

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	5 March 2018
REPORT TITLE	The ' Final Straw ' - campaign to ban plastic drinking straws in Scotland
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/18/012
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram, Interim Director of Communities, Housing & Infrastructure
REPORT AUTHOR	Andy Campbell, Facilities Manager

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 To bring to Council's attention, the Final Straw campaign which ultimately aims to achieve the banning of plastic drinking straws in Scotland.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 That Council

- (a) Instructs the Head of the Commercial and Procurement Service to undertake an audit across services and across our Arm's Length External Organisations in so far as the Council's contractual and governance relationships with its ALEOs allows it to do so, to identify all outlets where plastic drinking straws are made available for consuming drinks.
- (b) Instructs the Head of the Commercial and Procurement Service to work with Scotland Excel and the supply chain to source products which either require no drinking straw or with bio-degradable drinking straws where they are necessary
- (c) Instructs the Head of Land & Property Assets, following consultation with the Head of the Commercial and Procurement Service to remove plastic drinking straws from points of sale and from drinks provided as part of school meals, where this is easily immediately achievable; and
- (d) To report back on progress in two Committee cycles and to recommend to the Council whether or not the Council can at that stage commit to backing the Final Straw campaign.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 In late 2017, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) screened the 'Blue Planet 2'. The final episode focused on the ecological damage which is being caused to the planet from plastics which were finding their way into watercourses and ultimately polluting our beaches, seas and oceans, highlighting the impact that this issue is having on our marine life.
- 3.2 On the 12th January 2018, Kate Forbes MSP wrote to our Chief Executive, to bring 'The Final Straw' campaign to her attention, to advise that an online petition had been launched calling on businesses and organisations to ban plastic straws and to ask if Aberdeen City Council would commit to being plastic straw free. This letter is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 On the 14th January 2018, The Sunday Mail and Daily Record launched their 'The Last Straw' campaign, which has the aim of making Scotland the first plastic straw-free country in Europe.

(see <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/campaign-make-scotland-first-plastic-11848266>)
- 3.4 Scottish Government has already announced plans to ban plastic-stemmed cotton buds in Scotland and are forming a team of experts to provide advice on the actions which should be taken to reduce reliance on environmentally damaging plastic items.
- 3.5 Aberdeen City Council's School Catering Service currently provide a plastic drinking straw with fruit juice cuplets which are provided as part of a Primary School meal. The provision of this juice cuplet is currently under review, with the feeling being that the provision of the current plastic drinking straw could be ceased with immediate effect without detriment to our school pupils.
- 3.6 Aberdeen City Council's School Catering Service also currently offer drink products for sale to Secondary School pupils, which have a plastic straw attached to packaging, the straw being used to puncture a foil straw hole allowing the content to be consumed. Through the Scotland Excel frameworks, discussions have already begun with our existing suppliers around the steps they are taking to supply these products with bio-degradable straws.
- 3.7 Aberdeen City Council's Education service currently provides free milk to eligible school pupils which also have a plastic straw attached to packaging, the straw being used to puncture a foil straw hole allowing the content to be consumed. Through the Scotland Excel frameworks, discussions have already begun with our existing suppliers around the steps they are taking to supply these products with bio-degradable straws.
- 3.8 It is almost certain that plastic drinking straws are offered with products at points of sale elsewhere across the organisation and at outlets which are run by our Arm's Length External Organisations, e.g. Sport Aberdeen. The extent of use of plastic drinking straws is at this stage unknown, but an audit across services can be undertaken to determine current usage and the findings of

this audit used to inform the steps the organisation needs to take as it moves toward becoming plastic straw free.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Committing to banning plastic straws may be cost neutral, represent an additional cost, or a cost saving to the Council. This will be explored during the recommended audit.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If any exclusive supply contracts are in place for a fixed term, co-operation of the supplier would be required for them to make changes to the products they supply and contract variations may be required. Where existing suppliers are not able to offer products without plastic straws and the Council has a non-exclusive contractual relationship with them, the Council could explore what other alternative supplier in the market place could offer. Entering into new contracts of supply would need to be undertaken in a manner compliant with the Council's Procurement Regulations.

The Council hope that its ALEOs will co-operate with the Council and participate in the audit that has been recommended. If they do not, a review of the contractual and governance relationships between the Council and its ALEOs would have to be undertaken to confirm whether or not the Council has the right to receive the information sought and oblige ALEOs to seek to eliminate or reduce the use of plastic straws.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Environmental

- 6.1 Having had the consequences of plastic drinking straws finding their way into water courses so graphically illustrated by the BBC, the environmental damage these items are causing is obvious, so continuing to supply plastic drinking straws would see ongoing risk to the environment.

Customer / Citizen

- 6.2 Consideration will need to be given to customers who for capability reasons, need to use drinking straws for consuming fluids. This could easily be achieved by the supply of bio-degradable drinking straws where they were required.

Reputational

- 6.3 As this issue has seen the launch of national campaigns and commitment from the Scottish Government, Aberdeen City Council would face potential reputational damage by not committing to supporting these campaigns.

Other

- 6.4 Consideration has also been given to Employee, Technological and Legal risks, no risks in these areas were identified.

7. IMPACT SECTION

Economy

- 7.1 There is no direct economic impact arising from this report

People

- 7.2 As mentioned at 6.2 above, consideration will need to be given to customers who for capability reasons, need to use drinking straws for consuming fluids. This could easily be achieved by the supply of bio-degradable drinking straws where they were required.

Place

- 7.3 Commitment to ending the use of plastic drinking straws will have a positive impact on our commitment to the environment.

Technology

- 7.4 There is no direct technological impact arising from this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 There are no background papers

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 **Appendix 1** – letter from Kate Forbes MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Name: Andy Campbell
Job title: Facilities Manager
Email address: AnCampbell@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Phone number: (01224 52) 3494

HEAD OF SERVICE DETAILS

Name: John Quinn
Job title: Head of Land & Property Assets
Email address: JQuinn@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Phone number: (01224 52) 3363



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Angela Scott,
Chief executive officer,
Aberdeen City Council
Town House
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1FY

12 January 2018



Dear Angela,

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 2017, I launched a petition calling on businesses and organisations to ban plastic straws.

I am writing to ask if Aberdeen 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 Aberdeen 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