

CABINET – 23 JANUARY 2024

CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – JANUARY 2024

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
 - a) approve the inclusion of ‘Great Mead’, a Children’s Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £3.1m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
 - b) approve the inclusion of ‘Willow Bank’, a Children’s Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £1.8m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
 - c) approve the inclusion of a new Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) School for Social and Emotional High Needs (SEMH) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), located in Didcot, into the Capital Programme, with an indicative capital budget of £14.4m to be met by section 106 funds and High Needs grant 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Executive Summary

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2023 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 2024.

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. There are no variations included in this report.

Property

5. ‘Great Mead’, East Hagbourne
To support the sufficiency strategy for placements for Children We Care For, Children’s Services plan to deliver four children’s homes. A property, ‘Great Mead’, has been identified by the service as meeting their needs as

a Autistic Spectrum Disorder children's home, giving children the opportunity to live and thrive within a settled and safe rural community, within easy reach of universal amenities. The property meets the requirements for the Large Autistic Spectrum Disorder Home set out in the Business Case proposal for 50:50 joint funding approval by DfE and Cabinet (5 December 2022).

6. Approval is required to release £3.1m of funds, agreed by Council in February 2023, to purchase Great Mead and to fund the cost of refurbishment and adaptations.
7. 'Willow Bank', Sutton
Another property, 'Willow Bank', has been identified to support the delivery of the four children's homes agreed in February 2023. This property meets the requirements for the Small Solo Children's Home set out in the business case proposals for 50:50 joint funding approval by DfE and Cabinet (5 December 2022).
8. Approval is required to release £1.8m of funds, agreed by Council in February 2023, to purchase Willow Bank and to fund the cost of refurbishment and adaptations.
9. New Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) School, Didcot
Approval is required to enter a new SEND School, located in Didcot into the Capital Programme. Oxfordshire's SEND Sufficiency Delivery Strategy identifies the need for two new special schools in the south-east of Oxfordshire, one for Social, Emotional & Mental Health and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (SEMH/ASD) needs and one for other categories of need.
10. The £14.4m capital cost of the new school will be met from section 106 funds and High Needs grant 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Financial Implications

11. The financial implications are contained within the report. Funding for these schemes can be met from previous identified grant funding, funding provisions and held/secured S106 developer contributions.

Comments checked by:
Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

14. 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 Chief Executive). 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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January 2023