

Rebecca Evans AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-822
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/05144/19

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Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter. I am happy to update you on progress of the pilot project being undertaken in Pembrokeshire, and to set out some of the key findings and the Welsh Government's views with regard to potential for wider implementation of the scheme.

The pilot took place from September to December last year. It covered a sample of seven schools within the area, which switched from plastic third pint bottles to glass bottles and self-service pergals for milk provision.

An analysis of the materials used throughout the supply chain was undertaken by third party experts on behalf of WRAP Cymru and Value Wales. This work focused on the emissions impact of each model of milk provision and covered - but did not focus solely on - plastic straws. That analysis is now complete and a draft report was shared with officials on 2 April. The contents are not yet in the public domain but officials will make the report available as soon as the report is finalised.

In terms of the findings, the pergals had the lowest overall impact, followed by plastic bottles and then glass bottles for the reasons I outline below. I am pleased to confirm that due to the robust recycling arrangements by the schools and Pembrokeshire County Council, it is unlikely that either the plastic bottles or the straws used will end up in the marine environment. Straws were collected along with bottles for waste treatment, and where bottles were recycled, as far as the authors are aware, straws were incinerated. The emissions associated with this process were included in the analysis.

Further to this, due to the proximity of local suppliers to schools, the emissions impact associated with plastic bottles is lower than that of glass bottles, which require a bottling plant outside Wales to fill the bottles. The authors are not aware of any glass bottling plants within

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Wales at this time, so any schools wishing to replicate this approach should be aware of the likelihood that a wholesale switch to glass bottles could have a detrimental effect on both the environment and Wales based suppliers.

Use of pergals provided the lowest overall associated emissions, and although this solution does present some issues in terms of recyclability and the circular economy, this is likely to be an area that officials will recommend for further exploration for those authorities wishing to reduce their environmental impact in school milk provision.

Pembrokeshire County Council is now considering how best to take these lessons into account for future school milk provision, and my officials will continue to work with them.

It is therefore clear that while there is no quick solution to the issue of how best to optimise waste from school milk provision, as long as schools observe local recycling arrangements they can be confident that plastics from their milk provision are unlikely to end up in our rivers and seas.

Public bodies in Wales are, however, encouraged to avoid using single use plastic products where possible, in order to reduce waste and help us reach our 2050 one planet resource use goal.

My officials are committed to exploring the potential for alternative solutions to plastics in order to reduce the amount of materials and associated waste products, and will continue to work with local authorities and industry to find better ways to reduce our impact on the environment.

I would like to thank the Committee and the pupils and staff of Ysgol y Wern for bringing this matter to my attention and helping raise awareness of this important subject. I will ensure that procurement continues to play its role in safeguarding our environment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive style.

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