

## Scotland Excel

To: **Executive Sub Committee**

On: **27 April 2018**

**Report  
by  
Director Scotland Excel**

### **Update Report on Plastic Straws**

#### **1. Summary**

At the Executive Sub Committee meeting on 26 January 2018, a question was posed to Scotland Excel on the work being undertaken to help support local authorities to reduce the use of plastic straws in goods through any relevant frameworks.

This report will provide an update on the work to date in relation to this initiative.

#### **2. Background**

In January 2018, MSP Kate Forbes contacted Scottish local authorities asking for commitment to be plastic straw free and to look at sourcing alternatives to plastic straws where required for drinks and cartons.

As a result, Scotland Excel contacted framework suppliers on the groceries and provisions and the milk frameworks to ascertain the feasibility of this and to determine if they or their supply chain (where applicable) were carrying out further research and development in this area.

Through the Groceries and Provisions framework and the milk framework, there are approximately twenty products which are produced with cartons, which are one of the best environmental packaging choices that local authorities can make. They are mostly made from renewable raw materials (trees used to produce paper), have a very low impact on climate change and they are recyclable. A straw also provides a safe, convenient and easy to use solution for children.

Tetra Pak (a multinational food packaging and processing company) has advised that development of an alternative straw is part of their innovation programme. This alternative to the traditional plastic straw will need to

address functionality challenges including the ability to pierce the pack and integrity of the product in a chilled supply chain. An update on possible timelines for the development of an alternative as part of their innovation programme will be provided in due course.

In the interim, following a meeting with pupils at Sunnyside Primary School in Glasgow, Muller Milk & Ingredients (a supplier on the Scotland Excel milk framework), proposed a new scheme to be implemented to help tackle the issue based on the pupils' commitment and detailed research. The proposal consists of three strands:

1. New packaging containing clear advice to push the straw back into the carton when finished and for it to be then sent for recycling; Muller have entered into an agreement with a plastic recycling plant based in Halifax whereby the products will be compressed and recycled.
2. Local authorities can collect plastic straws and send back to Müller who will recycle them as part of their own current plastics recycling stream; and
3. Where local authorities cannot send the plastic straws to Müller, the company will periodically collect the straws and add to their own plastics recycling stream.

### 3. **Actions**

As well as this work, Scotland Excel has also been working with suppliers on the catering sundries framework, as part of the core product list within the catering disposables lot, contains plastic straws. A key element of our contract management process is to conduct core product reviews which involves a review of products and pricing in order to seek new and innovative solutions within the market place. Scotland Excel is in the process of conducting such a core product review with relevant suppliers to remove the plastic straws from the core list and instead replace with environmentally-friendly alternatives e.g. paper straws.

Scotland Excel will continue to work with suppliers and local authorities on this area as part of the contract and supplier management process. Where appropriate, questions will also be included in future tenders such as what suppliers are doing to reduce plastic packaging and elimination of black plastic from packaging in entirety.

### 4. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that members note this report.