

PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLES AND CONTAINERS FOR WEEKLY FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

4.0 Overview and Scrutiny Comments

4.2 The Panel discussed the Procurement of Vehicles and Containers for Weekly Food Waste Collection Service report at its meeting on 6th February 2025.

4.3 Councillor Bywater expressed concern that the procurement costs of the vehicles and caddies may increase as the demand would be likely to increase due to demand. The Panel heard that the costs within the report were current but that it was anticipated that they would fluctuate with demand as the implementation date drew nearer. The Panel were assured that the Council's procurement team were already briefed and involved to ensure that the project could proceed as soon as practicable. Councillor Alban identified a shortfall in the funding of the capital investment, the Panel heard that these were indicative costs and that there would be an aim to keep the project within the funding parameters. It was also confirmed that it was hoped that any shortfall would be covered by further funding opportunities. Councillors Criswell and Bywater expressed further concern that it appeared that operational costs for the service had not yet been established and in turn would thereby impact the Council's finances. Following a debate by the Panel, it was established that there would be a desire to see further details on the financial aspects of the project to be brought back to the Panel. It was proposed by Councillor Alban to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this was seconded by Councillor Criswell and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

2) to produce a report detailing the revenue and capital costs of the project and submit this to the democratic cycle of meetings.

4.4 Councillor Hunt expressed concern over the anticipated funding from DEFRA which had not yet been confirmed. The Panel heard that the collection project was still in its infancy with the capital costs having been identified, the Panel were assured that communications were ongoing with DEFRA to establish long term funding for the scheme. The Panel were further assured that the Council were a member of the RECAP partnership and as such were working with neighbouring authorities to move forward. It was proposed by Councillor Hunt to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this was seconded by Councillor Kerr and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

3) to encourage Cabinet to write to the DEFRA Secretary to confirm the revenue funding as soon as practicable.

- 4.5 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor McAdam, that the anaerobic digestion of the waste created energy generation and also created an end product which could be used as a fertiliser. The Panel also heard that the food waste collection should be as organic as possible, and that no plastics should be placed within the caddies.
- 4.6 In response to questions from Councillor Tevlin, it was hoped that the weekly food waste collection would result in a reduction of waste within the grey bins but that existing collection arrangements would not be affected. Councillor Hassall expressed concern that the waste from the grey bins required a certain amount of organic matter to aid its disposal process. The Panel heard that this was expected to change but that this was an issue faced nationwide and the disposal methods would be adjusted accordingly.
- 4.7 Following a question from Councillor Hunt, the Panel heard that a preferred supplier had been identified to ensure that the caddies would be British made, 100% recyclable and also supporting a local workforce.
- 4.8 It was confirmed to the Panel, following a question from Councillor Alban, that additional refuse drivers would be recruited to fulfil the collections and that these drivers would include HGV as well giving current staff the opportunity to train as an HGV driver. The Panel heard that further detail would be sought relating to the retention of drivers who had received HGV training and brought back to the Panel.
- 4.9 In response to a question from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that the Waste Minimisation Team were already in communication with property management companies and residents associations in properties with communal bins to ensure minimal cross contamination and that this would continue with the additional collections.
- 4.10 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Shaw, that the initial purchase of the caddies included sufficient additional caddies for new properties within the district still currently under construction.
- 4.11 Following a further question from Councillor Shaw, it was confirmed that contract negotiations with Cambridgeshire County Council as the disposal authority, were ongoing to ensure that collections would remain unaffected after 2027 when the current contract was due to end.
- 4.12 In response to a question from Councillor Lowe, regarding the disposal of food waste in the existing green bins should that service not be chargeable, the Panel heard that it would be mandatory to have a separate food waste disposal

from 2026, and that the decomposition of the food waste through anaerobic digestion was better for the environment than within the green waste.

4.13 It was suggested by Councillor Hassall that opportunities to collect used vegetable oil from the kerbside in line with the food waste collections should be investigated in line with investigating opportunities with the Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil Fuel Trial.

4.14 Following questions from Councillors Tevlin and McAdam, the Panel heard that a robust communications plan would be developed to ensure resident awareness and compliance. It was also confirmed, following a question from Councillor Lowe, that residents who are already registered for an assisted collection would have an assisted collection for the food waste caddies. It was suggested by the Executive Councillor that a working group comprised of members of the Panel be created to look at the implementation and creation of a communications Plan. It was proposed by Councillor Hunt to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this was seconded by Councillor Kerr and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

4) to create a Food Waste Collection Service Working Group to help inform the development of the communications plan to support the scheme.

4.15 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision upon the recommendations within the report, and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;

2) to produce a report detailing the revenue and capital costs of the project and submit this to the democratic cycle of meetings;

3) to encourage Cabinet to write to the DEFRA Secretary to confirm the revenue funding as soon as practicable; and

4) to create a Food Waste Collection Service Working Group to help inform the development of the communications plan to support the scheme.