

EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Wednesday 8 October 2025.

PRESENT: Mayor C Cooke (Chair) and Councillors I Blades, L Henman, J Rostron, J Ryles, P Storey and N Walker

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors E Clynch, D Branson and L Young

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor J McTigue

OFFICERS: S Bonner, M Adams, C Benjamin, C Cannon, G Field, L Grabham, R Horniman, A Humble, E Scollay and A Glover

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors T Furness and P Gavigan

25/24 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting and explained the fire evacuation procedure.

25/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

25/26 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 3 SEPTEMBER 2025**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 September 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/27 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor stated that the Executive agenda had been updated since the approval of the constitution at Council. The processes underpinning agenda items six and seven (questions from members of the public and elected Members respectively) were being developed and would be in place for the next meeting of Executive.

NOTED.

25/28 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)**

None.

25/29 **QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS (IF ANY)**

None.

25/30 **MATTERS REFERRED TO EXECUTIVE FOR RECONSIDERATION FROM SCRUTINY OR COUNCIL (IF ANY)**

None.

25/31 **FINAL REPORT OF THE PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL - CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION**

The former People Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a review entitled Children Missing Education. A copy of the full report was attached. The Scrutiny Panel had made six recommendations upon which a response was sought from the relevant service area.

The recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel were:

- A. Ensures that CME forms an integral part of Middlesbrough Council's Draft Poverty Strategy. CME, and its impact, should be explicitly referenced and included in any performance regime underpinning the strategy. Members of the Children's Scrutiny Panel should be briefed on how CME will feature within the Poverty Strategy no later than January 2026, or sooner if the strategy is available.
- B. Ensures that Education & Partnerships are fully prepared for the Children's Wellbeing in Schools Bill, in particular the monitoring of Elective Home Education and the implementation of a single unique identifier (SUI) for children. The Children's Scrutiny Panel should be briefed on the preparations, no later than December 2025.
- C. Establishes a Working Group between Primary Schools in the Central areas of Middlesbrough, Education and Partnerships, Stronger Communities and local Councillors to explore if further assistance can be provided in respect of the large transient community and the issues of school roll turnover. The Working Group should report back on its progress by March 2026.
- D. Establishes a Working Group between Education & Partnerships and Stronger Communities to understand the nature of the higher rate of CME in the Romanian community. The Working Group should produce an action plan to help reduce this number against the baseline average of 22, at the time of the review. The Working Group should provide a progress update against their action plan to the Children's Scrutiny Panel by March 2026.
- E. An update be provided to the Children's Scrutiny Panel that provides assurance to the on the ongoing work of assisting children at risk of permanent exclusion. This should happen no later than October 2026.
- F. An update be provided to the Children's Scrutiny Panel on the new Alternative Provision and the restructure of the Inclusion and Outreach Model. This should happen no later than April 2026.

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education and Culture and the Interim Director for Education and Partnerships submitted a service response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel. A copy of the action plan was appended to the report.

The Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel introduced and presented the Scrutiny report and advised the review had been undertaken by the previous People Scrutiny Panel.

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education and Culture provided a response to the Scrutiny report and presented the Service Response.

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education and Culture commented that the work carried out by the Scrutiny was important and relevant to current developments.

The Mayor stated that this issue had been discussed extensively and remain an important matter. As such it was commented that an all-Member briefing be arranged to update all Members on the situation.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. **Notes the report of the People Scrutiny Panel into Children Missing Education and the accompanying recommendations; and**
2. **Approves the Action Plan prepared by the service in response to the recommendations.**

REASON

It was a requirement that Executive formally considered the Scrutiny Panel's report and confirmed the service area's response to the accompanying plan.

FINAL REPORT OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL – HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICE

The Place Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a review entitled Home to School Transport Service. A copy of the full report was attached. The Scrutiny Panel had made seven recommendations upon which a response was sought from the relevant service area.

The recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel were:

- A. Investigate whether it would be cost effective to devolve the provision of Home to School Transport to individual schools, as they may be able to provide a more localised service. Ideally the funding could be passed directly to the schools making them responsible for controlling costs, ensuring there was no additional cost to the Local Authority.
- B. Review the eligibility requirements for free school travel, especially for post-16 students and for pupils who attend a school that is not in the catchment/nearest school by parental choice, but they meet the low-income criteria. There would need to be an option included for consideration of special circumstances.
- C. Ensure closer collaboration between Children's Services, Schools and the Home to School Transport Unit to make certain that the most cost-effective and suitable transport arrangements are in place for each student, particularly in relation to students with SEND. The requirement for transport assistance should be included as a consideration in SEND assessments.
- D. Prioritise the promotion of independent travel to all parents and students, increase the number of travel trainers and bus buddies and encourage greater use of personal travel budgets.
- E. Introduce a spare seat scheme to offer discretionary transport assistance on existing transport for students who are not eligible for free travel assistance, with an option for part payment of the full cost.
- F. Investigate whether increasing the Council's fleet of vehicles and reducing dependency on third party providers would be cost effective and whether this would enable better route planning.
- G. Explore whether entering into longer-term contracts with third party providers would provide for greater flexibility and consistency.

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability and the Director for Environment and Community Services submitted a service response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel. A copy of the action plan was appended to the report.

The Chair Children's Scrutiny Panel introduced and presented the Scrutiny report and advised the review had been undertaken by the previous People Scrutiny Panel.

Following a question from a Member in the public gallery, a conversation took place regarding eligibility criteria for children using Home to School Transport services. It was stated this area was complex, and while there was a hierarchy of need, each service user's eligibility was assessed on a case-by-case basis. It was also commented that generalisations should be avoided when discussing the topic.

In the absence of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability, the Mayor provided a response to the Scrutiny report and presented the Service Response.

It was queried what the impact would be if the Home to School Transport service was handed to Schools. It was commented that, while this would prove difficult, the Mayor stated it would be beneficial for a worked example to be created which would provide a clear understanding of the challenges involved.

ORDERED that Executive:

- 1. **NOTES** the content of the Environment Scrutiny Panel's final report on Waste Management.
- 2. **APPROVES** The action plan, as amended, developed in response to the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations.

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive consideration the purpose of which was to set out a proposed Information Strategy for the Council.

This was the second Information Strategy developed by the Council and built on the progress made in the previous Strategy.

The Strategy would act as the basis for efforts to improve and exploit information for the benefit of Middlesbrough and its residents within an ethical framework. It also closely interlinked with the Council's emerging Digital Strategy and Transformation Strategy. Both of which relied on information being held appropriately to enable improved services to customers to be delivered.

An effective Information Strategy would deliver the following benefits:

- Enhanced decision making by ensuring accurate and timely decisions are taken, using excellent data and intelligence.
- Improved operational efficiency through use of efficient information management to support activity to transform and streamline services through the Council's transformation programme and business as usual performance management.
- Ensuring good data security and compliance with information governance legislation, regulations and standards.
- Improving the Council's ability to use data to drive innovation.
- The Information Strategy, found at Appendix 1 of the report, set out:
- The legislative, regulatory and governance framework that the Strategy will operate within.
- The vision of the strategy, which is that 'the right information will be available to the right users, at any time, accessible and used ethically to support achievement of the Council Plan.'
- The current position of the plan and its ambitions over the next four years
- The key principles that underpin the Strategy which are derived from government's seven information principles for the public sector and
- The strategic objectives of the strategy.

Following adoption of the Strategy, progress would be overseen by the existing Information Strategy working group. This comprised representatives from ICT and Information Governance and was chaired by the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO). This group would develop and deliver a detailed implementation plan for the key actions identified in the strategy. Progress against this Strategy would be reported annually within the Annual SIRO report to Audit Committee.

OPTIONS

The Council could choose to operate without a strategy, however codifying its activities against a stated vision provides the best chance of achieving that vision and improving outcomes for the residents and businesses of Middlesbrough.

ORDERED That Executive approves the Information Strategy 2025-2029.

REASONS

Having a strategy in place to manage information effectively was vital for a complex organisation. It enhanced decision-making, improved operational efficiency, ensured data security and compliance, facilitated collaboration, and supported innovation and growth. Prioritising information management would enhance the ability of the Council to achieve the Council Plan objectives.

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability submitted a report for Executive consideration. The purpose of the report was to set out the decisions and delegations the Council needs to take to be able to work with the other authorities in respect of undertaking

financial close with the preferred bidder and the subsequent structures for managing the disposal contract.

Seven Local Authorities had joined together to procure a contractor to design, build, operate and finance a new Energy Recovery Facility to be located in the Tees Valley (TV ERF).

The seven Councils which include Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council, Newcastle City Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Stockton Borough Council (the Authorities) had a statutory obligation to provide waste management services to their collective 1.5m residents. The Tees Valley Councils currently operated residual waste disposal services as a group under a single contract with Suez and which included Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Stockton Borough Council and Middlesbrough Borough Council. Darlington Borough Council was part of the group but currently had its own separate waste treatment and disposal contract. Durham County Council and Newcastle City Council currently had their own separate residual waste disposal contracts with SUEZ.

All existing waste treatment / disposal contracts with SUEZ had been extended to cover the period until the new ERF was in operation.

To align with these dates, the procurement programme was originally due to have Final Tenders submitted and evaluated in early 2022, with a Preferred Tenderer to be appointed by July 2022 and Contract Award / Financial Close aimed to be achieved by November 2022.

The project was now at a stage where a preferred bidder had been selected, and seven local authorities were working towards financial close of that procurement process.

Middlesbrough along with six other Local Authorities in the North East had undertaken a procurement for the disposal of residual waste. The Council was now at a stage in that process where a preferred bidder had been nominated and was working towards financial close of that procurement process. The price per tonne achieved through the procurement process was currently £143, which was the average price over the life of the contract at 25/26 prices and indexed at CPI. This was below the ceiling limit that was set.

The negotiations would continue to financial close with a view to reducing the price per tonne further.

The 2025/26 budget for residual waste disposal was £5.6m. The price paid under the current arrangements for residual waste disposal was £128.29 per tonne with an estimated inflationary rise to £144.97 per tonne in 2029/2030. The average annual tonnage was currently around 39,000 tonnes. This was expected to reduce over the next several years following the introduction of the Government's Simpler Recycling Initiatives.

In order to allow the council to fulfil its requirements as part of the process there are a number of decisions and delegations that need to be made and granted. These are outlined below in the recommendations.

Agreeing to the recommendations is in line with the councils of objectives of delivering Best Value and its Environment objectives. The price per tonne provides value for money in respect of the disposal of Middlesbrough's residual waste. It also allows Middlesbrough to increase its level of recycling in the town without affecting the contractual arrangements with the successful bidder.

A conversation took place regarding the implications of not proceeding with the project as outlined in the report. It was discussed that not proceeding as detailed in the report would have negative financial impacts for the Council as it would lose the negotiation benefits of a wider partnership.

In terms of the environmental impacts, Member's attention was drawn to section 4.85 to 4.95 of the report which detailed the environment factors associated with the Energy Recovery Facility.

Following a question from a Member in the public gallery, a conversation took place regarding how recycling could be improved across the town and if waste collected by volunteers could

contribute to this. It was clarified that improving recycling rates was challenging but work was underway to address this with

A Member queried if the Council would benefit financially from the energy created at the Energy Recovery Facility and what fuels would be required as part of the start up process. It was clarified the Council could realise some benefit from the Energy Recovery Facility and that diesel generators would be used as part of the start process.

The Mayor proposed that the recommendations in the report be amended. The recommendations should state that, where delegated authority was afforded to officers in consultation with the Mayor, this should also include the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability or relevant portfolio holder.

OPTIONS

The seven Councils were required to undertake a procurement process due to their existing waste treatment contract arrangements due to expire in 2026. By procuring this contract together, economies of scale provide enhanced value for money for the Councils.

if this approach was not agreed, then the Council would have to undertake a fresh procurement of a merchant contract. It was expected that this would deliver a higher gate price due to the lack of competition in the market.

The benefits of forming a Local Authority SPV to be the contracting entity with the Contractor included:

- **Separate legal entity** - The Project would sit on the balance sheet of the Local Authority SPV, rather than the full Project sitting on Hartlepool Borough Council's balance sheet (with all assets and liabilities running through their accounts);
- **Shared ownership** - The Project assets (and liabilities) would be owned by the Local Authority SPV, which in turn would be wholly owned by all of the Councils;
- **Transparency** - Each of the Councils would be entitled to appoint a director to the Board, having visibility over the activities of the Local Authority SPV and direct involvement in the decision-making process;
- **Flexibility** - The agreement would allow any future changes to the Councils' relationships to occur.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. Where the recommendations in the report that reference delegated authority in consultation with the Mayor should also include "relevant Executive Member with portfolio responsibility" where applicable.
2. Approves the creation of the Local Authority Special Purpose Vehicle (LA SPV).
3. Appoints the Director of Environment and Community Services as the Council's Director on the Board of the LA SPV and authorises them and any successors; or any substitute or deputy appointed by the Director of Environment and Community Services should they be unavailable, to take all decisions on behalf of the Council as Director on the Board of the LA SPV for the good governance of the LA SPV and the Energy Recovery Facility.
4. Authorises the Council to subscribe for shares in and to be a shareholder of the LA SPV; and to issue a Shareholder Resolution to approve and adopt the Articles of Association.
5. Appoints the Section 151 Officer as the Council's Shareholder Representative and Authorises that Shareholder Representative to appoint an alternative representative to act as their substitute or deputy and authorises the Shareholder Representative and their alternative to make decisions under the Shareholder Agreement, articles of association etc including the making of shareholder resolutions, including a shareholder resolution to approve and adopt the Articles of Association on behalf of the Council.
6. Authorises the Council to enter into the Shareholders' Agreement and Delegates Authority to Director of Environment and Community Services (in

- consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to finalise and agree and enter into the Shareholder Agreement.
7. Delegates Authority to Director of Environment and Community Services (in
 8. consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to authorise the LA SPV to enter into the Shareholder Agreement.
 9. Authorises the LA SPV the enter into the Service Level Agreement and Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to finalise and agree the Service Level Agreement.
 10. Authorises the Council to enter into the Waste Supply and Support Agreement ("WSSA") and Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to finalise, agree and enter into the WSSA with the LA SPV.
 11. Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to authorise the LA SPV to enter into the WSSA.
 12. Authorises the LA SPV to award the Contract, enter into the Project Agreement with the successful Contractor and to enter into the 50 year lease with Teesworks for the site and Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to finalise and agree the Project Agreement, Lease and any associated agreements and documentation.
 13. Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to finalise and agree the Business Plan for the LA SPV and provide sufficient resources to allow the LA SPV to reach Financial Close and then to monitor and manage the Contract on behalf of, and with, the Councils for the term.
 14. Delegates Authority to Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to enter into Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 Council certificates in relation to the WSSA.
 15. Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to finalise and agree the Secondment Agreement and to authorise the LA SPV to enter into the Secondment Agreement.
 16. Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to authorise, finalise, agree and enter into the Cost Equalisation Agreement. Authorises the Council to enter into a Guarantee of the Project Agreement and a Guarantee of the Lease and Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to agree finalise and to enter into the Council Guarantees.
 17. Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Services (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to authorise the LA SPV to enter into and be a party to the Council's Guarantee of the Project Agreement and the Guarantee of the Lease.
 18. Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Service (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to authorise the LA SPV to enter into a Novation of the Option Agreement, Side Deed with the Estate Owner and Environmental Deed and to authorise the LA SPV to enter into all other necessary agreements or legal documentation to enable the project to reach financial completion and to monitor and manage the contract.
 19. Delegates Authority to the Director of Environment and Community Service (in consultation with the Mayor and supported by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer) to authorise the Council to act as Guarantor in respect of the LA SPV Side Deed with the Estate Owner and Environmental Deed and to authorise the Council to enter into all other necessary agreements or legal documentation on behalf of the Council to enable the project to reach financial

completion and to monitor and manage the contract.

REASONS

The recommendations allowed the Council to move to financial close on the procurement of the TVERF.

The TVERF provided a value for money method of disposing of Middlesbrough's residual waste.

The TVERF met all environmental regulations.

The TVERF contract allows Middlesbrough to significantly increase its recycling rates and other environmental objectives of the council.

The TVERF has a robust governance and management structure to ensure value for money.

A Local Authority Special Purpose Vehicle (LA SPV) is required to be established as a Limited Company incorporated and registered at Companies House. It would be the Contracting entity representing the seven Councils (the Shareholders) and will enter into the Project Agreement with the successful Contractor and the lease with South Tees Development Corporation Teesworks for the site.

The regulation and management of the LA SPV shall be governed by the Shareholders' Agreement (SHA). Each Council (Shareholder) will be required to formally enter into the Shareholders' Agreement approximately three months in advance of the Project Agreement being entered into with the successful Contractor (Financial Close).

There will be a Service Level Agreement between Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council as the 'host authority' to provide support services to the LA SPV. The Service Level Agreement is required to be formally entered into by the seven Councils in parallel with the Councils entering into the Shareholders' Agreement.

The terms of the commercial arrangements between the seven Councils (the Shareholders) in relation to the LA SPV will be defined and governed by the Waste Supply and Support Agreement (WSSA). The WSSA is required to be formally entered into by the seven Councils (Shareholders) in parallel with the LA SPV awarding the Contract and entering into the Project Agreement with the successful Contractor.

A Business Plan for the LA SPV was being produced which detailed the 'structural' and operational costs of the Company that would administer the ERF contract.

As outlined in the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 (LGCA) - In a public private project such as the TV ERF Project, it was typical for the Project Agreement (and to the extent applicable, the funder direct agreement) to be certified by the procuring authority. In the case of the Project, the collaborative nature, and innovative structure of the public sector parties means this is not possible (as none of the Councils would be party to the Project Agreement). Each of the Councils was, however, party to the WSSA, pursuant to which the LA SPV would provide waste management services. The WSSA therefore satisfied the LGCA criteria for certification.

There would be a Secondment Agreement between the Host Authority (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council) and the LA SPV, whereby the Host Authority shall second the Seconddees to the LA SPV.

The five Tees Valley Authorities had previously agreed to equalise all costs in relation to the transfer and haulage of Contract Waste to the TV ERF.

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2025/26 AMENDMENT

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report for Executive consideration the purpose of which sought approval for changes required to the Household Support Fund (HSF scheme previously approved for the 2025/26 financial year).

On 30 October 2024, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced that the HSF would be extended for a further 12 months from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Each Local Authority was required to prepare a local scheme to determine how the funding would be provided and allocated. The grant amount allocated to Middlesbrough was £2,914,447.24.

Government guidance required Local Authorities to clearly advertise the scheme to residents, including publication on the Council website. The value of the individual awards was to be determined by Local Authorities in accordance with the parameters set out in the guidance.

The current scheme was approved by Executive on 14 May 2025 and was based on the Council's previous successful HSF schemes. The original 2025/26 scheme included a payment amount for pensioners who were no longer eligible for the state Winter Fuel Payment under the changed criteria introduced in 2024. This would have meant that those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) or Attendance Allowance who were not eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment from the Government could have received an equivalent amount to the Winter Fuel Payment in full from Middlesbrough Council's HSF of £300 or £200 depending on age. £340,000 was allocated to enable this to happen.

On 9 June 2025 the Government amended the criteria for the Winter Fuel Payment again, meaning that pensioners with incomes of less than £35,000 would now be eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment. This had reduced the number of pensioners ineligible to benefit from it with a consequent reduction in the number who would be eligible under the previously agreed scheme for the £300 or £200 HSF payment, depending on age. As a result, the HSF funding required in the Council's scheme to meet the reduced need had been reviewed and the changes proposed to increase other expenditure by £330,000 were detailed in the report.

Those pensioners in receipt of CTR or Attendance Allowance who remained ineligible for the Winter Fuel Payment or were subject to clawback through HMRC would still be eligible for the same level of payment under HSF of £300 or £200, depending on age. Pensioners who were eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment and not subject to clawback may still have been eligible for a payment of £100 from HSF, depending on their circumstances, the rate having been increased from £50 under the amended scheme.

The scheme remained designed to support vulnerable residents and low-income households which include children, pensioners, people with disabilities and other households who may be experiencing financial difficulties brought about by the continuing economic challenges.

The Mayor queried how residents would be made aware of the revised scheme. It was clarified that in addition to press releases and wider communications those individuals whose details were known to the Council would be paid the correct amount automatically and would be notified before payment was made.

OPTIONS

Do nothing; however, without a suitable scheme approved by the Council's Executive, Section 151 Officer and presented to the DWP, the funds could not be used by the Council to benefit vulnerable residents and low-income households.

Funding could be distributed differently amongst the groups identified or across different groups. The plan presented had taken account of the government guidance and experience gained through prior schemes to ensure maximum reach to those in need of support.

ORDERED that Executive approve the proposed changes, listed below, to the Household Support Fund (HSF) delivery plan for 2025/26 previously approved by Executive on 14 May 2025, which would be delivered between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, as set out in Table 1 (paragraph 4.9) of the report and that it continued to target the same main groups as before.

- **An increase of £10 per child for those in receipt of income based free school meals, Council Tax Reduction (CTR), Universal Credit (UC) or Housing Benefit (HB)**

- **Widen the criteria for pensioner support to include all on CTR (previously had to have Pension Credit Guarantee Credit as well) and increase the payment from £50 to £100**
- **Increase the amount provided to singles / couples in receipt of benefits from £45/£55 to £75/£100**
- **An additional £38,000 to Community Support to assist with crisis applications**
- **An additional £17,000 allocated to the provision of third-party support**

REASONS

The decision was required as Central Government extended eligibility to the Winter Fuel Payment in an announcement on 9 June 2025. £330,000 had already been allocated within the Council's HSF scheme to provide support for those pensioners who were due to miss out but who would now be eligible to receive the Winter Fuel Payment. The Council scheme needed to be amended to ensure that available funding was re-distributed to ensure the maximum support possible was provided locally, otherwise the grant funding available would be lost.

A revised delivery plan endorsed by the Executive Member for Finance must be submitted to the DWP where significant change was intended.

The decision met the key decision threshold and impacted on two or more wards and would incur expenditure above £250,000.

25/36

RECOVERY SOLUTIONS DELIVERY MODEL

The Executive Member for Public Health submitted a report for Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report sought Executive approval for the reconfiguration of Recovery Solutions delivery sites, ensuring safe, accessible, and compliant service provision.

Nationally, Middlesbrough had one of the highest levels of need in relation to substance use, highlighted by the prevalence of both drug and alcohol-related deaths. This linked to the considerable levels of deprivation locally with Middlesbrough having high numbers of people engaged with our services.

The Council currently had ambitious government targets, including to further increase both numbers accessing treatment and those completing treatment successfully. To meet those challenging targets, Council services needed to be able to work collaboratively with key partners and be open and accessible to those who needed support.

Recovery Solutions currently operated from three sites:

- **Live Well East (Berwick Hills) – this was currently the main assessment centre; served between 700-750 clients. Changes to the building usage and enforcement presence had compromised care and restricted the opportunity for the site to offer the necessary capacity required;**
- **Live Well West (Ayresome Green Lane) - served approximately 400 clients and had limited capacity;**
- **Live Well South (Hemlington) - served between 180-200 clients; offered adequate capacity and has improved the engagement rate.**

The proposed relocation of the Neighbourhoods team into the LWE library introduced a significant police presence, which was unsuitable for substance use client group. The presence of Police and enforcement staff in close proximity to a substance misuse treatment service would place the service in breach of critical CQC regulations under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. This risk was escalated substantially if they were within a shared space, which would be the case with the space constraints introduced at LWE.

The new plans for LWE also introduced physical space reductions. This further impacted service delivery capacity, which resulted in the service not being able to accommodate the necessary range of roles and support key partner organisations to work into the setting. This severely restricted the ability to provide a full, person-centred treatment and recovery offer.

A new central site, Park House, on Park Road North, had been identified. This was located adjacent to Parkside Mental Health Resource Centre and both buildings were owned by Tees Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust. Public Health and the substance misuse services worked in partnership with TEWV across South Tees as the services share many clients.

The TEWV Care Programme Board had approved in principle the plan for Public Health South Tees to utilise their building.

Collaborative substance use and mental health services were vital because they improved patient outcomes. This was achieved by providing integrated, co-ordinated care for complex co-occurring issues, moving away from siloed systems. The integrated approach in South Tees enhances treatment engagement and recovery, leading to reduced severity of symptoms, lower rates of hospitalisation and a decrease in people falling into the cracks between services.

Levelling Up Partnership funding of £1.15 million was secured for LWE as part of a wider £20.816 million capital investment programme for Middlesbrough. Due to the changes and resultant challenges, consideration was important to how the new plans could be delivered, based on which option is approved.

Members discussed what mitigations were in place combat potential antisocial behaviour in the area. It was clarified that the service would avail itself of any Street Warden Service as required. It was also commented that services such as that being recommended would help to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

It was also commented that work would continue to engage local businesses, and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure the service was a success.

Thanks were expressed to all involved in the initiative and approval was expressed at public health matters being included on Neighbourhood Action Partnerships.

The Mayor requested that an all Member briefing be delivered on this subject.

OPTIONS

Six options were considered and were described briefly in paragraph 3.10 of the report and in more detail in Appendix 1. Option 2 provided the most local service possible within an affordable cost envelope (£476,561 revenue and £189,744 + VAT capital) providing care closer to where people lived.

ORDERED that Executive approves the establishment of a new central assessment site to support safe and effective care.

AGREED that Executive:

- **NOTE** the revenue impact in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) from year two onwards and that these will be considered for approval by Council as part of the budget setting process;
- **NOTE** the capital implications on the Levelling Up Partnership funding secured for Live Well East and;
- **NOTE** the process and timescales to progress the preferred option and ensure continuity of service during library redevelopment.

REASONS

Recovery Solutions provides support for people with drug or alcohol issues, including prescribing, psychosocial interventions, counselling, and recovery support.

In February 2025 Recovery Solutions had its first CQC inspection since bringing the Clinical Prescribing Service in house (previously provided through Foundations GP Practice). CQC rated all three current sites as “good” overall and the elements Safe, Effective, Responsive and Well-Led with an “outstanding” rating for Caring.

The performance of the Service had continued to improve since clinical provision was brought in-house and integrated with the wider offer. The service delivered more than 8,000 individual interventions each month to 2,000 adults in structured treatment, with an increasing number of new presentations and increasing numbers of clients making substantial progress. The rise in new presentations was linked to the development of the locality-based delivery model, which had made treatment easier to access, offering support closer to where people live.

The Service continued to develop and improve the offer to support some of the most vulnerable people in Middlesbrough into recovery, including:

- A dedicated team to support people in temporary accommodation and their own tenancies to prevent eviction, secure housing, and move into more suitable homes. Working alongside neighbourhood safety wardens, the anti-social behaviour officer, and the substance use service, the team provided wraparound support that benefited clients and the wider community.
- Early screening had been introduced in partnership with both Adult and Children's Social Care to ensure individuals identified at referral with substance-related needs were engaged at the earliest opportunity.
- The Outreach Team worked closely with neighbourhood wardens and other partners to engage people in the community who appeared to need support with substance misuse. The team proactively targeted hotspots and individuals, delivering an average of 300 interventions per month. In 2025 alone, 85 clients were assessed directly in community settings;
- Young People's Team provided tailored drug and alcohol support across all Middlesbrough schools, alternative education, and post-16 settings. This included one to one student support (143 young people supported through drop-in), assemblies (over 5,000 students reached), staff training (334 youth professionals trained), and parent resources;
- The service had also been recognised for its innovative work: awarded Team of the Year by Middlesbrough Council for new pathways in lung health; and a Bronze Award for Public Health Nurse of the Year at the national Nursing Times Awards for the work of the Night Clinic, which engages vulnerable women with complex health needs.

As part of the Neighbourhoods model the former Library part of the building is to be used as the Neighbourhood Hub for East Middlesbrough. The Hub would be the platform from which a range of council services would engage with communities in East Middlesbrough. It would also be a space where residents could engage with the council to resolve complex problems and from which they could be directed to appropriate services where required. It would also allow the council to host partner organisations such as the police and housing providers to enhance joint working a focus on the improvement of the physical appearance of East Middlesbrough. It would also be where partner organisations implementing locally derived joint problem-solving plans to tackle issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour.

The relocation of the Neighbourhoods team into the library at LWE would introduce a significant Community Safety and Police presence, which was not appropriate for the Recovery Solutions client group and raised concerns about maintaining a CQC compliant therapeutic environment. The changes also reduced the available space that would require service users to be seen in staff areas, which was not conducive to safe or effective care.

If LWE were to remain the main assessment site with the largest footfall, there would be serious risk of service users disengaging and deterring individuals from seeking treatment due to fear of stigma or criminalisation. If service users were not aware of the police presence, they could not make informed decisions about accessing care, undermining the principle of person-centred care.

These factors collectively compromised the service's ability to operate in compliance with CQC requirements and NICE guidelines, necessitating a review of alternative delivery models.

Providing services closer to where people lived by localising LWE for nearby residents

and providing a new, town centre offer that served central, North Ormesby and other wards in the vicinity. This would reduce travel and associated costs and ensure there is a recovery-focused site that was not intimidating or distressing for service users.

25/37

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

None.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was/ were published unless the decision(s) become subject to the call in procedures