

## **NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION**

**DECISION OF:** COUNCILLOR HANNAH YOUNG. THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT



**WITH ADVICE FROM:** THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND S151 OFFICER

**DECISION NO:** 23/24 DP 528

**SUBJECT:** TRAFFIC SIGNALS OBSOLESCENCE GRANT ACCEPTANCE OF ALLOCATED GRANT FUNDING

**KEY DECISION:** YES

**REASON:** The Traffic Signals Obsolescence Grant is over £500,000.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Department for Transport announced it would be opening a grant which Local Authorities could bid against for the replacement of obsolete traffic signals (Non LED and Analog telecommunications systems) equipment for the second time. The bid amounts being £500k.

To be successful with the being awarded the grant the Council had to demonstrate that it had an asset management plan in place for the replacement of its traffic signals assets and demonstrate how the funding would be used to replace obsolete equipment, but also make improvements for active travel.

The Council have been awarded the full £500,000 along with an additional £37,668 allocation.

Like with Street Lighting, traditional lamps used in Traffic Signals are being phased out in favour of new LED technology and have become increasingly more difficult to get hold of.

Additionally the traffic signals assets are connected via mobile telecommunications to a central server for the monitoring of faults and their operation. The Mobile network operators have advised that the network used by the traffic signals will be switched off by 2028.

The existing telecommunications method on each site will be reconsidered as part of this project and will either be upgraded to 4G or where the infrastructure allows Wi-Fi or underground private Fibre. Wi-Fi and Fibre being the preferred option as the ongoing maintenance costs are reduced compared with 4G.

North Somerset Council's traffic signals asset is aging, and current funding levels are not enough to keep on top of the replacements needed to ensure the equipment can continue to operate and be maintained.

Without this essential funding there is risk that sites will have to be switched off or other funding found to replace them, to ensure they can continue to be maintained and to keep them running safely.

Carrying out these works will contribute towards the Authorities corporate objective of being a carbon neutral Council.

## **DECISION:**

1. To accept the Traffic Signals Obsolescence Grant allocation of £537,668 to allow important replacement of Traffic Signals equipment to take place.
2. To increase the Capital Programme by the sum of £537,668 in line with the amount of funding to be received.

## **REASONS:**

By accepting the funding allocation, North Somerset Council are able to carry out much needed replacement and upgrades works to its Traffic Signals asset.

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

1. Do not accept the funds – This option was rejected as without these much needed funds there is great risk that the Council will have to switch off some of its sites if they become no longer maintainable and increases the risk of accidents if the Council is not able to be proactive in its response to issues at Traffic Signals due to not being able to automatically report safety critical faults.
2. Accept the allocated Traffic Signals Obsolescence Grant – This is the preferred option as it allows the Council to make inroads into its Traffic Signals backlog and deal with an ever increasing obsolescence issue.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The capital fund discussed in this decision notice is central government funded and

### **Costs**

Projected spend of £537,668 for the works will be limited to the amount of Traffic Signals Obsolescence Grant funding received in the council's allocation of £537,668.

No additional North Somerset Council match funding will be needed for this project – grant allocation is the sole expenditure required.

### **Funding**

DfT have provided NSC with an allocation of £537,668 for Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant, as per determination (2023/24: No.31/6681). The funding was received 22/03/2024.

The Council is required to provide a programme of works to the DfT by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The works are to be completed in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Following approval of this decision, a new capital cost centre will be set up in order to separately identify and monitor spend on the scheme.

## **LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

As per Council Constitution, Capital Budget Changes and Transfers, 4.35, increases or changes to capital schemes between £500,000 to £1,000,000 are permissible subject to the funding impacts being identified and the applicable following limitations:

- **Executive Members** in consultation with the **Section 151 Officer** can approve changes between £500,000 and £1,000,000;
- All changes between £250,000 and £1,000,000 shall be retrospectively reported to the Executive as part of the corporate budget monitoring reports.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

[Click here to enter Climate Change and Environmental Implications]

## **CONSULTATION**

As individual schemes are developed and are ready to be delivered on site, key stakeholders will be advised of when the works will be taking place.

Stakeholders are to include the Exec Member for Highways and Transport, Ward Members and any members of the public or businesses directly affected by the ongoing works.

Advance notice will be provided to any affected properties and engagement made to ensure ongoing access is maintained.

A press release will also be produced as required by the individual schemes.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Following the completion of a risk register for this project, no risks remained at High.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

This funding improves on the Councils Traffic Signals asset position and with up to date telecommunications provides future proofing for new technologies and allowing the Council to better operate its Traffic Signals in the future to react with demands more effectively.

## **APPENDICES**

N/A

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: ..... Executive Member for Highways and Transport

Date: .....

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed: ..... Director of Place

Date: .....

Signed: ..... S151 Officer

Date: .....