



Tuesday, 23 September 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Weekly Food Waste Collection Service Update

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the Council's rollout of the weekly kerbside food waste collection service from 13th April 2026. The introduction of this service is mandated by the Environment Act 2021.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report, the proposed timelines and the associated costs.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Sustainable South Kesteven
Effective council

Which wards are impacted? All wards

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 There are significant capital and revenue costs associated with establishing the weekly food waste collection service. Although the Government has agreed to provide new burden funding to support the new service, the level of revenue funding for 2026/27 has not yet been released. The funds received for initial capital purchases is confirmed at £1.371m, this was £171,850 below the level required to purchase vehicles and caddies. Furthermore, the transitional revenue funding awarded by government is £142,069 below the level required to initiate the service.
- 1.2 To support this deficit in funding, Council have been asked to approve the creation of a revenue budget to support the transitional arrangements alongside an increase to the vehicle replacement budget to cover the costs incurred when purchasing vehicles. Council have been asked to approve the use of the Waste Services Fund to fund these shortfalls. At the time of publishing the approval from Council for the additional funding is awaited.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 The introduction of food waste collections is mandated by the Environment Act 2021. It is important that members are kept updated on developments as the date for collections approaches.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.4 Food waste makes up around one third of residual waste bins, it is also a major contributor to carbon emissions via its current disposal route. The new food waste collection service will ensure that food waste is taken out of the residual waste stream (black bins) and disposed of through anaerobic digestion, which is a more environmentally friendly way of disposing of this waste stream.

1.5 Introduction of a new way of separating and disposing of food waste will reduce carbon emissions associated with their current disposal route, as well as improving the recycling and reuse opportunities of other materials in the waste stream. Nevertheless, the operation of an additional 12 vehicles has the potential to increase fuel consumption overall for the fleet and therefore carbon emissions associated with the operation of the Council's vehicle fleet.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. On the 29th November 2024 the Government announced the new default requirements for business and household waste collections under the Simpler Recycling collection reforms. These reforms form part of the updated Environment Act 2021.
- 2.2. The reforms are designed to simplify the rules and make recycling easier for people in England; they enable consistent, more streamlined collections from all households and businesses. The approach is designed to ensure the same set of materials are collected everywhere in England. The reforms aim to reduce confusion, end the postcode lottery of bin collections and ensure the correct materials are captured for recycling.
- 2.3. The new default requirements include four containers for:
 1. Residual (non-recyclable) waste,
 2. Food waste,
 3. Paper and card,
 4. All other dry recyclable materials (plastic, metal and glass).
- 2.4. It is because of these new requirements that the Council will be required to introduce weekly kerbside collections from the 31st March 2026. SKDC will introduce the service from Monday 13th April 2026, this date has been selected as part of a staggered rollout across Lincolnshire which ensures disposal facilities are not overwhelmed. The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) wrote to DEFRA in September 2025 to confirm this arrangement.
- 2.5. To facilitate the introduction of the service, the Council is working with the LWP to seek out joint procurement opportunities which achieve economies of scale. In addition, we are working with Lincolnshire County Council to ensure adequate disposal facilities are available.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The service roll out is made up of two aspects – one off capital purchases (vehicles, caddies) and ongoing revenue costs (fuel, salaries, vehicle maintenance etc.).

Capital Purchases

- 3.2. The capital purchases are split into two forms – vehicles and caddies. The Council has received £ 1,371,150 in capital funding from central Government to establish the food waste collections.
- 3.3. This service requires two caddies for each household – a 5l indoor caddy and an 23l outdoor caddy. SKDC is a member of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership

(LWP), and it was agreed that a joint caddy procurement would be an opportunity to ensure all Lincolnshire residents received the same caddies (minimising confusion) and to achieve a better price per item due to the large quantities required.

- 3.4. The procurement was completed through the ESPO framework and approval for the purchase was granted through an Officer Delegated Decision which was finalised on 16th December 2024.
- 3.5. The food waste collection vehicles also need to be purchased. Route estimates indicate that 12 vehicles will be needed to deliver the service, and the vehicles cost around £95,000 per vehicle; the cost for 12 x 7.5tonne food waste collection vehicles is £1,140,000. This is substantially more than the £920,700 in capital funding granted by DEFRA. This figure has been challenged, however, to date no response has been received.
- 3.6. The total cost of capital purchases (vehicles + caddies) is £1,543,000; this is around £171,850 more than the £1,371,150 payment from DEFRA. At the time of publishing, the approval from Council for an increase in the Vehicle Replacement Budget of £171,850 from the Waste Services Reserve to cover this deficit, is awaited.

Revenue Costs

- 3.7. Table 1 shows the estimated revenue costs for year 1 of the service. All costs shown in Table 2 are prorated for a period of 3-months (January – March 2026) and they are reflective of the costs expected to be incurred when initiating the service.
- 3.8. The total estimated revenue costs are £542,195 for year 1 (2025/26). Although the service doesn't start until April 2026, there are costs associated with introducing the service (vehicle costs, staff recruitment, communications, caddy delivery etc). The transitional revenue funding provided by Government covers £400,125.45 of these costs, meaning a further £142,069.55 of funding is required to establish the service.
- 3.9. At this time, no information has been provided on the level of ongoing revenue funding for service provision from 31st March 2026. Despite DEFRA acknowledging that the funding will be released this year, there has been no indication on how much this will be and when it will be received. Based on this, a further update will be provided once the ongoing revenue funding figures have been released.
- 3.10. To bridge the gap between the transitional revenue payment provided by DEFRA (£400,125) and the actual costs in 2025/26, Council have been asked to approve the creation of a revenue budget made up of the transitional funding payment with additional revenue from the Waste Services Reserve. At the time of publishing the approval from Council for the additional funding is awaited.

3.11. The costs associated with the 2026/27 service will be included in the budget proposals for the next financial year and any financial shortfall will be highlighted through the budget setting process for 2026/27.

Table 1: Revenue costs for weekly kerbside food waste collections (2025/26)

	2025/26 £
Transport Revenue Costs	
Road Tax	910
Tyres	2840
Maintenance	27,500
Fuel Usage	24,960
Vehicle insurance	20,000
Total Transport Revenue Costs (a)	76,210
Other Revenue Costs	
Training	3,000
Protective Clothing	11,400
Route Optimisation	18,302
Caddy Liners	15,000
Communications Strategy	90,000
Total Other Revenue Costs (b)	137,702
Additional Staff Revenue Costs	
10 x Drivers	103,160
20 x Loaders	167,510
Project Support Officer (Estimate SK9)	20,967
Refuse Supervisor (SK9MS)	21,852
Additional Workshop Hours (25 hours)	14,794
Additional Staff Total Costs (c)	328,283
Total Revenue Costs (a+b+c)	542,195

Timelines

3.12. A full breakdown of key milestones and timescales can be found at Appendix 1.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1. No other options have been considered, the roll out of a weekly food waste collection service has been mandated by the Environment Act 2021.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The recommendation is that the Committee note the contents of the report and the proposed timeline for the implementation of the domestic food waste collection service. The timeline proposed will allow the Council to deliver the new service in line with the legislative requirements of the Environment Act 2021.

6. Appendices

- 6.1. Appendix 1: Key actions and dates for the SKDC weekly food waste collection service rollout