

CABINET – 21 JANUARY 2025

CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – JANUARY 2025

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

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
 - a) approve the inclusion of 'The Greenwood Centre', an 11-bed accommodation block for 16–17-year-olds in need of supported accommodation, into the Capital Programme at an indicative cost of £1.932m, to be funded from £6.000m agreed by Council in February 2024 for additional Children's Homes.
 - b) approve a budget increase of £6.39m for 'Great Western Park Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) School', to be funded from the High Needs Grant.
 - c) approve a budget increase of £1.500m to the Energy Saving Measures Programme, to be addressed through the annual Budget and Business Planning process and approval by Council in February 2025.
 - d) approve a budget increase of £11.516m to the Didcot to Culham River Crossing, part of the Housing Infrastructure 1 (HIF1) programme, to be funded through additional funds granted by Homes England and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.
 - e) approve a budget increase of £12.537m to Didcot Science Bridge, part of the Housing Infrastructure 1 (HIF1) programme to be funded through additional funds granted by Homes England and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.
 - f) approve a budget increase of £11.916m to the Clifton Hampden Bypass project, part of the Housing Infrastructure 1 (HIF1) programme to be funded through additional funds granted by Homes England and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.

Executive Summary

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2024 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; those variations are included in this report.

Property

The Greenwood Centre

5. The council needs to provide housing for children under the age of 18 who are classified as “Children We Care For.” This includes children who cannot return home, those who have been lost or abandoned and unaccompanied asylum seeker children. Contracts currently in place do not meet the needs of these children and so an existing property, owned by the council is to be remodelled to provide an 11-bed supported accommodation block.
6. Approval is required to enter this scheme into the Capital Programme at an indicative cost of £1.932m, to be funded from funds of £6.00m agreed by Council in February 2024 for additional Children’s Homes.

7. Great Western Park SEND School

Great Western Park SEND School will deliver 120 places for pupils aged 7-19 and was entered into the Capital Programme in January 2024.

8. Following completion of the feasibility phase, a shortfall in budget has been identified due to higher than expected construction cost estimates, overall project costs and additional risk and contingency required to deliver the project. Approval is required to increase the budget from £14.43m to £20.82m, an increase of £6.39m to be met from the High Needs Grant.
9. The additional cost pressure will impact on available funding remaining to deliver other projects identified to be funded by the High Needs grant funding. The previous funding covered the period 2021/22 to 2024/25, and the Council is waiting for information on the continuation of the grant and any funding being provided for 2025/26.
10. Energy Saving Measures Programme
The Energy Saving Measures Programme is the Council’s approach to the replacement or maintenance of heating systems and addressing the reduction of the property carbon footprint associated with meeting the Council’s ambition of net zero carbon in operation by 2030.
11. Due to a number of cost pressures, including poorer than expected estate conditions and supply chain challenges, there is a budget pressure on the programme of £1.500m. The additional funding required to complete the programme is to be addressed through the Budget and Business Planning process which will be approved by Council in February 2025.

Major Infrastructure

12. HIF1 Schemes

The HIF1 Scheme is the cornerstone of the Science Vale transport strategy and helps to support employment and growth ambitions in neighbouring Oxford City. It will benefit a large swathe of Oxfordshire residents that are required to travel from or into the Science Vale area for work, shopping and leisure.

The following schemes all require additional budget due to additional costs from the joint Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), the planning inquiry and associated delays, mainly due to inflation. The additional costs are to be met by the HIF1 grant from Homes England, following an updated Grant Determination Agreement approved by Cabinet in July 2024.

13. Didcot to Culham River Crossing

The Didcot to Culham River Crossing is a new road project connecting the A4130 at Didcot with the A415 at Culham. It includes bridges over the River Thames and a private rail siding providing connections to Appleford and Sutton Courtenay. The project also features walking and cycling facilities.

Approval is required to increase the budget by £11.516m to be funded by the HIF1 grant from Homes England.

14. Didcot Science Bridge

The project includes a new single carriageway bridge over the A4130, Great Western Railway Mainline, and Milton Road, with segregated walking and cycling facilities. It also features a link road through the former Didcot A Power Station site, rejoining the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road with segregated walking and cycling facilities.

Approval is required to increase the budget by £12.537m to be funded by the HIF1 grant from Homes England.

15. Clifton Hampden Bypass

The project includes a single carriageway bypass for Clifton Hampden, between Culham Science Centre and B4015 just north of Clifton Hampden Village. It includes a new relief road, northwest of the village, a new roundabout near Culham Science centre and Culham Rail station and various access junctions along the bypass. Additionally, the project will include segregated walking and cycling facilities.

Approval is required to increase the budget by £11.916m to be funded by the HIF1 grant from Homes England.

Financial Implications

16. The financial implications are contained within the report. In the body of the report.

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

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

19. 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 2025