

## PRESS RELEASE

### **ICELAND BECOMES FIRST UK SUPERMARKET TO SHOW IN-STORE SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME**

**Friday 18 May, 2018** – Iceland today became the first UK supermarket to install a reverse vending machine in store in support of the Government's recently announced intention to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme in England.

The UK's leading frozen food specialist continues to lead the way in reducing the impact of plastic packaging on the environment, and will be trialling the reverse vending machine in its Fulham, London, store initially for six months.

The trial aims to understand consumer perceptions and appetite for the technology and comes ahead of the launch of the Government's Deposit Return Scheme, providing insights which will allow Iceland to maximise the positive environmental impact of the national initiative.

Reverse vending machines reward individuals for recycling, by providing money or vouchers in return for empty containers. Iceland's reverse vending machine accepts any Iceland plastic beverage bottle and repays customers with a 10p voucher to be used in store for each bottle recycled.

Today's announcement is yet another demonstration of the supermarket's dedication to tackling the issue of plastic pollution globally, following the pledge it made in January to eliminate plastic packaging from all of its own label products by the end of 2023.

The move also comes following extensive consultation between Iceland and suppliers, to understand fully the possible implications to the supply chain of the reverse vending machine project.

***Iceland Managing Director, Richard Walker commented:***

*"The vocal support Iceland has received since announcing our intention to eradicate plastic packaging has shown us that there is a huge public will to tackle the scourge of plastics.*

# Iceland

*“We’re the first supermarket to take decisive action to bring the reverse vending machine into stores, following the announcement of the Government’s support for a Deposit Return Scheme in England. We’re doing it properly, through consultation with suppliers and by gaining understanding of how customers will act in response to the machine.*”

*“There are 12 million tonnes of plastic entering our oceans every year<sup>1</sup>, so we feel a responsibility both to tackle the issue of plastic packaging, as we are doing with our own label products, and to give our customers the power to make a difference themselves.”*

Iceland’s action comes with strong support from the Government, with whom they have been in ongoing consultation since they first announced their 2023 plastics pledge in January.

**Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, commented:**

*“We can be in no doubt that plastic is damaging to our marine environment. Plastic pollution contributes to killing dolphins, choking turtles and degrading our most precious habitats.*”

*“I applaud Iceland for leading the way with their trial scheme. It is absolutely vital we act now to curb the millions of plastic bottles a day that go unrecycled. Support from businesses will be a vital part of ensuring we leave our environment in a better state than we found it.”*

**Hugo Tagholm, CEO, Surfers Against Sewage commented:**

*“A nationwide deposit return system will stop millions of plastic bottles escaping into the environment annually, and stem the tidal wave of plastics swamping our coastlines. Surfers Against Sewage would like to congratulate Iceland on their continued leadership to tackle plastic pollution through the trial of a reverse vending machine to understand how customers will respond to the new system. This puts the power in customers’ hands to say no to plastic pollution and incentivises them to participate in the proven solutions for a plastic free ocean.”*

It is estimated more than 12 million tonnes of plastic enters the world’s oceans every year, putting the lives of all forms of marine life at risk, from larger animals through to plankton, and there are fears that toxins originating from plastics are then re-entering the food chain via seafood.

# Iceland

Iceland, which announced in November last year that it is supporting Greenpeace's call to the Government to adopt the Deposit Return Scheme for bottles, has a long history of campaigning and leading positive change for the environment, being the first UK supermarket to remove artificial flavours and colours from its own brand food and the first UK retailer to commit to removing palm oil from own label ranges.

## Ends

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/what-we-do/oceans/plastics/>

## ABOUT ICELAND

Iceland is recognised as the leader in frozen food with 900 stores in the UK. The company prides itself on being a convenient and friendly place to do the family's weekly shop, as well as to meet everyone's daily top-up shopping needs for fresh, chilled and frozen food and groceries. Iceland's nationwide online shopping service was named the UK's best in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Which? supermarket surveys, and for 20 years Iceland has offered a unique, free home delivery service for in-store purchases.

Since 1970 Iceland has been proudly demonstrating to shoppers just how the Power of Frozen can deliver an extensive choice of high quality, great-tasting food from fine sources around the world at great value prices.

With the Power of Frozen at its heart, Iceland naturally generates low levels of food waste. The company is also known as a pioneer in removing artificial colours, flavours and non-essential preservatives from its own label products. It has ranked as one of the UK's Best Big Companies to Work For in each of the last 12 years, and was number one in both 2012 and 2014.