

Report to Cabinet

Thursday, 21 March 2024

By the Cabinet Member for Environmental Health,
Recycling and Waste

DECISION REQUIRED



**Horsham
District
Council**

Not Exempt

Domestic Food Waste Weekly Collections

Executive Summary

This report considers the implications and processes for introducing a weekly food waste collection for all Horsham residents, including flats, by 31 March 2026 as set out in the Government's Simpler Recycling announcement.

There are several projects which will form the process of introducing weekly food waste collections which include vehicle procurement, caddy procurement, vehicle storage, routing of rounds, communications and recruitment to ensure a successful District wide roll out. There will also be the need to work with West Sussex Waste Partnership and to establish post implementation monitoring to establish the success of the new service.

There also needs to be a decision made on the frequency of residual waste collections taking into account the Simpler Recycling recommendations which are set out in this report.

This report sets out all the associated projects and considerations to enable us to deliver the most effective food waste collection service and meet the deadline of 31 March 2026.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet is recommended:

- i) To approve the introduction of a weekly domestic food waste service before 31 March 2026 to all residents in Horsham District.
- ii) To approve the collection frequencies, as follows:
 - Residual Waste: fortnightly
 - Dry Mixed Recycling: fortnightly
 - Garden Waste: fortnightly
 - Food waste: weekly
- iii) To recommend to Council that capital expenditure of up to £2,617,000 required to purchase the vehicles (to include in cab technology and CCTV), caddies and bins, is approved. This will be spent across 2024/25 and 2025/26 and profiled

into the capital programme in the relevant year by the Director of Resources when the lead times for each capital items are known.

- iv) To recommend to Council that revenue expenditure of £25,000 in 2024/25 for route planning required for the transition to weekly food waste collection is approved.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) The Environment Act 2021 set into legislation various requirements for local councils and specifically mandated for all waste collection authorities (WCAs) in England to provide a weekly collection of food waste from households.

On 21 October 2023, Government announced 'Simpler Recycling' waste reforms which stated the new requirement must be provided by 31 March 2026.

- ii) The roll out of weekly food waste collections encompasses a number of projects as detailed in the report, which will all feed into achieving the delivery of the service by 31 March 2026.
- iii) Full Council must approve capital and revenue expenditure.

Background Papers

Ricardo report for Horsham District Council modelling food waste, residual, recycling and garden collections.

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Contact: Laura Parker, Head of Recycling & Waste.

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Environment Act 2021 set into legislation various requirements for local authorities and specifically mandated for all waste collection authorities (WCAs) in England to provide a weekly collection of food waste from households.

On 21 October 2023, Government announced 'Simpler Recycling' waste reforms which stated the new requirement must be provided by 31 March 2026. The statement also included information on how local councils would be funded to deliver the new, additional burden. Funding is intended to cover all reasonable costs associated with:

- capital expenditure for vehicles and containers. On 9 January 2024, Defra confirmed the funding allocation amounts which will be paid to councils in the 2023/24 financial year in the form of government grants.
- resource transitional costs (such as vehicle routing, communications, and project management) to be paid in the 2024/25 financial year; and
- support for ongoing service delivery costs to be provided from 1 April 2026.

Delivery of the project will ensure compliance with Government legislation. It will also support the Council Plan relating to recycling targets and waste minimisation.

In 2023 the Council commissioned waste consultants Ricardo to carry out modelling work for both 1-2-2 (weekly food, fortnightly recycling and fortnightly refuse) and 1-2-3 (weekly food, fortnightly recycling and three weekly residual) collections. The results of this modelling along with government legislation will form the basis of this report.

- 1.2 The key decisions from this report are the following:

- Decision on frequency of collections for residual waste
- Vehicle procurement - decision on number and size of vehicles to procure.
- Container procurement – decision on type, number and size of caddies and wheelie bins (for communal flats) to order.

There are also other complex projects which need to be considered as the project develops:

- Depot size constraints to accommodate the new vehicles
- Re-routing of all rounds including residual, recycling, garden and adding in food
- Recruitment – the need to employ additional drivers and loaders
- Service mobilisation and roll out
- Communications plan

- 1.3 All Horsham residents will be impacted by the roll out of the service as they will all be provided with a weekly food waste collection service and collection days for other receptacles may also change.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 The introduction of weekly food waste collections will support the Inspiring Greener Futures Council Plan Theme which states “We aim to be a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero district by 2050. Horsham District will be held in high regard for best practice in rewilding, regenerative farming and recycling.

3 Details

- 3.1 Decision on frequency of collections for residual waste, 1-2-2 or 1-2-3.

We know that at present, around 40% of the waste (by tonnage) that goes into residual waste bins in the Horsham District is food waste. The Government announcement of the introduction of mandatory food waste recycling had been anticipated since 2021, and during that period it was considered that the most cost-effective method of collecting waste following the introduction of the food waste recycling would be a 1-2-3 service. This would mean that we would collect food waste on a weekly basis, dry mixed recycling every two weeks and residual waste every three weeks. The rationale for this thinking was that once food was taken out of the residual bins, providing there was a solution for nappy products, there was little, if anything, that would rot or cause smells in the residual bin.

Ricardo were commissioned in early 2023, in advance of the Government announcement, to produce a report setting out the various options and costs for the introduction of a food waste collection. This report sets out that a 1-2-3 collection is the lowest cost solution only when there is no provision for the collection of absorbent hygiene products (AHP) – commonly known as nappies.

It is considered that for residents who use nappies (for both children and older people) a three weekly collection would be unacceptable. The main reason for this is the smell and the second is around the capacity of our bins to accommodate these for a three-weekly period. If we were to introduce a weekly AHP collection service, the cost would increase by an estimated £1.1m per annum.

Furthermore, the Government has mandated that Local Authorities collect residual waste no less frequently than fortnightly. They have advised that this minimum standard provides a backstop, not a recommendation. If the Council takes the decision to go against government recommendations and introduce a three weekly residual waste collection, we will likely not be eligible to receive any government new burdens funding for the initial capital and ongoing revenue costs. This will have a significant impact on Council funds which would have to be found from our own budget.

It is hoped that in the future, the Government will change its stance on collection frequency once food waste collections are embedded. It is anticipated that one of

the impacts of food waste recycling will be that the amount of food that is wasted will reduce. When people see what they are throwing away, it is hoped that people will change their shopping, cooking and eating behaviours to waste less and save money. It may be that at a later date it would be appropriate to review frequency collection and introduce a 1-2-3 service.

It is therefore recommended that Horsham District Council introduces a 1-2-2 service. This would be a weekly food waste service, and two weekly dry mixed recycling and residual waste collections.

The estimates from Ricardo suggest that a 1-2-3 service would increase our recycling rate from 51.6% to 71% and a 1-2-2 service would increase it to 69%. Both of these figures would put Horsham District in the top performers nationally.

3.2 Vehicle Procurement

The Ricardo report modelled 15 tonne vehicles and 7.5 tonne vehicles for food waste collections. Whilst 7.5 tonne vehicles are cheaper, we would require an additional vehicle, driver and loader. Given the Council's local knowledge and experience of running collection services in the Horsham District there are also concerns that using 7.5t vehicle we would not be able to accommodate two tip runs and required vehicle cleaning into the driver's working hours.

We will need to purchase 11 frontline vehicles (9 x 15t and 2 x 7.5t) plus 3 spare vehicles to cover repairs, servicing and maintenance (2 x 15t and 1 x 7.5t).

12t vehicles are also being considered instead of 15t as the amount of waste they'll take is similar. 7.5t vehicles will be used for the rural rounds as they don't need to take so much weight but need to travel further distances in narrow lanes.

3.3 Container Procurement

A key element of procurement will be the purchase of the caddies that will be used to place food waste in. We will work in partnership with the West Sussex Waste Partnership (WSWP) on the procurement of caddies. This will include a 5 litre kitchen caddie for residents to store inside their homes as well as a 23 litre caddie for residents to leave their food waste out for collection.

Communal properties will also require 140 litre bins to store food waste in bin stores as well as 5 litre caddies for the residents.

A survey of all the flats and bin stores in the district will need to be commissioned so we can establish how many 140 litre wheeled bins will be required.

We also need to source a storage facility for the caddies and communal 140 litre bins before and during delivery and a company who will deliver to each household.

There will be circa 55,000 properties to deliver the two caddies, liners, and a leaflet to. Kitchen caddies, and communal 140 litre wheelie bins with leaflets will be delivered to circa 10,000 flats, and signs will be installed in bin stores.

3.4 Depot size constraints

The Hop Oast depot does not currently have the parking capacity to accommodate the additional vehicles we will require. Officers are working with the property team and West Sussex County Council on a separate project to source the additional space required. This will come at an additional cost which has not been included in the Ricardo modelling. Defra has not confirmed if this will be included as part of the new burdens funding, but we will apply for additional funding once we know costs. Reports will be developed for consideration on this matter at the appropriate time.

3.5 Round rerouting

The introduction of a food waste service will also prompt a need for a review of the collection rounds to ensure we have the most efficient rounds for all our collection services. This includes refuse, recycling and garden waste in order to balance the rounds to work more efficiently. This is a separate project to be undertaken and will also be at an additional cost, which is not included in the Ricardo modelling.

3.6 Recruitment

There will need to be a recruitment drive to recruit drivers and loaders. Consideration will need to be given to the fact that all District and Boroughs in the local area will be recruiting and so there will be a competition for staff. Time and resource will also need to be given to inducting and training new staff.

There may also be a need to recruit temporary staff to include a recycling engagement officer to assist with the successful roll out of the food waste collections. The customer contact centre may also need temporary staff to cover the predicted rise in queries from residents.

3.7 Service mobilisation

An internal project manager has been appointed and the service mobilisation will be managed with regular communications, meetings and project plans.

A detailed project plan will be required to manage the various components of this roll out and to ensure all departments are working alongside each other. There needs to be an in depth understanding of the risks involved and a proactive and whole Council approach to manage the roll out to ensure its as smooth as possible. Consideration also needs to be given to a phased roll out i.e., one phase per month over five phases to help manage a smooth service delivery.

3.8 Communications

A service change communication strategy will be developed, and we will work with the WSWP to ensure consistent and easy to understand material.

4 Next Steps

4.1 Vehicle Procurement

To work with the procurement team to source and purchase suitable vehicles.

Container Procurement

To complete the flats project to establish the type and quantity of containers which are required for flats. To work with the procurement team to source and purchase suitable containers.

Depot size constraints

To work with the property team to source depot space to accommodate the new vehicles and establish costs that will be associated with this.

Round rerouting

To source software through a company which specialises in this specific technology and establish costs which are associated with this and set a project plan to implement.

We are not using our in-house systems due to the complexity of routing the different rounds and material flows and the capacity our inhouse team have.

Recruitment

To work with HR and communications to develop a strategy to recruit the necessary staff.

Service mobilisation

To work with the project manager to establish a mobilisation plan and detailed implementation strategy.

Communications

To continue work with WSWP and our internal communications team to establish an effective Communications Strategy to engage and inform residents.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 A Members forum took place on 22 February 2024 which was open to all Councillors. Ricardo presented to all Cabinet members. Members were supportive of the need to keep fortnightly residual waste collections to comply with government standards set and due to the small cost difference.

A discussion will also take place at the Environmental Health, Recycling & Waste PDAG on 14 March 2024 and the outcome will be reported verbally to the Cabinet meeting.

- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer and the Director of Resources were both consulted to ensure legal and financial probity.
- 5.3 There is a working group with West Sussex Waste Partnership to work with each other and share ideas and plans for the implementation of weekly food waste collections. These will be ongoing up to and beyond the roll out of collections.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 Do nothing – not recommended. Although the consequence of not delivering the project by 31 March 2026 is currently unknown, the requirement for separate food waste collections is a statutory requirement.
- 6.2 Accelerate delivery to commence service prior to 31 March 2026 – not recommended. This option is unrealistic considering the known market constraints.
- 6.3 Change residual collections to three weekly – not recommended due to the potential backlash from residents when recycling capture rates only change by 1.8% and we will risk not receiving any further government funding due to their current stipulation to remain weekly or fortnightly as a maximum for residual waste collections.

7 Resource Consequences

7.1 Project delivery costs

Capital funding allocations have been released by DEFRA and should be received by 31 March 2024. HDC will receive £1,486,27, which has been calculated by DEFRA using a central formula to cover vehicle and caddy purchases plus containers for communal properties. However as detailed below, it falls a long way short of the expenditure we will incur.

Cost	£ Required	Source	To fund
Capital expenditure one off.	£2,617,000	New Burdens Funding from Government £1,486,271 £1,130,729 unfunded.	Vehicles including spares. In-cab tablets and software. Caddies – Kitchen and Kerbside. Communal bin store containers
Transition revenue costs – All estimated and spread over 2024/25 (£25,000) and 2025/26 (£310,000).	£335,000	New burdens funding may be available in 2024/25 (to be confirmed) otherwise funded through the Council's earmarked food waste	Route planning Communications Container roll out Temporary staffing

		implementation reserve	
One-off capital cost – depot expansion / additional vehicle parking	TBC.	Unknown. Application for New Burdens funding or unfunded.	Additional parking space is required for the new food waste vehicles, options are currently being explored.

The cost of depot expansion and / or additional vehicle parking is currently being explored and is unknown. Should this be required, this will have a further capital impact, which may be unfunded.

7.2 Impact on the 2025/26 revenue budget and on going costs:

Cost	£ Required	Source	To fund
Annual revenue From 2025/26	£1,800,000	Ongoing revenue budget to come from additional new burdens funding and / or council revenue budget. This will be included in the budget setting programme for 2025/26.	Vehicle Maintenance and fuel. Permanent staff to include drivers, loaders, additional supervisor and additional workshop fitter. Ongoing communications. Container stock.

As the capital allocations have shown, there is a strong likelihood that ongoing new burdens revenue funding will not cover all our costs. Note this is already an assumption in our Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Note also that a revenue saving of approximately £100,000 for a 1-2-3 service would be significantly outweighed by the loss of any capital and revenue funding from Government.

7.3

Cost	£ Required	Source	To fund
2025/26 Revenue cost just for year 1 to hire a vehicle plus driver and loader	£192,000	To come from new burdens funding and council budget. This will be included in the budget setting programme for 2025/26.	1 x hire vehicle 1 x driver and 1 x loader

7.4 HR consequences – we will need to employ the following staff which will mean increasing the establishment during 2025/26:

- HGV Drivers x 14 to include 3 pool staff
- Loader x 14 to include 3 pool staff
- Service Delivery Manager x 1 to manage additional staff
- Workshop Fitter x 2 to service and repair 14 new vehicles
- Recycling Education Officer (temporary post to assist with project roll out)

8 Legal Considerations and Implications

- 8.1 The legal implications have been incorporated into this report. Otherwise, the requirements relating to the collection of waste are contained in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended by the Environment Act 2021.

9 Risk Assessment

9.1 Key risks

Risk	Action to reduce risk
The cost of the projects may increase	<p>Working closely with procurement to ensure we get best value.</p> <p>Working with West Sussex Waste Partnership (WSWP) to ensure we get best value.</p> <p>Track costs with regular reports produced to monitor spend.</p> <p>Ensure finance is included on project board.</p>
Project delay – it is possible that there will be a delay to the project for several reasons such as vehicle or caddy delivery delays.	<p>Ensure the project team is running and keeping on track with various projects.</p> <p>Seek early Cabinet and Council approval.</p> <p>Use established procurement frameworks and work closely with procurement.</p> <p>Ensure all stakeholders are kept updated and engaged.</p>
Poor service quality which may lead to reduced participation rates which will impact on recycling rates and reputation.	<p>Devise an effective communication strategy working with WSWP.</p> <p>Ensure training is delivered on time and effectively.</p> <p>Ensure project team works closely together and all stakeholders are engaged.</p> <p>Ensure rerouting is effective.</p>

<p>Unable to recruit in drivers and loaders to crew the 11 rounds required. All the other neighbouring authorities will also be recruiting staff at the same time meaning there will be increased competition.</p>	<p>Work with HR to attract drivers and loaders to Horsham.</p>
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10 Procurement implications

- 10.1 The Council will comply with all necessary Procurement Regulations and the Council's Procurement Code. The procurement processes will be overseen by the Council's Senior Procurement Manager and Senior Solicitor ensuring compliance.
- 10.2 Our Senior Procurement Officer has been advised of the need to deliver the food waste weekly service and the procurement implications this has on the team. He has attended project meetings and will start working on the procurement process when we have approval.

11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 11.1 An Equality analysis has been undertaken to ascertain the potential impact on staff, service users, vulnerable groups and wider communities' groups that share protected characteristics and the Council will take actions to mitigate any negative impact as each project is developed and implemented.
- 11.2 An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on 28 February 2024 and will be reviewed on 28 February 2027.

12 Environmental Implications

- 12.1 Food waste will be diverted from the residual waste stream and recycled, leading to waste minimisation.
- 12.2 The new service will lead to an increased carbon impact because of the extra vehicles we need to run. There will be an increase of 80 t CO₂ eq per annum compared to our current service. This may be mitigated by the anaerobic digestion of the food waste, which is the responsibility of the disposal authority, West Sussex County Council. This will produce renewable energy and can be used to add nutrients to agricultural land as an end product.
- 12.3 The Council's recycling rate will increase by approximately 17.3% from 51.6% (2022/23) to 69%.

- 12.4 There will be a reduction in residual waste of 112kg (kilograms per household per year)
- 12.5 There will be a weekly food waste yield of 113kg/hh/yr (kilograms per household per year)

13 Other Considerations

- 13.1 The procurement will ensure GDPR and data protection processes are in place and compliant with all relevant legislation.
- 13.2 Crime and disorder incidents are unlikely to occur but do need to be taken into consideration for potential vehicle or infrastructure vandalism. Monitoring processes are in place to deter this behaviour.