

Report for: Cabinet, 20 January 2026

Item number: 12

Title: Updated Single Use Plastics Policy and Action Plan.

Report

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Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/

Non-Key Decision: Key

1 Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to adopt the Single Use Plastics (SUPs) Policy 2026 and approve the Single Use Plastics Action Plan.
- 1.2 The SUP Policy updates the council's strategic objectives around the reduction of SUPs, both within its operations and across the wider borough.
- 1.3 The Action Plan outlines the measures already implemented, those currently underway, and future actions planned to deliver on these objectives.

2 Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 SUPs are defined by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as: 'any disposable plastic item which is designed to be used only once.' The versatility and durability of plastic mean its use is widespread. As well as contributing to litter, SUP are made from chemicals derived from fossil fuel production. By reducing or removing SUP we will help reduce the demand for fossil fuels, thereby reducing the CO2 in the atmosphere.
- 2.2 Haringey Council is well placed to help tackle the issue of SUP. Our priority is to address the unnecessary use of SUPs across our own services, in our buildings and schools and influence their use across the borough.
- 2.3 Haringey's last SUP policy ran from 2020 – 2022 and successfully delivered a wide range of plastic reduction initiatives. This policy update supports Theme 2 of the Corporate Delivery Plan - Responding to the Climate Emergency, and Objective C4 of the Haringey Climate Change Action plan. The revised Action Plan is built around four areas: council operations, schools, residents and

businesses. The Actions focus on internal practices such as procurement and staff engagement; building partnerships with schools to eliminate SUPs; supporting residents through awareness campaigns and working with local businesses and event organisers to reduce plastic use.

3 Recommendations

For Cabinet to:

- 3.1 Approve the Single Use Plastics Policy 2026 (Appendix 1) and accompanying Single Use Plastics Action Plan (Appendix 2), which outline how the council will reduce SUPs, both within its operations and across the borough.

4 Reasons for decision

- 4.1 Haringey Council is committed to doing everything possible to respond to the climate emergency and improve sustainability across its own operations and in the borough of Haringey.
- 4.2 Reducing consumption of SUPs across the council's offices and the borough will save money, reduce waste, improve our environment and decrease the number of harmful plastics ending up in the world's oceans or in landfill.
- 4.3 Haringey Council has already taken bold steps to reduce SUPs. The last SUP policy successfully delivered a wide range of plastic reduction initiatives including the introduction of water fountains for refillable bottles and recyclable drink cups in council offices.
- 4.4 This decision supports the council's Climate Emergency declaration and contributes to borough-wide carbon reduction targets. It also aligns with the Corporate Delivery Plan, particularly the strategic themes of Responding to the Climate Emergency and Place and Economy.
- 4.5 Haringey's last original SUP Policy ran from 2020 to 2022. Post-COVID, many council practices have changed; for example, changes in building usage, remote working affect SUP consumption and waste. Some actions outlined in the original plan are no longer applicable or relevant to current ways of working.
- 4.6 The national and regional landscape around SUP has also changed significantly since 2020, which means the original policy does not reflect recent developments in legislation, borough-wide sustainability goals, or best practice guidance from ReLondon and London Councils.
- 4.7 At a regional level, London Councils, ReLondon, and WRAP launched the "One World Living Single-Use Plastics Pledge" in 2025, encouraging boroughs to commit to reducing SUPs across their operations and supply chains. This new updated SUP policy reflects how Haringey is actively aligning with this pledge.
- 4.8 The Policy and Action Plan highlight the borough's commitment to eliminate problematic single-use plastics and transition to reuse in council operations and delivered services. It aligns with a growing regional movement across London and is in tandem with our commitment to the single use plastics pledge in partnership with London Council, ReLondon and WRAP.

5 Alternative options considered

- 5.1 Do Nothing was rejected. This would leave the council with an outdated SUP Policy, which does not reflect the how the council's operations have changed, or changes in the regional and national policy landscape. Not updating the policy would not support our Corporate Delivery Plan, or the Haringey Climate Action plan.
- 5.2 Do a Council Plan only, was rejected. This would focus only on the council as an organisation and on the influence the council has across the borough. The council is well placed to help reduce SUPs beyond its own organisation. To only focus on SUP the council directly uses would miss opportunities, such as SUPs at events, SUPs in schools and SUPs used by the council's partners, which are a vital part of the achieve the council's aim.

6 Background information

The problem with plastic waste

- 6.1 According to government estimates, 8 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the world's oceans every year, killing more than a million sea birds and 100,000 marine mammals. More than 80% of marine litter is plastics. Plastics take longer than other materials to break down and often break down into smaller, harmful micro-plastics. Single use items, such as plastic bottles or straws, are some of the most commonly found plastics in the world's oceans. These micro plastics get into the food chain and when dried act like a dust. Recent studies have found high levels of micro (less than 5mm in diameter) and nano-plastics (less than 0.001mm) in humans.
- 6.2 Coupled with the release of greenhouse gas from their production, manufacture and final disposal, the use of plastic is one of the most significant environmental issues of our time
- 6.3 According to WRAP's latest plastics market situation report, UK plastic waste arisings for 2019 were estimated at 3.7 million tonnes, of which packaging was the main source representing 59% of the total. In London, plastic makes up approximately 9% of the household waste stream (by weight) with plastic packaging accounting for nearly 70% of this. The majority of plastic packaging is single use, defined as plastic that is used only once, or for a short period of time, and then thrown away.

National, Regional and Local context

- 6.4 Since the original policy was adopted in 2020, the national and regional landscape around single-use plastics has evolved significantly. Public awareness and concern about the scale of single-use plastic consumption in the UK, and the resulting environmental consequences, has increased in the UK in recent years.
- 6.5 The UK government has introduced a series of new restrictions, including a ban on the supply of single-use plastic plates, cutlery, balloon sticks, and polystyrene food containers, which came into effect in October 2023.
- 6.6 The UK Government's 25-year environment plan sets out goals to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025, and to achieve zero avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042. The UK Government's Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) for

England, published in 2018, committed to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.

- 6.7 The Mayor of London set out commitments in the 2018 London Environment Strategy (LES) to significantly reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the UK's capital city, with a focus on water bottles and coffee cups.
- 6.8 At the regional level, there is a growing movement across London: several boroughs—including Hammersmith & Fulham, Lewisham, Newham, Richmond, and Wandsworth—have already committed to eliminating problematic single-use plastics through the One World Living Pledge, a collaborative initiative led by London Councils, ReLondon, and WRAP. These councils are actively implementing reuse strategies, sustainable procurement practices, and staff training programs to meet their 2030 targets.
- 6.9 Councils across the UK and across London have passed motions, endeavouring to reduce, remove or eliminate single use plastics from their own offices. Some have gone further and committed to reducing, removing or eliminating single use plastics in their region, city or locality.

Scope and definitions

- 6.10 SUP are defined by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as: 'any disposable plastic item which is designed to be used only once.' Examples of SUP include containers, wet-wipes, straws, bottles and carrier bags. Often many products have SUP lining too, such as disposable coffee cups and takeaway food containers.
- 6.11 The council's priority is to address the unnecessary use of SUPs across our own services, in our buildings and schools and influence reduction in their use across the borough. This will be done by both encouraging our staff to modify their behaviours, by changing our own practices around purchasing and procurement and supporting our residents and businesses to reduce the consumption of these items at home and work.
- 6.12 The council recognises that to achieve all of the actions outlined in the policy and action plan, there is a need to work effectively with partners, community groups, charities, businesses and residents. The issues of SUPs cannot be tackled alone. The council will endeavour to use its extensive links into the community to ensure that this ambition is achieved.

Single Use Plastics Policy and Action Plan

- 6.13 The scope of the policy and action plan is to focus on SUPs that can be directly reduced or eliminated. The action plan will be delivered across the organisation, with responsibility for delivery allocated to the relevant service.
- 6.14 The objectives are to:
 - 6.14.1 Work to eliminate the avoidable use of SUPs across council offices;
 - 6.14.2 Work in partnership with schools to eliminate avoidable SUPs;
 - 6.14.3 Improve procurement practices to reflect the commitment to reducing SUPs in Haringey;
 - 6.14.4 Raise awareness amongst staff and partners about SUP to increase recycling rates across the council's estate;

- 6.14.5 Support Residents and raise awareness about SUP. Promote schemes that enable them to reduce SUP;
- 6.14.6 Work with local businesses to reduce their use of SUP; and
- 6.14.7 Partner with event organisers to eliminate avoidable SUPs at events held on council land.

Previous success

- 6.15 Several businesses in the borough have already made a declaration to reduce SUPs and are undertaking efforts to reduce and remove the use of SUPs. In Crouch End the business community has come together to collectively share best practice and promote these key messages. They are reducing their use of SUP through actions and promotions – such as reuse bags, and free water refills.
- 6.16 Several primary and secondary schools have signed up to NLWA “In the Know” waste education programme and other student led projects to reduce the use of SUPs and increase recycling rates. Through this action plan we will encourage schools to sign up to the Surfers Against Sewage “Plastic Free Schools Pledge”, and we will be able to sign post more schools to best practice that they can replicate. We are working with NLWA to encourage schools to book sessions at EcoPark House to enhance young people’s understanding of waste management and circular economy principles.

Governance

- 6.17 An Internal board will be responsible for reviewing the SUP action plan on a yearly basis. Progress against the SUP actions will also be reported on a quarterly basis as part of the Corporate Delivery Plan updates. The cabinet member for climate action, Environment and Transport will also be updated on a monthly basis or when requested.
- 6.18 The Policy is accompanied by the Action Plan, in Appendix 2, which set out the completed, ongoing and future actions the council is undertaking to achieve each objective. The Action Plan represents the council’s desire to tackle SUPs in a transparent and accountable way.
- 6.19 The Action Plan is a living document that does not represent everything that is or can be done to tackle SUPs. It will be reported on and updated with new actions as and when the council enacts them.

7 Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2026-2028 high level strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The updated Policy and Action Plan is a deliverable under the theme, ‘Responding to the climate emergency’, outcome area, ‘A Cleaner, Low Waste Haringey’ and activity, ‘reduce single-use plastics in the council and wider borough’. The Policy responds to the climate emergency by eliminating avoidable plastics across council offices, events, and commissioned services, by promoting reuse and embedding sustainability into procurement practices.

8 Carbon and Climate Change

- 8.1 SUP contributes significantly to global pollution, as well as climate change. SUP are made from chemicals derived from fossil fuel production. The more plastic made, the more petrochemicals are required, and so the higher the demand for gas, oil and even coal. By reducing or removing SUP, we will contribute to reducing the demand for fossil fuels. Coupled with the release of greenhouse gas emissions from their production, manufacture and final disposal, the use of plastic is one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time.
- 8.2 The council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and have made climate change one of the top priorities. This updated Single Use Plastics Policy directly supports the Haringey Climate Change Action plan and contributes to the objective of being a Net Zero Carbon Borough by 2041.

9 Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

Finance

- 9.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to update Single Use Plastics Policy and the Single Use Plastics (SUP) Action Plan.
- 9.2 The intention is to revise the current policy documents to achieve a Net Zero Carbon Borough by 2041, and regional and national pledges.
- 9.3 The action plan to deliver SUP is predominantly about changing internal practices, advising and working with external partners to reduce reliance on SUP.
- 9.4 The cost of delivering the Action Plan is expected to be minimal and will be funded from the service budgets.

Procurement

- 9.5 Strategic Procurement has been consulted on the preparation of this report and notes the contents herein.
- 9.6 While the recommendations do not present any immediate procurement implications, Strategic Procurement remains committed to supporting the implementation of the SUP policy wherever feasible. This includes, for example, incorporating a link to the approved policy within relevant guidance documents to promote broader compliance across the council.

Head of Legal & Governance [Name and title of Officer completing these comments]

- 9.7 The Director of Legal & Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report. In June 2025, London Councils launched the One World Living Single-use Plastics Pledge with the commitment to eliminate problematic single use plastics and transition to reuse in council operations and delivered services by 2030. The appended policy sets out the councils' commitment to reducing the use of single use plastics.
- 9.8 The supply of single use plastics in the England is subject to regulated by the

Environmental Protection (Plastics Plates etc and Polystyrene Containers etc) England Regulations 2023. The regulations, which came into force in October 2023, make it unlawful to supply certain single use plastics items and imposes restrictions on others. The regulations are enforced by local authorities.

Equality

- 9.9 The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not
- 9.10 The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 9.11 The Cabinet is being asked to adopt the updated Single Use Plastics Policy and Action Plan, the focus of which is solely upon changing behaviours to reduce and eradicate the use of everyday disposal plastic items in favour of more environmentally sustainable practices. Adopting the Policy will not negatively impact any protected characteristic, the rationale for which is provided in 8.4.4.
- 9.12 The overall objective of the Policy and the Action Plans is to reduce the use of any plastic product designed to be used only once. Implementation, as set out in the Action Plans, focuses on two separate areas: Haringey Council premises and the borough. Appendix 1 sets out the actions that concern council premises. These will affect the council workforce, within which women and BAME people are overrepresented relative to the general population. The council workforce also includes people who have disabilities. Reasonable adjustments will be made in the implementation of the Action Plan where necessary to meet the needs of these people, and people who share the other protected characteristics, where they differ to the needs of others. It is not anticipated that the proposed decision will result in any direct or indirect discrimination for council staff.
- 9.13 Appendix 2 sets out the actions that will be implemented across the borough more widely. BAME people, young people, people with disabilities, and people from religious groups are overrepresented in Haringey relative to the London and UK populations. The objective of the proposed decision is to reduce use of single use plastics and plastic waste and the means by which the Action Plan seeks to do so are not anticipated to result in any direct or indirect discrimination for Haringey residents. Indeed, to the extent that the policy and the action plan results in a lower level of pollutants it can be expected to benefit the wards in Haringey that are more deprived on average and in which people

who share the protected characteristics are overrepresented, as these wards tend to have higher levels of plastic pollution. Moreover, actions to improve access to free water can be expected to benefit young people, older people, and people with disabilities and limiting health conditions in terms of their health.

10 Use of Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 – Single Use Plastic Policy

10.2 Appendix 2 – Single Use Plastics Action Plan

11 Background papers

N/A