

## **CABINET – 17 JUNE 2025**

### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – JUNE 2025**

**Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer**

#### **Recommendations**

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
  - a) to approve the inclusion of a programme of work into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £5.906m to be funded from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund (TCIF), agreed through Council in February 2024.
  - b) to note the proposed schemes to be delivered under the TCIF programme of work.
  - c) approve a budget increase of £1.800m for the Access to Witney Scheme from £25.025m to £26.825m to be funded by incorporating £1.800m from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund.
  - d) approve the inclusion of the Benson Lane Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) into the capital programme, with an indicative budget of £1.232m, to be funded by a combination of developer contributions, Transport Provision funding, BSIP programme funds and the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2025 and will be 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 July 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.
4. 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.
5. On occasion, variations to the Capital programme are recommended to Cabinet. All variations and financial implications are contained within this report.

#### **Placemaking**

Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund

6. A £6.000m fund to create a pipeline of capital projects to ease congestion in built up areas was agreed as part of the Labour & Co-operative Group budget amendments, agreed by Council in February 2024. The 2-year programme, with an indicative cost of £5.906m, will deliver a package of measures, comprising of major works, bus service improvement schemes, signing updates to map providers, and signals upgrades.
7. Detailed analysis has been undertaken to identify congestion hotspots across the County with a focus on built-up areas. The following mitigations have been identified as being the highest priority schemes:
  - a. **Traffic Filter trial delay mitigations package** – a package of measures to reduce the impact of delays to the traffic filter trial due to the ongoing Botley Road closure
  - b. **Littlemore Roundabout** – signals upgrades / refurbishments and the addition of a pedestrian crossing
  - c. **Horspath Road: Phase 1** – signals upgrades, pedestrian cycle crossing improvements and bus priority
  - d. **Horspath Driftway: Phase 1** – signals upgrade and traffic management scheme to improve bus journey times
  - e. **Benson Lane BSIP, Crowmarsh Gifford** – measures to improve bus journey times and service reliability
  - f. **Swan Close Road, Banbury** – feasibility work to identify improvements at 3 junctions
  - g. **A40 Access to Witney** – complimentary measures to re-route traffic from Witney town centre
  - h. **Urban Traffic Control Upgrades (countywide)** – improvement of visibility of sites to ensure they are performing optimally
  - i. **CCTV Cameras (countywide)** – increased coverage allowing greater visual oversight of traffic on the highway network
8. Approval is required to enter this programme of work into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £5.906m.

## Major Infrastructure

### Access to Witney

9. The Access to Witney Scheme will improve access to the A40 from east and north-east Witney, reducing the need for local and longer-distance traffic to travel through the town centre by providing an alternative traffic route around the edge of the town.
10. Due to the delay in releasing the Compulsory Purchase Order decision caused by the timing of the 2024 general election, the scheme has incurred prolongation costs. Additional costs have also been incurred due to requirements to carry out accommodation works mandated through the planning process, as well as the need to design and implement a signing strategy.
11. Approval is required to increase the budget from £25.025m to £26.825m, which is to be met by incorporating £1.800m from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund (TCIF), agreed through Council in February 2024.

### Benson Lane Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

12. The Benson Lane BSIP Scheme, part of the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan, will improve access to bus services for residents and visitors. The project will deliver a signalised right-turn for buses only off the southbound A4074 into Benson Lane and will also include infrastructure improvements to enhance safety and accessibility for walking and cycling.
13. Approval is required to enter this scheme into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £1.232m. The funding required to deliver the programme is comprised of contributions from the following sources:
  - a. S106 developer contributions (£0.222m)
  - b. Transport provision (£0.160m)
  - c. BSIP programme fund (£0.100m)
  - d. Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund (£0.750m)

## **Financial Implications**

14. As set out in the budget agreed by Council in February 2024 the cost of £6.0m borrowing to support the schemes included in the Transport Congestion Improvement Fund, which includes £1.8m for Access to Witney and £0.750m for the Benson Lane BSIP scheme, will be met by on-going funding built into the revenue budget (see 2025L&CO16).
15. A further £0.160m to support the cost of the Benson Lane BSIP scheme will be met from £4.000m capital funding agreed by Council in February 2025. This funding was for schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions but require additional funding to progress.

Comments checked by:  
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

## **Staff Implications**

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

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

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

## **Legal Implications**

18. Local authorities are required to have robust governance structures in place to oversee capital programmes, including regular reviews and updates to capital strategies, ensuring decisions are made transparently. The Council's Financial Rules and Financial Regulations which make up part of the Constitution outline the Council's financial governance structures.
19. **Prudential Code Compliance:** To meet the requirement for transparency the Council must adhere to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, which

emphasizes affordability, prudence, and sustainability in borrowing and investment decisions. This ensures that capital investments are financially sound and do not jeopardize the authority's financial stability.

20. **Regulatory Framework:** The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, govern how local authorities manage their capital finance. These regulations include provisions for borrowing limits, capital receipts, and the use of capital allowances. This report is the assurance by officers that the regulatory framework and the prudential code are being complied with.
21. The Council's Financial Regulations states that in year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet. Paragraph 5.1.1(IV) sets out that where the total estimated resource allocation is above £1,000,000, Cabinet must agree its inclusion into the Capital Programme. Due diligence regarding changes to the Capital Programme is carried out at officer level by the Strategic Capital Board and the Section 151 Officer.
22. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with Financial Regulation 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 (chaired by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer).

Comments by:

**Kim Sawyer Interim Head of Legal & Governance**

**LORNA BAXTER**

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Background papers: none

Contact Officers:

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