

## **Factsheet on food waste reduction and related eco-innovations In Devon**

ERDF 2014-2020: 51 Mio EUR

The main objective of ERDF in relation to the ECOWASTE4FOOD project is: Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency

ECOWASTE4FOOD addresses Investment Priority 6f: Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution.

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This document provides a brief overview of how the challenges and opportunities faced by Devon on food waste and eco-innovations are addressed by the ERDF.

### **1. Situation and key challenges**

Devon covers an area of 6564km<sup>2</sup> of which 53.2% is rural (defined as settlements of less than 10,000 people, open countryside and some sparsely populated/remote areas).

The total population is 773,100 – of which 16% live in cities.

What are the challenges Devon is facing regarding the environment, resource efficiency and food waste?

- 24% of the waste in Devon's householders' dustbins is food waste
- Approximately 19,000t/year of domestic food waste are collected and go to Anaerobic Digestion
- However, this leaves approximately 33,000t/year which remain in the dustbin heading to a combination of landfill or energy from waste
- The average family wastes £700 a year by throwing away food

At the same time, there are over 50 emergency food providers in Devon which are well established and provide food to thousands of people in Devon. Exeter Foodbank for example provided emergency food supplies to 4668 people in 2015/16. In addition a survey of school staff was completed in 2015 to identify their understanding of local need and the extent of food poverty within children in Devon. Of 50 responses, 62% agreed that food poverty is an issue at their

school. In response, work has begun to set up holiday hunger projects and breakfast clubs to improve access to free food for children in food poverty. There are also breakfast clubs and pay as you like cafes for the homeless or those struggling with addiction.

There is a number of independently operating food re-distribution groups in Devon but currently no coherent strategy.

## **2. How Devon will address these challenges towards 2020?**

Devon's Waste and Resource Management (2013-2035 with 5 yearly reviews) and Waste Prevention and Reuse Strategies (2017-2022) both highlight the need to reduce food waste. Behavioural Change campaign work will focus on food waste reduction and home composting. The targets are to reduce overall waste by 3kg/person per year (no specific target for food waste) as of 2017/2018.

Devon County Council will be aiming to:

- Instigate behavioural change in consumers
- Enable new projects/SMEs to set up by bringing in funding
- Influence more redistribution of food
- Influence national strategy groups
- Reinvigorate Devon Food Strategy
- Input into the planned Sustainable Food Strategy for Exeter

Devon County Council is the Waste Disposal Authority for Devon and as such is funded by a combination of council tax paid by each property in Devon, business rates and funds allocated by Central Government. Additionally Devon County Council applies for external funding where applicable to deliver specific projects. By 2020 however, Devon County Council will no longer receive any allocation from central government. Funding sources to address eco-innovation through the ECOWASTE4FOOD project will include ERDF and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

## **3. What kind of eco-innovations may offer opportunities to help Devon to address these challenges?**

Devon hopes to find a wide range of eco-innovations but will also focus on food re-distribution and influencing consumers. It's clear that technology has a large part to play in connecting unwanted food with those in need so we will look carefully at the various platforms enabling this along with the social hubs that facilitate food redistribution such as community cafes. Typical examples of the sort of eco-innovations which might offer opportunities include:

- Surplus fruit air dried into crisps
- Beer brewed using surplus bread (Toastale.com)
- Mushrooms grown in coffee grounds (Grocycle.com)
- Olio App for sharing surplus food between householders
- Fareshare distributing excess food to those in food poverty
- Making wonky veg into e.g. baby food, soup
- Exeter Foodcycle cooks regular community meals

Key stakeholders which Devon County Council has attracted to the project include:

- Devon and Cornwall Food Association incorporating Exeter Food Action
- Exeter Student Volunteers Food Action
- Exeter Foodcycle
- Food in Community CIC
- The Real Junk Food Project Plymouth
- Fareshare South West
- Takestock
- Olio
- Exeter University
- Devon Norse
- Too Good To Go

Key stakeholders which Devon will be aiming to attract to the project include:

- Homeless in Teignbridge (HITs)
- WRAP
- Feedback
- Devon's Love Food Champions
- Supermarkets
- Public Health Devon
- Local Enterprise Partnership