

MID-SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Mid Suffolk Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/23/54
FROM: Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture & Wellbeing – Tim Weller	DATE OF MEETING: 07/05/2024
OFFICER: Director of Operations & Climate Change – Mark Emms	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB473

SIMPLER RECYCLING – FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Government has legislated for Councils to align their waste and recycling services with new nationwide Simpler Recycling¹ requirements² by 31st March 2026. The council will need to provide a new kerbside weekly household food waste collection service and vary the existing dry recycling collection service to include glass, to remain compliant.
- 1.2 This report concerns the requirements around separated weekly food waste collections from all households at the kerbside and seeks to enable officers to progress procurement to meet the deadline and manage risk.
- 1.3 The capacity of the supply chain to meet an unprecedented nationwide demand for specialist food waste collection vehicles and bins poses a delivery risk to Waste Collection Authorities meeting the deadline.
- 1.4 Further choices for recycling and residual waste collection methodology and frequency will need to be taken during 2024 and these will be briefed to members and brought to cabinet to make decisions by the summer. Preferred recycling collection options that have been developed by Suffolk Waste Partnership members and the final choices will need to take into account the benefits that a common collections method gives to disposal. This collections choice is not expected to pose the same risk for new vehicle procurement and as such does not need to be considered as expediently.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The options presented in this report assume that the council will comply with the requirements of the government legislation in respect of food waste collections. Officers do not believe the council has any grounds to apply to DEFRA for an exemption to the legislation and delay making this change by 31st March 2026. Therefore, the paper does not consider options about whether to not provide the service.

¹ [Simpler Recycling Press Release – gov.uk](#)

² [Simpler Recycling reforms summary | Campaign Monitor \(createsend.com\)](#)

2.2 **Option A** - commence procurement of the vehicles, caddies, and bins as soon as practicably possible after a decision has been made by cabinet.

This is the recommended option as it is the most likely to ensure that the procurements are complete, and contracts awarded in sufficient time for deliveries to be made for the Council to meet the implementation deadline of 31st March 2026.

2.3 **Option B** - delay procurement of the vehicles, caddies and bins that will be required and await further funding guidance and information from the Government (not expected before Autumn 2024) on the implementation of food waste collections.

This option is not recommended as the delay may result in vehicle orders being further back in the supply chain resulting in not receiving them in sufficient time to meet the implementation deadline of 31st March 2026.

<p>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>3.1 The introduction of a weekly kerbside food waste collection service to all households using dedicated vehicles by or before 31 March 2026 to meet new statutory requirements is approved.</p> <p>3.2 Delegated Authority is given to The Director of Operations, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for the Environment and Finance to agree and authorise the procurement strategy, individually and/or collectively as required with partner Suffolk councils, to deliver the necessary infrastructure including vehicles, bins and material processing within the financial constraints described in section 5.</p> <p>3.3 Delegated Authority is provided to The Director of Operations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Finance, to progress agreement of the Contract Variation of the Joint Waste Contract with Serco PLC to include the introduction of food waste collections.</p>
<p>REASON FOR DECISION</p> <p>To ensure that the Council can effectively implement weekly Food Waste Collections to meet its statutory requirements in compliance with environmental law in accordance with Simpler Recycling, by the 31st March 2026 deadline.</p>

4. KEY INFORMATION

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

4.2 Householders will be asked to separate their food waste and present it for collection on a weekly basis from the kerbside.

4.3 An internal food waste caddy (approx. 5 litres) will need to be provided to householders for use in the kitchen. This provides the householder with somewhere to store food waste in the short term (day to day) and helps improve collection yields.

4.4 Householders will empty their food waste into an external food waste caddy of approximately 23 litres (approximately 10% of the size of a standard 240L wheelie

bin) which can be stored either on top of or beside their existing bins. Residents in houses of multiple occupancy or where larger communal bins are already provided will have larger external bins to empty their food waste into.

- 4.5 The waste collection teams will empty the food waste from these external caddies or communal bins from the kerbside into a dedicated food waste collection vehicle and return the bins.
- 4.6 Modelling carried out by Eunomia for SWP in 2022 has led officers and members to narrow down the preferred food waste collections method to being the use of dedicated 7.5/11.5t vehicles with driver plus two loaders.
- 4.7 The Council will need 7 collect rounds and to share 3 spare vehicles with BDC – 8.5 new food waste collection vehicles. Current lead times on food collection vehicles are estimated at a minimum of 6 months but could easily be 9-15 months as further local authority pressure on the supply chain is expected due to this change.
- 4.8 There is a requirement to procure both internal and external food waste caddies, plus additional bins for communal properties. Colours to be confirmed but expected to be from a standard range of brown, grey, green, blue or black, with a preference to be consistent across the county.
- 4.9 Whilst lead times on the manufacture and supply of both internal and external food waste caddies and communal bins is not expected to be as lengthy as for vehicles, it is considered prudent to undertake the procurement of these as early as possible and ensure that orders are placed which ensure that deliveries are received at least 6 months prior to commencement of the service.
- 4.10 The Suffolk Waste Partnership undertook food waste market research in 2022 and established strong market interest for the processing of Suffolk collected food waste and the most likely technical solution would be through Anaerobic Digestion. This work, supported by Defra's 'Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme' (WIDP), also concluded that the best value solution for the processing of collected food would be through a market driven procurement.
- 4.11 As the Waste Disposal Authority, Suffolk County Council will undertake the food processing procurement with support from all the Suffolk Waste collection Authorities (4 Districts and Borough Councils).
- 4.12 Suffolk County Council are currently preparing procurement documents for food waste treatment, with an anticipated procurement start of late May/Early June 2024 and contract award in late Summer.
- 4.13 The disposal procurement process is expected to divide the work by geographic lots considering the location of the counties existing waste transfer stations. This will allow potential bidders to offer a whole county solution or bid for the tonnage from a single lot. A similar approach to procurement has previously been adopted for garden waste composting facilities.
- 4.14 In addition to the need for new food waste treatment, SWP councils will need localised delivery points for the collected food waste. Suffolk County Council has begun work to assess and make the changes that will be required at transfer stations. The planning and construction timescales for these infrastructure changes are another reason that food service decisions need to be taken promptly.

4.15 The end delivery point for the food tonnage is not known at this stage and this will be dependent on how the market responds. We expect to deliver collected food waste directly into SCC waste transfer stations at West Suffolk Councils Operational Hub in Bury St Edmunds, Ransomes Europark in Ipswich or directly to a new more advantageous market provided AD facility in the area, if this can be procured.

5. LINKS TO OUR MID SUFFOLK PLAN

5.1 The new food waste collection service will create 7 new HGV class 2 driving positions and 14 loader roles, plus relief cover.

5.2 Environmental benefits are covered in section 11.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Capital - Expenditure/Income Item - MSDC	Total	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
New Burdens Capital Grant Funding	-1,041,808	-1,041,808		
Additional Required Capital Expenditure – spare vehicles (50% of 3 spare vehicles)	150,000		150,000	
10% Contingency- cost inflation / containers	104, 000		104,000	
Capital Shortfall / Borrowing	254,000		254,000	
Principal repayment (7 years)	72,570		36,285	36,285
MRP/ Financing Costs	97,039		12,827	11,642

6.1 The Government has announced £295m of capital New Burdens funding in England and Wales to pay for Local Authorities to purchase assets (vehicles and containers) to deliver the new food waste collections service where this is required.

6.2 The allocated capital grant funding for food waste vehicles and containers (bins) is currently set out as below. We do not believe this covers the cost of spare vehicles (1.5 of) and are challenging this with Defra in light of the route modelling information we have. The likelihood of success in this appeal is unknown.

Local Authority	Kitchen caddies (plus spares)	Kerbside caddies (plus spares)	Communal Wheeled Bins (plus spares)	Vehicles (plus spares)	Total Funding
MSDC	£98,265	£219,229	£8,213	£716,100	£1,041,80

6.3 The exact difference between the procured cost of the required number of vehicles and containers and the Defra grant is unknown. Including contingency this is estimated to be up to £254,000, with the grant funding being received in 2024 and the supply expenditure not being expected until 2025. Therefore, it should be recognised that a decision to proceed will require additional funding from the capital programme in 2025, incurring repayment for borrowing (to be determined by treasury

management process) with repayment over 7 years depending on confirmed vehicle life.

- 6.4 Waste Collection Authorities have been advised New Burdens revenue funding will also be available to support the 'new burden' increase in costs of delivering this service. This is expected to be applied to the Revenue Support Grant from April 2026, but at present no further detail is available.
- 6.5 In 2022 the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group allocated £375,000 of joint funding to support the countywide coordination and collaborative delivery of the simpler recycling changes. This is expected to fund programme management procurement oversight, expert advice such as collection round analysis, and some joint communications activity.
- 6.6 Making this recommended decision to proceed with procurement will move the council further towards implementing food waste collections, and whilst if the government changed its position on new burdens funding it may be possible to stop and resell vehicles, it is likely the council will be committed to fully rolling out the new service.
- 6.7 In order to deliver the service, the Joint Waste Contract Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have with Serco PLC will need to be varied to cover the additional collections cost and initial dialogue has taken place. This will include a range of costs including Drivers (LGV & HGV), loaders, relief staff, vehicle running costs, bin deliveries, compliance and training, overheads and profits.
- 6.8 The new vehicles will require overnight parking spaces in the depot, and it is unknown if a larger depot will be available before this service change is implemented. In the event this is not the case, then we are confident that acceptable temporary arrangements can be put in place for staff and visitor car parking, and with some basic surface reconfiguration works we will be able to accommodate the new vehicles and containers. This will require additional funding to be agreed and is in many respects linked to the depot project.
- 6.9 Suffolk County Council will benefit from reduced residual waste tonnage going to the Energy from Waste plant and will lose some income from lower levels of electricity produced. They will incur Waste Transfer Station modification infrastructure costs and there will be gate fee and transfer costs associated to the new food waste stream. At this stage SCC do not know the nett position on existing or future recycling credits in respect of food waste. SCC will not receive any new burdens funding.
- 6.10 Under the new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging the Government is making producers responsible for the full net costs incurred by local authorities from collection and recycling/disposing of the packaging waste materials they place on the market. Producers will pay into a centrally administered fund which will pay councils.
- 6.11 Councils have been told that Government will provide authority specific EPR payment forecasts by Autumn 2024 to assist with local budget setting. However, actual payments won't commence until late 2025 at the earliest, albeit backdated to cover the period from April 2025.

6.12 We do not expect to profit from this arrangement and have been advised a mechanism would be in place to prevent this. However, it is the intention that EPR payment will become progressively more linked to recycling system performance over time. It is understood that councils who demonstrate that their waste services are efficient and effective will receive the highest tier of payments, however the criteria has not been published.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The introduction of a food waste collection service is a Statutory requirement, so failure to do so will be a breach of our Statutory duties as set out in the Environment Act 2021 and subsequent guidance.

7.2 Procurements will be carried out in accordance with all statutory guidance, the law and the councils standing orders.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Key risks are set out below:

Key Risk Description	Likelihood 1-4	Impact 1-4	Key Mitigation Measures	Risk Register and Reference*
Non compliance with legislation and regulatory standards	3	2	Regulatory change management Compliance risk assessment	SRR024
The Council may not be ready for RAWs and may face legislative penalties as a result.	3	3	Work closely as part of member, director and officer groups within the Suffolk Waste Partnership to develop plans, share procurement risk, share project resourcing and support. Monitor and act on all Defra advice and communications Brief joint cabinets and political groups	ORR Waste 11
Allocated Capital and Revenue Funding will not cover the cost of delivering Food Waste Collections	3	3	Challenge of the funding allocations with Defra Ensure costs are managed at all stages	ORR Waste 13

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 In December 2018 Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS).
- 9.2 Government subsequently consulted on various RAWS policies in 2019 and 2021, following which in November 2021 the Environment Act was passed, providing the legislative basis through which the strategic waste reforms will be enacted.
- 9.3 In October 2023 Government published its plans for Simpler Recycling with some further clarity on implementation and funding being released in the subsequent months.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 An EQIA initial screening was completed to determine whether the policy has any relevance for equality and if there is any impact on one or more of the 9 protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The screening identified that a full impact assessment was not required.'

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Separating food waste will lead to a directly proportional drop in residual waste which is treated via the Energy from Waste plant in Great Blakenham. A reduction in approximately 7,000 tonnes will lead to a Co₂ emissions reduction of 1000 tonnes per annum from Suffolk County Councils carbon emissions.
- 11.2 The vehicle tailpipe emissions for collection and transfer costs of diesel vehicles has been calculated to be in the order of 5% of the overall system emissions.
- 11.3 Purchasing Euro VI engine vehicles will continue to allow the use of alternative HVO fuel which avoids 90% of collection vehicle carbon emissions.
- 11.4 Electric food waste collection vehicles are being quoted as around 2 to 3 times the price of Euro VI engines vehicles. We will investigate this option further – consulting with other councils that use EV's, looking at charging infrastructure needs, obtaining prices through procurement and doing a full options appraisal to be brought back to Cabinet.
- 11.5 Food waste containers will be purchased with a high content of recycled material, but we are advised that some virgin material is required by suppliers to maintain UV resistance and maintain structural integrity over time.
- 11.6 Promoting home composting as a preference over kerbside recycling will be promoted and the current discounted compost bin scheme reviewed.
- 11.7 The by-products of the AD food waste treatment process will be an organic soil improver which can be used locally by farmers and a green biogas which can be injected into the national grid or converted into clean electricity. This will be managed by the winning bidder and detailed in the procurement process.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) N/a	

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

14. REPORT AUTHORS

Mark Emms Director of Operations and Climate Change

Ollie Faiers Head of Waste, Recycling and Fleet.