
Meeting of the Cabinet – 6th December 2018

Joint Report of the Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Finance and Legal Services

Urgent Amendments to Capital Programme and Bid for External Revenue Funding

Purpose of Report

1. To propose urgent amendments to the Capital Programme.
2. To authorise a bid for external revenue funding.

Recommendations

3. That the additional Disabled Facility Grants funding allocation be noted and the associated expenditure included in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 7.
4. That the refurbishment of the unused catering kitchen at the Stourbridge Family Centre be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 8.
5. That the Strategic Director People, be authorised to submit a bid to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund for the Lifelong Links project, as set out in paragraph 10.

Background

Urgent Amendments to Capital Programme

6. In normal circumstances, the Cabinet makes recommendations to the Council to make amendments to the Capital Programme. However urgent amendments may be referred to the next ordinary meeting of the Cabinet for decision provided that the timescales permit. The Cabinet will consider the reasons why an item is urgent and cannot be the subject of a recommendation to the Council. The Council will be informed of the decisions taken by the Cabinet. This is a new power subject to formal approval by Council on 3rd December.

Public Sector Housing - Disabled Facilities Grant Funding

7. Disabled Facilities Grants are for the provision of adaptations to disabled people's homes to help them to live as independently and safely as possible.

In the 2018 Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced an additional £55m nationally of funding for Disabled Facilities Grants in 2018/19. Allocations to individual authorities have not yet been notified.

In order to comply with the anticipated requirement that the additional funding must be spent before the end of the financial year, it is proposed that when the Council's allocation has been confirmed the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme.

Children's Services – Stourbridge Family Centre

8. A project has been developed to refurbish the unused catering kitchen at the Stourbridge Family Centre, Forge Road, Stourbridge to enable use as office / practitioner space. The project will allow Children's Services to provide a more robust service from the Centre to the Stourbridge area. The cost of £50,000 can be funded from Troubled Families resources.

This project is urgent as it relates to a priority service that is essential in achieving outcomes of the modernisation process to facilitate co location of staff and delivery of accessible family group conferencing support. It is proposed that the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Bid for External Revenue Funding

9. Bids for external funding (for revenue or capital projects) for amounts exceeding £250,000 require prior Cabinet approval.

Children's Services – Lifelong Links

10. The purpose of this project is to enable young people in care to be supported to safely explore their networks and establish or re-establish positive relationships that can have a transformational impact on their life and the lives of the other individuals with whom they are connecting. The project would be delivered through a family group conference methodology. We believe that the project has the opportunity to deliver:

- An increase in the number of supportive, lasting relationships for children in care and care leavers.
- A reduced number of placement breakdowns for children in care.
- Improved emotional and mental wellbeing for children in care and the family members with whom they are re-connected.
- Improved educational engagement and attainment for children in care due to greater stability within their lives, the influence of supportive adults and improved emotional and mental wellbeing.
- Reduction in incidents of children in care running away from their care placement.
- Reduction in harmful and risky behaviours including substance misuse, self-harm and criminal activity both during adolescent years and through to adulthood.
- Improved long-term outcomes for children leaving care including an increase in training and employment and reduced likelihood of their own child being removed.
- Stronger and more connected communities and a reduction in the number of people who feel isolated.

The Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund has been identified as a potential funding source, as this is a fund which is open to local authorities and whose objectives align with Lifelong Links. Preliminary conversations with the Fund have been positive.

The total value of the project is expected to be £50,000 - £70,000 per annum. Funding will be requested for a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years, such that the grant funding could be up to £350,000. It is proposed that the Strategic Director, People, be authorised to submit a bid to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund accordingly.

Finance

11. This report is financial in nature and information about the individual proposals is contained within the body of the report.

Law

12. The Council's budgeting process is governed by the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and the Local Government Act 2003.

Equality Impact

13. These proposals comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity.
14. With regard to Children and Young People:
- The Capital Programme for Schools will be spent wholly on improving services for children and young people. Other elements of the Capital Programme will also have a significant impact on this group.
 - Consultation is undertaken with children and young people, if appropriate, when developing individual capital projects within the Programme.
 - There has been no direct involvement of children and young people in developing the proposals in this report.

Human Resources / Transformation

15. The proposals in this report do not have any direct Human Resources / Transformation implications.



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List of Background Papers

Relevant resource allocation notifications.