

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Bil drafft Diogelu'r Amgylchedd (Cynhyrchion Plastig Untro) (Cymru)/
Draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products)(Wales) Bill
SUP_19
Ymateb gan Cyngor Dinas Casnewydd / Evidence from Newport City Council

Following the instructions received in the email below, please see below comments from Newport City Council on the Draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Bill. Newport City Council welcomes the idea of a ban on single use plastics and supports the introduction of the draft Bill. From a local authority perspective, there are 2 dimensions to take into account:

- Increased monitoring costs – our trading standards teams would need to lead the enforcement response, which would have a detrimental impact on the teams' resources. When Welsh Government implemented the Minimum Unit Pricing regime for alcohol, funding was provided to local authority trading standards departments over a period of a few years, after which it became business as usual and could be absorbed by the teams. Funding was phased to allow for officer training, guidance visits and then targeted enforcement visits. This approach allowed for successful implementation of legislation, and we believe that for an issue such as the ban on single use plastic products, a similar system of funding would best secure compliance.
- Enforcement – we note there is reference to the RES Act which allows penalties such as FPNs to be used, which we support as additional mechanism in addition to prosecutions. Any income via FPNs should be left with the local authority, which could then be used once the monitoring and enforcement activity becomes business as usual as a way to fund resources to deliver the activity.

Other comments regarding content/consequences of the bill:

- Definitions in the bill seem clear, and in most cases interpretation should be straight forward. However, there may be some cases where it is unclear whether a product constitutes a single use item or not, which may end in a dispute. It would be useful to have access to financial support in case such instances occur.
- The Bill makes no mention of acceptable alternatives, and the Bill may result in an increase in other items that can have a negative impact on recycling initiatives – for example, the use of 'compostable' products that end up mixed with food waste and that may not be accepted by food waste treatment facilities.
- Unintended consequences of the Bill would include pressures for organisations to procure alternative products that may perhaps be at a higher price, and therefore a requirement to pass this cost on to consumers. In the current cost of living crisis, combined with possible impact of deposit return scheme resulting in an increase in the price of products to the consumer, the timing of the implementation of the Bill may need to be considered.