

Report title: Food Waste Collections Implementation

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Parry
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Environment
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. The Cabinet **NOTE** the progress made on food waste collection implementation.
- 1.2. The Cabinet **RESOLVE** that Authority be granted to the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services to negotiate and finalise the terms of the lease for land at Howard Road and Crossgate Road.
- 1.3. The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that:
- 1.4. An allocation of additional ongoing revenue of £186,155 for the expansion of the food waste collection service from 2027/28 is considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, with any decision deferred until the full financial implications are assessed alongside wider funding priorities through the budget process.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Government has set a new statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to introduce a dedicated separate weekly collection of food waste from all households by 31st March 2026.
- 2.2. As the Council does not currently operate such a service, this will require additional resources to operate, and due to the current size restrictions of the Councils' depots, the Council is unable to add these to our existing arrangements without significant investment in additional land as well as an expansion of the Councils' Operators Licence with

the Traffic Commissioner and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

- 2.3. For this reason, the decision was taken in January 2025 to externalise the Food Waste collection service, and plans prepared to carry out a joint tender between Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council, and Wyre Forest District Council for an external organisation to provide this service on the Councils' behalf, utilising expected "new burdens" funding that had been promised from Central Government as part of the legislation being enacted.
- 2.4. Capital funding was provided by Central Government to support the purchase of vehicles and containers to operate the service with. Further revenue funding was promised under the "new burdens" principle, although confirmation of the value of this funding was delayed repeatedly, and the tender process was eventually started without the confirmation of revenue funding from Central Government due to the approaching statutory deadline. Funding was put in place within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to offset any potential shortfall that might arise from disparities in government funding models and the Councils' true costs.
- 2.5. In December 2025 it was identified that the promised revenue funding had instead been rolled into the general settlement fund for the Councils', with no identifiable allocation for the operation of food waste collections. This left a significant annual funding gap for provision of the service.
- 2.6. In light of this, Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) has taken the decision not to implement Food Waste Collections until such a time as Government funding is provided, or Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has been completed, and the new Unitary Authority can review this decision.
- 2.7. With insufficient funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, and the withdrawal of Wyre Forest District Council from the tender process, it was not possible to progress with award of the contract under procurement rules.
- 2.8. As a result of this, the Council is currently not compliant with its statutory duty.
- 2.9. Many other Local Authorities have publicly declared that they are unable to meet this duty as a result of not receiving expected additional funding for the provision of food waste collections, and are reviewing how they can comply with this legal duty.

- 2.10. In total, 25% of Local Authorities have not implemented food waste collections by the required start date, and a number of Authorities have declared that until additional funding is provided to implement food waste, they will not be implementing this service, whilst others have announced delays in implementation, and/or a switch to a phased implementation to balance their financial and legal responsibilities.
- 2.11. A review of options for internal delivery has been undertaken to allow implementation of the service utilising the funds currently available within the MTFP in 2026/27, and this report presents details on the proposed implementation of a partial food waste collection service utilising the current funding built into the MTFP for ratification, and also details the additional revenue funding required in 2027/28 to support expansion of this service to achieve full compliance with our statutory duty.
- 2.12. This approach now replaces the previous route approval by Council in January 2025 for the outsourcing of the Domestic Food Waste Collection Service in favour of launching an in-house collection service as set out within this report.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1. Aside from the identified funding shortfall, the primary limiting factor on launching an in-house food waste collection service is having the physical space to operate a service from.
- 3.2. Having reviewed all Council owned land across Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils' portfolios, only one site belonging to RBC was identified as viable from a space and legal usage perspective, but this site had a limit on its usage that would require a significant payment linked to its Capital Value to allow it to be repurposed.
- 3.3. Having explored this option, this has been ruled out as not being cost effective prior to LGR.
- 3.4. Having engaged the services of a local land agent, we have identified a limited number of commercially available sites available for lease on the open market, although no single site met our needs to deliver the service.
- 3.5. As such, two sites in close proximity to each other have been identified that collectively meet our needs, and Officers are making arrangements to lease these on a 5-year term with a break clause after 3 years to support flexibility alongside the timescales for LGR.

- 3.6. This site will be operated as a joint operational depot for the provision of Food Waste Collections across both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough in order to reduce the individual costs to each Authority of operating a depot and managing the service. This will also give opportunities for further operational efficiencies and increased resilience of the service in line with the Councils' existing joint services to residents.
- 3.7. Specialist food waste collection vehicles have been ordered to support provision of the Food Waste collection service to all residents, and are scheduled for manufacture and delivery by December 2026. The vehicles were ordered in expectation of a full roll-out of the service to all properties as part of the service tender process.
- 3.8. Food Waste Caddies have been ordered, with an expected delivery date in September 2026 for storage in advance of distribution to households ready for the commencement of collections.
- 3.9. When implementing a new food waste collection service, there are a number of variables relating to the "participation rate" and the "set out rate", which is related to how many residents use the service when it is available, and how regularly they may use it. This will impact on the volume of waste collected and the level of resource needed to provide the service.
- 3.10. Research carried out by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) suggests that an average performing food waste collection service will achieve a participation rate of 35%-55% with the set-out rate 10-15% lower than this (not all households take part every week).
- 3.11. The Councils' have had modelling carried out previously with external consultants *Circulogic*, as well as the government assessment of need that underpinned the Capital funding provided, and have used this alongside detailed route planning using our local knowledge to identify staffing requirements to deliver this service.
- 3.12. Food waste collections will be implemented in line with existing collection days across both Council areas to ensure ease of engagement by residents with the new service, and help improve the likely participation rates as well as simplify associated communication about services.
- 3.13. To support engagement with the service, it is planned to provide one roll of food waste caddy liners to all households when the service is introduced. These are bags that fit inside the 7ltr kitchen caddy to help keep them clean and facilitate transfer to the collection caddy for

disposal, which is the reason most often cited for not using food waste collection services elsewhere.

- 3.14. Provision of these liners has been demonstrated by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP¹) to increase uptake in the food waste service, and reduce odour associated with the service.
- 3.15. Although these are not included in the capital funding allocation from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the cost of providing the initial supply and on-going replacements to support residents' engagement with the service has been built into the service models, and will only be supplied on request to residents. This will ensure costs are proportionate to the number of households using the service in order to minimise the cost of this and secure the benefit of diverting food waste from the residual waste stream.
- 3.16. Whilst this is an investment in the service, it is expected to support higher participation in the service and increase the environmental benefits of operating the service by addressing the main concerns regarding hygiene of kitchen caddies and associated odour. This will especially support residents in communal and higher density housing areas by addressing the most often cited areas of uncertainty, and removing the barrier of residents feeling they need to invest in bags themselves.
- 3.17. In light of the financial limitations on how much of the service the Councils' can deliver in the 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial year with current budgets, Officers are currently working towards a two-phase implementation of the service. Phase One is planned to start in Quarter 4 2026/2027, with delivery to a proportion of local residents with a staggered rollout during January, February and March that will allow the Councils to ensure security of the new service and address any issues as they arise.

- 3.18. Overview of planned service implementation:

	Start Date	Bromsgrove District Council
Phase 1A	Q4 2026/27	3 Collection Rounds implemented (Approx. 50% households to receive service.)

¹ WRAP are a major UK-based environmental charity and global climate action NGO. They are best known for running campaigns like **Love Food Hate Waste** and orchestrating industry initiatives to increase recycling and reduce waste.

Phase 1B	Q1 2027/28	1 Additional Collection Round implemented (Approx 66% households now receiving service, and scope for consolidation and further expansion within existing resources.)
Phase 2	Subject to additional funding	2 Additional Collection Rounds to be implemented to support 100% service provision.

- 3.19. Resident engagement with the new service will be monitored and allow for potential expansion of the service within the phase 1 resources during the first quarter of 2027/28. A reprofiling of the resources required for implementing Phase 2 may then also be possible.
- 3.20. Revenue funding has been provided by Central Government to support communicating the new service to residents. This funding will be used to provide an information pack to each household along with their caddies, as well as wider messaging through social media and via partner organisations such as Parish Councils and Housing providers.
- 3.21. Communal sites, and registered Social Landlords make up approximately 5% of households within the Council's area, and have specific challenges in managing waste. These often need a greater level of support to avoid a negative impact when introducing new services, as well as higher rates of waste contamination and lack of engagement with services.
- 3.22. As a result, it is planned to omit these sites from Phase 1 and plan for the more complex communal sites to be phased in as part of Phase 2 in the third and 4th quarter of the 2027/28 financial year, alongside more targeted resident engagement and education to support this as part of improving the Council's wider performance on recycling services.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 In 2024/25, the Council received Capital funding totalling £1,013,896 through the Government's New Burdens Fund to support the implementation of food waste collections and fund the cost of vehicles and containers.

- 4.2 The Capital funding received is expected to fully meet the financial cost of containers and caddies required to operate the service to all residents. This is expected to be spent in full within the 2026/27 financial year as part of mobilisation for the new service, with unused assets to be stored securely for future use.
- 4.3 An annual revenue budget of £1,000,000 was allocated to the provision of Domestic Food Waste Collections from 2026/27 within the MTFP at Council in January 2025, in the expectation that additional funding would be received from Central Government to support this “new burden”.
- 4.4 The annual revenue cost of operating a full service that meets our statutory duties to provide a dedicated weekly food waste collection to every household is estimated at £1,186,155.
- 4.5 The table below summarises the modelled cost breakdown for the implementation of a food waste collection service to every household, and highlights the shortfall against the current approved funding within the MTFP.

4.6

	BDC
Staffing	£921,783
Maintenance	£112,000
Fuel	£77,550
Depot Operating Costs ²	£21,822
Depot Lease Costs	£45,000
Liners	£8,000
Total	£1,186,155
Variance to Current Budget	£186,155

- 4.7 As such, a partial implementation of the food waste collection service can be implemented, in line with approved funding contained within the budget.
- 4.8 Under these proposals, the service will support approximately 66% of households to receive a food waste collection service in 2026/27 and 2027/28 based on current funding within the MTFP.
- 4.9 To extend the service to support every household in the Council's area and fully deliver against the Council's statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021, will require additional ongoing funding of £186,155 be added to the MTFP for Bromsgrove.

² Estimate on Business Rates and Utilities.

- 4.10 Whilst there is no additional funding factored into the MTFP to offset this funding shortfall, the Council is receiving payments from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme (EPR)³, which started in 2025-26 providing local authorities with quarterly payments which “should be used to cover the net efficient costs your local authority incurs in the efficient management of household packaging waste”⁴.
- 4.11 In 2025/26 this funding was used to fund the existing dry recycling domestic waste collection service, and allow funds allocated from the MTFP for Waste collection to be used elsewhere within both authorities.
- 4.12 The MTFP has allocated Council funding for the provision of existing Domestic Waste collections in 2026/27 and 2027/28, and will receive further funding under the EPR scheme for 2026/27 of £1,766,905.34.
- 4.13 Whilst funding for 2027/28 has not been confirmed at this point, the Council has recently received details of proposed updates to the funding calculation to factor in additional recycling materials⁵ to the cost calculations that are now collected by our services as part of the Simpler Recycling requirements within the Environment Act 2021.
- 4.14 This funding is linked to the manufacture of recyclable packaging and will only fluctuate in line with the volume of packaging produced by the private sector. It is expected to remain a consistent funding stream moving forwards, although will be linked to our recycling quality in future, and could see deductions of up to 20% for poor performance from 2028. Full details of how this metric will be applied have not yet been provided.
- 4.15 £100,000 of this funding has already been allocated to support communication and engagement with residents on recycling quality related to the Council’s existing green wheeled bin services, but the remaining funds could be utilised to release existing funding within the MTFP to meet the shortfall from 2027/28 onwards.
- 4.16 Whilst food caddies have been funded by Central Government for the initial launch of the service, and will provide an initial stock for replacement of lost/damaged caddies once the service has started, there will be a need for a future Capital Replacement budget to fund these.

³ Effectively a tax on packaging manufacturers to offset the costs of collecting and managing that waste by Local Authorities. Managed by a scheme administrator (PackUK) who share funds based on net efficient costs of collecting household packaging waste.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/payments-to-local-authorities-under-extended-producer-responsibility-for-packaging>

⁵ Foil and Plastic Tubes

- 4.17 This will be submitted as a budget bid at a later date once the Council has reviewed the volume of replacements required during Phase 1 implementation, so that the bid can truly reflect expected costs.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Environment Act 2021 sets out the legislative framework for Simpler Recycling which was launched in October 2023. The Council already meets many of the requirements, but is currently non-compliant regarding its statutory duties to provide a dedicated weekly food waste service to all households from April 2026.
- 5.2. The requirements under the Environment Act 2021 state that Waste Collection Authorities (WCA's) must collect segregated food waste at least once per week from 31 March 2026, with no qualification made for technical or economic practicability or the extent of any environmental benefit.
- 5.3. The Council has no statutory exemption via secondary legislation and is currently in breach of its obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended by the Environment Act 2021.
- 5.4. The statutory scheme does not provide for DEFRA and/or the Environment Agency as the frontline regulator to sanction WCAs directly for failure to comply with mandatory food waste collection requirements, and there is no provision for the prosecution of WCAs for non-compliance, leaving Judicial Review as the primary legislative risk.
- 5.5. The onus in this situation is on the authority to demonstrate it has taken all reasonable steps to perform the statutory duty, as Local Authorities cannot choose to be non-compliant with statutory legislation.
- 5.6. A Council cannot use a lack of funds as a justification to break the law, even if it causes severe financial strain, and this principle is well documented in case law.
- 5.7. This report details the mitigation of this risk, and a proposed path to achieve full compliance at the earliest opportunity, which would be 2027/28 subject to the date of funding approval and associated recruitment that would be required to deliver Phase 2 of the service.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1.1. Proposals to implement a phased introduction of domestic food waste collections will ensure financial stability, and secure the capital assets to support a full collection service for our current residents.
- 6.1.2. Whilst it is hoped that the service will be able to identify sufficient productivity and efficiency savings to implement a full service before LGR has been completed, any unutilised assets such as vehicles and caddies will transfer to the new Unitary Authority that will be created.
- 6.1.3. As part of LGR, it is expected that opportunities to combine resources to support more efficient services will be considered. There may be additional sites identified to support operational services beyond those the Council have access to currently.
- 6.1.4. Should a North Worcestershire Unitary Council be adopted, the funds received by Wyre Forest District Council from Central Government are expected to transfer across to the new Unitary Authority, and will most likely support investment and expansion of the existing Bromsgrove and Redditch Service alongside further route optimisation to make full use of existing Council depots to operate efficient services.
- 6.1.5. Should a single combined Worcestershire model be adopted, funds received and not yet assigned to a dedicated food waste service in Wychavon District will support expansion of any existing schemes, as well as provide access to their Pershore depot. This may support provision of services to residents without the need for leasing of private land to operate a food waste collection service from.

6.2. Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2.1. Environment/Green, Clean & Safe

6.3. Climate Change Implications

- 6.3.1. Food waste collections contribute to carbon reduction by diverting biodegradable waste from incineration and supporting anaerobic digestion processes which provide biogas and biomethane. These are used to generate electricity as well as support the national gas grid as a sustainable source of energy within the circular economy.
- 6.3.2. Waste composition analysis carried out in 2022 on a sample of residual waste bins showed that residents in Bromsgrove District produced an average of 2.17kg per household per week. The average across

Worcestershire was 2.17kg. This is on a par with a national average of 3KG per week publicised by WRAP.

6.3.3. It is therefore expected that if 50% of households each presented their food waste for collection, the Council could expect to collect approximately 1,700 tonnes per year.

6.3.4. This will divert this waste from incineration within the existing residual waste service, to processing by anaerobic digestion which produces more sustainable energy generation as well as bio-digestate to return nutrients to the environment as part of the circular economy.

6.3.5. Diverting food waste from incineration to anaerobic digestion typically delivers a carbon saving of around 60–70 kg CO₂e per tonne⁶, which would result in a Carbon saving of 110 tonnes Carbon per year for the Council based on a 50% take-up of the service.

6.4. Community Impact

6.4.1. Implementing a food waste collection service is expected to deliver benefits to residents by reducing the carbon impact of their household waste on the environment.

6.4.2. By collecting food waste on a weekly basis, it will improve hygiene and support public health by removing putrescible waste more frequently than the existing fortnightly collection service within the residual waste stream.

6.4.3. A dedicated food waste collection can help residents identify avoidable food waste, and influence changes in behaviour and/or shopping habits. This reduces the volume of waste produced and also typically saves money on household food bills.

6.5. Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.5.1. People with disabilities may require assistance in presenting their food waste caddy for collection. This will be provided as part of our existing assisted collection scheme, and will be publicised alongside the introduction of a new collection scheme as part of the information provided directly to every household when the caddies are delivered.

6.5.2. There could potentially be a negative impact on people from particular ethnic groups whose first language is not English and any subsequent misunderstandings about the correct food waste disposal instructions. Imagery will be used to help simplify the message as much as possible,

⁶ based on WRAP's conversion factors for waste treatment options (CarbonWARM2)

and further assessment will be needed to identify the scale of this, and consider how to address these concerns through planned waste education and engagement with residents.

- 6.5.3. A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out prior to the launch of the new service in order to identify any additional elements and implement mitigation measures to support this.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1. Lack of a suitable site to operate a service

- 7.1.1. Domestic Food Waste service cannot be operated without additional land and a formal extension to the Council's Operator's Licence.
- 7.1.2. Land has been identified and contract arrangements being progressed to secure and safeguard proposed timescales.

7.2. Operator's Licence requirements for operating a HGV fleet

- 7.2.1. The Council have now appointed a second Operators Licence Holder as part of the shared services with Redditch Borough Council, which increases the oversight capacity regarding the number of vehicles that the Councils can operate.
- 7.2.2. Whilst there is limited physical space to support increasing our capacity on existing sites, this increased oversight capacity will allow the Council to demonstrate how a satellite site can be operated as an extension to the existing Operator's licence.
- 7.2.3. Officers have commenced discussions with the Traffic Commissioner's office and DVSA to vary the existing licences, and/or set up a new licence as required for a satellite site. This typically can be approved within 6-8 weeks, although more complex arrangements can take up to 12 weeks.

7.3. Planning permission delays

- 7.3.1. The Planning Team will be consulted regarding proposed sites for a new satellite depot as part of the Council's mobilisation process to ensure compliance with all planning requirements.
- 7.3.2. Should Planning permission be required to support a change of use or specific works to make changes to a proposed depot site, these will be mitigated through early submission and pre-application engagement with the Planning Team as per standard processes.

7.4. Vehicle delivery delays

- 7.4.1. Vehicles have been ordered and are currently scheduled for delivery in December 2026. This can vary if there are delays in the manufacturing process.
- 7.4.2. Close coordination with the manufacturer will seek to ensure that any delays are identified at the earliest stage possible, and opportunities explored with the manufacturer and hire companies for the provision of alternate vehicles to allow services to commence as planned.
- 7.4.3. Any costs associated with putting interim arrangements in place will be considered against available budgets to ensure the service remains viable given the high financial cost and risk associated with minimum lease periods.
- 7.4.4. Contingency plans will form part of the mobilisation plan to ensure that staff can be redeployed or used to support other related waste and recycling duties that support education and awareness of recycling quality and waste minimisation should this not be achievable, and the start date need to be delayed.

7.5. Food Waste Caddy procurement and delivery delays.

- 7.5.1. Food Caddies are available through procurement frameworks, and quoted timescales support delivery in readiness for us to distribute to residents during Quarter 3 of 2026/27 in advance of service commencement in Quarter 4 2026/27. Current timescales support a 3–4-week buffer to accommodate any potential delays in manufacture, although experience supports this as a low-risk issue.

7.6. Low take up of the service

- 7.6.1. Food Caddies will be delivered with supporting information as a welcome pack regarding use of the service and the associated benefits. This will be supported by a wider Communications Plan based on dedicated resources developed by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to support Local Authorities in implementing Food Waste Collections across the UK.
- 7.6.2. Any underutilised capacity within the service will be able to support more targeted engagement in initial launch areas, and then be utilised to support expansion of the service.
- 7.6.3. Collection Data will be monitored to track participation and associated tonnages to target messaging and resources proactively to support usage of the service.

7.6.4. This data will also support wider service planning regarding the future of household collections for residents. Coupled with waste composition analysis of the residual waste stream, this will provide evidence to support consideration of ways to pressurise the waste stream to encourage more residents to make use of the service in low performing areas.

7.7. Inability to secure disposal at modelled disposal point

7.7.1. Route planning has been based upon access to the Severn Trent Green Power Site, which has not been contractually secured by Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

7.7.2. Once a decision has been confirmed on the scale of services to be implemented, this should give security to support WCC in completing the contract. Close communication during the mobilisation period will ensure that any changes to the disposal point can be factored in, and services adjusted where appropriate. This may impact on the number of properties the service can collect from in a week with the proposed resource, requiring additional staff/vehicles/salary costs to support the additional travelling time for disposal.

7.8. Pace of implementation and expansion to meet the Council's full statutory duties

7.8.1. Implementation of food waste collection services will be managed and monitored using a structured mobilisation plan as set out in Appendix 1. This will be regularly updated to reflect any amendments or delays, and reviewed by the Waste Project Board to ensure timescales are managed and achieve the successful delivery of services.

7.9. Legal Sanctions

7.9.1. The Council has no statutory exemption from its statutory duty to provide food waste collections to all households, and is currently in breach of its obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended by the Environment Act 2021.

7.9.2. The statutory scheme does not provide for DEFRA and/or the Environment Agency as the frontline regulator to sanction WCAs directly for failure to comply with mandatory food waste collection requirements, and there is no provision for the prosecution of WCAs for non-compliance, leaving Judicial Review as the primary legislative risk.

7.9.3. Mitigation to date has been open dialogue with DEFRA regarding the impact of the withdrawal of promised Government revenue funding for

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the implementation of the service and the challenges facing implementation of the new service in this context.

- 7.9.4. Having a clear plan and timescale to launch a full service at the earliest opportunity will help demonstrate reasonability in meeting our statutory responsibilities and reduce the risk of a formal sanction through the Judicial Review process that could require us to implement the full service.

8. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker	1/7/26
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Guy Revans Simon Parry	19/6/26 23/6/26
Financial Services	James Walton – S151 Officer Paul Earley - Maqsood Ahmed	29/6/26 23/6/26 23/6/26
Legal Services	Claire Felton	30/6/26
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles	18/6/26