

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 22 MARCH 2018

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Kyle Robinson

Question

Nearly 8 million tonnes of plastic are dumped into our oceans every year. Plastics are an integral part of daily life in the 21st century but the proliferation of single-use-plastics is having a devastating impact on our environment. The Government must act now to stop the excessive use of single-use-plastics, which often end up in our waters and are severely harming marine wildlife. Councils must also play their part in tackling this problem. Therefore will the Leader of the Council commit to working with the Labour Group to make this County Council one of the first plastics clever councils in the country? Will he meet with me to discuss further and agree to establish a cross-party member working group to lead on this initiative?

Reply

The issue of single use plastic and its impact on the environment has been in the news recently, however the problem is one we're already aware of and recognise that it is not the only waste material that is causing problems with the environment. Environmentally speaking it is micro plastics that cause the most significant damage in marine environments and the government has acted on this through restricting the use of micro beads.

Waste collection from households in Staffordshire is carried out by District and Borough Councils and they collect the majority of dry recycling materials, including a range of plastics, to be processed under their own contracts. As you may know we also accept plastics at our Household Waste Recycling Centres.

However I would say that Staffordshire County Council becoming Plastic Clever, while achievable, is a little limited in ambition. The household waste service across all Staffordshire is jointly overseen by the Joint Waste Management Board and is the most appropriate place to raise the issue.

Working in partnership with our Districts and Boroughs, we provide a range of opportunities to capture various plastics (kerbside & HWRCs) and have multiple local and UK based disposal and reprocessing options. In addition, the authority is represented on a number of national policy and lobbying organisations, and will continue to use these channels to challenge the broader environmental and waste management issues.