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MBKS to enforce plastic straw ban from April

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Wee fields questions from the media. — Photo by Chimon Upon

KUCHING: Kuching South City Council (MBKS) will enforce its ban on single-use plastic straws at coffee shops and eateries from April.

Kuching South Mayor Datuk Wee Hong Seng said during a meeting with operators under MBKS' jurisdiction recently, most agreed for the trial run to begin next month.

"We have agreed during the meeting that we will start the trial run on March 1 and we will enforce fully on April 1," he said after launching Visit Malaysia 2020 stickers for tourist coaches on behalf of Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah yesterday.

While noting that the Sibu Municipal Council (SMC) started its enforcement of the plastic straw ban this month, Wee said MBKS needed to be fair to operators here.

"MBKS needs to give them sufficient time for them to clear their stock. Let's be fair about it. They have kept the stock for quite a while, some of them are still having the stock," he said.

He also pointed out that public acceptance of the ban is also necessary.

"We need public understanding that the world's global warming issues and not just the operators because we also share the problems with the hawkers because when they say they don't give the straws, they will be blamed, and this worries them because these measures might cause them to lose business."

He said MBKS is also working on an awareness campaign.

"At the moment, we are thinking of a slogan, a catchy one: 'Five minutes in your drink, 500 years in the ocean', that will make people realise the danger of plastics.

"Play your role, say no to plastic straws. I think we are using this type of slogan to explain to people that it is not necessary to have straws and to make it effective, actually education begins at home," he said.

Wee added that a discussion with SMC chairman Clarence Ting showed a common understanding on the implementation of the plastic straw ban.