

My reason for making this statement is to raise awareness about a growing health and environmental problem. A resident recently contacted me about single-use e-cigarettes (or vapes) and asked if their use here in Bath and North East Somerset is much of an issue. From my regular litter-picking around Weston, I can say for sure that I'm finding more and more discarded vapes: last weekend I collected six in less than an hour.

First a definition: According to the NHS website, an e-cigarette is "a device that allows you to inhale nicotine in a vapour rather than smoke. E-cigarettes do not burn tobacco and do not produce tar or carbon monoxide. Using an e-cigarette can help you manage your nicotine cravings."

Although e-cigarettes were originally developed as an aid to help smokers break the habit, the trend now seems to be that young people and even children are starting to vape without ever having smoked cigarettes. E-cigarette manufacturers appear to be marketing their products to appeal to this demographic by using colourful packaging and offering a range of fruity and bubble gum flavours. Vaping is harming the health of our young people, and this alone is reason enough to be concerned.

The other reason for concern is of course the environmental harm caused by e-cigarettes, particularly by single-use vapes. Last week the Local Government Association published an article about disposable e-cigarettes, which included the shocking fact that 1.3 million are used every week, making an annual total of 67.5 million! Apart from all the plastic involved, single-use vapes have integrated batteries, which makes recycling them impossible. Some of the minerals contained in these batteries (lithium, for example) are highly flammable, and this has led to fires breaking out in waste collection lorries and at recycling centres. I should add, that as far as I know, nothing serious has happened to date here in B&NES.

The Local Government Association, representing councils in England and Wales, has now called for a ban on the sale and manufacture of single-use vapes by 2024. The Government is coming under increasing pressure to resolve this growing problem, from both the health and environmental points of view. (The Government is apparently also considering introducing compulsory licensing for retailers of all types of e-cigarettes in England, which would bring the law into line with that of Scotland.)

So, personally, I support the Local Government Association in calling for a ban on the sale and manufacture of single-use vapes - for both health and

environmental reasons. If Bath and North East Somerset Council has not already expressly done so, I would urge the leading members and officers to back the Local Government Association ban. Thank you.