountable officer overseeing and leading on climate change issues. This role should include responsibility for administering the Climate Action working group; recruiting and liaising with green advocates and promoting environmentally friendly practices within the Council and its partners.
- I. That all Councillors and Senior Officers undergo training on the climate emergency by March 2021, with Cabinet Members receiving the training as a priority.
- J. That following a baseline review of paper use for the 2019/20 municipal year, the Council should review its systems and processes to reduce total annual paper use to 70% by 31st March 2021 and to 50% by 31st March 2022. These targets apply to the Council as a whole, not individual teams (i.e. some may be able to reduce paper use by more than 50%, others may already be relatively paper light).
- K. That all services receive regular reports regarding their printer usage to enable them to monitor their paper use to assist teams in achieving the

targets they are set for paper reduction.

- L. That the Council creates a paper light policy to encourage staff to decrease their paper usage. This should include guidelines such as: how best to utilise digital technology instead of paper; not printing out emails; the types of paper available via stationary supplies; being conscious of the type of paper used for different purposes; how services should monitor paper use.
- M. That the Council creates a plastic light policy to encourage staff to decrease their plastics usage. This should include guidelines such as: discourage the use of single use plastics in stationary (i.e. reduce laminating, use of plastic wallets) and discourage the use of single use plastics at meetings or events.
- N. That the Council review its fleet of multifunctional devices (MFDs). The aim of the review should be to reduce the number of devices provided across the Council's estate, ensuring the devices are appropriately located. This will ensure more efficient use of devices and reduce the Council's consumption of plastic contained within devices.
- O. That the Council's Communications Strategy incorporates a section on promoting the Council's green initiatives, highlighting the positive impacts on the borough and wider environment.

Introduction and Terms of Reference

- 1.1 During the process of agreeing the Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme for 2019/20 the Panel Members agreed to investigate the Council's use of paper and plastics, establish what is currently being undertaken to reduce their use and what can be done to further enhance this.
- 1.2 The aims and objectives of the review were to:
 - To ensure the Council minimises its paper and plastics use
 - To ensure Council contractors are encouraged to minimise their environmental impact through the work carried out on behalf of the Council
 - To influence to Council's partners to reduce their paper and plastics use
 - To establish a policy on eco-friendliness vs cost effectiveness in relation to decision making
 - To maximise the use of technology to reduce the environmental impact of the Council's activities

Methodology

- 2.1 The Task Group commenced its review in September 2019. To develop this report, the Task Group met with various officers from within the Council, considered online research into how paper and plastic use can be reduced and looked at similar reviews undertaken by scrutiny groups from other local authorities.

Background

Local

- 3.1 At the full Council meeting on 10th July 2019 Council approved a Notice of Motion moved by Councillor Uddin and seconded by Councillor Lynn Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services) regarding "Tackling the Climate Change Emergency".
- 3.2 Among other points, the notice of motion requested that the Council make a commitment to:
 - Aiming to be zero-carbon by 2040.
 - Taking action towards increasing recycling and reducing landfill waste.
 - Achieve 100% clean energy across the Council's full range of functions by 2040.
 - Ensure that all decisions, budgets, and approaches to planning decisions are balanced and in line with achieving the zero-carbon target.
 - Request that scrutiny panels consider the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing council policies.
 - Ensure that all reports in preparation for the 2020/21 budget cycle and investment strategy will take into account the actions the council will take to address this emergency;
- 3.3 The notice of motion also referred to the Liverpool City Region's 'Year of the Environment' in 2019. The mission statement for the Year of the Environment stated that "2019 will be a year of green action across Liverpool City Region

where people from all backgrounds will have the opportunity to be involved in projects that improved the natural world. Our aim is to leave a better environment for the next generation to inherit and make our area one of the best places in the country to live, work and flourish”.

- 3.4 During the Year of the Environment there were a number of initiatives that St Helens Council had been involved with including 146 public and school group events such as:
- Christmas tree recycling, wildflower sowing, tree planting, plant and mammal surveys, and litter picks
 - Taylor Park World Environmental Day 05/05/19 - 400 visitors
 - Cemetery Open Day 11/05/19 - nearly 400 visitors
 - Willow Park Craft & Nature Day 27/05/19 - 1000 visitors
 - Newton Town Show 03/08/19 - 5000 visitors
 - Victoria Park Fun & Craft Day 20/08/19 - 3500 visitors
 - Love Your Street – creating cleaner and safer streets and bringing the community together
- 3.5 Across the City Region over 125 partners contributed to organising over 500 varied events which engaged with more than 28,500 people from lots of different communities. Events such as: healthy walks and cycling; clean-ups of parks, green spaces and beaches; and wildlife observation and conservation have relied on the commitment of countless volunteers. Listening events, conferences, debates, competitions and academic publications were also been part of the wide range of activities taking place.

National

- 3.6 Nationally, in January 2018 the Government published A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Within this publication, the Government had set out actions that it would take to “... help the natural world regain and retain good health.” Goals of the 25-year environment plan included using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently, and minimising waste. Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste set out policies intended to achieve the aims of the plan. The Government wanted to “make sure that resources are used more efficiently and kept in use for longer to minimise waste and reduce its environmental impacts by promoting reuse, remanufacturing and recycling, and work towards eliminating all avoidable waste by 2050 and all avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042.
- 3.7 In December 2018 the Government also published a Resources and Waste Strategy. The Strategy sought to achieve some of the aims of the 25-year plan by making the country a world leader in using resources more efficiently (keeping resources in use for as long as possible) and reducing the amount of waste we create as a society (reducing packaging on products and tackling food waste). Specific measures within the strategy related to paper and plastics use included:
- stimulate demand for recycled plastic by introducing a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled plastic;
 - ban plastic products where there is a clear case for it and alternatives exist;
 - support developing nations to tackle pollution and reduce plastic waste.

- 3.8 HM Treasury has also previously made efforts to impact on single use plastics through its Single Use Plastics Budget in 2018 suggesting the use of the tax system or changes in relation to the production, use and disposal of single use plastics (SUP) could create the right incentives to encourage sustainable behaviours and drive technological progress. Broadly, the proposals were to:
- Use tax to shift demand towards recycled plastic inputs,
 - Use tax to encourage items to be designed in a way that is easier to recycle,
 - Taxes and charges on specific plastic items that are commonly used on-the-go and littered, in order to encourage a reduction in production and use, and
 - Using tax to ensure that the right incentives are in place to encourage greater recycling of waste that is currently incinerated.
- The Budget also suggested that the Government would invest in research and development of alternatives to plastics in products, packaging and greener processes.
- 3.9 During the Task Group's review, the 2019 General Election took place, resulting in a new Government. It is unclear at the time of writing whether the new Government will retain the 25 Year Plan of its predecessor or make a new plan.

Global - Plastics

- 3.10 Research published on Science Advances website estimates that 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the 1950s with half of this being produced in the last 13 years. 75% (6.3bn tonnes) of plastic has ended up as waste (69% landfill, 12% incinerated and 9% recycled). 25% of plastics produced are still in use today with most of the longest-use products found in construction and machinery (e.g. aeroplane parts and flame retardants). However, the majority of plastics produced are for short term/single use (e.g. packaging). 1 million bottles of water are purchased around the world every minute with only 50% of these going on to be recycled. 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans every year which can kill marine life.
- 3.11 In December 2015, countries from around the world reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. This is often referred to as the Paris Climate Agreement. Subsequent commitments have been signed by a number of governments and organisations to reduce their use of single-use materials.
- 3.12 For example, in October 2018, the *New Plastics Economy Global Commitment* - led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in collaboration with UN Environment - was signed by many of the world's largest packaging producers, brands, retailers and recyclers, as well as governments and NGOs.
- 3.13 Targets in the commitment include to:
- Eliminate problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging and move from single use to reuse packaging models
 - Innovate to ensure 100% of plastic packaging can be easily and safely reused, recycled, or composted by 2025

- Circulate the plastic produced, by significantly increasing the amounts of plastics reused or recycled and made into new packaging or products.

Global – Paper

- 3.14 Worldwide consumption of paper has risen by 400% in the past 40 years, with 35% of harvested trees being used for paper manufacture. It has been estimated that by 2020 paper mills will produce about 400,000,000 tons of paper and paperboard per year. Deforestation has become a major problem, both in developing and developed areas. As well as deforestation, the production process for paper and wastepaper can have a detrimental impact on the environment.
- 3.15 The pulp and paper industry uses more water to produce a ton of product than any other industry (a sheet of A4 paper requires 10 litres of water). The paper industry is the 5th largest consumer of energy in the world using up 4% of the world's energy. By-products from paper production go on to pollute the rivers and lakes used by the mills as well as the air and land. The bleaching process to make paper white can also lead to harmful chemicals being released into the environment.
- 3.16 Roughly, 26% of solid waste (i.e. landfill or incineration) is discarded paper and paperboard. When paper rots, it emits methane, a greenhouse gas and when it is burned or composted, carbon dioxide is released.
- 3.17 Governments and organisations have put in place different measures to address the environmental impact of the paper industry. They include; Sustainable forest management; Pulp bleaching using non-elemental chlorine process; Increased recycling of paper waste material.
- 3.18 Research suggests that recycling of paper causes 35% less water pollution and 74% less air pollution than making virgin paper and decreases the number of trees that need to be cut down. However, recycling wood pulp paper degrades the wood fibres each time they are recycled; after four or five times the fibres become too short and weak to be useful in making paper. If the world stopped all virgin paper production, it was quite quickly run out of paper as all recycled paper degraded.
- 3.19 Most recycled paper is priced higher than freshly made paper. The production process for recycled paper is costlier and more time consuming than the well-developed processes that create paper with the use of trees. Due to the degraded fibres in recycled paper, the final product is also less sturdy and of generally lower quality than virgin paper. There are some products made using a combination of recycled and virgin paper (the percentage of recycled paper is usually advertised on the packaging) and others that are 100% recycled.
- 3.20 There are also negative impacts of the paper recycling process. De-inking of papers during recycling is a source of chemical emissions with the waste slurry produced by deinking potentially going to landfill. Recycled pulp can also be bleached with the same chemicals used to bleach virgin pulp, but hydrogen peroxide and sodium hydrosulfite are still the most common bleaching agents.

Global – Industry Standards

- 3.21 As mentioned, more and more governments and organisations have been making commitments to reducing the environmental impact of economies and industries. The introduction and take up of standards and certifications on environmentally responsible practices has grown in recent years as more and more organisations look to demonstrate their commitment to the environment with increasing numbers of consumer giving consideration to the environmental impact of their purchases.
- 3.22 ISO 14001 is one of the most well recognised and internationally accepted standards that sets out how organisations can go about putting in place an effective Environmental Management System (EMS). By acquiring the ISO 14001 certification, organisations are demonstrating that they are complying with environmental laws and regulations, understand and manage the environmental impacts of their operations and are committed to continually improving their environmental impact.
- 3.23 In relation to sustainable paper production, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was established to promote responsible management of the world's forests. This international non-profit organisation aims to provide an independent international accreditation for timber and other forestry products. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that the wood used is coming from sustainable, well-managed forests. There are currently a limited number of FSC certified forests limiting the supply of sustainable wood however the number of forests is growing. Such forests are inspected and certified against strict standards based on FSC's 10 Principles of Forest Stewardship. In order to be given FSC certification a forest must be managed in an environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable manner.

Findings – Online Research

Other Local Authorities

- 4.1 During its research, the Task Group found two scrutiny task group reports related to single use plastics from other local authorities which had both been published in 2019.
- 4.2 In January 2019, Lancashire County Council's Internal Scrutiny Committee published a task group review on 'Reducing Single Use Plastics in Lancashire'. This review was instigated by a notice of motion to full council requesting that Lancashire (as a whole) take a lead on reducing plastics use to reduce the negative impact on the environment. The review concluded that communication and education about recycling and reducing plastic waste is key and that it's important that partners, not just the council, are involved to make a real difference in the county.
- 4.3 The task group made 14 recommendations, split into short, medium and long-term timescales. Recommendations included a campaign to promote the reduction of Single Use Plastics (SUP) used by the County Council's

workforce which the task group also wanted the Council's partners, schools and district and borough councils to adopt and support the campaign. The report also recommended that the Council work with its suppliers to look at alternative materials to plastic in products (and their packaging) provided to the Council and to review a strategy for waste collection that ensured fewer reusable plastic items went to landfill.

- 4.4 In March 2019, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee also published a report for a task group review into Single Use Plastics. This review was also instigated by a notice of motion to full Council in relation to SUP and how Bradford Council could reduce its use of SUP and encourage key partners and local organisations to do the same. The review concluded that while some good work was being done in pockets of the Council more work was needed to implement plastics reduction across the Council whilst recognising that in some cases there are no practical alternatives at this time. They also recognised the importance of working in partnership with other organisations, not just to remove plastics but, to educate the public about their personal plastics use.
- 4.5 Recommendations from this review included: the development of a single use plastics policy to help become a plastic free council by 2024; the appointment of SUP Champions (one Member, one Officer); favouring suppliers who are eliminating SUP during procurement process; work with Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) to develop more recyclable and biodegradable material in packaging; and working with partners and schools to educate the public.

Tips to reduce paper and plastics use

- 4.6 There are many websites, blogs and forums online that provide information and tips about ways individuals and organisations can reduce their paper and plastics use in their daily lives and working practices respectively. A list of those used to research this review is provided in the Sources section of this report. Many web pages or content on them were provided by consultancy firms specialising in providing services to organisations to help them reduce their materials waste.
- 4.7 The suggested benefits for an organisation in undertaking such changes to working practices include costs savings; enhanced reputation among customers (residents), clients and potential shareholders (for private sector) in relation to commitment to the environment; more efficient working practices; and more engaged and motivated employees. More and more businesses and organisations are becoming more aware of the impact that plastic is having on the planet and are endeavouring to do their part to reduce/minimise the amount of plastic they use.
- 4.8 There appeared to be more content available in relation to plastics reduction than paper, most likely because plastics are seen as a greater risk to the environment as it doesn't decompose like paper and may not be as easy to recycle in most cases.
- 4.9 Several of the pages discussing the reduction of plastics pollution referred to three Rs namely, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle or some variation (some also

included Remove, Replace and/or Refuse). Broadly, these words refer to the following:

- Reduce – suggests reducing the amount of plastic you use in general terms either by making different choices about the things you buy/use.
- Reuse – this may refer to reusing the SUP if possible or could be applied to any plastic product that could be reused if sold/bought second hand, disposed of differently or repurposed (upcycling) when you're finished using it for its original purpose.
- Recycle – when a plastic is recyclable, and you no longer need it make sure it is recycled properly and not dumped as litter or put with residual waste that goes to landfill or incineration.
- Replace – Sometimes used interchangeably with Reuse, suggests replacing SUP with a product or process that avoids the SUP (for example, reusable/non plastic shopping bags, using a refillable water bottle rather than continually buying bottled water). In the case of paper reduction this would apply to taking a reusable cup to the coffee shop/café instead of using paper cups when taking out or using scrap paper to write notes.
- Remove – similar to Reduce but may be specific to a particular product using SUP, it may not be possible to completely remove some SUP because there are no alternatives
- Refuse – suggests refusing to take a SUP when offered one as part of a product or service (e.g. a plastic straw with your drink, a plastic lid for your takeaway beverage cup). Examples of refusing paper may include not accepting paper copies of reports, leaflets or napkins.

- 4.10 On-line information specific to ways of reducing plastics use in the workplace suggested a variety of different initiatives or approaches to the issue. Most suggestions involved encouraging employees to change their behaviours/habits in relation to SUP and other waste. A common example is encouraging staff to use refillable water bottles and providing filtered water taps (water dispensers plugged into water mains are preferable to portable ones which require water from the big plastic dispensers delivered by the supplier) rather than buying bottled water from the shop (water bottles are among the most common form of plastic polluting the environment).
- 4.11 Other suggestions include removing plastic and paper cups from meeting rooms and kitchens/canteens and encouraging staff to have their own reusable cups for hot drinks. Some also suggested using loose leaf tea or plastic free tea bags, rather than most other brands of tea bags which do contain plastics, and having milk delivered by the milkman in glass bottles which can be returned and reused rather than using milk from plastic bottles.
- 4.12 In relation to food/eating habits, providing reusable cutlery and plates/dishes and removing plastic spoons, knives and forks or paper plates from kitchens and canteens helps to reduce waste. Also, encouraging staff to bring food from home in reusable containers rather than buying 'grab and go' food in plastic and paper packaging helps to reduce waste. To encourage staff to bring food employers need to ensure there are facilities to prepare or reheat food. Alternatively, some web pages suggested providing meals on site so that you can control the waste that is produced. Avoiding 'grab and go' food may also be better for employees health if they are preparing, or being provided with, healthier meals.

- 4.13 In relation to the activities of the organisation, carrying out a waste audit on a regular basis is suggested as a good way of understanding the waste produced by the organisation so that measures can be put in place to reduce this waste. Most web sites suggest working with the organisations suppliers to reduce the plastics in their products or the packaging used to deliver supplies. This may be something that can be done with a supplier during a contract or may be something that would need to wait until the organisation is looking to renew a contract or find a new supplier with a better record on minimising plastics use.
- 4.14 Repairing, reusing or extending the life span of older equipment containing plastic components rather than replacing them with new plastic equipment can help to reduce plastics use.
- 4.15 In relation to reducing paper use, it was suggested by some web pages that paper waste is one of the most persistent and most preventable operational costs in the modern office. In the age of cloud storage and mobile first communication there are more ways to transmit information without using paper in the process. It may not be possible to create a completely paper free office however there are a number of steps an organisation can take to reduce paper use.
- 4.16 Implementing and enforcing rules on printing is one of the most common ways to manage paper use. Implementing duplex printing (print on both side of paper) should reduce waste by ensuring the minimum amount of paper is used to print a document. Using wider margins and smaller font for draft or non-public/official documents will also reduce paper use. For example, this document is 28 pages long using standard margins for a Task and Finish Group report, however wider margins would have reduced the report to 25 pages. Discouraging unnecessary printing will likely lead to the biggest reduction in paper use. Providing two screens can help staff carrying out data entry/moving or other processing tasks, removing the need to print the data they are processing first. Encouraging employees not to print emails and storing documents electronically rather than as hard copies will save paper and reduce the need for storage space which can lead to more efficient use of floor space in offices.
- 4.17 Other analysis suggests that a lot of organisation use more paper than is necessary due to their existing systems and processes. One source suggested that a culture of wastefulness exists in many businesses (organisations) as employees get caught up in the whirlwind of the everyday operations and it can therefore be difficult to change. To create a strategy for changing paper use the organisation first has to understand the flow of paper-based processes; how and where paper enters the organisation, where it moves in between departments and where it clogs up/slows down the flow of processes. Managers and the staff carrying out these processes are best placed to understand why paper is being used and how it could be removed.
- 4.18 When looking to reduce paper use it is important to set measurements and benchmarks to understand your starting point and how the organisation, or departments within the organisation, are moving towards measurable targets. The goal of removing paper from processes may not simply be to reduce costs and the impact on the environment. It may also be to improve systems making it easier for staff to manage their work loads and remove mundane tasks. If employees understand how initiatives positively impact upon their

work, they are more likely to buy into the change and take an active role in achieving the goals set.

- 4.19 As well as removing or reducing waste within the organisation, some sources suggest that organisations should play a role in keeping the local environment free from litter and pollution by organising and encouraging staff to take part in litter picks or other clean-up projects e.g. in local parks, rivers or beaches.
- 4.20 Employees may be best placed to suggest ways that they could reduce waste through paper and plastics use in their roles. Several web pages identified the importance of getting buy in from staff to the aims of the organisation in relation to waste reduction and supporting the environment by explaining how changes will be beneficial to them as well as the organisation and the environment. Others also emphasise the importance of senior leaders showing commitment and driving initiatives to see long term change in the culture and practices of the organisation.

Findings - Meetings with Officers

- 5.1 During the review the task group met with Council Officers from the following areas:
- IT
 - Democratic Services
 - School Services (Catering, Cleaning, Caretaking)
 - Procurement
 - Recycling and Waste Collection
- 5.2 The task group discussed how each of these areas can and is currently working towards reducing paper and plastics use, and waste generally, within their service and across the Council.

IT Services

- 5.3 In September 2019, Cabinet approved investment in a device refresh involving 1,600 (two thirds of the Council's IT Estate) new devices replacing old devices which have reach the end of their life cycle. The device refresh will see all desktop PCs replaced by Windows Surface Pro tablets and laptops (except were not appropriate i.e. due to additional needs of staff or specific hardware or software needed for particular tasks e.g. graphic design). The task group was informed that the planned IT infrastructure refresh was due to be completed by May 2020. Providing officers with mobile technology like a tablet or laptop rather than a desktop computer would enable officers to work anywhere and access their electronic files and folders remotely (e.g. in a meeting or on site) removing the need to print paper copies of documents to work away from their desk.
- 5.4 New technology was also going to enable traditional desktop telephones to be removed as officers could receive calls through their tablet or laptop. Implementation of the new telephony began in January 2020 and was scheduled to be completed by May 2020. Not providing officers with new desktop phones was cheaper to the Council and as most components in a phone were plastic it would also reduce future plastics use. Video conferencing and streaming capabilities also meant that officers would be able to hold meetings online rather than traveling long distances which is also

better for the environment by avoiding carbon created by road, rail and air travel and avoids travel costs.

- 5.5 The Assistant Director of Information Technology is the ONE Digital Lead within the Council's ONE Council Modernisation Programme (announced at Cabinet in July 2019) and explained some of the other initiatives which were ongoing or due to commence. Office 365 is being introduced which includes a function called "Teams". Teams enables collaboration between officers (and external partners who also use Teams) through video calls, message boards and file sharing; this could help to reduce paper use by enabling digital meetings and sharing of documents, removing the need to print. WiFi was also being reviewed within Council buildings and being made available to the public as well as officers. The Council has adopted a "Cloud First" strategy with the purpose of moving systems and digital storage to the cloud or hosted off premises, reducing the need for onsite servers. This will reduce the Council's energy use by reducing and ultimately removing the need for Data Centres within Council Buildings. St Helens Council was reported to be at an advanced stage of deployment of its mobile technology platform within the Liverpool City Region.
- 5.6 Corporate policies have been developed for managing agile working however, no specific policy had been produced in relation to managing paper use and printing. The Task Group was provided with a summary report on the use of paper through the Council's Multi-Functional Devices (MFDs) (i.e. combined printer, scanner and photocopier). Officers are required to log into the MFDs to access their printing or to scan and copy documents. This enabled the MFD system to track the total number of print jobs for individuals, teams and departments based on the number of simplex and duplex jobs (i.e. single or double sided), colour print or greyscale, and number of pages to enable the tracking of cost (calculated based on cost of ink and a proportion of the maintenance fee charged by Hewlett Packard (HP) for the MFD contract) and paper use (cost of paper not included).
- 5.7 Reports could be produced to illustrate which MFDs were most frequently used and which teams used them the most. Usage data was used to recharge the cost of MFD provision to each service via the Council's Financial Information System (FIS). The total cost for the year from April 2019 to February 2020 of MFD use was £140,000 (not including paper costs).
- 5.8 The fleet of MFDs was due to be refreshed as the Council was coming to the end of its current contract with HP and the MFD usage data would be valuable in decision making. It was expected that the Council would be able to significantly reduce its fleet of MFDs as the need for printing/ copying documents was reduced by new technology. Renewing the fleet was also an opportunity to understand where best to locate devices based on current usage levels.
- 5.9 Although the MFD usage reports were used to recharge services the costs of the MFDs and would be used during the refresh the reports were not currently being used in any way to manage or monitor paper use. There was an opportunity to provide reports to directorates, departments and teams that showed their paper use for a given period of time. These reports could be used to see changes in paper use over time and for managers to work with officers in their teams to manage their paper use.

- 5.10 Since this report was written, the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic has encouraged the Council to accelerate the modernisation of its IT services. The developments include:
- Soft phone roll-out being completed - except for Contact Centre and Contact Cares (which need additional work);
 - Device Refresh Phase I completed and Phase II commenced;
 - Microsoft Teams along with other elements of Office 365 - including Outlook Webmail, Teams Live and SharePoint – now operational and further exploration of the available tools is underway;
 - A Wi-Fi model developed for two of the large Town Centre buildings (Town Hall and Wesley House) and considering Atlas House implementation.

Procurement

- 5.11 The group was advised that the Council had been using recycled products for at least 12 years and had been increasing their use each year. In relation to stationary, 74% of stationary products procured are environmentally friendly (such as refillable pens made from recycled plastics). The use of paper within Council services was varied. The Procurement Service provided a variety of paper options including virgin paper and recycled paper. There were circumstances where the use of virgin paper was necessary due to the need for a high-quality finish on documents. However, in most circumstances it was not necessary and recycled paper, though may be lower quality, would suffice.
- 5.12 It was pointed out that recycled paper and eco-friendly paper were more expensive than virgin paper. As previously mentioned, the Council did not currently have a policy or protocol for services to follow regarding the choice and use of paper therefore the Procurement Service couldn't advise services on which to choose.
- 5.13 Away from the office, the Council has reduced its paper use by removing paper towel dispensers from toilets, replacing them with hand dryers (toilet paper is obviously still provided). Paper towels are still provided in office kitchens for food preparation and cleaning, although some services have chosen to use tea towels provided by members of staff. Currently, all of the toilet paper and paper towel products procured by the Council are FSC certified.
- 5.14 Regarding the Council's service providers and suppliers, some of the Council's contracts come with sustainability and eco-friendly clauses. These clauses are an important part of how bids are scored with additional weighting given to environmental factors as well as cost and effectiveness so that more of the Council's contractors operate in an environmentally responsible way. As more of the Council's current contracts expire, more clauses regarding sustainability and eco-friendly practices could be added to new contracts to increase the influence the Council has on its supply chain.

Councillors and Council/Committee Meetings

- 5.15 Historically, Democratic Services has been a heavy user of paper and printing having to provide paper agendas for Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings for councillors and officers. As well as agendas, councillors receive a reports, briefing notes and training/induction documents. However, since the

introduction of Mod.gov and tablet devices for councillors and senior officers, Democratic Services has reduced its photocopying/printing budget by £40,000.

- 5.16 The task group were advised that the Council is required to keep one hard copy of all meeting agendas for public record and keeps one copy of minutes for the archive. Chairs of meetings usually have a hard copy of the agenda to help them manage the meetings. Councillors' pigeon-holes receive much less paper than they used to; anyone wanting to provide councillors with information are encouraged by the Democratic Service Team to send it to them electronically. Democratic Services no longer provide officers with hard copies of papers and all of the senior officers who regularly attend meetings have tablet devices however some may still choose to print documents themselves.
- 5.17 Councillors have had a mixed response to the introduction of tablet devices to replace paper agendas however more councillors have adjusted to using the tablet and understand the benefits of it. Training is always available to councillors to help them learn how to use their tablet devices. Feedback from members is that there can be issues with using a tablet device that don't occur with paper documents. For instance, some members have had issues accessing their device by forgetting their password, not being able to get good internet connectivity or tablets switch off when the battery runs out during long meetings.
- 5.18 During their induction, new members are currently provided with paper documents in a large lever arch file; this approach could be replaced by providing electronic documents as long as new members were provided with tablet devices as soon as their elected. Providing induction documentation electronically would help to set new members up to embrace a culture of being paper light from the start of their term. The Council also produced paper diaries that contained the dates for all council meetings in the municipal year. However, these diaries could quickly become out of date as meetings were moved or start times changed and could cause confusion for Councillors.
- 5.19 One issue raised was the use of paper or plastic cups at meetings. The group was informed that plastic cups had been replaced by paper ones in the Members' Room and that the catering supplier uses paper cups (some plastic cups were still available however, these were just remaining stock from previous orders). Members of the group wanted to go further and remove all disposable cups from meeting rooms to avoid their use. It was suggested that councillors should be encouraged to bring their own reusable bottles to meetings for cold drinks. It was noted that many Councillors (including members of the task group) were already in the habit of bringing their own reusable bottles of water to meetings, however all needed to be encouraged to do so.
- 5.20 Regarding the provision of hot drinks at meetings, it was also suggested that Members should be provided with, or encouraged to bring, their own cups for hot drinks. It was noted that there are already hot drink making and cleaning facilities within the Members' Room which would enable Councillors to reuse cups. It was suggested that hooks could be provided for Councillors to hang their cups on similar to a scheme seen by one of the task group members in another organisation looking to remove plastics. These hooks could be hung

on members' lockers to ensure each had their own that would be easy to find.

- 5.21 As well as Councillors, the task group believed Officers should be encouraged to bring their own containers for drinks to meetings. The group noted that this wouldn't be as easy for those officers not located at the Town Hall and also noted the issue of providing cups for guests/visitors to meetings and how these would be stored, cleaned etc. Besides the main meeting/committee rooms, most teams had their own meeting spaces and they had cups and glasses for use during meetings. However, for meetings in the main committee rooms and Council Chamber at the Town Hall, there was not currently a process or equipment to provide any cups at meetings.
- 5.22 There is a kitchen within the Town Hall which was previously operated by an internal catering service which provided food and drinks for meetings and events. In 2010/11 the catering service ceased as part of savings following the Comprehensive Spending Review and catering has since been provided by external suppliers. The facilities could still be used to store and clean cups for meetings however cups would still need to be transported to and from meeting rooms and cleaned by someone. The Executive Development Chef stated that as part of the catering contract crockery could be provided when catering is ordered for a meeting however this may incur additional charges.
- 5.23 The group also discussed the provision of food for members at evening meetings. Members of the task group noted that the food had previously been provided with lots of plastic packaging and that often more food than necessary was provided leading to a significant amount of waste. It was questioned whether the provision of food was necessary and, if so, whether the use of plastic packaging could be reduced.
- 5.24 The group was advised that food was provided as some members often had no opportunity to eat prior to an evening meeting because of work commitments and some evening meetings lasted until late at night. Also, food for meetings or training was usually ordered based on the number of people scheduled to attend meetings however, often, not all people would attend therefore more food would be provided than was actually needed. In terms of the packaging for food, the group were advised that discussions had taken place with the suppliers to replace plastic packaging with paper/card packaging. When a buffet was provided the plastic trays used could be returned to the supplier for reuse.

Schools

- 5.25 Schools are an important partner of the Council and the task group believes that working with them to help them to reduce their paper and plastics use will make a big difference to the environment and educate young people about the importance of climate change and avoiding waste. The task group learned about some schools that were taking their own initiatives to reduce paper and plastics use. The Task Group was informed that Rainhill High was becoming an "eco-school". One initiative the secondary academy had was to supply all pupils with reusable bottles and install water fountains around the school to reduce plastics use in drinks (this had the additional benefit of encouraging pupils to drink water rather than sugary soft drinks).

- 5.26 From an IT perspective, in August 2019 the Council reintroduced an in-house school IT support service. One of the benefits of this has been the ability to reuse some of the Council's old devices (which are being replaced by new Surface tablets and laptops) in the schools including providing computers in places like the kitchens for the Catering Service's digitisation. This will enhance the technology available within schools as well as extend the life cycle of the devices rather than discarding them.
- 5.27 In addition to providing recycled IT equipment to schools as part of the IT support service, officers were working on a print policy for schools to manage their printer and paper use and discourage any unnecessary printing. The Council could also work with schools on reducing paper use by governing bodies by encourage digital agendas and technology use.
- 5.28 Schools have historically communicated with parents through paper (e.g. letter sent to the home address or passed on to pupils to take home). However, technology enables schools to communicate electronically with parents and more and more schools in the Borough are introducing platforms (e.g. websites or apps) that parents can log into to get the information they need from the school or to provide payments for lunches and field trips.

Schools Catering

- 5.29 The Council currently provides Catering Services to 62 schools (including primary, secondary and special schools) in the Borough. The Executive Development Chef Informed the group that there were various issues with the prospect of being able to remove single use plastics from the service. Within secondary schools, the majority don't have a large enough canteen to accommodate seating for all pupils at once. This leads the need to provide "grab and go" food that pupils can take to eat elsewhere which requires disposable containers and utensils. Wooden cutlery is an alternative option to plastic which has been requested by some of the schools however it is four times more expensive than plastic and has its own impact on the environment. Also, feedback from pupils has been that they don't like the texture of the wooden utensils when eating. The service found that where metal cutlery has been used for grab and go it is often not returned which becomes costly when it is having to be continually replaced.
- 5.30 In relation to primary schools, these were seen as easier places to avoid paper and plastics in catering as they did have space for all pupils to eat so metal cutlery and plates could be provided. The council is working with suppliers to remove plastic bottles and having paper instead of plastic where possible in packaging. Across the catering service generally they were trying to become more digital in terms of record keeping and documentation to reduce paper use.
- 5.31 The group discussed the example of a school in Halton which had digitised the pupils' food ordering process through a web-based system used to order meals the day before. Using this system enabled the catering service to only make meals in the quantities needed based on pupils' choices and encouraged pupils to engage electronically and involve their parents in their food choices. The group was advised that a similar initiative was an aspiration within the Council's school catering service. It was suggested that with the

capability of the new technology being introduced to the Council such a process would be possible in the near future.

Depot Services

- 5.32 As well as the catering service, services based at Hardshaw Brook Depot (i.e. schools caretaking and cleaning, security, transport, waste collection, ground maintenance) were working collectively to consider ways of digitising the way they operate with the development or commissioning of apps. These apps will be designed to support efficiencies within the ways services work but should also help to reduce paper use. In cab technologies for refuse collection, grounds maintenance and highways should help to reduce paper use and avoid unnecessary travel back and forth to the depot. As with office based staff, there will need to be a culture change in relation to paper use to achieve the benefits of the new technology.

Recycling

- 5.33 There is a recognition by the task group that all paper and plastics use cannot be eliminated because there are circumstances where paper and plastic is necessary or there are no alternatives at this time. Where paper and plastic is unavoidable, the task group is keen to ensure that it can be and is recycled. Within Council Offices, there are recycling and residual waste bins within communal areas such as kitchens as well as waste-paper bins in various offices. Staff are not permitted to have bins at their desk (or if they do, they must empty them into the relevant communal bins). The bins are clearly marked to ensure people know what they should and shouldn't put into each bin.
- 5.34 The group was advised that efforts in relation to the recycling service have been focussed on the customer side (i.e. residents) and encouraging people to recycle more. She suggested that as well as encouraging people to recycle there should be a focus on encouraging people to reduce their waste overall by reusing things or avoiding purchases or habits that produce a lot of waste. Initiatives to increase residents' awareness of waste reduction have been running in libraries and shopping centres in the borough.
- 5.35 During Christmas people produce a lot more waste so the service was working to encourage people to think more about waste reduction and reuse (or upcycling) and recycling more. Currently, the refuse collection service produces stickers and paper calendars informing people of collection dates for recycling, waste and garden waste for the year. If this could be digitised it would help to reduce paper use however consideration always needs to be given to those residents who can't access online material as easily as most of the population.

Conclusions

- 6.1 There is a lot more information about, and attention given to, reducing plastics use than paper use given that plastic takes hundreds of years to degrade and has had such a significant impact on our environment, particularly our oceans which has received a lot of media coverage. However, this Task Group also believes that reducing paper use should be a priority as this can contribute to deforestation and pollution which has an impact on the climate, wildlife and

water supply.

- 6.2 Similar to the scrutiny reviews by Lancashire County Council and Bradford Council which focused solely of plastics use, this task group has been focused on how St Helens Council can reduce its use of SUP and encourage its partners in the borough to do the same. The task group made similar findings to the other reviews in that there are already many ways in which we are reducing our use of SUP and changing behaviours.
- 6.3 The Task Group is pleased that 74% of the stationary products the Council purchases are considered to be environmentally friendly and hopes that this trend continues. While environmentally friendlier options sometimes come at additional cost, the Task Group would like to see more weight given to the environmental impact of a decision and less emphasis on choosing the cheapest option. With regards to procurement generally, the Task Group believes the Council should prioritise those suppliers and providers of services who can demonstrate their commitment to reducing their environmental impact through certifications such as ISO14001.
- 6.4 The Task Group is very aware that we cannot completely eliminate plastics use from the Council's business. In relation to some equipment and supplies, there are currently few viable alternatives to plastics (e.g. IT equipment and furniture) however the Task Group is pleased that initiatives such as reusing old IT equipment in schools is extending the life of the plastics that we do have as well as providing other benefits (such as increasing the availability of IT equipment in schools).
- 6.5 The task group is keen to remove disposable cups from meeting rooms within Council buildings and reduce the plastic packaging used by catering providers. The task group notes that some councillors and officers already carry a reusable water bottle with them for meetings and they should encourage their colleagues to do the same. The Council should provide facilities to enable Councillors to also bring reusable cups for hot drinks at meetings. This should be straight forward as there are currently cleaning facilities available in the Members Room at the Town Hall. With regards to cups for visitors and guests, the task group would like to see officers contribute by helping to supply and clean reusable cups for the meetings that they host. The removal of disposable drink containers should be done on a phased basis with people/services given plenty of notice to prepare to put alternatives in place.
- 6.6 Similarly, the Task Group understands that paper cannot be completely removed from the Council's processes and amenities. Where the use of paper is required, the type of paper the Council chooses to use can also have an impact on the environment. There appear to be arguments for and against recycled or virgin paper. Using recycled paper reduces the need to cut down more trees but it is of lower quality and can only be recycled a small number of times; trees have to be cut down to maintain the availability of paper. There are however growing efforts to ensure paper is produced in a sustainable way and, where the Council is purchasing virgin paper, the Task Group believes it should only be from sources certified (e.g. by the FSC) as sustainable.
- 6.7 There are many circumstances where replacing paper with a tablet or other electronic device may not be viable due to the specific requirements of the service or an individual's additional needs. Any policies around paper use

must be implemented with full consideration of equality impacts. However, these circumstances should be the exception to the rule and the Task Group believes that with the opportunities provided by new IT equipment the Council should be looking to considerably reduce its paper consumption.

- 6.8 It is recognised that the introduction of the new technology and ways of working, such as agile working enabled by mobile devices, will be a significant culture shift for many officers that may take time to embed. However, the Council has an excellent opportunity for services to rethink their practices to reduce the amount of paper the Council is using. Services should redesign their systems and processes to replace paper with digital information management and services should also be encouraged to conduct meetings remotely and digitally to reduce the need for paper and travel. It will be important that appropriate training is available to ensure officers are maximising the potential of the new devices.
- 6.9 The Council has the ability to monitor printing by each department however has so far not used this data to inform any strategies to reduce paper use. The Task Group wishes to see policies implemented that will provide guidance on the types of paper to use and where and when it is appropriate to use paper or digital. Policies should also ensure services are set targets for reducing their paper use and that these are monitored and reported on regularly. Targets should be incremental, allowing time for services to make necessary changes and reduce paper use consistently and continuously. As well as helping to reduce the Council's impact on the environment, a reduction in use of paper should also lead to savings on stationary budgets. The use of plastic wallets, card files and folders should be reduced along with paper use as well as the need for space to store documents.
- 6.10 As senior figures within the Council and visible within the public, Councillors should lead by example by changing their habits to reduce their paper and plastics use as well as actively encouraging officers, partners they work with and the public to do the same. On 10th July 2019, Councillors supported a notice of motion to "Tackle the Climate Change Emergency" and all should ensure they make their contributions to achieving the commitments made within the motion. The Task Group encourages all councillors to be conscious of their paper and plastic use so as not to create unnecessary waste.
- 6.11 The Task Group is pleased that Democratic Services has noticed a reduction in paper received by Councillors. However, the use of paper agendas for Council and Committee meetings and the provision of paper induction packs and documents at training sessions is a concern for the task group; considering all councillors have a tablet device that can be used to view documents electronically. The Task Group also believes that the Council no longer needs to provide paper diaries containing the dates for committee meetings as these can become out of date quickly due to meeting dates changing and all Officers and Councillors should utilise their digital calendars.
- 6.12 The Task Group understands some of the unreliability issues that can occur and agrees that at times it is difficult to read content on a tablet device because the screens are relatively small. Despite the potential limitations, the task group believes that councillors should not be given paper copies of reports or agendas at meetings as a default. Democratic Services, Training and IT need to support Councillors in their use of the technology and discourage the use of paper copies where possible. The use of paper should

be in exceptional circumstances and requests for paper copies of documents should be made as a last resort.

- 6.13 The Task Group recognises the importance of buy in from senior management to achieving significant and sustained change to the culture and ways of working within an organisation. To encourage councillors and officers to adapt their habits and to lead the culture shift within the Council, the Task Group believes that a Climate Action working group should be established to champion environmental initiatives and promote the benefits of making changes. This working group should be led by a designated Climate Change Officer accountable for overseeing and leading on climate change issues generally and supported by councillors and officers who are particularly committed to the purpose of the group. The Council should develop the role of a 'Green Advocate' and encourage officers from all directorates to become advocates to lead on initiatives in their services and encourage their colleagues to change their habits and make a contribution to reducing their paper and plastics use, not just in the office, but in their personal lives as well.
- 6.14 To promote the Council's commitment to addressing environmental issues and highlight the positive work taking place, the Council should incorporate a 'Green' focus into its Communications Strategy. Regular messaging about the initiatives being championed by the Climate Action working group and Green Advocates will support them in encouraging buy in and demonstrate to the public and the Council's partners/stakeholders its commitment to the environment.

Sources

Minutes of Full Council Meeting 10th July 2019 –

<http://moderngov.sthelens.gov.uk/documents/g5852/Printed%20minutes%2010th-Jul-2019%2018.15%20Council.pdf?T=1>

LCR Year of the Environment 2019 – <http://yoe2019lcr.org.uk/>

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

Government Resources and Waste Strategy of England –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england>

HM Treasury – Tackling the plastic problem –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/tackling-the-plastic-problem>

Science Advances Magazine – Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made

<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/3/7/e1700782>

WorldAtlas.com - What Is The Environmental Impact Of Paper?

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-environmental-impact-of-paper.html>

theWorldCounts.com – A Useful but Wasteful Product...

https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/Environmental_Impact_of_Paper_Production

Wikipedia – Environmental impact of paper

https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoyvizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Environmental_impact_of_paper.html

Lancashire County Council's Reducing Single Use Plastics in Lancashire Report –
<http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=144764>

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's Single Use Plastics Report –
<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/5331/2019-mar-single-use-plastics.pdf>

Ways to reduce plastic use

<https://www.earthday.org/campaigns/plastics/plastics-campaign/>

<https://www.onyalife.com/reasons-and-ways-to-reduce-single-use-plastic-in-the-workplace/>

<https://www.lessplastic.org.uk/9-ways-to-reduce-plastic-in-your-workplace/>

<https://www.lessplastic.org.uk/planning-to-reduce-plastic-waste-in-your-business-in-2020/>

<https://www.lessplastic.org.uk/9-ways-to-reduce-plastic-in-your-school/>

<https://www.mynewlab.com/blog/how-to-reduce-use-of-plastic-in-workplace/>

<https://www.whereworkplaceworks.com/2019/08/08/plastic-in-the-office-how-to-replace-remove-reduce-and-reuse/>

Ways to reduce paper use

<https://blog.imagenetconsulting.com/7-ways-to-reduce-paper-usage-in-the-workplace>

<https://nektardata.com/6-tips-for-reducing-paper-consumption-in-the-workplace/>

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/office-waste-reduction-tips-and-ideas-2877884>

Council's Use of Paper and Plastics

Rec No	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Agreed Action and Date of Implementation
A	That the use of disposable paper or plastic cups for Council meetings (e.g. Cabinet, Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees) be phased out and that reusable cups be provided.		
B	That Councillors be requested to bring their own reusable cups/bottles to meetings held at the Town Hall and that provisions for storage of these cups/bottles be made in the Members' Room.		
C	That all agendas, presentations and documents provided during Council meetings and training courses should be provided electronically in advance of the meeting/training session. Paper copies should only be provided to Councillors and Officers if specifically requested or if required due to additional needs.		
D	That as of the May 2020 local elections, councillors' induction packs be provided digitally and not in paper format unless specifically required due to a councillor's individual needs.		
E	That the Council no longer produce paper diaries containing dates of Council and Committee meetings and that Officers and Councillors be encouraged to use their digital calendars.		

Council's Use of Paper and Plastics

F	That the role of a 'green advocate' be developed and officers from each directorate be encouraged to become an advocate and actively engage in initiatives to reduce the Council's paper and plastics use.		
G	That a Climate Action working group be established to lead on developing and implementing initiatives to reduce the Council's paper and plastics use. The working group should include councillor representation and engage with green advocates.		
H	That the Council appoints an accountable officer overseeing and leading on climate change issues. This role should include responsibility for administering the Climate Action working group; recruiting and liaising with green advocates and promoting environmentally friendly practices within the Council and its partners.		
I	That all Councillors and Senior Officers undergo training on the climate emergency by March 2021, with Cabinet Members receiving the training as a priority.		
J	That following a baseline review of paper use for the 2019/20 municipal year, the Council should review its systems and processes to reduce total annual paper use to 70% by 31st March 2021 and to 50% by 31st March 2022. These targets apply to the Council as a whole, not individual teams (i.e. some may be able to reduce paper use by		

Council's Use of Paper and Plastics

	more than 50%, others may already be relatively paper light).		
K	That all services receive regular reports regarding their printer usage to enable them to monitor their paper use to assist teams in achieving the targets they are set for paper reduction.		
L	That the Council creates a paper light policy to encourage staff to decrease their paper usage. This should include guidelines such as: how best to utilise digital technology instead of paper; not printing out emails; the types of paper available via stationary supplies; being conscious of the type of paper used for different purposes; how services should monitor paper use.		
M	That the Council creates a plastic light policy to encourage staff to decrease their plastics usage. This should include guidelines such as: discourage the use of single use plastics in stationary (i.e. reduce laminating, use of plastic wallets) and discourage the use of single use plastics at meetings or events.		
N	That the Council review its fleet of multifunctional devices (MFDs). The aim of the review should be to reduce the number of devices provided across the Council's estate, ensuring the devices are appropriately located. This will ensure more efficient use of devices and reduce the Council's consumption of plastic contained within devices.		

Council's Use of Paper and Plastics

O	That the Council's Communications Strategy incorporates a section on promoting the Council's green initiatives, highlighting the positive impacts on the borough and wider environment.		
---	---	--	--