

**EXECUTIVE**

A meeting of the Executive was held on Wednesday 1 May 2024.

**PRESENT:** Mayor C Cooke (Chair), Councillors P Gavigan, T Furness and N Walker

**OFFICERS:** K Bargewell, C Benjamin, S Bonner, G Field, A. Glover, C Heaphy, R Horniman, A Humble, A Mace, M Nath and E Scollay

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors P Storey, J Thompson and Z Uddin

23/103 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

23/104 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 10 APRIL 2024**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 10 April 2024 submitted and approved as a correct record.

23/105 **GARDEN WASTE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE - ADDITIONAL BIN PURCHASE**

The Director of Environment and Community Services submitted a report for Executive consideration. The report sought approval for the purchase of an additional 12,000 bins to respond to the increased demand for the garden waste subscription service. The virement of capital resource from the Traffic Signals scheme would fund the purchase and delivery of the additional bins, and the report sought delegated authority for the Director of Environment and Community Services to purchase additional waste bins, in line with service demand.

Following the Executive Report of 21 November 2023 the Council purchased 30,000 residual waste bins and 14,000 garden waste bins at a cost of £1.2m as part of the overall Waste Strategy Review. A total of £1.135m had been spent on new bins to date. The reason for replacing bins was to move green waste collection off diamond lift bins and on to comb lift bins reducing vehicle costs and increasing resilience within the service. This also supported the movement to a more sustainable waste collection service through the reduction of side waste and other ancillary issues, promoting recycling rates.

On the 8 March 2024 the Council introduced a chargeable green waste service and introduced fortnightly collection for residual waste. The Council expected 9,300 subscribers. The 14,000 bins the Council had purchased were expected to cover subscribers to the service and had a contingency level of bins following the Council's decision to implement a chargeable service. The demand for the garden waste subscription service had increased significantly over anticipated demand modelling. The service currently had over 19,000 subscriptions, which was 9,000 more than anticipated and this had resulted in the need for more brown garden waste bins to be ordered urgently to meet demand. In order to meet this additional demand, and further potential increased demand throughout the year, an additional 12,000 brown garden bins were required at an additional cost of £0.376m.

As part of the Revenue and Capital Budget Forecast Outturn position at Quarter Two 2023/24 report to Executive on 21 November 2023, Executive approved the allocation of £1.2m in the Capital Programme in order to fund wheeled bin replacements as part of a comprehensive Waste Strategy Review.

The additional 12,000 green waste bins would cost £0.376m and it was proposed that this was funded from the remaining budget of £0.065m and a virement of £0.311m from the traffic signals capital budget that was funded from Council resource which might be decommitted due to the receipt of unplanned grant from TVCA as explained below.

Subsequent to the approved Capital Programme by Council on 8 March 2024, TVCA had announced a total of £2.5m in grant funding for the upgrade of traffic signals across the Tees Valley, for which Middlesbrough was the lead authority. This included £0.5m allocated to

Middlesbrough. This grant funding could have replaced some of the Council capital resource previously set aside to fund this work. It was therefore recommended that £0.311m be vired from the Traffic Signals scheme to fund the purchase and delivery of the additional bins.

The procurement of the additional bins would be undertaken in accordance with the ESPO framework 860\_22 Refuse and Recycling Products.

Details of the expected total capital cost of implementing the Council's waste strategy were included at paragraph 6.4 of the report. The increase in the demand for the garden waste collection service would result in revenue income being higher than originally anticipated at budget setting. The expected revenue income to be received from garden waste collection was also included in the submitted report at paragraph 6.5.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance commented that the [bins@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:bins@middlesbrough.gov.uk) had been restored which would free some resource in the contact centre. For residents calling the general 726001 phone number, a message was available advising callers of the temporary bin shortage. The number also offered callers the ability to speak to a member of staff if necessary.

The Mayor, the Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Executive Member for Environment expressed their thanks to staff in the contact centre and Environment Services for their efforts in the rollout in difficult circumstances.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance advised Members that a green waste bin cost the council £25 per unit whereas the income generated was £40 per unit. In terms of changing the type of bins it was confirmed this was going to happen anyway.

The Chief Executive commented the bin rollout had, largely, been a success and there were lessons to be learned. He also expressed his thanks to all staff involved.

## **ORDERED**

**That Executive approve:**

- 1. The purchase of an additional 12,000 brown garden waste bins in accordance with the procurement arrangements set out at paragraph 6.6 of the submitted report.**
- 2. The virement of capital resource from the Traffic Signals scheme to fund the purchase and delivery of the additional bins.**
- 3. That delegated authority was provided to the Director of Environment and Community Services for the purchase of additional waste bins, in line with service demand.**

## **OPTIONS**

**The other alternative was to do nothing and not order the additional 12,000 garden waste bins. This was not recommended as it would mean the Council was unable to offer the new service to all residents who still wish to subscribe to it and we would also not be able to fulfil obligations to residents who have already subscribed to the service.**

## **REASONS**

**As part of the Revenue and Capital Budget Forecast Outturn position at Quarter Two 2023/24 report to Executive on 21 November 2023, Executive approved the allocation of £1.2m in the Capital Programme in order to fund wheeled bin replacements as part of a comprehensive Waste Strategy Review.**

**The additional 12,000 green waste bins would cost £0.376m and that was proposed to be funded by the remaining budget of £0.065m and a virement of £0.311m from the traffic signals capital budget that was funded from Council resource which might be decommitted due to the receipt of unplanned grant from TVCA as explained below.**

**Subsequent to the approved Capital Programme by Council on 8 March 2024, TVCA had announced a total of £2.5m in grant funding for the upgrade of traffic signals across the**

**Tees Valley, for which Middlesbrough was the lead authority. This included £0.5m which was allocated to Middlesbrough. This grant funding could replace some of the Council capital resource previously set aside to fund this work. It was therefore recommended that £0.311m be vired from the Traffic Signals scheme to fund the purchase and delivery of the additional bins.**

23/106

#### **HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2024**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance submitted a report for Executive consideration. The report sought approval of the Household Support Fund Scheme (HSF) for the first half of 2024/25 and sought delegated authority for the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Finance to make minor revisions/modifications to the plan.

On 6 March 2024, the Chancellor announced in the Spring Budget a number of measures to provide further help through the extension of the Household Support Fund (HSF) to support low-income households to cover the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

Each Local Authority was required to prepare a local scheme to determine how the funding provided would be distributed. The amount allocated to Middlesbrough was £1,653,615.

Government guidance required Local Authorities to clearly advertise the scheme to residents, including publication on the Council's website.

The value of individual awards was to be determined by Local Authorities in accordance with the parameters set out in the guidance.

The proposed scheme was based on the Council's previous successful HSF schemes and had been endorsed by the Council's Financial Inclusion Group and the relevant internal departments including Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

The scheme was designed to support vulnerable residents and low-income households that included children, pensioners, people with disabilities and other households who might be experiencing financial difficulties brought about by the economic challenges.

The proposed scheme was set out in Table 1 of the report. Estimated expenditure equated to £1.521m (excluding administration costs).

In line with the guidance, the Council was able to recover administrations costs to deliver the scheme and these had been calculated at £0.132m. This equated to 8% of the scheme funding. The administrative costs were in line with those of surrounding Local Authorities and also aligned to costs incurred from the administration of earlier HSF delivery plans.

Following implementation of the delivery plan, any remaining funds would be allocated to Council Tax accounts with a then current award of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and where an outstanding balance remained following the issue of a summons in 2024/25 financial year. The Council also reserved the right to widen the group to those accounts not in receipt of CTR.

The scheme had been designed to provide support across the defined six-month period for awards.

The scheme would be subject to periodic reviews to allow alterations to be made should the scheme requirements need to change to keep pace with events.

Appropriate counter fraud measures would be put in place to minimise risk in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

#### **ORDERED**

**That Executive approve:**

- 1. The Household Support Fund delivery plan for 2024, which will be delivered between 1 April 2024 and 30 September 2024 and as set out in Table 1 (para 18) to target four main groups:**

- Families with children and in receipt of benefits.
  - Pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and in receipt of Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (PCGC)
  - Singles/Couples in receipt of benefits.
  - Application-based awards for residents not in receipt of CTR or other benefits.
2. That any remaining funds following implementation of the delivery plan (and administrative costs) are allocated to Council Tax accounts, with a then current award of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and where an outstanding balance remains following the issue of a summons in 2024/25 financial year. This may also be widened to incorporate accounts not in receipt of CTR.
  3. That delegated authority is provided to the Director of Finance and the Executive member for Finance to make any minor revisions/modifications to the scheme and make decisions in respect of any remaining funds (as outlined in para 4) to ensure the scheme is distributed in line with the guidance and within the defined timescales.

### **OPTIONS**

Do nothing; however, without a suitable scheme with sufficient defined criteria approved by the Council's Executive and presented to the DWP, the funds would not be able to be utilised by the Council to benefit vulnerable residents and low-income households and would need to be repaid to the DWP.

### **REASONS**

The decision was deemed as special urgent as Central Government advised of a further round of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in the Spring Budget. This funding was due to end, therefore the decision by Central Government to continue has only just been made, hence the short timescale for implementation.

The decision is unable to comply with the notice periods in part 6.22 or the forward work programme requirements in part 6.32 of the Constitution. The general exception in 6.35 could not be followed as the decision needed to be made urgently to approve the Household Support Fund and delivery plan, for submission of the delivery plan to DWP, to start to distribute the funds to vulnerable residents and deliver the scheme as a matter of urgency.

Central Government had made allocations to Local Authorities through the HSF to provide support to households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs.

The Council needed to confirm an approach and submit an approved delivery plan to the DWP by 10 May 2024 for awards to be made within the timescale April to September. As the decision to continue has only just been made, hence the short timescale for implementation and the urgency of the decision

The policy is a key decision that impacts on two or more awards and will incur expenditure above £250,000.

The minor amendments that may be required will result in no changes to the threshold to services and support provided.

The delegated authority sought for the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Finance to approve future minor revisions/modifications and make decisions in respect of any remaining funds maintains service operation levels and ensures that the scheme can be delivered within the defined timescales.

23/107

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

None.

01 May 2024

**All decisions will come into force immediately as they were considered under urgency provisions.**