

POSITION STATEMENT

# Plastic straws



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# Plastic Straws

The debate around dealing with plastic straws has risen up the public policy agenda over the past 18 months. In the UK an estimated 8.5 billion plastic straws are used every single year. In March 2017, the UK government announced a consultation on the banning of plastic straws in England and Wales. We welcome this move to examine the options and would support a similar process to be initiated by a future Executive in Northern Ireland. It is important to be clear that this is not a fight against straws, but a fight against single use plastic straws. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful recognises that for many people using straws to take fluids and food is important and we support the use of alternatives such as stainless steel, bamboo and paper.

## Why we think this is important

- Plastic straws have been regularly identified as one of the most prominent Single Use Plastics.
- Businesses from fast food chains to local public houses use plastic straws.
- Many children use plastic straws and develop a habit of using them in drinks from a young age.
- Plastic straws are incredibly harmful to our wildlife, particularly our marine wildlife and birds.
- It is important at this juncture to use the rising public concern about this issue and turn it into action.

## What we think can be done

- We want any ban brought in at a European or national level to be implemented in full in Northern Ireland.
- We would encourage support to be given for firms who depend on plastic straws to move to alternative materials.
- Many businesses have already begun making a shift away from plastic straws, it is important that we continue to promote this and keep momentum going.
- Public awareness about the damage that plastic straws have on our environment should be raised across our society. This could be done through public advertising and engagement campaigns.



For more information please contact:

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