



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Cabinet Agenda

5.00 pm

Tuesday, 4 April 2023

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT

Members and Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest.
3. To hear relevant representation (from Members and the General Public) on items on this Cabinet agenda.
4. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Cabinet held on Tuesday 7 March 2023.
(Pages 3 - 10)
5. Matters Referred to Cabinet –
There are no matters referred back for reconsideration to this meeting
6. Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committee –
There are no issues referred back from the Scrutiny Committees to this Meeting, other than where they have been specifically consulted on an issue and their comments are included in the contents of the relevant report on this agenda.
7. Key Decisions:- –
There are no key decisions due to be considered at this meeting.
8. Household Support Fund 2023/24 – Report of the Chief Executive.
(Pages 11 - 18)
9. Release of Capital 2023/24 - Essential Repairs to Play Areas, a Bridge Across the Skerne River and Release of Advance Design Fees – Report of the Group Director of Services.
(Pages 19 - 22)

10. Membership Changes - To consider any Membership Changes to Other Bodies to which Cabinet appoints.
11. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.
12. Questions.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Monday, 27 March 2023

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Bartch, Clarke, Dulston, Durham, Keir, K Nicholson, Renton and Tostevin

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Lynne Wood, Elections Manager, Operations Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays (e-mail Lynne.Wood@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405803).

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
MONDAY 20 MARCH**

CABINET
Tuesday, 7 March 2023

PRESENT – Councillors Dulston (Chair), Bartch, Clarke, Durham, Keir, K Nicholson, Renton and Tostevin

INVITEES – Councillors Curry, Harker and Snedker

APOLOGIES – Councillor Wright

C260 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**C261 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON
ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.**

No representations were made by Members or members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

**C262 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON TUESDAY, 7
FEBRUARY 2023.**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 7 February 2023.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

REASON – The represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C263 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

There were no matters referred back for re-consideration to this meeting.

C264 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from Scrutiny considered at this meeting.

C265 KEY DECISIONS:-

**(1) RELEASE OF CAPITAL FUNDS - WHINFIELD PRIMARY ROOF AND HURWORTH SCHOOLS
SECTION 106 FUNDING**

The Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of People (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given

to the release of £1,124,000 of capital funding for the replacement of the roof at Whinfield Primary School, as agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan, and to the release of £108,603.69 of Section 106 funding, from Miller Homes, to enhance educational facilities in Hurworth Primary and Hurworth Secondary School.

The submitted report stated that all projects would be managed in line with the Corporate Capital Process procedures.

It was requested at the meeting that should any asbestos be found at Whinfield Primary School whilst undertaking the work on the roof, that it be recorded.

RESOLVED – (a) That £1,124,000, agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan, to re-roof Whinfield Primary School, be released.

(b) That the Section 106 funding of £108,603.69 from Miller Homes, be released, to enhance educational facilities in Hurworth Schools.

REASONS – (a) The roof at Whinfield Primary School is beyond economical repair and releasing the funding will enable the roof to be replaced.

(b) The release of the Section 106 funding will allow the Hurworth schools to enhance their educational facilities, targeting capital investment in the areas identified as greatest need.

(2) LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Cabinet Member with the Local Services Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Services (previously circulated) providing Members with an annual update on the Local Transport Plan, outlining delivery, performance and public satisfaction in 2022/23 and seeking approval for the 2023/24 programme, including the release of funding.

The submitted report stated that the Tees Valley had secured significant funding from government, including the £310m City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme, which would be delivered over the next 5 years; there had been good progress on the development and delivery of the transport capital programme including working in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to deliver elements of the strategic transport plan; in 2022/23 a new Transport Strategy for the Borough, a Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy had been adopted by the Council, and work was underway on implementing the associated action plans; outlined the progress on the schemes delivered in 2022/23; and the proposed programme of schemes for 2023/24.

It was reported that there was a focus by the Department for Transport (DfT) on progressing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP); Darlington had started the delivery of one of the two priority schemes contained within the LCWIP with the creation of phase one of a cycling route on Woodland Road; an Enhanced Bus Partnership had been created to deliver improvements to bus services; transport patterns had changed since the pandemic and a period of re-basing was taking place; and that the Council continued to monitor transport patterns, highway condition, road safety and public satisfaction to inform investment decisions.

RESOLVED – (a) That the progress in delivering the Local Transport Plan, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted, and the release of £0.893m Integrated Transport Block and £2.175m Highway Maintenance Funding, be agreed, to deliver the 2023/24 transport programme, as identified in Appendix B of the submitted report.

(b) That delegated authority be given to the Group Director of Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Local Services, to agree bidding on external funding opportunities, and if successful, release the funding, including the following:-

- (i) the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP);
- (ii) schemes as detailed in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Delivery Plan;
- (iii) Capability and Ambition Fund (CAF) – active travel revenue;
- (iv) Active Travel Fund (ATF) – active travel capital; and
- (v) Tees Valley Combined Authority Levelling up Fund (LUF).

(c) That the performance data relating to transport services, as detailed in Appendix C of the submitted report, be noted.

REASONS – (a) To continue to deliver Darlington’s Transport Strategy as set out in the newly adopted Darlington Transport Plan, Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy 2022 to 2030, which support the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (STP).

(b) To maximise the opportunities to maintain the highway asset for the benefit of all road users.

(c) To assist the Tees Valley Combined Authority in the delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and the Bus Service Improvement Plans programmes, in line with Government guidance.

C266 HOUSING SERVICES LOW COST HOME OWNERSHIP POLICY

The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Housing Services Low Cost Home Ownership Policy (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that Housing Services were committed to building sustainable communities and offering low-cost homes both to rent and buy; for residents who would like to own their own home but were unable to afford to purchase a property outright from the open market, the Council offered a range of low cost options; and that the Housing Services Low Cost Home Ownership Policy outlined the range of home ownership options available for Council properties.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the Housing Services Low Cost Home Ownership Policy, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – (a) The Government’s Social Housing White Paper, ‘Charter for Social Housing Residents’ published in 2020, introduced a new Right to Shared Ownership and aims to

ensure that 50 per cent of new homes delivered by the Affordable Homes Programme, and supported by grants through Homes England, will be for affordable home ownership.

(b) This policy sets out the low cost home ownership products that will be offered to residents, to meet the Government's aims.

C267 HOUSING SERVICES DAMP, MOULD AND CONDENSATION POLICY

The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that Housing Services were committed to providing good quality, safe and energy efficient homes; the Council had a responsibility to ensure all of its homes were free from hazards, including damp, mould and condensation; and that the Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy explained how the Council would ensure that prompt action would be taken to remedy issues and support tenants, offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process.

Particular concern was raised at the meeting to the need for tenants to ventilate their homes during the current cost of living crisis and requested that the Council be mindful of those pressures if it needed to take any action. The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio responded thereon.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – (a) The Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing providers to provide their tenants with good quality accommodation.

(b) The Social Housing Regulator also expects social housing providers to have a separate and specific policy on preventing and dealing with damp and mould in their homes.

C268 HOUSING SERVICES ALLOCATIONS POLICY

That the Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Housing Services Allocation Policy (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that the existing Tees Valley Common Housing Allocations Policy had been in place since 2012 and was last updated in 2019; there had been a significant increase in demand for Council housing in Darlington; the existing policy no longer met the strategic needs for Darlington; notice had been given to the Council's membership of the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership, which would expire in June 2023; and as a result a new Housing Services Allocations Policy was required.

Particular references were made to the key changes between the existing policy and the new

proposed policy and to the consultation undertaken with the Tenants Panel and the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the Housing Services Allocations Policy, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – (a) The Social Housing Regulator’s Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing providers to ensure their homes are let in a fair, transparent and efficient way, taking into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. The adoption of a formal Allocations Policy is one of the ways to demonstrate how we will achieve this.

(b) The Allocations Policy will also help ensure we meet the statutory requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

C269 EQUALITY POLICY AND OBJECTIVE REFRESH

The Cabinet Member with the Stronger Communities Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the updated Equality Policy and the Equality Objective.

The submitted report stated that historically the Council had chosen to have an Equality Policy in order to maintain a clear and structured approach that demonstrated how it aimed to meet its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010; there had been no changes to the Equality Act that required changes to the Council’s policy; and that the main amendment to the policy related to the objective. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council had specific duties to publish one or more equality objectives and equality information to communicate how it was meeting its statutory requirements; the objective must be updated every four years; and as the previous objective expired at the end of 2022/23 it needed to be updated this year.

It was reported that the Equality Policy had been reviewed and updated to reflect the current Council Plan; the previous objective had been reviewed; a new objective drafted; in light of the consultation some minor changes were made to the wording of the policy itself; and that the suggested new objective for 2023/27 was ‘to provide ongoing training and support for staff and members to help them meet their duties under the Equality Act of 2010, raise awareness of the Equality Policy and ensure residents of Darlington were treated with dignity and respect, and continue to report on progress.’

RESOLVED - (a) That the refreshed Equality Policy, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That the new Objective for 2023/27, as detailed in the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS - (a) The policy and objective have been through external consultation, Joint Consultative Committee and Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

(b) Changes requested in these stages have been made to make the policy and objective as inclusive as possible.

C270 REGULATORY INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) informing and updating Members on issues relevant to the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 and developments that have taken place since the last report to Cabinet in September 2022 (Minute C184/Sep/22 refers).

The submitted report stated that the RIPA Act 2000 enabled local authorities to carry out certain types of surveillance activity as long as specified procedures were followed; the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) was the main legislation governing the acquisition of communications data; the information obtained could be relied upon in court proceedings providing RIPA and IPA was complied with; and that no RIPA directed surveillance applications or IPA communications data applications had been authorised since the last report to Cabinet.

It was reported that the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) had published guidance for those who wanted to disclose information about the use of investigatory powers; a draft Statutory Instrument had been laid in relation to the updated Code of Practice, in order to bring into force the revised Covert Human Intelligence Codes of Practice; and outlined the recent training that had been undertaken.

RESOLVED – (a) That the developments that have taken place since September 2022, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That further reports on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) and Investigatory Powers (IPA) and associated issues, be submitted to future meetings of Cabinet.

REASONS – (a) In order to ensure that the Council complies with the legal obligations under RIPA, IPA and national guidance.

(b) To help in giving transparency about the use of RIPA and IPA in the Council

C271 DELIVERY OF NEW HOMES AT NEASHAM ROAD - LAND DISPOSAL AND JOINT VENTURE PROPOSAL

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) informing Members of the intention to sell land at Neasham Road Cell C, as shown on the submitted plan (also previously circulated), using the Council's Joint Venture framework.

The submitted report stated that a further report would be submitted to Cabinet to identify the net capital receipt for the Council; seek final approval to establish the new Joint Venture Company; approve the funding arrangements for the housing development at Cell C; and that no disposal would take place until Cabinet approval had been obtained.

It was reported that Cabinet approved the release of funding for Esh Homes Ltd to undertake preliminary surveys (Minute C213/Nov/22 refers); those preliminary surveys had been completed and a planning application had been submitted in January 2023; approval was now sought for the sale terms to Esh Homes Ltd.; and that it was proposed that the new Joint Venture company would be responsible for developing Cell C.

Particular reference was made at the meeting to what the Council would do to ensure that the target in the Local Plan in relation to provision of affordable homes, was met. The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio responded thereon.

RESOLVED - (a) That the principle and intention that Cell C will be sold to a new Joint Venture Company, on the terms and conditions as outlined in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be noted, subject to a further Cabinet report once all costs have been determined.

(b) That the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to prepare the terms of the disposal, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders, the details of which to be reported back in due course.

(c) That the Assistant Director – Law and Governance be authorised to execute the necessary documents to facilitate future development.

DELEGATIONS - Delegated authority to the Chief Executive as detailed in para 6(b) above.

REASONS – (a) To contribute to the delivery of new housing to satisfy the Borough's housing need.

(b) To achieve a capital receipt for the Council.

C272 SCHEDULE OF TRANSACTIONS

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Schedule of Transactions (also previously circulated).

RESOLVED – That the Schedule of Transactions, as detailed in the appendix to the submitted report, be approved, and the transactions be completed on the terms and conditions detailed therein.

REASONS – The terms negotiated require approval by Cabinet before binding itself contractually to a transaction.

C273 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 10 MARCH 2023**

**CABINET
4 APRIL 2023**

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2023/24

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Mike Renton, Stronger Communities Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Chief Executive**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval for a programme of support to deliver the third extension of the Government funded Household Support Fund (HSF) Extension for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Summary

2. Guidance has been published on the Government website. As part of a number of measures to provide help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living, the Household Support Fund (HSF) will be extended from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
3. The current programme is being delivered effectively. It is therefore proposed that the programme delivered in this next round takes forward the elements in the current programme.
4. Authorities are required to send a delivery plan to DWP by 17 May 2023 which outlines their intentions for The Fund.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Cabinet consider and approve:-
 - (a) The proposed programme and estimated costings outlined below.
 - (b) Delegation be given to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, to amend funding pots as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant within the time period.
 - (c) A submission to government is made based on the programme outlined below.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) To address the criteria laid down in the guidance.
 - (b) In order to secure the grant funding.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

Guidance published on the Government website was use in the preparation of this report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils/1-april-2023-to-31-march-2024-household-support-fund-guidance-for-county-councils-and-unitary-authorities-in-england>

Author: Seth Pearson x6090

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report does not directly address crime and disorder
Health and Wellbeing	This report proposes actions which will positively impact on health and wellbeing
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report does not directly address Carbon Impact and Climate Change
Diversity	This report will positively impact on all communities
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not represent a change to Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is an urgent decision as a the start date of the fund is April 1 st 2023
Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan by addressing the priority of Supporting the most vulnerable in the borough
Efficiency	Distribution of the funds is being realised in the most efficient way.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report proposes providing additional financial support for Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Round 4 guidance

7. Guidance has been published on the Government website. As part of a number of measures to provide help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living, the Household Support Fund (HSF) will be extended from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. As has been done for previous schemes, the fund will be made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need. This will be the third extension to the fund since its inception in October 2021.
8. Authorities are required to send a delivery plan to DWP by 17 May 2023 which outlines their intentions for The Fund, clearly setting out their priorities and approach for use of the Fund, and to demonstrate the ways in which they intend to allocate their funding.
9. The objective of The Fund is to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs.
10. Previous rounds of the Fund covered a six month period however this grant covers a full year. Allocations have been published with Darlington's being £1,827,708 which is double the amount of the previous grant provided for 6 months (i.e. the same level pro rata).
11. As with previous rounds of the HSF, Authorities are unable to carry forward any underspends from previous schemes.
12. When administering The Fund, Authorities are encouraged to adopt the following principles:
 - (a) Use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need, taking into account a wide range of information.
 - (b) Authorities are advised to use the funding from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and other related essentials. Authorities can also use the funding to support households who are struggling to afford wider essentials including housing costs where existing housing support does not meet this need.
13. Authorities are required to have a clear rationale for how households in greatest need have been identified.
14. The guidance for this round of HSF is similar in terms of types of support that can be provided and vulnerable households that are eligible.
15. As in the last round, every area must operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis - in other words, residents should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support.

16. However, unlike the last round, the Fund may be used to provide supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt and benefit advice. Authorities are reminded that the primary intention of The Fund is to provide crisis support for households, and it is not expected that a large portion of funding is spent on advice services.

HSF Round 3 programme

17. The programme for round 3 consists of the following elements:

- (a) Food vouchers to families with children on free school meals
- (b) Fuel vouchers through TBBT
- (c) Support for the Food Bank
- (d) Support for Care Leavers
- (e) Support for Elderly
- (f) Support for Vulnerable Groups through the voluntary and community sector
- (g) Low Income Family Tracker

Food Vouchers to families with children on free school meals

18. This has been a feature of all previous rounds of HSF so it is a well-established process. Supermarket vouchers are provided to families through a third party provider, Wonde, who send parents e-vouchers to their phones. Schools order the vouchers for parents then invoice the Council for the cost.

Fuel vouchers through The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT)

19. This provision was part of the first Household Support Fund delivery programme. It involves providing £49 fuel vouchers through the national programme administered by a Public Benefit Entity called Auriga.

20. Costs in providing vouchers are as follows:

Voucher value	£49.00
Voucher Admin Fee (charged by Auriga)	£5.48
Processing cost (TBBT)	£4.37
Unit Price per Voucher	£58.85

21. The process is now well tested and streamlined. Clients text 'FUEL' to a number and will receive a call within 48 hours during which they are taken through application. Residents with direct debit accounts can now also be supported via a voucher which can be exchanged for cash at fuel top up points (typically newsagents etc). To avoid misuse TBBT has introduced a number of additional steps in the application process to verify genuine need. Recipients can be referred by the Council or a trusted voluntary sector organisation providing additional assurance of need. The LIFT dashboard has also been used to identify vulnerable groups

Support for Food Banks

22. There is a network of six foodbanks across Darlington. The largest is at King Centre on Whessoe Road. All food banks are seeing an increase in demand. Whilst there are

numerous reasons why people use food banks the increase in fuel costs is cited frequently as is reducing monthly budgets. There is an increase in demand from working families but also a growth in demand from the elderly.

23. The Bread and Butter Thing are providing this element of the programme as they have warehousing facilities and connections in the food industry allowing them to purchase food at a discount.

Support for Care Leavers

24. This featured in the last HSF round supporting a group for which the Council acts as corporate parent. A payment of £100 has been made to the 154 care leavers.

Support for Elderly

25. Age UK have been delivering a package of support which includes the following:
 - (a) Home energy checks
 - (b) Meals at home
 - (c) Lunch clubs
 - (d) Subsidised meals in their café
 - (e) Attendance at activities
 - (f) Respite Care
 - (g) Befriending
26. Age UK have alerted the most vulnerable elderly people to their services identified via the LIFT dashboard.

Support for Vulnerable Groups through the voluntary and community sector

27. A collaboration of the voluntary sector has been delivering a flexible programme of support which is tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable individuals. In addition to supporting with food and fuel costs, they have also been improving people's resilience by providing energy saving and energy efficient equipment like electric blankets.

LIFT Dashboard

28. In line with the HSF guidance local authorities are required to target their support to those most in need. The Council has commissioned a consultancy, Policy In Practice to develop a 'Low Income Family Tracker' data dashboard. The dashboard allows the Council to proactively identify Low Income Households that are struggling, at risk or are in crisis by analysing and displaying Council and Universal Credit data. Once a particular vulnerable cohort has been identified a letter from the Council is sent alerting them to support available for the most appropriate provider.

Performance

29. The Household Support Fund Round 3 programme has delivered well. A wide range of vulnerable groups have been supported including the elderly, people with disabilities, care leavers, struggling families and working families on low incomes. The LIFT dashboard has

been used to direct resources to those most at need. However, the voluntary sector also organised a town wide mail out so that those households in need but that aren't claiming benefits could receive help.

30. By the end of the fund period each element of the programme will have spent the entirety of the contracted amount.

Recommendation

31. As the guidance for round 4 is similar to that for round 3 and the round 3 programme has delivered well, it is recommended that the round 4 programme continues with all the elements of round 3. However, a number of adjustments will need to be made to run a balanced programme.
32. As there are more school holidays during the spring/summer terms, to pay £20 per holiday week per child on free school meals would cost £1,147,000 approximately, only leaving £680,000 to support other vulnerable groups. It is therefore proposed that a rate of £15 per child per week is paid other than during the summer holidays where a rate of £12 is paid. £15 per week was the original meal entitlement rate, and a lower rate during the summer holidays is justifiable as there will be other activity with food available via the Holiday Activity and Food Programme. If this approach was taken the cost would be as follows:

Term	Weeks	Voucher value	Cost per pupil	Estimated Pupils based on Christmas numbers	Total Cost (£)
Easter	2	15	30.00	4,411	132,330
May	1	15	15.00	4,411	66,165
Summer	6	12	72.00	4,411	317,592
October	1	15	15.00	4,411	66,165
Christmas	2	15	30.00	4,411	132,330
February	1	15	15.00	4,411	66,165
Total	13		177.00		780,747

33. Which would leave £1,046,961 for the rest of the programme, similar pro rata to the current scheme.

34. Provisional estimated costs and outputs of the programme would be as follows:

Item No.	Option	Criteria	Estimated No. of Households	Estimated Cost
1.	Food Vouchers	families with children on free school meals	4,411	£780,747
2.	Fuel Vouchers through The Bread and Butter Thing	Low Income Families	5,500	£323,675
3.	Support for Food Banks	Families in food crisis	2,400	£100,000
4.	Support for Care leavers		154	£30,800
5.	Support for Elderly	Elderly people seeking support with fuel or food	600	£110,000
6.	Vulnerable families supported by Voluntary Sector	Vulnerable groups requiring additional support	2,660	£400,000
7.	Administration costs	LIFT dashboard		£25,000
		Other/contingency		£57,486
	Total			£1,827,708

35. As this round of Household Support Fund can now include provision of supplementary advice, this will be discussed with providers in negotiating agreements.

Financial Implications

36. As the delivery of the programme including administration costs are covered by the fund, these proposals should not impact on the overall finances of the Council.

Procurement Advice

37. The Procurement Team will be involved in writing the agreements with third sector providers of the programme above

Consultation

38. Voluntary sector organisations have been consulted extensively in the development of these proposals

Outcome of Consultation

39. The recommended programme reflects the advice of the voluntary sector

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**CABINET
4 APRIL 2023**

**RELEASE OF CAPITAL 2023/24 – ESSENTIAL REPAIRS TO PLAY AREAS, A BRIDGE ACROSS
THE SKERNE RIVER AND RELEASE OF ADVANCED DESIGN FEES**

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To approve the release of capital funding approved in the Medium Term Financial Plan to undertake essential repairs to play areas, repairs to a bridge over the River Skerne and release advanced design fee funding to enable projects to be developed.

Summary

2. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/24 to 2026/27 included the following financial allocations:
 - (a) £200,000 over the next 4 years for repairs to play areas over and above the annual revenue maintenance to replace/maintain play equipment to the required safety standard.
 - (b) £50,000 to carry out essential maintenance work to a bridge over the River Skerne in the Parkgate area.
3. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022/23 to 2025/26 included the following financial allocations:
 - (a) £150,000 in 2022/23 and the same amount in 2023/24 for advanced design work on projects to ensure projects are developed to appropriate standards for funding applications and Council decision making processes.
4. This report seeks approval to release the capital funding to deliver the works and projects identified above.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that the following amounts approved in the MTFP are released :-
 - (a) £200,000 for essential play area equipment replacement/ maintenance.

- (b) £50,000 for essential repairs to a bridge over the River Skerne.
- (c) £300,000 of advanced design fees be released for the development of Council priority projects.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-

- (a) To ensure the play areas/equipment are safe for children to use.
- (b) To ensure the bridge is in a safe condition to enable its ongoing use.
- (c) To ensure that schemes which are Council priorities are progressed.

Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Ian Thompson : ext 6628
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S17 Crime and Disorder	Ensuring play areas are well maintained provides opportunities for young people to engage in positive activities.
Health and Wellbeing	Provision of play areas has a positive impact on young people's health and wellbeing.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no implications on carbon and climate change.
Diversity	There is no specific implications on diversity.
Wards Affected	Play areas are located in various wards across the Borough.
Groups Affected	Young people will benefit from improved play areas.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no impact on the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Council Plan	The provision of play areas has a positive impact on the Council's visions and priorities.
Efficiency	There is no impact on the Council efficiency agenda.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The Council currently has 34 play areas across the Borough, which are of varying ages and over the next four years additional equipment replacement and repairs are required at a number of sites. Resources are limited so the investment will be prioritised on areas that have been identified from the annual external assessments and have Health and Safety requirements.
8. This additional work cannot be funded from the annual revenue allocation for basic ongoing maintenance and an amount was approved in the MTFP to cover these works.
9. The bridge over the River Skerne (SB10 Blackwell Meadows) on the open space in Parkgate requires essential maintenance to the main load bearing beams and decking. These repairs will ensure the bridge can continue to be used safely. The cost of the works are above revenue allocations, and a specific capital allocation has been approved in the MTFP.
10. An annual Advanced design work budget is approved in the MTFP. This is required to progress schemes which are Council priorities to understand the business case for investment, progress the ideas and ensure schemes are ready to be delivered when funding opportunities arise. Approval is sought to release these funds to progress advanced design works to inform funding applications and the council decision making processes.

Financial Implications

11. A sum of £200,000 has been allocated in the MTFP for play areas, £50,000 for bridge repairs and £300,000 for advanced design fees as detailed in this report.

Procurement Advice

12. Any procurement required to deliver the work will be carried out in line with the Council's contract procedure rules.

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