

REPORT TO TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

KNUTSFORD CUP

Report Reference T-26-06
Meeting Date 28th September 2026
Agenda Item 10
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1.0 BACKGROUND

In 2024, a resident raised a suggestion with the council that it look to work with local cafes to reduce the number of disposable coffee cups in the town. Since then, the Town Centre Manager has worked with a group of café owners to develop a scheme.

A survey of potential users was undertaken in 2025. The survey showed:

- 89% have a re-usable cup
- 76% forget to bring it
- 78% would like money off if they bring their own cup
- 77% would consider a use and return scheme

2.0 PROPOSED SCHEME

2.1 HOW THE SCHEME WOULD WORK

The proposed scheme is a membership rinse-and-return scheme where cups can be picked up and returned by members when visiting participating venues. Consumers would pay £10 to join the scheme, for this they would receive a membership token (keyring) and a cup.

When using the cup, customers will receive a discount on their beverage, funded by the café (most of which already offer a discount for customers using their own cups). Customers can return their cup to any participant, and it will be washed and reused. They can keep their cup to wash and re-use themselves. When they visit a participating café, if they do not have their cup, they can show their membership fob in order to get a new cup. To get the discount moving forward they just need to use a reusable cup / show their membership fob.

The Town Council will purchase the cups and fobs and provide a stock of cups to participating businesses. The businesses will work with one another to redistribute cup stocks when customers return them. The Town Council will provide an initial stock of membership fobs for participating businesses, they will then buy additional fobs as need for £10 (i.e. the membership fee charged to the customer). This will fund the purchase of additional fobs and cups as the scheme continues.

The initial cups will be sponsored by a local business. A sponsor would be sought for future purchases to subsidise the costs / maximise the number of cups/fobs in circulation with the aim that the scheme is self-funding. The design of the cups has been undertaken by Bella Marketing free of charge to support the scheme.

An A5 infographic and window sticker design will be produced in-house with promotion via PR, social media, influencer and Discover Knutsford/Knutsford Town Council websites.

Once the design and outline scheme is approved the TCM will promote to establishments outside of the steering group.

2.2 SCHEME FINANCES

The chosen cup will be £3.53 per unit, with membership fobs costing 85p per unit, making a per member cost of £4.38. The £10 membership fee (£8.33 ex VAT) will therefore cover the cost of the fob and two cups (which will be purchased regularly to keep a supply in circulation).

2.3 CUP CIRCULATION

There is a risk to the scheme that members will purposely or inadvertently stockpile cups (as they can get a new cup at any time using their fob). To deliver a scheme which addresses the issue that 76% of people forget to bring their cup, it is necessary to have a scheme where it is not just a cup they own and use. To balance this risk:

- a) Clear marketing messaging will reinforce the message not to stockpile and to return cups
- b) The scheme is aimed at the more eco-conscious consumer who will be less likely to do this intentionally
- c) The memberships will fund new cups to keep a good supply in circulation and available at businesses
- d) The scheme would be reviewed after 6 and 12 months

3.0 LINK TO STRATEGY

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The council's Environmental Policy outlines the council's commitment to sustainability and reducing its impact on the environment. It outlines that the council will promote the awareness of environmental issues in the community and initiate projects which contribute to meeting its objectives.

This initiative contributes to the objectives to reduce wastepaper/single use plastic. It also provides a vehicle for promoting awareness of the waste of single use cups.

3.2 STRATEGIC PLAN

The council's Strategic Plan outlines a strategic aim to reduce Knutsford's carbon footprint, and an objective to tackle climate change (through a community climate emergency action plan). This specific objectives is a phase three objective (post 2028).

The project also links with the aim of supporting a thriving town centre, creating a marketing message about sustainability in the town centre.

4.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider approval of the scheme.