

Agenda Item 7

Cabinet Member	Councillor Patricia Wiltshire
Strategic Management Team Lead Officer	Jack Straw
Author	Jack Straw
Telephone	01306 879246
Email	jack.straw@molevalley.gov.uk
Date	25 th September 2018
Ward (s) affected	All
Subject	Single use plastics and the introduction of a Refill scheme in Mole Valley
<p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measures are introduced to eliminate single use plastic items in Pippbrook initially and subsequently across the organisation. This would follow an assessment of the implications and take account of the work of the Surrey Waste Partnership Task Group that is examining ways of reducing single use plastics. 2. Pippbrook and The Fairfield Day Centre are added to the list of premises in Mole Valley where bottles can be refilled with tap water. 3. The operators of the Dorking Sports Centre, Meadowbank cafe and the Leatherhead Leisure Centre are encouraged to make tap water available and join the Refill scheme. 4. The existence and location of premises participating in the Refill scheme be publicised through MVDC's social media channels and other appropriate platforms. 5. Consideration is given to MVDC leading a Mole Valley Refill scheme and installing outdoor bottle filling stations in Dorking and Leatherhead town centres as part of the 2019/2020 business and budget setting process. 	
<p>Executive Summary</p> <p>Following the BBC's Blue Planet documentary which showed the impact of plastic waste on the marine environment, the Cabinet wished to be assured that plastic from Mole Valley did not end up in the sea and asked that consideration be given to looking at ways of reducing single use plastic in Mole Valley. The report explains what happens to plastic refuse in Mole Valley and the measures MVDC could take to encourage a reduction in single use plastic items within the organisation. It also follows up on the Council resolution to investigate how a water bottle refill scheme could be set up in Mole Valley and the implications of installing and maintaining outdoor drinking fountains/bottle filling stations in Dorking and Leatherhead (one in each town centre).</p> <p>Tackling single use plastic items and introducing a water bottle refill scheme would help contribute to MVDC's Environment, Wellbeing and Prosperity priorities.</p> <p>Organisers of the national Refill scheme have pointed out that local schemes are generally better supported when they are initiated by volunteers in a local community. Nevertheless, local authorities do have a role to play in publicising and promoting water refill schemes and by setting an example through taking measures to reduce single use plastic items in their organisations.</p> <p>There are already 11 Refill locations in Mole Valley which are shown on the Refill app. See Annex 1. There is also three drinking water taps for public use in the District. MVDC could</p>	

add to the Refill app those of its premises where tap water is available.

There has been in principle support for a Refill scheme in Mole Valley from Parish Councils, Residents Associations and other organisations.

The provision of an outdoor drinking fountain/bottle filling station in a town centre would cost in the region of £5,000 to install and £4,600 per annum for cleaning, maintenance and water supply.

There is no staff resource to take the lead and roll out a Refill/drinking water project or budget provision for capital and revenue expenditure. The business and budget setting process for 2019/20 provides an opportunity to balance this project with other emerging projects and decide to what extent MVDC is involved in the Refill campaign.

Corporate Priority Outcomes

Initiatives that tackle single use plastics and encourage the reduction of plastic water bottles through a Refill scheme will contribute to the Environment Priority of caring for the environment and tackling fly tipping and littering. They also encourage residents to protect the wider environment by facilitating the recycling and reuse of materials.

Encouraging volunteers to promote the Refill Scheme that provides access to free drinking water, improves opportunities for residents and visitors to live healthy lives. Refill schemes could support the Wellbeing Priority and foster community spirit and positivity towards those who adopt and support the scheme.

Adoption of a Refill scheme by local businesses could see them benefit from increased footfall at the new Refill Stations, thereby aligning with the Prosperity Priority.

The Cabinet has the authority to determine the recommendations

1.0 Single use plastics

- 1.1 Single use plastics are defined as items made from plastic which are designed to be used only once. Examples include drinks bottles, pots, tubs and trays, plastic bags, food wrappers and disposable utensils.
- 1.2 Plastic products take generations to break down and if they are not used or disposed of responsibly are damaging to the environment, harm wildlife and blight landscapes. This was well highlighted in the BBC's 'Blue Planet 2' documentary which was broadcast last year and showed the toll that plastic pollution takes on marine wildlife.
- 1.3 In Mole Valley, plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays that are placed in recycling bins are sent to the Materials Recovery Facility at Randalls Road, Leatherhead. The plastic items are separated into polymer streams. Those items such as bottles attract value and are recycled. Single use plastics that do not have currently have any value including pots, tubs and trays are sent to the Energy from Waste Plant at Colnbrook where they are used to generate electricity.
- 1.4 Plastics collected from street litter bins or from the street cleaning contract are recycled wherever possible. Where this is not the case, plastic items follow the same disposal route as general waste.
- 1.5 In Mole Valley 59% of all waste collected from households and streets is recycled, reused or composted. This is the third highest recycle rate in Surrey and the 13th in the country.
- 1.6 Plastics make up approximately 3% of material collected through MVDC's recycling service. This equates to 300 tonnes of plastics that are recycled each year by Mole Valley residents.
- 1.7 Despite making it as easy as possible for households to recycle plastics through the kerbside collection facility and boasting high recycling rates, many plastic products are not being recycled.

- 1.8 There is recognition across the County that consideration should be given to tackling single use plastics. The Surrey Waste Partnership¹ has recently agreed to establish a task group to help Districts and Boroughs tackle single use plastics in a joined up way. The group will report to the Surrey Waste Partnership which will act as a sponsor for the project. The partnership has agreed that this approach will provide:
- A platform for sharing best practice between authorities when developing plans for reducing single use plastics
 - The ability to plan for the wider implementation of various waste reduction initiatives such as water fountains and refill stations
 - A forum for deciding if and how best to communicate with residents in ways that fit in with the communications messages from other organisations and make the best use of limited resources.
- 1.9 The Task Group held its first meeting on 20th August 2018 when current practice across the County was shared and the Terms of Reference for the Group drafted. MVDC will be represented on the Task Group by the Executive Head of Service (Place & Environment). The next meeting of the Task Group is on 20th September.
- 1.10 In the meantime, MVDC could make start on tackling single use plastic by:
- Ensuring jugs of water and glasses and not plastic beakers are used at meetings
 - Encouraging staff to carry reusable bottles or making them available to staff
 - Ceasing the sale of plastic bottles of water at Pippbrook and encouraging staff and members to refill from the water taps.
- 1.11 The Dorking Halls have already stopped using single use plastic cups and are investing in re-usable rigid plastic cups. Plastic straws are no longer used and a discount on hot drinks is given to anyone bringing their own cup.

2.0 The Refill Scheme - Background

- 2.1 Following consideration of a motion at the meeting of Council on 20th February 2018, it was resolved that a report to the Cabinet be prepared that gives full consideration to the following matters:
- Setting up a Mole Valley Refill scheme in conjunction with the national Refill project
 - Offering a Refill Station in every public serving Council owned, or operated building
 - Insert the locations of its Refill Stations on the Refill app map so they are easy to find and use. Also, ensure the stickers available when a location is applied to the app are used, along with any further signage; to make it clear to passers by on the street that they are able to come in and fill their water bottle(s).
 - Promote, through its communication channels, the locations of its Refill Stations and the scheme in general. Raising awareness of the project and its ethos with residents, as well as encouraging local businesses to join and expand the network.
 - Work with Residents Associations and Parish Councils to identify locations for Refill Stations and roll out the scheme across the District, engaging the community.
 - Install an outdoor drinking fountain/bottle filling station at a suitable place in Leatherhead town centre and another in Dorking Town Centre.
- 2.2 The national Refill Scheme has been running for a couple of years. It was started by City To Sea² in 2016 as its campaign to reduce the amount of plastic waste caused by single-use

¹ The Surrey Waste Partnership comprises Surrey County Council and the eleven district and borough councils in the County. The partnership aims to manage Surrey's waste in the most efficient, effective, economical and sustainable manner. MVDC is represented on the partnership by Cllr Wiltshire.

² City To Sea is a Community Interest Company and is funded by sponsorship, grants and sales. It runs campaigns to phase out single use plastic. For example City to Sea ran a campaign in 2016 which called on retailers to switch cotton bud stems

drinks bottles. Its aim is to promote free tap water and bottle refills in shops, cafes and businesses on high streets and transport hubs.

- 2.4 Refill works by encouraging businesses to agree to make tap water freely available and to identify their location on an app. In Mole Valley, 11 businesses have signed up to the Refill scheme to become Refill stations and can be found on the Refill app. There are also three drinking water taps for public use in the District. See Annex 1 for details.
- 2.5 The Council motion is predicated on MVDC taking the lead on introducing the Refill scheme in the District. However, the advice from the South East Regional Coordinator for the Refill campaign is that take up by businesses joining the campaign is better when it is led by the voluntary sector. Nevertheless, the Coordinator has also explained that councils can play a role by supporting local groups who are best placed to stimulate community involvement in the scheme, by using its communications channels to promote the scheme and by providing water fountains.
- 2.6 The Regional Refill Coordinator has also provided details of those local authorities in the region who are taking part in the campaign. They include West Sussex County Council, and Worthing and Adur District Councils who have been supporting the voluntary sector to make Refill a success. They have been promoting the campaign and are integrating the Refill message through their organisations. Chichester and Mid Sussex Councils are linking the scheme with broader objectives to tackle single use plastics. Woking, Elmbridge and Crawley are also planning drinking water fountains. Volunteer groups are initiating Refill schemes in Redhill and Horsham.
- 2.7 Water UK and local water companies are now supporting Refill. The Sutton and East Surrey Water Company have indicated support for the Refill campaign and would be prepared to support local initiatives in Mole Valley

3.0 The Refill Scheme – Issues for MVDC

- 3.1 City to Sea requires local authorities to sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding³ where they wish to lead a Refill scheme in their area. There is an expectation of commitment and demonstrable capacity to sustain the scheme. Signing a MoU enables a local authority to use the Refill logo to market and promote the scheme and have visibility in the press and on locally produced posters. There is no licensing fee for local authorities' involvement in Refill but City to Sea does require a commitment to reducing single use plastics across the organisation.
- 3.2 There are currently no identifiable resources within the organisation that could be dedicated to delivering a Refill scheme across the District. If it was considered appropriate to take the lead in developing a Refill scheme it would need a dedicated resource. Providing this would need to be considered alongside other priority areas of work and provision made in a departmental business plan for 2019/20.
- 3.3 Alternatively, MVDC could take a less direct role and focus on encouraging volunteers to start local Refill campaigns. The main Residents Associations, Parish Councils, Transition Groups, Chambers of Commerce and the Dorking Town Partnership have all been approached to gauge their interest in supporting local Refill Schemes⁴.
- 3.4 In the meantime, MVDC could:
 - use its communication channels to promote the Refill scheme and highlight those businesses who are already taking part.
 - use its network of contacts to coordinate volunteer groups to take the lead in their communities and develop local Refill schemes.

from plastic to paper. Further details at <https://www.citytosea.org.uk/>

³ A draft MoU prepared by City to Sea is attached to this report . See Annex 2

⁴ At the time of writing this report, support for the principle of a Refill Scheme has been received from Transition Bookham, the Dorking Business Breakfast Group, Dorking Town Partnership, Bookham RA, Ashted RA, Leatherhead RA and Fetcham RA. In principle support has also been expressed by Brockham, Buckland, Headley Leigh and Ockley Parish Councils.

- 3.5 A review of MVDC properties has highlighted those which currently have a tap water supply that is or could be made publicly accessible⁵. MVDC could therefore lead by example and
- Encourage Dorking Sports Centre, Meadowbank Cafe and Leatherhead Leisure Centre⁶ to sign up to the Refill scheme
 - Add Pippbrook, and the Fairfield Day Centre to the Refill scheme and include them on the Refill app.

4.0 **Outdoor drinking fountains/bottle filling stations.**

- 4.1 Consideration has been given to clause six of the Motion which relates to the installation of outdoor drinking fountains/bottle filling stations in Dorking and Leatherhead town centres.
- 4.2 Initial investigations indicate that the installation of an outdoor drinking fountain/bottle filling station in a town centre location would cost in the region of £5,000. In addition there would be a maintenance charge of £1,000, and £2,600 a year for a weekly clean. Water supply costs are likely to amount to £1,000 a year. Installation of a drinking fountain/bottle filling station inside a building would be in the order of £1,000 to £1,500.
- 4.3 The installation, operation and maintenance of public drinking fountains/bottle filling stations is closely regulated to ensure hygiene and the minimisation of health risks. See Annex 4.
- 4.3 The Scrutiny Committee felt a drinking water dispenser that enabled bottles to be filled from a tap is preferable to drinking fountains on grounds of hygiene and that sponsorship for such a facility should be considered.
- 4.3 There is currently no budget provision for such expenditure or resource to design, procure and deliver outdoor drinking fountains/bottle filling stations. The benefits of such facilities in areas where there are already nearby Refill stations also needs careful consideration in deciding whether introduction of a drinking fountain/bottle filling station is appropriate to avoid duplication.

5.0 **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The principal financial implications relate to the capital and revenue costs of providing water fountains. The capital costs are likely to be £10,000 for a fountain in Dorking and one in Leatherhead. The combined revenue costs of operating two drinking water fountains are estimated to be approximately £9,000.

6.0 **Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The main legal implications are:

(i) In order for MVDC to deliver an outdoor drinking fountain/bottle filling station on third party land, satisfactory legal agreements will first need to be agreed and entered into with those third parties, and

(ii) MVDC will owe a duty of care to users of outdoor drinking fountains/bottle refill stations and as part of its general risk assessment it will need to be satisfied that it is able to discharge its duty of care by implementing sufficient installation, maintenance and other measures to minimise the risk of harm to users.

7.0 **Options**

- 7.1 There are three options the Cabinet is asked to consider:

Option 1 – The Cabinet agrees the proposed recommended actions to reduce the amount of single use plastic items in the organisation, the promotion of the Refill scheme and considers leading a District wide Refill scheme and installation of an outdoor drinking

⁵ See Annex 3

⁶ Initial discussions with Fusion who operate the Leisure Centre indicate support for the Refill scheme and a willingness to look positively at providing a refill facility in the foyer of the Leisure Centre.

fountain/bottle filling station in Dorking and Leatherhead town centres.

Option 2 – The Cabinet agrees the proposed recommended actions to reduce the amount of single use plastic items in the organisation, promotes those outlets currently participating in the Refill scheme but does not lead a District wide Refill scheme or consider the introduction of outdoor drinking fountains/bottle filling stations in Dorking and Leatherhead.

Option 3 – The Cabinet does not agree to any of the recommended actions to reduce single use plastics or support a Refill scheme in Mole Valley

- 7.2 The Cabinet is recommended to support Option 1 which would demonstrate leadership and a commitment to tackle single use plastics and a recognition of the contribution that the Refill scheme can make to reduce the amount of single use plastic in circulation.

8.0 Corporate Implications

Monitoring Officer commentary

The Monitoring Officer is content with the report's contents.

S151 Officer commentary

The s151 Officer is content with the report.

Risk Implications

Option 1 – *The Cabinet agrees the proposed recommended actions to reduce the amount of single use plastic items in the organisation, the promotion of the Refill scheme and considers leading a District wide Refill scheme and installation of an outdoor drinking fountain/bottle filling station in Dorking and Leatherhead town centres.*

Agreeing this option would demonstrate MVDC's commitment to the reduction of single use plastics in the District. If however the resources required to deliver Option 1 are not provided, the reduction in the amount of single use plastics in Mole Valley will be limited..

Option 2 – *The Cabinet agrees the proposed recommended actions to reduce the amount of single use plastic items in the organisation, promotes those outlets currently participating in the Refill scheme but does not lead a District wide Refill scheme or consider the introduction of outdoor drinking fountains/bottle filling stations in Dorking and Leatherhead.*

This would be a missed opportunity to demonstrate MVDC's commitment to reducing single use plastic in the District and would not reflect the positive sentiment for a Refill scheme that has been shown by local organisations.

Option 3 – *The Cabinet does not agree to any of the recommended actions to reduce single use plastics, support a Refill scheme in Mole Valley or introduce drinking fountains/bottle filling stations.*

This course of action would not reflect the feeling of Council when the matter was debated, would not assist in the reduction of single use plastic and signal MVDC's lack of interest and leadership in tackling the issue.

Equalities Implications

The provision of water refill facilities across Mole Valley will be of benefit to all residents and visitors.

Employment Issues

None.

Sustainability Issues

There are potentially economic, social and environmental benefits from encouraging the availability of free tap water including through drinking fountains/bottle filling stations and the reduction of single use plastic bottles.

Consultation

Parish Councils, the main Residents Associations, Business Groups and Transition Groups have been invited to indicate whether they would in principle be prepared to participate in a Mole Valley Refill Scheme.

Communications

MVDC's communication channels, including social media platforms could be used to promote and publicise and encourage interest in local groups to set up a network of refill schemes in Mole Valley

Background Papers

Information on the City To Sea website <https://www.citytosea.org.uk/>

Email exchanges with the South East Organiser for the Refill Campaign.

Mole Valley : Refill stations located on the Refill App (at 16/8/18)

Currently there are 11 Refill stations and 3 drinking water taps

Businesses:

Dorking (5)

- Dorking Halls
- Costa Coffee
- Bulls Head Pub – Fullers
- Cricketers Pub – Fullers
- Queens Head Pub – Fullers

Leatherhead (2)

- Costa Coffee
- Edmund Tylney – JD Wetherspoon

Westcott (1)

- Prince of Wales – Fullers

Great Bookham (2)

- Wishing Well Greetings Card shop
- Ildikos Chocolate

Ranmore (1)

- YHA Hostel

Drinking water taps

- Land Barn Farm – Denbies Hillside – National Trust
- Box Hill, the Zig Zag
- Charlwood Sports and Community Centre.

Local Councils Memorandum of Understanding

This is an agreement between Local Authority (and ideally a local organisation) and City to Sea CIC to enter into a working relationship based on the following business ethics:

Scope

The agreement will relate to any and all arrangements whereby the above parties co-operate or work together to deliver the Refill Location scheme. This will provide a positive local initiative focusing on the reuse agenda. The local authority will be able to use the Refill Logo to market and promote the scheme and have visibility in the press and on locally produced posters.

The partnership must reflect top-level partners – for example the local Water Company who is funding Refill.

Model

The best model for Refill is when a local community organisation ‘takes ownership’ and helps build the network from the ground up. This can be greatly enhanced with local authority involvement and at times the local authority may be an active partner with specific named roles and responsibilities.

Local businesses must be added onto the Refill App and Refill stickers must go in participating businesses windows.

There are no licensing fee for Local Authorities involvement in Refill but we do ask that the commitment to reducing single-use plastics across the organisation.

The initiative and app must be promoted through communication channels by partners and their associated departments / networks (for example, local tourist information, chamber of commerce and health forums).

Roles and Responsibilities

There are two main roles associated with a local roll-out for Refill. These are the local coordinator and the volunteer coordinator. These roles reflect the strategy employed and may be performed by one individual. They are very much part time roles though in larger geographic areas we may seek a funded Refill position to oversee delivery.

Coordinator Role:

STRATEGY:

- Co-create an active timeline of deliverables for Refill Location alongside City to Sea Regional Coordinator.
- Identify and formalise local ‘areas of operation’ - high streets, communities, transport hubs and commuter routes for example.

- Help identify partner organisations and aid the Regional Coordinator to build networks with local organisations in Local Authority region with similar/overlapping goals to be a part of Refill's Local success.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

- Provide a named employee who is leading on Refill Location.
- Ensuring the materials are correct and allocated in an efficient and sustainable manner.
- Ensuring new Refill Stations are correctly added onto the app (and stickers are delivered to the participating businesses). The council can either deliver this directly or work with a local community groups to deliver this aspect

MEDIA/MARKETING:

- Coordinate local Media Strategy alongside partner organisations and Regional Coordinator this may include broader messaging, content and timelines.
- Let Regional Coordinator (City to Sea) see any proposed Press release at least two working days prior to publication.
- Any publications or promotional material must adhere to the Refill brand guidelines.

PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT:

- Work with City to Sea and sponsors to ensure targets and needs are being met and that communication of activities and timelines are clearly understood.

ADMIN:

- Recording data and information required for report writing must be GDPR compliant.

Volunteer Coordinator Role:

- Recruit volunteers from within local community / action-group networks.
- Recruit volunteers - call to action - from other partner organisations and the wider Local Authority community.
- Training for Volunteers. Materials and mentoring provided by City to Sea and Regional Coordinator.
- Organisation of targeted 'sign-up' drives. (These are canvassing sessions in the agreed 'areas of operation'.)
- Organise informal 'celebrations' / feedback sessions for after the drives.
- Volunteer Party as an option to be built into the Launch. Attend or ensure volunteers are present.

City to Sea

- Provide all materials required to launch a local Refill scheme: from volunteer training guides and scripts to posters and window stickers.
 - Recognition and reputation through participation in a tried and tested, much celebrated award-winning initiative.
 - Provide open and ongoing access to the app and local location inclusion in the national Refill Map and rewards scheme.

- Access to the Regional coordinator.
- Provide virtual training support and assistance for the local Coordinator.
- Provide assistance in formation of initial strategy goal-setting and timelines.
- Joint coordination around partnership building and volunteer recruitment.
- Aid with press releases and media messaging.
- Provide benefits of the experience of the extended Refill Family / Network.
- Increased exposure and reputational benefits locally and nationally.
- Support potential Stakeholder Report with aid from local coordinator.

Expenses

If available, all expenses must be agreed in advance of purchase.

Communication

To agreed and adhere to a set of realistic communication principles regarding emails and meetings.

Confidentiality

Each party will respect any request from the other party to ensure that certain information remains confidential (e.g. client contact information). Confidential information will not be exchanged with any third party unless permission is granted. Should the partnership agreement cease to continue then all confidential information will be returned to the respective parties or deleted.

Insurance

Each company will be responsible for the provision of their own insurance appropriate to the work being undertaken.

General

- The named partner agrees not to independently profit from any part of the work detailed in this document or by the use of the Refill brand.

Approved by:

City to Sea: Regional Coordinator

Local Coordinator: To sign

Date: Local co-ordinator to date

MOLE VALLEY REFILL.**MVDC Properties –scope to host a Refill station**

Location	Refill Tap Available	Comments
Pippbrook	Yes	Drinking water tap accessible in foyer.
Dorking Halls	Yes	The Dorking Halls have signed up to the Refill scheme and the Refill app.
Dorking Sports Centre	Yes	Tap water available in café. Not signed up to Refill
Dorking Depot	No	No public access
Pixham Lane Depot	No	No public access
Meadowbank	Yes	Tap water on site. Not signed up to Refill scheme
Fairfield Day Centre	Yes	Yes, tap water could be made available.
Leatherhead Leisure Centre	No	Would require provision of a water supply in the foyer.

PUBLIC DRINKING WATER

Legal requirements

Legal standards in the UK are set in Europe and within national standards to maintain a high quality of water. Under the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016, drinking water must be 'wholesome'. This is defined in law by standards for a wide range of substances, organisms and properties of water in regulations, including:

- micro-organisms
- chemicals such as nitrate and pesticides
- metals such as lead and copper
- the way water looks and how it tastes

The standards are set to protect public health and the definition of wholesome reflects the importance of ensuring that water quality is acceptable to consumers.

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 protect public water supplies against waste, misuse, excessive consumption and contamination within plumbing installations of domestic and commercial properties. Every water fitting, plumbing system and appliance which receives water from the public supply comes under the scope of these Regulations, including public drinking water fountains. Every fitting must be of an appropriate quality and standard and be suitable for the circumstances in which it is used. To aid compliance, only Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) approved products/components should be used.

Where contraventions of the Water Fittings Regulations are found, the water supplier (water companies) will require them to be remedied as soon as practicable. Where breaches pose a risk to health or there is a significant waste of water, the water supply to the premises may be disconnected immediately to protect public health and prevent waste or damage to premises. It is a criminal offence to contravene the regulations.

In addition, there are obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated Regulations, to secure the health, safety and welfare of persons at work and for protecting others against risks to health or safety in connection with the activities of persons at work, which includes systems installed at a premises, such as public water fountains.

Risks of public drinking water dispensers.

Infectious diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, fungi and viruses can be spread via surfaces from one person to another. Additionally, in the right conditions, films of potentially pathogenic microorganisms can grow within a system and enter the water source or else be ingested or inhaled by the users.

The presence of pathogenic microorganisms in or on a public water fountain could be as a result of:

- Insufficient and poor cleaning of the taps, trays and dispenser casing
- Cross contamination from the poor personal hygiene of users
- Failure to replace the filters regularly
- Inadequate cleaning and maintenance of the dispenser pipe work
- Incorrectly fitted systems which are not plumbed into mains water supplies
- Drinking directly from the tap - contact with saliva, lips and fingers
- Growth of algae if the cooler or water fountain is located in direct sunlight

Controlling Risk

A risk assessment and controls should be identified to reduce, to as low as reasonably practicable the risks associated with the use of public drinking water fountains. Controls should include:

- Appropriate design and installation (using WRAS approved products), taking into account environmental factors, e.g. exposure to extreme weather conditions, as well as preventing unnecessary pipework/dead legs that could encourage stagnant water and microbial growth
- Appropriately trained staff to manage/maintain the facilities
- Monitoring for vandalism and contamination, maintenance and cleaning standards
- Sufficient maintenance regimes, carried out by qualified and competent engineers
- Regular cleaning, using appropriate chemicals as directed by the manufacturers. It is important that cleaning schedules clearly describe the activities needed, the frequency and who will carry them out

Additional Matters for Consideration

It is recognised that there is currently a trend towards the restoration of public water fountains in an effort to reduce significantly the use of single-use plastic bottles and the resulting adverse impact on the environment. However, the resource implications of ensuring the necessary controls are in place to ensure the quality of water from these is maintained will need to be considered.