

## Appendix 3

### Recommendations of Capital Scrutiny Group – Capital Plan 2025/26

Membership of the Capital Scrutiny Group (CSG) is as follows:

- Cabinet Member – Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets (Chair)
- Cabinet Member – Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Economic Growth and Tackling Deprivation
- Cabinet Member - Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
- Representative from each scrutiny committee
- Chief Executive
- Corporate Director – Governance and Business
- Head of Finance (S.151) and Audit
- County Landlord

### Recommendations

Block allocations for 2025/26 were reviewed by CSG on 29 November 2024. Bids submitted to CSG totalled £7,227k – a reduction from the 2024/25 total – plus an initial proposed contingency of £500k. The capital funding assumed to be available in the provisional WG settlement for 2025/26 was £6.185m, leaving a difference of £1.542m to be funded from capital receipts, reserves and prudential borrowing.

Services were asked to provide a business case to support their bids. Each bid was submitted with approval of the relevant Head of Service. Services presented how the block allocations will be spent in 2025/26 and provided an assessment of the impact and risk of any reduction in funding for Members' consideration and scrutiny. Affordability and links to the Council Plan guided those discussions and outcomes.

The proposed allocations are detailed in Appendix 4 and in summary are as follows:

- An allocation of £240k is recommended for Minor Adaptations, Community Equipment and Telecare. This funding is targeted at enabling the elderly and disabled to remain in their own homes.
- It is proposed to allocate £1.5m in support of Private Sector Housing Assistance. The funding will be used in the main on the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Both the school and non-school capital maintenance bids include provision for essential maintenance such as asbestos removal, fire risk assessment work, equalities etc. It is recommended that £1.25m be allocated to schools capital maintenance works. It is also proposed to allocate £1.0m to non-schools capital

maintenance work. It is further recommended that the appropriate Heads of Service determine the precise allocations to works required, in order of priority.

- It is proposed to allocate £2.0m towards Highways Maintenance and £337k block allocation for bridges & structures and public rights of way. Also included within this recommendation is a further £400k for repairs to bridge structures. This is the ninth year of a proposed ten-year Highways Structure Backlog Project.
- An allocation of £250k is recommended for the replacement of structurally unsafe lighting columns. This is the third year of a six-year programme.
- It is proposed to allocate £250k of the £1m four-year rolling programme to fund the annual desktop refresh and a number of other projects in order to maintain the Council's ICT infrastructure. Years 3 to 4 to be reviewed in 2025/26.
- Capital Scrutiny Group recommends maintaining the allocation set aside for any contingencies at £500k, in line with 2024/25.

In reducing the block allocations the following points were considered:

- Statutory nature of some schemes, for example Disabled Facilities Grants
- Revenue consequences for some schemes, for example reducing the allocation for minor adaptations, community equipment and telecare could lead to packages of social care being commissioned.
- Not allocating further funding in 2025/26 to block allocations that have some slippage built up from prior years and taking a single year approach for those block allocations to spend what funding they already have. This is unlikely to be sustainable going into 2026/27.
- Allocating less to some of the larger block allocations for property and highways in recognition that some expenditure can be deferred into future years. It should, however, be noted that, in real terms, allocations have effectively been reduced for a number of years due to above inflation increases to construction costs etc, and necessary works are now building up.