

County Council Meeting - 13th March 2025

Motion for Time Limited Debate – Addressing the Environmental and Social Harm of Disposable Vapes

Proposer: Mark Hood

Seconder: Jenni Hawkins

Background Information – provided by the Green & Independents Group

Disposable vapes cause significant environmental harm due to their plastic waste, lithium battery content, and lack of effective recycling options. Many end up in landfill or as litter, contributing to pollution.

An estimated 8 million disposable vapes are thrown away each week in the UK, equivalent to the lithium batteries of 5,000 electric vehicles annually. The improper disposal of disposable vapes leads to dangerous chemicals entering the environment, soil pollution, and increased fire risks in waste management facilities.

There is growing concern about the social and health impact of disposable vapes, particularly among young people, with evidence showing their appeal due to bright packaging and sweet flavours.

The government has proposed a ban on disposable vapes but the introduction of new 'Big Puff' devices are designed to avoid the imminent legislation which now requires amendment.

The Conservatives' own Shadow Health Secretary has called for amendments to limit the size of refill tanks and close other loopholes in the proposed ban.

Motion:

This Council believes that:

- a.) Immediate and decisive action is needed to address the environmental and public health risks posed by disposable vapes, rather than delaying with prolonged studies.
- b.) Any ban must be robust and comprehensive, preventing manufacturers from exploiting legal loopholes to continue selling harmful products.
- c.) Stronger regulations on vape marketing, packaging, and accessibility to young people should be introduced alongside the ban.
- d.) Urgent action is required to address the environmental and health impacts of disposable vapes.

And;

This Council agrees to call on the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to:

- a.) Write again to the government, urging swift and decisive action on disposable vapes, rather than a decade-long study;
- b.) Support calls for amendments to the proposed legislation that limit refill tank sizes and close other loopholes that could undermine the ban;
- c.) Advocate for a comprehensive ban that addresses both single-use and potentially harmful 'Big Puff' alternatives;
- d.) Work with local schools, businesses, and community groups to raise awareness of the environmental and health risks of disposable vape;
and
- e.) Encourage stronger local enforcement against the improper disposal of vapes and promote responsible recycling initiatives.