

ITEM No ...13.....

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 4 JUNE 2018

REPORT ON: MEASURES TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE SINGLE USE PLASTIC ITEMS FROM COUNCIL OPERATIONS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO:- 162-2018

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To propose that Dundee City Council agrees to support the Scottish Governments aim to remove the use of plastic straws from Council operations where practicable, and to consider longer term measures to reduce or eliminate other single use plastic items.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Committee is asked to:

- Recommend that a letter of support is submitted to Kate Forbes MSP.
- Instruct all Departments to determine current use of products containing straws in locations providing catering facilities to staff, pupils and members of the public
- Require all Departments to support this initiative and where possible to seek alternative products such as paper straws when serving drinks.
- Approve the alternative procurement arrangements to be put in place to support the above

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Scotland Excel are exploring alternative products to secure best value for councils. It is anticipated that a reduction in the use of single use products would help to offset any increase in costs.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 On 12 January 2018, Kate Forbes MSP, who is spearheading the Final Straw campaign, wrote to all of Scotland's 32 councils urging them to pledge not to use plastic straws, to help save the environment. The campaign website can be accessed at <https://www.finalstraw.scot/>.

4.2 'The Final Straw' campaign has been gathering momentum nationally following the popular BBC series 'Blue Planet' raising awareness of the harm plastic is doing to our oceans. Plastics are today even evidenced in our food chain because of the level to which they have been used and discarded into the natural environment.

4.3 'The Final Straw' campaign questions 'How often do you get a plastic straw with your drink that you didn't ask for and you don't need?' and highlights that plastic straws end up in our seas, suffocating wildlife and polluting beaches.

4.4 Whilst for the majority, plastic straws in drinks are unnecessary, it is recognised that some do require to use plastic straws for disability and medical reasons and other suitable alternative products are not currently available. In such cases, the Council will ensure that there is no impact on service provision.

- 4.5 In addition to single use plastic straws, a number of other plastic items are used throughout the council. Those that are commonly used include:
- Plastic stirrers;
 - Plastic bottles;
 - Coffee cups and lids;
 - Plastic cutlery;
 - Plastic bags;
 - Plastic drinking cups and;
 - Condiment sachets.
- 4.6 The Marine Conservation Society published their findings of a national beach survey in “The Great British Clean Report https://www.mcsuk.org/media/GBBC_2017_Report.pdf. The report highlights that litter from eating and drinking “on the go” makes up 20% of all rubbish found on beaches. Many of the litter items are from single use plastics including straws, cups and bottles. The amount of litter has increased by around 10% since 2016, with nationally an average of 718 items being found per 100 metres of beach, with 491 items per 100 metres of beach in Scotland.
- 4.7 Locally, management of litter on the beach is coordinated through the Broughty Ferry Beach Management group. This group is a sub group of the Local Community Planning Partnership for the Broughty Ferry Area, and consists of representatives from Dundee City Council, and external organisations including SEPA, Scottish Water and Catchment Tay Ltd. The group meet quarterly to discuss matters relating to the management of the area and litter is regularly discussed as part of these meetings.

5.0 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 It is recommended that a review of the use of plastic straws is carried out across all council departments to seek robust, flexible and suitable alternative products.
- 5.2 Where single use plastic straws are part of other products purchased by departments such as tetra pack milk and juice products for schools, paper straws are currently not strong enough to puncture the foil of the tetra pack. The environmental impact of alternatives such as replacing tetra packs with small bottles would need to be established as these also tend to be throw away single use plastic items.
- 5.3 Scotland Excel are currently engaging with suppliers who provide plastic straws as part of their products. They have asked suppliers what steps they could take to move away from plastic straws. Suppliers are working with their supply chain to try to find an alternative option however it is unlikely a fast solution will become available. In addition, Scotland Excel are working on the catering sundries framework and have contacted suppliers with the view of removing plastic straws in entirety from the core list of products and replace the core product with a paper based or biodegradable straw alternative. Council officers will continue to work with Scotland Excel to seek suitable alternatives to ensure best value options are established.
- 5.4 In addition to a commitment to replacing straws with an alternative product, it is recognised that the council will need to go further to eliminate unnecessary single use plastics from our day to day use within the organisation. It is proposed that the Council explores suitable alternatives to the other plastic items to eliminate or replace them with more environmentally friendly, preferably reusable alternatives. This will start with the seven items listed at paragraph (4.5) above but will cover the full range of single use plastics purchased by the Council.
- 5.5 Neighbourhood Services have been in contact with the Health and Social Care Partnership, Communities and the schools meal provision services through Tayside Contracts regarding the proposals. It is recognised that there will be times when specific groups may require single use plastic straws or other single use items for medical or disability reasons. Appropriate groups will be consulted going forward to identify these needs and to make appropriate provision in order that no groups are unfairly disadvantaged by the steps set out in this report. For example, in relation to the replacement of plastic straws it is proposed that provision will be made that a selection of suitable straws are available on request in our facilities for service users with such specific needs.

- 5.6 The department will revisit the internal waste recycling project and roll this service out further to council offices. This will be backed by an educational programme to highlight items that can be recycled, encourage alternative ways to reduce waste such as reusable water bottles and coffee cups and to offer other suggestions to minimise waste.
- 5.7 A key part of the “The Take Pride in Your City” campaign is to change behaviour and attitudes towards all types of litter including plastic products. The development of Litter prevention Action Plans encourages various organisations, businesses and community groups to promote a preventative message and have a shared approach to tackling litter. Future proposals include promotions and campaigns to encourage people to act responsibly and dispose of litter in a way that will not harm the environment.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. A copy of the Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website at www.dundee.gov.uk/jia/reports

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its contents.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

Elaine Zwirlein
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

Gary Robertson
Head of Environment

3rd May 2018

Appendix 1

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
for views on practicalities of implementing



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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David Martin,
Chief executive,
Dundee City Council
City Chambers
21 City Square
Dundee
DD1 3BY

12 January 2018

Dear David,

Final Straw campaign

Across Scotland, we are consuming an estimated 3 billion plastic straws every year.

Plastic straws are just one example of single-use disposable plastics, which are damaging wildlife, polluting our oceans and ruining beaches. Plastic straws are one of the top ten items of plastic litter found on our beaches. The recent documentary, Blue Planet, highlighted the extent of this waste and provoked a public outcry about the extent of plastic litter.

Of all the single-use disposable plastics, perhaps the easiest to reduce are plastic straws because most of us don't need them and there are obvious alternatives such as paper straws.

Collectively, we need to take responsibility for reducing the use of plastic straws and that is why I am writing to you. Many cafes, restaurants and pubs automatically hand out straws with every drink and only stock plastic straws.

On 8 January 2018, I launched a petition calling on businesses and organisations to ban plastic straws.

I am writing to ask if Dundee City Council will commit to being plastic straw free. This means that plastic straws are not automatically included with drinks, perhaps through catering or canteens, and when a straw is requested to provide a paper straw instead. In short, I am asking if Dundee City Council will ban plastic straws as one way of joining the Scotland-wide effort to crack down on plastic straws.

This may seem to be one small step, but I can assure you that if you and other organisations all take a stand then we will start to reduce the number of plastic straws that are harming wildlife and spoiling our beaches.

If you would like to discuss this matter further then I would be more than happy to meet with you.

Yours Sincerely,

Kate Forbes MSP
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch

