



Single Use Plastic Policy

25 July 2019

Every year in the UK, roughly 5.5 billion plastic bottles are not recycled - many of which find their way to landfill or the ocean (Greenpeace, February 2019).

In recent months, there has been increasing media coverage, high levels of public interest and emerging government policy on reducing Single Use Plastics (SUP). The negative environmental effects of plastics, particularly upon marine species and habitats, have recently received high profile coverage in the press and television. The contamination of our seas by plastics was particularly highlighted by the BBC's Blue Planet II documentary series.

There is now a much greater understanding of plastics and its often needless use. It is important to reduce the demand for plastic, the number of plastics in circulation and continue to improve our recycling rates.

In January 2018, the Government published its much anticipated 25 Year Environment Plan. The plan seeks zero avoidable plastic waste by 2042. Building on this, in December 2018, the Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy which gives a longer term policy direction to eliminate avoidable plastic waste of all kinds by 2050 (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

The Surrey Waste Partnership, which represents all 12 partner local authorities in Surrey, adopted its SUP Strategy in January 2019. Woking Borough Council seeks to build on this commitment through its own SUP Policy below.

What are Single Use Plastics?

Single-use plastics (SUP) can be defined as 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 (Source: HM Treasury) .

The Council's commitment to tackling Single Use Plastics

In March 2018, the Council made a pledge to WWF's Earth Hour to work through its operations to identify how we can remove as much plastic as possible.

So far we have:

- Removed plastic water bottles from Council meetings saving approximately 720 bottles a year.
- Launched [Refill Woking](#) in Woking Town Centre at the end of September 2018. With the help of Woking Shopping, there are now over 20 participating cafes and restaurants where members of the public can refill their plastic bottles with free tap water.

- Installed two new bottle filling stations in Albion Square (soon to be commissioned) as part of the railway station refurbishments encouraging people to refill their bottles on the move.
- Introduced segregated waste bins across the Council offices to help staff do their bit to improve recycling rates.
- Continued to provide residents in Woking Borough with a kerbside recycling service to enable them to recycle plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays. Cartons and cups can be recycled at the mini recycling sites located at supermarket car parks in Brookwood, Goldsworth Park, Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet.

We have built on our WWF pledge and our actions above by adopting a **SUP Policy** which will sit within the strategy framework of [Woking 2050](#). The Policy is to:

- Continue to identify how we can reduce avoidable SUP across our operations and estate.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and partners about SUP to increase our recycling rates across our own estate.
- Continue to work closely with Surrey Waste Partnership authorities to deliver on joint actions that tackle SUP waste.
- Promote awareness of schemes that enable Borough residents, visitors and local businesses to reduce SUP.
- End the sale and provision of SUP products across the Council estate (e.g. in vending machines and community centres).
- Support local initiatives that strive to address SUP avoidance in Woking Borough.
- Ensure that our procurement policy and procedures require all of our suppliers to reduce and work towards zero avoidable SUP use wherever possible). This may involve assisting in identifying suitable alternative products.
- Ensure our public events seek to reduce and work towards zero avoidable SUP use and provision where possible.
- Share good practice and raise awareness around SUP avoidance and replacements.