

## Motion to Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee

2 May 2023

### The Future of Disposal Vapes

That Committee understands that around 1.3 million disposable vapes are thrown away every week in the UK, although this figure is assumed to be greatly underestimated. As they are classed as nicotine based products primarily designed to reduce/replace smoking habits the figures are based on surveys from adults. Hence the figures don't include the number of teenagers who use them, especially as most of the disposable products are packaged and presented to appeal to younger generations.

A significant amount of the disposable vapes thrown away each week are not recycled properly and are instead littered or discarded with residual waste.

That Committee are concerned about the increasing number of these products and their improper disposal. The 1.3 million figure represents the equivalent of 1,200 electric car batteries or 10 tonnes of lithium – which is being sent to landfill or waste incinerators each year.

Committee notes that the country that produces the bulk of these products (China) has totally banned the sale and use of these disposable vapes. This is also the case in some European countries.

Vapes do fall under the current WEEE regulations both in England and Scotland, and should be disposed of correctly as any other electrical item. The Producer/Retailer responsibilities also apply, and each retailer of electrical equipment should either:

1. Provide a free, in store take back service
2. Set up an alternative free take back service
3. Join the distributor Takeback Scheme

However, as disposable vapes are now sold in many different outlets such as newsagents, cafes and hairdressers, these retailers are probably not fully aware of their responsibilities and most certainly don't comply with/promote take back schemes or even 'How to dispose of' information. As a result we are seeing more of these items disposed of as litter and they are becoming the new 'cigarette butt' alternative.

Committee asks that the Council Leader write to both the Scottish and UK Governments calling for a ban on the sale and manufacture of disposable vapes as soon as possible.

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