



# Garden Waste Business Plan

2025/2026

September 2024

## Executive Summary

West Lindsey currently runs a fortnightly collection for refuse and recycling to circa 41,000 properties through a wheeled bin service. In addition, a weekly bagged service is provided for c2000 properties in the South West Ward, these properties cannot have wheeled bins for logistical reasons.

In 2017, West Lindsey introduced an annual subscription for green waste collections (previously free since 2010); the charge was introduced in order to introduce a 'user pays' ethos as many residents felt they did not want or need the service but were subsidising it through their Council Tax. Since its introduction, the service has been very popular and outperformed original business case predictions. The subscription to the service has been £44 per bin in the 2024 season for 18 collections per year, closing down over the winter period due to lack of waste being produced, the price increased from £39 in order that a cost recovery model could continue to be delivered.

Moving forwards with the garden waste service, a new digital platform will be implemented for the operatives to be able to record and receive live data, this will be delivered through the new Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) and will also improve the customer experience. This new digital technology will be able to map subscriptions and allow officers to target low take-up areas with targeted marketing.

Information in this plan concludes that there a number of risks to the Garden Waste Service including increasing costs, the ongoing cost of living challenge , Government policy and even the changeable weather. However, it is a popular service with residents and therefore a prudent prediction of continuing to receive the current level of subscriptions has been forecast.

A Member decision is urgently required on the frequency and subscription rate for the 2025/26 garden waste season. Should more collections be required, a comms plan schedule and subscription window would need to be brought forward, therefore a October Committee decision is vital.

## Business Overview

Currently there are 36 green waste rounds collected over a two-week period (20 rounds one week and 16 the other). The garden waste rounds begin at the end of March and cease the last week in November, with each subscriber receiving 18 collections per calendar year.

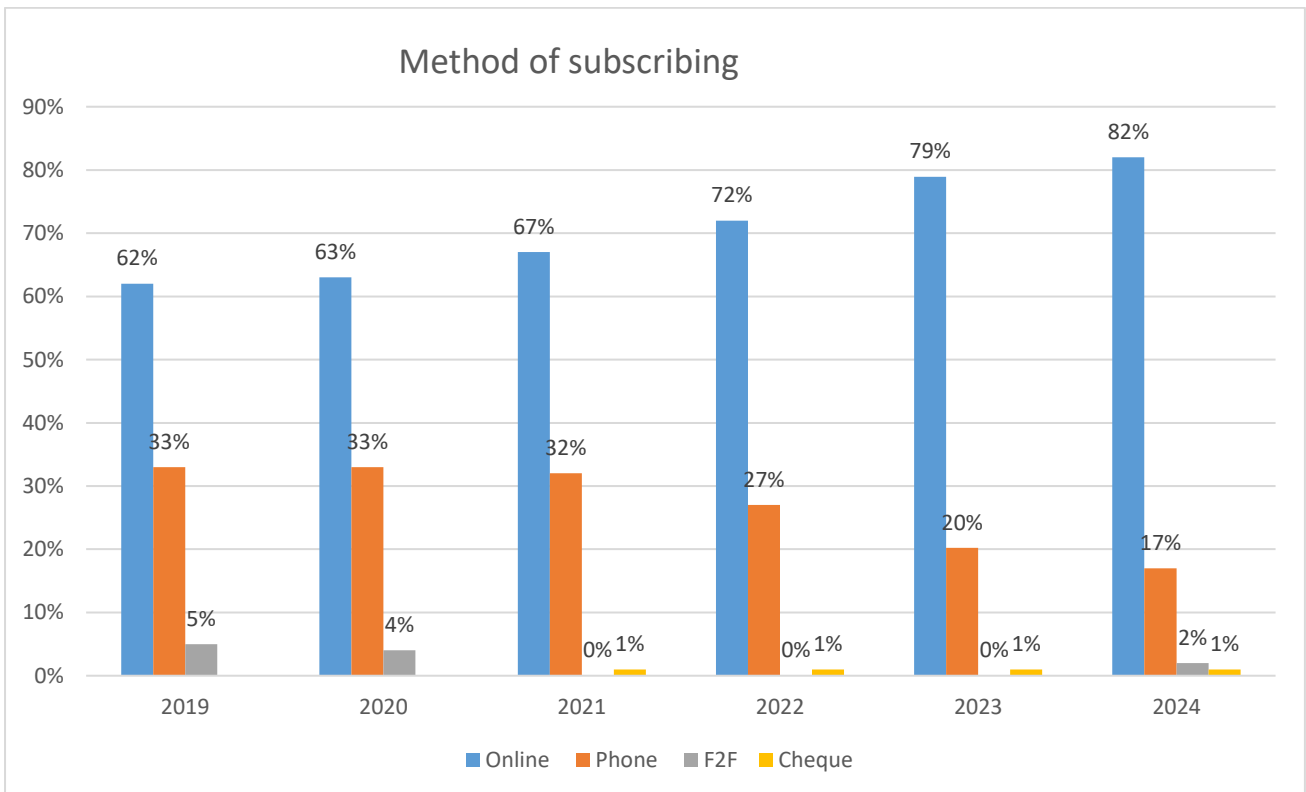
The customer has multiple ways to subscribe to the service from the 1<sup>st</sup> January for the year ahead (Table 1 and Table 2 below demonstrate). There has been a gradual increase in the number of online subscriptions by continuing to improve processes, this will be further enhanced with the ongoing development of the CRM system.

The 2024 data is year to date so far; traditionally a level of income continues until September.

Table 1 Subscription trends

Year	Number of subscribers	Number of bins sold	% take up	Online %	Phone %	F2F%	Cheque
2019	23729	26118	58%	62%	33%	5%	
2020	24686	27145	60%	63%	33%	4%	
2021	25559	28289	60%	67%	32%	0%	1%
2022	25163	28002	59%	72%	27%	0%	1%
2023	24994	27871	57%	79%	20%	0%	1%
2024	25024	27938	56%	82%	17%	2%	1%

Table 2 Method of Subscription

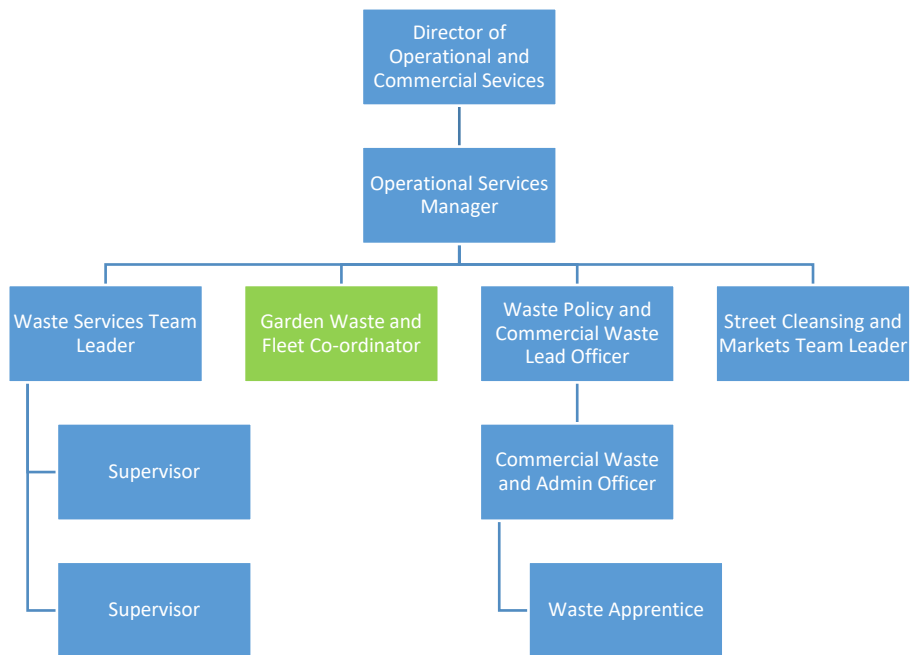


## Service Management

The Garden Waste Service benefits from one full time member of staff, with a Waste Admin Support Officer covering for periods of absence (Operational Services structure below at Table 3).

Currently, the Garden Waste Co-ordinator is the first point of contact for any issues regarding the service. The post provides administrative support ; duties which include printing of daily round sheets for all crews going out that day, highlighting new customers, assisted collections and number of bins at each address. The new CRM system reduces this administrative burden and more time can be spent on targeting sales and improving customer experience and satisfaction.

Table 3 Operational Services staff Structure



## Performance

Since the introduction of the chargeable service it has continued to grow year on year. However, this year has seen a small reduction mainly due to the increase in subscription level and the introduction of purple lidded bins meaning residents have less storage room for bins (Tables 4 and 5)

Table 4 Number of bins sold

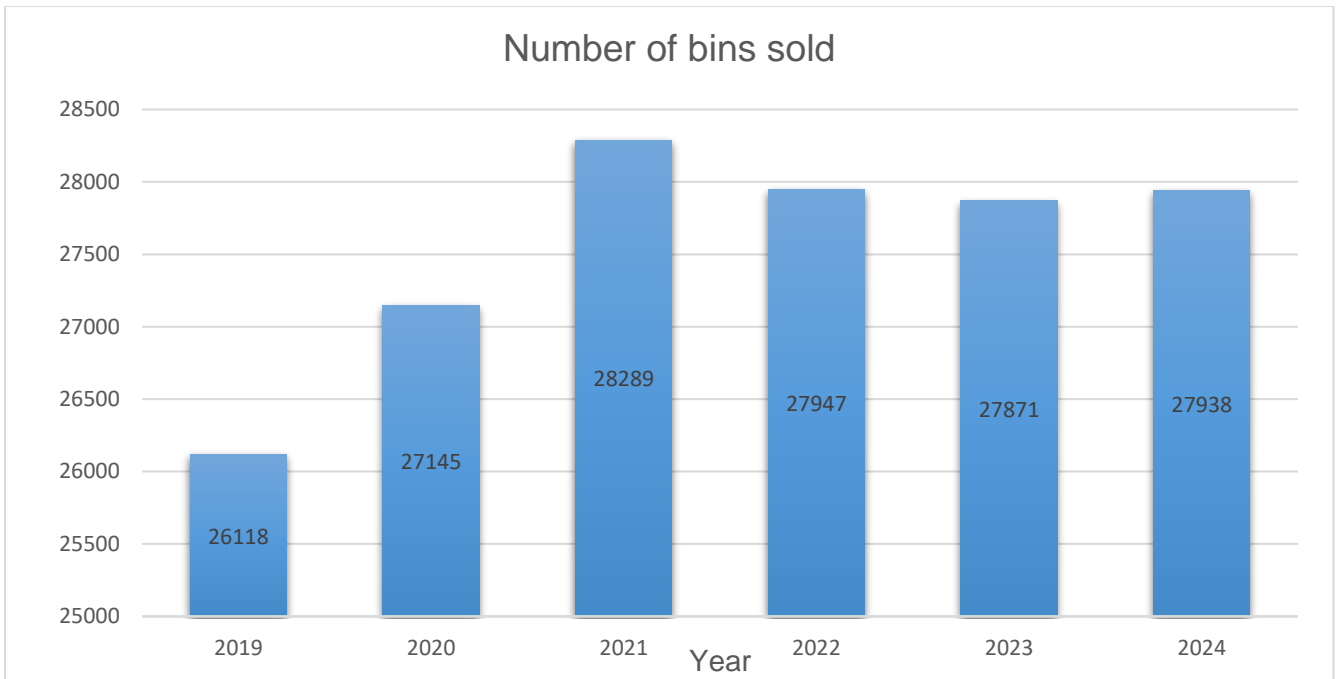
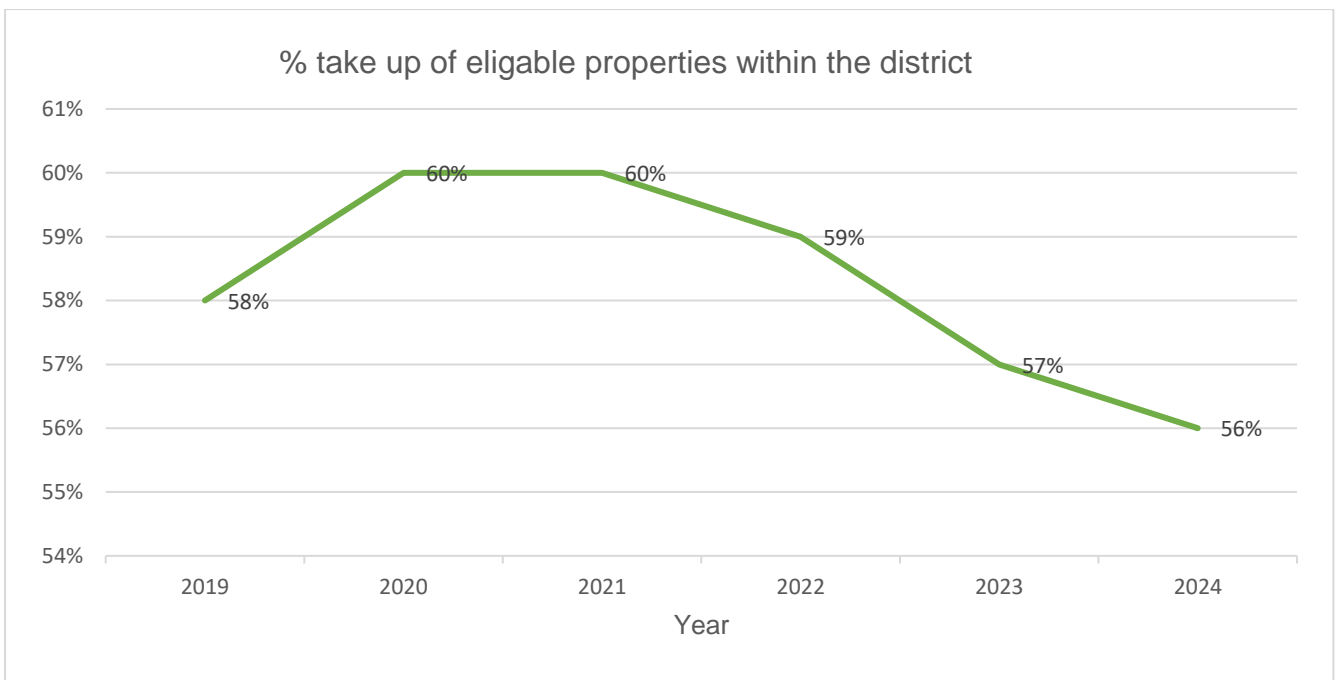


Table 5 % take up



### What is on the horizon?

The new CRM system will be up and running ready for the 2025 garden waste subscriptions starting. This software will enable previously time consuming, manual tasks to become not only more user-friendly for customers, but also to reduce the reliance on manual, paper-based processes. Currently, crews have paper copies of round sheets which are printed on

a daily basis, which are not only very cumbersome for the crews to use, but do not capture up to date information.

The number of properties within the district is constantly increasing, so a full round review will be undertaken in 2024/25. This may lead to an extra vehicle and additional staff members being required, which has cost implications on the service.

This year has seen unprecedented levels of hot weather, this has resulted in the lowest level of weight of material collected by our crews, as grass just didn't grow in the heat. Whilst it is unlikely this climate will continue annually; it is possible residents may conclude they don't need to subscribe given the small amount of garden waste produced in hot weather.

## Market Analysis

There are nine local authorities in Lincolnshire all offering a chargeable service.

Table 6 below highlights the service provided by every authority in Lincolnshire with costs for 2014. Each authority reviews their price point annually.

*Table 6 Lincolnshire comparison*

Authority	Subscription cost 1st Bin	Subscription cost for additional bins	Number of collections
WLDC	£44	£44	18
South Kesteven	£51	£42	23
North Lincs	140l free 240l £44.40	–	24
North Kesteven	£45	£8	24
East Lindsey	£50 (frozen for 3 years from 2022)	£50 (frozen for 3 years from 2022)	21
City of Lincoln	£39	£15	26
North East Lincs	£41	£41	22 (April - March no collections from 11 Dec – 4 Feb)
South Holland	£57	£33	24
Boston Borough	£50	£30	21 (April – end Nov, resume 17 Feb – 28 March)  Message online to encourage online subscriptions: If you pay online for the service between now and Sunday 31st March 2024, you could be in with a chance of winning the service for FREE as well as winning a Lincolnshire Hamper up to the value of £50.

Although West Lindsey offer the least amount of collections per annum, it is one of the cheapest in the County apart from North Lincs where the first, small bin remains free. Offering more collections would not only increase the cost of the service however, increase the Council's carbon footprint for a minimal return.

### Benchmarking

West Lindsey continually benchmark performance through the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) which not only helps by networking with other councils across the country, but with value for money. Also, benchmarking takes place through the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, which is an excellent source of sharing best practice.

### Social Media and Digital Marketing

The Garden Waste service is continually using all available platforms at the Council's disposal to promote itself and make the public aware of this excellent, value for money service.

### Website

The vast majority of subscriptions come from the WLDC website, which is continually being updated with service information.

### Printed Media and Advertising

At the start of each year, the service is advertised in the local media to inform residents of the service and how to subscribe. Annually, a calendar drop is done for all residents in the District to let them know when their collection dates are, which includes a section on the service and when and how to subscribe.

### Marketing Action Plan

Moving forward, the introduction of a new CRM system will allow information to be transferred from one system to another without additional hours of admin being taken up. It will enable a mapping system of bin sales to be continually updated and highlight all the low areas of take up. This will inform targeted marketing for certain areas through a designated Garden Waste leaflet highlighting the service. This approach, alongside digital up to date information being delivered directly to the crews, will enable the service to make customers aware that they can subscribe the day before collection and the information will be passed directly onto the crew's devices.

### What's next?

In 2023, the service was set at £44 for 2024, in table 7 below there are various options in which we can move forwards.

*Table 7 Options for 2023/24*

Option	Number of collections	Price per bin	Financial implications
1 - Same price, same number of collections	18	£44	This will create a deficit of £4.2k
2 - Cost recovery same number of collections	18	£46	This will cover the costs and account for a risk adjustment of 2% less subscribers
3 - Same price, two more collections	20	£44	This will create a deficit of £100.9k
4 - Same price, four more collections	22	£44	This will create a deficit of £197.3k
5 - Same price, all year round collections	26	£44	This will create a deficit of £389.7k
6 - Cost recovery including two more collections	20	£48.60	This will cover the costs and account for a risk adjustment of 2% less subscribers
7 - Cost recovery including four more collections	22	£52.10	This will cover the costs and account for a risk adjustment of 2% less subscribers
8 - Cost recovery, all year-round collections	26	£59.10	This will cover the costs and account for a risk adjustment of 2% less subscribers

## Financial Overview

Due to increased costs, to achieve cost recovery for 2025/26 for the normal 18 collections we would need to increase the subscription cost from £44 to £46. If we increase the number of collections in 2025/26 the subscription would have to increase as follows: -

- Two collections - £48.60
- Four collections - £52.10
- Eight collections - £59.10



Table 8 details for 2024/25 actuals, 2025/26 forecast outturn and costs for each option.

Summary Garden Waste Total Cost Recovery	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 Forecast outturn	2025/26 Current Budget 18 Collections	2025/26 Proposal 20 collections	2025/26 Proposal 22 collections	2025/26 Proposal 26 collections
<b>Direct costs</b>						
Operational Costs	649,800.00	642,098.34	693,600.00	765,000.00	836,200.00	977,900.00
Vehicles	258,400.00	236,600.00	247,200.00	272,500.00	297,700.00	348,400.00
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>908,200.00</b>	<b>878,698.34</b>	<b>940,800.00</b>	<b>1,037,500.00</b>	<b>1,133,900.00</b>	<b>1,326,300.00</b>
<b>Indirect Costs</b>						
Depots	31,800.00	31,800.00	32,400.00	32,400.00	32,400.00	32,400.00
Support Services	170,500.00	170,500.00	174,700.00	174,700.00	174,700.00	174,700.00
Depreciation	84,900.00	84,900.00	63,900.00	63,900.00	63,900.00	63,900.00
Notional Interest share New Depot	23,210.00	23,210.00	23,210.00	23,210.00	23,210.00	23,210.00
<b>Total In Direct Costs</b>	<b>310,410.00</b>	<b>310,410.00</b>	<b>294,210.00</b>	<b>294,210.00</b>	<b>294,210.00</b>	<b>294,210.00</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>1,218,610.00</b>	<b>1,189,108.34</b>	<b>1,235,010.00</b>	<b>1,331,710.00</b>	<b>1,428,110.00</b>	<b>1,620,510.00</b>
<b>Service Charge</b>	<b>(1,210,000.00)</b>	<b>(1,230,800.00)</b>	<b>(1,262,500.00)</b>	<b>(1,331,700.00)</b>	<b>(1,428,100.00)</b>	<b>(1,620,500.00)</b>
<b>(Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>8,610</b>	<b>(41,692)</b>	<b>(27,490)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>44.00</b>	<b>44.00</b>	<b>46.00</b>	<b>48.60</b>	<b>52.10</b>	<b>59.10</b>
<b>% increase</b>			<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>13%</b>