

**Agenda Item No. 4(b)**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

**13 February 2020**

Report of the Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE FOOD BAG PROJECT IN THE HIGH  
PEAK**

- (1) **Purpose of Report** To seek the Cabinet Member's 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 6 June 2019, 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 2019 to March 2020 (Minute No.38/19 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 the introduction of the project, householders were composting 0.16kg of food waste per household per week. The following table summarises the composting rates during the project:

#### **Food waste presented per household per week**

	<b>Buxton (kg)</b>	<b>Glossop (kg)</b>
<b>2018</b>	0.44	0.53
<b>2019</b>	0.49	0.59
<b>Overall</b>	0.45	0.54

The project incurs additional costs to supply compostable bags to households and to promote the scheme to ensure a healthy level of public participation. 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 will take place at intervals over the project to encourage greater public participation.

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.

The following table outlines the costs of continuing this project in the Glossop and Buxton areas from April 2020 to March 2021, based on the diversion levels achieved to date, i.e. Glossop 0.54kg per household per year and Buxton 0.45kg per household per year.

<b>Items of Expenditure</b>	<b>12 month extension of the Glossop trial (£)</b>	<b>12 month trial in the Buxton area (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Bags 52 for 7,000 properties and additional stock for the public offices	7,785	7,785	<b>15,569</b>
Stickers for bins	0	0	<b>0</b>
Distribution of stickers	0	0	<b>0</b>
Leaflets	268	268	<b>536</b>
Distribution of bags and leaflets	2,281	2,281	<b>4,563</b>
Marketing costs	2,122	2,122	<b>4,244</b>
Total Implementation Costs	£12,456	£12,456	<b>24,912</b>
Estimated Disposal Savings to the County Council	£13,392	£13,392	<b>£26,783</b>
Estimated Net Saving to the County Council	£936	£936	<b>£1,872</b>

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. 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.

This report seeks approval for the continuation of the compostable food bag for householders in the Glossop and Buxton areas for 2020-21 to enable food waste to continue to be composted and diverted from landfill and to reduce waste disposal costs.

A key consideration for this project is that the Government consulted on its new Resource and Waste Strategy in 2019. One of the many elements of this Strategy is to eliminate food waste from landfill by 2030. Consequently, the Strategy includes the proposal to collect an increased amount of food waste separately from garden waste on a weekly basis from 2023 and to treat it at Anaerobic Digestion facilities in future.

In view of this national development, it would be unwise to expand the current food diversion project in High Peak. However, the councils do not want to discourage the existing participants for composting their food waste and it therefore seems practical to continue the project in its current form until there is greater clarity on the Government's intentions.

Once this picture is clearer, the councils in Derbyshire will review the management of food waste composting services, which is likely to be different from this current trial project. A further report will be brought to the Cabinet Member on this matter in due course to provide an update on this project and the Resources and Waste Strategy implications.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The proposed 12 month expansion and continuation in the High Peak area will incur implementation costs of £24,912, which can be met by the disposal savings of £26,783 that the County Council gains providing net disposal savings to the Council of up to £1,872.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The County Council has a duty to dispose of residual waste presented by households under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

(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: 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 2021, 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 due course to update on progress with this food waste diversion project and the implications of the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**