



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th FEBRUARY 2021

THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 – 2023/24

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION
WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN**

Author: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with a proposed three year capital programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 that if acceptable, will be presented to Council for approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Review, and if acceptable propose the attached three year capital programme at Appendix A to Council on 10th March 2021 which includes:
- 2.1.1 A review and proposed release of earmarked reserve balances as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the attached report;
 - 2.1.2 Proposed reallocation of existing capital resources as detailed in paragraphs 5.5 – 5.8 of the attached report;
 - 2.1.3 Proposed investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the attached report;
 - 2.1.4 The Council's core capital programme;
 - 2.1.5 The Council's total capital programme including additional non core funding.
- 2.2 Authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the level of Council Resources required to fund the Core Three Year Capital Programme as shown at Appendix 2 as a consequence of any change to the Council's capital resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree that the report at Appendix A is acceptable and is proposed by Cabinet to Council on 10th March 2021.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Cabinet agreed the recommendations in the report presented on the 25th January 2018 titled “[Delivering the Corporate Plan – “The Way Ahead” – Investing for the future](#)”. These were to agree in principle to a strategic outline capital investment programme of in excess of £300M over the next 5 years over and above its recurring annual capital programme, and that regular reports are presented to Cabinet and full Council. The draft report at Appendix A expands on this and proposes the Council’s three year capital programme commencing 1st April 2021.
- 4.2 The Corporate Plan “Making a Difference” 2020-2024 reinforces the need to continue to live within our means, deliver an efficient and effective Council, maximise opportunities and have a shared responsibility.

5. THE FINAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT FOR 2021/22

- 5.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement for 2021/22 has been extremely uncertain throughout the autumn 2020 period, with the provisional settlement being announced on the 22nd December 2020.
- 5.2 The Final Local Government Settlement for 2021/22 is expected to be received on the 2nd March 2021.
- 5.3 The Minister for Housing and Local Government has indicated that there are no intentions to make any significant changes to the methodology or the data underpinning the Provisional Settlement for the purposes of the Final Settlement, albeit is unable to guarantee that there will be no changes due to the financial uncertainties currently faced. Whilst this provides some comfort the risk of change between the provisional and final settlement clearly remains.
- 5.4 In order to ensure that Cabinet are able to recommend a balanced capital programme to Council on the 10th March 2021, and given the timing of the Final Settlement (2nd March 2021), it will be necessary to authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the programme to deal with any change between Provisional and Final Settlement. It is proposed that any change is dealt with by means of amending the contribution from Council Resources across the 3 year programme, providing the opportunity to rebalance as necessary into future years.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of this report relate solely to the proposed report to Council at Appendix A.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Details regarding consultation relating to the Council’s budget strategy are subject to a separate report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 All financial implications are included in the proposed report to Council at Appendix A.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 The Council's capital programme is focussed on investing capital resources in line with all the Corporate Plan priorities. The capital investment also contributes to all of the seven national well being goals.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The draft report at Appendix A sets out the proposed capital programme from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2024.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020-2021

COUNCIL

10th MARCH 2021

**THE COUNCIL'S THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 – 2023/24
INCORPORATING A REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES**

REPORT OF THE CABINET

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1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24, following receipt of the provisional local government settlement for 2021/22.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the detail of the provisional 2021/22 local government settlement for capital expenditure, reproduced at Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Agree to the release of the Earmarked Reserve balances as detailed in paragraph 5.3;
- 2.3 Agree to the reallocation of resources as detailed in paragraphs 5.5 – 5.8;
- 2.4 Agree to allocate the funding released from Earmarked Reserves and existing core capital funding to the investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2;
- 2.5 Agree the proposed 'core' three year programme detailed at Appendix 2;
- 2.6 Agree the proposed total three-year Capital Programme, detailed at Appendices 3 (a) to (d), which includes the following non core capital funding:
- Prudential borrowing to support 21st Century School Schemes and Highways Improvements schemes;
 - Capital grants for specific schemes;

- Third party contributions;
- Additional Council resources previously allocated to support existing schemes and Corporate Plan investment priorities; and
- The investment priorities detailed in paragraph 6.2, which are funded by additional one off Welsh Government capital funding detailed in paragraph 3.2, the release of Earmarked Reserves as per paragraph 5.3, and reallocation of resource as per paragraphs 5.5 – 5.8.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that each year the Council is allocated a sum of unhypothecated “Supported” borrowing and General Capital Grant from the Welsh Government (WG). Details of the provisional allocation for 2021/22 are shown at Appendix 1. The funding for 2021/22 totals £13.764M, which includes our share of the continuation of an additional £35M of General Capital funding at an all Wales level. Our estimate of the annual base allocation for 2021/22 is £10.985M and our estimated share of the additional allocation is £2.779M. Even with this additional funding, there is still a reduction of £3.542M compared to 11 years ago:

Year	WG Capital Support
2010/11	£17.306M
2011/12	£13.856M
2012/13	£12.828M
2013/14	£11.328M
2014/15	£11.194M
2015/16	£11.154M
2016/17	£11.164M
2017/18	£11.232M
2018/19	£11.214M
2019/20	£13.441M
2020/21	£13.677M
2021/22	£13.764M

- 3.2 In determining our core capital programme we have included an annual allocation of £10.985M, with £2.779M allocated to fund the investment priorities proposed in paragraph 6.2. As referenced in paragraph 3.1, WG have included an additional £35M in total General Capital funding for 2021/22.
- 3.3 This base allocation, together with estimated Capital Receipts and the utilisation of Capital Reserves, represents the Council’s ‘Core’ capital funding. The wider overall capital programme however includes approved prudential borrowing, specific grants and agreed additional investment in our key priorities.

4.0 **THE NEW THREE YEAR PROGRAMME (2021/22 TO 2023/24)**

- 4.1 The proposed new 3 year capital programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 represents a total investment of **£116.024M**. This comprises:

- A Core programme of £42.300M over the next 3 years;
- Prudential borrowing of £12.446M to support the 21st Century Schools Programme and Highways Improvements schemes;
- Specific grants of £12.838M;
- Third party contributions of £1.185M;
- Earmarked reserves and revenue contributions previously allocated to schemes and investment priorities of £27.327M;
- Capital resources, in addition to the 3 year core allocation, of £10.528M; and
- If agreed, reallocated earmarked reserves of £5.484M and reallocated core funding of £1.137M to fund the proposed investment priorities detailed in paragraph 6.2, alongside the one off WG capital funding of £2.779M.

4.2 Having due regard to the level of available capital resources, both from WG and from our own capital receipts, the new core programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 is set at £14.1M per year. This represents a fully funded £42.3M core programme across the 3 years.

4.3 There remains a risk that the projected capital receipts are less than anticipated and projections will continue to be closely monitored.

4.4 Whilst allocating core resources for three years, there remains the requirement for us to continue to review and challenge any commitments made into years two and three, to robustly monitor capital receipt projections and to position ourselves to respond as appropriate and necessary as we move forward.

4.5 Given the timing of external funding approval processes, it will be necessary to maintain flexibility of funding across individual schemes in order to ensure the most efficient delivery of the overall programme.

4.6 Details of the overall capital programme for the 3 year period are set out in Section 7 of this report.

5.0 REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

EARMARKED RESERVES

5.1 As reported to Council in the Statement of Accounts (25th November 2020), the Council has revenue stream earmarked reserves at the 31st March 2020 of £39.028M (£41.867M at 31st March 2019) which are set aside for a variety of purposes. In addition, there are specific reserves relating to Capital Funding, Insurance and Treasury Management.

5.2 The level and use of earmark reserves is constantly reviewed as part of the Council's robust financial management arrangements. Budget setting and accounts closure traditionally provide opportunities for more in depth reviews and Cabinet have specifically requested that the Section 151 Officer undertake a detailed risk assessment of earmarked reserves with a view to:

- Assessing the underlying financial risk for which they have been set aside to determine if it remains or whether circumstances have changed;

- The extent to which any amounts set aside for investment (Prior Year Commitments – Service “Carry Forwards”) have been contractually committed;
 - Being clear on the reasons for holding reserves and ensuring that they are sufficient, but not excessive; and
 - The need for continued support of a robust Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 5.3 With the review complete, Cabinet have now been able to take a view on the extent to which any amounts could be released. These are listed below:

a) Investment/Infrastructure (£6.235M as at 31st March 2020)

Sums are set aside to fund current and future costs of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough.

Following review and alongside the investment requirements identified below, it is proposed that a sum of **£5.484M** is released from this reserve.

- 5.4 The total amount of reserves therefore which are proposed to be released amounts to **£5.484M**.

EXISTING CORE CAPITAL FUNDING

- 5.5 Capital expenditure and commitments are closely monitored throughout the year and as a result of reviewing actual expenditure and commitments in preparation for the new 3 year capital programme, some core capital underspend has been identified.
- 5.6 Maintaining our core capital programme at the current levels for the next 3 years provides flexibility with regard to any underspend and it is proposed that this underspend is now reallocated.
- 5.7 Reallocating this resource has no impact on the level of core allocation for the next 3 years and therefore no impact on the level of budget available or service delivery.
- 5.8 The total amount identified which is available to reallocate is **£1.137M**.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

- 5.9 The Section 151 Officer is content that releasing the above resource does not compromise our financial standing. As such, Cabinet have carefully considered the options available and investment requirements and opportunities. A key consideration continues to be supporting the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan “Making a Difference” 2020 – 2024 and the strategic outline capital investment programme, as agreed by Cabinet on the 25th January 2018, of in excess of £300M over the 5 year period to 2023 (over and above the recurring Capital Programme).
- 5.10 As such, Cabinet are content to propose to utilise the £5.484M of earmarked reserves and reallocate £1.137M of core capital funding which, with the additional WG capital funding of £2.779M (referenced in paragraph 3.2) results in total available funding of **£9.400M**.

6.0 INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- 6.1 The Cabinet believe that the most appropriate use of these one off resources is to invest in our infrastructure and to support the aspirations and priorities of the Corporate Plan as presented in the reports referenced above.
- 6.2 In being able to support the above objectives, Cabinet have identified the following specific areas which it is proposed that Council agree can be invested in, with funding available through use of one off reserves, existing resources and additional WG funding:

Investment Priority	£M
Highways & Roads	3.000
Highways Structures	1.500
Parks Structures	0.750
Making Better Use/Traffic Developments	0.300
A4059 Footbridge	1.500
Porth Interchange	1.500
Business and Community Grants	0.100
Parks & Green Spaces	0.500
Play Areas	0.250
Total Council Investment	9.400

- 6.3 Further details on these investments are included in section 7.

7.0 THE THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 – 2023/24

- 7.1 The details of the 3 year proposed programme for each Service Group are provided below.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S GROUP

- 7.2 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £3.136M for the Chief Executive's Group in 2020/21.
- 7.3 The total resources for 2021/22, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £1.900M.
- 7.4 As part of the Council's on-going programme to ensure high standards of health and safety and operational efficiency within its premises, appropriate resources continue to be allocated to our operational accommodation, the management and remediation of Asbestos and Legionella.

PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND FRONTLINE SERVICES

- 7.5 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £76.445M for Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services in 2020/21.

7.6 The total resources for 2021/22, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £48.342M.

7.7 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services in the following areas:

- Highways & Roads - £3.000M
- Highways Structures - £1.500M
- Parks Structures Improvements - £0.750M
- Transport Infrastructure - £3.300M (Making Better Use/Traffic Developments, A4059 Footbridge, Porth Interchange
- Business and Community Grants - £0.100M

This additional investment is included in the figures presented in Appendix 3b.

PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

7.8 The Council's Capital Programme continues to provide a long term funding commitment to the economic regeneration of the County Borough and in doing so supports one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper'.

7.9 In addition to the above, sustained investment has been maintained across a range of funding streams, supported by external funding and the Corporate Plan Investment Priorities. This has enabled a wide range of regeneration activity to be delivered to benefit the local economy.

7.10 The Council will continue to work with partners to develop and progress exciting and innovative schemes such as:

- Pontypridd YMCA – Redeveloping the YMCA to be fit for the future as a community centre for creative arts facilitating social enterprise, training opportunities and community involvement;
- Development of modern business accommodation with new units at Robertstown, Aberdare;
- Townscape Enhancements across our key town centres – a targeted approach to upgrading town centre buildings for increased business and commercial use and continuing to improve the quality of the townscape providing business investment and employment growth;
- Development of a new integrated Transport Hub at Porth as part of the Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy;
- Strategic Opportunity Areas – a number of Strategic Opportunity Areas have been developed to deliver economic growth and job creation in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These areas are:
 - Cynon Gateway – Energising the Region;
 - The Wider Pontypridd, Treforest – Edge of the City, heart of the Region;
 - Pontypridd Town – Pivotal in the Region;
 - A4119 Corridor – Regional Rhondda Gateway; and
 - Llanilid on the M4 – Driving the Regional Economy.

7.11 The programme of regeneration projects will add value to the significant

regeneration investment that has already taken place and will act as a catalyst for further regeneration activity.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

- 7.12 A budget for 2021/22 of £13.522M has been allocated and the programme comprises the following schemes to contribute to one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'People – Are independent, healthy and successful':
- Disabled Facilities Grants, Maintenance Repair Assistance Grants and Renovation Grants in Exceptional Circumstances;
 - Empty Properties Grants Investment scheme;
 - Community Regeneration budget which provides grants to support a number of initiatives underpinning the affordable warmth and energy efficiency agenda; and
 - Tackling Poverty Fund.

FRONTLINE SERVICES

Highways Technical Services

- 7.13 A budget for 2021/22 of £12.949M has been allocated to the next phase of the Council's Highways Improvement programme and in doing so supports one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play'. Schemes comprise:
- Road surface treatments and resurfacing – £6.804M;
 - Car park improvements – £0.045M;
 - Major repairs to structures such as bridges and walls – £4.990M;
 - Parks Structures Improvements - £0.750M;
 - Street lighting replacement and upgrades – £0.200M; and
 - Traffic Management - £0.160M.

Strategic Projects

- 7.14 A budget for 2021/22 of £12.076M has been allocated to Strategic Projects for major transportation infrastructure schemes and to extend and enhance the programme of pinch-point and highways network improvement projects as well as road safety, traffic management and drainage improvements. Schemes comprise:
- Transportation Infrastructure which includes Park & Ride schemes, Llanharan Bypass, A4119 Coed Ely Dualling, Cynon Gateway North, Gelli – Treorchy Link Road, and the Making Better Use programme – £11.936M; and
 - Drainage Improvements – £0.140M.
- 7.15 In recent years a number of grants have been made available by WG for delivery of projects on the transportation network. These include Local Transport Fund, Local Transport Network Fund, Active Travel, together with two new grants; Resilient Road Fund and Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Fund, as well as Road Safety Grant, Safe Routes in the Community Grant and Flood Alleviation Schemes. Guidance has been issued and bids are in progress. It is anticipated that available grants will be confirmed during March 2021.
- 7.16 A supplementary report on the detail of proposed schemes for Highways,

Transportation & Strategic Projects will be presented to Cabinet shortly.

WASTE STRATEGY

- 7.17 The budget for 2021/22 is £0.888M. This relates to the Eco Park at Bryn Pica.

FLEET

- 7.18 The 3 year rolling programme for replacement vehicles continues. The 3 year allocation is £5.227M. This service area is subject to ongoing assessment and continuous review of requirements.

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

- 7.19 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £20.992M for Education & Inclusion in 2020/21.
- 7.20 The total resources available to Education & Inclusion for 2021/22, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £24.735M and will support one of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper'.

SCHOOLS

- 7.21 The Council will continue to deliver and support its long-term strategic investment programme of modernisation to create school environments that meet the needs of our communities and provide the best learning provision and outcomes for young people and the wider community. The programme of capital investment is supported with Council funding, WG 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme Band B Capital Grant, WG Increasing Welsh Medium Provision Capital Grant, WG Childcare Grant, WG Community Hub Grant and Community Infrastructure Levy funding. The following key school projects are either in progress or planned, and are included in the overall strategic programme and include a combination of refurbishments, remodelling, demolitions and new buildings:
- Ffynnon Taf Primary – to create a community room/childcare facility and construct a four-classroom extension and hall to increase capacity at the school;
 - YGG Abercynon – to create and establish a new childcare setting into dedicated premises on the school site to expand identified need in the community;
 - Cwmlai Primary – to deliver dedicated childcare facilities on the school site, to expand identified need in the community and refurbish areas of the existing school. School capacity to be increased.
 - Dolau Primary – to create and establish dedicated childcare facilities on the school site to expand identified need in the community;
 - YGG Aberdar – to construct a four-classroom extension to increase capacity; car parking provision; and to create a dedicated Meithrin, to expand identified need in the community delivering additional fee-paying childcare services for the area.

PLANNED MINOR CAPITAL WORKS

- 7.22 The planned minor capital works programme allocation for 2021/22 is £7.170M. The allocation includes an on-going rolling programme for kitchen refurbishments/remodelling, window & door replacements, essential works, electrical rewiring, fire alarm upgrades, toilet refurbishments, Equalities Act/compliance works, access condition surveys, boiler replacement, roof renewal, improvements to schools, asbestos remediation works, capitalisation of IT hardware/software & licences and improvements to schools
- 7.23 A supplementary report detailing proposals of works for consideration within the above-mentioned programme will be presented to Cabinet shortly.

COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 7.24 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £7.579M for Community and Children's Services in 2020/21.
- 7.25 The total resources available to Community and Children's Services for 2021/22, as outlined in the proposed three year Capital Programme, is £6.336M.
- 7.26 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Community and Children's Services in the following areas:
- Parks & Green Spaces - £0.500M
 - Play Areas - £0.250M

This additional investment is included in the figures presented in Appendix 3d.

ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 7.27 The programme for Adult and Children's Services includes a budget of £4.703M in 2021/22. This will continue to fund the essential refurbishment and improvement works to the Council's Adult & Children's Services establishments, including asbestos costs, in line with care standards and health & safety legislation. Also included are additional costs associated with Telecare Services.
- 7.28 These investments will support one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'People – Are independent, healthy and successful'.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- 7.29 The Public Health and Protection programme has a budget of £1.633M in 2021/22. This budget is allocated across the ongoing rolling programmes for Parks Improvements, Cemeteries and Community Safety measures. Also included in this budget are allocations for investment and improvement works at Leisure Centres and Play Areas. These areas of investment support one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play'.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In developing the Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to ensure that:
- i the Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties; and
 - ii due regard has been taken of the likely impact of the recommendations in terms of equality and discrimination.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Consultation and engagement has been undertaken as part of formulating the revised programme and this was also built into the wider consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the recommended 2021/22 Revenue Budget Strategy, particularly in respect of investment priorities and community benefits.

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 10.1 The financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the main body of the report.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 The Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 complies fully with all legal requirements.

12.0 LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 12.1 The Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 has been formulated to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, as set out within the Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024, with these documents being aligned to the goals and principles included within the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 13.1 The three year Capital Programme is a key component of the overall Medium Term Financial Planning and Resources Strategy for this Council. Targeted capital investment can make a significant impact on service delivery and used effectively, is able to underpin the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, where relevant.
- 13.2 This report sets out the capital investment priorities for the Council through to March 2024. It represents an ambitious and significant level of investment (£116.024M) over the next 3 years.
- 13.3 The programme includes some element of slippage identified throughout 2020/21,

which is subject to change when final spend for the capital programme is known and the 2020/21 accounts are finalised. Any changes to slippage will be reported to Members in the quarterly performance reports.

- 13.4 This report has also identified the opportunity to invest £9.400M of additional resources in our local area including our own assets in order to improve the services which are available to our residents.
- 13.5 As the year progresses, changes will be made to the programme, for example where new schemes can be supported by specific grants. Approval from Members will be sought as these opportunities arise throughout 2021/22.
