



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Addressing Period Poverty</b>
<b>Date:</b>	18th February, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an outline of possible interventions to address the issue of period poverty.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. to approve the provision of free sanitary products in designated staff and public toilets;</li><li>ii. to approve the provision of free sanitary products in identified leisure centres, city centre toilets and parks and open spaces; and</li><li>iii. to note that work is ongoing with community and voluntary sector partners to address this issue as part of overall approaches to lessen the impact of poverty.</li></ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Background</u></b>
3.1	<p>Members may be aware that the provision of free sanitary products has been a consideration for the Council over the t few years. Officers have considered how best to address this issue within the Council area and brought a report to the Women’s Steering group on 2nd December outlining options. Following consideration of available resources, it is recommended that the following actions should be undertaken by Council;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the provision of free sanitary products in designated staff and public toilets</li></ul>
3.2	<p>Given the costs and anticipated level of use, it is recommended that the Council provides access to free sanitary products in two female bathrooms in both the Cecil Ward and 9 Adelaide buildings, as well as in one female staff bathroom in the City Hall and the accessible bathroom on the ground floor of the City Hall (6 in total). This would not require installation of a vending machine and facilities management staff would ensure stock replenishment.</p>

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p>	<p>There would be minimal cost associated with this element, which could be covered through existing budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to free sanitary products in identified leisure centres, city centre toilets and parks and open spaces that are the most appropriate locations to ensure availability of products for those in greatest need</li> </ul> <p>Free to access products will be provided in identified locations for an initial one-year pilot. Officers have identified that providing access in a range of Council facilities (which can be accessed without charge) will allow those who are most in need to access free products. This approach will be reviewed to assess demand and emerging issues and officers will bring back further recommendations to the Committee on whether the scheme should be extended or reviewed, alongside an assessment of associated costs.</p> <p>For a number of years and particularly as part of community responses to the Covid pandemic, community/voluntary and other organisations across the City have and are providing free sanitary products to those in need. This is usually through individual care packs which may include sanitary products, as well as underwear and hygiene products. These care packs are provided to different groups, including rough sleepers, refugees and asylum seekers, people who live in homeless hostels, teenagers living in poverty, people who depend on food banks and community/youth groups.</p> <p>The Council has allocated considerable resources to support this activity in this financial year and anticipates that further resources will be made available from DfC to support this work in the next financial year. In the past number of weeks, the Council has made another allocation of almost £250,000 to support the provision of food and essential supplies. Partners have reported that the cost of sanitary products mean that they are a key need that any response to poverty has to consider.</p> <p>In addition to the areas of work outlined above, the Community Awareness and Waste Education teams are currently developing a business case that will provide a pilot initiative that provides access to free or reduced cost reusable sanitary products. This project will raise awareness and encourage increased use of these products, which will reduce ongoing costs for individuals and also have a benefit to the environment by reducing the amount of sanitary waste that is produced.</p> <p>A further detailed report on this issue will be brought to the People and Communities committee for consideration. Given that this is a new concept, officers anticipate that there will be significant public interest.</p> <p><b><u>Financial implications</u></b></p> <p>Costs for the initial pilots can be provided through existing budgets so there is no requirement for an additional financial resource at this stage. Further detail on ongoing costs will be provided following the review of the pilot.</p> <p><b><u>Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications</u></b></p> <p>Many of the individuals who would benefit from this project are from S75 groups, in designing the project, consideration will be given to ensuring access to all groups.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>None</p>