

Record of Decision

Notice of Motion - Plastic Free Torbay

Decision Taker

Elected Mayor on 22 February 2018

Decision

That the motion be supported in principle, however, a number of actions are already being taken by the Council to support a plastic free Torbay as follows:

1. Instigating a council-led Plastic Free Torbay Task Force that involves all sections of the local community to be in place by July 2018. This task force will create an action plan that works towards moving away from the unnecessary single use plastics in Torbay and campaign to reduce and discourage single use plastics from retail premises;
2. Start phasing out the use of unnecessary 'single use plastic' products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in all Council buildings and at all Council events by July 2020
5. Working with local businesses and the Tourism Sector to participate in this initiative;

Actions:

Torbay Council is leading the South West Marine Plastics Initiative, in conjunction with Groundwork Trust. The project will be applying for substantial funding from the Big Lottery Fund to cover initiatives in the South Devon area (Plymouth CC, South Hams DC, Torbay Council (waste team, beaches and harbours) Teignbridge DC Exeter CC, Devon CC and East Devon DC), working with various partners including Torbay Cleaner Coasts Initiative, Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, Beach Care (part funded by Tidy Britain), Fathoms Free, South Devon AONB, The National Trust, MVV and Groundwork South who are all committed to dealing with plastic waste washed up on our beaches and in our seas,.

The project will focus on the collection, recycling and reuse of marine plastics through the collection of plastic waste from beaches and seas during organised community beach cleans/litter picks, alongside the fishing industry being enabled to recycle their unwanted nets, along with any other plastic collected in the course of their work.

The plastic will be collected separately and taken to Exeter CC's Material Reclamation Facility, where it will be sorted into different polymers. This will then be delivered to a company in Germany who will turn the plastic into pellets. The pellets will then be made into kayaks and hopefully surfboards by a company in Somerset.

Kayaks will then be distributed to beach clean groups to enable them to continue to collect waste and plastic from the sea.

Funding will also be requested for the purchase of items to replace single use plastics in all council and partner's buildings.- glasses, cutlery etc.

This project has the potential to be a flagship scheme for the whole of the UK, if the trial is successful.

Torbay Council is also signed up to the Refill Devon scheme, this is a practical tap water campaign that aims to make refilling your water bottle as easy, convenient and cheap as possible by introducing refill points on every street.

Participating cafes, bars, restaurants, banks, galleries, museums and other businesses display a round, blue sticker in their window, inviting thirsty passers-by to come on in and fill up their bottle – for free.

The aim is to reduce the amount of plastic bottles ending up in our oceans, whilst keeping residents and visitors healthy, hydrated and saving money at the same time.

Refill Devon launched last year with the support of Beach Care and City Seas (see <https://www.recycledevon.org/welcome-to-refill-devon> and <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/> for more information).

3. Installing a free drinking water fountain in Paignton Library;

Action:

Whilst waiting for the drinking water fountain to be installed, Paignton Library could offer the Refill Devon scheme.

4. Increasing the amount of plastic that can be recycled through doorstep recycling and instigating a strategy to reduce the amount of litter on Torbay's streets;

Actions:

TOR2 already collect a comprehensive range of plastics at the kerbside including drinks bottles, shampoo, milk and detergent bottles, plastic pots like yoghurt pots, plastic tubs like margarine and ice cream tubs and plastic trays that fruit and meat are sold in.

Torbay Council does not take black plastic, film or hard plastic as this cannot easily be recycled and can contaminate plastic loads resulting in rejection of whole loads of otherwise recyclable plastic.

The Council will continue to look for new markets that can accept all these more difficult plastics, but with the Chinese market restrictions from January this year plastic recycling is becoming increasingly difficult.

6. Sign up to the Herald Express and SAS campaign for Torbay to become a Plastic Free community by 2020.

Action:

The Elected Mayor supports working with the Herald Express and SAS on board with our marine plastics initiative.

Reason for the Decision

To respond to the motion.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Wednesday, 7 March 2018 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

At the Council meeting held on 22 February 2018, the Elected Mayor considered a motion on a plastic free Torbay notice of which was given in accordance with Standing Order A14 by Councillors Long and Carter as set out below:

Torbay is an important UNESCO accredited Global Geopark. The sea has shaped our communities and history and is a vital contributor to our economy and premier tourism offer.

This Council notes that in 2016 the Ellen MacArthur Foundation estimated that by weight, there could be more plastic in our oceans than fish as soon as 2050. Columbia University has estimated that plastic can last for up to 600 years in our environment, often finding its way into marine life thus affecting the food chain, and the water we eventually drink.

Torbay Council also congratulates the Herald Express newspaper and 'Devon Live' for launching a campaign with 'Surfers Against Sewage' (SAS) to encourage 125 communities to become plastic free by 2020.

Following the public outcry on this issue after the BBC 'Blue Planet II' programme, this Council resolves to provide leadership on this issue by:

- 1) Instigating a council-led Plastic Free Torbay Task Force that involves all sections of the local community to be in place by July 2018. This task force will create an action plan that works towards moving away from the unnecessary single use plastics in Torbay and campaign to reduce and discourage single use plastics from retail premises;
- 2) Start phasing out the use of unnecessary 'single use plastic' products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in all Council buildings and at all Council events by July 2020;
- 3) Installing a free drinking water fountain in Paignton Library;
- 4) Increasing the amount of plastic that can be recycled through doorstep recycling and instigating a strategy to reduce the amount of litter on Torbay's streets;
- 5) Working with local businesses and the Tourism Sector to participate in this initiative; and
- 6) Sign up to the Herald Express and SAS campaign for Torbay to become a Plastic

Free community by 2020.

In accordance with Standing Order A14.3(a), the motion stood referred to the Elected Mayor.

The Elected Mayor responded to the motion at the meeting and his decision is set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

None

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

27 February 2018

Signed: _____
The Elected Mayor of Torbay

Date: 27 February 2018