



CLIMATE ACTION for West Oxfordshire

Avoidable Single-Use Plastics, Statement of Principles

Plastic waste is one of the largest environmental challenges facing the world today. In everyday life, avoidable single-use plastic (SUPs) items may only be used for a few seconds, but once discarded can last for centuries within the natural environment.

The UK Government estimates that 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since 1950¹, of which an estimated 150 million tonnes is currently in the World's oceans. Without urgent action to cut the growing demand for plastic, it is likely that 34 billion tonnes of plastic will have been produced by 2050¹. The majority of this will not be recycled, but rather be disposed of in landfill or will pollute the world's continents and oceans.

What are SUPs?

SUPs is a broad term which includes all products that are made wholly or partly of plastic and are typically intended to be used just once and/or for a short period of time before being disposed of. Avoidable SUPs can therefore include disposable utensils, wet wipes, plastic drinks bottle, razor blades, plastic bags, coffee cups, straws and plastic lids.

To support West Oxfordshire District Council in becoming free of avoidable SUPs, the Council will:

- Work alongside staff to ensure that avoidable SUPs are minimised across all of our offices and places of work.
- Remove, wherever possible, the use of all avoidable SUPs within catering services used during Council meetings and events.
- Support contractors to ensure that avoidable SUPs are minimised where possible.
- Encourage the wider community to make SUP-free choices.
- Ensure that the Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy minimises and considers alternatives to avoidable SUPs.
- Encourage the development of community and staff volunteering groups to collect litter and minimise plastic pollution within our parks and public open spaces.
- Aim to use recycled plastic materials as a direct replacement for SUPs where plastic use is unavoidable.
- Continually review internal waste and recycling schemes, and assess options to use commercial companies to recycle staff single use plastics e.g. Terracycle schemes for crisp packets.
- Work alongside our partners where appropriate to support innovative projects which aim to reduce avoidable SUPs waste.

¹ Smith. L. (2019) Plastic Waste Briefing Paper, House of Commons Library, Number 08515.