

A Report of the Sustainability & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 11th June 2019

The Plastic Free Birmingham Inquiry

Executive Commentary

I would like to thank the Chair and Members of the Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and those who gave up their time to provide evidence, for this important inquiry.

The inquiry has clearly identified the severity of the consequences if action is not taken to reduce the use of single-use plastics, a responsibility of all consumers. The City Council has already started to explore through several of its service areas ways in which the Council can not only make its own contribution but also influence the actions and behaviours of others. For example, through Procurement and specifically the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility which was revised in December 2018 now includes, under the theme of Ethical Procurement: “Contractors and their supply chains should support the banning of single-use plastics in their place of work and in the goods and services they provide.”

We will work to ensure that sustainability considerations (and therefore use of single-use plastics) are built into any major event programme. In waste management, we will work with our partners to improve the range of plastics that can be recycled. The new Waste and Recycling Collection Officer role will help us identify areas and communities so that we can target support on the hard to reach parts of this city.

However, I am pleased that this inquiry has identified further activity and initiatives. Some of these we will implement quickly and may be able to go further than this report recommends. Others present challenges in terms of resourcing, but will contribute further to our combined efforts in a reduction of the use of plastic and where it is responsibly used in its reuse and or recycling.

Councillor John O’Shea
Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Parks