

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Council
<b>DATE</b>	10 September 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	The ' <b>Final Straw</b> ' - campaign to ban plastic drinking straws in Scotland
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/18/129
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Operating Officer
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Mark Reilly, Chief Officer Operations & Protective Services
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Andy Campbell, Facilities Manager
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	Introduction – 6 (previous Council decision)

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Council on work which has been undertaken since the initial report was considered by Council on 5 March 2018 and to seek Council's approval for backing the Final Straw campaign which ultimately aims to achieve the banning of plastic drinking straws in Scotland.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council:-

- 2.1 Notes the progress which has been made by services to reduce plastic straw (and other single use plastics) usage to date.
- 2.2 Instructs the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services to continue working 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.
- 2.3 Commit to backing the final straw campaign by instructing all Council services and ALEOs to cease using plastic straws wherever this is practicably possible, recognising the needs of some disabled people who require a fully flexible drinking straw to consume liquids
- 2.4 Commits to going further than the final straw campaign by phasing out the use of all single use plastics in Council owned properties where it is practicable to do so.

### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In late 2017, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) screened the 'Blue Planet 2'. The final episode focused on the ecological damage caused to the planet from plastics which were finding their way into watercourses and ultimately polluting beaches, seas and oceans, highlighting the impact that this issue is having on marine life.

3.2 On 12<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 The 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 At the time the initial report was written, Aberdeen City Council's Facilities Management (FM) Catering Service provided a plastic drinking straw with fruit juice cuplets which are provided as part of a Primary School meal. This product was removed from service with our school pupils now receiving either drinking water or milk with their meals, served in a rigid reusable plastic tumbler.

3.6 Aberdeen City Council's FM Catering Service offer drink products for sale to Secondary School pupils, some of which have a plastic straw attached to packaging, the straw being used to puncture a foil straw hole allowing the content to be consumed. Commercial & Procurement Services colleagues are continuing to work closely with Scotland Excel and the supply chain in order to find school meal compliant alternative products and these will be introduced as and when they become available.

3.7 Aberdeen City Council's FM Catering Service has undertaken an extensive review of all single use plastics and other non-biodegradable products used by the service with our disposables supplier. The findings of this review are included in **Appendix 2**.

3.8 Aberdeen City Council's Integrated Children's and Family Service 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. Instructions have been

given to schools on how milk packaging and straws can be best recycled in the interim.

- 3.9 The harm that single use plastics is having on marine life is one which resonates particularly with our young people. Aberdeen City Council's School Catering Service has received several communications from school pupils, examples of these are attached as **Appendices 3 and 4**.
- 3.10 The Final Straw campaign has been included as an agenda item at recent ALEO meetings attended by Craig Innes (Head of Commercial & Procurement Services) who advises that all ALEOs are committed to the Final Straw campaign and that work is ongoing to reduce use of plastic straws wherever possible to do so.
- 3.11 Councils the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, from Highland to Brighton and Hove, have made a commitment to the phasing out of the use of single use plastics. As a coastal city, it would be remiss if Aberdeen City Council did not show similar commitment.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 It can be seen from the table at Appendix 2, that by replacing all single use plastic disposable items currently used by the FM Catering Service with environmentally friendly alternatives, it is estimated that this will more than double the services spend on these items, from a current spend of £18,440.93 to an estimated spend of £47,047.47. The service will, however, work to minimise use of all disposables to only those which are absolutely necessary.
- 4.2 The impact of replacing single use plastic disposable items currently used by other services with environmentally friendly alternatives would have similar financial implications for those services as estimated for the FM Catering Service at 4.1 above.

#### **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.
- 5.2 The Council had hoped that its ALEOs would co-operate with the Council and participate in the audit that was recommended. This hope appears to have been realised by the commitment that has been suggested by the Head of Commercial & Procurement Services at paragraph 3.10 above. If this commitment was however not followed through, 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 instruct ALEOs to eliminate or reduce their use of plastic straws and other single use plastics.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Financial</b>	Impact on service operational budgets through increased costs for environmentally friendly alternatives	H	Services should limit their use of disposables to an absolute minimum, seeking more cost-effective methods of service delivery
<b>Legal</b>	No risk identified	N/A	
<b>Employee</b>	No risk identified	N/A	
<b>Customer</b>	Consideration has been given to customers who for capability reasons, need to use fully flexible drinking straws for consuming fluids.	L	Until such time as suitable non-plastic alternatives are available, no customer should be disadvantaged by our actions, so flexible plastic drinking straws should still be supplied in such circumstances.
<b>Environment</b>	Having had the consequences of plastic drinking straws and other single use plastics finding their way into water courses so graphically illustrated by the BBC and other sources following the screening of Blue Planet 2, the environmental damage these items are causing is clear to see, so continuing our use of single use plastics would see ongoing risk to the environment.	H	Implementation of recommendations
<b>Technology</b>	No risk identified	N/A	

<b>Reputational</b>	As this issue has seen the launch of national campaigns and commitment from the Scottish Government and many other local authorities across the United Kingdom, Aberdeen City Council would face potential reputational damage by not showing our commitment to the long-term eradication of single use plastics.	H	Implementation of recommendations
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## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous People</b>	Appendices 3 and 4 give examples of the views from our young people. We should listen to and respect our young people's wishes, wherever it is feasible for us to do so.
<b>Prosperous Place</b>	We should do what we can to demonstrate our commitment to being a people friendly city. Our commitment to reducing reliance on single use plastics would have positive impacts on our city's reputation and lead to less plastic waste finding its way into our watercourses, making the city a more attractive place for our citizens and a more attractive destination for visitors.

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	Extensive media coverage and the impact that single use plastics is having on the environment result in customers expecting organisations to show commitment to reducing their usage of single use plastics. This can be seen from Appendices 3 and 4 received from some of our youngest customers.
<b>Process Design</b>	Our processes and the products we purchase which allow these processes to be put into practice need to fit in with the needs of our customers.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	EHRIA discussed and shared with Sandra Howard
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	Not applicable

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 There are no background papers

## 10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 **Appendix 1** – letter from Kate Forbes MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch  
**Appendix 2** – FM Catering Services Estimated Disposables Cost Comparison  
**Appendix 3** – Letter from Matthew Pirie, Airyhall Pupil Council Member  
**Appendix 4** – Letter from Aniela Grzonka, Hanover Street School Pupil

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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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

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## Appendix 2

### FM Catering Services – Estimated Disposables Cost Comparison

Product	Code	Pack Size	Pack Cost	Replacing	Annual Units Purchased	previous cost	new cost
Seasons Standard Wedge	DSB040	500	£38.46	Currently being used - will replace any remaining use of DSB226	20	£311.20	£769.20
Seasons Wrap Box	DSB039	800	£108.82	NEW - NO EQUIVALENT SPEND AT PRESENT	12	n/a	£1,305.84
Seasons Tapered Baguette Tray	XDS3609	500	£38.75	Will replace DSB211A, DSB256	34	£336.94	£1,317.50
7oz Slim PLA Cold Cup	XDS4185	1000	£37.52	Will replace DSB446B, DSC201, DSC202, DSC230	238	£5,196.81	£8,929.76
PLA Dome Lid, no hole	XDS2481	1000	£33.57	Will replace DSB447B	50	£1,286.50	£1,678.50
Compostable Knife	VR-KN6.5	1000	£31.94	Will replace DSD227	81	£461.70	£2,587.14
Compostable Fork	VR-FK6.5	1000	£31.94	Will replace DSD228	117	£666.90	£3,736.98
Compostable Tablespoon	VR-SP6.5	1000	£31.94	Will replace DSD229, and an element of DSD242, DSD242A	217	£750.82	£6,930.98
Wooden Stirrers	DSD268	1000	£4.31	Will replace DSD242, DSD242A	30	£103.80	£129.30
12oz Double Wall Hot Cup	XDS3021	500	£43.00	Will replace DSC209, DSC210	90	£2,113.65	£3,870.00
8oz Double Walled Hot Cup	XDS3020	500	£40.80	Will Replace DSC207	22	£152.57	£897.60
Lid for 12oz Cup	VLID895	1000	£40.34	Will replace DSC210	27	£451.17	£1,089.18
Lid for 8oz Cup	XDS0105	1000	£38.21	Will replace 7oz lids(no code)	11	£139.70	£420.31
7x7" Clamshell Box	VW-BP7	500	£47.14	Currently being used - will replace any remaining use of DSB231, DSB238, DSB246, DSB313, DSB313A	68	£1,398.67	£3,205.52
Chinet Bowl 6.75"	DSD224	175	£53.19	Will replace DSD203	67	£804.00	£3,563.73
Chinet Plate 8.75"	DSD202	4 x 125	£31.75	Will replace DSD201, DSD213, DSD204	120	£2,131.20	£3,810.00
Large Platter Box + Insert	VWPLATL	25	£33.06	Will replace DSB204, DSB205(Platter + Lid)	30	£1,791.30	£991.80
Half Insert for Platter Box	VWHALFIN	50	£15.97	NEW - NO EQUIVALENT SPEND AT PRESENT	15	n/a	£239.55
Quarter Insert for Platter Box	VWQUARTIN	50	£13.46	NEW - NO EQUIVALENT SPEND AT PRESENT	15	n/a	£201.90
Eighth Insert for Platter Box	VWEIGHTIN	50	£12.68	NEW - NO EQUIVALENT SPEND AT PRESENT	15	n/a	£190.20
Hot & Crispy Pouch	XDS3634	500	£39.83	Will replace DSB211A, DSB256	8	£172.00	£318.64
Ovenable Wrap	XDS3635	500	£49.14	Will replace DSB211A, DSB257	8	£172.00	£393.12
3oz Cold Cup Insert	XDS2747	1000	£36.23	NEW - NO EQUIVALENT SPEND AT PRESENT	13	n/a	£470.99

£18,440.93

**£47,047.74**

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## Appendix 3

Airyhall School,  
Countesswells Road,  
Aberdeen.  
AB15 8AD

Dear Schools Meals Service,

I am a member of the ECO group. We always try and find ways to help save the environment. Some pupils have become concerned that we use too many plastic straws. On the news there has been a lot of discussion on the subject of plastic harming our seas and oceans. We believe that you should change the usage of plastic straws in our schools because they are causing big problems. The substitute for this item should be paper straws.

It is no secret that our environment is getting damaged all day every day. If we are throwing away plastic straws we are damaging our environment and generations to come won't be able to see our world as we see it today. The great Pacific garbage patch is 2 times the size of Texas and contains 200 million tons of plastic. Our school may be contributing to this because we have milk cartons, juice cartons and milkshakes that all use plastic straws. If you decide to change the straws to paper it will cut down on the pollution in our school and the community.

Many of the pupils in our school feel very passionately about the plastic straw issue and would like action to be taken immediately. We believe that paper straws will benefit us and the wider world. After seeing distressing footage of our oceans on the BBC documentary Blue Planet 2 it has given us new motivation to spread the word about plastic pollution.

In conclusion, we hope to see the changes in the usage of plastic straws in our school very soon. If you would like to contact Airyhall school at 01224 498050. Or go to [airyhall@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:airyhall@aberdeencity.gov.uk).

Kind regards,

Matthew Pirie

Eco Group

Airyhall School

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Hanover Street School  
Beach Boulevard  
Aberdeen  
AB24 5HN

Thursday 8th March

Dear Tracy Archibald,

I am writing to you because of a very important reason, plastic. My class were counting plastic juice cups from lunch. We surprisingly found out that at the end of the week we had 533 cups! That would be about 21,320 in a year!

Imagine a world with no sea creatures if all of them died out. Luckily we can help. Here is a fact; Recent studies have revealed marine plastic pollution in 100% of marine turtles, 59% of whales, 36% of seals and 40% of seabird species examined.

We must stop using so much plastic. Here's a question; How much money is spent on buying these juice cups for primary schools? We think we could just have jugs for our juice just like our milk and water.

P.T.O

Thank you for reading my letter. I hope  
you write something back.

Yours Sincerely,

Aniela  
P5 Hanover Street School