

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	Recycling & Borough Wide Food Waste Collection
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Manku - Lead Member for Environment, Environmental Services and Open Spaces
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Patrick Hayes – Executive Director Regeneration, Housing and Environment
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Matthew Hooper – Director – Highways and Environment
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	YES
<b>Exempt:</b>	NO
<b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b>	YES
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Kit the Caddy

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for two critical programmes of waste and recycling work that need to be delivered in 2025/6:
- A range of new projects to increase recycling.
  - A proposal setting out how the Council intends to comply with the requirement of the Environment Act 2021 for Local Authorities to undertake weekly borough wide food waste collections. Slough Borough Council is required to deliver this service by 31 March 2026 to all households.

### 2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- a. Agree to the range of recycling promotion activities commencing from April 2025.
  - b. Agree to Option B for a phased borough wide, weekly food waste collection service to commence from November 2025, ensuring that all households and flats are offered a weekly food waste collection by 31 March 2026.
  - c. Agree to the commencement of a competitive procurement process (through the Open Procedure) to identify, procure and enter into a five-year contract (plus an

extension of up to two years) for an external provider to carry out the collection and disposal of weekly food waste borough wide.

- d. Agree to the one-off purchase of 85,000 indoor and outdoor food waste caddies and containers for households and flats, conducted in accordance with the Open Procedure.

### **3. Reasons:**

- 3.1 Households in the UK generate 7.2 million tonnes of food waste annually. It is estimated that up to 40% of residual waste is comprised of food waste. This significant amount of wasted food poses not only the problem of wasted resources, water and energy in production, transportation, and sale, but also in disposal. The Environment Act 2021 became law in November 2021, introducing changes to waste collection so that recyclable household waste (which includes food waste) must be 'collected separately from other household waste'. Food waste itself must be collected at least once a week.
- 3.2 Approving the recommendations detailed in this report will enable the council to meet statutory responsibilities as set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended by the Environment Act 2021. The plans will apply to all homes in England, flats, commercial businesses, hospitals, schools and universities.
- 3.3 Slough has some of the lowest recycling rates in the country. The proposed use of EPR funding and the weekly, separate collection of food waste, will divert food waste from the residual waste stream, which is disposed of at the Grundon's Lakeside incinerator site. The diversion of this type of waste will both decrease disposal costs for the council, is environmentally friendlier and will free up space in residents' grey residual waste bins, as it is estimated that up to 40% of residual waste is made up of food waste.

### **4. Commissioners Review**

Commissioners have reviewed this report and there are no specific comments to add.

### **5. Report**

- 5.1 This report sets out (a) the need to introduce a borough wide food waste collection service, which will have environmental benefits for Slough and its residents in increasing recycling rates and reducing costs, and (b) proposals for use of the 2025/6 Extended Producer Responsibility funding to enable activities to increase recycling.
- 5.2 The Council's Corporate Plan includes the following priorities and our approach to delivering these:
  - A borough for children and young people to thrive;
  - A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives;
  - A cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough.
- 5.3 The regular collection of waste across the borough assists in keeping the town clean and contributes to residents living healthier lifestyles, in clean and safe environments. The Council currently has one of the lowest recycling rates in the country, Slough's recycling rate is 25% compared to the rest of the southeast at 45%. Improved levels of recycling and the separate collection of food waste will

divert this type of waste from the residual waste stream which is both less environmentally friendly to dispose of and is more expensive.

- 5.4 The ethical implications of food waste are also significant when, globally, 30–50% of all food produced is discarded without being eaten. Sending food waste to anaerobic digestion – the process where biomass (plant and animal materials) is broken down by micro-organisms in the absence of air, releasing a methane-rich gas that can be used to generate renewable heat and power and producing nutrient rich digestate for use as a fertiliser – will help to reduce reliance on fossil fuels to generate heat and power.
- 5.5 The separate collection of food waste at the kerbside and its treatment by anaerobic digestion will benefit the climate by reducing the amount of methane gas (a powerful greenhouse gas) emitted from landfill sites. In Slough’s case food waste is currently disposed of in the grey residual waste bin and taken for incineration.

## 6. Options

6.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to the range of recycling activities to be funded by the Extended Producer Responsibility grant which we will receive from 2025/6. All of these activities are targeted at increasing the level of general recycling in Slough to help improve our environment and drive down costs. In addition, it is recommended that Cabinet agree to one of the following options:

### 6.2 Option A – Deliver the phased, borough wide, weekly collection of household food waste in-house

Indicative annual costs have been estimated below for the collection and disposal of household food waste through an in-house option, which will require between 5 / 6 rounds / crews to be deployed borough wide daily. Using DEFRA capital funding the necessary vehicles have already been purchased by the council; in both options below the costs relate purely to vehicle maintenance.

<b>Staffing</b> 5 x drivers 5 x loaders Absence cover (sickness and leave) Catch up weekends (Bank Holidays)	£637,099
<b>Vehicles</b> 4 x 11 tonne 2 x 7 tonne 1 x 7.5 tonne caged tipper	£190,000 Which includes maintenance, fuel, road licensing, insurance and depreciation
<b>Disposal</b> costs are estimated on transportation and disposal at Trumps Farm Chertsey @ £40 a tonne.	£104,000
<b>ANNUAL COST</b>	<b>£931,099</b>

### 6.3 Option B - Deliver the phased, borough wide approach through a third party, preferred provider.

Indicative annual costs have been calculated based on existing contracts and knowledge of waste disposal costs. The below is based on collection from 55,000

households, including flats, and disposal costs. Prices would be subject to annual increase based on CPI, capped at 6%

<b>Staffing &amp; Vehicles</b> 5 x drivers 5 x loaders 5 x vehicles  £515 for vehicle with staff per day (260 days of the year)	£804,000
<b>Disposal</b> costs are estimated on tonnage, transportation, and disposal at Trumps Farm Chertsey @ £15 a tonne.	£39,000
<b>ANNUAL COST</b>	<b>£843,000</b>

6.4 The borough wide scheme will require the weekly collection of food waste from up to 55,000 premises; approximately 40,000 houses and 15,000 flats. The above details the costs of providing the service in-house by the council's waste collection team and indicative costs of a third party providing the same service. Using data from the pilot scheme it is estimated that the borough wide scheme will generate up to 2,600 tonnes of food waste for disposal annually.

6.5 The outsourcing of the service would provide better value for money initially due to more competitive gate fees (disposal costs) currently available to larger commercial waste businesses and lower staffing costs. It is therefore recommended to approve the introduction of option B and outsource the service for at least a 5-year (plus any extension) period.

## 7. Extended Producer Responsibility Funding

7.1 Slough has one of the lowest recycling rates in the southeast at 25%. This places Slough at 330<sup>th</sup> out of a total 343 authorities. The average recycling rate for the southeast is 45% against a UK average of 44%. In Berkshire, Wokingham has the highest recycling rate at 52.9%.

7.2 Slough have recently been notified that, as part of central government's initiative to tax retailers who use fossil based (plastic) packaging, we will receive a grant in 2025/26. The early indication is that this will be in the region of £2.525m.

7.3 What is understood is that the payment above is a year 1 payment and will not necessarily reflect funding in future years. After the first year, payments will be based on the data submitted by Local Authorities allowing DEFRA to index link funding to actual costs. It is also likely that payments will be linked to recycling performance – for this reason (and for the environmental and economic reasons given above) it is logical to use the EPR funding to invest in efforts to drive up recycling.

7.4 In assessing why our recycling rate is low we need to consider whether the facilities and services we are providing are fit for purpose. This includes whether, for example, there are sufficient street based recycling centres and whether we are undertaking effective and consistent communication activity with residents. In addition, the high number of rental properties (and Houses in Multiple Occupation)

and the high churn in the rental market may lead to residents either not understanding the recycling arrangements in the borough or not being in the borough long enough to want to adopt behaviours which lead to wider or deferred benefit. As a result, in addition to encouraging people to recycle we need to look at stronger enforcement options to deter people and businesses from illegally disposing of waste which currently costs us a minimum of £100,000 a year.

- 7.5 The following proposals are all targeted at improving Slough's recycling performance and increasing controls on negative behaviours which impact on our recycling activities:

Item	Timescale	Costs (per annum)	Cost Detail (which all include on costs)
<b>Waste Development Lead</b> Level 8 fixed term post for 2 years. Dealing with national policy and developing local strategic approach to improving recycling rates, generic waste disposal strategy and policy for Slough.	2 year fixed term contract	£66,706	£66,706
<b>Recycling Campaign</b> 2 x recycling officers Communications campaign	2 year fixed term contracts	£152,000	2 x recycling officer posts: 2 year fixed term at level 6. Communications & Marketing: £50,000 towards publicity and promotional costs.
<b>Separation of waste streams - transfer station / HWRC</b> Potential income generating and meets new Environment Act guidance. Operatives will separate waste streams that bring in income e.g. cardboard and wood.	2 x operatives	£74,000	2 x level 4 posts @ £37,000
<b>Separate collection of household card and paper</b> Additional 2 crews required and additional vehicle(s) 2 x drivers 2 x operatives 2 x vehicles 50,000 containers Gate fees	By April 2026 (if no DEFRA exemption granted)	£296,000	Capital costs: £775,000 (from existing capital grant) Revenue costs: £296,000
<b>Enforcement support</b> 2 x enforcement officers CCTV	From April	£150,000	2 x level 7 posts £120,000 Mobile CCTV £30,000
<b>TOTAL (annual spend)</b>		<b>£738,706</b>	

## 8. Pilot Food Waste Collection

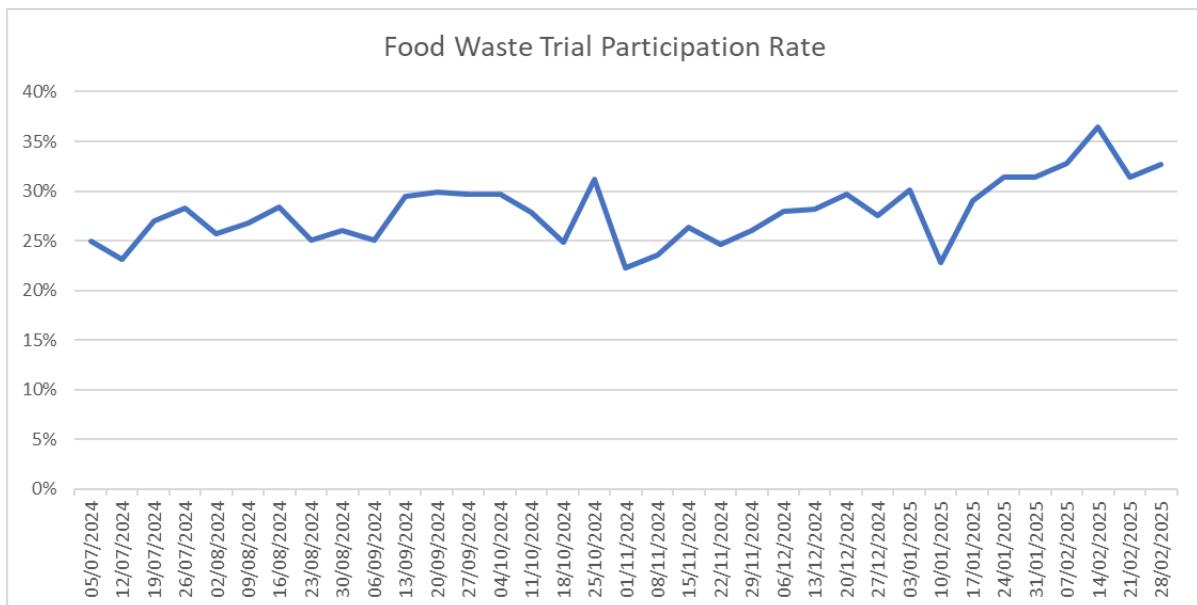
- 8.1 On 01 July 24 the Council launched a pilot food waste collection initiative in five areas of the borough:

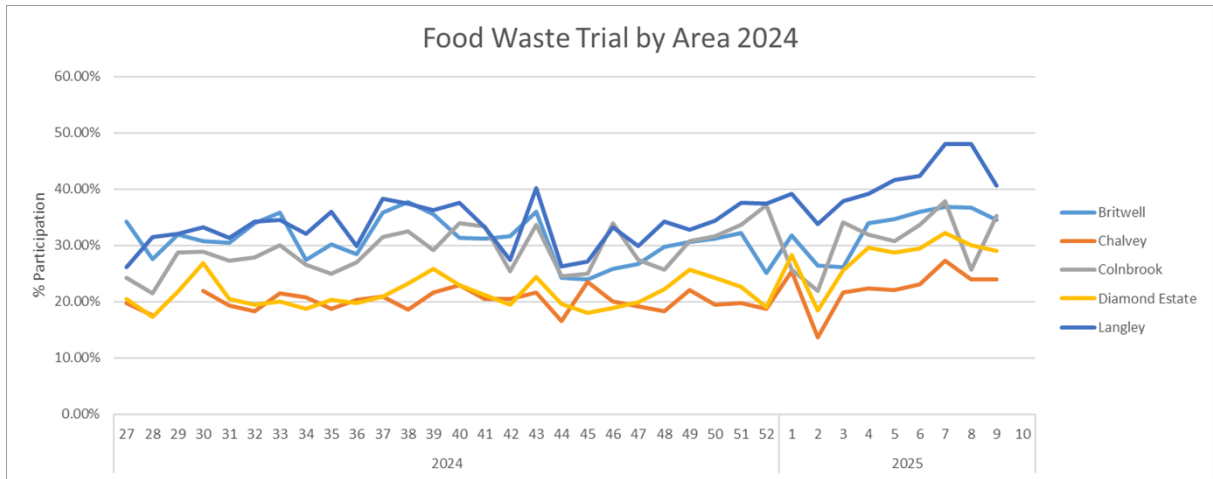
- Britwell;
- Chalvey;
- Diamond Estate;
- Langley;
- Colnbrook.

8.2 The pilot involved approximately 5,100 properties, who were provided with a 23-litre outside food waste caddy and a 5-litre indoor caddy. The collection and disposal of the food waste has been undertaken by Grundon Waste Management Ltd., who have supplied a vehicle and crew of two. The food waste is transported to Trumps Farm in Chertsey, West London for anaerobic digestion. Disposal costs for food waste is currently £10 a tonne. Disposal of residual waste, which is taken for incineration, is currently £112 a tonne.

8.3 The pilot has shown a steady improvement in levels of participation starting at around 25% and increasing to 37% in the highest month, with a general trend of improvement. When looking at the individual 5 areas all have shown an improvement in participation with Langley performing the best with nearly 48% participation in one month. Chalvey has proved the most challenging but, as with the other areas, has improved over the course of the trial with a peak of 32% participation. Other key statistics from the trial are:

- Total tonnage – 166 tonnes of food waste collected to date, averaging 0.68 tonnes a day
- Average caddy weight in kgs – 4.75 kgs
- Number of caddies collected - 49,003





## 9. Collection from Non-Household Municipal Premises (Trade Waste)

- 9.1 All non-household municipal premises in England (such as businesses, schools and hospitals), must make arrangements to have the same set of recyclable waste streams (with the exception of garden waste) collected for recycling or composting. The collection of separate food waste will come into force from 31 March 2025 for these establishments. The Council is not required to provide this service as a statutory service.
- 9.2 The trade waste service currently has 75 paying customers, collecting from 147 sites across the borough. This includes all Slough Borough Council owned sites.
- 9.3 The service will not be able to provide food waste collections from 31 March 2025 as it will neither have the specialist vehicles, staffing nor affordable gate fees for the disposal of the food waste in place to provide the service. Therefore, all existing trade waste customers will need to make arrangements through a third-party commercial provider to have their food waste collected weekly. We will continue to offer a residual and dry recycling collection service to our existing customers.

## 10. New Burdens Funding

- 10.1 The New Burdens Funding was committed by the previous UK Government to assist local authorities with the implementation and running costs of this new recycling initiative. DEFRA confirmed that £295 million was allocated across all local authorities to cover one-off capital costs e.g. vehicles and containers and a payment (Section 31 grants) of £2.1 million was confirmed and received in January 2024 to the Council. The decision regarding revenue funding was expected to be announced in October 2024. To date we have received notification from DEFRA that payment will be made in March 2025.
- 10.2 We have spend of approximately £1.1 million committed against the DEFRA capital funding to date including:
- 7 x vehicles of various sizes and functions, including 6 refuse vehicles to cover the 5 / 6 rounds required for the collection of food waste borough wide, including capacity for a spare vehicle for when vehicles are off the road for their 6-weekly PMI (planned maintenance inspection) service. We have also purchased a 7.5 tonne caged loader for the delivery and maintenance of the 85,000 food waste caddies and containers required to deliver the service.

## **11. Service Delivery – Food Waste**

11.1 Slough residents will be provided with 2 caddies per household, a 23-litre outside caddy and a 5-litre indoor caddy. Flats will be provided with 1 internal caddy and larger communal, outside bin(s). Food waste will be collected weekly on the same day as the normal household waste collection (grey or red bin collection day). Food waste can be placed directly into the caddy or can be placed in plastic bags and deposited in the 23-litre caddy or communal bins.

## **12. Communications Plan**

12.1 A full communications plan will be developed to ensure that all residents are aware when food waste collections will commence in their area at least six weeks before the launch. Caddies will be delivered one to two weeks prior to the go-live date. All communications will use the 'Kit the Caddy' branding, which was extremely successful in the pilot launched in July 2024 as further detailed in Appendix 1. Money from the DEFRA transitional funding will be allocated for the associated costs of this.

## **13. Planning and Mobilisation**

13.1 Additional resource will be required to project plan and manage the delivery of the food waste collection initiative, including a dedicated project manager and additional operatives to ensure the delivery of 85,000 food waste containers to households across the borough. DEFRA transitional funding (revenue) will be used for this purpose, when received.

## **14. Green Waste Collection Subscription Scheme.**

14.1 From April 2025 it is proposed to introduce a concessionary scheme for residents in receipt of pension credit who live alone, to receive a 50% reduction on the green waste subscription charge of £55; paying £27.50 per annum. A free green bin will also be provided to qualifying residents.

## **15. Implications of the Recommendations**

### 15.1 Financial implications

- i) The 2025/26 Budget provides for £1.549m to fund the roll-out of the Food Waste service and to improve the level of general recycling in Slough to help improve the environment and drive down costs. The breakdown of the funding requirement is set out in the table below:

	<b>£m</b>
Extended Produce Responsibility Spend	0.739
Net Cost of Food Waste roll-out	0.592
Other Waste Initiatives	0.218
Total	1.549



- ii) New Burden Funding has been allocated through DEFRA for the rolling out of the compulsory weekly collection of food waste. Slough's capital allocation was £2.1 million through the Section 31 Grant. £1.1 million is expected to be spent on specialist equipment and vehicles including:
- 7 x food waste collection vehicles of various sizes and functions
  - 85,000 caddies and containers.
- iii) On the 4 March 2025, The Council received confirmation of additional funding of £320,533 over the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26. The split of funding across those years and the purposes for which the funding has been received is set out below:

	2024/25		2025/26	
	Container delivery	Project management	Procurement	Communications
Slough Borough Council	£165,640	£67,000.	£2,000	£85,893
	£232,640		£87,893	

- iv) The initial business case was constructed before the recent funding announcement and will need to be developed further. In the 2025/26 budget, the funding of the roll-out of the food waste service was estimated at £0.542m for the full-year. The development of the business case will be assured by the Council's Design authority to ensure that appropriate funding is available, particularly with regard to the procurement of the contractor and the mobilisation of the contract through 2025/26 and beyond.
- v) DEFRA have confirmed that ongoing resource funding from 1 April 2026 will be available but is subject to an agreement through a further spending review. Any additional funding for operational costs will be considered as part of the Council's MTFS.
- vi) The diversion of approximately 2,600 tonnes of food waste from the residual waste stream will save the council up to £245,000 in residual waste disposal costs per annum.
- vii) It is estimated that the boroughwide collection of food waste will cost up to £850,000 per annum. Further detail is stated in section 6 of this report. New Burdens funding will be allocated against these costs if and when such funding is received from central government.
- viii) One off communications costs are estimated to be in the region of £25,000 which will include advertising and publicity, printing and delivery costs. DEFRA transitional funding will be allocated against these costs when received.
- ix) It is anticipated that an extra 1,500 green bins will need to be purchased to cover potential demand from the concessionary green waste collection scheme for residents in receipt of pension credit. The purchase of these bins at a cost of £38,250 will be funded through capital grant funding received from DEFRA.

- x) The introduction of the Green Waste Collection Subscription Scheme is intended to increase participation. The financial implications are negligible given the diversion of residual waste disposal and consequential cost saving.

## 14.2 Legal implications

- i) The duty of local authorities to collect and dispose of household waste is set out in Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Environment Act 2021 was enacted into UK Law in November 2021. This made several changes to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and mandated that all local authorities in England provide a separate, weekly food waste recycling service to all households via the 'Simpler Recycling' legislation that became law in May 2024.
- ii) The date that all local authorities must comply with the regulations and implement a separate, weekly food waste collection and recycling service is 31 March 2025 for commercial food waste and 31 March 2026 for household food waste.
- iii) The Council must ensure it complies with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Environment Act 2021. Furthermore, any funding conditions and reporting required under the funding granted under the EPR for Packaging must be adhered to.
- iv) Recommendation 2.1 (a) Should the Council receive any grant funding, then the Council must ensure that all conditions set out in the grant agreement are fully met. This includes adhering to deadlines for reporting progress, ensuring that funds are used only for the specified purposes, and maintaining proper financial records for auditing purposes. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in the loss of funding or the requirement to repay some or all of the funds. Additionally, the Council must ensure that any contracts related to the project comply with procurement regulations and that the funding is used in line with its statutory obligations.
- v) Recommendation 2.1 (c): The Council must adhere to the Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023. Under the Procurement Act 2023, the Council is legally obligated to deliver value for money; maximise public benefit; share information to allow suppliers and others to understand the Council's procurement policies and decisions; and act, and be seen to act, with integrity.

The Council must ensure that the tendering process complies with the rules for public procurement as contained in the Procurement Act 2023, including adhering to minimum notice periods for tender submissions and ensuring that all interested parties have sufficient time to prepare bids. The Council must also establish a clear and documented evaluation process, ensuring that the award decision is made based on the pre-defined criteria, such as cost, technical ability, and social value, without bias or discrimination. Legal must be instructed to allow advice to be provided on the specification and for an appropriate contract to be drafted.

- vi) Recommendation 2.1 (d): In receiving grant funding from DEFRA, the Council must ensure that all conditions set out in the grant agreement are fully met. This includes adhering to deadlines for reporting progress, ensuring that funds are

used only for the specified purposes, and maintaining proper financial records for auditing purposes. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in the loss of funding or the requirement to repay some or all of the funds. Additionally, the Council must ensure that any contracts related to the project comply with procurement regulations and that the funding is used in line with its statutory obligations.

In respect of the procurement of the 85,000 caddies and containers the Council's CPRs allows Council Officers to use the Open Procedure under the Procurement Act 2023 to procure them.

Under Procurement Act 2023 the prescribed procedure and mandatory requirements for procuring under the Open Procedure are summarised below:

- i) Advertising: The publication of a Find a Tender Service (FTS) Notice or Planned Procurement Notice;
- ii) Conducting the procurement in conformance with the information provided in the FTS Notice and the published selection criteria;
- iii) Time limits imposed by Contracting Authorities on suppliers;
- iv) Publish the contract details notice as required.

The procurement process is compliant with the Procurement Act 2023, the UK public sector procurement principles and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

The Council must maintain an audit trail documenting the procurement process undertaken and how the award decision was arrived at.

Once awarded, the Council must enter into a written contract with the other party and record the contract in the Contract Register

#### 14.3 Risk management implications

- i) **Risk** - We fail to procure a provider for the borough wide food collection service to commence from 31 March 2026. **Mitigation** – deliver service in-house and find additional costs for this
- ii) **Risk** - Specialist vehicles and waste containers are not delivered on time. **Mitigation** – procure well in advance and confirm lead in times with provider.
- iii) **Risk** - New Burdens funding does not cover the revenue costs of the delivery of the service. **Mitigation** – lobby DEFRA for additional funding and prepare business case for possible growth bid for 2026/27.
- iv) **Risk** - The outsourced provider fails to deliver the service to accepted performance targets. **Mitigation** - hold immediate contract performance meeting with provider and issue warning correspondence.
- v) **Risk** - Residents fail to use the food waste collection service and disposal costs remain at current levels and recycling rates fail to improve. **Mitigation** – ensure a comprehensive communications campaign reaches all residents across the

borough, detailing the benefits of separating food waste from normal residual waste.

#### 14.4 Environmental implications

- i) Food waste is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions globally. Significant investment in sustainable collection and disposal is therefore vital in order to respond to the world's climate emergency and to help the council achieve its target of a carbon neutral Slough by 2030.

#### 14.5 Equality implications

- i) All residents in Slough will be offered a weekly food waste collection service. Existing provision to collect and return caddies to and from the point of collection will continue for our more vulnerable and disabled residents as part of the 'assisted collections' scheme. The Council has reviewed the scope of the project as outlined within this report and considers that the proposals have no direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

#### 14.6 Procurement implications

- i) Cabinet approval is required to go out to tender as the contract value is in excess of £500K. Cabinet approval will also be required to appoint the preferred supplier.
- ii) It is recommended to use the Open Procedure under the Procurement Act 2023. The Council must ensure that they achieve Best Value under this procurement.
- iii) The procurement process will be compliant with Procurement Act 2023, the UK public sector procurement principles and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- iv) The Council must maintain an audit trail documenting the procurement process undertaken and how the award decision was arrived at.
- v) The Council will enter into a written contract with the chosen supplier and record the contract in the Contract Register. The Council will also need to publish the award of the contract and if relevant the contract in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023

### **14. Background Papers**

None

## Appendix 1

# I'm KIT the caddy!

## I love the taste of your food waste!



**Kit the caddy is here!**

You have received two Kits today - the little one for inside and the big one for outside.

From 1 July we will be collecting Big Kit weekly on the same day as your red and grey bins.

All you need to do is pop Big Kit next to where you put your red and grey bin and we will empty it.



## YUM YUM I love any food!

From cheese to chapatis, peelings to pakora, banana skins to bones, noodles to nuts, yoghurt to Yorkshire pudding and much more, I love the taste of your food waste.

# BLEUCH!

Anything that isn't food makes me sick including garden waste, pet waste and packaging.



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## Remember

We are collecting all your food waste weekly on your normal bin day from 1 July.



You can even put your food waste in a thin bin bag before you put it in Little Kit or Big Kit to save on smells!

For more information  
[www.slough.gov.uk/foodwaste](http://www.slough.gov.uk/foodwaste)

[www.slough.gov.uk](http://www.slough.gov.uk)  
**Slough**  
Borough Council