



Councillor Howard Sykes MBE
Leader of the Opposition
Oldham Council
Room 343 Level 3
Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham OL1 1UL

Reply to:

Cllr Sean Fielding
Oldham Council
Room 347, Level 3, Civic
Centre,
West Street, Oldham OL1 1UL

Support Officer: Nicci Robinson: 0161 770 1201

Dear Councillor Sykes,

Re: Public Water Fountains

I am writing to you following your question about the installation of public water fountains at the meeting of Oldham's full council earlier this month. I'm grateful for your support for the council's campaign to reduce single-use plastics in the borough and am pleased to be able to update you on progress following the meeting.

Officers have already done work looking into the opportunities to install public water fountains in the borough as the Oldham Labour Group pledged to initiate this as part of our local election manifesto this year. Following investigation it was established that, while possible, installing public water fountains carries a hygiene risk, creating significant resource implications related to the fountains' maintenance. As such we have taken the decision to look for other solutions to promote the use of reusable drinks bottles in the short term.

One solution is the promotion of the "Refill" campaign which we launched in Oldham in April. The campaign, and associated app, encourages local organisations to advertise their willingness to refill the water bottles of members of the public, without any obligation to make a purchase. There are a range of organisations already signed up across the borough, including Asda, Greggs, The Shay Wake and Dunwood Park in Shaw. While this has been advertised over recent months I have asked our communications team to look at how it can be promoted further to maximise uptake.

Over the longer term we will continue to look at how the installation and maintenance of public water fountains can be resourced. As with the London partnership with Thames Water, Bury Council are piloting a similar partnership with United Utilities. I have written to Cllr Andrew Western, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority portfolio lead for the green city region, and asked him to look into we might promote access to free drinking water across Greater Manchester, including the rolling out of the Bury pilot subject to its success, and have pledged Oldham's support for this work.

Thank you again for your support for Labour's manifesto pledge and our wider work on reducing single-use plastics in the borough. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important agenda over the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Fielding', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Sean Fielding

Leader of Oldham Council

Direct line: 0161 770 5738

Email: Sean.Fielding@oldham.gov.uk