

Single Use Plastics Informal Working Group

Update from Councillor de Whalley

Background

The first fully synthetic plastic was Bakelite invented in 1907 by Leo Baekeland, as a substitute for shellac, a natural electrical insulator; Bakelite also proved durable, heat resistant, and, ideally suited for mechanical mass production. By 1950 some 2 million metric tonnes of virgin plastics were being produced annually to estimates of 367 million tonnes of virgin plastics in 2020, with an incredible 381 million tonnes in plastic waste produced, up to 12.7 million tonnes of which enters our oceans. Around 80% of marine litter is plastic with an estimated grand total of 25 trillion pieces of macro plastics and 51 trillion particles of microplastics (A total of 165 million tonnes of plastic circulate in Earth's marine environments). Plastics pollute every corner of the planet.

Nationally

From 1 April 2021 a ban was placed on single-use plastic straws, cotton buds, and drink stirrers in England,

From 1 April 2022, companies must register for a new Plastic Packaging Tax of £200 per tonne, on plastic packaging which doesn't meet a minimum threshold of at least 30% recycled content.

Defra is currently looking at:

Phasing out Single-use plastic tableware e.g. plates, cutlery, etc. Each year England uses 1.1 billion single-use plates and 4.25 billion items of single-use cutlery, most of which are plastic.

An Extended Producer Responsibility scheme will mean packaging producers will be expected to cover the cost of recycling and disposing of their packaging.

Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers to recycle billions more plastic bottles and stop them being landfilled, incinerated, or littered. Through a small deposit placed on drinks products, the DRS is intended to incentivise people to recycle;
Introduction of Consistent Recycling Collections for every household and business in England.

Single Use Plastics Group

Received updates from Barry Brandford

During lockdown:

Garden Waste Bin sales have increased with a significant increase in the collection of garden waste

Dry recycling especially glass had increased.

Textiles had doubled.

There were No food waste collections which have since resumed (about six months)

Noted that recyclables reduce in quality at each iteration

Refill Schemes

Discussions on schemes where customers bring their own containers. Cllr Bower gave an example of a refill scheme at Hunstanton Town Hall where household products can be purchased.

Christmas Norfolk Recycles Campaign

Took advantage of online messaging using social media with a prominently featured scrunch test for wrapping paper.

Fly Tipping

The next meeting has tabled a presentation/discussion with Cllr Kunes (as portfolio holder) on fly tipping and public nuisance and how it fits in with single use plastics as a result of concerns raised by the group.

Strategies at this Council's disposal

Information aimed at altering consumer expectations and habits to improve responsibility and reduce overconsumption.

Encouraging changes in product design

Better waste management systems

Clean up and remediation activities

Recommendation from the group

A Schools competition to design a wrap for the waste collection vehicles. Costs estimated at £400 to £600 for changing the livery on the 26t and 15t vehicle fleet excluding any additional design costs. Cllr Kunes, the portfolio holder has offered the possibility of a sponsor for this.

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