



Administration Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From the Chair

15 May 2018

Dear Colleague,

Action to reduce use of single-use plastics in Parliament

From June you will see the introduction of a series of measures which will drastically reduce the number of single-use plastic items we consume in Parliament. This programme of measures has been agreed by the Administrations of both Houses following consultation with Member committees and represents a holistic approach to tackling the problem of single-use plastics. We expect implementation to be completed in phases over the next 12 months allowing us to get the necessary logistical elements in place successfully.

In January, following representations from Members and two valuable reports of the Environmental Audit Committee on plastic bottles and coffee cups the Administration Committee tasked Parliament's Environment Team with looking at ways to significantly reduce the amount of disposable plastics we use. They identified more than 2 million single-use avoidable plastic items consumed in the House of Commons alone in 2017. These were not restricted to catering items such as coffee cups and plastic bottles. The Committee therefore supported a broader review including stationery, recycling and reducing packaging waste from deliveries.

The Environment Team devised a strategy based on 'waste hierarchy' principles: replacing single-use items with alternatives that can be more effectively recycled. The proposals were extremely well received in both Houses of Parliament and were endorsed on 14 May by the House of Commons Commission.

The measures listed below will bring about a step change in the reduction of disposable plastics use in Parliament. By taking a holistic approach, they will put Parliament at the forefront of single-use plastic reduction programmes. No other body that we are aware of is considering a full range of proposals in this way.

Over the next 12 months Parliament will:

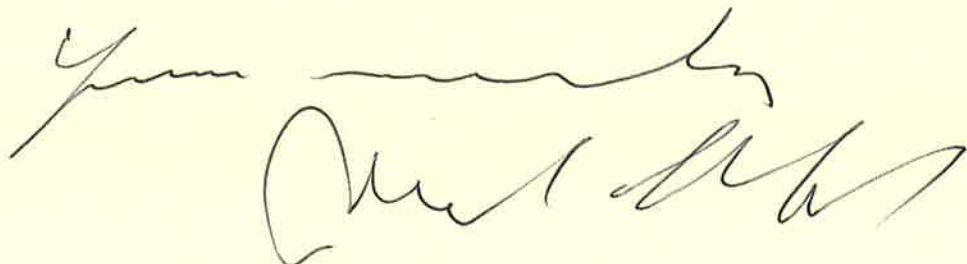
- End sales of water in plastic bottles.
- Introduce a 25p additional cost for using single-use coffee cups.
- Incentivise use of reusable cups through additional loyalty rewards.
- Sell reusable drinks cups to encourage behaviour change.
- Introduce fixed condiment dispensers to replace sachets (the House of Lords has already discontinued individual condiment sachets).

- Replace disposable catering items (including plastic-lined coffee cups) with compostable alternatives and introduce a compostable waste stream (including purchase of 800 additional bins).
- Replace plastic tumblers with compostable cups across the House.
- Replace plastic carrier bags with paper ones.
- Implement a 'green stationery' catalogue.
- Produce procedures for incorporating the environmental impact of packaging into the weighting of relevant procurement and tender exercises.
- Pilot a re-usable packaging 'totes' scheme at the Off-site Consolidation Centre (OSCC) for deliveries to the Estate.

The decision to introduce these measures reflects the strong feeling among members of both Houses and the public that action is needed to reduce our dependence on single-use plastics. To date over 160 Members of Parliament have signed a 'plastic free Parliament' campaign led by the charity Surfers Against Sewage.

Technologies to reduce our dependence on single-use plastics are developing at pace and Parliament will continue to review its approach to minimising our environmental impact.

Each change will be widely promoted in advance of implementation, including the locations of new water dispensers. In the meantime, if you have any queries about the changes please contact Parliament's Environment Team via environment@parliament.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Beresford', written in a cursive style.

Sir Paul Beresford
Chair of the Committee

Further information on single-use plastics in Parliament

What are we doing already?

The House of Commons already has several initiatives to reduce consumption of single-use plastics, including:

- Catering Services work closely with the Environment Team and suppliers to identify alternative products and encourage sustainable innovation. They frequently trial new environmentally friendly products and feed back to suppliers.
- Baristas tailor their service to discourage use of single-use disposable coffee cups.
- The Environment Team deliver targeted awareness and behaviour change campaigns, such as the ongoing "Right Kit, Right Place" campaign.
- Free drinking water is available in all catering venues and across the Estate through fixed water coolers, kitchens, office tea points and within the vicinity of most toilet facilities.
- In 2017, Parliament sold 5,054 re-usable 'bags for life' in our retail outlets. These reusable bags are prominently displayed in the shops to encourage their use.
- Parliament's Sustainable Procurement Policy requires that packaging, along with other environmental issues, is assessed as part of procurement exercises.
- Contract managers work closely with the House's stationery provider to identify opportunities for reducing our environmental impact. Improvements in the form of receiving bulk deliveries have been implemented, and subsequently reduce the associated packaging and carbon emissions.

How will the new measures announced today help?

The table shows the impact that the further measures agreed in May 2018 will have on the volumes of the top single-use avoidable plastics used in the House of Commons:

Top single-use avoidable plastics by type	Units used in 2017	How we will eliminate / reduce them
Coffee Cups	696,575	Many of these items were not previously recycled. Eliminating the plastic items by substituting them with compostable alternatives means they will all be recyclable through the compostable waste stream already used for catering food waste.
Cutlery misc.	733,000	
Coffee cup lids	436,000	
Vacuum Pouches	52,000	
Other plastic lids misc. (non-coffee)	136,000	
Plastic tumblers misc.	130,000	
Salad containers	55,080	
Salad containers lids	51,200	
Film front bags	24,000	
Plastic drinking straws*	12,500	
Plastic bags (retail)	24,500	This will be replaced with a biodegradable alternative.
Mineral water bottles (500mm)	103,000	This will be eliminated, with demand met by increasing the number of water dispensers.
Condiment sachets	334,800	These will be eliminated by using fixed condiment dispensers.