

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 July 2018

Title: Proposals to develop Environmental Initiatives

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet member: Councillor Isabelle Linington, Cabinet Member for Environmental Impact

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To approve a series of environmental initiatives as outlined in recent discussions with Councillors

Decision type: Key

Officer recommendation(s): Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) Agree match-funding of up to £5,000 for the provision of drinking water at Newhaven skate park.
- (2) Authorise the Strategy & Partnership Lead, Quality Environment, to conduct a desk-based feasibility study for the potential of free drinking water provision within council-owned parks and in other public places within Lewes district, working with partners and stakeholders.
- (3) Agree to support the national 'Refill' campaign through social media and as appropriate.
- (4) Authorise the Strategy & Partnership Lead, Quality Environment, to develop guidance for developers on the provision of underground bins, as part of the wider sustainability planning policy review.
- (5) Delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Impact, to bid for funding, supported by an appropriate business case, to invest in electric vehicle (EV) charging technology and infrastructure, working with partners and other local authorities.
- (6) Authorise the Strategy & Partnership Lead, Quality Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Impact, to prepare a Sustainability Policy to provide a framework for council activities for

consideration and approval at Cabinet later in the year.

(7) Note the launch and progress to date of the 'Single-Use Plastics' project.

Reasons for recommendations:

- (1) The need for drinking water provision at skate parks has been identified by users of the skate parks, but there are insufficient funds within the project budget to allow for the installation costs of the water supply at this site.
- (2) Additional drinking water provision could be made available to the general public in areas of high foot traffic, for example shopping precincts and parks. This will support various initiatives currently prominent in the political and public arena including the reduction of single use plastics and promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
- (3) The 'Refill' campaign, described in paragraph 1.2, has arrived in Lewes district through community activism.
- (4) Underground bins installed as a method of communal waste collection within a significant residential development could be considered for viability, if the guidance were in place.
- (5) A charging point feasibility study will provide for an evaluation of the opportunities available to Lewes District Council (LDC) with regards to EV charging on its own estate in light of the national move towards the provision of this infrastructure and Cabinet-approved changes to LDC planning guidance in support of EV charging facilities.
- (6) The adoption of a set of guiding principles in the form of an overarching Sustainability Policy would bring Lewes DC into line with many other councils nationally. The policy would support planning policy and guidance, guide procurement decisions, potentially reduce costs with regards to energy and waste (through staff education and project initiatives) and generally work to ensure the council has 'its own house in order' before guiding others.
- (7) The Single-Use Plastic (SUP) project started in May as a result of the Council's aim to become SUP free where it is reasonable to do so by 31 December 2018.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Recent cross-party discussions about a range of potential environmental initiatives led Councillors to identify three issues for further exploration: underground bins; electric vehicle charging; and drinking water provision. These issues have been proposed as national campaigns gain support locally, such as 'Plastic Free', and as a result of a growing interest in the provision of charge points for plug-in electric vehicles (EVs).

Officers have considered the feasibility of these ideas and this report outlines the proposed projects that would result from Cabinet agreement.

1.2 Drinking water provision:

The 2017 YouGov survey commissioned by BRITA UK and Keep Britain Tidy 'Understanding provision, usage and perceptions of free drinking water to the public in the UK' found that more than 70% of people surveyed feel uncomfortable asking for a glass of tap water when out and about and only a quarter know their rights when it comes to asking for a glass of tap water in public buildings and businesses possibly leading them to buy bottled water or other drinks. 59% would be more likely to carry a reusable water bottle if tap water was freely available or they knew that businesses would willingly refill their bottle. The report also revealed that 73% of people would like greater availability of free tap water.

'Refill' is a national, practical tap water campaign launched in Bristol in 2015 by City to Sea, a non-profit organisation aimed to 'connect our actions to our oceans' by running campaigns to prevent marine plastic pollution. Refill aims to make refilling your bottle as easy, convenient and cheap as possible by introducing refill points on every street. Participating cafes, bars, banks, shops, galleries and other businesses simply put a sticker in their window alerting passers-by to the fact that they are welcome to come in and fill up their bottle for free.

1.3 Underground bins:

Underground bins have been utilised in Europe for many years and usually consist of a large underground storage container that is topped with a standard appearance 'access' bin. It is estimated that one underground bin can negate the need for 20 wheelie bins.

Successful use of these bins in the UK has been limited to high density housing developments with a recent successful install in the first phase of the new suburb of Cambridge, Eddington which will eventually consist of 3000 homes, accommodation for 2,000 students, 100,000 sqm academic and research space, a school, community centre, care home, hotel and retail units.

1.4 Electric Vehicle Charging:

The transport sector overtook energy in 2016 as the UK's single biggest source of carbon emissions as energy production has moved away from coal and towards renewables and consumers have opted to purchase larger new cars. Owing to this and wider air quality issues, the Government has announced its intention to ban pure combustion vehicles from sale by 2040 and has created various grant based funding streams to encourage uptake and development of Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) technology.

Vehicle manufacturers are moving towards phasing out fully petrol/diesel vehicles including Volvo, which recently announced it would no longer manufacture new pure combustion engine vehicles from 2019. Although predictions for the take up of ULEVs in the near future are uncertain, the make-up of the new car market is visibly changing with both hybrid and pure electric vehicles undoubtedly increasing.

The use of pure Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Plug-in Hybrids (PHEVs) brings with it a shift change in behaviour with regards to 'fueling' the vehicle, with owners largely charging at home over night and then 'topping up' whenever there is an opportunity. This requires the provision of charging points at sites where vehicles are parked for a variety of durations during the day, including workplaces (longer charges possible) and destinations such as supermarkets, public car parks and leisure facilities (where fast and rapid charges are more suitable).

The Office for Low Emission Vehicles provides funding that currently provides for 75% of the cost of charge points for residential use and could be used to install points within car parks that are sited in areas where residents do not have access to off-street parking and there is limited on-street parking availability. The points would allow for overnight charging of EVs. Sites for consideration may include Little East Street, East Street and Mountfield Road in Lewes; Bay Vue Road, Newhaven and; Sutton Road and Saxon Lane in Seaford as examples.

Reducing emissions from transport and encouraging ULEV take-up will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and improve air quality within the district, working towards meeting objectives within the Council Plan and the County's Local Transport Plan.

2 Outline Proposal

2.1 Drinking water provision:

The provision of drinking water facilities within Lewes district would help to

provide free and accessible tap water to those who need it, whether or not they have a reusable bottle on them, reducing the need to purchase potentially less healthy drinks in single-use containers, on the go. This will support the aims of LDC as agreed at Council in February 2018, to reduce single-use plastics in our community. The installations would need to be supported by wider community-led refill campaigns, which LDC can encourage and support.

As a first step to this project, officers will conduct a desk-based study to assess the potential for drinking water installations in parks and other locations where there is a district-owned and managed water source available, for example at public toilets. Possible locations and costs would then be presented in a later paper to Cabinet. As a guide a typical basic stainless steel water fountain retails around £500. The biggest cost would be the provision of the water supply to the site, the cost of the water and the ongoing maintenance costs that would need to be factored into existing contracts.

2.2 Underground bins:

It is uncertain how suitable these bins are for developments within Lewes district with installation in the existing street scene likely to be problematic and the requirement for a specialist collection vehicle. However, with agreement from Cabinet, officers can carry out further research to establish costs and viability potential with the aim to feed this into the Local Plan Review which was requested by Members at February 2018 Council.

2.3 Electric Vehicle Charging:

Currently, in Lewes District there are two publically available Electric Vehicle (EV) charging devices and 5 at Glyndebourne. Of the LDC chargers, two are 'rapid' and situated in council-owned carparks, one in Newhaven and one in Lewes. The Lewes device has seen a gradual but notable increase in usage since installation. These devices were installed 3 years ago as part of a wider EV South East bid to OLEV for 75% funding that totalled £2.4m, the remaining 25% was funded by the commercial partners who installed the points and provided the back office management.

LDC has drafted technical guidance for developers encouraging provision of EV charge points in new development sites. The guidance will be refined into a policy as part of the Local Plan Review.

East Sussex County Council, as highways authority, is considering its position with regard to authorising on-street charge points, anticipating a policy being developed over the course of this year. Given this, LDC could investigate the feasibility of provision within council-owned parking facilities that are located in areas where there is limited residential off-street parking.

It may be advisable to conduct an initial informal public consultation to determine views on EV charging and future need across the district. A study and possible formal consultation would follow to review potential locations, research with the EST and OLEV with regards to any funding application and seek quotes from installers to gauge total costs, subject to delegated authority provisions.

Management and liability options for the sites would need to be agreed including fee charging models.

2.4 Sustainability Policy:

The sustainability policy would consist of a number of specific core values guided by the generally accepted definition of sustainable development:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” Brundtland Report, 1987

The core values will echo commitments already made to residents in the Corporate Plan and will direct them as to how we operate our own business. The policy will support the move towards a higher standard of sustainability in the planning process and demonstrate that LDC is considering environmental impacts across the organisation.

2.5 Current project – Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) within council operations:

Since the motion agreed at Cabinet in February 2018, progress has been made towards reducing single-use plastics in the council work place.

The project aims to decrease the use of SUPs in council offices in relation to day to day activities where reasonable to do so; and to introduce a SUP policy to encourage staff to consider SUP alternatives when procuring goods and services.

Audits of council offices across Lewes district and Eastbourne have been undertaken in order to determine the scale of the problem, ‘quick wins’ implemented (such as no longer purchasing plastic cups and removing these items from vending machines where possible) and where items can be substituted for re-usable or non-plastic alternatives within existing budgets this will be done.

3 Outcome expected and performance management

3.1 Drinking water provision:

The project will result in the installation of a suitable and robust drinking water tap at a key location in the district, improving customer perception of facilities provided, support the reduction of single-use plastics, help reduce littering and meet healthy eating objectives by reducing the need to purchase alternative drinks in single-use containers.

The costs of water supply and ongoing maintenance at this location will be monitored, following which feasibility of provision at other sites will be investigated.

3.2 Underground bins:

This investigation will be conducted in conjunction with the wider planning policy review as requested under the resolution from Cabinet February 2018.

Production of any guidance document will be in line with the Local Plan Review timetable.

3.3 Electric Vehicle Charging:

The outcome of this project is anticipated to be the scoping of provision of new electric vehicle charging infrastructure within public car parks at minimal cost to LDC. These would be primarily for local residents with no access to off-street parking to charge their cars but could also be available to others. This would encourage the take-up of plug-in vehicles and support Central Government objectives. This project would be subject to a robust business case.

4 Consultation

4.1 Drinking water provision: skateboard park users have requested access to drinking water as part of the site's redevelopment consultation.

4.2 Anecdotal evidence indicates residents' support for the provision of EV charging infrastructure and further consultation is recommended as part of this report.

5 Corporate plan and council policies

5.1 Corporate Plan: We expect the district to remain a clean and beautiful place to live, work and visit, as a result of continued effort to protect the quality of the local environment.

5.2 19 February Council resolved to:

- allocate up to £50,000 from Reserves to create an environmental Initiatives fund to be utilised in undertaking feasibility and development of the evidence base for a higher standard of environmental sustainability within the planning process, as part of the next Local Plan Review;
- support the aim for Lewes District Council to become 'single-use plastic free' by 31st December 2018

6 Business case and alternative option(s) considered

6.1 Drinking water provision:

The Newhaven skate park is a suitable site for water provision, and the Project Manager can put aside £5,000 from current budget allocation if Cabinet can match fund up to this amount to complete the installation.

Similar provision at the Malling skate park, Lewes, can be considered in due course, when the Environment Agency has given assurances on the viability in terms of risk to flood defences.

East Sussex Highways do not object in principle to the installation of drinking water facilities within the Lewes Pedestrian Precinct, should this be considered an option in future, provided the design, size and location are acceptable to them and the District Conservation Officer. At this time costs are unknown and a feasibility study would need to be conducted to assess the viability of such an

installation and the approach that would be taken to its design.

6.2 Electric Vehicles:

Currently OLEV grant funding currently provides two options:

(a) A workplace charge scheme that is limited to £300 for each socket up to a maximum of 20 across all sites for each application. Only one application can be made. There needs to be either an existing need or the intention to encourage uptake of personal or fleet EV's within the organisation.

(b) An on-street residential scheme. A known barrier to uptake of EV's is the limited availability of off-street parking. This scheme aims to provide access to on-street parking charge points to meet the needs of local residents through provision of a 75% grant for capital costs of procuring and installing the device and parking bay with a maximum of £7,500 per device. Applicants need to demonstrate a commitment to providing these facilities and must secure a minimum of 25% capital funds via sources other than OLEV. As per the previous bid, this could possibly be found through commercial partners. This funding can be applied to provision in car parks where there is no off-street parking for residents and access is possible overnight.

East Sussex County Council, as highways authority, has advised that its position with regard to on-street charge points is under consideration, either as new street furniture or integrated into existing assets (such as lampposts).

Management and liability options for the sites would need to be resolved at Cabinet at a later date, including fee charging models.

7 Financial appraisal

7.1 A £5,000 contribution towards the cost of providing a drinking water supply at Newhaven Skate Park can be financed from the 2018/2019 Service Priorities budget.

8 Legal implications

8.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 section 1, the general power of competence, the Council has the power to do anything that an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited or to which a more particular power or duty does not apply. The actions proposed in this Report fall within this power. Report considered by Legal on 29 May 2018 (IKEN-7391- LDC- MW).

9 Risk management implications

9.1 The proposals within this report are strategic in nature and the risks in not pursuing these opportunities are in part reputational. On the matter of installing drinking water facilities, the project manager is aware of the potential risks of vandalism and will seek to mitigate these through design and monitoring.

10 Equality analysis

10.1 Action arising from the Equality Analysis: design of any drinking water installation must be accessible to disabled park users.

11 Appendices

- None

12 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- [Equality Analysis](#)