**Sefton Council’s Single Use Plastic Strategy**

**Overall Vision**

The Sefton coast is a very special place for nature and one of the most important sites in Great Britain, according to Nature Connected <http://www.natureconnected.org/the-sefton-coast/>. The 22 miles of coastline provides a home for many very rare/endangered plants and animals with the sand flats and estuaries providing safe refuge for over 350,000 birds from the Arctic each autumn, winter and spring.

Sefton Council recognises that this special environment needs to be protected from the growing problem of plastic waste appearing due to littering, poor waste management and the pollution of water courses.

The Council believes that the reduction of single-use plastics (SUP) would benefit health and wellbeing in Sefton, reduce waste and ultimately help protect the coastline. Additionally, the mass intentional release of helium filled latex balloons (one form of SUP) and Chinese/sky lanterns pose hazards to wildlife and livestock causing injury and death. Lanterns can also cause injury to humans, damage to buildings and cause false callouts to the coastguard.

Whilst the Council recognises that there are limitations in its powers to ban single use plastics across the borough, the overall vision is to eliminate the use of SUP wherever possible across its assets, and encourage staff, communities, businesses and partners to reduce the avoidable use of SUPs too.

**Aim**

The aim of this strategy is to phase out avoidable single use plastics in Council buildings and activities by 2020 wherever possible. This will include a ban on intentional balloon and lantern releases from Sefton controlled land.

The Council will also commit to raising awareness of the issues associated with SUP use, the Council’s stance on SUP & balloon lantern releases, and will encourage the public, businesses, and partners to act responsibly.

**Current Situation**

Many groups are already actively engaged in protecting Sefton’s coastline/greenspaces and are reporting that single use plastic including balloon fallout is a common item identified in clean-up activities.

Information from these groups, together with information from wider sources such as the Tidy Britain Group are helping to identify sources and quantities of plastic waste found on Sefton’s coastline/greenspaces.

There is a wide range of SUP in circulation and the Council envisages that some of this can be easily reduced/replaced or classed as avoidable, such as plastic straws, bags, cutlery and cups/lids through the creation of a robust strategy on SUP in buildings and activities and by encouraging positive behaviour change.

Some action has already been taken across Sefton Council facilities, with some leisure centres and facilities removing or replacing certain SUP.

However, the Council recognises that more needs to be done and that other SUP, such as medicine blister packs and some food packaging, will take longer to phase out. This is being addressed at a national level and producers have been asked to look at these issues as part of the UK emerging waste strategy <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england>

Locally, Sefton’s SUP strategy will aim to standardise the Council’s approach to the phasing out of SUP where possible.

**Our Approach**

Our unique coastal environment necessitates an initial focus on activities that occur near or on the coast, together with those avoidable plastics soon to be prohibited across the EU. Thus, our approach will be to focus on raising awareness, intervening in events and activities to reduce SUP, rather than a quantification of tonnages of plastics avoided, at this stage in our strategy.

The European Union aims to ban by 2021 the use of ***plastic*** ***cotton buds, cutlery, plates, straws, drink stirrers and sticks for balloons.*** Single-use ***drinks containers*** made with plastic will only be allowed on the market if their caps and lids remain attached. There will also be targets to reduce the use of plastic ***food containers* and *drinks cups*.**

While the Council recognises that the UK will exit the EU by October 2019, the Council has aligned Sefton’s SUP strategy with the **avoidable** SUP that are also covered in the EU proposals, which means Sefton will be well placed when the ban does take effect, and will concentrate efforts on the elimination of SUP for the following items:

* Cutlery
* Straws
* Drink stirrers
* Plates
* Sticks for balloons (and balloons)
* Cups and lids

We will achieve this initially by prohibiting their use in concessions (food and drink) awarded by Sefton Council, which were awarded in April 2019.

One particular form of SUP, latex balloons, will be targeted through prohibiting the intentional release of balloons and lanterns from Sefton controlled land.

To prioritise coastal and natural locations, the Council will initially target:

* concessions (mobile food and drink outlets and ice cream vans) that operate under Sefton licences
* Food outlets (including take–away) through the Council’s food safety teams and business investment support teams.
* Events on the coast, Council parks and for balloon and lantern releases, any land controlled by Sefton Council e.g. schools.

During 2019, action will therefore focus on:

* Approval for Sefton’s SUP strategy
* Developing a network of partners to support on this issue
* Gathering and improving evidence of usage of SUP across the Council
* Reviewing waste management in key locations (key coastal sites)
* Implementing initial actions
* Raising awareness of the strategy with partners and the general public\* including the policy on intentional balloon and lantern releases
* Report back to members on a regular basis
* The development of a communications plan to underpin the strategy, which will inform the public and other key audiences of the reasons for phasing out SUP and encouraging them to switch to alternatives.

**Financials resourcing**

The SUP strategy is currently being co-ordinated by the Energy & Environmental Management Section together with the Communications Team. The teams are utilising officer time and materials available without incurring additional cost to the Council.

**Review and reporting**

Progress on the SUP Council Motion and resultant strategy will be provided to elected members each quarter (Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services and Ward Cllr. Blundellsands) and via Cabinet Meetings, with an update and renewed strategy to be prepared for May 2020 onwards.

**Measuring success**

As mentioned earlier, we will adopt a pragmatic approach and evaluate our efforts based on the completion of activities. Therefore, our measures of success for 2019/2020 would be;

* Engagement with groups with an interest in reducing SUP in Sefton
* Improve our knowledge of avoidable SUP usage across the Council
* Promotion of our policy on balloon and lantern releases through event licences
* Inclusion of avoidable SUP requirements in our food concession tenders and event licences
* Promotion of SUP issues to schools and partners as part of year of the environment
* Engagement with groups across Sefton to raise awareness and encourage action

In conjunction, a supporting communications strategy will be developed once this strategy has been approved by Cabinet. We anticipate an associated plan during August 2019, to provide a range of engagement materials based on research carried out by the Communications team.

**Conclusion**

Sefton Council recognises that it acts as a steward of a very special environment. We are acting to protect our area from the growing problem of plastic waste, in order to benefit health and wellbeing in Sefton, reduce waste and ultimately help protect the coastline.

**Appendix 1 – Council Motion 19/7/2018 Single Use Plastics**

It was moved by Councillor Roscoe and seconded by Councillor Moncur and unanimously:

RESOLVED:

This Council notes that the borough of Sefton has approximately 22 miles of coastline, which is enjoyed by residents and visitors and plays host to some of the most rare plants and animals in the country.

Around 70 per cent of all the litter in the oceans is made of plastic. Plastic pollution in the sea is a symptom of a more systemic issue originating on land and related to the design, the use and the disposal of plastic items, particularly single-use plastic. To reduce it, a key priority is to focus on interventions and stewardship to help reduce the quantity of plastic waste generated by society and the associated release of litter to the ocean.

It is estimated that about 275 million tons of plastic waste are being generated each year in 192 countries around the world, with between 4.8 million and 12.7 million tons being washed or dumped into the sea. If we do not change our behaviour, a threefold increase is predicted in the amount of plastics in the ocean between 2015 and 2025 (1)

Council believes that the reduction of single-use plastic would benefit health in Sefton, reduce waste and ultimately help protect our coast.

Council therefore directs Officers to report to Cabinet on:

1.          Development of a robust strategy to ensure Sefton Council works towards phasing out single-use plastics (SUP) in its activities and buildings within the next two years;

2.     Work with partners and other large institutions to encourage them in developing similar strategies to reduce SUP: and

3.     An ongoing Communications plan to inform the public of Sefton of the reasons for phasing out SUP and encourage them to switch to alternatives.

(1)    Jambeck, J. R., Geyer, R., Wilcox, C., Siegler, T. R., Perryman, M., Andrady, A., Narayan, R. & Law, K. L. 2015 Plastic Waste Inputs from Land into the Ocean. Science 347, 768-771. Law, K. L. & Thompson, R. C. (2014) Microplastics in the seas. Science 345, 144–145.

**Appendix 2 – Council Motion 25/4/2019 Intentional Balloon and Chinese/sky lantern releases**

**COUNCIL MOTION**

**25 APRIL 2019**

Moved by: Councillor Roscoe

Seconded by: Councillor Fairclough

**Policy on Intentional Balloon and Chinese / Sky Lantern Releases**

This Council notes:

The mass intentional release of helium filled latex balloons and Chinese/sky lanterns

pose hazards to wildlife and livestock causing injury and death. Lanterns can also

cause injury to humans, damage to building and cause false callouts to the

coastguard.

The Marine Conservation Society reported during the September 2016 'Great British

Beach Clean' event, volunteer beach cleaners found a 53.5% increase on 2015 in the

amount of balloon related litter on UK beaches (1)

Balloons have been found ingested in endangered turtles, dolphins, whales and

seabirds (2). Livestock have been killed from eating broken up lanterns which are

accidentally picked up by harvesting machinery and put into winter feeds. (3)

Under Section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 it is an offence to throw

down, drop or otherwise deposit and then leave litter. Local authorities have a statutory

duty to enforce this Act with fixed penalty notices and have a responsibility to keep

public open spaces free from litter.

Currently over 50 UK local authorities have agreed to implement a ban on balloon and

lantern releases on their land.

This Council believes that all Sefton residents should be discouraged from releasing

balloons and lanterns due to the damage that is caused to our environments,

(particularly to marine life).

This Council therefore directs Officers to report to the Cabinet on:

1. The drawing up of a policy of not permitting the release of balloons and Chinese

Lanterns from Council-owned land e.g. parks, open spaces, and beaches; and

any potential financial implications arising from this Motion

2. The Council not endorsing events where balloon and lantern releases are to take

place.

3. Where Council property is leased to a third party, e.g. schools, the leaseholder

is written to asking them to observe the ban on balloon and Chinese lantern

releases.

4. When leases or licences are renewed, an explicit clause banning balloon and

lantern releases is added.

5. An ongoing communications plan to inform Sefton residents and visitors on the

dangers of balloon and lantern releases and informing them of the alternatives

such as sponsoring a tree or a lighting candle event.

(1) https://xray-mag.com/content/time-back-banning-balloon-releases

(2) https://www.mcsuk.org/news/swift-action-shows-that-balloon-dont-let-gocampaign-

is-vital

(3) https://www.mcsuk.org/news/marine-charity-urges-communities-to-help-stopdamaging-

balloon

**Appendix 3 – European Commission press release on SUP new EU rules.**

# Single-use plastics: New EU rules to reduce marine litter

Brussels, 28 May 2018

With the amount of harmful plastic litter in oceans and seas growing ever greater, the European Commission is proposing new EU-wide rules to target the 10 single-use plastic products most often found on Europe's beaches and seas, as well as lost and abandoned fishing gear.

Together these constitute 70% of all marine litter items. The new rules are proportionate and tailored to get the best results. This means different measures will be applied to different products. Where alternatives are readily available and affordable, single-use plastic products will be banned from the market.For products without straight-forward alternatives, the focus is on limiting their use through a national reduction in consumption; design and labelling requirements and waste management/clean-up obligations for producers. Together, the new rules will put Europe ahead of the curve on an issue with global implications.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, responsible for sustainable development said: *"This Commission promised to be big on the big issues and leave the rest to Member States. Plastic waste is undeniably a big issue and Europeans need to act together to tackle this problem, because plastic waste ends up in our air, our soil, our oceans, and in our food. Today's proposals will reduce single use plastics on our supermarket shelves through a range of measures. We will ban some of these items, and substitute them with cleaner alternatives so people can still use their favourite products."*

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness, added: *"Plastic can be fantastic, but we need to use it more responsibly. Single use plastics are not a smart economic or environmental choice, and today's proposals will help business and consumers to move towards sustainable alternatives. This is an opportunity for Europe to lead the way, creating products that the world will demand for decades to come, and extracting more economic value from our precious and limited resources. Our collection target for plastic bottles will also help to generate the necessary volumes for a thriving plastic recycling industry."*

Across the world, plastics make up 85% of marine litter. And plastics are even reaching people's lungs and dinner tables, with micro-plastics in the air, water and food having an unknown impact on their health. Tackling the plastics problem is a must and it can bring new opportunities for innovation, competitiveness and job creation.

**Companies will be given a competitive edge**: having one set of rules for the whole EU market will create a springboard for European companies to develop economies of scale and be more competitive in the booming global marketplace for sustainable products. By setting up re-use systems (such as deposit refund schemes), companies can ensure a stable supply of high quality material. In other cases, the incentive to look for more sustainable solutions can give companies the technological lead over global competitors.

**Different measures for different products**

After addressing plastic bags in 2015, 72% of Europeans said they have cut down on their use of plastic bags (Eurobarometer). The EU is now turning its attention to the 10 single-use plastic products and fishing gear that together **account for 70% of the marine litter** in Europe. The new rules will introduce:

* **Plastic ban in certain products:** Where alternatives are readily available and affordable, single-use plastic products will be banned from the market. The ban will apply to ***plastic*** ***cotton buds, cutlery, plates, straws, drink stirrers and sticks for balloons*** which will all have to be made exclusively from more sustainable materials instead. Single-use ***drinks containers*** made with plastic will only be allowed on the market if their caps and lids remain attached;
* **Consumption reduction targets:** Member States will have to reduce the use of plastic ***food containers* and *drinks cups*.** They can do so by setting national reduction targets, making alternative products available at the point of sale, or ensuring that single-use plastic products cannot be provided free of charge;
* **Obligations for producers**: Producers will help cover the costs of waste management and clean-up, as well as awareness raising measures for ***food containers, packets and wrappers (such as for crisps and sweets), drinks containers and cups, tobacco products with filters (such as cigarette butts), wet wipes, balloons, and lightweight plastic bags***. The industry will also be given incentives to develop less polluting alternatives for these products;
* **Collection targets**: Member States will be obliged to collect 90% of single-use *plastic* ***drinks bottles*** by 2025, for example through deposit refund schemes;
* **Labelling Requirements:** Certain products will require a clear and standardised labelling which indicates how waste should be disposed, the negative environmental impact of the product, and the presence of plastics in the products. This will apply to ***sanitary towels, wet wipes and balloons***;
* **Awareness-raising measures:** Member States will be obliged to raise consumers' awareness about the negative impact of littering of single-use plastics and fishing gear as well as about the available re-use systems and waste management options for all these products.

For **fishing gear**, which accounts for 27% of all beach litter, the Commission aims to complete the existing policy framework with producer responsibility schemes for fishing gear containing plastic. Producers of plastic fishing gear will be required to cover the costs of waste collection from port reception facilities and its transport and treatment. They will also cover the costs of awareness-raising measures. Details on the new rules for fishing gear are available [here](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/item-detail.cfm?item_id=628060).

**Next Steps**

The Commission's proposals will now go to the European Parliament and Council for adoption. The Commission urges the other institutions to treat this as a priority file, and to deliver tangible results for Europeans before the elections in May 2019.

To mark the World Environment Day on 5 June, the Commission will also launch an EU-wide awareness-raising campaign to put the spotlight on consumer choice and highlight individual people's role in combatting plastic pollution and marine litter.

Of course, tackling EU-produced marine litter is only one part of the world-wide picture. But by taking the lead, the European Union will be in a strong position to drive change at the global level – through the G7 and G20 and through the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Background**

Today's initiative delivers on the commitment made in the [European Plastics Strategy](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-5_en.htm) to tackle wasteful and damaging plastic litter through legislative action, which was welcomed by the European Parliament and Council and by citizens and stakeholders. The measures proposed will contribute to Europe's transition towards a Circular Economy, and to reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU's climate commitments and industrial policy objectives.

Today's Directive builds on existing rules such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and Waste Directives, and complements other measures taken against marine pollution, such as under the Port Reception Facilities Directive, and proposed restrictions on microplastics and oxo-degradable plastics. It follows a similar approach to the successful 2015 Plastic Bags Directive, which was positively received and brought about a rapid shift in consumer behaviour.

The proposed Directive will bring both environmental and economic benefits. The new measures will for example:

* avoid the emission of 3.4 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent;
* avoid environmental damages which would cost the equivalent of €22 billion by 2030;
* save consumers a projected €6.5 billion.

Along with the new EU waste rules and targets adopted this month, the new rules will provide the clarity, legal certainty and economies of scale that EU companies need to take the lead in new markets for innovative multi-use alternatives, new materials and better designed products.

In line with Better Regulation requirements, stakeholder consultations and an open public consultation and thorough impact assessments were carried out in preparation of today's proposal. In the public consultation between December 2017 and February 2018, 95% of respondents agreed that action to tackle single use plastics is both necessary and urgent, and 79% believed that these measures should be taken at EU level in order to be effective. 70% of manufacturers and 80% of brands also replied that action is necessary and urgent.72 % have cut down on their use of plastic bags and 38 % of them over the last year.

**For More Information**

[Questions and Answers: New EU rules on single-use plastics](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-18-3909_en.htm)

[Factsheet](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/single-use_plastics_factsheet.pdf)

[Proposal for a Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/single-use_plastics_proposal.pdf) & [Annex](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/single-use_plastics_proposal_annex.pdf)

[Impact assessment](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/single-use_plastics_impact_assessment.pdf) & [Summary](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/single-use_plastics_impact_assessment_summary.pdf)

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http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\_IP-18-3927\_en.htm