



# Single Use Plastic Reduction Strategy 2019 - 2022

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## Section 1 – Introduction and Context

This **Single Use Plastic Reduction** Strategy has been developed to support the Council Motion approved at full council on 21 November 2018 (a copy of which can be found at appendix 1).

The Government in January 2018 has recently pledged to work towards eliminating all avoidable waste by 2050 and all avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042, but this strategy aims to reduce and eliminate where possible single use plastics as soon as possible within The Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme (“the Council”).

Most of plastic currently produced can be recycled. However, the extent to which plastics are recycled depends upon various technical, economic and logistical factors. As a valuable and finite resource, given that it is derived from fossil fuels such as oil and coal, the optimum recovery route for most plastic items at the ‘end-of-life’ is to be recycled, preferably back into a product that can then be recycled again and again, ad infinitum.

It is estimated that 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced globally, with 6.3 billion tonnes of this becoming plastic waste. Only 9% of plastic is recycled, 12% is incinerated, resulting in 79% of the plastic produced to date either ending up in landfill or the natural environment. Single Use Plastics (SUP) make up a significant proportion of this total. SUP often also referred to as disposable plastics, are commonly used for plastic packaging and include items intended to be used only once before they are thrown away or recycled.

These include, among other items, grocery bags, food packaging, soft drink bottles, straws, containers, coffee vending and water cups and cutlery, condiment sachets, plastic waste sacks,

The Council recognises that discarded plastics, including non-recyclable food containers, cups and straws are a major environmental pollutant and of detrimental impact to the Newcastle-under-Lyme region.

This strategy has been developed to expedite a program of plastics reduction actions that will have a long-term effect on the current issues raised within this area.

## **Section 2 – Strategy Scope**

This strategy in line with the council motion aims to reduce and eliminate SUP from the Council and support partners across the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The key objectives which form the scope of this strategy are:

- Identification of Council use of SUP and alternatives to implement change which will reduce / remove these from Council use;
- Work with our suppliers and contractors to encourage businesses to reduce / remove single use plastics;
- Raise awareness of the impact of single use plastics across the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The delivery of the commitments and actions' within this strategy will need to be delivered through a collaborative approach, not just across the Council but across wider public sector and through our supply chains.

## **Section 3 – Reduction / Removal of SUP within the Borough Council**

To reduce and remove SUP within the Council, there are three key steps that need to be undertaken:

- Identify current use;
- Identify and develop alternative sources of supply; and
- Implement change.

A review of all single use plastics across the Council needs to take place, to identify the SUP products currently used:

- Cutlery;
- Coffee machine vending cups;
- Water cups;
- Food containers;
- Straws;
- Condiment sachets;
- Soft drink bottles;
- Supply of consumable materials and chemicals from the councils suppliers;

The Council procures a range of sundries either directly or by its service providers, which accounts for most of the products noted above, through both framework agreements and/or open procurement processes. A partnership approach with framework providers,

service providers and our supply chains to bring about change is essential; to promote innovation and identify alternative products and solutions to ensure functionality and ongoing customer needs are met.

Relevant tenders, by the Council, shall include criteria to consider how our supply chain look at the circular economy in relation to plastics, with businesses being encouraged to minimise waste and to recycle from cradle to cradle. Such criteria shall support elimination and reduction of plastic packaging.

Following identification of alternative products, access to current products shall be removed from the Council's ordering system catalogues where these exist.

Further details of benchmarks and actions to be developed are provided within the Action Plan at Appendix 2 of this Strategy.

#### **Section 4 – Promoting the Reduction and Removal of Single Use Plastics across the Borough**

Through taking a lead on the reduction and removal of SUP across all Council offices we will take forward the opportunity to lead and to educate and promote awareness of the negative impact they have and identify alternative products for Council staff, visitors and work with partners, which can directly inform the Newcastle-under-Lyme community.

In addition to the work undertaken by the council directly to reduce and manage its SUP, the council works closely will engage with the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Council's partners across the region demonstrating commitment to the management and removal of plastics locally. The region has seen projects such as 'Plastic Free Newcastle under Lyme' a page dedicated to helping Newcastle under Lyme reduce its reliance on single-use/disposable plastics and to raising awareness of the Plastic Free Communities movement (developed by national marine conservation charity, Surfers Against Sewage).

The Council will work collaboratively with Keele University Sustainability Hub to identify how best to communicate the adverse impacts on the environment as a result of the continued use of SUP.

Through the partnership work undertaken by the council there is an opportunity to engage with external groups and influence the activities or resources being utilised to ensure consideration is given to reducing single use plastics at source.

## **Section 5 – Impact**

### Environmental

Growing plastic waste generation and its leakage into our environment must be tackled if we are to achieve a truly circular lifecycle for plastics. Today, littering and leakage of plastic waste harm the environment, cause economic damage to a range of activities and may affect human health through the food chain.

### Economic

With the achievement of this strategy within Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, depending on cost implications from the supply chain to innovate and develop alternative solutions, there may be potential cost increases; however this will be defined as further described within the action plan.

## **Section 6 – Reporting**

Outcomes will be reported half yearly highlighting progress against the proposed activities contained within the council's action plan identified in Appendix 2.

## Appendix 1 – Motion for Full Council

### Motion for Full Council, 21 November 2018: Single-use plastics

Proposer: Cllr Mark Holland

Seconder: Jennifer Cooper

#### Council notes that:

- (1) Estimates of the amount of plastic waste entering the world's oceans range from 4.8 million tonnes to 13 million tonnes annually. A 2016 study found that a majority of this waste comprised single use plastic items and packaging.
- (2) It is forecast that, without urgent action to cut demand, UK plastic production will reach 34 billion tonnes by 2050.
- (3) The Marine Conservation Society reported an average of 718 items of litter per 100m of UK beach in 2017, an increase of 10% compared to 2016.
- (4) Following the broadcast of the documentary series 'Blue Planet II' one year ago, public awareness of marine plastic pollution and concern about the long-term harmful effect on the environment and wildlife of plastic waste has greatly increased.

**Council welcomes** the UK Government's 25-year plan to eliminate avoidable plastic waste and the recent resolution of the European Parliament endorsing an EU-wide ban on a range of single-use plastic items.

**Council believes** that in support of national and supranational efforts, we should lead by example in our own borough and take all measures possible to reduce plastic waste and eliminate completely plastic waste that is avoidable.

#### Council resolves:

- (1) To seek to eliminate all single-use plastics within Council-managed premises and facilities by 2023, the 850th anniversary of our loyal and ancient borough's charter.
- (2) To encourage our partners in Castle House to adopt a similar goal.
- (3) To work with suppliers to reduce single-use plastics within the Council's supply chain, with the ambition of eliminating single-use plastics from goods and services provided to the Council by 2025.
- (4) To ask the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling to raise this matter at the next meeting of the Staffordshire Joint Waste Management Board.
- (5) To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs:
  - (a) informing him of this Council's policy
  - (b) responding positively to his consultation on proposals to ban the distribution and sale of plastic straws, plastic-stemmed cotton buds and plastic drink stirrers in England
  - (c) urging him to bring forward plans for an England-wide plastic bottle deposit return scheme, in line with similar schemes that are forthcoming from the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland.

**Appendix 2 – Action Plan**

Action:	Responsible Officer/s:	Timescales:	Comments/Progress:
1. Create a baseline of current SUP used across the Council:	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	October 2019	
2. Identify any investment required to implement reuse products (e.g. water bottles instead of cups) and consider budget options available to support this activity:	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	Throughout the period of the strategy / action Plan.	
3. Evaluate and trial alternative solutions:	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	Ongoing	
4. Identify where no alternative products are currently available within the market and work with local partners and current suppliers to develop solutions:	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	Ongoing	
5. Roll out of alternate products	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	Ongoing	
6. Where catalogues exist remove SUP products from ordering	Creditors - Procurement & Commissioning	Ongoing	



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catalogues.			
7. Remove use of SUP cups at water coolers and coffee machines across the Council	Facilities Services Procurement & Commissioning	October 2019	
8. Review current café contract with service provider identifying the use of SUP and examine alternate solutions	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	September 2019	
9. Within the Leisure Centre a review of water fountains will take place with recyclable drinking cones and signage to encourage refilling of bottles	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	September 2019	
10. Undertake research into what other council's / like partners are doing to reduce / eliminate SUP.	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group	Initial Research May 2019	
11. Support and encourage the Borough's businesses and institutions to commit to reducing single use plastic waste in their organisation, for example, by taking the 'plastic free pledge'.	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group, BID...	Ongoing	
12. Engage with external partners to further develop the borough	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group, Dr. Sharon George	Ongoing	

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council's strategy.	Keele University		
13. Engage with external partners to further develop the borough council's strategy.	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group, Jenny Mason – Plastic Free Newcastle-under-Lyme	Ongoing	
14. Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling to raise this matter at the next meeting of the Staffordshire Joint Waste Management Board	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling	March 2019	
15. Research into available support groups and any accrediting bodies that the council might wish to engage with and/or support.	Business Improvement & SUP Officer Group,	May 2019	
16. To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: (a) informing him of this Council's policy; (b) responding positively to his consultation on proposals to ban the distribution and sale of plastic straws, plastic-stemmed cotton buds and plastic drink stirrers in England; (c) urging him to bring forward plans for an England-wide plastic bottle deposit return scheme, in line with similar schemes that	Leader of the Council - SUP Officer Group,	February 2019	

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are forthcoming from the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland.			
17. Avoidance of unintended consequences <sup>1</sup> e.g. replacement for SUPs are either not biodegradable, recyclable or create un-beneficial impacts to the council:		Ongoing	
18.			
19.			
20.			

*Notes:*

<sup>1</sup> outcomes that are not the ones foreseen and intended by a purposeful action...