

**Council– 15 September 2025**

**Report of Cabinet – [3 September 2025](#)**

**Part I – Items Resolved by Cabinet**

**1. Financial Monitoring Report (based on performance April to June 2025 inclusive)**

**Portfolio** – Finance and Corporate / all

**Cabinet Resolution:**

That Cabinet note the latest budget forecasts of the General Fund, HRA, and Capital.

**Cabinet Discussion:**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate presented the report highlighting that it was the first financial monitoring report of the financial year. The purpose of the report was to reflect on the rephasings from the previous year, in particular £896,000 from the General Fund, £1.931 million for the capital programme and £60,000 within the Housing Revenue Account.

Other substantive variations related to the refuge and recycling service, including the Council fully utilising the additional grant from DEFRA of £151,000 to support the rollout of the new service. An additional £150,000 had been agreed by the Section 151 officer to allow the service to start the planning and immediate commencement of the trial of food caddies behind the gates in areas within the perambulation where there were free roaming animals.

The Portfolio Holder reported that he fully endorsed the recommendation within the report, including the allocation of additional funding towards the waste service as covered within the report.

The Assistant Director of Finance in addition, highlighted that the pay award had been agreed with an increase of 3.2%.

A non-Cabinet member questioned the 'behind the gates' trial and sought to understand why the additional expenditure had not been

budgeted and planned for. It was felt by another member that had the audit carried out prior to the introduction of the new service been more comprehensive that the expenditure would have been planned for.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate addressed the points made, highlighting that the council had sufficient reserves on which to draw upon, for what was a major service change and that it was expected that the roll out would be difficult. It was therefore understandable that it would require change and adaptations to address any issues. The council was responding as issues arose and the service was adapting to the problems identified. There were reserves available to afford the changes to the roll out of the waste service.

A non-Cabinet member highlighted that the issues now arising from the roll out of the new service, had been raised in meetings in 2020 and 2021 and that members had received the outcome of the residents survey at a meeting. The top issues raised within the survey was of the proposed waste service centred around accessibility and issues of livestock in the forest.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate noted that the report being considered was about financial monitoring and summarised that there were adequate resources to meet the challenges.

## **Part II – Recommendations to Council**

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

**Portfolio** – Environment and Sustainability

#### **Cabinet Resolutions:**

1. That Cabinet considered the contents of the report, and the summary of the debate at the Extraordinary Council meeting, included at Appendix 4;
2. That Cabinet noted the change in approach to food waste collection during the panning period, whereby residents within the perambulation will be asked to keep food caddies behind gates;
3. That officers would continue to work on a business case to extend the “behind gate” policy beyond panning, and that an “in principle” agreement to this longer-term policy change is given, with the final decision being subject to a business case;
4. That the Waste Programme Board will retain oversight of implementation, and will receive a Phase 2 plan and updated risk assessment;
5. That Cabinet supported further dedicated engagement sessions for ward councillors throughout the phased rollout to support their role within their local communities;
6. That, in considering the motion referred to Cabinet by Council at Appendix 1, the Cabinet noted that the options appraisal in the report identified that phases two and three should proceed as planned, with the mitigations and improvements noted in the action plan in this report; and

#### **Recommended:**

That Cabinet recommend to Council to endorse the Cabinet’s resolutions above, as the correct and proportionate response to the motion.

#### **Cabinet Discussion:**

The Leader clarified that the item followed the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 28 August 2025. In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, she reported she had agreed to include the item on the agenda as a matter of urgency. The urgency

arose from the need for Cabinet to consider the motion referred by Council relating to the roll-out of the Council's new waste and recycling service, and to make recommendations back to Council in view of the financial implications. The urgency was due to the upcoming phase two roll-out and the need to conclude the matters raised by the motion at the Council's next ordinary meeting on 15 September 2025.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability reported he was pleased to present the report with an update on the implementation of the new waste and recycling collection service. The transition was one of the most significant operational changes in decades. It was ambitious, complex and essential, not only to meet the statutory obligations of the Environment Act 2021, but also to deliver a sustainable and modern service for local communities. It was acknowledged that residents had experienced disruption during the phase one roll out. At the Extraordinary Council meeting he had offered his sincere apologies to residents. He understood that there was a degree of frustration and that work was being carried out to resolve the issues as swiftly and effectively as possible, whilst at the same time, not overlooking the advantages of the new service and the progress which had been made to date. Missed collections were reducing and the crews were adapting to the new rounds. This had had an impact across the organisation from front line staff, support services, contractors and officers. Lessons were being learnt from phase 1 and actions taken.

The report also reflected upon the concerns raised by members at the Extraordinary Council meeting last week when constructive feedback had been given from residents and partners. The Portfolio Holder commended the report to Cabinet and asked that the recommendations be endorsed to support the continued roll out of the waste and recycling service to meet the needs of residents and reflected the values of the organisation.

The Strategic Director – Place, Operations and Sustainability reported that he hoped the report was helpful in setting out the recommendations for consideration which were linked to the Extraordinary Council meeting. Appendix 4 detailed the main points arising from the debate. Cabinet were being asked to note the proposed changes in response to lessons learnt, especially in relation to the panning period. £150,000 had been set aside for the first phase trial for the start of panning on 15 September. Officers would continue to work behind the scenes to develop a business case for ongoing service change to address this issue. The Waste Programme Board would continue to retain oversight in considering future phases and would review an updated Risk Assessment.

The recommendations were outlined in the report along with conclusions. The scale of the task in hand was further highlighted and that work was being undertaken for the benefit of the residents of the New Forest.

Cllr M Wade as the mover of the motion presented at Full Council was invited to address the meeting. He reported that all members of the Council had a responsibility to the residents of the New Forest to ensure the delivery of a fit for purpose service. The residents speaking at the Extraordinary Council meeting had not felt they had received a fit for purpose service. It was further highlighted that there were over 900 emails received by customer services waiting responses as well as busy phone lines.

It was felt that the problems experienced by residents should not be repeated during the future phases. Cllr Wade reported he understood that the council was responding to the problems but felt that the roll out had not been properly planned and as a result there was unbudgeted expenditure. The concerns about animals and waste had been raised previously, as well as considering best practice and good communication with residents. It was requested that there be a pause in the service roll out, to review the concerns, put mitigating actions in place and to prove they were successful before rolling out the future phases. It was felt there was time to do this and still meet the requirement for the collection of food waste.

The Leader reported that given the matter had been debated at Full Council and that it was before the Cabinet for consideration, she did not intend to wider the debate outside of Cabinet. The matter would be further considered by all members at the next Full Council meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate reported that any delay to the rollout of the waste and recycling service would be costly and estimated that a delay could be in the region of £2.5 million. It was acknowledged that there had been a shortfall in customer services resource. A short pause to the roll out would not resolve the ICT issues and there would be an impact on contractors, etc with any revised timetable, and the deadline for collection of food waste might not be met which could put the government grant at risk. It was felt that sufficient resources had been made available to address the major concerns with behind the gate collections for some areas.

Other Portfolio Holders supported the approach to proceed with the roll out. It was felt that phase 1 had largely been successful. Changes were being implemented to address concerns. It was anticipated that phases 2 and 3 would have the benefit of lessons learnt from phase 1.

The Leader felt that having considered the learning, mitigations and improvements noted in the action plan in the report, and the options appraisal identifying that phases two and three should proceed as planned. She felt that it was not appropriate to support the motion and asked that Cabinet recommend to Council to endorse the Cabinet's resolutions as the correct and proportionate response to the motion. Cabinet confirmed support to these recommendations.

## **Appendix 1 – Background report to Cabinet**