

Agenda Item No. 4(c)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

19 June 2019

Report of the Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE FOOD BAG PROJECT IN HIGH PEAK

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek Cabinet Member approval for continuation of the compostable food bag project to households in Glossop and Buxton to divert food waste and reduce disposal costs.

(2) **Information and Analysis** On 25 July 2018, the Cabinet Member approved the expansion of this project across the Glossop and Buxton areas to issue compostable food bags that will encourage more householders to divert food waste for composting through their garden waste bins for the period of October 2018 to September 2019 (Minute No.76/18 refers). The project originally commenced in September 2017 in the Glossop area.

Householders in the High Peak have been able to place food waste in their garden waste bins since 2009, but participation levels have been very low. National research has identified that the public often do not participate for a variety of reasons including:

- too smelly/messy
- do not have the time
- do not see the point.

Food waste consists of:

- avoidable food waste that could have been eaten; and
- unavoidable food waste, such as fruit and vegetable peelings, banana skins, apple cores, cauliflower leaves, tea bags, egg shells, etc.

National research confirms that the typical household generates approximately 2kg of food waste per week or 100kg per year, more than the body weight of the average man. Until a household actually separates this waste, most do not realise how much food waste is thrown away.

Food waste is by far the single biggest waste stream in household waste bins. According to the waste compositional analysis of residual waste in 2017, Derbyshire householders are placing over 57,000 tonnes of food waste in their general waste bins each year that the County Council has to dispose of. This has a significant impact on the environment and the financial cost to the Derbyshire Council Tax payer is over £7.5m per year.

By providing compostable bags and promoting the service in the Glossop and Buxton areas, the public have responded and composted more food waste. Prior to introduction of the project, householders were composting 0.16kg of food waste per household per week. In the early stages of this project, Glossop households composted 0.48kg per household per week and in the last six months have been composting 0.53kg. Surveys have found that Buxton households are sometimes only composting 0.15kg per household per week, although the average across the Buxton area is 0.44kg.

The project incurs additional costs to supply compostable bags to households and to promote the scheme. These costs can be absorbed by the landfill savings resulting from the project provided that households continue to divert more than 0.40kg per household per week. Additional promotion and marketing activity is taking place in the Buxton area in the spring and summer of 2019 to encourage greater public participation. This will be reviewed later in the summer to identify whether the Buxton households can successfully achieve a higher level of food waste diversion.

The food waste collected is composted at the County Council's in-vessel composting plant at Waterswallows, Buxton. This facility is managed by Suez on the County Council's behalf. Suez has been monitoring the quality of the food waste being presented as it is critical that all food and garden waste feedstock is quality controlled to enable a compostable product to be produced. Suez has recently confirmed it is satisfied with the inputs from the project and will continue to spread the resulting compost on agricultural land in the Buxton area replenishing farmland with nutrients and organic matter that reduces reliance on artificially produced fertilisers.

Approval is being sought for the continuation of the compostable food bag for householders in the Glossop and Buxton areas to enable food waste to continue to be composted and diverted from landfill and to reduce waste disposal costs.

The following table outlines the costs of continuing this project in the Glossop and Buxton areas from September 2019 to March 2020, based on the diversion levels achieved to date, i.e. Glossop 0.53kg per household per year and Buxton 0.44kg per household per year. At these diversion rates the Buxton area delivers some modest savings to the County Council.

Items of Expenditure	Six Month Extension of the Glossop Trial (£)	Six Month Trial in the Buxton Area (£)	Total (£)
Bags 52 for 7,000 properties and additional stock for the public offices	3,779	3,779	3,558
Stickers for bin	0	0	0
Distribution of stickers	0	0	0
Leaflets	260	260	520
Distribution of bags and leaflets	2,215	2,215	4,429
Marketing costs	1,030	1,030	2060
Total Implementation costs	7,284	7,284	14,567
Estimated disposal savings to the County Council	10,961	8,325	19,286
Estimated net saving to the County Council	3,677	1,041	4,718

High Peak Borough Council is very committed to this project as it enhances its garden and food waste collection service. It has successfully implemented two phases of this project and they manage the day to day issues of bag supplies, social media marketing, public enquiries, etc. It is very keen to see the project expand across the whole Borough. There are four other collection authorities in the County that operate a similar service to High Peak where householders participate, albeit on a very limited basis, placing food waste in their garden waste bin. These authorities are following this project with interest as it may be a service enhancement that they wish to adopt.

Government is currently consulting on its recently published Resource and Waste Strategy. This document proposes that all councils provide weekly collection of food waste from all households. Government has indicated it will meet the net costs of weekly food waste collections should the proposal be taken forward. Any expansion of this project would be subject to High Peak Borough Council's view on this proposal. The evidence of food waste collections provided by this project will inform future consultations and policy.

The effects of the additional social media marketing in Buxton will not be known until late summer 2019. It is therefore proposed that a further report is presented to the Cabinet Member in autumn 2019 in regards to future developments to the project that could commence in spring 2020.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The proposed six month expansion and continuation in the High Peak area will incur implementation costs of £14,567, which can be met by the disposal savings of £19,286 that the County Council gains providing net disposal savings to the Council of up to £4,718.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The County Council has a duty to dispose of residual waste presented by households.

(5) **Environmental and Health Considerations** The County Council is committed to increasing sustainable waste management solutions across the whole County.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, property, social value and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer Contract details – Neil Haslam, extension 39787.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member approves:

9.1 The continuation of the compostable food bag project in the Glossop and Buxton areas until March 2020, whereby the County Council funds the costs outlined in the report from disposal savings.

9.2 That a further report is submitted to the Cabinet Member in autumn 2019 to update on progress with food diversion in the Buxton area with proposals for the project for 2020 onwards.

Mike Ashworth
Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment