

TITLE: Waste and Street Cleansing Service Proposals

Committee: Operational Services

Date: 23 September 2024

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Report number: Z57

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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:
- i. 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.
 - ii. 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).
 - iii. Increases in rounds will also require additional revenue for vehicles, fuel, maintenance, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) etc (circa £189k increase).
 - iv. Reduction in income from the sale of garden waste and recycling bins (circa £96k loss)
 - v. Saving from the provision of black bags (circa £79k saving)
 - vi. 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