

**SUBJECT: GROUNDS MAINTENANCE, STREET CLEANSING AND
WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES**

DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To summarise the outcomes of the three ‘all Member’ workshops that considered what the focus and content of the ground’s maintenance, street cleansing and waste collection services will be from September 2026 when the current arrangements end. This work was in advance of endorsement by Executive and the development of the new specifications.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The two contracts for waste collection and grounds maintenance / street cleansing will come to an end on 31st August 2026.
- 2.2 These contracts have been in place since 2006, and although variations have been made since that time, it is necessary and appropriate to carry out a full review of the specifications so that the services we deliver from September 2026 reflect the council’s strategic priorities, changes in legislation, and accepted best practice.
- 2.3 All of this is against a background of ever-increasing demand on limited budgets and unpredictable inflation, meaning that strategic priorities and aspirations have to be finely balanced with managing the potential for increased costs.
- 2.4 Critically, the lead-in time for procuring vehicles is currently two years, hence the need to start work now, and to follow a challenging timeline from hereon.

3. Background

- 3.1 The contracted arrangements for waste collection services and for (joint) grounds maintenance / street cleansing terminate on 31st August 2026.
- 3.2 The waste services contract includes the emptying of wheeled bins / collection of purple sacks from all domestic properties for residual waste, mixed recycling and garden waste. They also include the collection of clinical waste, and bulky waste for residents on means tested benefits.
- 3.3 Grounds maintenance services are the full range of services required for green spaces, including tree maintenance, tree planting, verge and amenity grass mowing, shrub bed maintenance, maintenance of public parks and open spaces,

weed spraying, cemetery maintenance and burials, play area inspections and minor repairs. Also included is (recharged) works on behalf of the Council's Housing Directorate and some aspects of work for Lincolnshire County Council. These are included so as to ensure a joined-up and seamless service in a street scene setting, and to maximise efficiency.

- 3.4 Cleansing services include routine and reactive mechanical sweeping, litter picking, emptying litter and dog bins, removal of abandoned vehicles, graffiti and fly tips.

- 3.5 Current lead-in times for procuring many commercial vehicles are much longer than they were, approximately two years, but dependent on the type of vehicle. This means that however the services are delivered from September 2026, orders for vehicles will need to be placed by around September 2024. This dictates a challenging timeline for the Council to design what the services will look like post 2026.

- 3.6 There are also significant financial challenges, as costs escalate and demands on the Council's services increase. Care is required to specify services that will meet our customers' needs, legal requirements, and strategic aims (including the environmental agenda) whilst managing the significant risk of rising costs.

4. All Member Workshops

- 4.1 Three 'all Member' workshops were held, on 28th September 2022, 31st October 2022 and 30th January 2023.

- 4.2 Workshop 1 provided Members with background information, and a briefing on the financial challenges and other challenges facing the Council, such as the introduction of separate paper and card collections, and food waste collections. It set out the timeline for the following two workshops and formal decisions.

- 4.3 The slides from workshop 1 were circulated to all Members after the meeting.

- 4.4 Workshop 2 concentrated on Members' high-level priorities, such as environment, quality, staff terms and conditions, social value, in order to inform development of workshop 3 and wider development work. Members were unanimous in their wish to see 'being greener / environmental issues' as a high priority in service development. There was a clear acceptance of the need to prioritise waste services, with reference to new legislation as mentioned in 4.2 above and the environmental impacts that waste collection arrangements have.

- 4.5 A summary of the outcomes of workshop 2 was shared with all Members after the meeting.

- 4.6 Workshop 3 focussed on specific issues, informed by the strategic discussions at the previous workshop. This gave Members the chance to expand on their vision for those strategic priorities, and to raise any specific operational issues that they would like to see considered.

- 4.7

A summary of workshop 3 was circulated to all Members after the meeting. Members were invited to pass on any other specification – related comments they may have, within the few weeks following the meeting.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Alongside other work required to ensure arrangements are in place by September 2026, work will soon start on writing the new specifications. This work will be informed by the workshop discussions and efforts will be made to include issues raised by Members wherever possible, practicable and with reference to financial challenges. The Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place will retain an overview throughout the specification writing process to provide direction and comment.
- 5.2 A summary of the final specifications will be presented to Policy Scrutiny Committee and Executive in autumn 2023.

6. Strategic Priorities

6.1 Let's enhance our remarkable place

These services contribute significantly to our remarkable place in visual and environmental terms. Some examples are: Street cleansing operations (most notably the daily early morning city centre full cleanse), removing graffiti and fly tips, ensuring litter bins are available for use, ensuring streets are clean after waste collections, verge mowing, parks maintenance, tree maintenance, keeping our play areas clean and safe, maintaining sports turf for safe use, ensuring grounds maintenance operations are in accordance with the Council's *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* and *Wildlife and Countryside Act* duties, maintaining our public parks and open spaces so that they are clean and safe for Lincoln's residents and visitors to enjoy.

6.2 Let's address the challenge of climate change

With reference to section 6.1 above, these services contribute towards the Council's climate change aspirations, and this is an opportunity to ensure that climate benefits are maximised, so far as is practicable, in terms of the services delivered (such as rewilding certain grassed areas, tree maintenance) and how they are delivered (use of electrical hand tools, reduction in use of single use plastics, most efficient rounds to reduce use of diesel).

6.3 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

Our waste collection services are designed to ensure they are accessible to all residents. This includes assisted collections, free of charge bulky item collections for people on means tested benefits and free of charge collections of clinical waste. Our parks and open spaces are free to use, well managed spaces for everyone's use. They are places to enjoy fresh air, to de-stress, get exercise, meet people, play, build skills and knowledge, to take part in community events and volunteering. They are wonderful city assets that provide mental and physical health benefits for all.

6.4 Let's drive inclusive economic growth

A clean, green city is an attractive place for business to grow and thrive.

7. **Organisational Impacts**

7.1 Finance

As presented in all three workshops, cost management will be essential throughout this project, given the financial climate and the scale of these services. There are no financial implications relating directly to this report, but the development of specifications and terms and conditions will by necessity give due serious consideration to managing potential cost increases.

7.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal or procurement issues relating to this report.

7.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

There are no Equality, Diversity and HR implications relating to this report. Any service changes will give due consideration to E,D and HR at the appropriate time.

7.4 Significant Community Impact

These services impact the community regularly and visibly. Any changes made have the potential to impact the community. Decisions taken about changes to specification will take into account community impact as well as environmental, practical and financial implications.

8. **Risk Implications**

8.1 The arrangements for these services end on 31st August 2026. The Council has no legal option but to make new arrangements from that date.

8.2 If the current specifications were continued beyond 2026 they would be operationally outdated and not fit for purpose into the future, particularly in terms of technological and environmental considerations.

8.3 In reviewing the specifications there is a risk of the service costs increasing, over and above inflation levels. Cost management is an essential element of the project,

as well as incorporating, where possible, flexibility to change and grow the services in the future when budgets permit.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Members consider the report and make known their comments.

Is this a key decision? Yes/No

Do the exempt information categories apply? Yes/No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? Yes/No

How many appendices does the report contain? 0

List of Background Papers: All Member workshop presentations and reports

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