

Single Use Plastic Policy

Ref. No.	
Category (Y/N)	
People	
Place	
Corporate	
In Constitution	

Policy Details

What is this policy for?	The Single Use Plastic (SUP) Policy commits Dorset Council to act to remove and reduce the use of Single Use Plastic from Dorset Council's operations and services as well as working towards finding positive solutions for reducing unnecessary waste across Dorset.
Who does this policy affect?	The Single Use Plastic Policy will affect: Dorset Council Offices including County Hall Cafe (Phase 1) Dorset Council Operations and Services (Phase 2)
Keywords	Single Use Plastic, Plastic, Climate Emergency, Environmental Advice
Author	Sophie Colley - Litter Free Dorset Project Coordinator Email: sophie.colley@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Dorset Council policy adopted from	This policy applies across the Dorset Council area
Does this policy relate to any laws?	N/A
Is this policy linked to any other Dorset Council policies?	Reference number and details of any other Dorset Council policies this policy is linked to, and in what way they are linked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social value policy – A social value policy would outline how staff would choose where charitable donations would be allocated (milk tops and crisp packets) Climate Emergency – Reducing plastic will reduce Dorset Councils' carbon footprint
Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	N/A
Other Impact Assessments	N/A

Status and Approvals

Status	<i>DRAFT</i>	Version	<i>001</i>
Last review date	N/A – New Policy	Next review date	January 2021
Approved by (Director)	Executive Director of Place John Sellgren	Date approved	
Member/ Partnership Board Approval	<i>SUP Task Group</i> <i>Cllr Ray Brian</i>	Date approved	

Single Use Policy (SUP) – Putting it into context

Background to the Policy – setting the scene

Dorset Council Single Use Plastic Task Group

Dorset Council has a designated Single Use Plastic task group to focus on making changes within Dorset Council. This group includes key representatives across the council including procurement, facilities, communications, Sustainability, property, estate & assets, waste (DWP) and environmental advice. The group also has three Councillors within the membership. The work to reduce SUP is being coordinated by the hosted partnership Litter Free Dorset.

The Issue

Single-use plastics can be described as any disposable plastic item that is designed to be used only once. Single-use plastics are often used in packaging, consumer products, cosmetics and healthcare. Examples include: plastic bags, disposable utensils, beverage containers, balloons and wet wipes. It is estimated that around 50% of plastic waste we produce globally is packaging that is used just once.

There are two key issues linked to this policy:

1. **Plastic pollution is litter** - Plastic pollution is both a global and local issue that affects the natural and urban environment, the oceans, beaches and links to people's health and wellbeing. Dorset has some of the most beautiful countryside in Britain, numerous designations including the Jurassic coast world heritage site, the Dorset and Cranborne Chase Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a highly designated coast and marine environment. All of which contribute greatly to the local economy and support a diverse range of habitats and species which are at risk due to plastic pollution. Plastic pollution from SUP found in our towns and villages impacts aesthetically but is also costly to clear up.
2. **Plastic is a major contributor to climate change** - Chemicals derived from fossil fuel production are used to make almost all plastics. The more plastic made, the more petrochemicals are required, and the more petrochemicals required, the higher the demand for gas, oil and even coal. By reducing or removing SUP this will mean Dorset Council are helping to reduce the demand for fossil fuels, thereby reducing the CO₂ in the atmosphere. This will support the Dorset Council climate change emergency work.

National Policy

The UK Government published its 25-Year Environment Plan in January 2018, which includes a target of "achieving zero avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042". DEFRA's new waste and resources strategy 2018/19 also sets out several plastic waste reduction reforms to help the Government achieve its ambitious plans for a greener future. Reducing SUP has become a priority for many local authorities across the UK and elsewhere. The target of "removing SUP from government estate by 2020" highlighted in DEFRA's new Waste and Resources Strategy requires all local authorities to take action immediately in order to meet the given 2020 target.

Challenges

Plastic is one of the most useful inventions in recent history. However, the current volume of plastic waste means it has also now become a pressing environmental challenge. Its low cost has encouraged the development of many SUP items:

- SUP is found in many products: medical supplies that cannot be reused for safety and hygiene reasons, cigarette filters containing plastic among other materials, chewing gums, disposable nappies, food packaging, balloons, cups, straws and many more.
- The types of polymers used to produce some items are currently hard to recycle so they often end up in residual waste. The numbers of SUP items are high; the UK Government estimates that every year 4.7 billion plastic straws, 316 million plastic stirrers and 1.8 billion plastic-stemmed cotton buds end up in landfill.
- Items used 'on-the-go' are the most often littered, creating an environmental pollutant and removing the possibility of managing their end of life effectively.
- When SUP items are not adequately captured and managed at their end of life, they represent a real threat to our ecosystems by degrading into tiny particles. Known as micro-plastics, they can contaminate the food web including being ingested by plankton.

Single Use Policy (SUP) – Dorset

The Single Use Plastic Policy

Dorset Council will act to remove and reduce the use of Single Use Plastic from its operations and services as well as working towards finding positive solutions for reducing unnecessary waste across Dorset.

How we will go about doing this:

A SUP action plan supports this policy setting out what, how and when this will be achieved. Implementing this policy Dorset Council will:

1. Lead by example
 - All Dorset Council teams will reduce and remove SUP across Dorset Council buildings and services
 - Embed the SUP policy into other key council strategies, policies and plans
 - Where the use of plastics is unavoidable, Dorset Council will encourage the use of recycled plastics, supporting manufacturers that make products from locally sourced waste plastics
2. Work with our suppliers and contractors
 - Ask Dorset Council suppliers to have a SUP policy in place or demonstrate that they are minimising the use of single-use plastics in their service provision and are finding sustainable alternatives (where appropriate)
 - The SUP policy is embedded in procurement and tender processes for Dorset Council
3. Support Dorset
 - Work with event organisers to eliminate SUP across all Dorset events held on Dorset Council land and share guidance for this more widely
 - Continue to support local communities by sharing best practice, raise awareness, supporting and promoting positive initiatives, campaigns and actions for reducing waste

Action Plan

The single use plastic action plan will provide the on-going planned changes to remove and reduce SUP.

The work to implement the policy will be in 2 phases:

- Phase 1: Reducing single use plastic in Dorset Council offices
- Phase 2: Reducing single use plastic in Dorset Council services and operations

A SUP audit will be carried out through the facilities team on an annual basis in September.