As with all newly-passed Council motions, Association Executive will now discuss how to take this motion forward. Where policies have a legal, reputational or financial impact they are likely to be referred to the Trustee Board.

**A ban on the sale of single-use plastics at the Students’ Association submitted February 2018.**

**What we will do:**

1. Ban the sale of all bottled water from Students’ Association-run outlets. The Students’ Association will replace these by increasing the number of water fountains, increasing the sale of re-usable water bottles and improving signage as to where bottles can be refilled.
2. Phase out the use of plastic carrier bags and explore bio-degradable plant based alternatives that are not paper bags, as well as bags for life such as re-usable cotton bags.
3. Ban the use of other single-use plastics, for example, straws and plastic cups from bars, if they cannot be easily replaced by bio-degradable alternatives.

**Background to this:**

Plastic waste is a huge environmental problem:

1. Due to recent coverage, particularly in David Attenborough’s Blue Planet 2, the issue of the environmental impact of plastics is currently very much in the public eye. The problem with plastic waste was also briefly mentioned in the Government’s autumn budget.
2. 8.3bn tonnes of plastic have been produced to date and, as of 2015, 6.3bn tonnes of that is waste (Geyer, Jambeck, & Law, 2017).
3. 79% of the 6.3bn tonnes is accumulating in landfill or the natural environment (Geyer, Jambeck, & Law, 2017).
4. 20,000 bottles are bought every second, less than 50% are recycled and of that figure, only 7% become new bottles (Laville & Taylor, 2017).
5. It takes hundreds of years for bottles to degrade (Matar, 2011).
6. It is a danger to marine life. Fish ingest plastic particulates which build up, killing the fish. Humans eat the fish with high levels of plastic, the consequences of which are still unknown.
7. The Students’ Association sells 80,000 bottles of water a year, many of which end up in landfill.
8. It takes 3 litres of water to produce 1 litre of bottled water (“Bottled Water and Energy Fact Sheet - Pacific Institute,” 2007).
9. If a bottle is filled to a quarter of its capacity, that is the amount of oil used to produce it (“Bottled Water and Energy Fact Sheet - Pacific Institute,” 2007).
10. Notes that paper bags are not an adequate replacement due to both the Scottish climate and more importantly that they are four times more resource intensive to produce, aid in the destruction of forests and the wider eco-system, displace indigenous communities and are generally not as re-usable as plastics. (WRAP, government agency for reducing waste, and EPA) Additionally it does not degrade much faster than plastics (EPA).

Beliefs and motivating actions:

1. In 2008, students from the University of Leeds voted overwhelmingly to ban the sale of bottled water from all the university union-run outlets. In 2007/2008 they sold 180,698 bottles, which means after the ban, 146,365 fewer plastic bottles went to landfill. As well as the University of Leeds many American universities have implemented a ban on bottled water on their campuses.

2. The University of Edinburgh strives to be a world leader in addressing sustainability issues. Banning single-use plastic would put the university at the forefront of the fight to reduce plastic pollution and become only the third university in the UK to take action against a growing environmental problem. It is a move that would be in line with the university’s Zero by 2040 commitment.

3. The Students’ Association notes on its website that ‘Britain’s present level of resource consumption and the related environmental impact could not be sustained, if applied to all countries of the world.’ A potential ban on single-use plastics and bottled water is a step that can feasibly be taken that would have a significant effect at a local level as well as providing an example to other student unions.

4. With this issue currently in the public eye, having been highlighted on BBC One’s Blue Planet 2 & mentioned in the autumn budget, now is the time to push for change.