

Somerset Waste Board meeting
31st July 2020
Report for information

Outcomes: Slim My Waste, Feed My Face - A Campaign to Tackle Food Waste

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<p>Forward Plan Reference:</p>	
<p>Summary:</p>	<p>This report summarises the impacts of the Slim my Waste, Feed My Face promotional campaign (used with the kind permission of Bristol Waste Company) planned to increase participation in food waste recycling and capture more food waste. The campaign exceeded its expectations, with food waste recycled up by 20% - nearly 5 tonnes extra per day - in the first measurable quarter (though Covid-19 will also have contributed to this).</p> <p>Not all parts of the County were covered as the campaign was suspended due to the pandemic. When resources allow, a decision will be made on whether to roll-out to the remainder of the County</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considers and comments on the following recommendations in this report.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - notes the outcomes of the campaign to drive higher levels of food waste recycling through the 'Slim my Waste, Feed my Face' behavioural change campaign - delegates authority to the Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership, in consultation with SMG, to decide whether, when and how to roll-out the campaign to the remainder of Somerset.
<p>Reasons for recommendations:</p>	<p>The campaign exceeded its aim of increasing the tonnage of food waste collected by 16%. Before Covid-19 forced the</p>

	<p>suspension of the campaign, it had reached 210,000 homes (around 80% of the County). With food waste recycling higher as a result of Covid-19, and continued pressures on SWP due to Covid-19 and planning the roll-out of Recycle More, it is not feasible to restart the campaign at this time. This would distract from our priorities to improve services and roll out Recycle More. Given the uncertainties of Covid-19 (and therefore accurately measuring the impact of the campaign) it is not clear if and when the campaign should be concluded.</p>
<p>Links to Priorities and Impact on Annual Business Plan:</p>	<p>Task 2.2.1 within the SWB Approved Business Plan 2019-24 set out our ambition to tackle food waste through a stickering and behaviour change campaign.</p>
<p>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</p>	<p>Financial savings: Turning food waste into energy and soil conditioner at our in-county anaerobic Digester is much lower cost than disposing of food waste in landfill or through Energy from Waste. Through capturing more food waste, SWP expected that the Slim my Waste campaign will deliver financial savings of £105k in disposal costs in 2020/21 and a total saving of £213k up to 2022/23. Given the impact of Covid-19 (resulting in increased food waste tonnages across the County) it is challenging to accurately forecast the degree of savings solely due to the Slim My Waste campaign, however, as set out in section 2 of this report, it is clear that the campaign at least delivered the savings anticipated in the 80% of the County rolled out to. We do not expect to realise 20% of savings due to Covid-19 resulting in the campaign's suspension, this cost pressure has been covered from SCC's MHCLG covid funding.</p> <p>Costs: The campaign was funded by £110k from Somerset County Council's Improving Lives to Prevent Demand Fund and £173,000 in match funding (including from Viridor, our disposal partner). SWP estimated £118,000 to cover the design and production of the materials, £126,000 for labour and fleet, and £39k for additional containers. Actuals costs were £61,371.22 and £113,207 respectively, a total of £174,758 and an underspend of £69,242. Actual costs vs estimates are set out in section 2.</p> <p>Legal: There are no legal implications associated with this campaign. Bristol Waste Company gave SWP permission to use their campaign materials, for which we are very grateful.</p> <p>HR: Temporary agency staff were used to undertake the campaign (delivering leaflets and affixing stickers to bins). When the campaign was suspended additional payments were made in</p>

	line with SCC's policy to temporary staff affected by Covid-19. All staff were sign-posted to Suez who had need for temporary staff, with special induction sessions arranged at short notice so that affected staff had no loss of employment compared to what was expected.
Equalities Implications:	An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in July 2019 when funding from SCC's prevention fund was secured. No adverse impacts were identified.
Risk Assessment:	A key risk is that the resource pressures on SWP due to Covid-19 and rolling out Recycle More means that we do not have the resources to roll out the remainder of the campaign. Uncertainty over behaviour since Covid-19 (which has seen increase in food waste tonnage everywhere, but which we need to better understand how long-lasting this change is and whether it relates to increased participation or simply more food waste because more people are at home for longer) also makes it more challenging to know whether the business case for the final 20% of the roll-out remains valid.

1. Background: rational for the campaign

- 1.1.** SWP collected 18,990 tonnes of food waste in 2018/19 through its weekly kerbside service. This was turned into renewable energy to power homes and a nutrient rich fertiliser at an anaerobic digestion plant at Walpole (near Bridgwater), saving 380 tonnes of carbon.

SWP's analysis has shown that Somerset's household rubbish bins contain over a quarter (26%) of food waste which could be recycled. Reducing the amount of food waste being sent to landfill would not only lead to a significant environmental benefit, but also generate cost savings of up to £950,000 per annum if all the food waste in the refuse bins was recycled. From analysing the food waste in Somerset's bins, we know that on average, around one third (36%) of food waste is thrown away in its packaging, including unopened and out of date food, with a further 36% being avoidable e.g. it was edible prior to disposal.

Whilst we know that significantly more people recycle their food in Somerset (62% participation) than the national average, we also know that there is significant room for improvement – with only 26% of householders recycling food waste every week. Zero waste Scotland have shown that food waste is a greater contributor to climate change than plastic – with the food waste not

ending up in the right bin in Somerset leading to 882 tonnes CO2 equivalent (carbon) per annum.

- 1.2. In 2017, the Bristol Waste Company launched the 'Slim My Waste, feed my face' (SMW) campaign which focused on encouraging householders to use their food waste bins and kitchen caddy by decorating them with face stickers to reflect their householder personality. The campaign achieved significant results in raising awareness in Bristol, increasing recycling (by 16%) and reducing the amount of food waste being sent to landfill. As a result, the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) has agreed to deliver a variation of the campaign to residents in Somerset. It adopted the same format as the Bristol campaign, but the artwork was amended to reflect SWP branding and messaging and support the existing food waste collection service.
- 1.3. All kerbside service residents received an information leaflet (figure 1) and 2 sheets of A5 'face' stickers to decorate their food waste caddy (figure 2). The 6-page A5 information leaflet promoted food waste recycling, explaining why we need to recycle food waste, the benefits, how to use the face stickers and step by step guide on how to use the food waste collection service. Content on what can currently be recycled at the kerbside and HWRCs and the upcoming 'Recycle More' service changes was also included (to raise awareness across the whole of Somerset). Black bins were given an 'I'm on a no food waste diet' sticker on their lid and a bright yellow 'no food waste' measuring tape around the middle (their 'waist'). The stickers provide an ongoing visual reminder not to use their black wheelie bin for food waste.



Figure 1: Leaflet



Figure 2: Face stickers



Figure 3: bin tape



Figure 4: Bin stickers

2. What the campaign achieved

2.1. The Slim My Waste project was scheduled to commence during mid-January. Due to un-anticipated printing issues the launch was delayed until the Tuesday 4th February 2020. Eight dedicated crews delivered the packs and stickered rubbish bins, following refuse crews. Each Crew was made up of three agency staff and managed on a daily basis by SWP staff, ensuring that initial teething issues (such as how the bin tape was applied) were addressed.

<i>Where</i>	<i>Households covered</i>	<i>Dates</i>
MDC	47,998	04/02 to 17/02
SSDC (excl Chard and Ilminster)	68,198	18/02 to 02/03
SW&T (old TDBC, and Chard and Ilminster)	68,261	03/03 to 16/03
SDC	25,543	17/03 to 18/03
SW&T (old WSDC)	0	Suspended

The campaign was suspended on 18 March as Covid-19 started to have a significant impact on SWP's services (the container delivery service was suspended on 19 June). This meant that part of Sedgemoor, the western part of Somerset West & Taunton and some rural parts of other districts did not receive the campaign.

2.2. Communications and Engagement

The campaign was launched on social media at the beginning of February, supported by a press release and website content. This coincided with the delivery of information packs to households across the county, district by district starting in Mendip. The initiative had already been heavily trailed in a 'wraparound' cover for the December 2019 edition of the Your Somerset newspaper which is delivered to homes across the county.

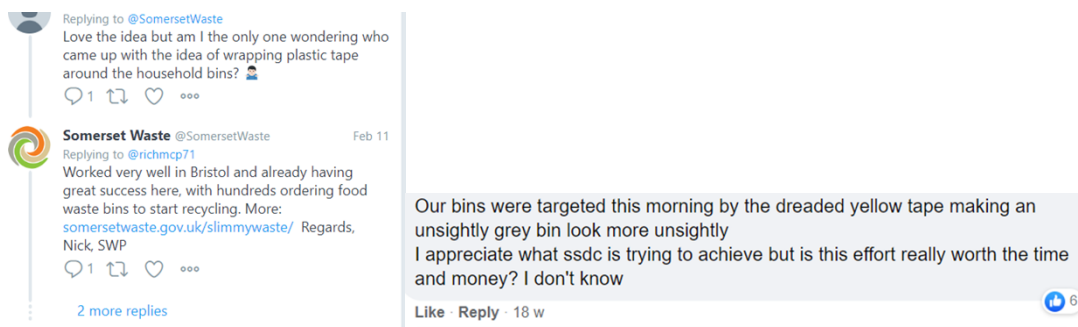
Residents were encouraged to post their stickered-bin 'faces' on social media using the #FeedMyFaceSWP hashtag for the chance to win prizes. Content was proactively shared on community Facebook pages, following the delivery of packs as closely as possible.

More than 100 'Feed My Face' pictures were posted on the SWP Twitter and Facebook pages, despite the promotion being scaled in mid-March down as Covid-19 saw the initiative paused. The number of photos submitted is likely to be substantially higher, as pictures were often posted without using the

hashtag. Beyond social media, anecdotally, stickered bins can be seen in most streets across the county. Overall this points to a substantial level of engagement across communities that will have encouraged the behaviour change demonstrated by the increased levels of food waste recycling.



As expected with a campaign of this kind, responses were mixed. Where reactions were negative, comments largely focussed on the tape applied to rubbish bins, costs and the materials used.



The food waste bin stickers themselves were subject to little criticism and were, in many cases, enthusiastically welcomed.



Undoubtedly, the campaign also stimulated healthy and helpful discussion not only about food waste but a wide range of waste and recycling issues. This was a valuable opportunity for SWP to engage with residents, answer questions and provide information. The degree of interaction through this route has provided useful insight into the potential of online engagement in support of Recycle More, especially in the absence – at least initially – of face-to-face engagement.

2.3. Impact of the campaign: participation

The impact of Covid-19 has made it very challenging to identify the specific impact of the campaign – we suspended the campaign on 18 March and suspended container delivery on 19 March 2020. The clearest indication that the campaign exceeded expectations in encouraging more people to recycle food waste is in demand for food waste containers – people asking for a caddy is the first sign that people who are not currently recycling food waste want to start doing this. In a typical the six-week period across Somerset we would usually expect to receive around 2,500 food waste container orders. During the Slim My Waste Campaign the total orders for a six-week period until Container Service suspension was 12,800 containers, which equates to over a 400% increase in demand for the service. Container orders is, however, only a proxy for participation as many people will have food containers that they don't use or use infrequently.

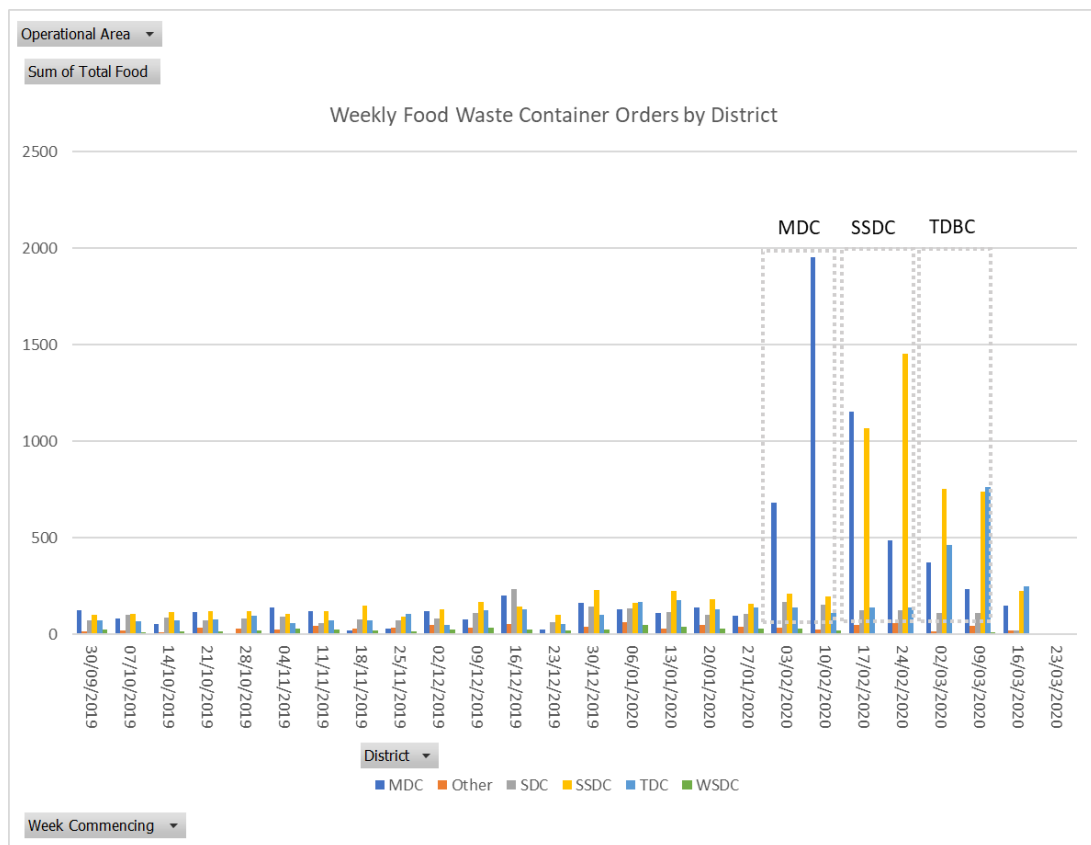


Figure 5: Food waste container orders mapped against slimmy campaign roll-out

As can be seen in the above graph, significant increases in demand for containers correlates with the roll-out of the slimmy campaign in different districts. Demand for containers was highest in Mendip. Whilst we cannot be certain, it is likely that previous food waste campaigns run in Taunton and South Somerset in 2015 meant that participation was already higher in those areas. The increased media coverage over Covid-19 is also likely to have had an impact on the campaign. Higher levels of participation in food waste in Mendip is particularly welcomed as this is expected to be the first area to receive the Recycle More service, and if people are recycling food waste already they will find this transition smoother.

2.4. Impact of the campaign: capture of food waste

As the campaign rolled out in the final quarter of 2019/20 we saw a significant increase in the food waste collected per day – an additional 4.92 tonnes per day on average. The marked increase in food waste capture in this quarter is shown in figure 6. Figure 7 breaks this down by district. Whilst we only rolled out the campaign to 80% of Somerset properties, the first quarter where we could see the full impact of roll-out is quarter 1 2020/21. As shown in figure 8 we have seen a significant (over 1,000 tonnes) increase in food waste capture in this quarter alone. Should that be maintained over the full year we would achieve over 80% of the increased tonnage we hoped to see. However, Covid-19 has also seen tonnages of other materials increase (though not by this proportion) and is likely to have driven increases in food waste. It is therefore high on

impossible to identify what proportion of increases in food waste are due to the slimmy campaign or due to Covid-19 (with more people at home, and hence consuming more meals at home). It is clear, however, that the campaign resulted in significant increases in the amount of food waste people recycled in Somerset.

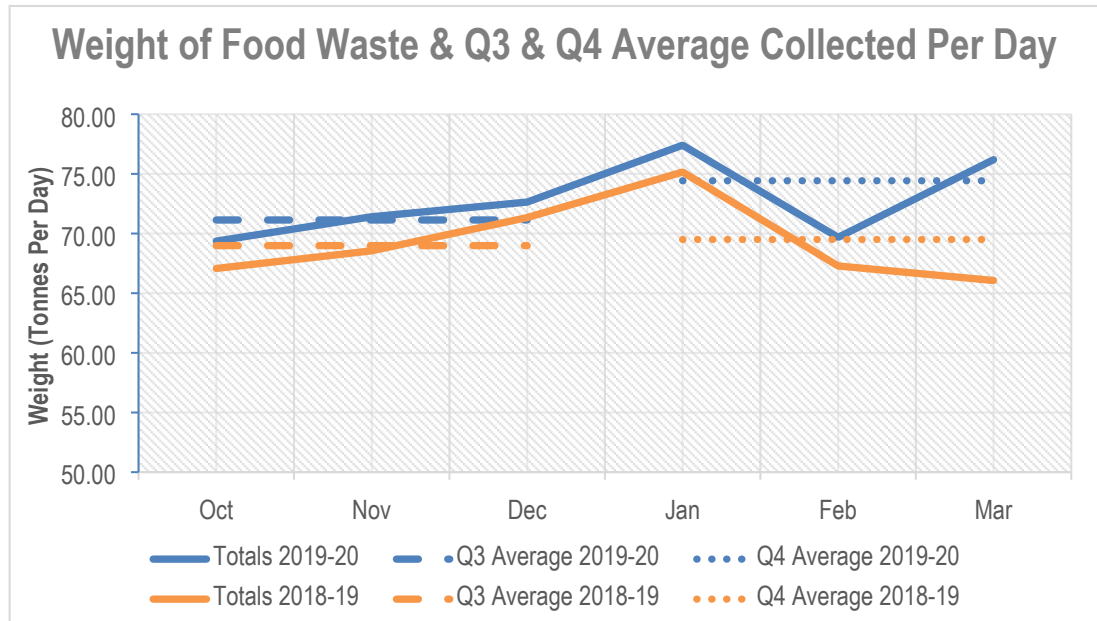


Figure 6: Increased capture of food waste in final half of 2019/20

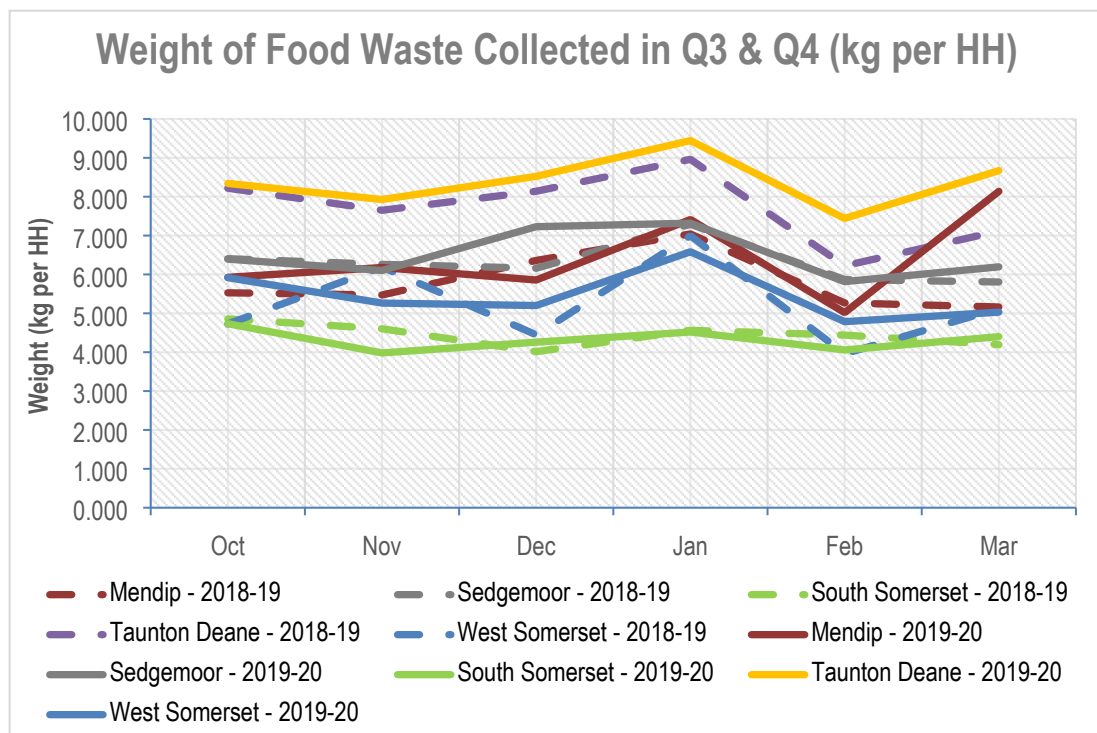


Figure 7: Increased food waste capture by district (2019/20)

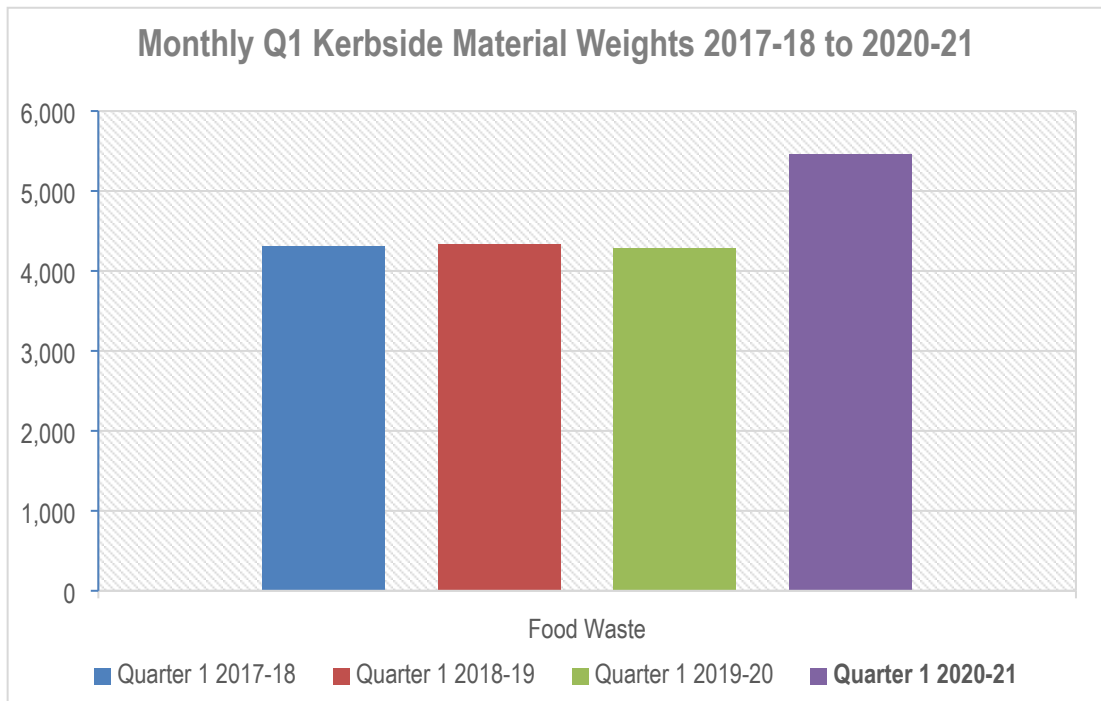


Figure 8: Food waste capture in Q1 2020/21 compared to previous years

2.5. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of food waste recycling, encourage participation and increase capture. Achievement against the set objectives is set out below:

Objective	What was actually achieved
Increase the tonnage of food waste collected by 16% in 2020/21 through targeted communications	Due to the significant increase in food waste tonnage under Covid, we may never be able to identify the specific impact of the Slimmy campaign for 2020/21. However, we did see an over 20% increase in food waste collected in Q1 of 20/21 compared to the three previous years (noting that the campaign wasn't fully rolled out).
Prevent 5,000 tonnes of food waste from going to waste	As set out above, the full impact of Slimmy may not be possible to separate from the impact of Covid (with more people at home and consuming more food at home), but in the final quarter of 2019/20 and first quarter of 2020/21 an extra 1,000 tonnes of food waste have been captured compared to the previous year
Save £105,000 in disposal costs in 2020/21 (£213k in total)	The additional tonnage of food waste captured is on track to deliver the savings estimated. However, it is assumed that 20% of the benefit will not be realised due to this proportion of the

	county not being covered. SCC have covered this cost pressure through MHCLG Covid funding
Increase participation in the food waste service from 62% to 72% in 2020/21	It is too early to measure achievement against this aim, and due to the significant increase in food waste tonnage under Covid, we may never be able to identify the specific impact of the Slimmy campaign. However, the 400% increase in container demand suggests that participation has increased significantly. If all these households starting to recycle food waste that would be an increase in participation of 5%. Our previous participation survey showed us that infrequent participation in food waste high, so many people will not require a new container to start recycling food waste regularly.
Engage with a minimum of 20 primary schools to raise awareness of the SMW campaign and encourage participation	Bookings were on track to have exceeded the target, but fell slightly under target owing to the impact of Covid-19. The Schools Against Waste (SAW) team carried out 17 Slim My Waste workshop sessions, with 6 schools also hosting stalls for parents where they could collect food waste bins and caddies. The team distributed 96 large food bins and 93 kitchen caddies to parents to replace missing or damaged containers. A further 12 school visits and 7 Slim My Waste workshop sessions and stalls for parents were cancelled schools owing due to Covid-19. Overall, the team reached 3,861 children through assemblies promoting the Slim My Waste campaign and over 500 children attended Slim My Waste workshop sessions during this period.
Involve 12 Co-op stores around the County as pick-up points for food waste bins/caddies	All 12 stores received deliveries of caddies and bins (including West Somerset) and were able to request more if needed. In total, 420 were delivered, spilt roughly half and half between caddies and bins. Highest numbers being in Taunton, Wincanton and Frome.

2.6. Costs of campaign compared to budget

The campaign was expected to cost £283,000 of which £118,000 covered the design and production of the materials and £126,000 covered labour and fleet. SWP secured £173,000 in match funding (including from Viridor, our disposal partner) and £110,000 from Somerset County Council's Improving Lives to Prevent Demand Fund. The anticipated increased cost of food waste caddies/bins was £39k, funded from the Recycle More fund (as agreed with the

Strategic Management Group).

Actual costs for design of leaflets, stickers and tape were £2,520. Print costs for 260,000 units were £58,851, giving a total of £61,371 and an underspend of £56,629.

Due to the curtailing of the campaign before complete, there were also underspends in labour and fleet costs. Labour costs were £80,535, fleet costs £17,881 and consumables (e.g. PPE and building hire) £14,783, giving a total cost of £113,207 and an underspend of £12,793.

This gives the total spend of £244,000 and an underspend of £69,242 against the estimated budget.

A sum of £39,000 had been budgeted for the anticipated increased cost of food waste caddies/bins. With the campaign shortened, actual spend was £27,000. An underspend of £12,000.