

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
COUNCIL HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2021

STATEMENT and QUESTION from Mr Peter Dobbs, Ashbourne Local Resident

"I would like to ask 3 questions and make comments concerning the suspension of separate food waste collections in Derbyshire Dales.

I understand that the 4 month suspension of food waste collection and its diversion to landfill via the black / grey bins was an operational decision taken by officers. I also understand that there was no climate impact assessment made at the time.

It would appear that an operational decision may have been made to extend the suspension beyond 4 months.

Q1 *Could you indicate when separate food waste collections are predicted to be resumed?*

Q2 *At the 14th October Full Council it was indicated by Mr Braund that delegated decisions would also have climate impact assessments undertaken. So if the decision was made to extend the food waste suspension (a matter specifically mentioned during that meeting), was an impact assessment made and if so could it be published?*

Q3 *Are the Council intending to follow the DCC policy outlined in their Climate Change Strategy Report 2021-25 (*1) to increase the diversion of food waste from landfill by 2022? They appear at present to be doing the opposite.*

*Calculations (*2) will show that the 17 week suspension has placed 1,450 tonnes of food waste in landfill. By anaerobic decay this will produce methane with a greenhouse gas equivalent of about 960 tonnes CO₂.*

*This is more than the total GHG emissions reported by Derbyshire Dales for 2019-20 and for 2020-21. (*3) This is obviously bad news - but how bad? How expensive will it be to 'remove' this amount of CO₂ in the future to 'repair' the damage?*

The PV array and air source heat pumps currently being installed at Ashbourne Leisure centre are predicted to save 123t CO₂e per year at an installation cost of £734,000. Assuming an operational lifetime of 20 years this equates to a cost of £300 per tonne of CO₂ saved.

This suggests that it will cost well over £0.25 million to repair the damage already caused by sending food waste to landfill. A sum that will increase by £17,000 for every week this policy continues.

*1

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/climate-change/climate-change-strategy.pdf>

*2

<https://derbyshiredaleslibdems.org.uk/en/article/2021/1412362/food-waste-in-the-black-bin-really>

*3 <https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/climate-change2>

Peter Dobbs Ashbourne resident.”

RESPONSE:

Q1: Separate food waste collections will commence on Monday 29 November, as will the collection of side waste for recycling

Q2: A Climate Change Impact Assessment was not undertaken. As stated in previous meetings, the primary focus and reason for the temporary adjustments to the waste and recycling collection service was to support the improvement of waste collections to our residents. Whilst it is regrettable that the Council has needed to take these steps, we have seen a significant reduction in the disruption to our waste collection service as a result of these difficult decisions.

Officers understand and acknowledge the concern of Members in respect of the Methane emissions associated with food waste temporarily going to landfill, however completing a full quantitative assessment would have not changed the situation. At this time there were not enough drivers to to restore the food waste rounds. We are however, pleased to report that separate food waste collections and the collection of side waste for recycling will resume from Monday 29 November.

Q3: As the waste collection authority, the Council will continue to work in partnership with DCC as they aim to achieve their ambitions as set out in the Climate Change Strategy. This includes the prioritised action to ‘Identify solutions to increase the diversion of organic waste including food, soiled materials, carpets, organic textiles, etc. from landfill’ – which will start by 2022 and the more ambitious target (T3) that ‘No more food and garden waste sent to landfill by 2030’

Officers understand and acknowledge Mr Dobbs’ concern in respect of the Methane emissions associated with food waste temporarily going to landfill, however completing a full quantitative assessment would have not changed the situation.

With regards to Ashbourne Leisure Centre, the Council is committed to reducing our emissions in respect of our own estates and operations. The current grant funded project at Ashbourne Leisure Centre demonstrates this commitment and is an exemplar, enabling us to not only reduce emissions at this site but also gain an understanding of technologies such as air source heat pumps for potential use at our other sites

QUESTIONS from Mr David Smith, Wardlow Local Resident

Q1 *I have to ask this question, as the Monitoring Officer of this authority seems to have interpreted the constitution in a way that denies my wife, a councillor, the*

opportunity of asking questions herself, in the public arena. Her questions to the last council meeting were neither read out or minuted.

On July 26th, officers made the operational decision to landfill food waste for 3 months, without any climate change impact assessment. This decision expired on 26th October. At the full council meeting on 14th October Tim Braund agreed with my wife, that any future decision to landfill food waste should have a climate change assessment. Can you tell me if a climate change assessment has been done, for the subsequent decision to landfill food waste, that must have been made on or after 26th October?

Q2 . *I have to ask this question, as the Monitoring Officer of this authority seems to have interpreted the constitution in a way that denies my wife, a councillor, the opportunity of asking questions herself, in the public arena. Her questions to the last council meeting were neither read out or minuted.*

We have all witnessed recent events that paint a picture of the Conservative Party as one of sleaze and lobbying for vested interests. At the Governance and Resources Committee on 18th November I watched Cllr Purdy use his allocated speaking time to present the case for a local landowner. Does the council think this is an appropriate use of his position as the leader of a council which is supposed to represent all of the residents in the Derbyshire Dales? How many times, and on what dates, has Cllr Purdy met Mr Newton to discuss the Starkholmes allotments? Were officers present on all occasions?

Q3 . *I have to ask this question, as the Monitoring Officer of this authority seems to have interpreted the constitution in a way that denies my wife, a councillor, the opportunity of asking questions herself, in the public arena. Her questions to the last council meeting were neither read out or minuted.*

Whilst on the subject of Conservative Party sleaze, earlier this year, as part of a complaint, my wife provided the Monitoring Officer with photographic evidence of Cllr Atkin's declared employer, with outside table and chairs that would require a pavement license. Cllr Atkin had participated in debate and voted to give businesses free pavement licenses. My wife was told by the Monitoring Officer he would prefer to treat the issue as a training matter. Can the council confirm whether Cllr Atkin has received the training required to inform him he should not be voting to potentially financially benefit his employer?

RESPONSE:

- 1. A Climate Change Assessment was not undertaken. As stated in previous meetings, the primary focus and reason for the temporary adjustments to the waste and recycling collection service was to support the improvement of waste collections to our residents. Whilst it is regrettable that the Council has needed to take these steps, we have seen a significant reduction in the disruption to our waste collection service as a result of these difficult decisions.**

Even if an assessment had been completed, there were not enough

drivers to to restore the food waste rounds. We are however, pleased to report that separate food waste collections and the collection of side waste for recycling will resume from Monday 29 November.

- 2. Thank you for raising this issue, Mr Smith. I do not accept the view that I was presenting a case for anyone. I used my contribution to share information that had been provided to me in the meeting I had agreed to hold with the landowner. This information was relevant to the matter under discussion. I am keen that the discussion can move on to support all parties to achieve a solution for the allotment holders at Starkholmes. I will provide the remaining information to you in writing after the meeting.**

- 3. All Members have been invited to attend training on Decision Making and Ethics in December and I understand that the Monitoring Officer will provide a much needed refresher for all Members on the requirements of the Code of Conduct and maintaining the highest standards as elected representatives. I am advised that the Monitoring Officer has discussed the issue with Cllr Atkin, despite not receiving a formal complaint when the matter was raised in September 2020, and reiterated the need to seek advice on such matters in future. I would recommend any Member to approach the Monitoring Officer for advice or counsel ahead of any decision whether they consider that there may be a potential conflict of interest.**