

Plastic-Free Action Plan – 2024/25 Update

The Council fully recognises the need to eliminate single-use plastics and is committed to moving towards removing these items where possible, starting with our own offices, facilities and services.

An outright ban on all single use plastics overnight would have a detrimental impact on the many small businesses that trade at the market and other sites owned by the Council. For that reason, we are recommending a phased approach, which allows time for businesses to adjust.

The policing of any plastic free policies outside of the Market and Events operated by the Council would be extremely difficult, if not impossible for the Council to do.

What we have done already

2010

- Recycling bins for plastic bottles and food containers available in all offices.

2018

- Single-use plastic cups have been removed from use at the District Offices. Glass jugs and glasses provided for meetings. Staff encouraged to bring their own cups.
- Coffee machines for staff removed from use at the District Offices.

2019

- Banned the use of Styrofoam from use at the market. Traders were given 6 months to run down any existing supplies.
- Information stall was held at St Albans market to advise traders on alternatives to single-use plastic and educate the public about how to support the issue in their own homes.
- Waste contractor Veolia has met with local food businesses to discuss options for recyclable food containers at takeaways.
- Installed two water bottle refill fountains in the town centre and Clarence Park and launched a Refill St Albans Campaign to reduce the use of single use plastic bottles.
- Banned the sale of plastic bottles, plates, cutlery, bags and polystyrene at Council events.
- Trialled the use of reusable cups at two Council events.

2020

- Final coffee machines removed from District Offices.
- Biscuits and refreshments no longer provided to visitors and events at the District Offices.
- Our Sustainable Procurement Policy restricts the purchase of other non-essential single-use plastic items and provides advice on avoiding plastic waste for example by ensuring items are branded in a way to allow later reuse.

- Refill hand sanitiser dispensers from larger bottles rather than replacing individual bottles in District Offices and Museums.

2021

- Plastics issues included in mandatory staff Sustainability training.

2022

- Plastic film and crisp packet bins provided to staff in most used kitchens in the District Offices.
- Refill fountain moved from District Offices to running track at Verulamium Park where it will be used more.
- Limited the use of single use plastic cutlery from food stalls at events.
- Monitored milk bottle waste produced by staff at the District Offices and considered provision of centralised milk purchase if necessary.
- Trial the use of biodegradable cable ties in the Green Spaces Department.

2023

- Include relevant plastic-free policies within the tendering of the Council's largest contracts.
- Include a requirement that only biodegradable balloons are permitted at Council events.

2024

- Plastic bags and any single use plastic items are prohibited at SADC events, with the exception of plastic water bottles.
- Events team plastic covered publicity materials are designed to be reusable each year (wherever possible).

Our Commitments

The table below shows an outline of the Council's planned further steps towards a plastic free St Albans City & District Council.

Year	Action	By Whom
2025	Work with Council suppliers and Contract Managers to encourage the reduction of plastic packaging and products in the supply chain via the updated Procurement Policy.	Sustainability, Procurement
2025	Liaise with Business Improvement District and Chamber of Commerce to encourage reduction of single use plastics across local businesses and encourage the topic to be involved in future business events.	Economic Development
2025	Pilot the use of SADC branded non-plastic, sustainable bags to be used at the regular markets and the annual events.	Community Engagement & Markets
2025	Create a new plastic usage and refill section on application forms for new market and event traders.	Community Engagement & Markets
2025	Introduce a restriction on the use of plastic flowers and decorations to the new areas of the cemeteries	Cemeteries

	combined with a campaign to educate users on the environmental harms caused by plastic decorations.	
2025	Encourage more retail facilities to offer and promote themselves as water refill stations across the District.	Sustainability & Built Environment
Ongoing	Investigate and trial alternative options to single use plastic and plastic-lined card drink cups at Council managed and run events.	Community Engagement
2025	Biodegradable or reuseable 'zip' ties to be adopted by teams across the Council.	Planning, Events, Markets, Enforcement, Housing
2025	Continually seek to work with, and encourage, all supply chain partners to reduce the use of plastic in the activities it undertakes, such as packaging.	Housing
2025	Explore options to recycle used plastic crates from market traders.	Markets
2025	Commitment to reuse and recycle all plastics arising from office refits or refurbishments, where possible to do so.	Built Environment

How can we make decisions that lead to reducing plastic use?

1. **Reduce** the need for plastics. Do you need it? Can you avoid it?
2. **Reuse** what you already have. Can unavoidable plastics be reused?
3. **Replace** plastics with more sustainable alternatives e.g. cornstarch, bamboo.
4. **Recycle** any plastics that can be recycled.