



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 24 March 2026
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Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report / Key Decision
Report Title	Introduction of a Pilot Food Waste Collection for Domestic Properties ahead of the Statutory Rollout in 2027
Purpose of Report	To seek approval for a proposal to introduce a pilot scheme of around 3,000 properties in September 2026 in preparation for the full District wide introduction of the service in October 2027. This is in accordance with the Council’s ambitions to ‘Reduce the impact of climate change and protect and enhance green spaces’ and within the statutory responsibilities placed upon the Council.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the implementation of a six-month food waste collection pilot across two rounds of approximately 1,500 properties each; b) the comparative testing of provision versus non-provision of compostable liner bags; c) a further report being brought to the Cabinet in spring 2027, detailing the pilot outcomes and recommendations prior to the District wide rollout; d) a Capital budget of £27,500 for the purchase and delivery of 3,300 external food waste caddies, 3,200 internal food waste caddies, to be funded from the Food Waste Reserve; and e) a revenue budget of £9,500 for the six-month supply of caddy liners for 1,500 properties, communication material and hiring a van to deliver the caddies, to be funded from the same ring-fenced reserve.

Alternative Options Considered	Consideration was given to not running a pilot food waste round and base future round sizes and expected yields on general benchmark data that is available. However, the Council wishes to maximise use of the service to benefit residents, provide value for money and increase recycling, rather than simply deliver the service. A pilot is deemed a positive development in order to achieve this ambition.
Reason for Recommendations	The proposal aligns with the community plan to enhance the climate and the environment and provide value for money, whilst there is also a statutory requirement to provide a kerbside food waste collection service from October 2027.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In November 2021, the Environment Act was mandated. One of the key outcomes from the Act was the introduction of consistent waste and recycling collections (branded as ‘Simpler Recycling’) with a mandate for local authorities to collect food waste from the kerbside on a weekly schedule.
- 1.2 In October 2021, the Government declared the availability of £295-million of new burdens funding for local authorities to implement food waste collection programmes. The funds would be allocated on a formula-based system rather than individual local authorities submitting applications to bid for the funds. In 2024/25, the Council received capital funding totalling just over £1 million through the Government’s New Burdens Fund to support the implementation of food waste collections. A funding gap of £211,701 was highlighted and filled with Capital funding. This covered the cost of vehicles and caddies for the 2027 roll out.

Payments from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme started in 2025-26 with local authorities receiving regular quarterly payments which are intended to be ring fenced specifically for improving waste and recycling infrastructure and services and it is intended that this funding will help support the collection of this new service.

- 1.3 In June 2025, a report was presented to Cabinet outlining the vehicle and other resources required to implement food waste collections in October 2027.
- 1.4 As we move towards this date a decision is being sought to approve two pilot food waste collection rounds for six months from September 2026. This pilot will look to draw on a proportion of the government funding.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

- 2.1 Given that domestic food waste collections will represent a new waste stream for the Council, it is considered both prudent and operationally necessary to undertake a pilot ahead of full District-wide implementation. The pilot will enable the Council to gather essential data and experience regarding service delivery, resident participation, the effectiveness of resident engagement, experience of fleet issues and the comparison on participation rates and tonnages from those that we issue

compostable/degradable bags to and those that we don't and the operational impact on existing waste streams.

- 2.2 It is proposed that the pilot be based on two food waste collection rounds, covering approximately 3,000 properties. The areas identified for the pilot are Southwell, Lowdham and Yorke Drive and the Hawtonville estate in Newark, which offer a suitably mixed demographic for the pilot. One of the key variables the pilot will test will be the inclusion of compostable/degradable bags. The pilot areas have been chosen to provide a mix demographic, whilst being operationally achievable within the capacity available within the pilot and to reflect tipping arrangements in Colwick in Nottingham.
- 2.3 Research has shown that there is a 10% annual replacement rate for external caddies as they are lost, damaged, stolen or re-purposed so an order of 3,300 is required. There is a smaller replacement rate for internal caddies as they are not presented on the street so 3,200 will be ordered.

Item	Quantity	Cost
Capital		
External Food Waste Caddies	3,300	21,250
Internal Food Waste Caddies	3,200	6,250
Total Capital		27,500
Caddy Liners	1,500 x 52 bags	4,000
Van Hire	x1	500
Communications	2 x leaflets, 1 x sticker	5,000
Total Revenue		9,500
Grand Total		37,000

- 2.4 Following research and sector guidance, autumn has been identified as the most effective time to introduce a new waste stream. As such, the proposed start date for the pilot is week commencing 28th September 2026. The six-month pilot scheme will allow for some seasonal variations, particularly over the Christmas/New Year period when we would expect the most food waste.

There is a period of 6 months following the conclusion of the pilot before the district wide service will commence. The data and experience gathered throughout this pilot will help with the planning for the rollout and for ensuring that the new service is as operationally prepared as possible.

It is the intention to continue with the food waste collections for the households included in the pilot scheme which will take us up to when the rest of the district will go live with the service in October 2027.

A recommendation on whether to continue to supply bags will be made after reviewing the data following the conclusion of this pilot scheme and will also update on what partner authorities intend to do given the context of Local Government Reorganisation.

- 2.5 Whilst not all local authorities in Nottinghamshire intend to adopt a pilot, a unified and consistent approach to the caddies was agreed with other Districts and Boroughs with each householder due to be issued with a black 23L external food waste caddy which the operatives will collect from. They will also be issued with a silver/light grey 7-litre internal kitchen caddy.
- 2.6 The resident will empty the 7-litre caddy into the 23-litre caddy as/when required ready for collection. The 23-litre caddy will need to be presented in the same way that a wheeled bin would be, and collections will take place on the same day every week.
- 2.7 The distribution of the caddies would take place a week before the collection start and will be carried out with existing waste management staff. They will use a 7.5t box van and the distribution would be done over a period of 2-3 days.
- 2.8 The rounds will differ as follows:
- Round 1 will be provided with a six-month supply of liners to assess participation, contamination and the operational impact of managing the provision of liners.
 - Round 2 will not be provided with liners so they have the option of lining with newspaper, disposing of the food waste loose or they can purchase their own liners.

The on-going cost of replacing liners for all participating householders across the district would be approximately £50,000-£60,000 so it is important to understand the impact of supplying these or not to ensure value for money.

- 2.9 Round 1 and Round 2 collections will be carried out on consecutive days by the same crew (1 Driver and 1 Waste Operative).

Currently, this team collects additional “Simpler Recycling” materials — such as plastic trays, cartons and foil — separately from trade waste customers. These materials are transported to a waste transfer facility in Colwick, as they are not included in the general recycling mix (paper, cans, plastic bottles, etc.).

This separate collection arrangement will end in March. From April onwards, both the main sorting facility in Mansfield and the waste transfer station in Newark will be able to accept these materials as part of the standard mixed recycling stream, in line with the broader Simpler Recycling changes.

As a result, the crew will no longer need to collect these materials separately, freeing them up to be redeployed to this service from September.

They will be utilising the vehicle which is currently used for commercial food waste collections on its non-operational days. This vehicle is the same specification as the vehicles that have already been ordered for the district wide food waste collections as per the Cabinet decision in June last year, so will provide continuity and an opportunity to test on domestic collections.

- 2.10 Research carried out by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) suggests that an average performing food waste collection service will achieve a participation rate of 35%-55% with the set-out rate 10-15% lower than this (not all households take part every week). It is proposed to use the middle figure of 45% for modelling the pilot area.
- 2.11 A waste composition analysis carried out recently on a sample of residual waste bins across Nottinghamshire showed that residents in Newark and Sherwood produced the most food waste averaging 3.84KG per household per week. The average across Nottinghamshire was 2.89KG. This is on a par with a national average of 3KG per week that WRAP suggests you would be expected to collect.
- 2.12 It is therefore expected that if 45% of the 3,000 participating households each presented 3.4KG of food waste, we would expect to collect approximately 4.59 tonnes per week.
- 2.13 The food waste that is collected will be taken to the site where our commercial food waste is taken which is operated by a company called Bio-Dynamic and is located in Colwick, Nottingham NG4 2JR.

Objectives

- 2.14 The pilot aims to:
- Measure capture rates (kilogrammes per household per week)
 - Assess contamination levels and types
 - Evaluate operational efficiency and crew productivity to establish if the round sizes are correct
 - Understand resident satisfaction and behavioural response to the new scheme by monitoring feedback/complaints or any surveys that could take place
 - Identify communication and engagement requirements and assess the impact and feedback of communication channels
 - Compare the participation rates and other performance indicators between rounds
 - Assess the cost/benefit implication of supplying food waste liners when launching the service in October 2027.
- 2.15 A review of key performance indicators will be evaluated as part of a further report to be presented to Cabinet upon the conclusion of the food waste pilot, which is likely to be in the Spring of 2027.

Benefits

- 2.16 Running a controlled pilot offers significant strategic and operational benefits. There will be more evidence-based decision making as the data that is gathered will be localised rather than based on national averages. Understanding the likely participation rates and tonnage yields will assist with more accurate modelling for resource requirements and the design of the collection rounds.

- 2.17 Assessing the impact of supplying food caddy liners will help inform decisions prior to potential large-scale procurement and the budgetary commitment this will bring.
- 2.18 The food waste pilot will be very useful to refine the collection methodology by gathering feedback from the operatives. The 6-month period will also give us an insight into the demand for container replacement rates and how many are lost or damaged which will allow for more a more accurate order when going district wide.
- 2.19 The food waste pilot will be very useful from a workshop/fleet perspective. The vehicle has not been utilised to collect the tonnages that we anticipate collecting so there is an opportunity to identify any mechanical faults or other vehicle issues so that we can be better prepared for managing the fleet prior to the full roll out.
- 2.20 By identifying common contaminants and other operational barriers along with customer feedback which maybe resulting in a low participation, it can help develop more targeted communication messages.

3.0 **Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Implications Considered			
Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable			
Financial	Yes	Equality & Diversity	Yes
Human Resources	Yes	Human Rights	N/A
Legal	Yes	Data Protection	N/A
Digital & Cyber Security	N/A	Safeguarding	N/A
Sustainability	Yes	Crime & Disorder	N/A
LGR	Yes	Tenant Consultation	N/A

Financial Implications (FIN25-26/2273)

3.1 **Capital**

The Capital budget required of £27,500 for the food waste bins and the caddies can be financed by the Residential Food Waste Reserve which has an estimated uncommitted balance of £0.891m as at 31 March 2027. This will ensure ongoing revenue impacts of the scheme are kept to a minimum.

3.2 **Revenue**

The revenue requirement of £9,500 covers:

- Caddy liners
- Van hire
- Communications (leaflets and stickers)

This £9,500 can be funded from the Food Waste Reserve initially, with a view to reviewing the final outturn position of the business unit at the end of the year. If the

business unit is in a favourable position (underspend), the cost will be absorbed within existing budgets, and the reserve would not be required for this cost.

- 3.3 This approach ensures flexibility while maintaining overall financial control and allows appropriate year-end adjustments depending on outturn performance.
- 3.4 As per paragraph 2.8, the use of caddy liners will be included in 1 of the 2 rounds. Should the outcome of the pilot demonstrate that providing liners leads to increased food waste capture and higher tonnage, continuing the provision of liners would have an ongoing revenue budget impact from 2027/28 onwards, which is not currently built into the base budget for 2027/28. This cost pressure would, however, sit alongside an increase (although currently unknown) in recycling credit income, and both elements will need to be considered together as part of future budget planning.

Legal Implications LEG2526/9081

- 3.5 The Council has a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to arrange for both the collection and disposal of household waste.
The Environment Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021. Section 57 (4) of the Act introduces a new section 45A into the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which requires the separate collection of food waste for recycling, at least once a week. The new duty imposed on English councils in May 2024, by the Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England: Simpler Recycling, brought into force additional regulations for weekly food waste collections for domestic premises to commence by 31 March 2026. The Council has approval from DEFRA to defer the implementation of food waste collection October 2027.
- 3.6 The disposal of the waste obligation will be met through existing contractual arrangements with the County Council and legal advice should be sourced in respect of any change to contractual arrangements going forward.
- 3.7 The procurement of caddies, food waste bins will be undertaken jointly with a neighbouring authority. Legal advice should be sourced in respect of any further contractual arrangements entered into.
- 3.8 Any procurement processes associated with the roll out of the pilot and permanent scheme will be in accordance with the Council's Contract and Procurement Procedure rules and the Public Procurement Regulations, and the contract documentation will in a form approved by legal officers.

Human Resources Implications

- 3.9 No additional staff will be required for the pilot food waste scheme.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.