

SUBJECT:	WASTE COLLECTION & STREET CLEANSING SPECIFICATIONS (FOR NEW CONTRACTS FROM 1/9/2026)
DIRECTORATE:	COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the specification for the waste collection and street cleansing contract prior to commencing procurement, with specific reference to comments received in the All-Member workshops.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has two contracts for street scene services: street cleansing and grounds maintenance, and waste collections. Both of these contracts end on 31st August 2026. Work has commenced on procuring new contracts which will commence on 1st September 2026. They will be realigned and packaged as two separate contracts: waste (which includes recycling and other domestic waste streams) and street cleansing, and a separate grounds maintenance contract.
- 2.2 The work involved is extensive, and includes reviewing and updating all the specifications for the full range of works that will be delivered as part of the new contracts.
- 2.3 This has involved consultation with all Members, as well as reviewing the specifications against changes in law, changes in best practice and environmental awareness and 'lessons learned', as well as trying to avoid significant increases in costs.
- 2.4 The waste / cleansing specifications are now drafted and are extensive. A summary is attached as Appendix A for Committee's information. The summary matches the new specifications to feedback received from Members in the All-member workshops that took place in late 2022 / early 2023. The review has considered and rewritten every requirement within the current specifications. The changes in Appendix A are just those material changes which may be noticeable to service users. Many other changes have been made in the interests of cost control, clarity, ease of navigation, ease of operational use and understanding.
- 2.5 The grounds maintenance specification is still in development, as it is programmed to go out to tender in mid-2024. That specification will be brought before Members in a separate report.
- 2.6 Of special note, this report also draws attention to the fact that the Council will require its contractors to pay their staff in accordance with the Real Living Wage as

a minimum (currently £10.90 per hour). This will relate to both the waste /cleansing and the grounds maintenance contracts.

3. Background

- 3.1 These contracts have been in place since 2006, and although variations have been made since that time, it was necessary and appropriate to carry out a full review of the specifications so that the services the Council delivers from September 2026 reflect the Council's strategic priorities, changes in legislation, and accepted best practice.
- 3.2 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 significant potential for increased costs.
- 3.3 Recognising that specialist vehicles are required, and that the lead-in time for procuring the vehicles necessary is currently two years, there is a need to commence procurement in November 2023.
- 3.4 Waste services include 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 both charged and free (free for residents on means-tested benefits).
- 3.5 Cleansing services include routine and reactive mechanical sweeping, litter picking, emptying litter and dog bins, removal of abandoned vehicles, graffiti and fly tipping clearances.
- 3.6 These are statutory services, highly visible, and make a difference to our residents and the street scene, day in and day out. It is vital that we specify the works to meet our legal duties and our customers' needs, to reflect the Council's strategic aims (including the environmental agenda), to encourage efficient operations, and all while managing the significant risk of rising costs.
- 3.7 However, specification development is just one element of this significant project. There are a number of work streams, involving officers across the organisation, that are making good progress against a challenging timeline. These include data collection and verification, Terms and Conditions of contract, ensuring a compliant procurement process, and consultation with all services that interact with these services.
- 3.8 At the start of the consultation programme, All-member workshops were established. Following the All-Member Workshops, officers committed to presenting a summary of the final specifications to Policy Scrutiny Committee and Executive in autumn 2023.

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 potential introduction of separate paper and card collections, and food waste collections. It set out the timeline for the following two workshops and the formal decisions that would be required.
- 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 from 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 the outcomes from 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. Specification Development

- 5.1 Over the past 5 months, officers have held an intensive series of focussed workshops, each looking at a specific area of the services, and referencing the current contract arrangements, changes in law, best practice, customer expectations, changes in technology available, 'lessons learned', and importantly, how we could contain costs and maximise our cost control. The outcomes of the All-Member Workshops were considered in these workshops.
- 5.2 Appendix A summarises the resulting material changes to the contracts, referring them to Members' aspirations from the workshops.

6. Real Living Wage

- 6.1 The Council is a recognised 'Living Wage Employer', accredited by the Living Wage Foundation. To be accredited, an employer has to have plans in place to pay its contractors the Real Living Wage when contracts are renewed, as well as to pay its direct employees the Real Living Wage.
- 6.2 It is therefore a requirement of the Council's accreditation that it makes the Real Living Wage payment a requirement of both the waste / cleansing and the grounds maintenance contracts.

7. Strategic Priorities

7.1 Let's drive inclusive economic growth

A clean city is an attractive place for businesses to grow and thrive.

7.2 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.

7.3 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.

7.4 Let's address the challenge of climate change

Waste services can contribute significantly towards the Council's climate change aspirations, both in terms of the waste materials collected and recycled, and the efficiency of the operations themselves. This is an opportunity to ensure that climate change benefits are maximised, as far as is practicable, in terms of maintaining reliable recycling and composting collections to maximise recycling and minimise contamination, and how they are delivered by use of efficient and clean vehicles.

8. Organisational Impacts

8.1 Finance

As presented in all three All-member workshops, cost management is essential throughout this project given the financial climate and the scale of these services. The development of specifications and terms and conditions has, by necessity, given serious consideration to managing areas of potential cost increases.

The specifying of the Living Wage requirement is likely to have financial implications. It isn't possible to predict the scale of this, although a check of the current recruitment market seems to show that most of the jobs involved are being paid at Living Wage level or above already.

After following the required procurement processes, and a final price being determined, this will need to be factored into the Council's overall medium term financial plan. It is likely to have significant implications, but these will not be known until tenders have been received and evaluated.

8.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

In so far as it is simply presenting the specification for work, there are no legal or procurement issues relating to this report. Officers from Procurement and Legal

services are members of the project board to ensure that the council is fully legally compliant in all regards.

8.3 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

An Equality Analysis is included at Appendix B. There are no negative impacts as a result of these specification changes.

8.4 Significant Community Impact and/or Environmental Impact

These services are high profile and impact the city's residents directly, and the street scene, routinely. They currently enjoy high satisfaction rates and are generally considered to be reliable and effective.

Environmental impacts have been considered throughout the specification development process, in terms of the services provided, and the way they are provided. This is set out in Appendix A.

By having reliable waste/recycling collection services, the Council makes it easier for Lincoln's residents to recycle and compost their waste, and to minimise residual waste. Appropriate street cleansing arrangements keep the city's streets and relevant land clean, making a better environment for people and for wildlife.

9. Risk Implications

- 9.1 Throughout the specification development process, officers have weighed legal requirements, Members' strategic and operational aims, customer expectations and the need for close cost control. The resulting specifications ensure that the Council is fully legally compliant and will continue to provide reliable services, ensuring an appropriate degree of flexibility, whilst minimising risks of escalating costs. It isn't possible to predict what prices will be submitted by bidders, especially given the current financial climate, but all efforts have been made to avoid unnecessary increases, and to ensure maximum cost control in the resulting contract.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 Members consider the report and make known their comments.

Is this a key decision?

Yes

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

Two

List of Background Papers:

All Member workshop presentations and reports

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