

TITLE: Waste and Street Cleansing Service Proposals

Committee: Operational Services

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1.0 Issue

To consider the proposals from Member Working Party (WP) for the future Waste Collection and Street Cleansing service.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. Members are requested to recommend to Full Council:

- i. That the Council implements the measures as detailed in section 4.3 - 4.5 of this report and collect food waste in a separate container, on a weekly basis by 31 March 2026.
- ii. That the Council implements the collection of residual waste in a 180lt wheeled bin on a fortnightly basis as detailed in section 4.3 - 4.5 of this report by 31 March 2026.
- iii. That the Council retains a free fortnightly garden waste collection service that is suspended for 6 weeks during winter and Christmas catch up period by 31 March 2026.
- iv. That the Council removes the annual subscription charge for a second garden waste bin from 1 April 2026.
- v. That the Council removes the one-off charge for an additional recycling bin from 1 April 2026.
- vi. Instruct the Director of Operations to progress with the procurement of vehicles, caddies and bins required to implement i) and ii) above by 31st March 2026.
- vii. That the Council approves the supporting mobilisation and communication plans as detailed in Appendices 3 and 4
- viii. That the Council retain the current street cleansing service specification, with minor changes to ways of working set out in sections 4.19 - 4.21.
- ix. That the Council review the Street Cleansing specification in one year's time with regards to how it has enabled performance delivery against the Key Performance Indicators with ECSS (East Cambs Street Scene) to determine any new specification for implementation from 1 April 2026.

3.0 Background**Legislation Changes**

- 3.1 In November 2021, the Environment Act became law for the UK with waste reduction, increased recycling rates, and the standardisation of waste and recycling collections across local authorities as priority areas.
- 3.2 Secondary legislation then came into force in January 2023, entitled 'The Environmental Targets (Residual Waste) (England) Regulations 2023', the regulations are a statutory instrument which requires the setting of deliverable targets to help reduce the amount of residual waste, on a kg per capita basis by 50% (of the amount in 2019) by 2042.
- 3.3 In May 2024, the Government outlined how the legislation will work, by publishing the Simpler Recycling requirements. The Council's existing recycling service largely complies, but the Council is now required to introduce a weekly collection of food waste from households by 31 March 2026.

Member Working Party

- 3.4 In anticipation of the significant changes brought about by the Environment Act, the Operational Services Committee approved a Strategic Service Review of the waste, recycling and street cleansing service in November 2023. This led to the creation of a cross-party Member Working Party (WP). The WP has met monthly to review the existing services and identify opportunities to achieve the following:
- i. Compliance with emerging environmental legislation.
 - ii. Move to a wheeled bin service for the collection of residual waste.
 - iii. Improve service quality, safety and visibility.
 - iv. Increase recycling rates for dry mixed recycling, food waste and garden waste and a reduction in residual waste.
- 3.5 The WP initially considered a long list of options for the waste and recycling collections service and narrowed it down to four options based on useability, operational efficiency, cost and environmental improvement. A specialist waste consultant was then commissioned to refine and cost multiple options. See section 3.10 - 3.12

Waste and Recycling Collections Performance Overview

- 3.6 East Cambridgeshire District Council currently has a recycling rate of 55% which has ranked it 22 out of 210 English waste collection authorities. From a height of 60% recycling in 2015/16, the recycling rate has dropped over the years and stayed at around 55%.
- 3.7 The Council sent over 12,000 tonnes of waste to landfill in 2022/23. The amount of residual waste generated by households has fluctuated over the past 10 years, with significant increases in residual waste in 2020 and 2021 (likely caused due to the Covid pandemic and more people working from home). However, in the past 2 years the amount of waste produced has returned to average levels seen previously.

- 3.8 Residents can recycle their food waste in their green lidded bin, which accounts for nearly a quarter of all the organic waste collected. Despite having this free service available, there remains around one third of food waste being put in the black bag for collection, which is landfilled. The weekly collection of black bags de-incentivises residents to put food waste in their green lidded bin, which is collected fortnightly.

Street Cleansing and ancillary services

- 3.9 The service comprises litter picking and manual sweeping of footpaths, mechanical road sweeping, and maintaining and emptying litter and dog bins (street bins). The district is zoned, and each zone dictates the frequency of work undertaken; the higher footfall zones receive cleansing more frequently.

In addition to this, the service removes fly tipping and graffiti, responds to customer requests to collect bulky waste and deliver waste and recycling bins to households.

Options considered - Waste and Recycling Collections Service

- 3.10 Table 1 shows a summary of the options that were considered by the WP. The appraisal of each option considered; useability of the service for customers, the operational efficiency, cost, and opportunity to increase recycling rates. Each option is considered in more detail in Appendix 1.
- 3.11 Further analysis was also undertaken to understand the impact on cost and recycling rates of different wheeled bin sizes for residual waste.
- 3.12 The WP party also considered the impact on cost and recycling performance of charging for garden waste collection versus a free garden waste collection. Around 70% of councils in the UK currently charge for garden waste collections, however the WP agreed that retaining a free service yielded higher recycling rates and made it easier for customers to recycle garden waste.

Table 1 Waste and Recycling Collection Appraisal

Waste type	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Residual Waste	Fortnightly, 140lt bin	Fortnightly, 140lt bin	Fortnightly, 180lt bin	Fortnightly, 240lt bin
Food Waste	Weekly, caddy	Weekly, caddy	Weekly, caddy	Weekly, caddy
Recycling	Fortnightly, 240lt bin	Fortnightly, 240lt bin	Fortnightly, 240lt bin	Fortnightly, 240lt bin
Garden Waste	Fortnightly, 240lt bin: free	Fortnightly, 240lt bin: charged	Fortnightly, 240lt bin: free	Fortnightly, 240lt bin: free

Options Considered – Street Cleansing and Ancillary Services

- 3.13 The following options were considered by the WP, considering the performance of the service, cost and opportunity to formalise additional services that have been adopted. Each option in table 2 is considered in more detail in Appendix 2.

Table 2 Street Cleansing options Appraisal

Activity	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Scheduled work	As current, but clarify zone plan	Remap zones with crew assigned	Prescribed schedule of work	Decrease to 9-week frequency, dog bins emptied fortnightly
Graffiti, fly tips, ad-hoc requests	Rapid response crew	Rapid response crew	Rapid response crew	Increase response times
Unscheduled work (leaf fall, chewing gum)	As current	Additional crew	Additional crew	Switch to responsive service

4.0 Arguments/Conclusions

Waste and Recycling Collection Service

- 4.1 The Council must introduce a separate weekly collection of food waste by 31 March 2026. The Council has also previously committed to providing residents with a wheeled bin for residual waste.
- 4.2 The Council is committed to and recognises the need to act fast, to reduce the Councils and the Districts net carbon emissions as quickly and deeply as possible and is ambitious to achieve the Government's recycling and waste tonnage targets as soon as possible.
- 4.3 Based on the modelling carried out, the WP unanimously agreed to recommend the Service outlined in Table 3 for the majority of households:

Table 3 – Proposed Waste and Recycling Collection Service

Waste Stream	Container	Frequency
Residual Waste	180 litre bin	Fortnightly
Food Waste	23lt kerbside caddy 7lt kitchen caddy	Weekly
Recycling	240 litre bin	Fortnightly
Garden Waste	240 litre bin	Fortnightly

- 4.4 Where households are not able to store multiple bins, the following service was recommended in Table 4:

Table 4 – Alternative Waste and Recycling Collection Service

Waste Stream	Container	Frequency
Residual Waste	3 x purple bags	Fortnightly
Food Waste	23lt kerbside caddy 7lt kitchen caddy	Weekly
Recycling	4 x clear recyclable bags	Fortnightly
Garden Waste	4 x brown paper bags	Fortnightly

4.5 The WP also proposed that:

- i. Garden waste should be maintained as a free service
- ii. Garden waste collections will be suspended for 6 weeks during winter and Christmas catch up. E.g. 3 weeks prior to Christmas and 3 weeks after (dates to be finalised).
- iii. To encourage recycling and take up of the service, the charge for additional garden waste and recycling bins should be removed.
- iv. An alternative service sack collection is recommended to those areas who cannot accommodate a wheeled bin.
- v. An initial supply of 52 food caddy liners will be provided to all residents as part of the new service rollout, to encourage participation.

Further detailed policy and service standards will be considered at the 23 September 2024 Operational Services Committee Agenda item 10

4.6 The proposed service delivers the following benefits and improvements:

- i. Meets government legislation.
- ii. Provides a potential increase in recycling levels of up to 6%.
- iii. Significantly reduces our impact on the environment – by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill by 10% and reducing our Co2 emissions by 20%.
- iv. Provides value for money by mitigating future service cost increases and improves recycling rates.
- v. Increases the capture of food waste from residual waste.

- vi. Residual waste will be within containers, meaning safer working practices for operatives and fewer ripped open bags and spilt litter.
- vii. A 180-litre wheeled bin will provide sufficient capacity to the majority of households in the district, with additional capacity available to those that need it.
- viii. Disposal of food waste will be undertaken in partnership with the County Council, using an Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility, where the food waste will be turned into methane gas to produce electricity.

Mobilisation and roll out of the new waste collection services

- 4.7 A service change of this magnitude will introduce challenges and opportunities. It is anticipated that it will take around 12 -15 months to mobilise and implement the new service.
- 4.8 The council is required to have the new service implemented by 31 March 2026 and therefore following full Council approval the procurement for vehicles and bins will need to start.
- 4.9 A high-level implementation plan is included in Appendix 4, however as procurement progresses the plan will be refined with exact dates for communication and bin deliveries, and then a 'go live' date can be agreed.
- 4.10 The changes proposed will require the Council to engage directly with all those affected by the changes. Therefore, the implementation of the service will also be supported by a comprehensive communications and engagement campaign with residents and stakeholders to support the transition to the new services. Appendix 3 outlines this proposal.
- 4.11 As part of the implementation of the new service a review of collection rounds and collection days will be required to ensure that it operates efficiently and maintains some capacity to accommodate future growth in the district. Invariably changes to round structures are likely to cause disruption to service delivery. Therefore, it is vital that additional resource is provided to address any issues that arise, for example, additional customer service support will be required on the phones to respond to the increase in customer contact both prior to the new service starting and during the first few months as the new service beds in.
- 4.12 Issues such as missed bins or overflowing bins are common issues that arise during the start of a new service roll out, and therefore a comprehensive frequently asked questions will be developed for staff and residents, as well as a clear reporting and response mechanism to ensure issues are addressed swiftly. Additionally, 'mop up' crews may be required to assist with the collection of missed bins or unfinished rounds.
- 4.13 While service disruption is likely during the initial roll out, it is essential the Council plan for this and provide help and support to residents when service performance

drops. The communication and operational response plans will be developed further during 2025 in readiness. This will provide residents and other stakeholders with clear information and quick resolution to any issues that arise.

Street Cleansing

- 4.14 The review of the Street Cleansing service identified opportunities to improve the visibility and performance of the existing Service. However, the changes proposed do not need a significant change to the service specification, rather just changes to ways of working.
- 4.15 The street cleansing service has and continues to achieve an improved performance, through a new suite of monitoring measures, increased resilience through a reduction in staff sickness and a proactive approach to managing litter hotspots.
- 4.16 Due to the considerable changes within the Waste Collection Service the WP agreed that a further review of working practices for the Street Cleansing service should be carried out over the next year to inform potential changes from 1 April 2026. Any proposed service changes will be brought back to Committee.
- 4.17 The WP agreed that in the meantime and to embed resilience, the Council should request ECSS to maintain a minimum level of resource across street cleansing services, to cover staff absence through leave or sickness.
- 4.18 Additionally, some changes to ways of working were agreed in i) to iii) below. These changes do not require a change in service specification and can be managed within the existing Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).
 - i. Improve communication of the service: the website should be updated with information on the street cleansing regime and that dog waste can be placed in litter bins.
 - ii. Applying stickers to fly tips to advise the Council is aware and dealing with it.
 - iii. Monitoring of street bin emptying: Gather data on how full a bin is on each collection across a year to determine future service specification.
- 4.19 More robust processing of street bin requests: There would need to be evidence of a problem to justify the installation of a new street bin.

Efficient use of resources: If garden waste collections were suspended over winter the resources could be diverted to street cleansing work to cover issues such as leaf fall, or infrequently cleansed areas (e.g. roundabouts or laybys).

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

Financial Implications Yes	Legal Implications Yes	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)
YES	Yes	NO

Financial implications – Revenue Costs

- 5.1 To inform the financial appraisal of the preferred service, the new collection methodology and street cleansing requirement was passed to ECSS for costing. ECSS have provided a revenue cost estimate of the new service comparing it to the current service. The costs below are indicative and based on a number of assumptions. Due to the number of changes being made and the exclusion / offsetting of some costs through new burdens funding, it is important to note that providing a final budget requirement at this stage is not possible.
- 5.2 Table 5 provides a financial comparison for the purposes of decision making only. The actual cost of the service and the budget for the client-side management of contract will be calculated during the budget setting cycle for 2026/27, when more is known about new burdens revenue and extended producer responsibility payments.

Table 5 – ECSS management fee comparison illustration - Waste and Street Cleansing:

Year	Inflation	Existing Service	Proposed Service
2025/26	4%	4,814,351	-
2026/27	3%	4,958,782	5,779,511
		Increase	820,729

- 5.3 The increase in cost is based on the following assumptions:
- Increase in staff – the mandatory introduction of a food waste collection requires 3 additional rounds; this takes into account the reduction of rounds due to moving to a fortnightly collection of residual waste. Each crew will consist of a driver and two operatives. With the rebalancing of the existing rounds, some existing operatives can move over to the food waste collection service, but overall, the number of operatives employed will still increase.
 - A baseline staffing provision has been built into the model, as well as 1 additional management post, to build resilience in the service. This will cover sick and holiday leave, which is currently partly managed through agency staff (circa £623k increase).
 - Increases in rounds will also require additional revenue for vehicles, fuel, maintenance, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) etc (circa £189k increase).
 - Reduction in income from the sale of garden waste and recycling bins (circa £96k loss)
 - Saving from the provision of black bags (circa £79k saving)
 - Exclusion of recycling credits and MRF credits/debits (see section 5.5 to 5.8)

- 5.4 The ECSS management fee includes costs associated with new RCV's and food collection vehicles. The food vehicle costs will largely be covered by the capital payment made by DEFRA to the council in March 2024 of circa £864k. See section 5.13 below for more details.
- 5.5 There are a number of income and expenditure budgets that the Council will now manage directly, rather than including them within the ECSS Management fee, as is the case now. The income and expenditure are income from recycling credits paid by the County Council, and the credits and debits are for materials processing and onward sales from the new MRF and haulage contract.
- 5.6 Removing these budgets from the ECSS Management fee provides a transparent means to track the costs of the ECSS operation and the variable costs associated with recycling income/costs will be tracked through ECDC Client team.
- 5.7 In 2023/24 ECSS received an income of just under £400,000 for recycling credits. This income will now come directly to ECDC and will partly offset the additional management fee shown in Table 5.
- 5.8 The recently tendered MRF, waste transfer and haulage contract has resulted in a significant increase in the cost of managing recycling. In 2023/24 income from the MRF was £302k and costs were £386k, so a net cost to ECSS of £84k. However, this will now be a projected cost to the Council of circa £750k in 2025/26, although it remains unclear what materials income and Extended Producer Responsibility credits may be to offset these costs.
- 5.9 The government has indicated that there will be a new revenue burdens payment to the council for the introduction of a separate weekly food waste collection. At the time of writing there has been no confirmation of the amount, what it covers, or for how long it will be paid. However, announcements of this new burden funding are expected in November 2024.
- 5.10 The new Extended Producer Responsibility regime is also planned to be implemented in October 2025. The scheme is essentially a financial mechanism to encourage producers of packaging materials to be financially responsible for the recycling / disposal of those materials. Local Authorities will be notified in November 2024 of their payment estimate, with payments expected to be received towards the end of 2025. At the time of writing, it is not clear what impact the scheme will have on the existing recycling credits payment scheme, or the amount of waste materials produced.
- 5.11 DEFRA have confirmed the capital payment made to councils only covers the cost of food waste vehicles and caddies, and no provision is made for other implementation costs. Therefore, a further one off provision will need to be made to cover: the delivery of bins and caddies, communications and marketing literature/materials, additional staffing to support the roll out (e.g. customer service staff), food waste sacks and a round reconfiguration service.

The implementation plan is provided in Appendix 3 and 4. It is proposed that a provisional sum of £200k is made available. However final costs associated with bin deliveries, round reconfiguration, staffing and communications materials will be confirmed in 2025.

Financial Implications – Capital costs

- 5.12 In March 2024 DEFRA made a payment of £864,056 capital funding to the Council for the purchase of food collection vehicles, and kerbside / kitchen caddies to implement the food waste service.
- 5.13 The Council has already included within the 2024/25 capital programme £1m for the purchase of wheeled bins for residual waste and this will be carried over. The most recent quotes from suppliers suggest this amount is adequate, but the Council will not have certainty of costs until a procurement exercise is completed.
- 5.14 The existing refuse collection fleet (black bags only) will need replacing earlier than expected. This is because the types of vehicles needed to collect bins are different to those that are sack collection only. The vehicles were expected to be end of life in March 2027, whereas the new vehicles will be needed by end of March 2026. Therefore, the total depreciation outstanding for the 31 March 2026 will be £185,500. In part this cost can be mitigated by avoidance of maintenance costs in the region of £20k.
- 5.15 Consideration must also be given to the Council's depot in Littleport, which ECSS operate from. The expansion of the fleet and associated extra staff parking that will be required cannot currently be accommodated onsite. The surface of the car parking area has deteriorated and will need replacing, and due to the nature of surfacing in other areas of the site, further work is required to bring these up to a standard that can accommodate large vehicles. A paper will be taken to Finance and Assets committee outlining additional infrastructure costs beyond what is already assigned to the depot refurbishment works in the capital programme.

Legal Implications


- 5.16 Full Council agreed to extend the existing MoA arrangements with ECSS until 31 March 2026.
- 5.17 Also being considered at Operational Services Committee on 23 September 2024 is the preferred service delivery model. The recommendation is for ECSS to continue to provide the waste and street cleansing services on behalf of the Council.
- 5.18 Due to the significant changes proposed to the service specification proposed and because the existing MoA expires on 31 March 2026, a new specification and contracting arrangement needs to be developed for the provision of waste collection and street cleansing between the Council and ECSS Ltd. This will be

agreed in advance of 31 March 2026 when the current MoA is due to expire. This will be brought to Council at the appropriate time in 2025.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 5.19 Producing food requires significant resources including land, energy and water. Globally, 25–30% of total food produced is lost or wasted, and food waste is estimated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to contribute 8-10% of total man-made greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- 5.20 The carbon cost of landfilling the collected waste in East Cambridgeshire last year was calculated as likely being around 8850 tCO₂e. The proposed new service is targeted to divert 5% of currently landfilled food waste into the food recycling service and 5% of refuse into the recycling bin. This would result in a net carbon emissions saving of 20%, or around 1950 tCO₂e per annum.
- 5.21 The changes outlined to the fleet have also been considered as part of the impact assessment. The replacement [vehicle report](#)¹ provided to Committee in March 2023 explored the market for alternative fuels. At present, electric vehicles are not suitable for this District, and so the new vehicles will be run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). HVO provides a viable transitional alternative until the other markets (such as electric) mature. It significantly reduces emissions by up to 90% (compared with conventional fossil fuels), is similar in cost to diesel and has been successfully used for the past year by the new recycling and green waste vehicles that were purchased.
- 5.22 The new fleet of food waste vehicles, running on HVO will produce an additional 7 tonnes of carbon p.a. The existing refuse fleet are already fuelled by HVO, however, switching to fortnightly collections will result in a saving of 40 tonnes of carbon, thus offsetting the impact of introducing the food waste fleet.
- 5.23 Whilst the purchase of new vehicles and containers (and associated liners) will have a negative impact arising from the embodied carbon (i.e. the energy and emissions arising from the manufacturing process), such negative implications can reasonably be assumed to be offset within a short period of time if the increased diversion of food and recyclables from landfill occurs as forecast.

Equalities Impact Assessment

-  This has been addressed under the accompanying report: Waste and Recycling Policy 2026 Agenda item 10

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Waste and Recycling Collection Considerations
Appendix 2 – Street Cleansing Considerations
Appendix 3 – Communications Plan
Appendix 4 – Implementation Plan

¹ <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/agendas/270323ReplacementWasteVehicles.pdf>

7.0 Background documents

Household food waste collections guide:

<https://www.wrap.ngo/sites/default/files/2024-02/WRAP-Household-Food-Waste-Collections-Elected-Members-Summary-Guide-PRINT.pdf>

Maximising food waste collections: Case studies:

<https://www.wrap.ngo/resources/case-study/maximising-food-waste-collections-case-studies>

Driving up recycling and reducing residual arisings through changes to residual waste collections:

<https://www.wrap.ngo/resources/webinar/driving-recycling-and-reducing-residual-arisings-through-changes-residual-waste>

Notes of Waste Service Review Working Party meetings held between November 2023 and June 2024

Plan B waste service review report

Agenda Item 9: Appendix 1**Waste and Recycling Collection Considerations****Food Waste**

The Government has set a legal requirement for councils to introduce a separate weekly collection of food waste from all households by 31st March 2026.

To enable residents to participate and contribute to the Council achieving this, a small internal food waste caddy (approx. 7 litres) will need to be provided to households for use in the kitchen. This provides the household with somewhere to store food waste in the short term and helps improve collection yields.

Residents will empty their food waste into an external 23 litre food waste caddy (approximately 10% of the size of a wheelie bin) which can be placed either on top of or beside their existing bins. Residents in flats etc where larger communal bins are will have larger external bins to empty their internal food waste caddy into.

Waste collection teams will then empty the material from these external caddies or communal bins into a specific food waste collection vehicle.

The Council will need to purchase new dedicated food waste collection vehicles. Current lead times are estimated at a minimum of 12 months and further pressure on the supply chain is likely as all local authorities which do not currently collect food waste will be looking to procure vehicles.

In addition to requiring additional dedicated vehicles there is a need to procure both internal and external food waste caddies, plus additional bins for communal properties.

Evidence from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) (see background documents), advises that to maximise participation and therefore yield/diversion of food waste from landfill, local authorities should provide food caddy liners to residents. This helps reduce the perception of mess and smells from using the food waste service. Liners do not need to be compostable; they cannot be broken down through food waste treatment plants and food waste treatment facilities prefer them to be plastic as either way, the liners are removed in the process and are sent for energy recovery. Plastic liners are also less expensive than compostable ones.

The Government has provided the Council with new burdens capital funding of £894,056 for the purchase of food bins (this includes internal kitchen caddies, external kerbside caddies and communal bins, but not liners) and food waste collection vehicles, and has indicated it will provide ongoing new burdens revenue funding. At the time of writing there had been no confirmation of the amount, what that would cover or for how long.

Residual Waste

The Council currently collects residual waste weekly, in single use black plastic bags. Residents are provided with a delivery of bags each year, at an annual cost of around £79,000 (paid for via the management fee to ECSS). Residents are given enough to fill one per week, The Council does not restrict the number of bags it will collect each collection, and residents can purchase more from shops if they wish.

For several years, despite having the desire, the Council has not changed the collection methodology to wheeled bins as it has been waiting for the updated legislation from the Government to ensure any changes would comply long term. It has already set aside budget for the provision of wheeled bins for residual waste of £1,000,000 in its Capital Strategy Budget.

The Council operates six RCVs (including a spare vehicle) to collect residual waste. They were purchased in 2018 and are due to be replaced by 31 March 2027. They do not have the lifting mechanism fitted to enable emptying of wheeled bins.

The most recent waste composition analysis (2021) found that within collected black bags, nearly 25% was recycling and 36% was food that could be captured by the existing recycling and garden/food service.

Based on best practice research and advice from WRAP, the most effective way to increase recycling performance and reduce the Council's environmental impact is to limit residual waste. This has the twin effect of reducing residual wastes and increasing materials presented for recycling.

Limiting residual waste can be achieved through the introduction of rigid wheeled bins and rejecting additional waste. Restricting the frequency of collections also helps to drive residents to use recycling services. The key benefits of wheeled bins are the following:

- Limits the amount of residual waste that can be put out per property, and therefore drives residents to reduce their waste and recycle more.
- Reduces cleansing issues, with a significant reduction in ripped sacks and litter.
- Reduces the Council's impact on the environment through the provision of single use plastic bags every year.
- Safer ways of working for operatives through reducing manual handling and risk of sharps injuries.

It is also difficult to identify non-residential properties placing waste out for collection that should be paid for under a commercial waste service.

Garden Waste

The Council currently co-collect garden and food waste in the green lidded bin. The Council does not make a charge for the collection of this. Charging for the collection of garden waste is allowed under legislation as the collection is not a statutory right, but

food is not allowed to be charged for. Residents can have a second garden waste bin, which they pay an annual subscription for, yielding an average yearly revenue (based on the last 5 years) of £37,000 per annum.

Simpler Recycling allows Local Authorities to continue decide whether they charge for garden waste or provide it free of charge. It also makes provision for Local Authorities to continue to co-collect this waste, but as it contains food, it must be weekly.

In its early stages, the WP considered continuing to co-collect food and garden waste and increase the frequency from fortnightly to weekly to comply with the new legislation. It was realized that this would incur significant capital expenditure (exceeding the new burdens grant from DEFRA) and ongoing revenue costs, as the current fleet of garden waste vehicles would need to be doubled. These vehicles cost approximately £200,000 each. Through the modelling work, providing a separate weekly collection of food, with much smaller vehicles, would be more cost effective.

Options

The WP considered the performance data provided by the consultants of differing collection options, both financially and in terms of waste yields and therefore recycling performance.

Four service options were modelled for the different material streams (residual, recycling, garden waste and food waste) with variables between each such as the frequency of collection, charging and not charging for garden waste.

Table 1 Four service options modelled

Material stream	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Residual waste	Weekly, 140lt WB	Weekly, 140lt WB	Fortnightly, 140lt WB	Fortnightly, 140lt WB
Recycling	Fortnightly 240lt WB	Fortnightly 240lt WB	Fortnightly 240lt WB	Fortnightly 240lt WB
Garden waste	Fortnightly 240lt WB FOC	Fortnightly 240lt WB Charged	Fortnightly 240lt WB Charged	Fortnightly 240lt WB FOC
Food waste	Weekly, 7/23lt caddy	Weekly, 7/23lt caddy	Weekly, 7/23lt caddy	Weekly, 7/23lt caddy

Two versions of each service option were also presented to show the difference in costs between collecting waste in a single stream vehicle or co-collection in a dual body vehicle. Therefore, a total of eight operational solutions were presented.

Co-collections would require a transition to a different Rear Collection Vehicle (RCV) which would have a twin compartment with recycling waste one side and food waste on

the other. As the service had recently procured a fleet of vehicles which would need replacing (at approximately £2 million of extra capital cost) it was agreed that these would not deliver value for money given the other viable options to be considered.

Estimated vehicle CAPEX and operational (revenue) costs were also calculated for each operational solution.

The model clearly demonstrated a significant variation in performance based on the collection frequencies adopted by the Council. Specifically, the frequency of residual waste collection and whether the Council charges or retains a 'free' garden waste collection had a profound effect on the recycling rate and the cost of the service. Table 2 summarises these variances.

Table 2 The effect of differing frequencies of collection and charging for garden waste on the estimated recycling rate

	Baseline	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Estimated recycling rate	58.5%	60.5%	54.5%	58.6%	64.5%
Estimated variance in operating cost	-	+28%	-4%	-20%	+11%

Moving to alternate week collection for residual waste could result in a 5% transfer of recyclable waste and 5% transfer of food waste from the residual bin to the recycling bin and food waste bin (by weight).

The modelling showed that option 4 would likely achieve the highest overall recycling rate (c64.5%) and option 2 seeing an overall decrease in the recycling rate (to c54.5%).

Option 3 would yield the most significant saving with an annual reduction in service cost of 20%.

Option 1 would incur the most significant increase in annual service cost of 28%.

Please note that these cost figures are used on a comparative basis to assess options as part of a desktop exercise. Certain elements were excluded from modelling, such as disposal/treatment costs and recycling income. The modelling cost outputs were not and therefore should not be viewed in the context of budgeting and instead should be used as a strategic tool to compare the different options. All the options and the baseline have been based on the same cost assumptions.

Overall, the introduction of alternate weekly collection for residual waste and weekly food waste would see an increase in recycling rates, however the impact of introducing a chargeable garden waste service would negate this.

The WP gave considerable thought to introducing a charge to residents for collecting garden waste. There were advantages (mitigates the additional costs incurred from

introducing the collection of food waste) and disadvantages (reduces the recycling rate, reduces opportunity to mitigate additional costs), to this as the model showed. The WP acknowledged that most councils in the UK have introduced a charge for collecting all garden waste. For residents in East Cambridgeshire, the WP agreed that retaining a free collection for every resident, and therefore maximising the opportunity to divert waste from landfill was most important. With this in mind, the WP also agreed to recommend the removal of paying for additional recycling and garden waste bins. This would result in a reduction of c£90,000 per annum.

Size of the residual waste bin

The original modelling work proved that current levels of residual waste per household in East Cambridgeshire would fit inside a 140lt bin over the two-week period. The size of residual waste bins can encourage/discourage recycling by providing too little or too much capacity.

The WP requested further modelling work to explore options for a larger sized residual waste bin: a 180 lt and 240lt were subsequently modelled. Both options were modelled as a fortnightly collection, with weekly food waste, free of charge garden waste and 'as is' dry recycling collection scheme.

The following table summarises the impact that the different sized bins would have on recycling performance compared to the original 140lt bin model:

Table 3: The effect different bin sizes have on recycling performance

Bin size (lt)	180	240
Reduction in recycling rate per additional lt	0.05%	0.05%
Total tonnage lost from food and dry recycling	487	1218
% lost from food and dry recycling	50%	50%
% of lost recycling from food stream	50%	50%
Estimated kerbside recycling rate	62.5%	59.5%
Estimated reduction in kerbside recycling rate by not using 140lt	2%	5%

As referenced through WRAP research, any increase in residual bin size increases the amount of waste sent to landfill and decrease the recycling rate. As well as this, it is important to note that a larger bin size has implications on the operational resource (number of vehicles and operatives) required:

Table 4: The effect of different bin sizes on the capacity of the collection rounds

Residual bin size	Average round utilisation	
	Weight	Volume
140lt	74%	79%
180lt	79%	84%
240lt	86%	92%

Providing a 240lt bin as the standard size would disincentivise residents to use their recycling bins and provide opportunity to dispose of waste that would have been taken to the Recycling Centre at Witchford. The modelled increase in waste collected, whilst not requiring an increase in resource, would limit the capacity left in the rounds for periods of more waste being produced (e.g. Christmas) and property growth, and therefore an additional round (1 extra vehicle and 1 driver, 2 loaders) would likely be included in the final costing work carried out by ECSS to provide resilience in the service.

The model showed that providing a 180lt bin would not significantly impact the round capacity, requiring no additional resource and therefore no cost impact compared to the 140lt bin (i.e. the original modelling of vehicle and operative numbers would have capacity for the small increase in waste to be collected). The WP agreed that providing this as the standard bin size could also mean that those who may need additional capacity e.g. larger families or producers of healthcare waste, may find this size of bin adequate and therefore may be less likely to request additional capacity. This would mean that residual waste could be kept low. An option to provide a bigger bin for households that met the policy criteria would be included, and this would be managed through an application process. (see Agenda Item Waste and Recycling Policy 2026 considered at the 23 September 2024 Operational Services Committee).

Therefore, the WP unanimously agreed to progress the following as the preferred model and instruct ECSS to provide a detailed financial model.

Table 5: Preferred standard service

Waste Stream	Container	Frequency
Residual Waste	180 litre bin	Fortnightly
Food Waste	23lt kerbside caddy 7lt kitchen caddy	Weekly
Recycling	240 litre bin	Fortnightly
Garden Waste FOC	240 litre bin	Fortnightly

Street Cleansing and Ancillary Services Considerations

Background

East Cambridgeshire District Council is defined as a 'principal litter authority' under Section 86 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 with responsibility, under Section 89, to keep 'relevant land' and highways clear and clean of litter and refuse, so far as is practicable. In this context 'relevant land' is defined as 'land that is open to the air and is land which is under the direct control of such an authority to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access with or without payment'. It excludes private land and unadopted highways.

To address its statutory obligations, the Council through the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with ECSS, undertakes several duties including litter picking and manual sweeping of footpaths, mechanical road sweeping, maintaining and emptying litter and dog bins (street bins), bulky waste collections, refuse bin deliveries and removing fly tipping and graffiti. ECSS through its Business Plan allocated just over £1.4 million of its management fee to deliver these services.

The MoA details a zoned approach to street cleansing across the district. Each zone specifies the frequency of work to be undertaken. Zone 1 areas are on a daily cleansing schedule, Zones 2 and 3 areas are on a three times per week schedule and Zone 4 areas are scheduled every six weeks.

The service operates a 'blended' approach to street cleansing, incorporating a mixture of multi-disciplined mobile teams (x6), a single static cleansing resource in Ely and 2 mechanical sweeper lorries. The service is predominantly proactive in nature, however, as with most services has an element that is reactive, for example fly-tipping and graffiti removal.

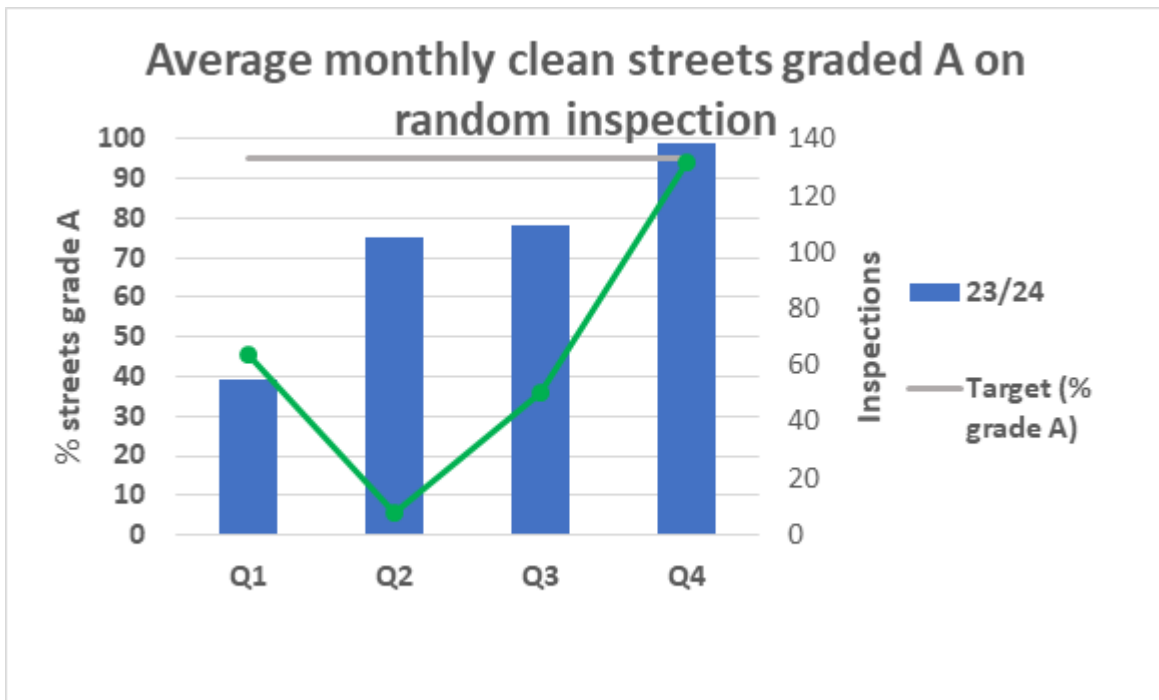
Whilst the management fee has been reviewed and increased recently, the service specification has not been since the MoA was agreed in 2018. New housing growth has not been factored into the different zones and human resources have only modestly increased in the period. Practices have been adopted by ECSS that have not been formalised in the MoA, such as emptying all dog bins every week despite them mostly located in zone 4 which stipulates emptying every 6 weeks. ECSS currently employs a dedicated operative and vehicle to complete this work.

The A14 and A11, which require traffic management in place to facilitate safe litter picking by operatives, and carries additional cost is also absent from the MoA.

There is no policy regarding installing new street bins at the request of Parish Councils (PC). The cost of the initial bin is usually met by the PC, but the ongoing emptying is absorbed by ECSS' budget.

In Spring 2022, the round reconfiguration, coupled with the national HGV driver shortage led to street cleansing resources being diverted to assist with the waste collection service. This resulted in decreased performance in street cleansing.

ECSS undertook an improvement project: Street Smart, to build a resilient, robust and high performing service. The Council also introduced new Key Performance Indicators in April 2023 to give stakeholders a more accurate and clearer record of the performance of the service. This measures performance in four areas; litter/detritus, graffiti, fly tipping and emptying of street bins. The cleanliness of the district's streets has shown steady improvement since the introduction of these measures, as shown in the below table for last year. Members will note this from the quarterly reports submitted through the Operational Services Committee.



Performance of street cleansing service for 2023/4 – Each area is graded from A to D. Grade A means that an area has no issues whilst the worst affected areas will receive a Grade D.

The removal of graffiti and fly tipping on public land generally misses the target of 98% within two working days.

Members of the Operational Services Committee have frequently asked whether residents can be advised of the schedule of cleansing activity, so they can move vehicles blocking the kerb line where the mechanical sweeper needs to access.

Options

The modelling work for the service was completed by officers of the Council. As with collections, the current service was baselined, and then four options were modelled for comparison and consideration, with impacts on cost and resource summarised. The models and background are contained within Appendix 3: Street Cleansing Model.

Unlike collections, assumptions for the resulting performance from changes made to the specification are challenging. Street cleansing specifications tend to be output based, with the emphasis on the result achieved, rather than what resource should go into achieving it. The service is subject to seasonal fluctuations in demand (e.g. autumn leaf fall, litter during summer etc) and therefore needs to be able to be flexible, unlike an input specification, such as for collection services, where services are predictable (e.g. bin collection frequencies are prescribed).

The options considered focused on the cost involved:

Option 1: retain the existing approach but improve the response to clearing fly tips and graffiti with the provision of a rapid response team. Flexibility is maintained in the service as all crews can be deployed to unscheduled work during times of less demand on the service. More information added to the website around the zones (for residents they would know that their road would be cleansed every 6 weeks). Implement a digital management system to enable the effective management of this, i.e. a road would not be cleansed in week 1 of the first cycle, and week then 6 of the second cycle.

Option 2 – As Option 1, but zones would be re-mapped and assigned a crew so that each village would be aware of the week their cleanse would take place within a 6-week schedule. An extra crew would be required to ensure the completion of unscheduled work as the other crews would have to visit every single street and possibly clean 'clean' streets. Inefficiency has had to be designed into the service; if the crew completes their scheduled work in less than a week, work on the next village would be unable to take place since its scheduled completion was in the following week. However, as this is unpredictable, equally if it has taken a whole week to complete their work, then there is no additional capacity to complete the unscheduled work.

Option 3 – As option 1, but every road has a designated day of cleanse. This would result in a significant increase in the number of operatives and vehicles needed to provide certainty. As with option 2, inefficiency is designed into the service and a further additional crew is needed to ensure the unscheduled work is completed.

Each of the above options ensured dog bins were emptied weekly, formalised the litter picking of the A14 and A11 and implemented policy that parish councils would be expected to pay for ongoing costs of emptying new street bins that they request, if ECSS had determined there was no need for one in their parish:

Option 4 – This was requested by the WP at a later meeting, to understand the implications of finding savings within the service. Therefore, this option modelled the cost saving of removing a crew (one vehicle and two operatives). This would result in a reduced frequency of cleansing activity and dog bins emptied fortnightly.

It was acknowledged that as the collections service had stabilised through Project Street Smart, with no additional input, so had the street cleansing service. This could be noted through the quarterly performance report.

The service could be stabilised further through the implementation of a minimum resource level – that is to employ a buffer of operatives to account for times of absence through sickness or holiday. This resilience is not in place and performance notably decreases when any operative is off.

Agenda Item 9: Appendix 3**Draft Communications Plan****1. Context**

Addressing climate change is a key priority for the council and in November 2023, our Council appointed a cross-party working group to guide the development and details of the new service.

The working group has concluded its work and is recommending to committee that the council introduces a weekly food waste collection service in spring 2026, in line with the government's legislated target for all councils to introduce food waste recycling, in order to increase the district's recycling performance and reduce our impact on the planet.

With the current recycling and rubbish collection arrangements, the council achieves a recycling rate of around 58%, which has stagnated in the last five years and is significantly short of the forthcoming national target of 65% by 2035. Analysis of black bag contents showed that over a third was food waste and over 10% were items that could already be recycled in East Cambridgeshire.

To make the most of the new service in increasing recycling rates, promote waste minimisation, and to reduce carbon emissions, the working group is also recommending that at the same time as introducing weekly food waste recycling, the council should move to fortnightly black bin collection for residual waste. The current fortnightly blue lidded bin will continue as is, and the green lidded bin will be used just for garden waste.

These changes, if approved, will represent the first major new recycling service to be introduced in East Cambridgeshire in more than a decade and the most significant change to the council's recycling and rubbish collection service since the challenging round reconfiguration in spring 2022. It will therefore be important to support these changes with a comprehensive communications and engagement plan.

2. Aim of the communication plan

The aim of this plan is ultimately to support the council's agreed goal to tackle climate change by increasing household recycling and reducing household waste and carbon emissions, as well as complying with new government legislation.

To do that, however, we need to start with our residents to make sure they understand why we all need to change: that it is no longer feasible to continue as we are; and to support them to shift to weekly food waste collections and fortnightly non-recyclable (black bin) collections, alongside the current fortnightly recycling offer.

It is anticipated to generate some challenges to the reduction in frequency of the residual (black sack) waste collection service, and weaved into the communications plan will be responses to those. Many authorities have already been through this change and there is much information and lessons learned from those experiences,

that this Council can make use of. The service on the whole (subject to approval) is to be enhanced, with a container for rubbish, an additional collection of waste and more opportunity to recycle, and removal of some charges.

We should also recognise that many residents are enthusiastic about being to recycle more (our recycling rate is one of the highest in the country, and the rate of contamination is relatively low) and therefore share positive messages and celebrate successes along the way.

3. Objectives – to be developed alongside the waste team

- Residents put out correct bins on correct days. Measured by feedback from ECSS
- Residual waste is reduced by in first six months
- Baseline for tonnage of mixed recyclables is established and then increased to reflect awareness raising of the need to recycle and additional materials being added to dry recyclables, such as pots, tubs and trays, cling film and carrier bags
- Baseline for tonnage of food waste is established and then reduced to reflect messaging around reducing food waste and only buying what you need
- Council maintains position in top 20 local authorities for recycling

Overall communications and engagement – how

4. Audience

- All residents, but with specific consideration of:
 - Children and young people
 - Larger households
 - Vulnerable customers / assisted collections
 - People on alternative service
 - Housing associations
 - Areas which have low levels of recycling / high levels of waste
 - Customers without access to the intranet
 - People who live in flats or areas which have difficult access (Fen rounds)
 - People who have moved into the district
 - Gypsy and traveller community
- Council Members
- Council staff
- Community organisations / parish councils
- Media

5. Key Messages

Message	Explanation	Why

It's simple	There is nothing difficult about this. We can easily get it sorted.	Promotes ease of use for residents
We can easily be the best	Thanks to your support we already recycle half the waste we produce. By working together we can do better	Messaging based on WRAP's behavioural change concept: Encouraging people to do more by celebrating how well they have already done
It benefits the environment	These are easy to make changes that everyone can do to help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and reduce damaging impacts on the environment	Supports the council's environmental objectives and empowers residents with a tangible means of tackling climate change
There are many benefits to this	FREE green lidded wheeled bin collection, can now recycle soft plastic, extra bin caddy to easily dispose of food waste, wheeled bin for left over rubbish	Highlights the positive benefits of change to residents
Support is on hand	Got a question? We can easily help with the answer	Humanises the campaign and provides residents with reassurance we can sort out their individual concerns

- East Cambs is revamping recycling to make it easier for residents to recycle more
- Residents will receive a weekly food waste collection service from February 2026. All food waste is to go into kerbside caddy
- Residents will continue to receive a twice weekly FREE green waste collection service
- Residents' rubbish (residual waste) collections will move to once a fortnight. What is going in your black bin. Generally don't need a big bin.
- These changes have been introduced following changes in government policy and are being brought in across England
- They help support the environment by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill and increasing the amount of recycling
- Help is here

6. Communications and engagement channels

- Social media - digital artwork, videos, engagement, targeted advertising
- Digital media

- Website
 - Email newsletters
 - Infographics
- Printed material
 - Leaflets: Teaser and new service pack
 - Letters
 - Hard to reach (assisted and alternative service customers and others where required) dedicated communications plan
 - Stickers and bin hangers
 - Stakeholder packs (FAQs, service leaflet, key dates)
 - Local media
 - Local websites
- Fleet and bin info
 - Livery
 - Stamps/stickers on bins
- Roadshows – council offices, markets, libraries, community events
- Schools education programme
 - Name the food waste truck competition
 - Personalise your caddy
- Door knocking
- Internal communications
 - Connect
 - Councillors – email
 - Briefings
 - FAQs
- Internal and external working group
 - Volunteer service change ‘champions’

7. Timeline

Activity	When
Outline comms plan – to be agreed	July 2024
Outline policy document – to be agreed	July 2024
Comms plan and timeline for 2024 to be signed off	August 2024
Internal comms – Connect to include details of proposed changes	August 2024
Press release to be drafted in advance of Sept committee	Before 23 September 2024
Op Services Committee	23 September 2024
Press release to be issued	24 September

APPENDIX B

Recycling Week	16-22 October
Comms plan and timeline for 2025 to be signed off	November 2024
Branding created	Spring 2025
All comms to be drafted	Spring 2025
Food Waste Action Week activities	3-9 March 2025
Website copy drafted	June 2025
Website updated	July 2025
Dedicated internal comms	July 2025
Dedicated Cllr comms	July 2025
Commence mini road shows	July 2025
Work on bin tags and stickers etc	August 2025
Print leaflets	August 2025
LAUNCH CAMPAIGN	SEPTEMBER 2025
Press release: Bins are coming	September 2025
Social media: Bins are coming	September 2025
Commence door knocking	September 2025
Commence schools education	September 2025
Parish Council comms	September 2025
Comms for assisted bin residents	September 2025
Comms for alternative service	September 2025
Paid for advertising (TBC)	September 2025
Bin tag 1: New bins coming	September 2025
Lorry livery in place	September 2025
Calendar and sack delivery	September 2025
Begin work on mini-videos	October 2025

Recycling Week activities	October 2025
Event: Christmas Market stall	November 2025
Comms plan and timeline for 2026 to be signed off	November 2025
Press release: New year, new bins	w/c 5 Jan 2026
Bin tag 2: New year, New bins	w/c 5 Jan 2026
Bin tag 3: New bins next week	w/c 26 Jan or 2 February
BIN DELIVERY ROLL OUT Bin tag 4: Welcome to your new bin	w/c 9 or 16 February
BIN COLLECTIONS BEGIN	TBC

8. Resources**9. Evaluation**

To agree recording of complaints and reporting back to ECSS

Ensure arrangements for collection of data and monitoring protocols are agreed

Agree post roll-out review – lessons learned, regular updates between council and ECDC (specifically customer service, waste and communication teams)

Theme	Actions		Assigned to	Indicative timeframe
Service design	Agree timetable for scheme implementation			6-12 months
	Agree key assumptions and parameters			
	Review vehicle options and determine vehicle type			
	Design collection rounds			
	Supporting policies - implment			
Procurement of vehicles and containers	Confirm vehicle procurement process & place orders (including when they will be delivered)			6 - 14 months
	Arrange vehicle livery			
	Agree container spec			
	Agree food waste caddy liner supply policy			
	Procure containers (when orders to be placed and receipt of delivery)			
	Appoint container distribution team			
Treatment, processing and bulking	Arrange storage of containers prior to distribution			3 months
	Confirm transfer site for bulking			
	Determine site needs			
Mobilisation	Agree bulking arrangements and contingency with site manager			3 - 6 months
	Recruit additional collection crews or transfer existing staff			
	Appoint temporary Food Waste Recycling Advisors and Customer Contact Centre staff			
	Carry out and complete H&S risk assessments for all aspects of the service			
	Ensure that all staff are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and spill kits for vehicles			
	Identify training needs for collection crews and supervisors			
	Train collection crews and supervisors			
	Identify training needs for Customer Contact Centre staff			
	Train Customer Contact Centre staff and issue FAQs			
	Add vehicles to O licence			
	Arrange vehicle insurance and tax			
	Agree maintenance schedule			
	Agree contingency arrangements in event of breakdown			
	Agree container distribution schedule			
	Delivery of containers			
	Take back or redundant containers			
Communications	Service change communications plan			3 - 12 months
	'Pre-launch' communication activities	Arrange vehicle livery and stamped messages on containers		
		Produce and circulate 'stakeholder information packs' for council members, collection crews, union reps and other key stakeholders		
		Community engagement		
		Prepare FAQs for council staff & presentations to Customer contact centre staff		
		Design and print householder information packs (including instruction leaflets explaining how to use the new service)		
		Circulate introductory letter / 'teaser' information to ensure residents are aware of the planned changes		
		Information about the service change on website and social media, press releases		
	Launch of service communication activities:	Distribute householder information packs		4 - 6 months
		Issue contamination tags where material for recycling is incorrectly presented		
		Issue press releases to local media		
		Issue regular social media updates		
		Provide all customer facing staff with stakeholder information packs to enable them to answer any queries they receive in the course of their work		
	'Post-launch' activities	Issue regular updates on the progress of the implementation to council members and other key stakeholders		
		Issue 'thank you' communication to householders		
	Monitoring & Evaluation (see below)			
	Business as Usual' communications			
Monitoring and evaluation	Agree monitoring protocol, recording of complaints and reporting between ECSS / ECDC			
	Ensure arrangements for collection of data			
	Agree tonnage data returns from treatment / processing plant			
	Post roll-out review			

