

Motion 1

Motion for Time Limited Debate – Disposable E-cigarettes

Proposer – Jenni Hawkins

Seconder - Mark Hood

Background information

Disposable e-cigarettes are non-rechargeable devices that usually come ready-filled with liquid that may contain nicotine. Disposable e-cigarettes are typically designed as a single unit and therefore they cannot be taken apart very easily, if at all¹. The batteries in disposable e-cigarettes are generally made of lithium and these can be widely recycled, but over 50% of disposable e-cigarettes are thrown away, resulting in approximately 1.3 million vapes being discarded every week².

The disposal of lithium batteries presents environmental and safety issues. Lithium batteries can quickly increase in temperature and can become flammable if crushed. A recent study found that over 700 fires in bin lorries and recycling centres were caused by batteries that had been discarded in domestic waste. This poses a serious health and safety risk to people working on site and there is also a financial cost to taxpayers due to fire damage³. Recycling firms have expressed that they are struggling to insure their facilities due to the number of e-cigarettes they are handling⁴. Disposing of vapes is also wasteful; Lithium is a material that is critical to the Net Zero transition, and the 10 tonnes of lithium discarded from disposable vapes each year is the same as that needed for 1,200 electric cars².

As well as being an environmental disaster, e-cigarettes pose a serious public health risk, particularly to children and young people. The proportion of children experimenting with vaping has grown by nearly 50% since 2022, and the use of disposable vapes is particularly prevalent amongst children, with 69% of children and young people who vape reporting that this was the e-cigarette device they used most frequently⁵. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have called for disposable vapes to be banned, expressing concern as the long-term health effects of vaping are unknown, as well as highlighting the serious environmental impact of disposable e-cigarettes⁶. As a local authority with responsibility for waste management, environment and public health, Kent County Council should take these concerns seriously.

Motion

This council resolves to;

1. Request that the Executive write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to request that disposable vapes are banned.

¹[Environmental impact of disposable vapes - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

²[One million single use vapes thrown away every week contributing to the growing e-waste challenge in the UK - Material Focus](#)

³[Over 700 fires in bin lorries and recycling centres are caused by batteries many of which are hidden inside electricals - Material Focus](#)

⁴[Disposable vapes cause fires and cost taxpayer, English and Welsh councils say | Vaping | The Guardian](#)

⁵Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). Use of e-cigarettes (vapes) among young people in Great Britain. 2023

⁶[Youth vaping 'fast becoming epidemic', children's doctors warn as they call for ban on disposable vapes | UK News | Sky News](#)