



PAPER CUP

Recovery & Recycling Group

****EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 ON FRIDAY 5TH JANUARY****

RESPONSE TO EAC REPORT ON PAPER CUPS

Further to the publication of the Environmental Audit Committee Report on Paper Cups (5 January 2018) the Paper Cup Recovery and Recycling Group makes the following response.

Comments attributable to Neil Whittall, Chairman PCRRG

Latte Levy

The PCRRG was disappointed to see that the EAC had suggested a consumer tax as part of its recommendations in its report on paper cups. The industry has collectively embraced the challenges put to it since attention was drawn to concerns over cup waste and PCRRG members are working across the whole supply chain, implementing activity designed to meet its objective of ensuring consumers are able to recycle their cups in a sustainable manner by 2020.

PCRRG members firmly believe that improvements to infrastructure, alongside changing consumer behaviour through education and conveniently located collection / recycling points are key factors in creating a more sustainable paper cup supply chain. In the last 12 months, the PCRRG and its members have focused efforts on increasing paper cup collection points to make recycling cups on the go more convenient, there are more than 4000 collection points through the activities of collaborative and individual organisations across the market and this focus will continue to add hundreds more in 2018.

Alongside the extensive in-store collections and work of private contractors in offices and other locations, from January 1st 2018 the total number will be increase through a new UK collection system, in collaboration with the beverage carton industry, which will add 382 recycling points located in 97 local authorities across the UK and a further 33 recycling points across an additional eight local authorities scheduled. The beverage carton industry has successfully implemented carton collection in over 92% of local authorities and the aim is to replicate this success with paper cups. The PCRRG also encourages organisations and independent coffee shops to utilize one of the two national post-back schemes, meaning that any operation anywhere in the UK can recycle used paper cups.

Through this cups can be transformed into new products, using the high quality fibre for both industrial and consumer applications such as the example of Selfridges in London who are using paper cups in the manufacture of their paper bags with the help of PCRRG member James Cropper and their waste operator.

All disposable cups should be recycled by 2023

PCRRG members, representing the entire paper cup supply chain, are already committed to delivering the Manifesto Goal that by 2020 the greater majority of the UK population will have access to information, schemes and facilities that enable used paper cups to be sustainably recovered and recycled. The PCRRG recognises that there is still work to be done and is actively encouraging this through further industry-wide collaboration, it notes that the report suggests a 100% recycling target but respectfully points out that this is unlikely to be achievable given the experience of other materials groups whose accepted targets are well below this level.

Paper cups can and are being recycled in the UK

The PCRRG was pleased that the committee acknowledged that whilst the PE coated cups are more challenging to recycle than some materials, these industry standard paper cups are being recycled at four sites in the UK and trials are currently underway with a number of other facilities. New and alternative cup formats may also have a role to play but the PCRRG emphasises that solutions must work for the whole supply chain and consumers and not specific elements only.

Make producers pay/PRN reform

The PCRRG welcomes the broadening of the debate into looking at the suitability of the current Producer Responsibility system, but is opposed to the principle that paper cups should be singled out. Whilst paper cups are under particular scrutiny, the PCRRG believe the benefits of paper cups must not be overlooked, facilitating consumer demand for convenience in the most safe and hygienic format.

The growth of retail coffee shops in the UK has had a significant benefit to UK plc in terms of employment and business property rates, as well as playing a vital role in encouraging consumers to spend on the High Street. The branded retail coffee sector is a UK success story and must continue to be so, unencumbered by unnecessary taxation or legislation.

It is estimated the industry employs over 100,000 people and generates £9.6bn billion in revenues from 24 000+ retail units.¹, recent research showed that 75% of Britons would visit, on average, two other shops when they popped out for a coffee and spend around £15. However, indications are that introducing a tax on coffee cups will significantly deter shoppers, with over one third saying it would negatively affect how often they visited their local high street.

Paper cups must meet the most stringent health, safety and food hygiene regulations, keeping consumers safe. The virgin fibre used in cups comes from 100% sustainable sources where forestry plays a vital role in the local economy and ecological management. Virgin fibre also plays an important role in the quality of recycled material for onward processing, though the PCRRG also recognises that recycled content in paper cups may provide additional benefits if appropriate.

Note to editors:

The Paper Cup Recovery and Recycling Group (PCRRG) is a voluntary body dedicated to increasing the recovery and recycling of paper cups. It has more than 40 members from across the supply chain including paper board manufacturers, paper cup manufacturers, distributors, coffee retail brands, waste, recycling and reprocessing companies, local authorities and NGO bodies including litter organisations.

¹ Project Café 2018 UK from Allegra World Coffee Portal

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