



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 21 July 2026

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy Update

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide Cabinet with an update on changes to the Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy and seek approval to implement the updated policy. The updates include changes to round start times and Bank Holiday working. Under the Environment Act 2021, South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) is required to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their waste collection services, and the changes suggested within this report support the improvement of the service.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to review and approve the updated Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy.

Decision Information

Key Decision?	Yes
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Sustainable South Kesteven Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The updates to the Policy are within existing financial resources and therefore there are no financial implications arising from the report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Members are asked to scrutinise the Policy before considering whether to approve the suggested changes.
- 1.3 Relevant legislation is referred to throughout the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn. Democratic Services Manager

Human Resources

- 1.4 The proposals set out in this report have potential to impact employees' working arrangements and working patterns. Formal consultation with affected employees and Trade Unions will take place if Members support the proposals. This will ensure Trade Unions and colleagues are given full opportunity to provide feedback and that any views are fully considered before final decisions are made and changes are implemented.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Head of HR)

Climate Change

- 1.5 The proposed changes to earlier start times offer the potential to further rationalise vehicle mileage and associated fuel consumption, as well as the potential to reduce congestion at the morning peak hour.
- 1.6 Additionally, the ability to commence collections earlier will be beneficial to crews during periods of hotter weather.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy document provides the residents of SKDC with an outline of the services provided and helps to manage their expectations regarding service delivery. Furthermore, it acts as a guide to decision-makers on how to handle issues and ensures that any problems are dealt with fairly and transparently.
- 2.2 The current Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy was last updated in February 2026 to include food waste recycling collections. This latest updated draft version includes changes to round start times to reflect the longer length of rounds since the restructure in 2025 together with alternative proposals with respect to collections during Bank Holiday periods. *The proposed changes are highlighted in yellow in Appendix 1 for ease of identification.*

Round Start Times (Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy: Section 1.4)

- 2.3 The current Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy indicates a start time of 07:30am for collections. However, since the rounds were restructured in late 2025, each round can have around two more hours work to cover on residual collection weeks. Due to this increased workload, crews are regularly missing the deadline for final tipping at the Waste Transfer Station (WTS). Discussions with Lincolnshire County Council have been productive and they have agreed to open the WTS for an additional thirty minutes. This change will not mitigate the entire issue and to address this, SKDC have agreed to explore moving the collection start time forward by 30 minutes to 07:00am.
- 2.4. Furthermore, additional reasons which support the introduction of an earlier collection time include:
- During severe hot weather periods it is common practice within the waste industry to bring collections forward during these periods of intense heat.
 - The current start time of 07:30am means that the waste crews experience the commencement of rush hour traffic and if there are accidents/incidents on the A1 then this can cause severe delays which can result in unfinished rounds. Deploying earlier would mitigate against the impact of these traffic incidents can have on deployment, especially now that the crews deploy from the new depot site which is located very close to the A1.
- 2.5. To support the change, a comprehensive communications campaign would be undertaken, and residents would be encouraged to place their bin out for collection the night before collection is due (if this is possible).

Bank Holiday Working (Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy – Section 2.8)

- 2.6. This report seeks to change Bank Holiday working with a commencement date of Easter 2027. The following Bank Holidays will be impacted:
- Easter Monday,
 - Early May Bank Holiday,
 - Spring Bank Holiday, and
 - Summer Bank Holiday.
- 2.7. Currently, collections which fall in the week of one of these Bank Holidays are pushed back by one day and so every resident experiences a change in collection day.
- 2.8. Collections which are scheduled for Fridays are moved to the Saturday. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fully staff up a Saturday as it requires volunteers. Therefore, the service regularly runs without a full set of vehicles, and this can result in missed bins. Alongside the inconvenience this causes, it also results in additional work and overtime as the team try to empty the missed bins.
- 2.9. To address this issue, it is recommended that the collections which fall on the Bank Holidays outlined in Section 2.8. take place on the scheduled collection day. Staff would be paid at the same overtime rate as they are for the Saturdays, however, these days would be included within their contract and therefore the risk of service failure would be reduced.
- 2.10. Informal consultation has been undertaken with the team and there is support for this change. However, formal consultation cannot be undertaken until this change is given consideration through the governance process. If this change is agreed, the full HR process will be followed before the suggested changes are taken further.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. These changes have been proposed to ensure the services delivered by the Waste Team provide the best possible service standards for residents. They will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.
- 3.2. The change in start time will ensure more consistent collections. It will also ensure that waste is not stored on vehicles in the depot yard overnight, which is a breach of health and safety regulations.
- 3.3. The variations to Bank Holiday working will reduce the impact of Bank Holiday collection changes on residents and will reduce missed bin numbers. It will lessen

the complexity of the collection schedule for residents, resulting in a more consistent collection schedule.

- 3.4. If approved, the changes will be communicated to residents via social media, press releases and SKDC's website. A full Communications Plan will be implemented to ensure maximum effectiveness.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative option considered is to do nothing and leave the Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy as it currently stands and not make the suggested changes to start times and Bank Holiday working.
- 4.2 This option would not enable the Waste Team to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Waste Service which is a key requirement under the Environment Act 2021.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. This report proposes amendments to the Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy which will impact all residents, and therefore the report recommends that Cabinet:
- Review and approve the updated Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy.
- 5.2. These changes have been proposed to ensure the services delivered by the Waste Team provide the best possible service standards for residents. They will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.
- 5.3. The change in start time will ensure more consistent collections. It will also ensure that waste is not stored on vehicles in the depot yard overnight, which is a breach of health and safety regulations.
- 5.4. The variations to Bank Holiday working will reduce the impact of Bank Holiday collection changes on residents and will reduce missed bin numbers. It will lessen the complexity of the collection schedule for residents, resulting in a more consistent collection schedule.

6. Appendices

- 6.1. Appendix 1 – Updated Refuse and Recycling Operational Policy