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Single Use Plastics:

From Pledge to Practice

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# Plastic: Fantastic or Frightening?

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

# Why Focus on Single Use Plastics?

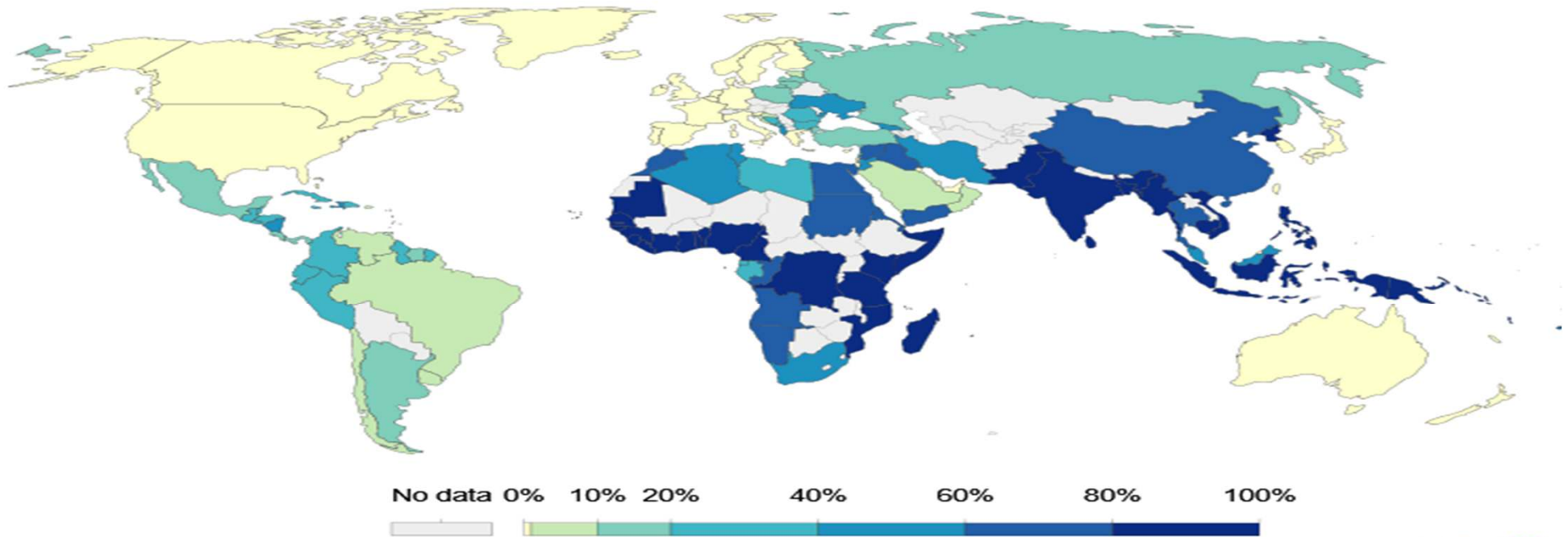
- Half of all plastics SUPs
- 50% of EU beach pollutants SUPs (other 34% plastic).
- Wasteful of resources/fossil fuels
- Smaller – more likely to break down/ ingest
- Unnecessary/avoidable
- Not all recyclable



# 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).



# 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.**



# From our beaches.....



Photos courtesy of Roger Coulam

# Background

**24 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*

# Our Approach

- Not Just Council Focused – Partnership is Key
- For the Council – a corporate approach all service areas.
- Not waiting for legislation
- Crucial role for Scrutiny.
- Audit and understand what is happening in practice.
- Task Group Established – generated international interest
- Action orientated – reports via scrutiny committee.
- Not always an easy solution, but sometimes it is!
- Covid has impacted – from face coverings to implementation of plans



# The “easy” bit



Individuals 192  
Schools 38  
Businesses 42  
Community Groups 29

We have a total of 301 sign ups to date

You can sign too!

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/singleuseplastics>



# Work to date: Action Plan Waste Management

- Coordinated audits across DCC venues
- Provided key communications to the public in relation to how SUPs can be prevented.
- Delivered education talks to schools, community groups, AAPs etc
- Introduced on street recycling provision in Durham City;
- Implemented recycling of street litter collected by DCC.
- Engaged with Change Advocates to raise awareness of SUPs
- Reviewed all DCC owned buildings to ensure the internal recycling schemes are being used correctly.
- Introduced Walker's crisp packet collection points in DCC buildings (trial)



# Work to date: Action Plan

## DCC Catering Services

- Removed 90% of SUPs across DCC catering services
- Introduced a DCC reusable cup (cheaper coffee too!)
- Sourced alternatives to SUPs where possible
- Identified SUP usage across Culture and Sport catering venues,
- Designed and planned new takeaway concepts for new civic menu roll out.
- Moved to recyclable, compostable, biodegradable, Vegware food takeaway packaging and hot food service containers as standard
- Sachets to served portions (where possible)
- Moved from plastic to Vegware cutlery and then subsequently wood alternatives
- From plastic coated cups to biodegradable ones
- Glass provision including jars where possible.







## Work to date: Action Plan Culture and Sport

- Removed SUP confetti at the Gala Theatre and replace with sustainable alternative.
- Phased out the supply of SUP blue overshoes at DCC owned leisure centres.
- Promoted the SUP message to producers and traders.
- Commitment to the reduction of SUPs at the Gala Theatre.
- Rolled out successes at the Gala Theatre to other Culture and Sport run facilities.
- SUP collection at Major events eg Durham City Run

## Work to date: Action Plan

### Corporate Procurement Services

- Undertook internal audits across the organisations involved
- Produced and undertook a SUP survey with key suppliers
- Engaged regarding their SUP issues – sought to resolve
- Updated the core list of supplies to remove single use plastics
- Ensured DCC future contracts consider alternatives to SUP where possible
- Engaged with contractors via the North East Procurement Organisation
- Provided advice on SUP reductions to other local authorities and national procurement networks





## Work to date: Action Plan

### Consumer Protection Services

- Reviewed the DCC Licensing Act Policy in order to incorporate the reduction of or alternatives to SUPs where possible.
- Considered the DCC Street Trading Policy in order for alternatives to SUPs be provided where possible.
- Considered the DCC Market Operator Agreements.





## Work to date: Action Plan Highways

- Trialled the use of pelletised plastic within road construction
- Received an national APSE award (innovation category)
- Submitted a national funding bid to Department of Transport to expand the scheme

# Work to date: Action Plan

## Communications

- Promoted the work of the SUP task group via regular updates and features with Durham County News and other platforms.
- Ensured residents are informed of both why and when alternatives to SUPs are being used.
- Ensured that clear information of the different types of plastics, identifying what can and cannot be recycled is provided to residents.
- Provided residents with an opportunity to identify how SUPs usage can be reduced.
- Developed a single use plastic information network across County Durham via a web based hub.



# Work to date: Action Plan

## Education and Wider Partners

- Engaged with DCC schools catering provider
- Developed and promote circular economy learning resources
- Promoting the example of St.Bede's, Sacriston as a best practice example to other schools
- Continue the development of a 'plastic free network' with Durham BiD in relation to providing key messages around sourcing alternatives to SUPs.
- Promote Northumbrian Water's Refill Campaign across County Durham.
- Encourage organisations and partners to join the North East Nature Partnership's Environment Accreditation Scheme.
- Replicated best practice examples of reusable/washable food containers.
- Promoted further beach clean ups with staff and external partner organisations.



# 2020-2021 Action Plan Summary

Area	Total Number of Actions	Completed	Outstanding	Completed %
Corporate Procurement Services	5	4	1	80%
DCC Catering Services	5	5	0	100%
Consumer Protection Services	3	2	1	66%
DCC Children and Young Peoples Services	8	6	2	75%
DCC Highways	1	1	0	100%
Waste Management	7	6	1	85%
Culture and Sport	3	3	0	100%
External Partner Engagement	6	5	1	83%
Communications	6	5	1	83%

Awards



# Legislation

- From the 1st October, 2020 a restriction on the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton-buds came into force in England.
- Defra published guidance for businesses and suppliers of these items <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/straws-cotton-buds-and-drink-stirrers-ban-rules-for-businesses-in-england>



# Waste & Resources Strategy for England 2018

## Strategy Key Objectives:

- All plastic packaging to be recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025;
- Work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030;
- Eliminate avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of 25YEP;
- Double resource productivity by 2050
- Eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050

## Recent Consultations:

- Consistent set of recyclable materials including:
- Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging
- Deposit Return Scheme
- Taxing plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content

## Impacts for Local Authorities:

- Financial implications for consistent collections (food/garden waste)
- EPR & DPS (greater clarity on how this money will be passed to LA's)

65% Recycling rate (MSW)  
Municipal Solid Waste by 2035

50% Recycling rate H/H  
waste by 2050





# Where do we go from here?

- Implement and support introduction of legislation as required.
- Develop further the County Durham SUP network;
- Develop further education and awareness materials e.g. living without SUPs;
- Continue to audit SUP usage;
- Promote further the Environmental accreditation scheme and audit for organisations
- Promote more Refill stations across County Durham
- Work with NEPO to influence the supply chain

COUNTY DURHAM  
SINGLE USE  
PLASTICS  
PLEDGE

# Summary

- National exemplar of best practice.
- Corporate and Partnership approach taken.
- A lot done, but more to do, and we are not perfect.
- Lots of interest, opportunity to use this to support more fundamental cultural changes.



**COUNTY DURHAM  
SINGLE USE  
PLASTICS  
PLEDGE**

**Could you carry a reusable shopping bag, swap to a reusable coffee cup or stop using plastic straws?**

Many County Durham businesses, schools, groups and individuals have already signed our County Durham Single Use Plastics Pledge. Could you?

You can pledge to do as little or as much as you can to help reduce the amount of single use plastics.

Find out more and sign up:  
[www.durham.gov.uk/singleuseplastics](http://www.durham.gov.uk/singleuseplastics)

**Altogether better  
Durham**  
County Durham Partnership



## Any questions?

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