

## Cabinet – 3 September 2025

### Review of new waste collection service phase 1 roll out and motion to suspend phases 2 and 3

Purpose	For Review
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report provides a comprehensive overview of the project to launch the council's new waste service.</p> <p>An Extraordinary Council meeting was called by the Chairman of the Council in response to concerns expressed by councillors regarding reported operational disruption, and the impact on residents of the initial rollout of a new waste collection service within New Forest District. This meeting was held on 28 August 2025.</p> <p>The report provides background data on the phase 1 roll-out, highlights lessons learnt, and actions already underway to overcome issues raised and to provide more corporate resilience for phases 2 and 3.</p> <p>The report also considers the implications of delaying the programmed roll out to the rest of the district, as a basis for discussion on the matters raised.</p>
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. That Cabinet consider the contents of the report, and the summary of the debate at the Extraordinary Council meeting, included at Appendix 4.</b></li><li><b>2. That Cabinet note the change in approach to food waste collection during the pannage period, whereby residents within the perambulation will be asked to keep food caddies behind gates.</b></li><li><b>3. That officers continue to work on a business case to extend the "behind</b></li></ol>

	<p><b>gate” policy beyond pannage, and that an “in principle” agreement to this longer-term policy change is given, with the final decision being subject to a business case.</b></p> <p><b>4. That the Waste Programme Board will retain oversight of implementation, and will receive a Phase 2 plan and updated risk assessment.</b></p> <p><b>5. That Cabinet support further dedicated engagement sessions for ward councillors throughout the phased rollout to support their role within their local communities.</b></p> <p><b>6. That, in considering the motion referred to Cabinet by Council at Appendix 1, the Cabinet note that the options appraisal in this report identifies that phases two and three should proceed as planned, with the mitigations and improvements noted in the action plan in this report.</b></p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The new waste collection service is a significant change that will affect every household in the district and is a key corporate priority for the council. The service also contributes to the council’s environmental and climate change objectives, increase recycling rates, reducing emissions, and reducing the amount of overall general waste and littering from sacks.</p> <p>During the Phase 1 roll out to 31,000 households, issues have been encountered with data, systems and processes that have impacted on the project and residents. These are being addressed with the learning used to shape phases 2 and 3.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Geoffrey Blunden – Environment and Sustainability

Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director of Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	Chris Noble - Assistant Director, Place Operations  Karyn Punchard – Waste Programme Director  Liz Mockeridge – Service Manager, Waste and Transport

## Introduction and background

1. New Forest District Council (NFDC) began a phased rollout of a new waste collection service for residents in June 2025 as part of a wider waste management strategy and programme. This strategy is designed to improve recycling rates, modernise collection services and meet statutory requirements set out in the Environment Act 2021 which are due to come into force in 2026. The Act requires that by 1 April 2026, household food waste is collected separately from other waste, and sent for recycling.
2. The waste strategy was agreed at a meeting of the Council in July 2022 with an update considered in February 2024. The policies to support the strategy were agreed at a meeting of the Council in July 2023.
3. The key elements of the new service are:
  - **New weekly food waste collections** with a 23-litre lockable kerbside caddy and a 7-litre kitchen caddy;
  - **Fortnightly recycling and rubbish collections** using new 240-litre (recycling) and 180-litre (rubbish) wheelie bins

There are no planned changes at this time to the format of other waste collection services, such as glass and garden waste collections.

4. In support of these frontline service changes, the overall Waste Programme also includes projects relating to:
  - a. Depot facilities (including completion of the new depot at Hardley as well as enhancements at Ringwood and Lymington depots)
  - b. New container procurement, storage and distribution
  - c. District wide property assessments
  - d. Revised route planning
  - e. Recruitment of additional employees

- f. Revised employee working practises and Terms and Conditions
  - g. ICT (for back-office, customer-facing, and “in-cab” technology improvements, delivered via the Bartec system)
  - h. Information and communications to support the new service
5. A dedicated Waste Management Programme Board is in place to oversee the complex workstreams required to deliver the roll out in time to meet government targets and within approved budgets. The membership of the Board comprises the Leader, Portfolio Holders for Environment & Sustainability and Finance & Corporate, members of the Executive Management Team and senior waste officers. The Board meets monthly.
6. In keeping with the approved strategy, the project proposed to roll-out the service over three phases:
  - Phase 1 (Lymington Depot area) commenced June 2025
  - Phase 2 (Ringwood Depot area) commencing October 2025
  - Phase 3 (Totton/Hardley Depot area) commencing March 2026
7. Phase one has now been implemented across the Lymington Depot area (covering New Milton, Barton, Milford, Lymington, Pennington, Boldre, Brockenhurst and surrounding villages). A total of 31,000 homes are now receiving the new service, which entailed the delivery of over 100,000 containers.
8. In accordance with the approved project plan, preparations are well underway for phase two with the initial communications having been sent direct to residents in mid-July. Recruitment of loaders and drivers for the new rounds is in progress and container deliveries to phase 2 households commences on 25 August 2025.

### **Extraordinary Council Meeting**

9. On 4 August 2025, six District Councillors submitted a request to the Chairman of the Council to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council to urgently review the roll-out of the new waste and recycling service.
10. In accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman exercised this power to enable the Council to meet to discuss the project, on 28 August 2025.
11. The related motion (in appendix 1), included on the Council agenda submitted by Cllr M Wade, in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders for Meetings, requires reference to the Cabinet for

consideration, before reporting back to the next Council meeting. This is due to the financial implications in the context of the Council's agreed budgets, which are identified at paragraph 58 below.

12. A number of issues were cited by those Members who requested this extraordinary meeting. The submitted motion asked the Council to note missed collections, overflowing bins, interference from animals, confusion about collection points, impacts in phase 2 and 3 areas including call waiting times, and impact on NFDC staff. It also references a meeting held with partner organisations on 6 August 2025, updated cost projections for phase 2 and 3, and states that Cabinet has continued to progress to phase 2 despite these known issues.
13. The request for the Extraordinary Council meeting sought that supporting information be provided in advance. Each of these requests was responded to in detail within Appendix 2 to this report. Some data requested is not held and this has been indicated where this is the case.
14. A summary of the debate at the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 28 August 2025 is included in appendix 4. At this meeting, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability announced that for the panning period, residents within the perambulation (areas open to livestock) would be asked to present food waste for collection behind their gates.
15. The key issues are summarised below to support the review and decision-making.

### **Commentary on roll-out progress and learning**

16. Appendix 2 illustrates in detail the successes and also the challenges of the rollout so far. This section is a summary of key factors in relation to phase 1.
17. This programme is a very significant set of transformation projects with the following changes coming together at the same time:
  - New collection containers – over 120,000 for phase 1
  - New materials (food waste) collected for the first time
  - Change in collection frequencies
  - New collection policies
  - New collection routes for crews
  - New staff taken on to support collections
  - Changes in working practices for staff
  - New ICT (back office, customer facing and in-cab)
  - New/amended depot facilities and layouts
  - Training programmes

- Wider interdependencies with other council services e.g. Customer Services, Housing Services, Communications
18. These changes, being delivered to 82,000 homes in total across the unique geography of New Forest District was recognised for its complexity and significance at the outset. Learnings taken from other councils who have delivered changes to waste services in the past identified likely high levels of service disruption whilst the new service “beds in”, even before considering the additional complexities arising in the district. The complexity and likely challenges were conveyed as part of the briefings leading into the roll-out.
  19. The new service has seen excellent take-up from residents in the first phase areas in terms of participation in food waste collections, with increasing tonnages being collected (see Appendix 2). As of 15 August 2025, the new service has completed 10 weeks of delivery, amounting to nearly 620,000 household collections. During this same period an additional 1,367,500 collections of glass, garden waste (across all three phases), refuse and recycling (in phase two and three areas) have been made.
  20. The vast majority of householders have had their collections carried out without service disruption. The new service is delivering on many of the expected benefits, including increased recycling rates, reductions in manual handling and other injuries for staff, and reduced litter on collection day.
  21. There have also been some key challenges with the rollout. These have resulted in some residents seeing significant disruption in service. A review of the phase 1 roll out was commissioned by the Waste Programme Board to implement learning for phases 2 and 3. Actions being implemented are detailed in the table below.
  22. In addition to the actions detailed, Officers will provide dedicated engagement sessions for ward councillors throughout the phased roll out to support their role within their local communities.

Issue	Detail	Key learnings from phase 1 to be taken forward in phase 2
Container Deliveries	<p>There were delays in initial delivery of containers to a number of residents. This was due to a range of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Format and clarity of address data used for deliveries did lead to difficulties for delivery teams.</li> <li>• Inability to “live monitor” delivery progress.</li> <li>• A key vacancy within the waste team (Operations Manager) at the time of container delivery.</li> </ul>	<p>Following discussions between officers and the contractor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement of improvements in address data format – testing with the contractor has taken place to ensure that both street lists and maps give the best chance of accuracy of delivery, reducing properties who have missed or duplicated deliveries.</li> <li>• Setting up of a live shared delivery progress sheet – so that council staff, including customer services, can view the delivery contractor’s progress and better inform responses to customer enquiries.</li> <li>• The key role of Operations Manager has now been appointed to, giving increased contract management capability within the team which will facilitate more regular contract meetings during the delivery phase.</li> <li>• Delivery spot checks by council staff.</li> </ul>
Missed collections	<p>Missed collections reported by residents have been at a higher level than expected. This is due to 3 factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of the new collection rounds are taking longer to complete than anticipated (in part due to high participation rates) leaving uncollected containers at the end of the day.</li> <li>• Unfamiliarity with new rounds and neighbourhoods</li> </ul>	<p>Key actions and learnings for phase 2 have been agreed, and commenced, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional staff resource has been agreed for rural rounds, which was a key round with a disproportionate number of missed collections due to the round taking longer to complete than expected.</li> <li>• Staff recruitment – bringing forward the recruitment of staff for phase 3, to support phase 1 and 2 areas.</li> <li>• Introduction of 5% market supplement from 1 August for drivers to improve recruitment and retention.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increased sickness level, limited agency staff availability and recruitment challenges, has meant that the additional staffing contingency that was allowed for in phase 1 has not been sufficient. This has had knock-on effects to other parts of the district and is not just contained to the phase 1 area. (More information on all these factors is included in Appendix 2 - this includes data showing that just 0.4% of collections are being reported by customers as missed each week).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased support and training for staff using the new in-cab technology, to ensure that the system supports efficient collections, data recording and accurate service delivery.</li> <li>• Gradual improvements in round completion are being observed, as crews become naturally more familiar with their rounds and new ways of working. However, it may be that additional collection resource is needed if some rounds continue to be too large to complete. This is being monitored.</li> <li>• For phase 2, some staff from the Ringwood depot will spend time before service change working in the phase 1 area, to provide familiarisation with new vehicles, ICT and working practices.</li> <li>• Crews will be informed as early as possible of new routes/rounds, so that geographical familiarisation can begin well before scheme commencement, i.e. by sitting down with staff to discuss these new routes.</li> </ul>
Livestock accessing food waste	<p>In areas open to livestock, there have been instances of animals accessing food waste. Concern about this has been expressed by the public and key partners. There has been an average of 10 instances reported each week. More information on the policy background is included in Appendix 2.</p>	<p>A meeting was held on 6 August with representatives of key partners has led to the following actions being taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two trial areas on selected roads (commencing 22 August – affected residents have been written to). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On selected roads in Brockenhurst, the collection point for food waste will be moved to behind gates.</li> <li>○ In East Boldre, the selected roads will see the collection point for food waste <i>and</i> general waste/mixed recycling containers moved behind gates.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>These trials will provide valuable data on the impact of changes to policy on relative costs, time, health and safety</p>

		<p>and other operational or environmental impacts ahead of phase 2 commencement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing research into more secure food waste containers</li> <li>• Further data analysis on property quantities and locations affected by this issue.</li> </ul> <p>A follow-up meeting was held on 27 August to discuss progress on the above actions. At this meeting it was agreed with partners that for the upcoming pannage period, where pigs are released into the Forest, residents within the perambulation (areas open to livestock) will be advised to present food waste containers behind gates on collection day. This will alleviate the potential risks of animal interactions with food waste. The Financial Monitoring Report presented to Cabinet on 3 September, details £150,000 that has been allocated to provide additional staff and vehicle resource to support this temporary change.</p> <p>As well as this temporary policy change, it is recognised that a longer term position is needed. Officers are working on a business case to extend the “behind gate” policy beyond pannage. To aid in communications and officer progress, an “in principle” agreement to this longer term policy change is sought via the recommendations in this report.</p>
Customer contact	Whilst customer contact from the phase 1 area is gradually reducing, there have been periods where contact has been high in response to service disruption and repeat issues not being resolved.	<p>The direct communications with residents via two direct mailings and information delivered alongside containers has worked well in terms of preparing residents for the change.</p> <p>Contact volume has largely been driven by instances where the service has failed. The actions described throughout this table are</p>

	<p>Customer feedback has been that response times have been significant, and this has tested customer service staff capacity and resilience, despite additional resource being deployed into the CS team.</p> <p>It is also evident that existing systems and processes have not met the needs of the roll-out demand from customers, data recording or feedback and assurance.</p>	<p>designed to improve delivery of the service itself, and in turn reduce direct customer contact in the phase 2 area.</p> <p>However, with the level of service change already described, an elevated level of contact can still be expected, and additional resources on top of that which had been provided for phase 1 (as detailed in Appendix 2) have been agreed for the Customer Service and Waste Advisory teams, to provide increased capacity and support to our customers.</p> <p>Website messaging is to be reviewed and a more flexible approach to digital communications utilised to keep residents informed.</p> <p>A project to provide a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is currently underway but will not be delivered until 2026. In the interim period, the transformation team and ICT are working with the waste service and customer services on options and process redesign to improve case management and introduce improved direct resident communications during phases 2 and 3.</p>
Bring sites	<p>Bring sites have seen a significant increase in usage, and in the context of the staffing issues described elsewhere, the increased collection requirements have been difficult to fulfil diverting supervisor capacity to collect from these.</p> <p>In part, this is likely due to businesses who incorrectly used the domestic collection under the previous sack</p>	<p>The actions described above regarding staff recruitment and retention, also apply here. The bringing forward of staff recruitment from future phases will help to provide the increased level of collection resource needed to manage these sites and maintain more regular collections.</p> <p>It is also noted that the material being deposited includes commercial waste from inside and outside of the district, which is exacerbating the issue. As a result, the council's enforcement</p>

	<p>collection scheme in phase 1 areas, plus changes implemented in neighbouring authorities driving disposal out of their areas.</p>	<p>team are monitoring sites, and a review of such sites will be carried out once all phases have been delivered.</p>
Collection points	<p>Notwithstanding the issues described around containers presented outside gates in areas accessible to livestock, the approved collection policy states that <i>"If the property is in a private footpath, lane, or road, the collection point will, wherever possible, be where the lane or road meets the public highway."</i></p> <p>It has been identified that for phase 2, improvements in communication to residents directly affected by this, must be improved.</p>	<p>Officers will ensure that identification of properties affected by this will be carried out ahead of phase 2, and direct communications issued to ensure residents are fully informed.</p> <p>Crews will also receive additional training on collection points.</p>
Sack Deliveries	<p>Staff assigned to sack deliveries have been diverted to support other collection services, and this has caused delay in some residents in phase 2 and 3 areas receiving their sacks.</p>	<p>Crews were up to date on these ahead of the suspension of deliveries, meaning that some areas are 10 weeks behind the standard schedule. Recovery should be quicker as there is no longer a requirement to deliver to phase one areas. In response to the backlog:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliveries are ongoing and collections are available from Council offices and contact centres.</li> <li>• Additional support is being provided by Streetscene teams to ensure recovery is rapid.</li> <li>• An annual equivalent of sack rolls is being delivered to phase three areas to ensure more support capacity is available during phase two and phase three roll out periods.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The catchup and annual deliveries will be complete by October.</li> </ul>
Flats	<p>Deliveries of containers to flats were carried out in-house in phase 1. On arrival at some properties residents physically prevented containers from being delivered. At others, it was identified that the initial property assessments were incorrect and further access arrangements needed to be planned for.</p> <p>Larger containers were separately procured for flats, deliveries of these ran late at one stage and the arrival of one size of container incorrectly marked up meant that some planned containers were unusable, and a contingency plan needed to be implemented, necessitating reassessment.</p> <p>Commercial properties, specifically care homes, had evidently been receiving domestic collections, they had expected a bin delivery and collections that would not occur.</p> <p>These issues and missed collections led to overflowing bins in some instances.</p>	<p>Phase 2 and 3 flats will continue to be delivered by in house teams with the following mitigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earlier deliveries are being made by manufacturers to prevent gaps in stock in the event of any delivery delays</li> <li>• Waste adviser and supervisor checks have been made on properties with communal storage to confirm initial container assessments</li> <li>• Experience of the previous, phase one, mis-labelled containers ensures that the team have the enhanced experience to respond to any future rapid pivots in container availability and assessment.</li> <li>• Additional in-house resources identified in the event of any disruption to bin deliveries, allowing for a rapid response preventing any delays in later phases.</li> <li>• The Housing Service are supporting the rollout with additional site assessments and support and education to tenants.</li> </ul>

<p>Oversize and undersize container deliveries</p>	<p>Late delivery of the online request forms meant that requests were received after the planned delivery period, which creating a backlog at a time of restricted resource availability.</p>	<p>The provision of the online form came late during the phase one bin delivery period. This has been available since and is already being used for phase two and three areas, well ahead of the communications prompting residents to submit their requests. This allows for planned deliveries ahead of collection commencement.</p> <p>Recovery of the previous backlog continues at this time, prioritising vulnerable residents. This is being delivered by in-house Waste and Streetscene resources supplemented by additional external resources.</p>
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## **Commentary on proposal to postpone phases 2 and 3**

23. Whilst most residents have experienced the expected service, the council would indeed have wished to have experienced, and witnessed, less disruption. The project is perhaps the largest in terms of scale implemented in the district for a generation. Service disruption was expected and was planned for, particularly when taking into account the complexities of delivering such a project in a geography as unique as the New Forest District.
24. However, it is apparent that the scale of service disruption has been in excess of the level deemed acceptable, and there have been a number of incidents that have attracted elevated media attention. For this both officers and members of the cabinet have rightly issued apologies to affected residents and have taken ongoing management steps to address issues as they arose, within the fluid and complex environment of delivering operational services.
25. There continues to be clear programme governance in place, with effective risk management, budget assurance, and operational updates through the Waste Programme Board, and the linked Steering Groups with the frequency of these meetings having increased in tune to the emergence of issues during roll-out.
26. The table in section 22 highlights a summary of significant learning and improvements to the service that have either already been implemented or will be in place ahead of the planned phase 2 roll out.
27. It is anticipated that these actions will significantly reduce service disruption and customer contact to closer to expected levels (recognising that substantial service change will always attract significant demand). Members may therefore consider these sufficient, with necessary governance, monitoring and reporting, and scrutiny by members without implementing a delay. In addition, it is worth noting that Phase 2 delivery is to 16,000 properties compared to 31,000 in phase 1. Correspondingly the numbers of vehicles, staff and new collection rounds are also lower than in phase 1.
28. The current planned phase 2 and phase 3 key milestone dates are:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Phase 2 dates</b>	<b>Phase 3 dates</b>
Resident communication 1	21 July	11 November
Container delivery commences	25 August	19 January

Collections commence	20 October	16 March
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29. A delay to the service roll out is to be considered by Council, such a delay is not without risk and further complications.
30. For the purposes of setting out the implications, an example delay of 4 months is discussed in this section of the report. This takes account of the difficulty in rolling out a new service in the period November to February, with potential impacts of weather and the natural break in services that occurs in the festive period.
31. As highlighted further in the report, it is not immediately clear without detailed contractual discussions with multiple partners, whether this example timeline is feasible or deliverable at this stage. Any costs included are estimates, and ranges are given to illustrate the likely financial implications.
32. If it is not feasible, it must be noted that such a decision could put phases 2 and 3 back for a much more significant period of time. For example, if container/vehicle manufacturers or the container delivery contractor cannot adjust their production/service timelines in the short term, it may result in a much longer lead time for the required equipment or services. Many of the cost implications detailed below would be significantly higher in these circumstances.
33. The most significant consideration to note is that the government have set a deadline, mandated in the Environment Act 2021, of 31 March 2026 for the roll out of food waste to all domestic households. Any delay to phase two or three beyond 31 March deadline will result in New Forest District Council being non-compliant with the legislation. The consequences of such non-compliance would need to be determined via external legal advice, in conjunction with potential reputational damage, over and above that resulting from any customer complaints.
34. Funding of £2.3 million has been provided to NFDC by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to support the implementation of food waste collections by the deadline of 31 March 2026.
35. Communications have already been sent directly to residents regarding the start of phase 2, informing them of key dates. To change the timescales at this stage will require additional and corrective direct communications to residents. There is a risk of confused messaging to residents if the message and timescales are changed when some residents already have containers delivered to

their properties and all residents have received communications to expect delivery of their containers by a certain date. There would also be a cost of around £15,000-20,000 for the re-production and posting of leaflets and letters with the changed dates.

36. The container manufacturer has already delivered the phase two containers into the former Claymeadow depot in Totton. The delivery of the phase three containers is scheduled to commence in December 2025 ahead of deliveries to residents commencing for phase three in January 2026.
37. The possibility of delaying some containers being delivered into NFDC storage sites could be explored but the high demand across the industry as all local authorities work to comply with the Environment Act deadlines means that there is little capacity for manufacturers to adjust production times.
38. Previous conversations with the manufacturer indicated that there would be additional costs of £100,000-150,000 for the delay in the manufacture of containers for phase three. This cost is based on an uplift in unit costs incurred as a result of the delay.
39. Delay of phase 2/3 rollout will have the following implications with regard to container storage:
  - Storage of containers in the stacks that they are delivered in for prolonged period may damage the containers, especially over the winter period where there is likely to be water ingress and further damage from freeze/thaw splitting containers in low temperatures. This may lead to an unquantifiable cost to replace these containers, but to give an indication, loss of 10% of stock would equate to c£55,000.
  - Storage for the containers requires a substantial footprint that comes at a cost. Extension of the rollout programme would require an additional 4 months of storage at Claymeadow and Queensway storage locations. An extended use period of Queensway would delay the intended re-letting of this site, meaning NFDC would continue to be directly liable for Business Rates, and would delay the generation of rental income.
  - Current storage capacity is insufficient to store containers for both phases 2 and 3, meaning that a larger footprint for storage will also need to be identified. There are currently no further options available within the NFDC estate. Commercially rented space has been considered in the past but suitable sites are

scarce and this would likely come at a cost of £50,000-100,000 and there is no site currently identified.

40. The council has entered into a contract with a contractor to provide container deliveries over all three phases. This contract would require amending to accommodate a new timeline. As with the container provision, there is no certainty that there will be industry capacity to move the container delivery period due to the peak in work taking place across the country, driven by legislation change. The container delivery industry has very few available contractors, and alternative options would be extremely limited. The procured contractor is also delivering multiple contracts, and their programme is finely tuned and mapped out for many months.
41. Any cancellation of work due to the contract expiring may still require the full contract payment under the contract terms and conditions at a cost of £260,000. Any agreed movement of work may see the requirement for compensation to be paid. A realistic outcome is that NFDC would have to arrange container deliveries for a readjusted timeline itself. This would require the use of hire vehicles and temporary staff to complete the work in-house, and it can be assumed that a cost at least equal to the contract cost of £260,000 would be incurred.
42. To allow for new wheeled bin-based collections, there is bin lift retrofitting programme under way to prepare the current vehicle fleet for service change. At this stage, once new bin lifts are fitted they are deployed onto the old collection scheme but cause a slower operation as service bins are used to lift the sacks into the rear of the vehicle. Staff are prohibited from manhandling sacks over the lifting equipment due to the personal safety risk from accidentally triggering the lift movement. The use of service bins slows down the collections in comparison to the use of open backed vehicles.
43. At this time the retrofitting programme is exactly matched to service change so the slower operation is manageable within current resources but delaying service change may require additional vehicles and staff to be hired, and additional agency staff used to deliver the sack-based services in phase two and three areas. If the current vehicle retro-fitting programme is paused, it should be noted there is a Europe-wide shortage of bin lifts, and if existing production slots are lost there is no guarantee of being able to access the equipment needed on an adjusted timeline. This would mean hiring in of additional vehicles. This would in turn have an impact on depot capacity and it is possible that this is unfeasible within the current depot footprint.

44. Deliveries of sacks would have to continue for longer than planned in the phase 2 area. This would require additional vehicle and staff resource. It's expected this would have a cost of £66,000 for staff/vehicles and the purchase of the sacks themselves.
45. Hampshire have put in place contractual arrangements for the transfer/disposal of food waste. At the time of writing, it is not known if a delay would have any financial implications which may be passed back to NFDC.
46. The council has already accepted the delivery of the new vehicle fleet for phase 2. Long term storage, especially if these continue to be parked outside over winter without use, will lead to the degradation of their condition, and much of the vehicle warranty period will have passed before they are put to full use if the scheme is delayed. This may have a future cost implication.
47. Additional staff (operations support, waste advisors and customer services teams) have been taken on for the duration of the project on a fixed term basis. There would be a cost for an additional 4 months for these staff to ensure their employment covers the revised roll-out period.
48. As of 2025/26, the council has been guaranteed at least £1.2 million of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding, to support the collection, recycling and disposal of packaging waste. This annual funding is to support "efficient and effective" collection schemes with high levels of recycling capture. The existing sack-based service would not be classed as efficient or effective in these terms, and in 2026/27 this funding would likely be reduced as a result. The exact mechanism of how the funder (Pack UK) will calculate payments on this basis are not currently known.
49. Staff retention – there is a risk that delays in implementation will lead to some staff leaving. As one of the last remaining councils in England still operating a sack collection service, frontline staff in phase 2 and 3 areas have been waiting a long time for the working condition and manual handling benefits that the change will bring. It's notable that we've also recruited staff from other neighbouring Local Authorities since the phase 1 service change. Staff are currently being interviewed for frontline roles in the phase 2 and 3 areas and may have been appointed by the time of this meeting.
50. Feedback from residents has shown strong demand for the new system, with many households welcoming the introduction of bins as

a more reliable, practical and hygienic way of managing waste. Residents are already aware of the changes and have seen communications and preparations taking place across the district, which has raised expectations. Any delay at this stage would risk undermining public confidence, generating unnecessary frustration and potentially leading to reputational damage.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

51. The new waste collection service supports Corporate Plan Priority 2: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world by:
- **Minimising non-recycled waste** through the separate collection of food waste from households.
  - **Cutting vehicle emissions** by using the Bartec system to design more efficient waste collection routes.
  - **Boosting recycling rates** by introducing separate food waste collections and providing larger wheeled bins for recyclables.
  - **Reducing litter and spillages** by replacing sacks with more secure and contained waste collection methods.

### **Options appraisal**

52. The measures being introduced to mitigate the challenges seen in the phase 1 area have been clearly presented in section 22 of this report, and the implications of delaying phases 2 and 3 of the service rollout have also been detailed. The result is a recommendation to proceed with phase 2 as originally planned.

### **Consultation undertaken**

53. Recent consultation has focused on identifying and addressing the challenges associated with the rollout of the new waste collection service. Resident feedback via complaints and comments made to the council is of significant importance to the council. This information is continually under review and is used to make incremental changes.
54. Consultation has also included meetings with representatives of organisations and wider stakeholders working and living in the New Forest.
55. The Waste Management Steering Group has continued to provide strategic guidance, particularly in relation to operational complexities, resident engagement, and service readiness.
56. The Programme Board has overseen the evaluation of key risks, including logistical constraints, communication gaps, and the need for additional resources where needed.

57. Feedback from these groups has been instrumental in refining implementation plans, ensuring that the service remains responsive to community needs while delivering on environmental objectives.

### **Financial and resource implications**

58. The additional costs already approved to support the rollout of phases 2 and 3 are detailed in Appendix 2.
59. Commentary around estimated costs associated with a delay in rollout are documented throughout the report, and summarised below. This is in the context of considerable uncertainty about exact costs as there has not been sufficient time to fully engage with multiple industries (property, vehicle manufacturing, container manufacturing, container delivery) on the implications of a delay. As detailed in section 32, a more significant delay than four months (in the event that a shorter delay cannot be accommodated) would significantly exacerbate these costs.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Estimate cost or range of cost (£)</b>
<b>Additional communications costs</b>	15,000 - 20,000
<b>Container cost increase</b>	100,000 - 150,000
<b>Loss of container stock resulting from storage over winter</b>	40,000 - 70,000
<b>Additional container storage costs (NFDC estate)</b>	60,000
<b>Loss of rental income due to storage overrun</b>	105,000
<b>Additional storage capacity (3rd party)</b>	50,000 - 100,000
<b>Remaining delivery contract costs at contract expiry</b>	260,000
<b>Cost of phase 2 and 3 container deliveries</b>	260,000
<b>Additional hire costs resulting from delay in vehicle retrofitting</b>	40,000 - 50,000

<b>Additional depot capacity requirement due to increase in hire vehicles</b>	Unknown
<b>Additional sack supply and delivery costs</b>	66,000
<b>Waste transfer/disposal costs</b>	Unknown
<b>Vehicle maintenance cost associated with unutilised fleet</b>	Unknown
<b>Extension to temporary staff deployment</b>	120,000
<b>Reduction in EPR income from PackUK</b>	Unknown
<b>Staff retention issues</b>	Unknown
	0
<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>1,116,000 - 1,261,000</b>

60. The range of costs given at the base of the table above do not include the “unknown” factors that have not been possible to quantify at this stage and therefore should be viewed as a minimum level of additional cost to be incurred.
61. It is also of note that DEFRA transition grant totalling of £2.3 million has been received to facilitate the delivery of the new food waste service in accordance with the legislation. It has not yet been ascertained as to whether there would any requirement to repay any or all of this grant, should the Council not meet the 31 March 2026 deadline.
62. In line with the Council’s Standing Orders for Meetings, the related motion on this agenda affects the Council’s approved strategies, policies or budgets, meaning that it must be referred to Cabinet for consideration, before reporting back to Council.

### **Legal implications**

63. The Council is bound by legislation (Environment Act 2021) to roll-out a separate food waste collection service by 31 March 2026. It is unclear what repercussions the government may impose through non-compliance, but any actions could come with severe financial and reputational risk.
64. Detailed discussions on the implications of delays to phases 2 and 3 have not taken place with key partner suppliers. There are a range of potential outcomes from this, from basic contract amendments to the potential need for re-procurement in some cases.

## **Risk assessment**

65. As requested, a risk log is included as Appendix 3 to this report.
66. In the first 2 months of the new service, zero instances of injury due to manual handling or sharps/puncture injuries were reported in the phase 1 area. This is a very encouraging demonstration of the H&S benefits of the move away from sack collection to bins.
67. The key risks of delay to the rollout of phases 2 and 3 could be summarised as follows:
  - Legal – relating to the Environment Act 2021 and contracts
  - Financial – as outlined in the financial section above
  - Deliverability – as described, it is feasible that a short-term delay is not achievable, pushing service change back by 12 months or more.
  - Strategy delivery – delay in achieving the benefits of change as highlighted in the Waste Strategy, for example no improvement in recycling levels, health and safety, or litter left after collection of sacks,

## **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

68. Over 400 tonnes of food waste was collected in the first 10 weeks of the new service. Although no formal data has been collected, participation in this service (known from other areas to be difficult to achieve) has been high, at c70% of all households presenting separate food waste for collection in many areas. This is significantly higher than the expected figure for a service where, nationally, a 55% participation rate is considered to be a good rate engagement rate with the service and is level with the best performing services (WRAP, 2025).
69. The service has also led to improvements in street cleanliness associated with the previous sack service. Streets that would previously have been strewn with litter because of seagull and animal attacks, are now reported as clean after collections have taken place. As highlighted above, a delay in the rollout of phase 2 will delay the realisation of these benefits across the rest of the district.

## **Equalities implications**

70. The equalities impact assessment (EIA) for both the strategy and policy is regularly reviewed on receipt of resident feedback and on learning lessons during the implementation of service change.

Feedback from recent discussions will be considered as part of this regular review process.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

71. None identified.

### **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

72. As described, waste teams and ICT counterparts are continuing to work on the rollout of new ICT systems and identifying improvements that can be made in case management.

### **New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

73. Reducing littering and spillages from sacks will support the aims of the National Park and National Landscape by enhancing the natural beauty and reducing risks to wildlife.

74. In response to concerns raised in the initial roll-out —particularly regarding livestock accessing containers in the open Forest—this report makes it clear that the aim is to minimise animal interference with a set of proposed changes, influenced by forthcoming trials in the affected area. This is being explored further with key partners.

### **Conclusion**

75. The report has presented the size of the challenge to project delivery – not only being one of the last councils in England to move away from sack collections to containers, but also the supporting changes needed in ICT, depots, staffing, and many other significant factors. This is all aimed at increasing recycling, improving staff working conditions and improving the local environment by reducing litter.

76. Participation in food waste collections has been very encouraging, with the 400 tonnes collected so far indicating that if this level of participation is replicated across the rest of the district, it will amount to c6,000 tonnes per annum. This amounts to a 16% reduction in black bag waste being sent for incineration. Most recent statistics on missed collections reported by residents, amount to 0.4% of scheduled collections, and performance has improved since the scheme launch. Each corporate complaint received represents a failing, but these have been received from just 0.16% of households.

77. The report has set out these challenges from phase 1. It is acknowledged that where there has been service disruption, these have had a detrimental impact upon residents, and they must be resolved.

78. The report details the actions being taken to resolve these issues, both in the phase 1 area itself, and in preparation for phase 2 and 3 areas. The actions proposed will ensure that future phases learn from the experience of phase 1. In particular, the move to amend collection policies during panning shows that changes can and will be made when needed.
79. Phase 2 is just over half the number of households in phase 1, with rural based households in more complex locations already receiving collections as part of a dedicated rural collection round.
80. The costs and risks of a delay in phases 2 and 3 are significant, and not without further complication, and are laid out in the content of this report.
81. These factors have led to the recommendations at the top of this report.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion  
Appendix 2 – Waste collection data from phase 1  
Appendix 3 - Waste programme risk log  
Appendix 4 – Summary of Council debate

**Background Papers:**

[October 2024 Cabinet – Waste Programme Update](#)

[July 2022 Cabinet – Waste Strategy](#)

[Waste collection policy](#)

[Report and appendices from Extraordinary Council Meeting 28 August 2025](#)