

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	8	
<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2025	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Food Waste Container Procurement	

### Cover sheet:

## **1 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.1 To approve the cost effective and timely procurement of the containers required for the range of Fenland municipal properties to commence weekly food waste in line with legislation.

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 45A, as amended by the Environment Act 2021, places a duty on English waste collection authorities to make sure that waste is collected from households in their area. From the end of March 2026, waste collection authorities must provide weekly food waste collections from all households, to allow people to dispose of their organic waste frequently.
- 2.2 On 24 February 2025 Cabinet and Council approved the commencement of weekly food waste collections in Fenland from 30 March 2026 in line with this statutory duty.
- 2.3 Defra has provided £1,061,991 of capital funding, upon appeal from the Council. These funds are for the purchase of the required vehicles and containers.
- 2.4 The required vehicles cost a total of £848,000, leaving £213,991 to fund the container purchase. There remains the risk identified in previous reports, that the capital supplied by Defra will be insufficient to cover the total costs of implementing this new service in Fenland
- 2.5 The required containers will be purchased through the most effective means possible to reduce the cost and ensure delivery in good time for the service commencement.
- 2.6 Members should be aware that if either the vehicles or the container delivery is not to schedule, that this could result in the Council needing to seek Defra approval to delay the implementation of weekly food waste collections.
- 2.7 Members should also note that the Council is expecting to hear very soon on the nature of the revenue funding as a result of New Burdens Doctrine for both the transition to, and delivery of, the food waste service, but that there remains no clarity if this will completely cover the required costs of this service.

### 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To agree delegated power for the corporate director with responsibility for Environmental Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder, to purchase the required containers through the most cost-effective and timely means.
- 3.2 To agree to the capital expenditure from the monies supplied by Defra for this purpose, and that should the total exceed the monies supplied that this further capital be sought from appropriate reserves by the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder.
- 3.3 To delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Refuse and Recycling, Parks and Open Spaces to inform Defra of any change to implementation deadlines should this be required if there are delays to the delivery of these containers, or other essential equipment such as vehicles.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	<i>[Insert Reference No. From Forward Plan. (It is a legal requirement to include key executive decisions on the forward plan for 28 days before the decision requested in this report is taken).]</i>
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Peter Murphy - Portfolio Holder for Refuse and Recycling, Parks and Open Spaces.  Cllr Steve Tierney - Portfolio Holder for Communications, Transformation, Climate Change & Strategic Waste.
Report Originator(s)	Mark Mathews - Head of Environmental Services
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd - Chief Executive  Carol Pilson - Corporate Director
Background Papers	<a href="#">New Burdens Doctrine Guidance</a>  <a href="#">Cabinet Report 15 July 2024 - DEFRA Funded Food Waste Vehicle Purchase</a>

### Report:

## 1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

### Weekly Food Waste Collections




- 1.1. The government announced in 2018 that a key element of their waste and resources plan was for the weekly collection of domestic food waste and increased requirements for businesses to recycle more, with an emphasis on both closed loop waste management and the producer pays principles.

- 1.2. Following extended consultation periods and many years of delays, including uncertainty for Cambridgeshire around if the county would collect food waste at all, the weekly collection of food waste from all properties will be a legal requirement from the end of March 2026.
- 1.3. 'All properties' includes flats, communal collection areas and remote properties. For Fenland this represents a particular issue, because around 1,709 (3%) of properties are on either narrow or extremely remote roads, 3,953 (8%) are flats and 16,257 (33%) are rural.
- 1.4. As reported to Cabinet in [July 2024](#), upon appeal, Defra have improved the capital funding offered by £235,000 to £1,061,991 towards the vehicles and other equipment, such as food waste caddies, required.
- 1.5. The vehicles have been ordered and Cabinet approval is not being sought to secure the required containers for the food waste collection.
- 1.6. Fenland's most recent waste analysis demonstrates large percentages of food waste within residual (green bin/black bag) waste.



**Figure 1: Residual Waste Analysis Results**

- 1.7. The waste analysis shows that each property creates almost 180 kg of food waste each year. This is more than a third of the residual waste collected.
- 1.8. We know from the experience of other authorities that, with ongoing good quality communications and the provision of kitchen caddies and liners, around half of this material is separated for the food waste collection by customers.
- 1.9. As such the current rounds and logistics are modelled on this basis along with WRAP research data and an anticipated 3,200 to 4,000 tonnes of food waste being collected each year.
- 1.10. The standard receptacle offering will be as follows, although colour of the caddies is yet to be decided:

Container	Locations	Number Req.	Image	Likely cost per unit
5 litre kitchen caddy	All properties	50,000		£1.30 - £1.77
23 litre outdoor caddy with lockable handle	All properties with a suitable kerbside waste collection point	46,000		£3.53 - £5.90
120 – 240 litre wheeled bin housing	Communal collection points shared by flatted properties.	200 - 300 (subject survey) to		£400 - £550

- 1.11. The expected costs of the containers per unit is outlined in the table from existing government frameworks. Consideration will be given to if a local or joint tender might reduce these prices and conversations have taken place with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership authorities and WRAP.
- 1.12. Based on these anticipated prices per unit, the costs will potentially go beyond the allowed capital.
- 1.13. Alongside the capital funding and investment by Defra a commitment has been made to cover the net revenue burden in line with New Burdens doctrine.
- 1.14. There will be an increased staffing resource requirement, along with support services, and this will be presented to members once Defra has provided improved clarity over how the [New Burdens](#) funding will work for rural districts such as Fenland.
- 1.15. Along with staffing, we are also awaiting a capital bid request made to Defra for an extension to the vehicle workshop at Melbourne Avenue and will keep members up to date with this as we hear.
- 1.16. Members will be kept up to date through portfolio holder updates, briefings and further reports to cabinet and other relevant committees.

## **2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Council and Cabinet approved the commencement of weekly food waste collections from the end of March 2026. As a result, the council needs to quickly move to purchase the required food waste caddies and containers through the most appropriate means.
- 2.2 Given the increases in the price of equipment since Defra set the capital allowances for each authority from the total £295 million provided, there is a real risk that the monies provided will not be sufficient. Given the statutory nature of the requirement, the Council will need to find the remaining capital funding.
- 2.3 Without confirmed delivery dates and the number of authorities all purchasing similar equipment at the same time, there is the real risk that delivery delays will result in implementation delays. This is recognised within the project plan and within government guidance.

## **3 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 Government extensively consulted on the changes that ultimately created changes enacted in the Environment Act 2021.

## **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 None.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Legal Implications**

- 5.2 The weekly food waste collections are a statutory requirement for waste collection authorities to implement prior to April 2026.

### **5.3 Financial Implications**

- 5.4 As previously reported to members, there remains the risk that the capital funding provided by Defra will not meet with the total capital costs of the new service. Defra have been written to requesting further clarification on this issue and this is something that the district council association is also pursuing.
- 5.5 Likewise, we still await clarity, beyond that net costs are covered as set out in the New Burdens Guidance, on how the revenue funding will be provided to cover the costs of the new service and the transition to this service.

### **5.6 Equality Implications**

- 5.7 The waste and recycling service is offered in a universal fashion, with service adjustments such as assisted collections where required and the related

equality impact assessment will be updated ahead of the food waste service implementation.