

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Director of Environment and Community Services, Geoff Field
Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Peter Gavigan
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	16 July 2025
Title:	Simpler Recycling – Legislation changes for Waste Streams
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	A successful and ambitious town
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-urgent report

Proposed decision(s)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Executive notes the following statutory changes to the household waste refuse collection service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly food waste collections service to be implemented from 31st March 2026. • Fortnightly paper and card recycling collection to be implemented from 31st March 2026. • Fortnightly microfilm plastics collection to commence from 31st March 2027. 2. That Executive note the estimated capital and revenue funding required to implement the statutory services above, and the proposed methods of funding the required costs. 	

Executive summary

This report outlines the Council's statutory requirement to implement the new Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Simpler Recycling legislation changes to the household waste collection service and sets out the required funding:

- To commence weekly implementation of food waste collections for all households from 31st March 2026.
- To commence fortnightly implementation of a separate household collection for paper and card from 31st March 2026.
- To commence with the fortnightly collection of microfilm plastic from households from 31st March 2027.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 To inform Executive of the following statutory changes to the household waste collection service:

- Weekly food waste collections service to be implemented from 31st March 2026.
- Fortnightly paper and card recycling collection to be implemented from 31st March 2026.
- Fortnightly microfilm plastics collection to commence from 31st March 2027.

1.2 To inform Executive of the capital and revenue funding required to implement the statutory services above and the proposed funding mechanisms to provide this.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	This report supports delivery of this ambition by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the amount of household waste recycling. - Improve in education in relation to waste minimisation.
A healthy Place	This report supports delivery of this ambition by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting and improve our environment by encouraging household recycling initiatives.
Safe and resilient communities	This report supports delivery of this ambition by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting new recycling initiatives and working with the community.

Delivering best value	<p>This report supports delivery of this ambition by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adhering to the corporate procurement guidelines and utilising the best value frameworks for the purchasing of required materials and equipment.
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2. Recommendations

2.1 That Executive notes the following statutory changes to the household waste refuse collection service:

- Weekly food waste collections service to be implemented from 31st March 2026.
- Fortnightly paper and card recycling collection to be implemented from 31st March 2026.
- Fortnightly microfilm plastics collection to commence from 31st March 2027.

2.2 That Executive note the estimated capital and revenue funding required to implement the statutory services above, and the proposed methods of funding the required costs.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 The Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has made the following legislative changes mandatory:

- A weekly household food waste collections service to be implemented from 31st March 2026.
- A separate fortnightly household collection service for paper and card to be implemented by 31st March 2026.
- The fortnightly collection of microfilm plastic from households by 31st March 2027.

4. Background and relevant information

Food Waste Collection:

4.1 As cited in 3.1 above, Middlesbrough Council is required to commence with weekly food waste refuse collections by 31st March 2026.

4.2 DEFRA has recently distributed capital funding to 251 local authorities.

4.3 Middlesbrough Council initially received funding from DEFRA for the purchase of receptacles (to be provided to households) and vehicles as follows:

- £930,834 (£127,071 for kitchen caddies, £292,263 for kerbside caddies and £511,500 for vehicles).
- Additional funding of £145,160 was then received from DEFRA (which can be allocated to both caddies and vehicles as required), totalling £1,075,994

- A Transitional Resource Grant has also been received of £343,617 from DEFRA to support the delivery of introducing weekly food waste collections (for container delivery to households, project management, procurement and communications).
- DEFRA have yet to confirm if any additional revenue funding will be provided. In order to begin implementation, it must be assumed that they expect the Council to use the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) grant (detailed in paragraph 4.18) to cover any remaining costs.

4.4 To meet the statutory food waste collection implementation date of 31st March 2026, the Council has conducted a joint procurement exercise with Redcar and Hartlepool Councils to purchase the required vehicles to ensure best value and timely delivery.

4.5 Due to expected timescales for vehicle deliveries the new food waste service will commence implementation from 31 March 2026.

4.6 Each household will be provided with the appropriate food waste receptacles (an internal kitchen 5 litre caddy and an external 23 litre caddy). Larger households will be able to request to order more than one external caddy. It is proposed that we will not charge residents for additional and replacement / stolen caddies. It is proposed that the Council will provide bin liners to residents free of charge for the internal caddies for approximately one year.

4.7 Revenue costs to the Council – please see costs in table below:

- As noted above we are awaiting revenue funding from DEFRA, however this is expected not to cover the full revenue costs for the operational service.
- Due to the increased number of vehicles required, two additional Fleet Fitters are needed within Fleet Services to comply with the vehicle O licence obligations.
- Additional refuse service staff are required (18 Loaders and 6 Drivers). These additional staff will be required to start in April 2026 to allow for training in advance of the service commencing.
- Waste Disposal costs will be incurred.
- Internal caddy bin liners are to be purchased and delivered to all residents free of charge for approximately one year (propose to provide one bin liner per week to each household and the cost for this is included in the table at 4.8 below).

4.8 Capital costs to the Council – please see costs in table below:

- Food waste vehicles .
- Food waste receptacles.

Food Waste Revenue Costs			
Detail	Cost / estimated cost	Funding received	Estimated Council funding required
	£	£	£
Fleet Maintenance Costs (two additional fitters)	104,772	0	104,772

Labour (6 rounds)	794,898	0	794,898
Temporary cost Implementation (delivery, procurement, comms)	343,617	343,617	0
Internal caddy bin liners <i>Based on estimated cost of 1 bag @ 0.05p per week for one year</i>	156,000	0	156,000
Fuel	24,000	0	24,000
Waste Disposal	10,000	0	10,000
Total Revenue	1,433,287	343,617	1,089,670
Food Waste Capital Costs			
	£	£	£
Vehicles	1,017,331	656,660	360,671
Receptacles	455,334	419,334	36,000
Total Capital	1,472,665	1,075,994	396,671

Paper and card recycling

4.9 The implementation of fortnightly collection of separate paper and card recycling is to commence by 31st March 2026.

4.10 Additional vehicles will be purchased for this new collection service, to meet the statutory legislation for commencing the service.

4.11 Suitable collection receptacles will need to be provided to households in advance of the collection service commencing and will be purchased in line with the relevant procurement framework.

4.12 All households will be provided with a new 240 litre bin (this will be a black bin with a red lid) for paper and card collection, with the option for smaller households to change this to a smaller 140litre bin.

4.13 The current blue 240 litre recycling bin (which is a black bin with a blue lid) which all households have already will then become the plastics/glass/tin recycling bin.

4.14 Revenue costs to the Council – please see costs in table below:

- Additional refuse staff required. These additional staff will be required to start in April 2026 to allow time for training ahead of the service commencing .
- Waste disposal costs - it is expected with the introduction of the separation of paper and card recycling that contamination levels will reduce and therefore waste disposal costs will be monitored.
- Delivery of wheeled bins to all residents will be combined with the delivery of food waste receptacles. It is envisaged that deliveries will take place from April 2026.

4.15 Capital costs to the Council – please see costs in table below:

- Additional recycling vehicles x6. Due to the extensive lead in time for the delivery of vehicles, it is necessary to place the orders and fund from the current Fleet Services Capital Budget. It is not expected that DEFRA will provide any grant to cover this cost. This has significantly reduced the remaining Fleet Services capital resource, therefore it will be necessary to review the programme for the future purchase of all vehicles across the Council.
- 240 litre second bins (black bin with a red lid) for paper and card collections, with the option for smaller households to change to a 140litre bins.
- Communal bins.

Paper / Card Recycling Revenue Costs			
Detail	Cost / estimated cost	Funding received	Estimated Council funding required
	£	£	£
Temporary cost of implementation (delivery, procurement, comms)	150,000	0	150,000
Recycling sacks for households without access to a communal recycling bin	24,000	0	24,000
Labour (6 rounds)	794,898	0	794,898
Fuel	30,000	0	30,000
Waste Officer	53,916	0	53,916
Ongoing Bin Deliveries	136,974	0	136,974
Total Revenue	1,189,788	0	1,189,788
Paper / Card Recycling Capital Costs			
Detail	Cost / estimated cost	Funding received	Estimated Council funding required
	£	£	£
Vehicles	1,350,000	0	1,350,000
Wheeled bins	1,434,000	0	1,434,000
Communal bins	45,000	0	45,000
Total Capital	2,829,000	0	2,829,000

4.16 As a result of the new statutory waste legislation outlined above, DEFRA announced the requirement for enhanced accurate data collection, analysis and reporting for compliance to the new legislation. In order to meet this requirement, an additional Waste Officer post is essential. The revenue cost for this post is included in the tables above.

4.17 In addition to the costs listed above, there will be one-off costs incurred within the Fleet service in order to be compliant with the Operator's Licence requirements as a result of the increase of 13 new refuse vehicles for the food waste and paper / card recycling collection services. Costs are currently being established for the potential expansion of the Fleet workshop into a vacant shed adjacent to the current workshops (estimated at approximately £200,000-£300,000 for structural building works and

installation of power, water and drainage supplies, etc.) and a new ramp and pit are required (estimated at approximately £150,000). When finalised the costs relating to this will be considered as part of the review of the Council's Capital Programme which is currently being carried out and this will be subject to the appropriate approval by Executive and/or Council as required.

- 4.18 The Council has received an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging payment of £3,367,000 for 2025/26 from DEFRA in line with the new household waste recycling legislation covered in The Environment Act 2021. This is towards estimated net efficient costs associated with collection and disposal of household packaging waste from kerbside and communal collections, waste brought to Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs). The Government have confirmed as part of the Spending Review 2025 published on 11 June 2025 that local authorities will continue to receive EPR funding, however the level of funding in future years has not yet been confirmed.

Microfilm plastic recycling collection

- 4.19 Microfilm, often containing polyester-based film and flexibles is treated as plastic material and must be separated from general waste. This will be collected from households by 31st March 2027 on a fortnightly basis.
- 4.20 At this stage it is not expected that any additional vehicles or receptacles will need to be purchased in order to implement the microfilm plastic recycling collection.
- 4.21 For each of the statutory changes to the refuse waste collections listed above, a full communications plan will be developed in order to provide advance notice and recycling education to residents, which will include mediums such as leaflets, social media campaigns and posters, etc.
- 4.22 A further update will be provided to Council when DEFRA release further guidance.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

- 5.1 The Executive Member for Environment is aware of the new legislation and service delivery requirements.
- 5.2 Ward Member engagement sessions will be delivered to confirm the processes of the new services.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

- 6.1 There are no other potential alternatives as the Council is statutorily required to comply with the DEFRA legislation listed above.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	Section 4 above provides details of the total capital and revenue costs of implementing the statutory changes.. Some of the costs detailed above have been covered from

DEFRA grant funding and existing Council funding within the current Capital Programme.

There are an estimated £2.279m remaining annual revenue costs that will be required to be incurred from 2026/27 onwards as detailed below. The Government have confirmed as part of the Spending Review 2025 published on 11 June 2025 that local authorities will continue to receive EPR funding and it is proposed that this will be used to cover the annual revenue costs arising from this. This will be included in the next review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan which is planned to be submitted to Executive in September.

REVENUE	2026/27
	£
Food Waste-Operatives	794,898
Food Waste-Fuel	24,000
Food Waste-Bin Liners	156,000
Food Waste- Disposal	10,000
Paper & Recycling-Operatives	794,898
Paper & Recycling-Delivery & Communications	150,000
Paper & Recycling-Fuel	30,000
Paper & Recycling-sacks	24,000
Ongoing Bin Deliveries	136,974
Fleet Fitters	104,772
Waste Officer	53,916
Total Revenue Required	2,279,458

There is an estimated £1.515m of Council capital resource required to enable the purchase of bins in advance of the implementation deadline (detailed below). This will be initially funded in 2025/26 from the existing approved Capital Programme by utilising the remaining £1.331m of funding from the reduction in the capital programme of £2.931m relating to the Children's Services Financial Improvement Plan scheme detailed in the 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Outturn report that was presented to Executive for approval on 11 June 2025, with the remaining capital funding required being provided by minor reprogramming of existing Council capital funding within the current capital programme.

CAPITAL	2025/26
	£
Food Waste-Communal Bins	36,000

	Paper & Recycling-Wheeled Bins	1,434,000
	Paper & Recycling-Communal Bins	45,000
	Total Capital Required	1,515,000
	<p>The contract to provide the receptacles will be directly awarded via a utilising framework.</p> <p>The Council capital funding for the changes required to the Fleet workshop as detailed in paragraph 4.17 will be considered as part of the review of the Council's Capital Programme which is currently being carried out and this will be subject to the appropriate approval by Executive and Council as required.</p>	
Legal	<p>The changes in household waste refuse collections are in line with the updated statutory legislation of The Environment Act 2021, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplifying recycling. • Mandatory weekly food waste collection. • Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). 	
Risk	<p>The only risk is to not comply with the legislation. In order to address this risk, projects are underway to implement these changes.</p>	
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	<p>Please see Impact Assessment at appendix A. No protected groups will be affected by the decision.</p>	
Reducing Poverty	<p>The proposed decision does not impact upon Reducing Poverty.</p>	
Climate Change / Environmental	<p>The changes in refuse collection are in line with the Council's Climate Change / Environmental aspirations as they will reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and increase recycling.</p>	
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	<p>The proposed decision does not impact upon Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers.</p>	
Data Protection	<p>Not applicable. The proposed decision does not involve the collation / use of personal data.</p>	

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
<u>Food Waste Collection</u>	MBC Procurement Team and other procurement teams	July 2025

Order food caddies and arrange Waste Disposal contract	from neighbouring Local Authorities	
<u>Paper and card recycling</u> Undertake procurement exercise for receptacles.	MBC Procurement Team	August 2025
<u>Microfilm plastic recycling</u> Scope requirements for implementing the service.	Environment Waste Team	August 2026

Appendices

1	Equality Impact Assessment
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
N/A	N/A	N/A

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