



## **Special Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date** Monday 12 November 2018  
**Time** 9.30 am  
**Venue** Council Chamber - County Hall, Durham

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### **Business**

#### **Part A**

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.  
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's  
agreement.**

1. Apologies
2. Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interest, if any
4. Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties
5. Single Use Plastics (SUPs): (Pages 3 - 100)
  - (i) Report of the Head of Direct services and Chair of the County Durham Environment Partnership
  - (ii) Presentation by Oliver Sherratt, Head of Direct Services, Chair of the County Durham Environment Partnership Board and Chair of the SUPs Task Group
  - (iii) Report of SUPs Task Group with the following appendices:
    - a. LARAC – response to call for evidence (appendix 1)
    - b. Single Use Plastics survey of DCC suppliers (appendix 2a)
    - c. Single Use Plastics survey results (appendix 2b)
    - d. Range of plastic pledges (appendix 3a)
    - e. Plastic campaigns (appendix 3b)
    - f. Brighton and Hove Single Use Plastics Policy (appendix 4)
    - g. Single Use Plastics action plan (appendix 5)
6. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

**Helen Lynch**  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
2 November 2018

To: **The Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor E Adam (Chair)  
Councillor O Milburn (Vice-Chair)

Councillors B Avery, D Bell, L Brown, J Carr, J Clark, R Crute,  
S Dunn, A Gardner, D Hicks, P Howell, P Jopling, C Kay,  
R Manchester, C Martin, A Patterson, A Simpson, P Sexton, L Taylor  
and M Wilson

**Co-opted Members:**

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

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**Contact: Paula Nicholson**

**Email: 03000 269710**

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**Environment and Sustainable  
Communities Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**



**12<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**Phasing Out Avoidable Single Use**

**Plastics**

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**Report of Oliver Sherratt, Head of Direct Services and Chair of the  
County Durham Environment Partnership**

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**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To respond to a County Council resolution that calls for a report on phasing out of unnecessary single use plastics across Council activities and assets as well as influencing partners and stakeholders to make similar commitments.

**Background**

- 2 In 1950 the world produced only 2 million tonnes of plastics a year. By 2015 this is expected to have risen to 381 million tonnes a year. Whilst this cheap and versatile material has been of immense benefit, there is also a growing realisation of the harm that it brings, especially to our marine environment, where television programmes such as Blue Planet II bring into living rooms vivid images of wildlife or fishermen struggling in a “plastic soup”.
- 3 Of particular concern and wastefulness of Single Use Plastics (SUPs). These are items such as drinking straws, cotton buds, tooth picks, stirrers, wetwipes, cups and bottles that are deliberately designed for one use only to be then thrown away. If they are not disposed of correctly they can persist for hundreds of years.
- 4 Whilst much of the marine pollution arises from countries with inadequate waste management practices, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Strategy “Our Green Future” recognises the role that all countries including our own can play as it still makes environmental (and financial) sense to avoid single use plastic items in the first place, thereby avoiding the costs of the item being recycled, the wastefulness of it being sent for disposal, or worse still ending up as a discarded pollutant either by incorrect disposal down the toilet, litter or by fly tipping.
- 5 On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 a County Council resolution was passed as follows:

*Request that a report be brought to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the options for bringing an end to the use of unnecessary Single Use Plastics (SUP) in County Durham, taking account of the following measures to:*

- a) *enable Durham County Council to become a full signatory of the ‘Plastic Free Pledge’, by phasing out the use of unnecessary SUPs in all County*

*Council buildings, and working with commissioning partners to end the purchase and procurement of SUPs through the DCC supply chain;*

*b) encourage the County's businesses, organizations and residents to go 'plastic free,' working with best practice partners across the County to explore the creation of a 'plastic free network,' that could provide business support, practical guidelines and advice to help local businesses transition from SUPs to sustainable alternatives;*

*c) to incentivize traders on Council land to sell re-usable or non-plastic biodegradable containers and invite customers to bring their own, with the aim of phasing out SUPs; including investigating the possibility of requiring food and drink vendors to avoid SUPs as a condition of their event permission, strengthening DCC's existing guidance for exhibitors and traders.*

6 Accordingly on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018 the County Councils Overview and Scrutiny met to determine how they would respond to the resolution. Following this they invited the County Durham Environment Partnership to develop a report for consideration, involving not just the Council but those of Partners where possible.

## **Approach**

7 In response to the request the Environment Partnership established a Task Group to consider all aspect of the County Council resolution. It involved not just those Council services that use or buy single use plastics but also a range of Partners too, as parts b) and c) of the resolution refers to influencing of wider stakeholders. The group has met monthly since April 2018 and comprises the following:

- Durham County Council – Head of Direct Services (Chair)
- Durham County Council – Strategic Waste
- Durham County Council - Procurement
- Durham County Council – Education
- Durham County Council – Trading Standards
- Durham County Council - Events
- Durham County Council - Catering and Facilities Management
- Durham Heritage Coast Partnership
- Durham University – Procurement
- Durham University – Catering and Facilities Management
- Environment Agency
- Durham Business Improvement District
- Northumbrian Water
- North East Nature Partnership

8 The inaugural meeting was attended by the Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Eddy Adam who set out the requirements and gave a clear steer that there was an interest in “early wins” in advance of consideration to any pledge. This action orientated approach was further supported by Cllr Brian Stephens Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships.

## Activities

- 9 The Task Group followed the format of the Council resolution and have developed a report attached as **Appendix 2**. In summary it involved:

**a) What the Council is and can do to achieve substantial reductions in Single Use Plastics.**

Under this section of the resolution the Task Group undertook an audit to assess current levels of usage, a survey of suppliers and through this process identified a wide range of “quick wins” now implemented from removal of a number of SUPs from catering, provision of reusable cups, and ceasing using plastic confetti at pantomimes. Opportunity was taken to showcase innovation through highway services incorporating 6.5 tonnes of unrecyclable plastic into a 1 mile road scheme.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 the Government started consultation on proposals ban the distribution and/or sale of plastic straws, stirrers and plastic-stemmed cotton buds in England. This has already been largely achieved by the Council, for example use of plastic stirrers has ceased, and plastic straws no longer used, except those provided with drink/juice cartons for which we are in discussion with suppliers. It is suggested that the Council may wish to support the ban.

**b) What Partners are and can be doing to achieve substantial reductions in single use plastics.**

Examples of good practice already underway range from Schools such as Sacriston Primary achieving “plastic Free Status, to the University using reusable containers in Van Mildert Hall of Residence. Northumbrian Water have also been undertaking promotion of their refill scheme (thereby avoiding the need for bottle purchase) and the Durham City Bid have been engaging with a number of businesses who are keen to make a contribution.

The above is just seen as a start, and the report recommends a Single Use Plastics Network (in line with the Council resolution) to foster more information sharing and actions across a wider range of partners

**c) Using the Council influence at events and for licencing activity**

Here the report incorporates some early wins such a provision of recycle bins and collection of plastic bottles after the Durham City run. It also highlights how the approach can be extended to wider events and opportunities for reviewing licencing policy.

- 10 As can be seen from the above, the Task Group have not waited for a pledge commitment to be signed, however as part of their work they have considered a range of available pledges.
- 11 The preferred pledge recommended by the Task Group would be a bespoke one for County Durham, used by the Council and its Partners. The reasons for the preference above the Plastic Free pledge is that the latter has its origins in reduction of plastic drinking straws, and is perhaps a misnomer to suggest “plastic free” when it is more about reductions in single use plastics.

12 A draft pledge is provided below, as the basis for consideration,

### **County Durham Partnership Single Use Plastics Pledge (Draft)**

*We the undersigned, pledge to significantly reduce and work towards ultimately removing the use of unnecessary single use plastics from our operations, and will encourage and enable partners, schools, businesses and the residents of County Durham to do their part.*

Plastic pollution is an international scourge on our environment, and the scenes of harm it does to our beaches, oceans and wildlife bring a sense of collective shame. The consequences, are much more than visual as plastics enter the food chain and can eventually reach the whole ecosystem including us. The UK government estimates that there are currently more than 150m tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans, and that some 100,000 sea mammals and one million birds die from eating or becoming tangled in plastic waste each year.

We will work towards significantly reducing use of unnecessary single-use plastics across our own operations and services and work with partners to maximise the effectiveness of this approach throughout County Durham. We will also work to maximise the reuse and recycling of other plastics to conserve resources and minimise pollution.

To support this aim, partner organisations commit to:

- Work in our respective organisations to ensure that unnecessary single use plastics are eliminated across our offices and service buildings, and from activities (where provided) such as catering and events.
- Where opportunity arises, promote and support the activities of schools, communities and residents in their efforts to reduce single use plastics.
- Support the establishment of a Single Use Plastics network within the County, to disseminate good practice and ensure the good work and pledge commitments are maintained

### **Recommendations and Reasons**

- i) That the committee note the considerable work undertaken in the last 6 months towards reducing the use of Single Use Plastics by the County Council and its partners.
- ii) That Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the report and presentation and comment accordingly.
- iii) That the comments made by Members at the meeting form the Overview and Scrutiny response to the SUPs Task Group final report and that the committee's response is shared subsequently with both the COSMB and Cabinet accordingly.
- iv) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny receive a further presentation and report detailing progress made against the future actions identified in the report at the meeting of the committee on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

### **Background papers**

Defra (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment

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**Contact: Victoria Burrell, Waste Strategy Team Leader Tel: 03000 266099**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** - There may be financial implications relating to avoiding unnecessary single use plastics. These are however being addressed by managers on a case by case basis and will be within service budgets.

**Staffing** - There are no issues arising from this report

**Risk** - There are some financial risks associated with avoidance or alternatives to SUPs however these will be managed within services. Risks of failure to honour commitment in pledges (if signed) can be managed through an audit process

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** - No adverse impacts are anticipated.

**Accommodation** - None

**Crime and Disorder** - The report seeks to reduce plastic littering promoting reuse where possible.

**Human Rights** - None

**Consultation** - The report identifies some consultation with business has been undertaken (through Durham BID) with more to follow as the appetite for change is assessed.

**Procurement** - The report contains an action plan that includes engagement with suppliers, and where appropriate requests that they use alternatives to SUPs for products and services to the Council.

**Disability Issues** - None

**Legal Implications** - None although a forthcoming Waste and Resources Strategy (anticipated at the end of December 2018) may include requirements on Councils relating to usage of Single Use Plastics.

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Report of the County Durham Environment Partnership

## Phasing Out Unnecessary Single Use Plastics (SUPs)

For Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Oliver Sherratt

Chair, County Durham Environment Partnership

Head of Direct Services Durham County Council



# Plastic: Fantastic or Frightening?

- **Versatility**: a benefit and a curse: 2 million tonnes produced in 1950 rising to 381million tonnes in 2015 !
- **Durability**: a benefit and a curse: It can last 400-600 years.
- **Lightness**: a benefit and a curse – easy to transport, but pollutes environments.
- **Inexpensive**: – can be thrown away but wasteful.

*Altogether better*

# Why Focus on Single Use Plastics?

- Half of all plastics SUPs
- Wasteful of resources/fossil fuels
- 50% of EU beach pollutants SUPs (other 34% plastic).
- Smaller – more likely to break down/ ingest
- Unnecessary/avoidable
- Not all recyclable

*Altogether better*



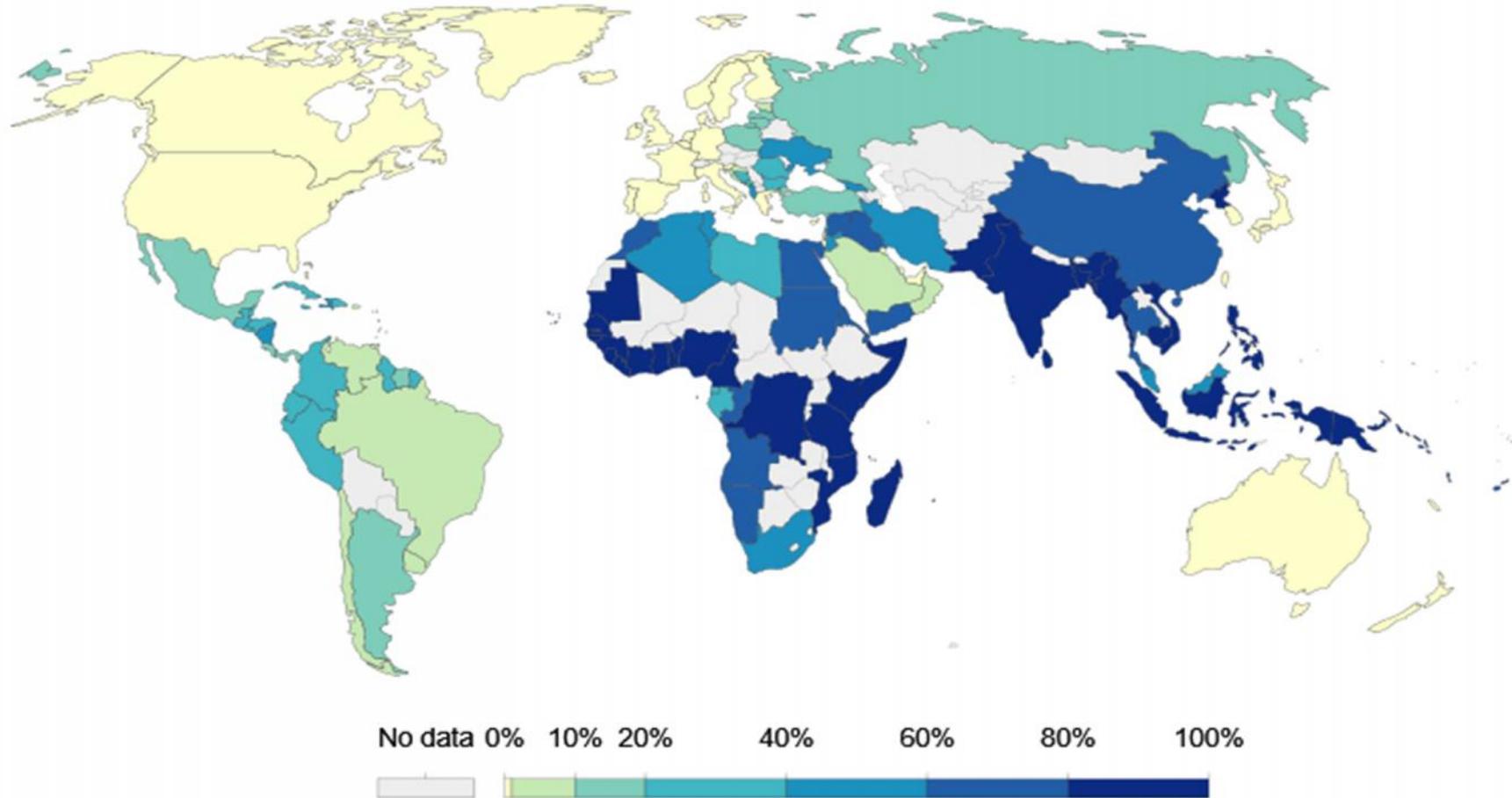
# But is this our problem?



# Global Perspective

## Share of plastic waste that is inadequately managed, 2010

Share of total plastic waste that is inadequately managed. Inadequately disposed waste is not formally managed and includes disposal in dumps or open, uncontrolled landfills, where it is not fully contained. Inadequately managed waste has high risk of polluting rivers and oceans. This does not include 'littered' plastic waste, which is approximately 2% of total waste (including high-income countries).



# EU and National Perspective

- 150,000 -500,000 tonnes plastics from EU on beaches
- Oct 2018 EU proposed ban on several plastic items.
- UK ban on microbeads.
- Defra national Strategy (Defra) several measures
- October consultation (England) on ban plastic straws, stirrers and buds.
- A lot more to do?:

Mr Webb Margate retained 4,490 pieces plastic over a year.

13 billion plastic bottles used UK per yr..only 7.5 billion (58%) are recycled



More waste  
guidance/regulations to  
Councils and  
stakeholders expected by  
end of year



A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to  
Improve the Environment



# Closer to home

- We have excellent waste management systems and domestic market for plastics.
- **Sector does however involve global markets**
- 82% pollutants on Durham beaches are plastics, some may be “leakage” from litter, fly tipping.
- Estimated 22% County Durham residual waste bins are plastics that could have been recycled.
- **Need to set example, contribute to the world wide efforts, ensure sustainable end use and conserve resources.**

*Altogether better*



# From our beaches.....



*Altogether better*

Photos courtesy of Roger Coulam



## 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 Durham County Council Resolution

***Request that a report be brought to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the options for bringing an end to the use of unnecessary Single Use Plastics (SUP) in County Durham, taking account of the following measures to:***

- a) enable Durham County Council to become a full signatory of the 'Plastic Free Pledge', by phasing out the use of unnecessary SUPs in all County Council buildings, and working with commissioning partners to end the purchase and procurement of SUPs through the DCC supply chain;*
- b) encourage the County's businesses, organisations and residents to go 'plastic free,' working with best practice partners across the County to explore the creation of a 'plastic free network,' that could provide business support, practical guidelines and advice to help local businesses transition from SUPs to sustainable alternatives;*
- c) to incentivise traders on Council land to sell re-usable or non-plastic biodegradable containers and invite customers to bring their own, with the aim of phasing out SUPs; including investigating the possibility of requiring food and drink vendors to avoid SUPs as a condition of their event permission, strengthening DCC's existing guidance for exhibitors and traders*

*Altogether better*



# So broken down that means..

1. What the Council is and can be doing to phase out SUPs. Can it sign a pledge.
2. What Partners in County Durham are and can be doing, including businesses.
3. What can the Council do as a land owner and licencing authority as well as public events.

*Altogether better*



# What we have done

- Established a Partnership Task Group
- Audited DCC practices
- Engaged with suppliers including visits
- Identified and implemented “early wins”
- Developed action plans.
- Drafted a pledge.
- Multiple approaches from other Councils
- Now presenting findings to Scrutiny

*Altogether better*



# Resolution Part 1. Durham County Council First Step: Audit



*Altogether better*



# County Council **Early Wins**

- Removed many of the SUPs:  
Eg Plastic straws, stirrers
- Introduced reusable alternatives.
- Collected plastics from events.
- Trialled plastics in roads
- Engaged with suppliers
- 260 individual pledges agreed.
- **Promotion and publicity**



*Altogether better*



# More to do...

- Introduce more procurement controls.
- Further audits to ensure SUPs eliminated.
- Expand recycling provision public realm and offices.
- Obtain funding to expand plastic roads scheme
- Encourage more plastics recycling/
- Focus on new areas eg plastic overshoes

*Altogether better*



# Work By Partners

- Plastic Free Schools
- Durham University
- Environment Agency
- Nature Partnership
- Heritage Coast
- Police
- Northumbrian Water
- Durham City BiD



*Altogether better*



# More to do with Partners

- Establish a SUP network
- Develop education and awareness materials eg living without SUPs
- Environmental accreditation scheme and audit for organisations.
- Promote the refill scheme further
- Consider a collective pledge

*Altogether better*



# Work on Licencing and Events

- On street recycling.
- Collection of plastic bottles at events eg Durham City Run
- Removal of plastic confetti.
- Engagement with Safety Advisory Group



# More to do:

- Improve collection at more events eg Miners Gala, Kynren
- Review Licencing act requirements in line with SUPs
- Review Street Trading for SUPs.
- Influence less SUPs through Market Trade licence.

*Altogether better*



# Consideration to a Pledge

Lots of them!



*Altogether better*



# A Partnership Approach?

## County Durham Partnership Single Use Plastics Pledge (Draft)

*We the undersigned, pledge to significantly reduce and work towards ultimately removing the use of unnecessary single use plastics from our operations, and will encourage and enable partners, schools, businesses and the residents of County Durham to do their part.*

Plastic pollution is an international scourge on our environment, and the scenes of harm it does to our beaches, oceans and wildlife bring a sense of collective shame. The consequences, are much more than visual as plastics enter the food chain and can eventually reach the whole ecosystem including us.

The UK government estimates that there are currently more than 150m tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans, and that some 100,000 sea mammals and one million birds die from eating or becoming tangled in plastic waste each year.

We will work towards significantly reducing use of unnecessary single-use plastics across our own operations and services and work with partners to maximise the effectiveness of this approach throughout County Durham. We will also work to maximise the reuse and recycling of other plastics to conserve resources minimise pollution.

To support this aim, partner organisations commit to:

- ) Work in our respective organisations to ensure that unnecessary single use plastics are eliminated across our offices and service buildings, and from activities (where provided) such as catering and events.
- ) Where opportunity arises, promote and support the activities of schools, communities and residents in their efforts to reduce single use plastics.
- ) Support the establishment of a Single Use Plastics network within the County, to disseminate good practice and ensure the good work and pledge commitments are maintained

Future regulations may require much of this.

*Altogether better*



# QUIZ

How many plastic bottles would be bought worldwide in this 20 minute presentation?

Source Euromonitor/The Guardian

*Altogether better*



# Answer

To be revealed !!!

*Altogether better*



# Recommendations

- Note the considerable working and early wins in assessing and reducing SUPs by the Council and Partners.
- Provide any comments/feedback on the report and main findings to be incorporated into further revision.
- Consider if you wish to receive further updates on progress.

*Altogether better*



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County Durham  
Environment Partnership



Report of the County Durham Environment Partnership

# Phasing Out Unnecessary Single Use Plastics (SUPs)

For Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



## Overview

1. Plastic pollution is an international scourge on our environment, and the scenes of harm it does to our beaches, oceans and wildlife bring a sense of collective shame. The consequences, are much more than visual as plastics enter the foodchain and can eventually reach the whole ecosystem including us.
2. This report however is not intended to be anti-plastic, as it is recognised that it is a highly versatile material, utilised in a wide variety of products from the computers on which this report was written, to the pens with which pledges are signed. What this report however focuses on is the **unnecessary** and **single use plastics** which might range from drinking straws, cotton buds, stirrers, wetwipes, excessive wrapping to water bottles and disposable cutlery.
3. We live in a country and a county with excellent waste management systems which largely avoid contributing to the worst of the high level marine pollution we see on our television screens. That is no cause for complacency however. Small items, such as cotton buds, disposed of (incorrectly) down the toilet can still make it out to our seas. Notwithstanding, it still makes environmental (and financial) sense to seek avoid using these items in the first place, thereby avoiding the costs of the item being recycled, the wastefulness of it being sent for disposal, or worse still ending up as a discarded pollutant either as litter or fly tipping. Surveys from September 2018 found 82% of pollutants on Durham Heritage Coast are plastic materials. We all have to play our part in reducing this.
4. The County Durham Environment Partnership have been asked to consider a County Council resolution on reducing Single Use Plastic, not just for the Councils own activities, but as far as possible involving for Partners too, and collectively using our influencing position to change behaviours.
5. A Task Group comprising a range of Council services and Partners was established and through an early audit, found SUP use across a variety of Council Services from catering to events. What was most encouraging however was to find a “quiet revolution” occurring across not just Council services but also from Partners, which has ranged from the withdrawal of disposable cups, promotion of water refill schemes, to on street recycling. Even Snow White has now gone green in stopping use of plastic confetti at the Council pantomimes.
6. The Council resolution calls for consideration of a pledge which is examined in the report, and subject to members views it is considered that there is appetite for this, not just from the County Council, but from a range of partners too, potentially through a joint declaration. The report goes on to describe the range of measures that would be implemented should a commitment to further reductions in single use plastics be made, including a “single use plastic free network” referenced in the resolution. Many of the measures

described are in advance of any national guidance or regulations that are anticipated in a forthcoming national Waste and Resources Strategy.

7. The Government has recently announced consultation to seek views on banning the distribution and/or sale of plastic straws, plastic-stemmed cotton buds and plastic drink stirrers. Whilst there are some exceptions to this (e.g. medical drinking straws), it is felt that this should be welcomed.
8. Finally and subject to the County Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee inputting their own views, it is suggested that this report and its recommendations be submitted to the County Councils Cabinet for consideration.

## Purpose

9. For the Environment Partnership to provide a report which responds to a County Council Resolution of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 namely:

*Request that a report be brought to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the options for bringing an end to the use of unnecessary Single Use Plastics (SUP) in County Durham, taking account of the following measures to:*

*a) enable Durham County Council to become a full signatory of the 'Plastic Free Pledge', by phasing out the use of unnecessary SUPs in all County Council buildings, and working with commissioning partners to end the purchase and procurement of SUPs through the DCC supply chain;*

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## Definitions

10. The definition of **Single Use Plastic** adopted in this report is from Institute of European, Environmental Policy 2018 which is:

*'Any disposable plastic item which is designed to be used only once'*

11. The key emphasis here is that it is designed to be used only once. Examples of plastic materials readily meeting this criteria include drinking straws, vending cups, cotton buds. Many water and drink bottles would also fit into this category as they would be designed with immediate disposal after use in mind. Water bottles made of more rigid plastic, intended for re-use would not fit into this category.

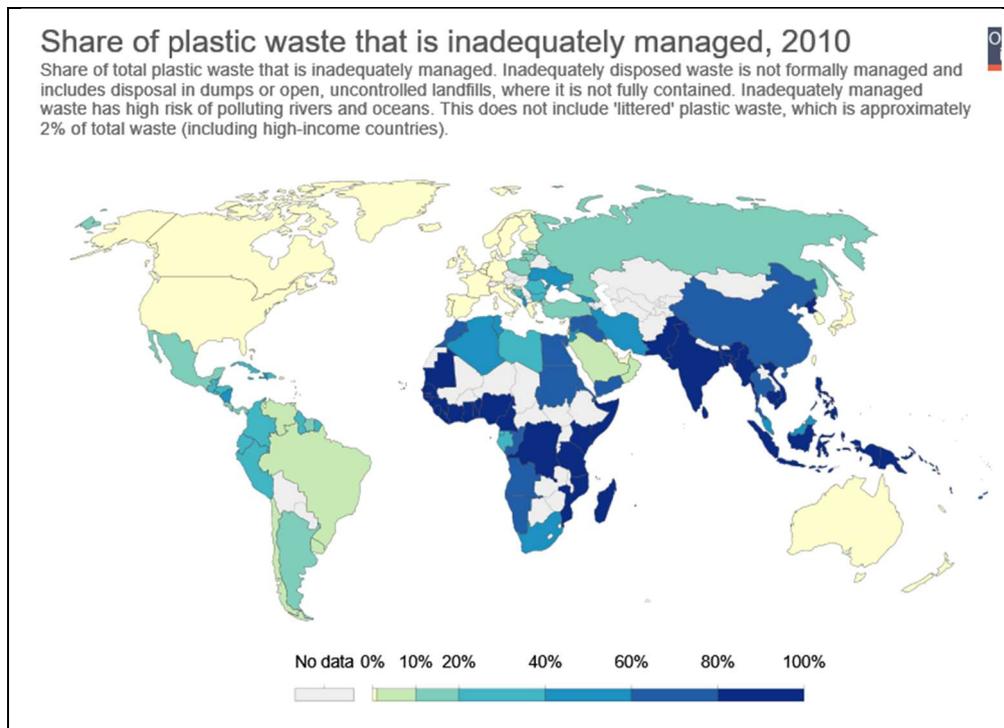
12. The definition of "**unnecessary**" referenced in the resolution to Single Use Plastics is much harder to define, and there is no national definition. The best fit can however be gained by using the term "**avoidable**" which is defined in the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 25 year plan 2018.

*"Avoidable means what is Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable"*

This means therefore that in theory for some single use items there are no current viable alternatives. This may become more relevant as a Council we search for alternatives and find that either they are not available or too costly.

### Context – International Position

13. In 1950 the world produced only 2 million tonnes of plastics per year. Since then, annual production has increased nearly 200-fold, reaching 381 million tonnes in 2015 (source Our World in Data/Ocean Unite). This is expected to grow further to 400 million tonnes by 2025.
14. The United Nations Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP), estimated that land-based sources account for up to 80 percent of the world's marine pollution, 60 to 95 percent of the waste being plastics debris. Television programmes such as Blue Planet II bring home to our living rooms the shocking realisation that parts of our seas and oceans are becoming “plastic soup”. More worryingly what is found on the surface is estimated to only 5% of the pollution with 95% submerged.
15. With the largest population, in 2010 China produced the largest quantity of plastic, at nearly 60 million tonnes. This was followed by the United States at 38 million, Germany at 14.5 million and Brazil at 12 million tonnes. High income countries typically have well managed waste streams and therefore low levels of plastic pollution to external environments. Low income countries even though they produce less plastic, have higher levels of pollution.



16. The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and globally the highest-level decision-making body on environmental issues. In December

2017 a Resolution on Marine Litter and Microplastics was made which seeks to contribute to the process of reaching Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) and its target 14.1 which aspires to “prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities including marine debris and nutrient pollution” by 2025. The Resolutions of the UNEA are not legally binding on Member States. However, the biennial Environment Assemblies have an important role in guiding future policies and setting priorities concerning global environmental issues.

17. The United States Marine Conservancy has published statistics on the estimated longevity of plastic materials, and they are as follows:

- Foamed plastic cups: 50 years
- Plastic beverage holder: 400 years
- Disposable diapers: 450 year
- Plastic bottle: 450 years
- Fishing line: 600 years.

Increasingly therefore some initiatives are looking at methods to collect the marine pollution from the bays and seas where it accumulates.

18. Microbeads are tiny pieces of plastic (diameters usually less than 1mm) used as exfoliants and cleansers in personal care products such as shower gels and tooth pastes. They are recognised as being especially harmful to the environment as they are deliberately designed to wash/rinse off and accordingly go direct to watercourses without treatment - sewage plants are not designed to extract them either. The small particle size renders these plastics to be easily digested and enter the food chain.

19. Whilst many countries have in recent years banned the production of these products (e.g. United States, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom) there remains no international ban, It is estimated that 209.6 trillion microbeads (306,900 kilos) enter the water from China every year (source Water Research, 2017).

20. In the EU it is estimated that 150,000 to 500,000 tonnes of plastic waste (50% of which is SUPs) ends up in the oceans every year, equivalent to the content of 66,000 refuse vehicles full ( Source: EU Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy 2018). Furthermore, whilst an estimated 25.8 million tonnes of plastic waste are generated in Europe every year, less than 30% of such waste is collected for recycling. Of this amount, a significant share leaves the EU6 to be treated in third countries, where different environmental standards may apply.

21. The EU Strategy for Plastics in Circular Economy calls for changes in the way plastic products are designed, used, produced and recycled in order to reduce the amount of waste and pollution. It also calls on national Government to improve the economics and quality of plastic s recycling, as well as implement measures to curb waste and littering.

In January, China stopped accepting a range of plastic waste from Britain and several other countries. This is seen as an opportunity to develop local domestic end markets, although there is also recent evidence of exports being shifted to Malaysia, Vietnam and Poland, Turkey and the Netherlands. Some of these countries have themselves started to introduce limits and controls, in order to manage.

22. On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 The European parliament has overwhelmingly backed a wide-ranging ban on single-use plastics in an effort to tackle pollution in seas, fields and waterways. Under the proposed directive, items such as plastic straws, cotton swabs, disposable plastic plates and cutlery would be banned by 2021, and 90% of plastic bottle recycled by 2025. Described by the European Commission as a clampdown on “the top 10 plastic products that most often end up in the ocean”, the proposed legislation passed 571 votes to 53. The measure still has to clear some procedural hurdles, but is expected to go through. The UK will also have to incorporate the rules into national law if the ban becomes a fully-fledged directive before the end of a Brexit transition period

### Context - National Position

23. DEFRA in their ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ have a target of “achieving zero avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042.” Furthermore they identify an ambition of “significantly reducing and where possible preventing all kinds of marine plastic pollution – in particular material that came originally from land.”
24. They propose achieving these objectives at the Production, Consumption and End of Use Stages.

Production Stage	Work with industry to rationalise packaging formats
	Reforming producer responsibility systems
	Banning problem materials in an approach similar to microbeads
	Encouraging biodegradable/eco friendly plastic
Consumer Stage	Removing all consumer single use plastics from the central government estate offices
	Extending uptake of the successful 5p plastic bag charge to small retailers
	Supporting water companies, high street retailers, coffee shops and transport hubs to offer new refill points for people to top-up water bottles for free
	Working with retailers and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to explore introducing plastic-free supermarket aisles

End of Use Stage	<p>Continuing to support the industry led on-pack recycling labelling system</p> <p>Implementing voluntary and regulatory interventions that can cut the amount of commonly littered items</p> <p>Through the Framework for Greater Consistency, WRAP is working with industry and local authorities to ensure that a consistent set of materials are collected</p> <p>Working with the waste management industry and re-processors to significantly increase the proportion of plastic packaging that is collected and collected by all local authorities</p>
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25. Some of this work is already underway. For example across Central Estate Offices (i.e. all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies with some exceptions e.g. Military Barracks) from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 a phased removal of single use plastics has commenced to be complete by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.
26. From a local authority perspective however, beyond seeking to contribute to the strategy objectives, there is currently no clear direction on the future of waste policy in England. More detail is anticipated in the Resources and Waste Strategy which is expected to be published by the end of 2018. It appears that in the short term, local decision makers will be required to continue to concentrate on improving recycling performance and saving costs in a manner most appropriate to their circumstances. It would not be surprising if the forthcoming strategy highlighted in the 25 year plan has some more detailed measures for Councils to follow, including eliminating avoidable SUPs from their own practices, similar to that of the Central Government estate.
27. In order to inform the Resources and Waste Strategy, the Government issued a call for evidence between 13th March – 18th May 2018. The government ran a call for evidence to explore how changes to the tax system or charges could be used to reduce the amount of single-use plastics we waste. It looked broadly across the whole supply chain, from production and retail to consumption and disposal, in order to gain the best possible understanding of the whole landscape to determine the best course of action. It also sought to explore how best to drive innovation in this area to achieve the same outcomes. The Council, as a member of Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) provided comments as part of this call for evidence which are attached as **Appendix 1**.
28. The government will consider all options for using the tax system to address single-use plastic waste (including introducing a deposit return scheme) in order to drive innovation, and will use the evidence gathered from this call to inform that process.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 the Government announced consultation to seek views on banning the distribution and/or sale of plastic straws, plastic-stemmed

cotton buds and plastic drink stirrers. This also includes PLA (Polylactic acid) straws as whilst they are in theory biodegradable, in landfill the conditions are not right for this. There are certain exceptions in the consultation such as the use of medical enabled drinking straws.

### Local Context

29. Across County Durham there is a robust system of waste and recycling collection in place. Whilst some Councils are restricted on the type of household plastics for recycling they collect, those within County Durham are at the broader end of the spectrum and will accept for recycling most plastic materials. Furthermore, materials not sent for recycling are sent for incineration with energy recovery (rather than landfill) meaning that there is little scope for contribution to marine pollution, with the exception of incorrect disposal of plastics (e.g. contact lenses and cotton buds) down the toilet, littering and fly tipping.
30. Across the County in 2017 we collected 7,713 tonnes of plastics comprised of 6, 827 tonnes kerbside and 886 tonnes household waste recycling centres. Different plastic product types are sorted and sent for recycling. Photograph shows baled plastic bottles at the Council's contractor (Biffa) to be sent for recycling.



31. The Local Government Association has revealed (October 2018) that 20 per cent of councils have felt a direct impact from China's restrictions on imports of mixed paper and certain types of plastic over the last year. In County Durham the plastics collected are then taken to a range of UK destinations for processing, and markets so to date we have been largely unaffected by this. As a matter of policy our contractor Biffa only seeks to export materials where there is no viable UK outlet.
32. The Council has not undertaken waste compositional analysis of its residual bins for some time, however in 2014/15 our surveys found between 16% and 22% of a typical waste bin was target plastics (plastic bottles, pots, tubs) that could have been recycled. Whilst some benefit is gained (energy from waste) in incineration, overall it represents waste of resource and untapped potential to recycle more.

33. The fact that there are no significant links to home grown plastic marine pollution, does not give sufficient reason for the Council not to be involved. Plastics are a finite material, and even if they can be recycled the process takes up valuable energy, furthermore as an estimated 11% of household waste is plastic, 40% of which is plastic bottles (source University of Cambridge), it makes economic and environmental sense to reduce it in the first place, especially if single use can be avoided.

### **Approach**

34. The Council resolution on Single Use Plastics was presented to Durham County Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th February 2018 , who determined that the County Durham Environment Partnership be asked to prepare and submit the report requested in the resolution.
35. Working as one of the thematic groups of the County Durham Partnership, the Environment Partnership is tasked with delivering “Altogether Greener” objectives. It comprises a wide range of voluntary and statutory environmental organisations including Durham Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency, Voluntary Sector Organisations, English Heritage, Durham University as well as a range of Council services from waste to planning.
36. In response to the request the Environment Partnership established a Task Group, to consider all aspects of the County Council Resolution. It comprises a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in single use plastics. This includes:
- Durham County Council – Head of Direct Services (Chair)
  - Durham County Council – Strategic Waste
  - Durham County Council - Procurement
  - Durham County Council – Education
  - Durham County Council – Trading Standards
  - Durham County Council - Events
  - Durham County Council - Catering and Facilities Management
  - Durham Heritage Coast Partnership
  - Durham University – Procurement
  - Durham University – Catering and Facilities Management
  - Environment Agency
  - Durham Business Improvement District
  - Northumbrian Water
  - North East Nature Partnership
37. Clearly the membership of the group does not reflect the full community of stakeholders linked to Single Use Plastics, but was comprised to be of sufficient size to cover a range of key internal services for the Council, as well as the valued input from a selection of external obligations.
38. The Task Group has been meeting monthly since 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny

Committee, Cllr Eddy Adam attended this first meeting and as well as confirming the objectives, also set out a clear steer and support for “early wins” in advance of any pledge. This is further supported by the County Councils Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnership who endorsed the action concentrated approach.

39. The Task Group have addressed the three areas of the Council Motion separately as detailed in the rest of the report. Under each section we describe what has been done, and what remains to be done, culminating in an Action Plan (**Appendix 5**) for consideration.

## **Durham County Council Motion Section A**

*Enable Durham County Council to become a full signatory of the 'Plastic Free Pledge', by phasing out the use of unnecessary SUPs in all County Council buildings, and working with commissioning partners to end the purchase and procurement of SUPs through the DCC supply chain;*

40. This aspect of the resolution is interpreted to be about the Council getting its own house in order, and considering making a public commitment to change. The Task Group have approached this challenge in the following stages.
- A “field” audit of the current position to consider Council wide where we are using most single use plastics. This included catering services, events, facilities management, leisure centres, libraries and plant nursery.
  - Identification of and delivery of some “quick wins” in advance of the pledge with support from the Chair of Environment and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny and the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Partnerships.
  - A survey of suppliers to help identify their products to us and the availability of alternatives.
  - A consideration of the options, issues and implications of the Council becoming a signatory to the “Plastic Free Pledge”

### **Field Audit**

41. This was carried out between June and July 2018 across a wide range of Council establishments including administrative buildings, leisure centres, libraries, staff and public cafes, as well as the Councils plant nursery.
42. It should come as no surprise that single use plastics were found across several locations. Examples include stirrers, plastic lids, and vending machine cups.



43. What is perhaps more surprising, is the breadth of use of these materials across Council services that hitherto may not have been considered. For

example plastic overshoes at leisure facilities, spoons in ice cream tubs and even plastic confetti for pantomimes.



44. This audit has been invaluable in allowing us to implement some early wins, (see below **many of the items in the pictures above have now been removed**) as well as form a view that it would be impracticable to eliminate overnight. Even when as a Council we would consider this complete, it is suggested that further field audit be undertaken to establish if this is the case in practice.

### Quick Wins – Now Achieved

Outline of Initiative	Estimate of Impact
<p><b>Catering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moved to recyclable, compostable, biodegradable coffee cups, food takeaway packaging and hot food service containers as standard.</li> <li>Ceased use of plastic straws (with the exception of cartons), and plastic stirrers</li> <li>Introduced chargeable reusable plastic sip cups including a discount on your purchase when they are used in any site</li> <li>Joined Northumbrian Water’s Refill campaign in DCC civic sites and several public facing cafes.</li> <li>Use of glass bottles and reusable glasses when serving water for hospitality orders – no longer provide disposable cups.</li> </ul> <p><b>Highways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Piloted the use of recycled plastics into road surfacing materials</li> </ul> <p><b>Procurement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveyed key suppliers in relation to current and future SUP issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Culture and Sport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removed SUP confetti used within the Gala Theatre and replaced with paper alternative</li> <li>Ceased use of plastic straws.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Waste Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During recycle week (September 2018) the team promoted individual SUP pledges</li> </ul>	<p>Over 300 sold to date.</p> <p>6.5Tonnes of recycled plastic used in the scheme.</p> <p>Responses from 19 key suppliers. Confirmed appetite and opportunity for change.</p> <p>700Kg of SUP confetti removed</p> <p>143 pledges from DCC staff and 117 from residents</p>

## Supplier Survey and Questionnaire

45. To complement the internal audit, the group also conducted an investigation into our main suppliers to see how they were addressing SUPs.
46. As Durham County Council is a significant purchaser of goods and products, it was felt that sending a survey to the top suppliers could influence the supply chain in the future and assist with working towards the substantial reductions in avoidable SUPs. In turn, as many organisations use the same suppliers, influence upon a regional scale could be established via NEPO. The task group developed a bespoke SUP survey and targeted communications electronically during July 2018, via the use of Survey Monkey.
47. **Appendix 2**, provides a copy of the electronic survey and the results which were obtained from 19 of the Council's main suppliers. In addition, face to face interviews were held by the Procurement Team directly with their suppliers in order to a) understand the issues associated with alternatives to SUPs and b) establish the changes (if any) suppliers were making in relation to reducing SUPs.
48. Although a relatively small number of respondents the survey does indicate that 40% (5 out of 9) feel they could remove SUPs from their products or services, with (not surprisingly) the same number indicating alternatives would be available. This can be viewed as glass half full vs glass half empty – some suppliers readily see SUP alternatives, whilst for other products they may not.
49. Many small scale local suppliers had recognised the fact that their customers were asking for changes to SUPs to be made and had started to make small scale changes where possible e.g. the introduction of paper straws rather than plastic ones by Embleton Diaries and the withdrawal of offering plastic straws by many Durham based bars and restaurants.
50. In the main, large scale, corporate organisations stated that they were awaiting the future strategic direction of travel from Government. Many reported that they hoped DEFRA's Resources and Waste Strategy would influence the wider plastics industry and key stakeholders.

## Government Consultation on Banning Plastic Straws, Cotton Buds and Stirrers

51. From a local context this has now already been largely achieved. For example at Gala, we have stopped plastic straws, and giving out straws as standard, but we will give paper straws if people request them. For catering services we no longer provide plastic stirrers (wooden alternatives), and have stopped using plastic drinking straws. The only exception to this is the cartons of juice and drink that come with their own straws. For these we are engaging with suppliers to consider alternatives, or as a last resort may cease purchase altogether.

52. It is suggested that the Government proposed ban be endorsed through formal feedback from the Council and, if they wish, from key partners.

### **Consideration of “Plastic Free” and other Pledges**

53. The “Plastic Free Pledge” (PFP) which is the subject of the Council Resolution is a misnomer in that it is not about fully “plastic free”, but rather commits organisation signatories to:

#### ***“Commit to reducing single-use plastic waste in your organisation”***

54. Each pledging organisation then describes the measures it intends to take. There is currently only 1 pledge in County Durham which is Market Place Ltd, Crook. They provide a commitment of only use paper straws have stopped selling plastic bottles of water and soft drinks. They no longer use polystyrene containers for takeaway food and have reduced the amount of plastic carrier bags we use by making customers aware. There are currently no North East organisations established as “Ambassadors” to promote the cause.
55. The PFP originated as a local eco campaign, based in Hove, proactive with a focus on removing straws from local businesses. It does have a strong plastic straw focus, and the local Council at Brighton and Hove have therefore signed up individual buildings and establishments, rather than the Council as a whole, although they do support the focus.
56. As part of their work, the Task Group also considered a range of other pledges that were potentially available as alternatives. These are detailed in **Appendix 3** and include:
- Greenpeace – pledge to stop plastic pollution
  - WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) Plastic Pact
  - Plastic Free Coastlines (Surfers Against Sewage)
  - Marine conservation Society Plastic Free for July
  - Bespoke pledges for the Council or County partnership area
57. The Greenpeace, and Plastic Free Coastline pledges were focussed on marine pollution, and indeed the Marine Conservation Society a time limited awareness raising campaign. All are very important issues, however the Task Group felt that a broader pledge that covered the wider impacts and wastefulness of single use plastics may be more appropriate.
58. WRAP Plastic Pact was considered, however it is not currently open for local authorities but rather targeted at businesses. Larger businesses are expected to financially contribute with this being recognised and promoted. It was felt that this may dissuade some from joining.
59. Consideration was given to a bespoke pledge established solely for the County Council and its partners. These can be as broad or narrow as the Council wants and can include a range of local commitments. Several Councils have adapted this approach from Monmouthshire to Plymouth. A

sample from Brighton and Hove is attached in **Appendix 4**, which has ambition to establish a “Single Use Plastics Free City”. Whilst these pledges do ensure local distinctiveness, they are not part of national campaigns, and Members may consider that they want to display unity of a common format of pledge.

60. Taking all the above into consideration, in the County Durham Context it is felt that either the Plastic Free Pledge or a Local Pledge is the most appropriate. Clearly this will be Members discretion, however the signature for a County Durham Pledge would have the advantage that it is clearly labelled as combatting unnecessary single use plastics, rather than the confusing term “plastic free”.
61. Such a pledge, could be designed not only with the Council in mind, but partners too. It may look like:

### County Durham Single Use Plastics Pledge (Draft)

*We the undersigned, pledge to significantly reduce and work towards ultimately removing the use of unnecessary single use plastics from our operations, and will encourage and enable partners, schools, businesses and the residents of County Durham to do their part.*

Plastic pollution is an international scourge on our environment, and the scenes of harm it does to our beaches, oceans and wildlife bring a sense of collective shame. The consequences, are much more than visual as plastics enter the food chain and can eventually reach the whole ecosystem including us.

The UK government estimates that there are currently more than 150m tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans, and that some 100,000 sea mammals and one million birds die from eating or becoming tangled in plastic waste each year.

We will work towards significantly reducing use of unnecessary single-use plastics across our own operations and services and work with partners to maximise the effectiveness of this approach throughout County Durham. We will also work to maximise the reuse and recycling of other plastics to conserve resources minimise pollution.

To support this aim, signatory partner organisations commit to:

- Work in our respective organisations to ensure that unnecessary single use plastics are eliminated across our offices and service buildings, and from activities (where provided) such as catering and events.
- Where opportunity arises, promote and support the activities of schools, communities and residents in their efforts to reduce single use plastics.
- Support the establishment of a Single Use Plastics network within the County, to disseminate good practice and ensure the good work and pledge commitments are maintained.

### Further Actions

62. Clearly, a pledge is meaningless unless it is followed up with actions. A full action plan is attached in **Appendix 5** for Durham County Council. These can be summarised as follows:

## **Key Future Actions for Durham County Council**

### **Waste**

- Engage with Inspire Programme "Change Advocates" staff network to raise awareness and alternatives to SUPs.
- Review recycling provision and utilisation across all Council buildings

### **Procurement**

- Consideration to a centralised block on all procurement of Single Use Plastics without senior manager consent.
- Include in future DCC contract Specifications the consideration to use SUP where possible

### **Catering**

- Expand the approach to reduce Single Use Plastics from Direct Services provisions to other Council catering services
- Design and implement new takeaway provision that eliminates SUPs

### **Highways**

- Submit scheme to Department for Transport for roll out of successful road construction scheme incorporating palletised plastics.

### **Children and Young Peoples Services**

- Engage with DCC schools catering provider to look at opportunities for further reduction in SUPs.

### **Culture and Sport**

- Removal of blue overshoes from leisure centres.
- Consider options around phasing out foil balloons and strings from supply chain and licencing.

### 63. Durham County Council Motion Section 2

b) encourage the County's businesses, organisations and residents to go 'plastic free,' working with best practice partners across the County to explore the creation of a 'plastic free network,' that could provide business support, practical guidelines and advice to help local businesses transition from SUPs to sustainable alternatives

64. Given the widespread concern regarding Single Use Plastics, it was not surprising that many of the Partners around the table of the Task Group were already undertaking some excellent work. It is important to highlight this positive direction of travel. Examples illustrated in this section of the report include:

- Schools
- Environment Agency
- Durham BiD
- Northumbrian Water
- Durham University
- Nature Partnership
- Heritage Coast

65. There are undoubtedly a wide range of businesses and organisations across County Durham who have also made an impact in reducing Single Use Plastics. Within the timescale available to the group, it has not been possible at this stage to undertake a full audit of activity, however that is something that can be established going forward.

#### **Schools**

66. St Bede's RCVA Primary School, in Sacriston was the first school in the North East to achieve 'Plastic Free Schools' status from the Surfers Against Sewerage charity. The Eco Warriors led the whole school in the project with the aim of reducing our use of single use plastic and raising awareness of the dangers of plastic to our environment in our community.

67. The group completed a series of 'missions' to achieve the status including:

- 'trash mobs' in which children picked up litter around school and the local community;
- making changes to the kitchen e.g. getting a yoghurt maker to avoid plastic pots and using tin foil instead of cling film;
- having a 'plastic bottle boycott' and pledging to use reusable water bottles.

68. The project had a hugely positive impact, resulting in the Secretary of State for the environment writing to them, a visit from our local MP, and Tyne Tees news visiting school! The children were incredibly engaged

and motivated, feeling great passion about the subject. Other schools have since been in touch for more information about the project.



### **Environment Agency**

69. The Environment Agency have been actively working to reduce the use of SUPs in their workplaces. The Facilities Management teams have replaced single use cups, straws, condiment sachets, plates and cutlery in their buildings. The next stage will be to eliminate single use plastic bottles on sale including in canteens. Facilities Management will also be working to understand how they can remove thousands of plastic milk cartons from offices at a reasonable cost.
70. They have produced a handy guide to plastic reduction at work to provide Environment Agency staff with some ideas of what they can do.

### **Durham BID**

71. Durham BID has led on engaging with businesses in Durham on single use plastics. It has used its existing database of over 500 businesses to explore existing practices and identify the appetite to make commitments to reducing SUPs. It has also promoted campaigns such as refill and encouraged businesses to reduced plastic, e.g. straws in bars/restaurants.
72. It has also acted to improve waste awareness amongst Durham businesses, arranging presentations and meetings looking into improving recycling in the city centre.

### **Northumbrian Water / Refill**

73. Refill is City to Sea's campaign to promote and encourage free tap-water 'Refill Stations' in cafes, bars and shops on every high street and transport hub across the UK.

74. Northumbrian Water are delivering the campaign locally and launched Refill in December 2018, in Durham – signing up over 30 Refill Stations in Durham City through volunteers on the first weekend.
75. Durham University and Durham County Council came on board in Spring/Summer 2018, signing up key buildings and running joint campaigns to encourage take up and participation. The County Councils Waste Team have assisted on this and during Recycle Week contacted 48 establishments countywide to encourage take up of the scheme.



### **Durham University**

76. Durham University students in residences are offered meals as part of their accommodation fees and in some cases packed lunches are provided where students need to eat offsite.
77. Reusable drinking bottles and food containers are being be trialled at Van Mildert College for the autumn term. These reusable containers are dishwasher safe, freezable and can be microwaved.
78. It is hoped that by the end of the trial the students have engaged with the trial, returned their containers after use for washing and there is a reduction in waste plastics and less SUPs purchased as a result.

### **Nature Partnership**

79. The Nature Partnership is delivering GENEE (Greening the Economy of North East England) package of environmental policy and process support from Capability North East. GENEE is a one year audit and review programme that will assist in achieving a corporate understanding and delivery mechanisms to meet sustainable and environmental ambitions, including addressing the use of SUPs. It will be rolling out the package from the autumn and the County Council will be one of the early adopters.

## Heritage Coast

80. The Heritage Coast Partnership is a key organisation leading on actions to remove plastic litter from the beaches of Durham. It provides support for beach cleans and liaises with DCC for collection services afterwards.
81. Working with European partners it is investigating the problem of where the plastics originate from and how best to deal with them.



## Police

82. Whilst not part of the Task Group it is also evident that organisations such as the Police are also playing their part in contributing to reductions in Single Use Plastics. This includes stopping using plastic bottled water when they have buffets for external guests. This has saved approximately 3,500 plastics bottles per annum. They are stopping using disposable cups for drinks within our training facility. This is estimated to save £2,000 per annum.

## Future Actions

83. It is clear that there is a significant appetite for reductions in Single Use Plastics across the County and that a wide range of organisations are doing some excellent work. Clearly there remains work to be done, these are captured in the Action Plan (**Appendix 5**) and summarised as follows:

### Key Future Actions in Encouraging Wider Involvement

- The existing Task Group to be developed and expanded to become a “SUPs network” as advocated in the Council resolution.
- Consideration to a “collective pledge” of a wide range of organisations and partners with County Durham.
- Undertake an audit of all external activity regarding reduction in Single Use Plastics across the County

### New Partners

- Active engagement and support to major employers providing advice and support, encouraging involvement in SUP network.

**Children and Young Peoples Services**

- Develop and promote circular economy learning resources with schools across the county

**Northumbrian Water**

- Working with partners significantly increase participants in the Refill Scheme across County Durham County Council

**Business Improvement District**

- Continue the development of a City “plastic Free network” providing advice and assistants

**North East Nature Partnership**

- Encourage organisations and partners to join the North East Nature Partnership’s Environmental Accreditation Scheme.

### **Durham County Council Motion Section 3**

*c) to incentivise traders on Council land to sell re-usable or non-plastic biodegradable containers and invite customers to bring their own, with the aim of phasing out SUPs; including investigating the possibility of requiring food and drink vendors to avoid SUPs as a condition of their event permission, strengthening DCC's existing guidance for exhibitors and traders*

84. This section of the Council resolution, calls on the County Council to use its influence in authorising activity on its own land, or through licencing to encourage or require vendors to reduce single use plastics.
85. The Task Group benefited from representatives from Environmental Health and Licencing participating, and whilst it is clear that there is potential for more to be done, it will not be of surprise that changes to policy and regulatory guidance in this area are not matters that can be changed overnight.
86. Given the above, it was recognised that for many outdoor public events there are high use of single use plastics for safety reasons (such as disposable plastic drink receptacles at Miners Gala). Whilst these might be regarded as unavoidable, there is however still an interest in collection for recycling, which is not currently the case. Furthermore people bring with them large quantities of plastic bottles drink bottles to sporting events, and whilst there is an opportunity to educate towards reusable bottles, opportunity should also be taken to recycle where possible.
87. This section of the report therefore advices of some early wins achieved in the furtherance of this resolution, as well as a description of key measures to come.

## 88. Durham City Run

In June 2018, the annual Durham City run held in the City Centre, attracted over 3,000 participants. During this event, a larger number of plastic bottles were used. The Council's Clean and Green Team arranged for 7 dumpy bags of plastic bottles to be immediately collected and sent for recycling via the Council's recycling contractor. This event and the collection of the plastic bottles afterwards, was covered on social media and generated local interest. It is planned that future DCC events can be managed this way.



### On Street Recycling facilities

89. New public recycling facilities have been introduced in the market place at Durham, with the potential for wider expansion especially to areas where plastic items are likely to be disposed of. It does remain a challenge however, as the recycling only works with low levels of contaminants. If the plastic aperture has significant amounts of polystyrene, food boxes or other wastes then the load becomes unviable to sort. Apertures are clearly labelled. If the pilot is successful then it will be rolled out to other areas.

#### Proposed Future Actions

##### Licencing

- Review DCC's Licensing Act (which controls licensed premises including pubs, clubs, and takeaways with licences, restaurants, hotels etc. that supply alcohol, late night refreshments and regulated entertainments) to include the requirements where possible, for licensed premises to seek alternatives to SUP usage where practically possible (Note many licenses currently specify the use of SUPs due to health and safety requirements).
- Review the DCC Street Trading policy with a view to incorporating the requirement to recommend the uptake and use of SUP by street traders.
- Review DCCs market operators license in order to influence that alternatives to SUPs are considered

##### Events

- Promote the SUP message to producers and traders at both Bishop Auckland Food Festival and Seaham Food Festival, giving

priority to those traders who demonstrate a commitment to the reduction of SUPs.

- Explore with organisers SUP collection at the Miners Gals
- Commitment to reduction of SUPs at Gala Theatre (c300,000 visitors per year). In addition to changes already made, this will include: replacement of plastic bar glasses with plastic-free alternative, elimination of the sale of water in plastic bottles, replacement of ice-cream and popcorn tubs with compostable alternatives.
- Roll out of successes at Gala to other Culture & Sport run facilities.
- Reaffirm the Council's commitment to prevent the use of balloon and lantern releases on its land and events.

## **Recommendations**

1. To note the considerable work undertaken in the last 6 months towards reducing use of Single Use Plastics by the County Council and its Partners.
2. To welcome the Government consultation in banning plastic drinking straws, stirrers and cotton buds, which has already largely been achieved with some exceptions (e.g. straws attached to drink cartons), which are now being given attention.
3. To approve progression of a bespoke County Durham pledge to the County Councils Cabinet to further reduce Single Use Plastics across Council Services.
4. To extend an invitation to wider Council partners to also sign up to the same pledge, magnifying its impact.
5. To note and approve the establishment of a “Single Use Plastics Network” to build on the success to date, and oversee implementation of plans that make further substantial reductions in single use plastics.

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Single-use plastics call for evidence  
Energy and Transport Tax team  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

15 May 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Tackling the plastic problem**

#### **Using the tax system or charges to address single-use plastic waste**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this call for evidence. The LARAC response is contained below.

The responses below are sent on behalf of the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC). LARAC is an association of around 75% of local authorities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Members are waste management and recycling professionals who co-ordinate and operate waste management services. Membership is drawn from all types of authority including statutory Waste Collection (WCA), Waste Disposal (WDA) and Unitary Authorities.

Our response has been peer reviewed by members of LARAC's policy team and executive committee. LARAC members have also been invited to comment on the consultation through the members' discussion forum on our website. All contributions received have been taken into account in drafting the response below. LARAC's Policy Team focused its resource to consider the areas where local authorities can have the most influence. Questions 5-12 which relate to production and retail have not been responded to.

#### **1. How should the government define single-use plastics, and what items should be included and excluded, and why?**

Plastic products which are intended for single use and then discarded should be considered as single-use plastics. This includes on the go plastic products where the item is purchased with the food or drink product ready for consumption such as beverage containers and lids, stirrers and takeaway boxes. Once the item is consumed the packaging becomes waste as it is not suitable for reuse.

The definition should also be wide enough to include items which have the potential for reuse, but are generally only used once. For example bottles with a screw cap could be used more than once, although generally are not.

**2. What are the most important problems associated with single-use plastics, and why?**

Many single use plastics are not readily recyclable and are therefore not suitable for collection through the kerbside recycling service (such as polystyrene boxes, coffee cups and stirrers).

The range of single use plastics that can and cannot be recycled through the kerbside system is potentially confusing to some residents. This could be contributing to increased contamination levels of the recycling stream. Similarly some single use plastic items which can be recycled are being placed in the residual waste stream and therefore recycling levels are lower than they could be.

Food and drink items consumed on the go are often contaminated with excess residual food and drink and therefore not suitable for recycling unless rinsed even if the packaging is recyclable. The opportunity and willingness to do this by the majority of the population whilst on the go is limited.

On the go plastic film, beverage containers and take away boxes make up a sizeable proportion of litter and are therefore problematic to local authorities. LARAC is aware that Eunomia have estimated that 17% of litter (by weight) is drinks containers. Littering decreases the amenity value of an area and in areas where heavy littering occurs there may also be a greater frequency of fly tipping and graffiti. Street cleaning and litter clearing activities cost local authorities around £800 million a year.

**• Which polymer types are particularly problematic?**

Plastic film (LDPE), mixed polymers and polystyrene are problematic waste streams for local authorities as they are not readily accepted by MRF's for recycling and lead to contamination of the recycling streams. There are also limited viable reprocessing opportunities if the material has not been source segregated especially where the container is a multi-material composite product e.g. paper cup with flexible plastic lining and rigid plastic lid.

**• Which items are particularly problematic?**

Composite products, polystyrene (packaging, beverage and food containers and disposable cutlery) and black plastics (pots, tubs and trays) regularly contaminate the kerbside recycling stream.

**3. Are there more environmentally friendly alternatives, currently available or possible in the future, to these types of single-use plastic items or their manufacturing processes, and can they still offer similar benefits?**

- **Should the government encourage biodegradability in plastics, and if so, how?**

Environmentally friendly alternatives should be designed to be clearly distinguishable from a similar plastic product to prevent contamination of waste streams and clear labelling of the item is essential.

If biodegradable plastic enters the plastics recycling stream it can contaminate the recycling process and reduce the quality of the recycled plastic. Similarly degradable plastics are not always suitable for the composting process and could put the companies PAS accreditation at risk. Some composters also do not have the sophisticated sorting equipment in place to distinguish plastics from biodegradable plastics and therefore all types of plastic will be extracted and sent for disposal.

If biodegradable plastics are to be used in parallel with oil based plastics it must be considered how these materials will be collected and sorted and must be compatible with current local authority collection infrastructure. Any change introduced should be supported by a full evaluation on the collection and processing infrastructure to ensure there is no negative impact on the investment requirement for local authority public realm, kerbside or household recycling centre waste services.

If plastic alternatives are introduced, this would also make it potentially more complicated for the public as different disposal routes would be required and would need to be clearly communicated. Local authorities would require additional funds to deliver this effectively.

**4. Are there single-use plastic items that are deemed essential by their nature or application, which cannot be substituted or avoided?**

The 25 year Environment plan outlines the ambition of the UK to be a world leader in resource efficiency and eliminating avoidable plastic waste by 2042. Priority should be given towards substantially reducing the need for single use plastics, with continued use only where clearly justified. In accordance with Circular Economy principles manufacturers should be committed to investigating suitable alternatives for single use plastic items, even for those which are currently considered essential.

**Questions 5-11 relate to production and retail and have therefore no comment has been provided**

**12. What factors influence consumers' choices related to single-use plastic items?**

• **How can the government encourage the re-use of these items?**

Consumers should be encouraged, where feasible to avoid buying the plastic item in the first place through using re-use containers specifically designed for the purpose. LARAC believes that the UK should investigate the potential for direct charging for kerbside collections. This is likely to bring a step change in resident behaviour as there is a financial incentive to reduce the amount of waste generated. Case studies from other countries that have implemented direct charging suggest it does bring about a change in consumer behaviour and the use of recycling systems increases. Overall waste levels have also been shown to decrease which could indicate higher reuse levels.

Packaging design can substantially influence consumer choice. Plain packaging has been introduced to discourage the purchase of cigarettes. A similar approach could be used for single use plastics where appropriate, with the reusable replacement more appealing.

Taxes and levies could be applied, although for these to be successful sustainable alternatives must be readily available at a competitive price. LARAC would not recommend this as a high priority measure to be introduced unless alternatives are readily available.

**13. What are the barriers to consumers choosing alternatives to single-use plastic items, and how responsive would consumers be to price changes?**

Alternatives must be convenient and competitively priced for consumers to change behaviours away from purchasing single use plastics. For example, the nature of on the go items are they can often be impulse purchases and therefore many consumers will not be prepared with a reusable container. In these situations a more sustainable disposable item may need to be offered, at least in the short term to allow businesses to continue to operate while consumers become accustomed to the behaviour changes required of supplying a reusable container.

For regular purchases where the purchase has been pre-planned before leaving the home small price changes may be a sufficient incentive for the consumer to supply a reusable container.

**14. In what way, and to what extent, do the decisions of producers and retailers influence consumer choice?**

No comment

**15. In your opinion, how can the tax system or charges play a role in delivering better environmental outcomes at this stage?**

• **What interventions should be implemented, and why?**

Taxes can be imposed on virgin products which have a high environmental impact or are used in less sustainable products. This could include materials used in the manufacture of single use plastics such as polystyrene. Similarly tax breaks could be provided for sustainable

alternatives, such as compostable, re-usable products or items with a high recycled material content.

See also question 12 regarding Direct Charging, taxes and levies.

• **What behavioural effect would these interventions have, both on this stage in the supply chain, and more broadly?**

The behavioural effect of direct charging is discussed in question 12.

Taxes and levies on single use plastic products could stimulate the demand for sustainable alternatives and therefore supply of alternative products would also increase. This could stimulate local business developments if the taxes raised are directed back to the industry. As referred to previously taxes and levies will be most successful and accepted by users and businesses if a convenient and competitive sustainable product is available.

• **What would be the impact on consumers?**

The impact of Direct Charging could encourage greater reuse so as to avoid a disposal fee or the purchase of items which are recyclable as this is likely to attract a lower disposal fee than a non-recyclable item. Those which continue to purchase single use plastics with limited recycling opportunities will face increased costs.

The introduction of taxes or levies is likely to be unpopular with many consumers, especially in the short term. As indicated in question 12 alternatives need to be convenient and readily accessible. If this is the case most consumers are likely to quickly adapt and accept the change as there is no long term negative impact, which has been shown to be the case with the plastic bag levy.

• **Are there specific items the government should be focussing on?**

With the Circular Economy principles in mind, priority should be put on:

- producers to design products to minimise resource use and either encourage reuse or maximise recyclability. Producer responsibility delivered through the PRN system does not provide a true reflection of the cost burden of recovering single use plastic packaging waste or incentivise investment in the industry. LARAC recommends a fundamental revision of the packaging producer responsibility system to encourage local investment in infrastructure and for products to be designed with re-use and recyclability as a priority.
- the public on their purchasing and recycling habits. Investigating the potential for Direct Charging for consumers for their waste is also likely to assist in achieving the reuse and recycling behavioural shifts aspired to in national policy (see question 12).

**16. What are the barriers to the collection of single-use plastics and more environmentally friendly methods of waste treatment, including barriers to any existing technologies?**

The potential for recycling of many single use plastics is currently low due to limited availability of reprocessors and the capability of MRFs to separate some these waste streams. The barrier to collection is therefore dictated by the limited opportunities for sorting and end markets, rather than collection infrastructure.

Investment in UK waste and recycling infrastructure is low. The current PRN system places no obligation on reprocessors and exporters receiving PRN revenue to invest in improving local infrastructure. The uncertainty of income resulting from fluctuating PRN prices is also not conducive for long term investment which has resulted in a relatively immature recycling market in the UK.

Capturing on the go plastics which are compatible with the local authority public realm recycling infrastructure is also challenging. Local authorities operate very few on the go or street bin recycling schemes. The contamination level in these bins is high and therefore yield very little recycling material.

**17. In your opinion, how can the tax system or charges play a role in delivering better environmental outcomes at this stage?**

**• What interventions should be implemented, and why?**

See question 12 and 15 for recommendations for PRN reform, tax breaks and taxes and levies.

**• What behavioural effect would these interventions have, both on this stage in the supply chain, and more broadly?**

PRN reform has the potential for the circular economy to be forefront in the change. The PRN system could encourage producers to develop products which use materials which are sustainably sourced and for the design to use components which can easily be separated for recycling or reused. This would encourage greater local investment which would not only provide for a more stable market for the recycle, it would also boost the local economy through investment and support local jobs.

**• What would be the impact on Local Authorities and business?**

If businesses took greater responsibility for the design of products to minimise the environmental impact of the product, maximise recycling and encourage reuse there would be a greater balance in the responsibility for managing the plastic waste between manufacturers, retailers and local authorities. This could result in significant savings for local authorities which could then be directed towards other essential services.



If you have any queries on this response then please contact me at [admin@larac.org.uk](mailto:admin@larac.org.uk)

Yours faithfully,

Dianne Hewgill  
**LARAC** Policy Team

Single Use Plastics (SUP) Survey

1. What is your role the organisation?

SUP Policy

2. Does your organisation have an Environmental Management System?

- Yes
- No

3. Does your organisation have a Single Use Plastics (SUP) Policy? (If so please email a copy to [wasteware@durham.gov.uk](mailto:wasteware@durham.gov.uk))

- Yes
- No

4. Has your organisation signed up to a SUPs pledge?

- No
- Yes - If yes which one?

5. Does your organisation use SUPs in its products or services?

- Yes
- No

6. Has your organisation set targets to reduce SUPs?

- Yes
- No

7. Could you remove any SUPs from your products or services ?

- Yes
- No

8. Could you substitute SUPs for a more environmentally friendly option?

- No
- Yes (If so where and how?)

9. Is there a perception that alternatives to SUPs are more expensive?

- Yes
- No

10. Does your organisation have a recycling policy in order to manage SUPs effectively?

- No
- Yes (Please give details)

11. Have you recently undertaken a SUPs review in your organisation, ideally across your supply chain and business activities?

- Yes (If so would you be prepared to share your findings? Please email details to [wasteware@durham.gov.uk](mailto:wasteware@durham.gov.uk))
- No

12. How are you influencing your supply chain to reduce SUPs?

Reducing SUP

13. Do you carry out staff awareness campaigns in relation to reducing SUPs e.g. posters, staff awareness days.

- No
- Yes (Please provide information below or email details to [wasteware@durham.gov.uk](mailto:wasteware@durham.gov.uk))

14. Have you included waste reduction and SUPs in your Corporate and Social Responsibility?

- Yes
- No

15. Do you think your organisation could do more to reduce SUPs use?

- No
- Yes (If so, how?)

16. Do you have any other comments?

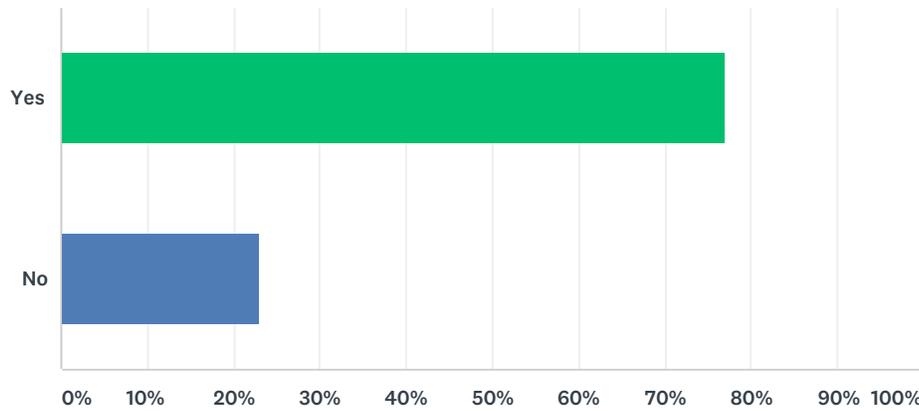
**Thank you for completing this survey, should you wish to contact us directly or supply additional information please e-mail [wasteware@durham.gov.uk](mailto:wasteware@durham.gov.uk)**

## Q1 What is your role the organisation?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 0

## Q2 Does your organisation have an Environmental Management System?

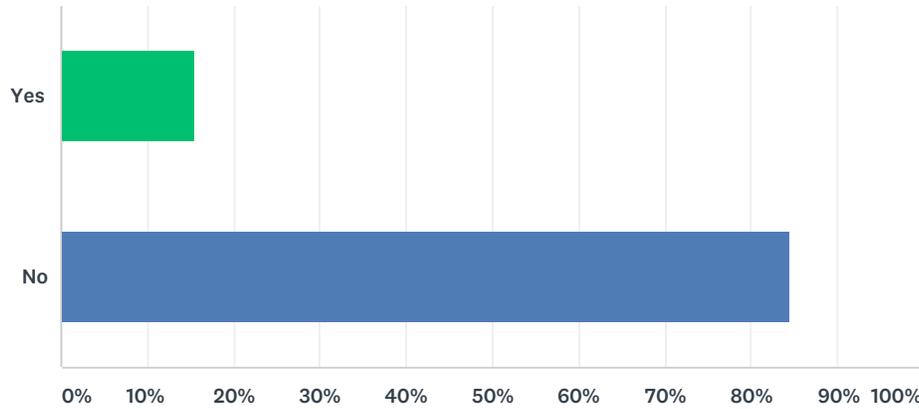
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.92%	10
No	23.08%	3
TOTAL		13

### Q3 Does your organisation have a Single Use Plastics (SUP) Policy? (If so please email a copy to [wasteware@durham.gov.uk](mailto:wasteware@durham.gov.uk))

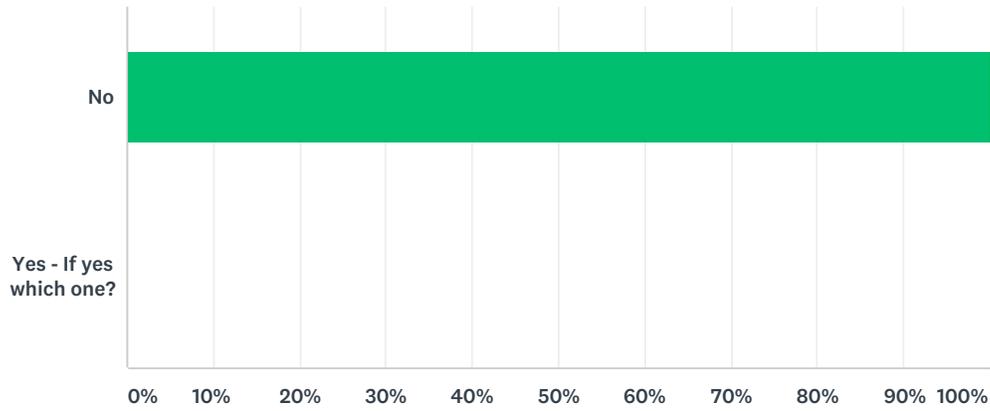
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	15.38%	2
No	84.62%	11
TOTAL		13

### Q4 Has your organisation signed up to a SUPs pledge?

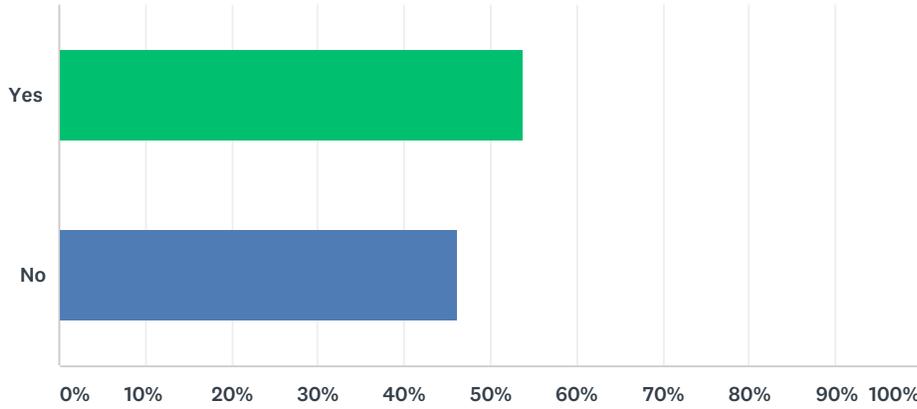
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	100.00%	13
Yes - If yes which one?	0.00%	0
TOTAL		13

### Q5 Does your organisation use SUPs in its products or services?

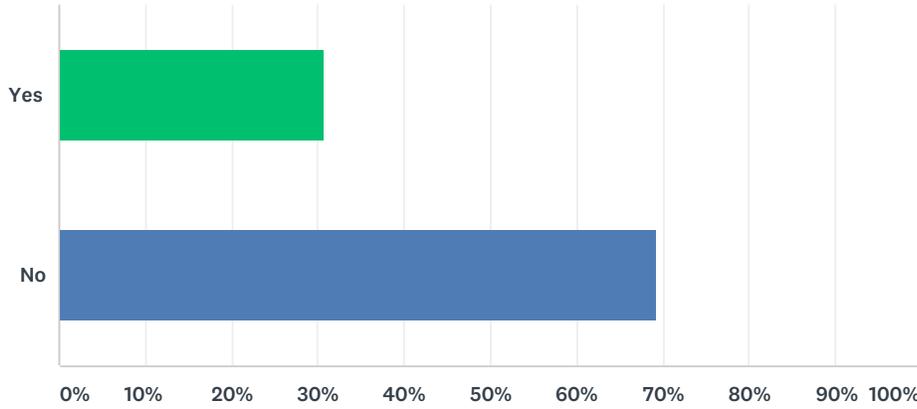
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	53.85%	7
No	46.15%	6
TOTAL		13

### Q6 Has your organisation set targets to reduce SUPs?

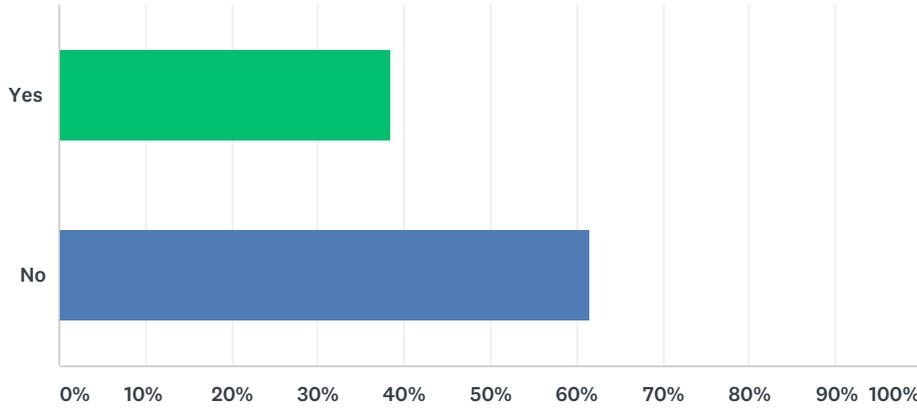
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30.77%	4
No	69.23%	9
TOTAL		13

### Q7 Could you remove any SUPs from your products or services ?

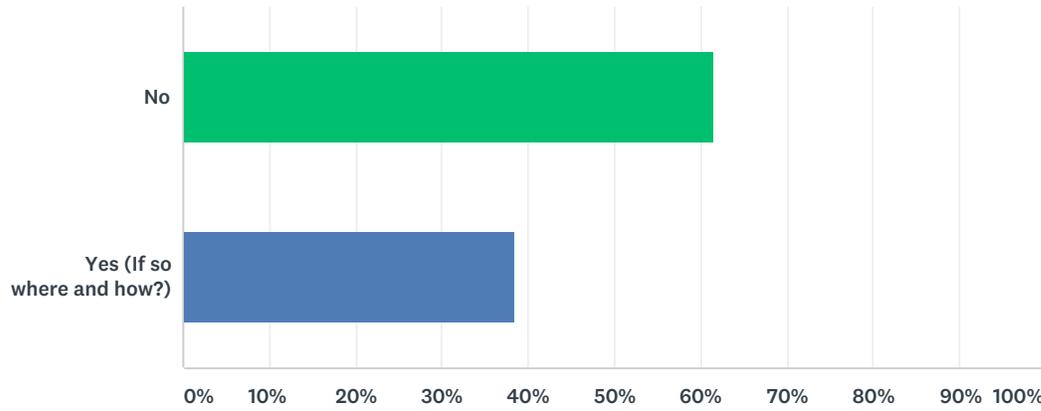
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	38.46%	5
No	61.54%	8
TOTAL		13

### Q8 Could you substitute SUPs for a more environmentally friendly option?

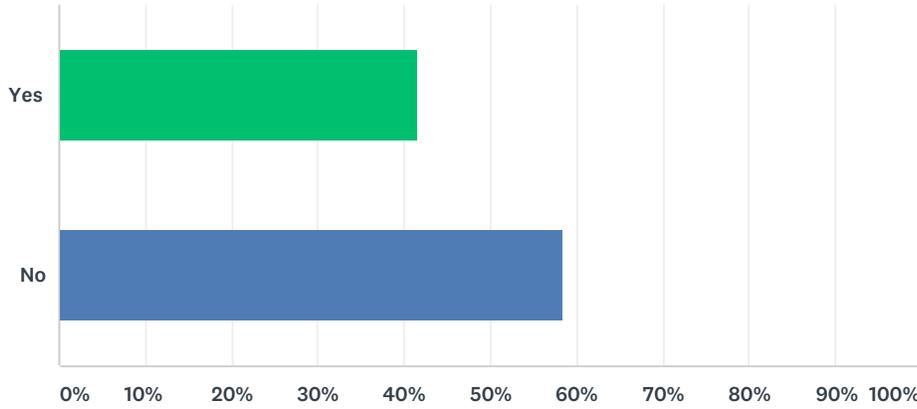
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	61.54%	8
Yes (If so where and how?)	38.46%	5
TOTAL		13

### Q9 Is there a perception that alternatives to SUPs are more expensive?

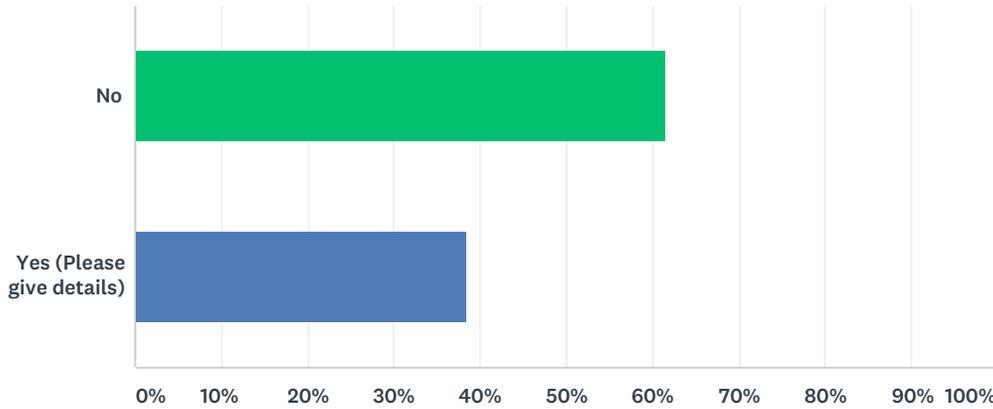
Answered: 12 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	41.67%	5
No	58.33%	7
TOTAL		12

### Q10 Does your organisation have a recycling policy in order to manage SUPs effectively?

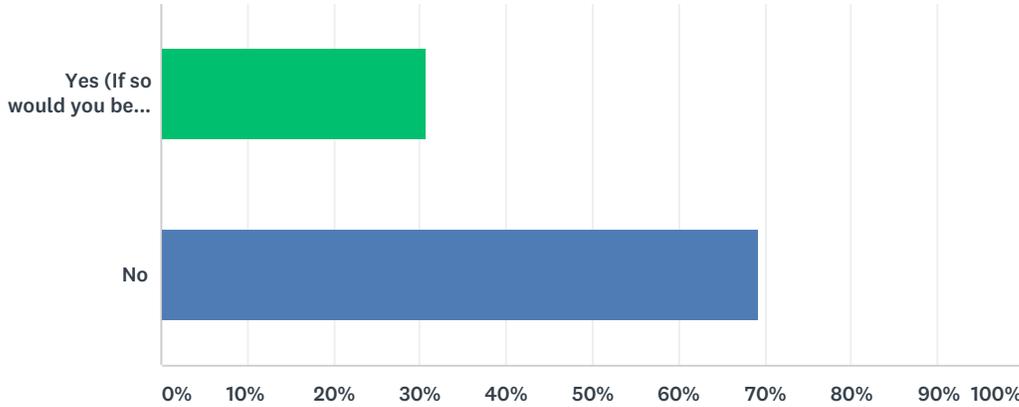
Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	61.54%	8
Yes (Please give details)	38.46%	5
TOTAL		13

### Q11 Have you recently undertaken a SUPs review in your organisation, ideally across your supply chain and business activities?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 6



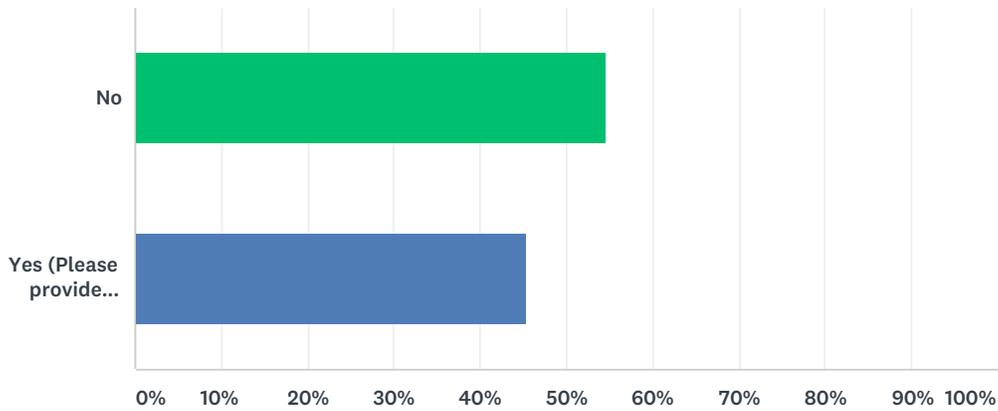
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (If so would you be prepared to share your findings? Please email details to <a href="mailto:wasteware@durham.gov.uk">wasteware@durham.gov.uk</a> )	30.77%	4
No	69.23%	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13</b>

## Q12 How are you influencing your supply chain to reduce SUPs?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 10

### Q13 Do you carry out staff awareness campaigns in relation to reducing SUPs e.g. posters, staff awareness days.

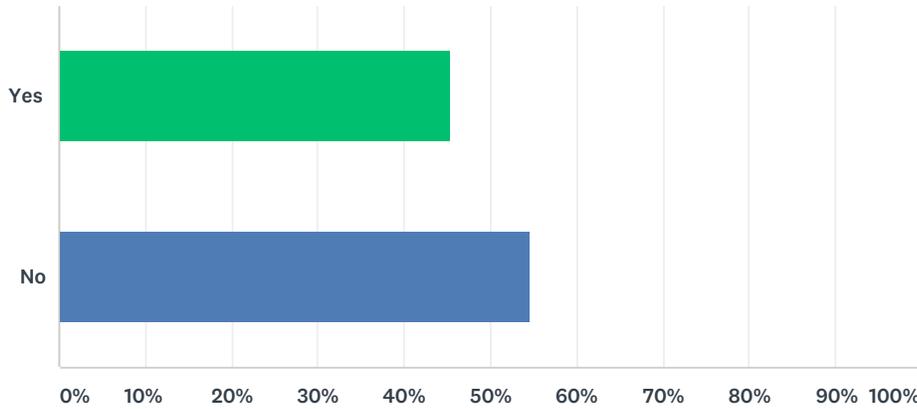
Answered: 11 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	54.55%	6
Yes (Please provide information below or email details to <a href="mailto:wasteware@durham.gov.uk">wasteware@durham.gov.uk</a> )	45.45%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>11</b>

### Q14 Have you included waste reduction and SUPs in your Corporate and Social Responsibility?

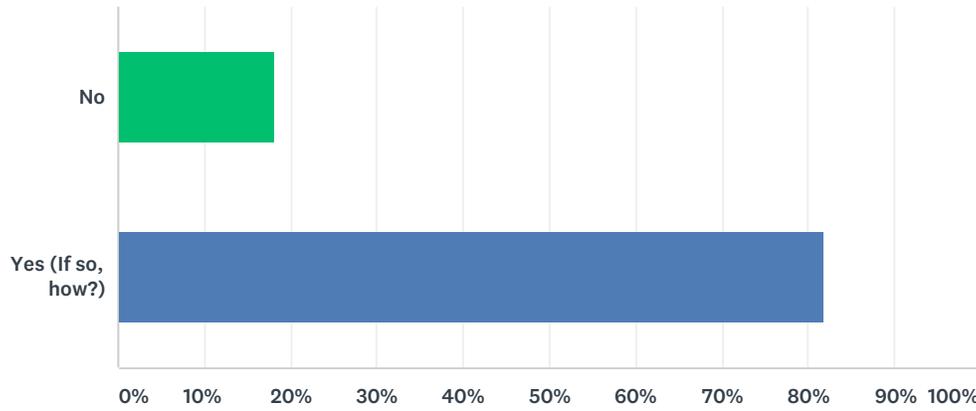
Answered: 11 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	45.45%	5
No	54.55%	6
TOTAL		11

### Q15 Do you think your organisation could do more to reduce SUPs use?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	18.18%	2
Yes (If so, how?)	81.82%	9
TOTAL		11

## Q16 Do you have any other comments?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 11

## Plastic Pledges

Name	Organisation	Pledge aims/objectives	Comments	Link
	HQ (consultancy firm)	Free choice	<p>Local ambassadors (but not one in the north east at present).</p> <p>This was the one referred to in Council motion.</p> <p>Running de-straw campaign.</p> <p>Not many local organisations on their map.</p> <p>Small, unknown lead organisation.</p>	<a href="https://www.plasticfreepledge.com/">https://www.plasticfreepledge.com/</a>
	Greenpeace	Pledge to help put a stop to plastic pollution, and keep our oceans clean.	<p>Large organisation with track record of environmental work.</p> <p>Supported by other campaigns on plastic.</p>	<a href="https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/what-we-do/oceans/plastics/">https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/what-we-do/oceans/plastics/</a>
	WRAP	<p>Not a pledge: The UK Plastics Pact is a trailblazing, collaborative initiative that will create a circular economy for plastics. It brings together businesses from across the entire plastics value chain with UK governments and NGOs to tackle the scourge of plastic waste.</p>	<p>Government backed campaign. Supported by a large number of national organisations.</p> <p>Has targets.</p> <p>Not a pledge, but members have made their own statements, equal to a pledge.</p> <p>Councils cannot currently apply.</p> <p>Larger businesses maybe charged.</p>	<a href="http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact">http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact</a>

<p>Plastic free Community Leaders</p> 	<p>Surfers against Sewage</p>	<p>Using people power and community action to tackle the problem of avoidable single-use plastics head-on</p>	<p>Grass roots approach.</p> <p>Good toolkit support.</p> <p>Might be appropriate for smaller local groups to adopt.</p> <p>No local group.</p> <p>Not a pledge.</p> <p>Marine focus.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-community-leaders/">https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-community-leaders/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-coastlines/">https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-coastlines/</a></p>
<p>Marine Conservation</p> 		<p>Make a promise to the ocean. Plastic free for July.</p>	<p>Large international organisation leading campaign.</p> <p>Not much activity on website since July.</p> <p>Marine focus.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.mcsuk.org/plastic-challenge/">https://www.mcsuk.org/plastic-challenge/</a></p>

## Plastic Campaigns

Name	Organisation	Aims/objectives	Benefits	Link
		Plastic Free for 8 May	Make your own date up to.	<a href="http://www.plasticfreeday.co.uk/">http://www.plasticfreeday.co.uk/</a>
	Friends of the Earth	Plastic Free Fridays	Flexible	<a href="https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/act/join-plasticfreefriday">https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/act/join-plasticfreefriday</a>
Plastic Pollution Coalition		Take the 4 R's Pledge	Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle	<a href="http://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/take-action-1/">http://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/take-action-1/</a>
BBC Plastic Watch / Action	BBC	Reduce plastic waste	Lots of resources	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/11CnCQR0GJfkDgJs57sR5Ps/plastics-action">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/11CnCQR0GJfkDgJs57sR5Ps/plastics-action</a>
The Refill Initiative	City to Sea.  Northumbrian Water is the local champion (task group partner)	Encourage people to refill water rather than buy single use bottles.	Encourages public engagement Involves local businesses	<a href="https://www.refill.org.uk/refill-scheme/refill-durham-north-east/">https://www.refill.org.uk/refill-scheme/refill-durham-north-east/</a>
Plastic Free Falmouth		Raise awareness of single use plastics and minimise it.		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/plasticfreefalmouth/about/?ref=page_internal">https://www.facebook.com/pg/plasticfreefalmouth/about/?ref=page_internal</a>
The Great Plastic Pickup		Raise awareness about plastic that is littering.		<a href="https://www.greatplasticpickup.org/home/2684">https://www.greatplasticpickup.org/home/2684</a>  <a href="http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/lets-turn-tide-plastic-together">http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/lets-turn-tide-plastic-together</a>
The Boundless Explorer		Raising awareness by picking a particular day.		<a href="https://www.gobroadreach.com/broadreach-blog-plastic-free-day-pledge-february-21">https://www.gobroadreach.com/broadreach-blog-plastic-free-day-pledge-february-21</a>

## Brighton & Hove City Council – Single-use Plastics Policy - *draft*

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Plastic waste is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world today. The UK government estimates that there are currently more than 150m tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans, and that some 100,000 sea mammals and one million birds die from eating or becoming tangled in plastic waste each year.

As lead partner of The Living Coast UNESCO World Biosphere Region, Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to taking leadership on tackling the plastic waste problem by taking responsibility for its own impact on the environment and society, both within the local area and across the globe. The council will work towards minimising use of single-use plastics across its own operations and services and by all staff and pro-actively work with partners to find positive solutions for reducing unnecessary waste plastics across the city.

What are single-use plastics?

Single-use plastics can include any disposable plastic item which is designed to be used only once e.g. plastic bags, disposable utensils, beverage containers, coffee capsules, wet wipes, razor blades, plastic drinks bottles, food wrappers, bottle tops, straws, stirrers and plastic lids.

To support Brighton & Hove becoming a single-use plastics free city, the council commits to:

- Work with staff to ensure that single-use plastics are eliminated across our offices
- Support our schools and communities in their efforts to make their buildings plastic-free zones
- Through The Living Coast Biosphere programme, communicate the importance of protecting our urban, rural and marine environments, and support and promote positive initiatives, city campaigns and actions for reducing plastic waste
- Work with our event organisers to eliminate single-use plastics across all city events held on council land and share guidance for this more widely
- Support communities and litter-pick initiatives to ensure our parks, beaches and open spaces are free from plastic litter
- Use government legislation that regulates against the use of single-use plastics to support our efforts where we can
- Require all our suppliers to minimise the use of single-use plastics in their service provision and find sustainable alternatives (where appropriate)
- Where the use of plastics is unavoidable, the council will encourage the use of recycled plastics, where practicable, and support manufacturers that make products from locally sourced waste plastics
- Work with partners in joint ventures and innovative projects for reducing single-use plastic waste
- Share best practice and information about plastic free initiatives, to residents, businesses, visitors and beyond through the council's social media and communication channels

The council will work to embed these commitments into the sustainable events guidance, sustainable procurement policy, and into other key council strategies, policies and plans.

Appendix 5

Single Use Plastic Action Plan

Objective	Action ref.	Action	Responsibility	By when?	Update
<b>Procurement Services</b>					
Remove single use plastics from council premises.	P1	Consider a range of 'Plastic Pledges' which is fit for purpose for DCC and its partners to adopt.	DCC	November 2018	
	P2	Undertake an internal audit across DCC buildings and services to establish the level of SUP usage.	Procurement / Waste Management	July 2018	Complete.
	P3	Update the core list of supplies on the council's system to remove single use plastics where possible.	Procurement	October 2018	
	P4	Produce and undertake a SUP survey with key suppliers in order to understand and influence the reduction of SUPs.	Procurement	July 2018	Complete.
Encourage contracted providers to use alternatives to single use plastics.	P5	Include in future DCC contract specifications the consideration to use SUP alternatives where possible.	Procurement	April 2019	
	P6	Engage with contractors via the North East Procurement Organisation in order to source alternatives to SUPs.	Procurement	August 2018- August 2019	Initial meeting in relation to SUPs held August 2018.

Objective	Action ref.	Action	Responsibility	By when?	Update
<b>DCC Catering Services</b>					
Remove the use of unnecessary single use plastics in catering services and source alternatives to SUPs.	C1	Continue to promote the DCC reusable cup to staff.	Catering Services / Communications	October 2018- October 2019	
	C2	Source alternatives for SUPs across DCC's catering services.	Catering Services	October 2018	Complete.
	C2	Identify SUP use in Culture and Sport catering venues and develop a reduction strategy for implementation.	Catering Services / Culture & Sport	December 2018	
	C3	Develop communication messages to the customer in relation on achievements so far with regards to the reduction of SUP's within DCC catering sites.	Catering Services / DCC Communications	October 2018 – October 2019	
	C4	Design and plan new takeaway concepts for the new civic menu roll out that incorporate the elimination of SUP's.	Catering Services / DCC Communications	October 2018- October 2019	

Objective	Action ref.	Action	Responsibility	By when?	Update
<b>Consumer Protection Services</b>					
Influence traders and street operators to seek alternatives to single use plastics.	CP1	Review the DCC Licensing Act Policy in order to incorporate the reduction of or alternatives to SUPs where possible, subject to conditions.	Consumer Protection	March 2019	
	CP2	Review the DCC Street Trading Policy in order for alternatives to SUPs be provided where possible, subject to conditions.	Consumer Protection	March 2019	
	CP3	Review the DCC Market Operator Agreements in order to influence the use of SUPs.	Consumer Protection	March 2019	

Objective	Action ref.	Action	Responsibility	By when?	Update
<b>DCC Children &amp; Young Peoples Services (Education)</b>					
Promote alternatives to single use plastics to County Durham schools.	E1	Engage with DCC schools catering provider to look at opportunities to reduce SUP's in school catering.	CYPS	October 2018- July 2019	
	E2	Develop and promote circular economy learning resources with schools across the County.	CYPS / Waste Management	January 2018- July 2019	
	E2	Link the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the issue of SUP's in new learning opportunities for schools.	CYPS	January 2018- July 2019	
<b>DCC Highways</b>					
Source alternative uses for plastics where possible.	H1	Continue with trials of using pelletised plastic within road construction and feedback on the future viability of expanding the scheme across County Durham.	Highways	October 2019	

Objective	Action ref.	Action	Responsibility	By when?	Update
<b>Waste Management</b>					
Promote awareness of sustainable waste management practices and encourage behavioural change in relation to the use of SUPs.	W1	Continue to provide key communication to the public in relation to how SUPs can be prevented and recycled in conjunction with wider waste awareness messages.	Strategic Waste Management / DCC Communications	October 2018-October 2019	
	W2	Continue to provide key educational talks to schools and community groups in relation to sustainable waste management practices in relation to SUPs.	Strategic Waste Management	October 2018-October 2019	
	W3	Consider the provision of expanding further street recycling provision across County Durham following feedback from the reintroduction of the Durham City trials.	Strategic Waste Management	October 2018-October 2019	
	W4	Continue to work with external partners to promote SUP reduction campaigns to the public e.g. promotion of Northumbrian Water's Refill Campaign.	Strategic Waste Management	October 2018-October 2019	
	W5	Engage with Change Advocates to raise awareness of SUPs and their alternatives.	Transformation & Partnerships / Strategic Waste Management / Facilities	October 2018-October 2019	
	W6	Review all DCC owned buildings to ensure the internal recycling schemes are being used in the correct manner.	Transformation & Partnerships/ Strategic Waste Management / Facilities Management / Communications	October 2018-October 2019	

Objective	Action ref.	Action	Responsibility	By when?	Update
<b>Culture &amp; Sport</b>					
Promote and implement methods to reduce the amount of SUPs used.	CS1	Remove SUP confetti at the Gala Theatre and replace with sustainable alternative.	Culture & Sport	June 2018	Complete
	CS2	Phase out the supply of SUP blue overshoes at DCC owned leisure centres.	Culture & Sport	June 2018-June 2019	
	CS3	Promote the SUP message to producers and traders at both Bishop Auckland Food Festival and Seaham Food Festival, giving priority to those traders who demonstrate a commitment to the reduction of SUPs.	Culture & Sport	June 2019	
	CS4	Commitment to reduction of SUPs at Gala Theatre (c300,000 visitors per year). In addition to changes already made, this will include: replacement of plastic bar glasses with plastic-free alternative, elimination of the sale of water in plastic bottles, replacement of ice-cream and popcorn tubs with compostable alternatives.	Culture & Sport	October 2018-October 2019	
	CS5	Roll out of successes at Gala to other Culture & Sport run facilities.	Culture & Sport	October 2018-October 2019	

Objective	Action ref.	Action	Responsibility	By when?	Update
<b>External Partner Engagement</b>					
Work with external partners in order to reduce and provide alternatives for SUPs.	EP1	Continue the development of a 'plastic free network' with Durham BiD in relation to providing key messages around sourcing alternatives to SUPs.	Durham BiD / DCC Task Group	October 2018 - October 2019	
	EP2	Continue to promote Northumbrian Water's Refill Campaign across County Durham.	Northumbrian Water / DCC Task Group	October 2018 - October 2019	
	EP3	Encourage organisations and partners to join the North East Nature Partnership's Environmental Accreditation Scheme.	NEEP/ DCC Task Group/ Partners.	October 2018 - October 2019	
	EP4	Replicate best practice examples of reusable / washable food containers.	Durham University Catering / DCC Task Group	October 2018 - October 2019	
	EP5	Adopt the Environment Agency's staff communications scheme and promote plastic free days to staff.	Environment Agency / DCC Task Group	October 2018 - October 2019	
	EP7	Promote beach clean ups with staff and external partner organisations.	Heritage Coast / DCC/ Partners	October 2018- October 2019	

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