

REPORT TITLE: FUTURE OF WASTE AND RECYCLING; NEW FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS AND RECYCLING SERVICE.

20 NOVEMBER 2024

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Kelsie Learney Cabinet Member for Climate Change

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The council is committed to tackling the climate emergency and creating a greener district. The proposals detailed in this report will provide an opportunity for the council to significantly increase its recycling, reduce waste and improve its carbon performance, while adhering to the national timetable set by Government under its Simpler Recycling programme.

This report sets out the necessary next steps to establish a new food waste collection and recycling service on a six-month phased rollout for residential properties across the district from October 2025 to ensure that it will be fully operational ahead of the Government's deadline of 31 March 2026.

The introduction of food waste recycling has the potential to reduce the district's carbon footprint by c 1,900 tonnes of CO₂e per year by recycling this waste to generate clean green energy and nutrient dense soil improver. Roughly one third of the residual (black bin) household waste is food waste that could be recycled into useful byproducts. In real terms this means that the introduction of food waste recycling could see the city council achieving a 50% recycling rate for the first time and significantly reducing the overall amount of waste produced.

It is proposed that the new food waste collection and recycling service is incorporated into the existing waste collection service operated by Biffa, the Council's current waste collection contractor.

RECOMMENDATIONS, that Cabinet:

1. Agree to implement a new food waste collection and recycling service in line with the requirements of Simpler Recycling through the Council's contractor, Biffa, at a forecast cost of £1.611m per annum.
2. Approve additional baseline revenue budget of £0.211m per annum for the ongoing cost of the food waste service, in addition to the £1.4m previously agreed in February 2024 (CAB3444 refers).
3. Agree to start collecting food waste from October 2025 on a phased roll out basis at a total forecast cost in 25/26 of £457k. An additional one-off budget of £317k is required in 25/26 to be funded by the major investment reserve.
4. Agree the additional baseline budget of £105k per annum from 25/26 for the relocation of the grounds maintenance contractor to enable Biffa full use of the depot at Barfield Close from which to operate the new food waste service. A part year supplementary budget of £50k is required for 24/25 to enable the new lease to start in December 2024.
5. Agree to vary the contract with the Council's contractor, Biffa, to include the new food waste collection service.
6. Agree to increase the capital budget for this project by £159k, to be funded by borrowing, to allow for the additional costs, outlined in Appendix 1.
7. Agree to procure the required bins and caddies with associated branding necessary to start food waste collections, with authority delegated to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change to agree assessment criteria and conclude the process, including use of an approved framework, in line with the forecast cost of £429k as outlined in Appendix 1, from this project's approved capital allocation in 25/26.
8. Authority to incur expenditure of up to £853k for identified revenue costs and up to £604k for identified capital costs set out in Appendix 1, (Stage 1 – Revenue and Stage 1 – Capital).
9. Authority to agree the detail of the new food waste service will be delegated to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District

1.2 Waste management and recycling is a key part of tackling the climate emergency and creating a greener district. Winchester City Council has ambitions to significantly increase its recycling, reduce waste and improve its carbon performance, which will support the ambitions in the Council Plan of becoming greener faster.

1.3 The Environment Act 2021 requires a minimum range of materials to be recycled, including food waste. As the provisions of the Act come into force, this will increase the range of materials that can be recycled in Winchester and will enable residents and businesses to reduce the amount of waste each household produces, which in turn will be better for the environment.

1.4 Increased recycling will reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill or incineration, thereby reducing carbon emissions. Stopping waste from decomposing in a landfill can reduce harmful gases, such as methane from food waste, being created and released into the atmosphere. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas and this action to reduce its production will benefit the environment. Likewise, reuse of recycled materials will reduce the need for carbon intensive raw material extraction and conserve limited resources.

1.5 Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a replacement for diesel fuel in the waste and recycling fleet has been introduced from May 2024. This is an interim solution while other net zero solutions are explored. From verified sustainable sources, HVO offers up to 94% reduction in carbon emissions and up to 50% reduction in particulates. It contributes to the circular economy and avoids extraction and combustion of fossil fuels. Operating all 17 existing frontline waste and recycling vehicles in this way will result in a reduction of 683 tCO_{2e} per year, reducing the council's current carbon footprint by an estimated 20%.

1.6 Removing the food waste currently mixed in with resident's residual waste, and recycling it, could save the district circa 1,900 tonnes of CO_{2e} per year. This demonstrates the environmental benefit of introducing food waste recycling as soon as possible to the district. In real terms this means that the introduction of food waste recycling could see the city council getting to 50% recycling rate for the first time and significantly reducing the overall amount of waste produced.

1.7 Vibrant Local Economy

1.8 Simpler Recycling and Government initiatives, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will introduce changes to businesses that have to be implemented in a limited window of time. There is little information available to businesses at this time, but the

council will offer support and information as it is available. Businesses are likely to need support and education to help achieve compliance.

1.9 Living Well

1.10 The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have reported that in 2021/22, households in the UK threw away 4.7 million tonnes of edible food valued at £17 Billion, equivalent to 12% of the food we purchase. A UK household wastes on average the equivalent of eight meals a weekⁱ.

1.11 Introducing a collection of food waste separate to residual (black bin) waste, will allow our residents to quantify the amount of food waste they produce. It will raise awareness of the benefits of buying less (saving money) and using more, contributing to an overall reduction in waste, a reduction in residual black bin refuse and an increase in recycling rates.

1.12 Your Services, Your Voice

1.13 The views of residents are important as, alongside the council's own ambitions of improving recycling for residents and reducing waste, the Council must put in place a new waste and recycling service to meet changes in national legislation and changes in disposal arrangements by Hampshire County Council. A public consultation survey was undertaken in autumn 2023 to seek resident views on recycling to help inform the new waste strategy. This was previously reported to Cabinet in February 2024 (CAB3439 refers).

1.14 The council is aware that communal properties may find it harder to participate in the new food waste recycling service due to the unique challenges they face. To understand this better, the council is currently surveying communal bin stores across the district to identify issues that may need addressing to enable residents to recycle more. If issues are identified, the council will engage directly with the residents, owners and managers of those properties to work together to find the best solution for their needs.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The new food waste recycling service will require depot space from which to operate. The council proposes relocating the current grounds maintenance contractor to a separate depot to make space within the current waste depot. The gross cost of this new depot space is £155k per annum and it will add a baseline cost of £105k per annum to the annual food waste service delivery cost. This cost will be linked to the food waste service until the grounds maintenance contract is re-tendered in 2027. Additional capital and revenue costs will be incurred, and full details of this proposal can be found at section 12 below and detailed in the spending plan at Appendix 1. The additional costs related to depot space are summarised below:

Additional costs	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
	000's	000's	000's	000's
Ongoing Revenue Costs	50	105	105	67
One-off Capital Costs	142	0	0	0
One-off Revenue Costs	26	0	0	0

- 2.2 The additional revenue costs for depot space can be covered within the existing revenue budget allocated to the project for the new food waste service, however, the additional capital costs, along with increased costs identified in the spending plan and at 2.7 and 15.12 below, will require a total capital budget growth of £159k.
- 2.3 It is recommended to introduce a phased rollout of the new food waste collections, to commence in October 2025. Full details of the background to this recommendation are provided in section 13 below. Government has confirmed that funding of ongoing service costs through New Burdens funding will only be made available from 1st April 2026. Starting the service on a phased basis prior to this date will cost an additional £317k for the six months from October 2025 to the end of March 2026.

Cost of phased rollout prior to April 2026	Cost in 000's
Total cost over 6 months	457
Less budget already allocated	-140
Total additional cost over 6 months	£317

- 2.4 Once the new food waste service is fully implemented, the forecast 2026/27 cost of running this service will be £1.61m. This amount will be subject to indexation in line with the contract terms every year in February. The table at 2.6 demonstrates the increase in forecast costs for 26/27 compared to the initial budget estimate made in February 2024.
- 2.5 Based on the information provided by DEFRA, it is anticipated that a proportion of the transitional and ongoing operational costs outlined below should be covered by New Burdens Funding. It is estimated that 80% of reasonable costs will be covered. The council is expecting an indication of its transitional funding allocation to be received by the end of 2024.
- 2.6 The council will require an additional £130k to the existing baseline budget for the food waste service from 26/27. If New Burdens Funding is provided at the anticipated level, this would reduce the cost by circa £104k per annum. The table below sets out the costs including the anticipated funding, as well as the increase in baseline cost due to the new depot.

Food Waste Recycling Service 2026/27 (£000)	Existing Budget	Latest Forecast	Budget Variance
Revenue			
Annual running costs*	1,330	1,429	99
Corporate Inflation Estimates	81	94	13
HVO estimate	70	70	0
Communal bin liners	0	18	18
Forecast Gross Costs	1,481	1,611	130
Forecast Govt. Funding @ 80%	-1,185	-1,289	-104
Forecast Net Operating Costs	296	322	26
Incremental cost of new depot	0	105	105
Forecast Total Net Costs	296	427	131

* based on estimated properties of 60,500 as at 1 April 2026, plus 100 per month to March 2027

- 2.7 Project implementation costs have been identified in the Project Spending Plan at Appendix 1. These are one-off (or time limited) implementation related costs such as project management, communications to support the rollout of new services and legal costs. Capital costs have increased since the budget was created in February 2024. This is due, in part, to the need for additional depot space and an increase in cost for caddies and bins, likely because of increasing demand for these products. This has resulted in a request for an additional £159k of capital funding to be funded by prudential borrowing at an estimated additional cost of £21,000 per annum for 10 years being Minimum Revenue Provision (equivalent to principal repayment) and estimated interest. In total, £559,000 of the capital expenditure will be funded by prudential borrowing (circa £74,000 per annum MRP and interest). A summary of the capital budget change is provided below:

Stage 1 Capital costs in £000's	Existing Budget	Latest forecast	Budget variance
Caddies and Communal Bins	415	429	14
Charging Infrastructure for electric RCV	30	33	3
Additional one-off depot costs			
Fitout costs for the Winnall site	0	42	42
Oil Interceptor at the Winnall site	0	50	50
Refurbishment of office to welfare space	0	50	50
Additional capital budget required			159

- 2.8 The council had expected capital funding for the additional depot space required to run the food waste service to be covered under New Burdens funding, however, DEFRA have indicated that this will not be provided. The council has been advised to make the case for capital expenses related to depot provision to DEFRA, who may be willing to cover reasonable costs on a case-by-case basis. The project team have submitted these costs to DEFRA and await a response.

- 2.9 The revenue expenditure outlined in the spending plan at Appendix 1 has been summarised in the table below. It is recommended to agree that the remaining unallocated revenue budget at the end of stage 1 be carried forward to deliver stage 2. Please note that although New Burdens funding is expected to cover reasonable transitional costs, DEFRA have not defined what these will be and have not yet provided an indication of the relevant amounts. To avoid any uncertainty, no funding has been included in the costs outlined below and any funding that is received will be used to offset these costs.

Revenue cost in £000's	Existing Budget	Latest forecast	Remaining Unallocated Budget
Stage 1 – food waste implementation to March 2026	1500	853	647
Stage 2 – additional plastics recycling to March 2028	Carried forward 647	321	326

- 2.10 [Extended Producer Responsibility](#) (EPR) payments for packaging will be provided to local authorities, where packaging producers are made responsible for the costs of collecting and managing packaging waste through efficient and effective services. Initial estimates are that local authorities in England will collectively receive payments totalling in the region of £900 million per annum for managing packaging waste. Details of funding have not yet been released but are expected in November 2024.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Environment Act 2021 requires a minimum set of materials to be collected separately from households for recycling. The core recyclables include glass bottles and containers, paper and card, metals, plastic bottles, plastic pots, tubs and trays, food and drink cartons, and food waste. These must be collected for recycling by 31 March 2026. Plastic film will be introduced in 2027.
- 3.2 All households and property types, including communal properties, and flats above shops will need to have access to the food waste service and be able to present the core recyclable materials for collection. The project will need to consider the best way to deliver these new services to everyone.
- 3.3 Details were confirmed in the 'Simpler Recycling' announcement of 21 October 2023 and the Government expressed an intention to introduce an exemption to enable the co-collection of dry mixed recyclables (Co-mingled), which has been confirmed in a DEFRA statement in May 2024.
- 3.4 Changes to the existing collection service proposed in this report can be accommodated via contract variations to the existing waste collection contract with Biffa Waste Services Limited. External legal advice has been sought,

which confirms that variations to introduce a separate food waste collection and additional recycling materials may be made under the terms of the existing contract and are compliant with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

- 3.5 All procurement activities undertaken by the council will be conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the new Procurement Act 2023 (which is currently due to come into force in early 2025) and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules as relevant. Further legal support will be sought prior to any contract variations being agreed.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A core project management team has been established to maintain the project within the bounds of the agreed time, scope, and budget. Financial resources have been allocated to the project and recruitment of an additional communications officer on 0.5 FTE has been completed. Further resource, such as Recycling Engagement Officers to support the education campaign and engagement with communities in areas with lower recycling rates, have been identified with associated costs included in the project spending plan submitted at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 There has been a delay to decision making about the disposal infrastructure that Hampshire County Council must build to allow recycling of pots, tubs, trays and cartons in line with Simpler Recycling by March 2026. This delay is likely to lengthen the project delivery timeframe by at least 1 year to 2027 and has been outlined in the spending plan at Appendix 1, 'Stage 2 - Revenue' section.
- 4.3 A continued commitment of time and effort will be required to run an effective service post-implementation and maintain a high standard of communications with residents to get the best recycling rates possible.
- 4.4 Additional operational staff to run the service and administrative staff to implement the changes to recycling collections will be required over the next few years. The operational staff will be employed by the Council's collection service contractor Biffa.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Biffa operates the Council's current waste and recycling service out of the Barfield Close Depot together with ID Verde (IDV) for the grounds' maintenance service. The depot is at capacity and does not have space to operate any new services, nor accommodate the vehicles, bins and crews that a new service would require.
- 5.2 This paper sets out the business justification for the proposal to relocate IDV to their own depot to allow Biffa the full operational use of the Barfield Close Depot so that all requirements for waste and recycling as set out in 'Simpler

Recycling' can be accommodated, and importantly, the new food waste service can begin as intended in October 2025 from that location.

- 5.3 Subject to Cabinet approval of this proposal, the council proposes to enter into a new lease of a unit in Moorside Road Winchester of suitable premises in which to relocate ID Verde. The Council will then enter into a new sublease which will be agreed between IDV and the council for the new site in Moorside Road. When the new sub-lease to ID Verde is completed, ID Verde will surrender their current sublease with Biffa back to Biffa, which will allow Biffa to use the space previously used by ID Verde. This is accounted for in the project programme.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Committee is due to consider this report at its meeting on 12 November 2024, after this report has been dispatched. Any matters that the Scrutiny Committee wishes to raise or asks the Cabinet to note before making their decision will be reported and considered fully at the Cabinet meeting on 20 November 2024.
- 6.2 A Member's briefing was held on 4th November 2024 to update Members on the wider changes to waste management and the progress of the Future of Waste Project to implement the new food waste recycling service required by Simpler Recycling. Members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the contents of this report and seek clarity on the proposals.
- 6.3 A public consultation survey was undertaken in Autumn 2023 to seek resident views on recycling to help inform the new waste strategy. This was previously reported to Cabinet in February 2024 (CAB3439 refers). 8470 responses were received which have helped inform the development of the new food waste service.
- 6.4 A comprehensive communications & engagement strategy will be developed to support the introduction and roll out of the new food waste service required by Simpler Recycling. An outline of this is presented in section 16 below. The council's strategies aim to help residents to produce less waste, which could result in households saving money, improving recycling rates and reducing residual waste. It will be important to maintain this educational and encouragement work based on the waste hierarchy 'reduce, reuse, recycle' philosophy, which will require additional staff resources. These requirements are included in the spending plan at Appendix 1.
- 6.5 New food waste rounds will be communicated to residents through a variety of channels and the council will make every effort to implement a digital first strategy to support the rollout by directing residents to find relevant information and make use of existing facilities on the council's website such as the 'bin look up' function and weekly bin reminder emails.
- 6.6 The new food waste service must be made available to all households in the district. This includes communal properties, such as purpose-built student

accommodation, residential blocks of flats, Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs), temporary housing and flats above shops. Communal properties may find it harder to make the required changes due to the unique challenges that they face.

- 6.7 To understand this better, the council is currently surveying communal bin stores across the district. This will identify issues such as lack of space or poorly designed bin stores that may need addressing to enable residents to recycle more. The council will set up activities to enable direct engagement with the residents, owners and managers of those properties to work together to find the best solution for their needs.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Winchester City Council has an opportunity to improve its waste and recycling collections and performance and, by doing so, to reduce its impact on climate change. Any changes will consider current viable environmental benefits and impacts as part of the process.
- 7.2 There is a national requirement to increase the range of dry recycling materials collected from households and to collect food waste separately. This change will benefit the environment by reducing the quantity of waste sent to landfill and Energy from Waste.
- 7.3 The council is using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in its general collection fleet as this is a low carbon fuel, as an interim solution while full electrification is considered. The new food waste vehicles will likewise be run on HVO as an interim low carbon solution. From verified sustainable sources, HVO offers up to 94% reduction in carbon emissions and up to 50% reduction in particulates. It contributes to the circular economy and avoids extraction and combustion of fossil fuels. Operating all frontline waste, recycling, and food waste vehicles in this way would result in a reduction of 905 tonnes of CO₂e per year. Removing food waste from the residual waste stream and recycling it saves an estimated additional 1,900 tonnes CO₂e per year.
- 7.4 To prepare for the changes to recycling collections, including food waste, and to rebalance routes following the growth of new housing in the district, our service provider, Biffa, has completed a re-route of all waste and recycling collections. The re-route has resulted in a reduction in distances travelled equalling 35,000 miles per year, with new routes optimised for efficiency and the reduced mileage providing an additional carbon saving of circa 13%. To service the re-route, an additional round has been created and this is being operated by the council's first fully electric RCV.
- 7.5 The council has worked with the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) and continues to work with Tetra Tech and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) to understand the electrical supply capacity at the Depot, and the work required to enable a full fleet of electric vehicles to be accommodated in future.

7.6 Additionally, the council continues to explore all available options for a zero-carbon waste & recycling service, including a review of green hydrogen powered electric vehicles as a potential future consideration. Once further investigation has been completed, Officers will submit findings to Cabinet for consideration of the best solution to fully decarbonise the waste and recycling service.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the project in July 2023 covering the consultation and engagement required for any changes to the waste and recycling service (CAB3409 refers).

8.2 A further Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the implementation of the new food waste recycling collections and is available at Appendix 2.

8.3 The Assessment concludes that mitigation to address potential equality impacts have been built-in to the main waste and recycling service provision and these arrangements, such as assisted collections for residents who require them, will continue to be delivered within the new food waste collection service.

8.4 Additional mitigation has been identified and incorporated into project delivery plans, such as using visual communications as the main method to depict how to recycle food waste to overcome language difficulties and recommending a light-coloured kerbside caddy to reduce any trip hazard concerns.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 Not required for the decisions in this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 There is a full project risk register which is a working document and will be reviewed and updated throughout the project life cycle as part of the project governance.

10.2 Risks and associated mitigation are set out below.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	Proposed Government funding to support required changes will provide some mitigation to the increased costs of new requirements.	Introducing a new separate food waste collection will have positive environmental benefits.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
	<p>Mitigation of these issues will be achieved by aligning decision making on implementation with confirmation of Government funding and better understanding of financial exposure.</p> <p>There is a risk of the Council being unable to determine value for money where the new service is to be implemented as a variation to an existing contract.</p> <p>To mitigate against this, the Council will review the evidence of supplier costs, benchmark the new service cost proposal against the current contract costs and / or those declared by other local authorities and procure the services of a waste management specialist to evaluate the proposed options and determine the best value (financial, social, and environmental) options.</p>	<p>Support funding from the Government will give the council a cost-effective opportunity to introduce positive changes to its household collections.</p>
<p>Exposure to challenge</p>	<p>External legal advice has been commissioned to help steer the process to ensure it is robust.</p> <p>Introducing a new food waste recycling service is a government requirement under Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>Engagement with residents through a resident's survey has been undertaken at an early stage of developing the new waste strategy for households. Consultation and engagement will continue to be undertaken as the strategy is</p>	<p>Good engagement and communication with residents will ensure that opportunities as well as issues are identified, and actions taken. Comms will involve education on how and why we should recycle as well as tips to reduce waste and save money.</p>

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
	developed and agreed to understand residents' needs and issues with any changes to the waste and recycling collections system.	
Innovation		<p>Use of HVO fuel for the current waste collection vehicles is now underway.</p> <p>The council is exploring opportunities to decarbonise the waste and recycling service further in line with the lifespan of the existing vehicles.</p>
Future HVO supply and accreditation	All suppliers must be ISCC and RFAS accredited as a minimum to ensure a genuinely sustainable product. Confirm that no palm oil sources have been used before purchase. Monitor the HVO market and confirm guarantee of supply for full duration of contract before purchase.	As accreditation improves, ensure our suppliers provide the best assurance available.
Reputation	<p>Waste and recycling collections affect every resident. Appropriate engagement with residents and members is being factored into the project timeline at an early stage to be considered in development of the service delivery model.</p> <p>Engagement with residents will seek to identify key issues which will help to shape the new service.</p> <p>Undertaking the process set out in the report will contribute towards compliance with national and regional requirements.</p>	Improving carbon and recycling performance is a key aim of this project. Improving carbon and recycling performance would have a positive impact on reputation.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Achievement of outcome	The council has a statutory duty to deliver a new waste management service and has committed resources to do so. This project will develop and deploy a collection system that considers environmental benefits, affordability, customer needs, and statutory requirements.	With the opportunity of external funding, it allows an opportunity to review current collection arrangements with the intent to improve the service and most importantly, recycling rates.
Property	<p>Additional food waste vehicles will need to be stored, requiring more depot space, as well as additional welfare facilities for the new crews.</p> <p>The Council has proposed a solution which provides space for both the grounds maintenance contract and waste & recycling collections to continue to operate. This could allow Biffa to operate the new food waste service from the current depot, subject to Cabinet decision.</p>	This presents an opportunity to uncouple the waste & recycling contract from the grounds maintenance service, allowing these to be reviewed and refined.
Community Support	Consultation and engagement exercises will engage with households and community groups to ensure all views are captured and considered.	Building on previous consultation with residents, the Council aims to arrange focus groups to specifically support rollout to harder to reach properties such as flats above shops and communal properties.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Timescales	<p>Specialist food waste vehicles have a long lead-in time to procure and there will be a very high demand nationally for these vehicles therefore this process is being started as soon possible.</p> <p>This will include active management of this procurement - order acknowledgement, regular progress updates, prompt notification of delays, shortages, and mitigation plans.</p>	<p>Government have provided capital funding which can be used for the purchase of specialist food waste collection vehicles. Working with our waste collection contractor, Biffa, we have identified the right type of vehicles for our district which maximises the operational capacity of the service, ensuring it retains flexibility for future growth of housing in the district.</p>
Project capacity	<p>A core project management team has been established to maintain the project within the bounds of the agreed time, scope, and budget. Financial resources have been allocated to the project and identified in a spending plan submitted to Cabinet in November 2024. Any further resource requirements will be identified with detailed costs submitted to the appropriate decision-making bodies as required.</p>	<p>Opportunities for knowledge transfer into the council will be maximised when external consultancy is required. The core project management team are undertaking training to support their roles, and this knowledge will likewise be transferred into the council through regular liaison with other project managers and those involved in project delivery.</p>

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

12 **Preparing for a Food Waste Collection and Recycling Service**

12.1 **Additional Depot Space to accommodate the new service**

12.2 The Environment Act 2021 and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) 'Simpler Recycling' response of 2023 require that food waste be collected separately from every household in the district for recycling

by 31 March 2026. This then enables the food waste to be recycled into clean green energy.

- 12.3 The council has a long-term contract with its current waste collection and recycling service provider, Biffa, who are very familiar with Winchester and will be able to apply economies of scale through their existing arrangements that an independent supplier would not be able to achieve.
- 12.4 In order to operate the food waste service, Biffa will require additional depot space for the associated new vehicles and staff. The Depot on Barfield Close, which Biffa currently share with the council's grounds maintenance provider *idverde* (IDV), is at capacity and does not have space to accommodate the new food waste service which requires additional vehicles, bins and crews.
- 12.5 The portion of the depot currently operated by IDV is of a sufficient size to accommodate the new food waste service and allow Biffa to run the entire waste and recycling service from one location.
- 12.6 The council is also in a long-term contract with the grounds maintenance contractor, IDV, and is contractually obliged to provide space from which to operate the grounds maintenance contract. Both IDV and Biffa provide services that are legally mandated to comply with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and both services must be allowed to continue to operate unhindered.
- 12.7 To resolve this issue, the council's Estates team have identified an 849m² industrial site with the inclusion of an external yard area in Winnall. Suitable industrial units are not often available in Winchester and this unit is available to let now, making this a rare opportunity. This space is sufficient to provide IDV a suitable depot from which to continue to run the grounds maintenance contract until the contract ends in 2027.
- 12.8 Removing and relocating IDV to the Winnall site could be achieved in 3-6 months making this a good solution in terms of timing and the added benefits early vacation brings, such as freeing the Barfield Close depot to accommodate the new food waste vehicles as soon as they are delivered and providing adequate welfare facilities to the new crews once recruited.
- 12.9 Relocating IDV to their own depot alleviates the conflicting Safe Working Policies each organisation must adhere to. This has caused issues at the shared depot when operators are working in shared spaces and will make operations safer for both Biffa and IDV.
- 12.10 Additionally, providing IDV with a little more room will allow them to explore the use of HVO fuel for their service with an added benefit that the council's special maintenance team, situated very close to the Winnall site, may be able to share these HVO fuel facilities. However, this is still being investigated.

12.11 This solution, to remove and relocate IDV and free the current depot to accommodate the requirements of Simpler Recycling, does not come without a cost. The new space for IDV will need to be fitted out and prepared for their occupation. Once IDV leave the Barfield Depot, this will need to be prepared for the new service, such as conversion of internal meeting rooms to additional welfare space and reviewing traffic movements and creating safe pedestrian walkways. This will result in additional one-off costs (for both depots) as well as an additional annual revenue cost for the Winnall site. These are set out below. The one-off costs are also accounted for in the Project Spending Plan at Appendix 1.

12.12 Table 1: Additional revenue baseline costs related to relocation of IDV only.

Ongoing Revenue Costs	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	Total
	000's	000's	000's	000's	000's
Lease	36	105	105	70	316
Less rental income	-4	-50	-50	-33	-138
NNDR	10	31	31	21	93
Utilities	5	9	9	4	27
Insurance	1	2	2	2	7
Maintenance	0	5	5	3	13
Security	1	3	3	1	8
Baseline totals	50	105	105	67	326

Table 2: Note, this relates to capital costs associated with relocation only, full costs can be found in Appendix 1

One-off Capital Costs	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	Total
	000's	000's	000's	000's	000's
Fit-out costs (IDV)	42	0	0	0	42
Oil interceptor	50	0	0	0	50
Preparation of depot (Biffa)	50	0	0	0	50
One-off totals	142	0	0	0	142

Table 3: Note, this relates to revenue costs associated with relocation only, full costs can be found in Appendix 1

One-off Revenue Costs	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	Total
	000's	000's	000's	000's	000's
Moving costs (IDV)	14	0	0	0	14

Surveys and inspections	7	0	0	0	7
Preparation of yard (IDV)	5	0	0	0	5
One-off totals	26	0	0	0	26

12.13 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the additional cost of £105k per annum to the baseline budget for the new food waste service to relocate IDV and allow the new service to run from the existing Barfield Close depot.

12.14 The additional one-off costs are included in the Project Spending Plan at Appendix 1 with a separate recommendation made to authorise the expenditure required to deliver this project.

13 **When to start the new food waste collections**

13.1 The Council has reviewed the possible start dates and rollout methods for implementing new food waste collections.

13.2 Several factors have been considered, including;

- a) the Government's deadline of 31 March 2026,
- b) impact on climate change,
- c) cost to the council,
- d) time of year,
- e) availability of resources,
- f) operational considerations such as Bank Holidays,
- g) the customer experience,
- h) availability of depot space,
- i) the operational constraints of delivering bins and caddies to residents,
- j) and Biffa's recommendation based on their knowledge and experience elsewhere.

13.3

	Oct-25	Oct-25 Phased	Feb-26	Apr-26	Key	
Government requirements	4	4	4	4	4	Best
Impact on climate change	4	3	2	1	3	Better

Cost to council	1	2	3	4	2	Worse
Biffa recommendation	1	4	1	1	1	Worst
Competition for staff resources	3	4	2	1		
Depot / Operational space	1	2	3	4		
Vehicle storage, maintenance & insurance	4	3	2	1		
Distribute caddies / bins	1	4	1	1		
The customer journey	4	3	2	3		
Time of Year	4	3	2	1		
Totals	27	32	22	21		

- 13.4 The council proposes starting the food waste collections service on a 6-month phased rollout from October 2025.
- 13.5 The full service will be implemented by the required date of 31 March 2026 in line with the Government's deadline with the added benefit of lowered carbon emissions and environmental benefits being realised sooner.
- 13.6 Recruiting staff for the new service was highlighted early as a risk. There is a known shortage of HGV drivers, and it is likely that other Local Authorities in the area will be recruiting from the same limited pool of available drivers at the same time. Starting the process early, before the government deadline, will ease pressure on recruitment and competition for high quality operatives, allowing Biffa to recruit staff before most other councils in the area start recruiting theirs.
- 13.7 In a phased rollout, the service can begin once a suitable number of staff have been recruited rather than waiting for all staff to come on board. This will allow a more spread-out period of recruitment, induction, and training, removing the bottleneck in service delivery that could result in higher staff turnover during the initial months of operation.
- 13.8 Rolling out a limited number of rounds at a time ensures that those rounds "bed in" more easily which leads to fewer missed bins and complaints from residents. Importantly, a phased roll out ensures that lessons can be learned throughout the rollout phases leading to a better outcome overall.

- 13.9 The initial cost to the council is lower as the operational cost for collecting the food waste is staggered over the first few months leading to a saving to the council of 38% versus full implementation in one go (a big bang approach).
- 13.10 Operationally, it is easier to distribute bins and caddies to residents on a phased basis. It reduces the need for large scale storage of bins prior to distribution to residents, allowing bins and caddies to be delivered and distributed in batches closer to the start date for each phase of the rollout.
- 13.11 There are certain times of the year that are more difficult to implement new services due to pre-election restrictions on communication with residents and further times when services experience disruption, such as Christmas and Bank Holidays. Starting in October 2025 allows Biffa to make full use of October and November, break for Christmas and New Year and then complete the rollout in February and early March 2026. Allowing time for each new round to 'bed in' and completing the rollout before any pre-election restrictions could impact communications in late-March.
- 13.12 While the council intends to roll out the new service to all residents within this period, it should be noted that certain types of accommodation, such as flats above shops and other communal properties, may find it more challenging to implement these changes. The council will work with properties where issues have been identified and ensure the service is implemented in a way that allows all residents to participate, however, in certain circumstances, this may take longer to achieve.
- 13.13 **Funding the new service from October 2025**
- 13.14 DEFRA have confirmed that reasonable ongoing revenue funding for the service will be provided from 1st April 2026. However, the deadline for full implementation of the service to all households is 31 March 2026.
- 13.15 It was assumed that for the service to be fully rolled out by the due date of 31 March 2026, the service would need to start before the due date and therefore funds would be made available to do so. £700k was allocated in the 25/26 budget to allow the Council the option of a phased rollout from October 2025 and 80% of this was expected to be funded by DEFRA.
- 13.16 It has been confirmed that no funding for service costs will be provided before 1 April 2026. Therefore, the revenue budget allocated by the Council to operate the service prior to 1st April 2026 is £140k of council funds only. The additional funds needed will require budget growth.
- 13.17 The introduction of the new food waste recycling collections, phased over 6 months, starting in October 2025, will cost circa £457k for those 6 months. Less the budget already allocated for this service for 25/26, this will require a budget increase of £317k.

- 13.18 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) payments to local authorities are expected in late 2025 and may be substantial. DEFRA have indicated that councils will receive initial details of their EPR funding allocation by the end November 2024. This funding is expected to be non-ringfenced and could be used to cover the food waste service prior to New Burdens funding, as well as to support other council costs.
- 13.19 The cost set out above is the costs of running the service for the 6 months prior to New Burdens funding for ongoing running costs. Details of the ongoing running cost of the new service are included in section 14 below. A separate budget exists for project implementation to support the rollout of the new service, for example, communications and project management costs, and this is detailed in section 15 below and Appendix 1.
- 13.20 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to start collecting food waste in October 2025 on a phased roll out basis at an additional cost of £317k.
- 13.21 This allows the council to remain compliant with the Government's current deadline of 31 March 2026 but retains the benefits of early adoption in terms of recruitment of staff and achieving carbon reductions quicker. A phased rollout is less expensive to the council and a request to uplift to the budget for the food waste service has been made in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, pending approval by Cabinet.
- 13.22 Should EPR funding become available, it could be used to offset these costs, but if this is delayed, or the amount is insufficient, the service would be able to go ahead as planned.

14 Food Waste Collection and Recycling Baseline Service Cost

- 14.1 Biffa have provided a proposal for running the new service which will be added to the overall contract price. The cost of this proposal is detailed in section 14.12 to 14.14 below.
- 14.2 **Evaluating the Proposal**
- 14.3 Due to the price proposal for the new food waste service not having been submitted as part of a tender exercise and with nothing to compare it to, the council commissioned external consultants, Tetra Tech, to independently verify that value for money is being offered in this proposal.
- 14.4 By evaluating the information provided by Tetra Tech, the team have been able to confirm that the price provided by Biffa for the new service is comparable to the costs paid by other local authorities (LA). The comparison data from other LAs is available only up to 22/23, taken from existing contracts in operation prior to that date. The price provided by Biffa is as at 24/25 and represents an increase of 3.8% compared to what other LAs were paying in 22/23.

- 14.5 'Value for Money' assesses both cost and quality. Tetra Tech have recommended a number of opportunities for the council to enhance the value of the proposal Biffa have submitted through enhancement of the 'quality' element. One of these was to review the method statements provided by Biffa for the service to determine if there are additional elements that could enhance the value for money being offered within the proposal.
- 14.6 The council have met with Biffa and agreed a number of actions and activities that would provide additional benefits to the district and thereby enhance the quality being offered. Some examples of added value are included below:
- a) Biffa have agreed to support the council's communications team with the phased rollout by making available their marketing and communications team resource and providing the council with social media assets, activity packs for schools, and phased rollout campaign plans that can be adapted for use in Winchester. These are of significant value to the council and will aid in delivering a quality communications campaign to support this new service.
 - b) Biffa are committed to providing employment opportunities for local people either through their career progression model by paying for existing staff to be trained to 'level up' – for example, a loader could train to become a driver, or by offering apprenticeships where appropriate.
 - c) Biffa provide enhanced training and incentives for their staff, thereby retaining quality operators with lower levels of absenteeism and associated service disruption. This has resulted in very low levels of missed bins and complaints from residents. The council will continue to monitor the performance of the food waste contract and ensure this trend continues.
 - d) Biffa have committed to very high standards of vehicle maintenance, meaning that the food waste vehicles, which the council will own, should have useful life left in them at the end of the depreciation period and could be re-used in another contract or sold to recover some costs.
 - e) Through the Biffa Award scheme, anyone in the district who lives or operates within a 10-mile radius of a Biffa depot site, can apply for grant funding to support community projects. Since operating in Winchester, Biffa have provided funds for a church near Winchester city centre to redesign its interior and for the refurbishment of a significant part of the Winchester Science Centre and Planetarium. This equates to over £360k of added value for our communities.
- 14.7 Having reviewed the benefits Biffa provide; the council is confident that value for money is being achieved in the food waste proposal and that through further negotiations around additional changes to the service contract (to be completed once the disposal infrastructure for additional plastic recycling is confirmed), additional benefits could be obtained.

14.8 Food Waste Service Cost Proposal

- 14.9 To fund this new requirement, in February 2024 (CAB3444 refers) the General fund recommended a budget of £1.4m for the ongoing running costs of the new food waste service. This amount was based on modelling completed by WSP on behalf of the council.
- 14.10 The council have anticipated that 80% of the cost of running the service should be covered by New Burdens funding. Due to uncertainty over the exact level of funding, the cost of the new service set out below does not include any Government funding. This should be viewed as the 'worst case scenario' cost for the council with any funding made available by DEFRA offsetting these costs.
- 14.11 Biffa have calculated that to run the food waste recycling service it would cost £23.39 per household per year. This was calculated as of February 2024 and with 58,213 households (as of May 2024), this equates to c £1.36m per annum.
- 14.12 Under the terms of the existing contract with Biffa, the price per household for food waste collections will be uplifted each year in February, in line with agreed inflation measures. When these are applied to the price, the cost increases to c £24.09 in February 2025 and c £24.81 in February 2026. Household numbers are amended each month to ensure that new homes are captured within the service. It is anticipated that household numbers will increase from 58,213 (as of May 2024) to c 60,523 (as of April 2026). The table below shows how the increase in price per household and household numbers affects the cost of the service.

Food Waste Recycling Service 2026/27 (£000)	Existing Budget	Latest Forecast	Budget Variance
Revenue			
Annual running costs	1,330	1,429*	99
Corporate Inflation Estimates	81	94	13
HVO estimate	70	70	0
Communal bin liners	0	18	18
Forecast Gross Costs	1,481	1,611	130

* based on estimated properties of 60,500 as at 1 April 2026, plus 100 per month to March 2027

- 14.13 A budget of £1.4m was agreed in February 2024 (CAB3444 refers) and due to the increases shown in this report, an additional £130k to the existing baseline budget for the food waste service will be required from 26/27. It should be noted that this figure does not include any funding from DEFRA nor the increase in costs due to the new depot.
- 14.14 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to start a new food waste collection service in line with the requirements of Simpler Recycling through the

Council's contractor, Biffa, at an ongoing cost from 26/27 of c £1.61m per annum.

- 14.15 The addition of food waste collections can be accommodated through a variation to the existing contract with our waste service contractor. It is therefore further recommended that Cabinet agree to vary the contract with the Council's contractor, Biffa, to include a separate collection of food waste.

15 **Project Funding and Budgets**

- 15.1 To implement the changes required under Simpler Recycling is a complex project made more challenging by delays and lack of certainty around the funding promised by Government under the New Burden doctrine and EPR to deliver it.
- 15.2 Government have confirmed that EPR funding to local authorities for the collection and disposal of packaging waste should also be used to cover the cost of the changes required under Simpler Recycling. EPR was expected in 2024 but was deferred for one year to 2025. The council has been assured by DEFRA that it will receive information about its allocation of EPR funds by the end of 2024, with the first payment expected in October 2025. Should this prove to be substantial, it could be used to offset the cost of starting the food waste collections in October 2025, (details of this cost are included in section 13 above), and if sufficient, some of the costs associated with providing additional depot space from which to run the new food waste service (details in section 12 above).
- 15.3 In February 2023 (CAB3388 refers), a £500k project reserve was allocated to the project from the Greener Faster reserve and in February 2024 (CAB3444 refers) an additional £1m was allocated to support the roll out of changes to the waste and recycling service. This allocation forms the basis of the revenue budget for the spending plan detailed in Appendix 1.
- 15.4 DEFRA has allocated and paid capital funding of £1.38m to Winchester City Council for the purchase of assets (bins, caddies, and vehicles) required to deliver the new food waste collection service. However, this allocation is short of the actual vehicle and receptacle costs required and as such an additional £0.4m budget, funded by prudential borrowing, was presented in the capital programme in 2025/26 (CAB3443 refers). The total capital budget allocated for this project is, therefore, DEFRA grant funding of £1.38m plus the council's contribution of £0.4m, totalling £1.78m. The spending plan in Appendix 1 details the forecast costs for capital expenses.
- 15.5 While the complete picture of funding from Defra remains unknown, it should be remembered that New Burdens grant funding is expected to cover reasonable transitional and ongoing revenue costs. It remains unknown if this will include any capital funding for depot space and no indication has been received regarding the amount to be allocated for any ongoing revenue costs for additional depot space.

- 15.6 Due to continued uncertainty around the exact amount of funding to be provided, no funding has been included in the spending plans presented in Appendix 1 and as such they should be viewed as the maximum cost the council should incur. Once confirmation of the council's allocation for New Burdens funding is known, this funding will be used to offset the costs listed in the spending plan.
- 15.7 The project team have gathered all known costs based on evidence from existing frameworks for new assets such as bins and caddies, as well as receiving quotes for anticipated works. Details of all expected project implementation costs are set out in Appendix 1. Detailed implementation and delivery plans for the new food waste service will be developed and approved by the Strategic Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency. This will include a detailed phasing schedule, operational considerations such as bin types / colours, delivery of caddies to residents, and targeted communications campaign plans.
- 15.8 Due to the length of this project, that it will be delivered over several years, it is prudent to add a contingency amount to the revenue budget to cover any unforeseen costs and inflation. 5% contingency has been added to revenue costs in Appendix 1. Although the budget was drafted based on known costs at the time, some of these costs will not be realised until much later in the project and it is likely that these costs will increase with time. Capital costs have been calculated to include a contingency amount within each item of either 5% or 10% as appropriate.
- 15.9 Simpler Recycling requires the collection of a core set of recyclable materials, including plastic pots, tubs, trays, and cartons, by 31 March 2026. These materials cannot currently be recycled in Hampshire because the available materials recovery facility (MRF) is not equipped to recycle these items. As the disposal authority, Hampshire County Council (HCC) is responsible for developing the infrastructure to allow these materials to be recycled. Decision-making on the type of MRF required to recycle these materials has been delayed and as a result, the council, and all Waste Collection Authorities in Hampshire, will not be able to meet the Government's deadline of 31 March 2026 for recycling these materials.
- 15.10 This delay will result in additional costs for project management, communications, legal and consultant support, to deliver the changes once they are back in scope – this is estimated to be in 2027. These costs are reflected in Appendix 1 ('Stage 2 - Revenue' section) but it should be noted that these are indicative costs only and any additional expenditure for this project will need to be approved once decisions and timescales for delivery have been confirmed by Hampshire County Council. Additionally, a Deposit Return Scheme will be introduced as part of the changes to waste and recycling under Simpler Recycling in 2027. The council will need to consider the implications of this scheme and adjust the waste and recycling service if needed.

- 15.11 To facilitate the additional changes expected in 2027, the council recommends preserving the remaining unallocated revenue budget, indicated on the 'Stage 1 - Revenue' section of Appendix 1, to cover these likely costs. A further spending plan will be submitted to the appropriate decision-making body in due course.
- 15.12 Additional capital costs have become apparent since the project inception
- a) additional costs for fitting out the new depot space, which it had assumed would be provided by DEFRA New Burdens funding.
 - b) an increase in costs for caddies. This is likely because of the high demand for these items (driven by Simpler Recycling), which DEFRA have not accounted for in their modelling of capital costs.
 - c) unexpected additional cost for installing the EV charger at the depot.
- 15.13 These additional costs have resulted in a request for additional capital funds of £159k, to be provided by borrowing.
- 15.14 The project budgets are monitored and tracked against budget allocation, future commitments, invoices, and actual spending both in the project budget tracker spreadsheet and in the finance general ledger. Project spending is also monitored through the highlight reports that are produced quarterly for the Programme and Capital Strategy (PAC) Board. The spending plan in Appendix 1 has been reviewed by the Council's Finance Director and the additional budget request has been added to the medium-term financial strategy.
- 15.15 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the expenditure detailed in Appendix 1 and totalled here:
- a) Project Implementation costs (Revenue) - £853k
 - b) Project Implementation costs (Capital) - £604k

16 **Communicating the new service to Residents and stakeholders**

- 16.1 The phased introduction of a food waste recycling service for the Winchester district before the government deadline of April 2026 will be supported by a communications and engagement plan designed to ensure residents are informed, aware and encouraged to use the service.
- 16.2 Our goals: to introduce a food waste recycling service that all households in the district can use; to educate all residents about the benefits of food waste recycling and how to avoid wasting food; to encourage residents to recycle their unavoidable food waste; to continue to monitor progress after the launch of the service and continue working to increase participation in the service, while encouraging individuals to take steps to waste less and recycle more overall.
- 16.3 As food waste collections are likely to be introduced in seven phases across the district, there will be both general educational messaging for all (to create

awareness and a desire to participate) and targeted local messaging regarding the start of the service in specific areas.

- 16.4 Desk and face to face research will be used to identify barriers to recycling and engage with communities which may have particular barriers. The Council is working with the University of Southampton on a joint project with colleagues from Test Valley and Eastleigh Borough Councils using community researchers to explore barriers to recycling in communal properties. In addition, a PHD researcher from the University of Southampton will also be working with the council to offer greater insight into encouraging uptake into food waste recycling and what barriers people may face.
- 16.5 Feedback from our research will feed into the campaign development, and this, along with the experience and resources provided by Biffa, Recycle Now, WRAP and our Project Integra partner Local Authorities, will be used and adapted to suit our particular audiences.
- 16.6 A range of materials and communications channels (both on and offline) will be used at different stages of the campaign, to ensure everyone has a chance to understand the service, how to use it and its benefits.
- 16.7 The council has employed a Communications Officer on a 0.5 FTE fixed term contract to develop and deploy the communications strategy needed to support the changes required by Simpler Recycling.
- 16.8 To further support and embed the communications activities, the council intends to recruit Recycling Engagement Officers on fixed term contracts to engage with local community groups and take educational resources into schools to inform and educate them about why and how to recycle. Working with young people in schools will help to influence uptake in their homes and importantly, reduce contamination, maximise participation, and generate sustainable recycling habits which will provide long-term environmental benefits for the district.
- 16.9 Additionally, the Recycling Engagement Officers will monitor participation and contamination rates across the district after introducing the new service. Using targeted interventions, the officers will engage directly with communities struggling to participate or with high contamination rates, working together to remove blockages and encourage better recycling behaviours.
- 16.10 Behavioural insights will be used to inform each stage of the awareness campaign and promote the principles of the waste hierarchy – to ‘reduce, reuse, and recycle’.
- 16.11 The cost of communicating the new food waste service to residents is included in Appendix 1. It is expected that New Burdens funding will be provided for communication costs to introduce food waste recycling, although the amount has yet to be confirmed by DEFRA.

17 **Future Proofing the waste and recycling service for a zero-carbon future**

- 17.1 The council has invested in a fully electric Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) which has been added to the existing frontline fleet. This vehicle will help to explore the practicalities of operating an electric vehicle in a large district such as Winchester while the council explores opportunities to move towards a fully carbon neutral service.
- 17.2 CAB3452 recommended that the council commission a feasibility assessment with SSEN to determine the likely costs and timescales for providing sufficient power to the depot to support a fully electric fleet. This work is underway, and the results are expected to be available in early 2025.
- 17.3 Additionally, the council continues to explore all available options for a zero-carbon waste & recycling service, including a review of green hydrogen powered electric vehicles as a potential future consideration. This is a solution that could suit a large, partially rural district such as Winchester, although further evaluation is required.
- 17.4 While the council works with SSEN to review the potential to support a fully electric waste fleet, the council will continue to evaluate the suitability of hydrogen electric RCVs and present both options to Cabinet for decision in 2025.

18 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

18.1 **Food Waste Recycling start date and rollout method**

- 18.2 The council considered starting food waste collections in October 2025, February 2026 and April 2026 on a 'big bang' approach (full service implemented from the start) and / or a phased basis. These options were rejected due to difficulties with operational complexity, cost to the council, delayed environmental impact and in some cases, risk of non-compliance with Government implementation deadlines.

18.3 **Additional depot space for food waste**

- 18.4 Several options were explored and rejected; these are listed below:

18.5 **Operating the new services from the existing depot with IDV and Biffa.**

The option to remove staff car parking and try to fit the new vehicles and crews into the existing depot was explored. This has been rejected on health and safety grounds as it would not be possible to operate the service safely with the high numbers of vehicle and pedestrian interactions.

18.6 **Other Locations**

Several alternative locations were considered for operating the new food waste service, but each had significant drawbacks. Most notable is the old Goods Shed next door to the current waste and recycling depot. This option would have resulted in a loss of income to the council of £60k per annum and would have required planning permission which may have been difficult to

obtain due to the neighbouring residential properties. Other locations were discounted due to the length of time these would have taken to secure and gain planning permission as well as prohibitive security costs due to a lack of existing infrastructure.

19 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

19.1 Previous Committee Reports:-

[CAB3388](#) - General Fund Budget 2023/24 (Pages 43 - 86)

[CAB3439](#) - Waste and Recycling Strategy (Pages 9 - 102)

[CAB3443](#) - Capital Investment Strategy 2024-2034 (Pages 165 - 208)

[CAB3444](#) - General Fund Budget 2024/25 (Pages 131 - 164)

[CAB3452](#) - Procurement of Waste & Recycling Collection Vehicles (Pages 13 - 46)

19.2 Other Background Documents:-

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Project Spending Plan

Appendix 2 – EQIA
