



Report of the County Durham Environment Partnership

Phasing Out Unnecessary Single Use Plastics (SUPs)

For Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



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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

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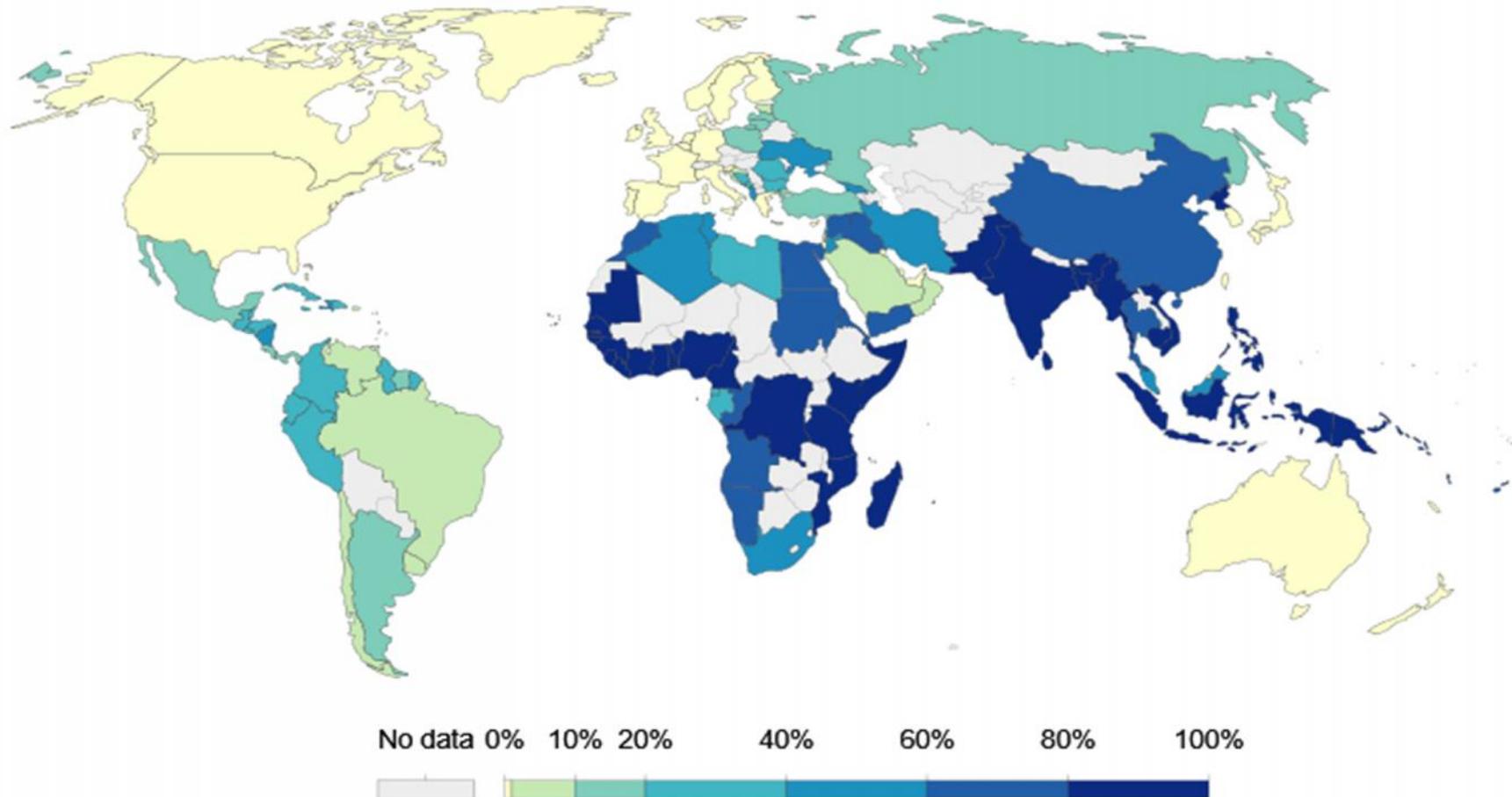
But is this our problem?



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.**

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From our beaches.....



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Photos courtesy of Roger Coulam



24th 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*

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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.

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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

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Resolution Part 1. Durham County Council First Step: Audit



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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**



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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

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Work By Partners

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



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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

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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.

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Consideration to a Pledge

Lots of them!



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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.

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QUIZ

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

Source Euromonitor/The Guardian

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Answer

To be revealed !!!

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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.

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