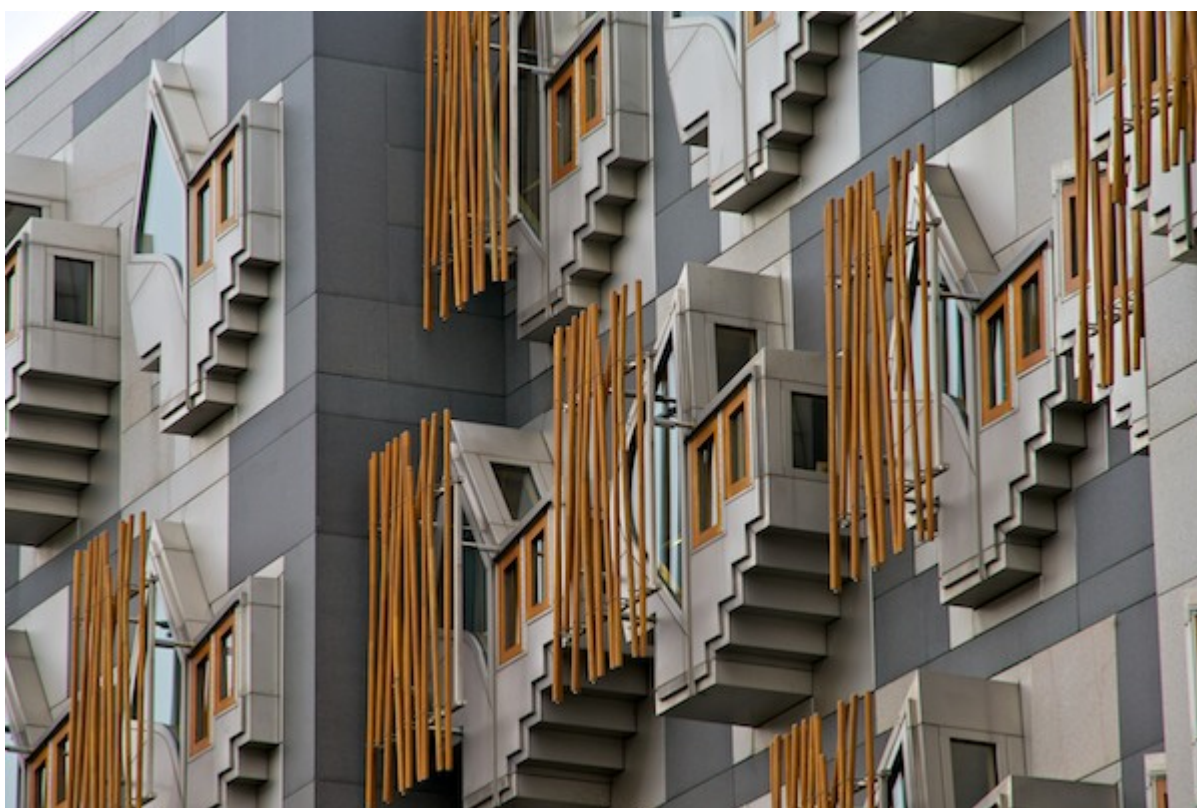


# Lothians MSP highlights the difficulties in banning plastic straws

Jeremy Balfour, Scottish Conservative MSP addressed the Scottish Parliament in March to ask the Scottish Government what measures they are taking to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged by the ban on plastic straws.



Jeremy backs a call from disability campaign group One in Five, to urge the Scottish Government to pause their plastic straw ban while they consider the daily challenges this ban may pose for many disabled people.

Jeremy said : “Whilst I fully agree that the current levels of plastic straw usage are not environmentally friendly or necessary, I feel that disabled groups are being forgotten in the rush to place an outright ban on one small, plastic item that can have a massive impact on a someone’s ability to have

a dignified outing to a café or restaurant.”

He explained that the current environmental alternatives for plastic straws, such as paper or plant based straws, do not work for drinks over 40°C as they can melt and collapse, which would prevent some people from enjoying a hot beverage in safety. Other reusable alternatives, such as metal straws, also present barriers to sufferers of Parkinson’s Disease and other disabilities where bite control is an issue.

Jeremy continued : “This ban on plastic straws could be the final straw which stops many disabled people from taking that important step to go out and socialise and may lead them to being vulnerable to isolation and loneliness.

“I urge the Scottish Government to stop and think this policy through, keeping the dignity and needs of disabled people firmly in mind.”