

CABINET – 25 FEBRUARY 2025

CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – FEBRUARY 2025

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
 - a) approve the inclusion of a new one-form-entry primary school - East Carterton - into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £10.227m, to be funded from S106 developer contributions and basic need funding.
 - b) note that £7.500m of the remaining Housing and Growth Deal funding is to be allocated to Grove Airfield School in 2024/25.

Executive Summary

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2025 and updated during the year through the capital programme and monitoring reports. This report sets out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in March 2025.

Introduction

3. The Capital Programme sets out how the Council will use Capital expenditure to deliver the Council's priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022-25. The Capital Programme is updated quarterly and fully refreshed annually as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that it remains aligned to the latest priorities, reflects the latest cost projections and profile for delivery, and incorporates the current funding position.
4. On occasion, variations to the Capital programme are recommended to Cabinet. Variations are included in this report.

Property

East Carterton Primary School

5. In order to meet the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient pupil places, a new one-form-entry primary school is to be provided to serve the new housing development in East Carterton. The existing school, Brize Norton Primary School, is to be relocated to the new site.
6. Approval is required to enter this scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £10.227m to be funded by held S106 developer contributions and basic need funding.

Major Infrastructure

Housing and Growth Deal

7. The Housing and Growth Deal funding of £142.727m needs to be fully spent by 31 March 2025 with only a small element able to be retained for safety audits in 2025/26.

Tramway Road

8. The scheme to improve access to Banbury railway station for pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and taxis is in construction and is expected to be completed in 2025/26. However, agreement for early access to a small part of the land was rescinded by the landowner, meaning that progress has been delayed. As a result the element that can be funded from the Housing and Growth Deal has reduced from £15.217m to £5.600m.

Access to Witney

9. The Access to Witney scheme, which will construct a new west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction to improve access to Witney, has been impacted by delays in assembling the land. The decision on a Compulsory Purchase Order was expected in July 2024 but due to the General Election it was issued in October 2024. This caused a delay to the start of the construction stage so the amount of Growth Deal funding that can be utilised by 31 March 2025 has reduced from £15.600m to £9.700m. However, the scheme started on site on 10 February 2025 and is on track to be delivered in 2025/26.
10. In order to ensure that the full Growth Deal allocation can be utilised by 31 March 2025, £7.500m planned spend on Grove Secondary school will be brought into the programme. The 600-place secondary school is being directly delivered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The school is essential in supporting infrastructure required to ensure the provision of sufficient secondary school places to meet the demand generated by the new housing development of up to 2,500 new dwellings at Grove Airfield. The funding released will be used to fund on-going spend on the Access to Witney and Tramway Schemes in 2025/26 to enable completion of those schemes.
11. The use of Housing and Growth Deal funding for other schemes that are part of the existing planned programme will also be maximised in 2024/25.

Financial Implications

12. It is anticipated that the council will receive the remaining £30m Housing & Growth Deal grant funding from MHCLG in 2024/25.
13. The use of Housing and Growth Deal Funding to support Grove Airfield School in 2024/25 will help to fully utilise the funding, maximise the funding available in the capital programme, and ensure that the remaining Housing & Growth Deal projects can be completed.

Comments checked by:
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Staff Implications

14. There are no staffing implications arising directly from the report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

15. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications

16. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with the Financial Regulations and in particular paragraph 5.1.1(iv) permitting Cabinet to agree resource inclusion into the capital programme via a periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendation of the Strategic Capital Board.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Background papers: none

Contact Officers:

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February 2025