



Isle of Man
Government

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SINGLE USE PLASTICS REDUCTION PLAN FOR THE ISLE OF MAN GOVERNMENT

MAY 2018



INTRODUCTION

Hon. Howard Quayle MHK – Chief Minister

In January 2018, I made a commitment that the Council of Ministers' Environment and Infrastructure Policy Committee would develop a plan to significantly reduce the amount of single use plastic we use over the course of the current administration. This "Single Use Plastics Reduction Plan for the Isle of Man Government" shows how we will deliver significant usage reductions.

The threat to marine life from plastics came to the forefront of global attention in 2017. Marine plastics cause direct impacts on marine species, such as tangling and choking, but also tiny plastic particles and associated toxins are infiltrating all levels of the marine food chain, creating a problem which will impact on generations well into the future. The majority of the Isle of Man's waste plastic is efficiently processed and the energy it contains is recycled into electricity, however some plastics do find their way into the environment and it is important to tackle this issue.

Single use plastics also often represent an unsustainable use of resources and make a significant contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. However, it is a complex issue and the wider sustainability and environmental issues need to be fully considered. We must minimise use wherever possible, without inadvertently switching to less ideal alternatives.

Reducing plastic use and pollution will contribute to a wide range of Programme for Government priorities and departmental work streams, including promoting the Isle of Man as a UNESCO Biosphere Region, Waste Management Strategy, Landscape and Amenity Strategy, Fisheries Strategy, Climate Challenge and Mitigation Strategy and delivering our Biodiversity Strategy. The Government also works with the British Irish Council on waste, recycling and marine environmental protection, contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

This plan is the result of dedicated research and is a considered and evidence-based approach to one of the most high profile environmental challenges of our time. It aims to ensure that the measures adopted by the Isle of Man Government ensure the best outcomes for the marine environment, global greenhouse gas emissions reduction, our global reputation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and the full range of sustainability and operational considerations.

The initial focus is substantially regarding Government's activity, whilst the next phase will address wider single use plastic issues through-out the Isle of Man and engage with the private sector and the public to minimise usage of single use plastics.

WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE

Since the Chief Minister's commitment to reducing single use plastics over the course of this administration, work has already begun across the Isle of Man Government to reduce plastics within Government and across the Island. Examples of initiatives already in place or developed recently include:

IN GOVERNMENT
<p>Departmental sustainability champions</p> <p>Each department and agency has been asked to appoint a sustainability champion who will lead on implementing the reduction of single use plastics in their department. Champions are supported by senior management and the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) provides training and technical support. A survey of single use plastics across Government was completed in April 2018 in collaboration with champions.</p>
<p>Reducing plastic at Government events</p> <p>Reducing single use plastics has become part of the planning process for Government events in 2018. The Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Environment Ministers' Summit in February 2018 was single use plastics free and measures are in place to reduce plastics at IsleExpo, Tynwald Day and the Isle of Man Food and Drink Festival.</p>
<p>Schools</p> <p>Through their partnership with UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man, many schools have plastic awareness and reduction programmes in place. Innovative projects to recycle plastics and turn them into artwork have recently been showcased in the press.</p>

OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT
<p>Plastics education – Working with our partners</p> <p>DEFA and the Department of Infrastructure (DOI) already work with Beach Buddies to remove plastic litter from the Government Estate. DEFA also works with Beach Buddies and the Manx Wildlife Trust to educate the public on plastic use and reducing marine litter. A new Plastics Education Programme is currently being developed and will be rolled out over Summer 2019.</p> <p>The message REDUCE – RE-USE – RECYCLE is key.</p>
<p>Removing plastics from the environment</p> <p>A number of Government-funded initiatives assist in reducing plastics in the environment. The majority of single use plastics generated are processed by the Energy for Waste Plant, with minimal use of landfill. Recycling is promoted and programmes such as Fishing for Litter and the agricultural plastic waste scheme aim to reduce the impact of plastic waste from specific sectors.</p>
<p>Facilitating composting of packaging waste</p> <p>DEFA has been working with the private sector to facilitate on-Island composting of plastic-free packaging waste. Trials have been successful and there is scope for compostable packaging waste to replace plasticized versions on a much wider scale. This is subject to a high level of quality control by producers and operators.</p>

ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE GOVERNMENT'S USE OF PLASTICS

After a review of current plastics use in the Isle of Man Government, and looking at the evidence for the sustainability of alternatives to single use plastics, this action plan outlines the plastics action for the Isle of Man, focusing on reducing use within Government and improving education and awareness.

What we will do	Why this is important	When
Build capacity of sustainability champions through training, provision of resources and technical support.	Sustainability champions will be key in delivering plastics reduction across Government. DEFA will train sustainability officers to support their work in their departments, to ensure that have the best information available to them.	Immediately
Ensure single use plastics are minimised at events	Events often create large quantities of single use plastic waste and litter. Sustainable alternative are available. Guidance will be given to departments and it is expected that improvements can be made year on year.	
Ban balloon releases by Government departments, agencies and schools and by other parties on Government land	Whilst balloon releases by Government organisation are rare, they are still carried out in the private sector. The intention is to minimise pollution and risk to wildlife.	
Ensure easy access to tap water in Government buildings.	Enabling Government workers and others to easily access tap water in Government buildings will minimise the use of plastic bottled drinks consumed.	
Ban the use of specified single use plastic items across Government. To include the following if single use plastic: straws, cotton buds, cutlery, plates, cups, drinks stirrers.	Many of these items are either unnecessary or can easily be replaced by sustainable alternatives. Not using these items will reduce plastic waste and wasteful use of resources. Exceptions will be made where needed, e.g. for clinical use of straws.	By January 2019
Implement new procurement criteria considering single use plastics, and encouraging the use of sustainable alternative where appropriate	Whilst environmental issues are considered as part of procurement, this is an opportunity to facilitate making sustainable choices and avoiding unnecessary single use plastic.	
Departments will opt in to appropriate elements of plastics guidance, taking into account their operational requirements and any crucial exemptions required.	The guidance will outline best practice on single use plastics and targets that departments will be able to opt into, according to operational requirements (ultimately facilitating meeting the 2021 target for elimination of all unnecessary single use plastics)	
Identify an officer in Government to lead on plastics reduction and recycling	The delivery of the plastics plan will be enhanced by an officer who can lead on plastics reduction as part of their role. This may link into advice on recycling and other sustainability measures.	
Establish a consistent recycling scheme across all Government Buildings, where practical	Although some recycling is done in most Government buildings, there is currently no central recycling scheme and some schemes are run by individuals.	
Reduce plastic fragments from food and sewage waste	Removing all sources of plastic entering the marine environment from Manx sources is important and finding a solution to plastic from waste disposal needs to be addressed.	January 2020
Eliminate all unnecessary single use plastics across Government and replace with sustainable alternatives	Building on the initial bans of single use plastics and the opt in scheme for departments, this gives the organisation a longer term target. Whilst plastics will continue to play an important role, where appropriate, all unnecessary and unsustainable use will cease.	January 2021

FURTHER WORK TO REDUCE PLASTICS IN THE ISLE OF MAN

It is proposed that a complementary action plan to tackle single use plastics and plastic litter outside Government will be developed to be rolled out into the wider community. Initiatives proposed include:

<p style="text-align: center;">Plastic Bag Levy</p> <p>We reviewed the use of single use plastic bags and the operation of levies in other jurisdictions. Since levies were introduced in neighbouring jurisdictions there have been significant reductions in single use plastic bag use and the numbers polluting the marine environment. The issue is complex, with single use plastic bags reused as bin bags representing a more sustainable option than alternatives under some circumstances. However, we recommend the introduction of a levy on single use plastic bags. Depending on the legislative route taken, this should be in place within 2 years.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Plastic Free Island – <i>minimising use</i></p> <p>As the only whole nation UNESCO Biosphere Region, we are in a unique position to engage the community in some really innovative approaches to reducing plastics and improving sustainability. By involving everyone in reducing plastics and increasing sustainability we can make a real difference locally and an important contribution to this global challenge. A plastics stakeholder forum and seeking accreditation through existing plastic reduction programmes are possible routes forward on this.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Recognising the challenge of marine plastic pollution</p> <p>Whilst much of our plastic litter is processed by the Energy from Waste Plant, we cannot be complacent about marine plastics entering the Manx marine environment. Manx sources of marine litter include; littering and fly tipping; rubbish from bins and receptacles being released into the environment by wind, gulls or other sources; organised balloon releases; discarded fishing gear; sewage related plastics in areas where sewage treatment is not yet in place; agricultural waste if not disposed of properly. Further research and action on local sources of marine pollution will help protect Manx waters and the global marine environment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reducing food and drink packaging litter</p> <p>A significant source of local litter is plastic packaging from take away and convenience food. With the development of non-plastic alternatives, there is scope to reduce the packaging waste produced. We will also explore opportunities to work with food and drink vendors to ensure that problem waste is reduced, and where necessary encouraging sources of packaging waste to take responsibility for disposal. Education also plays a key part in reducing food packaging litter.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Public health considerations</p> <p>Based on our initial review of public health impacts of plastics in the environment and in our food, it is recommended that we further consider health implications of plastics. The World Health Organisation recently committed to reviewing health risks associated with bottled water and scientists and medical organisations are increasingly examining the evidence for a wide range of health risks potentially associated with plastics. We will continue to monitor international research and policy in this area and work across Government to explore the Isle of Man implications.</p>	