

## CABINET

<b>DATE</b>	20th August 2025
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor Henry Hudson - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Net Zero
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Carolina Borgstrom, Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Implementation of weekly food waste collections in North East Lincolnshire.
<b>STATUS</b>	Open
<b>FORWARD PLAN REF NO.</b>	CB 08/25/06

### CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The recommendations in the Cabinet report supports the delivery of the Council Plan for 2025 to 2028 which sets out the ambition for a Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities. The introduction of a new weekly food waste collection service aligns with our strategic Green Future: Waste and Recycling priority where our waste and recycling services are resilient and customer friendly. The services we design and deliver, influence sustainable behaviour and minimise waste sent for disposal and increase recycling.

The council's priority is for residents to have access to an effective service that is easy to use and delivered right first time. Everyone has a part to play in making sure that we limit the waste we produce and reuse and recycle where we can.

Under our green ambition we want everyone in North East Lincolnshire to benefit from a green economy and high-quality environment, and we're committed to cutting our organisation's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. We will also support North East Lincolnshire to hit the target of carbon net zero by 2050.

Our priorities are monitored using our vital signs data which includes progress on our household recycling rate.

The North East Lincolnshire Council Waste Management Strategy 2020 – 2035 also sets out the following priorities and objectives relevant to this report.

- **Customer friendly** to increase the number of households that participate in recycling and increase the amount of recycling collected from each household.
- **Environmentally responsible** reduce the amount of waste produced and collect good quality recycling with a low contamination rate.
- **Education focused** to improve sustainable waste management education and awareness.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environment Act 2021 requires all councils to align their household waste and recycling services with new nationwide requirements known as 'Simpler Recycling'. North East Lincolnshire Council already meets the main requirements but must be in the process of planning weekly food waste collections from households by 31 March 2026. Councils have discretion to choose how best to collect food waste in their area. A comprehensive options appraisal including the modelling of waste collection data was used to formulate the recommendation on the preferred collection method set out in this report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees the principle of:
  - a. providing an integrated weekly food waste collection service to households in North East Lincolnshire using a refuse collection vehicle which incorporates a food waste pod enabling the collection of two waste streams simultaneously; and
  - b. endorses the optimisation of waste collection routes, a process which may necessitate changes to bin collection days for all residents.
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Net Zero to:
  - a. Undertake procurement exercises for the resources required to deliver a food waste collection service, as outlined within the report to include fleet and equipment; and
  - b. To take all ancillary actions reasonably arising, including implementation planning, mobilisation and recruitment of staff.
- 3) Authorises the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) to complete and execute all legal documentation arising.
- 4) Directs that the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure presents a detailed delivery plan to Communities Scrutiny Panel for awareness, once vehicle lead times are determined.

## REASON FOR DECISION

To agree the food waste collection method to satisfy the legal requirement to deliver weekly food waste collections to households in a way that best suits North East Lincolnshire. The decision allows the Council to commence the procurement exercises for fleet and ancillary items required to deliver the service and award the necessary contracts.

The introduction of a separate food waste collection will contribute to North East Lincolnshire's recycling rates somewhere between 8 – 11% and help us achieve government targets and result in long term reduction in residual waste sent for disposal.

## **1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES**

- 1.1 In December 2018 the Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS). This was the first national review of waste policy for over ten years and aims to reduce waste, improve recycling, and support the development of a 'circular economy'. A key element of the strategy is providing nationwide consistency in recycling collections.
- 1.2 The Government subsequently consulted on various RAWS policies in 2019, 2021 and in November 2021 the Environment Act 2021 was passed providing the legislative framework through which the strategic waste reforms were to be enacted.
- 1.3 The Simpler Recycling policy published in October 2023 and updated in November 2024 set out the new waste collection default requirements for the majority of households and workplaces. The default is four containers for:
  - residual (non-recyclable) waste
  - food waste (mixed with garden waste if appropriate)
  - paper and card
  - all other dry recyclable materials (plastic, metal and glass)
- 1.4 To comply with these requirements, the Council must have planned a weekly collection of food waste from domestic properties by 31st March 2026.
- 1.5 It is vital that decisions relating to the introduction of a food waste collection service are taken as soon as possible in order to allow the procurement of the required service assets (vehicles, bins, etc) to commence. Lead in times for manufacture of food waste collection vehicles are currently 12- 18 months and will likely increase as councils nationwide place orders to introduce this new service.
- 1.6 A comprehensive options appraisal to determine the most appropriate collection methodology for the borough has been conducted. This considered a range of factors including
  - Revenue and capital cost.
  - Workforce implications including H&S, role desirability, skills and recruitment.
  - Procurement of vehicles, bins, caddies and liners, including lead time and delivery.
  - Environmental impacts.
  - Interface with waste disposal both operationally and contractually.
  - Customer service and communication.

- 1.7 The work undertaken to explore potential options was shared with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) who are supporting Councils with the implementation of food waste collections. WRAP were then able to model the two preferred options and confirm the indicative resource requirements that would be needed to operate the different collection methods.
- 1.8 The preferred collection method is to create an integrated food waste collection service that operates alongside the existing collections using a collection vehicle with a food waste pod at the front of the vehicle. Residents will therefore receive a food waste collection at the same time and using the same vehicle that is collecting their residual waste and recycling. Each crew will be increased in size to incorporate an additional loader. The new crews will contain a Driver and three loaders.
- 1.9 The integrated service will require up to 19 new waste collection vehicles (including spares) and up to 25.5 additional staff to mobilise the service. These figures remain subject to the results from a route planning exercise which will also be undertaken to optimise the new routes. This in turn may lead to some changes to collection days.
- 1.10 The food waste pilot carried out between 2021 and 2023 provided valuable feedback from residents on the scheme. Residents will be provided with a small indoor kitchen caddy and a kerbside container similar to those used in the pilot. Residents in flats and apartments will be provided with the same indoor caddy and share a larger outdoor container.
- 1.11 The Council has a 30 year integrated waste management contract with Newlincs. This contract was very ambitious when it began in 1999, making North East Lincolnshire Council one of the first Authorities to make real progress in diverting waste from landfill, but it has not been updated to include more modern recycling solutions. The contract does not currently include provisions for food waste and separate arrangements will have to be put in place by the contractor to process food waste which may incur additional cost.
- 1.12 In February and March 2024, the Council was allocated a total of £1,358,289 under new burdens capital transitional funding for the purchase of vehicles and bins to support food waste collections.
- 1.13 In March 2025 new burdens revenue transitional resource grant of £428,052 was received to support implementation of the scheme. Further new burdens revenue funding is also due from April 2026 to support with the ongoing costs of operating food waste services. At present no further detail is available on the likely financial award or timescales.

## 2. RISKS OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 There is a risk that vehicle lead times will delay implementation of the service. This may also increase the likelihood of higher costs for vehicles and bins which will be a subject to unprecedented demand.
- 2.2 Recruitment of sufficient staff to enable implementation in accordance with the project plan. This is mitigated through the design of the service and the requirement for additional loaders rather than drivers.
- 2.3 Introducing the new food waste streams will require an alternative disposal method which will may impact on current disposal costs.
- 2.4 The transitional capital funding is not sufficient to cover the cost of new vehicles and there is a risk that the new burdens revenue funding will not be sufficient to cover the new operating costs.
- 2.5 It may be more challenging to implement the new food waste collections in some types of accommodation, such as flats above shops and other communal properties. The council will work to identify issues and suitable mitigation to maximise the roll out of food waste collections and resident participation.
- 2.6 Tonnage yields may differ from modelled outputs. The projected food waste tonnages are based on the evidence from our local food waste pilot and national evidence for other collections across the country. There will be a degree of uncertainty regarding how much food waste we are likely to collect so both a low and mid-range yield was modelled. Changes in the tonnage of food waste collected may impact on the number of crews needed to undertake food waste collections.
- 2.7 Residents may not welcome an additional waste container in some of the more densely populated wards.

### **Opportunities**

- 2.8 Using a collection vehicle with a food waste pod will minimise the change for our residents and so will hopefully encourage higher participation rates in food waste collections. Whilst participation in the service is discretionary for residents we wish to make participation easy to increase recycling and reduce waste for disposal.
- 2.9 This new service will create new employment opportunities for local people.
- 2.10 The new food waste scheme will increase the overall recycling rate in the borough. It is estimated that the food waste collection service will divert between 4000 – 5500 tonnes of waste from disposal to recycling. This is likely to increase our baseline recycling rate for waste collected through the wheeled bin scheme by 8 – 11% (excluding garden waste).

### 3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 **Do nothing.** This is not an option as food waste collections are required by law.
- 3.2 **Integrate with garden waste.** This would require garden waste collections to be carried out weekly to all households rather than the current model. It also impacts on the current disposal method for garden waste which would need to change to Anaerobic Digestion or other suitable technology.
- 3.3 **Separate dedicated food waste collection.** This option will increase the number of vehicles on the fleet by eight. This in turn impacts of depot space and operational fleet costs. This option also requires a large number of both new drivers and loaders to operate the new dedicated rounds.
- 3.4 A dedicated food waste collection also increases the number of vehicles on the road and the number of miles travelled.

### 4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are potential positive and negative reputational implications for the Council resulting from the decision.
- 4.2 The recommended option has been subject to a comprehensive assessment and should therefore reflect positively on the Council as it offers a solution that is balanced on resident and workforce experience. It should also provide a simple collection methodology for residents that aligns to their current collection schedule, once optimised.
- 4.3 There may be some negative public reaction to the proposed changes, including the provision of an extra bin. The Council will aim to encourage participation through a robust communications and engagement strategy. This will begin as soon as possible following confirmation of vehicle lead times and will continue following the initial mobilisation period until the waste service are confident residents' habits are fully embedded.

### 5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 In order to support the introduction of food waste collections, new burdens funding has been allocated by Government to local authorities. While this does not fully cover the initial capital investment it is accepted that the fleet will need to be upgraded in the coming years anyway. While we await confirmation of future new burdens revenue funding, modelling of the preferred option has focused on minimising the ongoing revenue costs required to run the service.

- 5.2 In the absence of confirmed new burdens funding the Council is keen to deliver this new service to residents. It is estimated that the preferred option of an integrated collection will have a net cost £4,765m taking account of capital grant received. Although the co-collection vehicle requires slightly higher initial capital investment, it aims to reduce ongoing spend on running the service via reduced fleet, staffing and oncosts.

- 5.3 Revenue costs and any resulting forecast pressures will be considered as part of the budget setting process

## **6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

The proposal will create additional employment within the Council. In our role as Corporate Parent we will actively support care experienced young people to access suitable work opportunities. In addition, the scheme, alongside existing educational initiatives will help raise awareness among children and young people about the importance of waste reduction and recycling.

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposal to incorporate food waste collection into the existing waste rounds, rather than establishing dedicated food waste rounds, is the most sustainable and carbon-efficient method, by reducing overall fleet and journeys made. This approach aligns with our sustainability goals for 2030.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY**

Due to time constraints the proposal has not been presented to Communities Scrutiny in advance of the decision. It is proposed that the project delivery plan be considered by the panel.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The project will form part of the approved capital programme, with expected spend aligned with the timeline for implementation. The approved capital budget will be £6.123M, consisting of £1.358M grant funding and £4,765M corporate funding. Revenue budget implications will be considered as part of the annual budget setting and medium term financial planning process. Opportunities to cover costs (including partially) via new burdens funding or via the existing budget envelope for Environment will continue to be explored.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 As outlined in the report the Environment Act 2021 mandates that Councils must make arrangements for the collection of food waste on a weekly basis from households. The recommendations sought will permit the Council to be in a state of readiness to meet the statutory time frames.

- 10.2 All anticipated procurement exercises will be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023, and supported by relevant officers. Legal Services will support the completion of the contractual documentation on award.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report. People and Culture will support with any recruitment and employment related opportunities or needs should it be required.

## **12. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed service will have borough-wide impact, affecting all wards. The implementation plan will focus on reducing any inequalities that may exist between wards particularly relating to bin storage. By integrating food waste collections with the existing waste collections, the initiative aims to minimise disruption for residents by maintaining a single collection day. This approach is expected to support ease of participation and encourage long-term engagement with the service.

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None available.

## **14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Kath Jickells, Assistant Director – Environment

**COUNCILLOR HENRY HUDSON**  
**PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NET ZERO**