

Social Care, Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee: 24 January 2011

Comments Regarding the Capital Programme as presented to Executive on 11 January 2011

At its meeting of 24 January 2011 the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the capital programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 and the statutory review of fees and charges for 2011/12. Detailed below are the comments and recommendations from this meeting, which the Executive is asked to consider.

1. *Capital Programme*

1.1 Members discussed the proposals contained within the Capital Programme, in particular:

- a. Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme
- b. Renewal Assistance
- c. NHS Campus Closure
- d. Timberlands & Chiltern View Gypsy and Traveller Sites
- e. Empty Homes
- f. Schemes under the Housing Revenue Account

RECOMMENDED to the Executive

- (i) that all proposals be endorsed.**

Children's Services Committee: 17 January 2011

Comments Regarding the Capital Programme & Statutory Review of Fees & Charges as presented to Executive on 11 January 2011

At its meeting of 25 January 2011 the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the capital programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 and the statutory review of fees and charges for 2011/12. Detailed below are the comments and recommendations flowing from this meeting, which the Executive is asked to consider today.

1. *Capital Programme*

- 1.1 Members considered those elements of the revised capital programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 relating to Children's Services and apart from seeking clarification and further information on a number of specific items, were content to note it.

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 18 January 2011

Comments Regarding the Draft Budget, Capital Programme & Statutory Review of Fees & Charges as presented to Executive on 11 January 2011

At its meeting of 18 January 2011 the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft budget proposals for 2011/12 to 2013/14, together with the capital programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 and the statutory review of fees and charges for 2011/12. Detailed below are the comments and recommendations flowing from this meeting, which the Executive is asked to consider:-

1. *Capital Programme*
 - 1.1 The meeting had before it the Capital Programme Review report which had originally been considered by the Executive on 11 January 2011. The meeting was aware that this item was being taken as a matter of urgency.
 - 1.2 The Committee queried how the Football Foundation grant that had been obtained for football pitches at Flitwick Leisure Centre had been lost. It was further queried why there appeared to be no maintenance costs for Flitwick Leisure Centre in the revenue or the capital budgets.
 - 1.3 In response to questions from Members the Director of Sustainable Communities stated that funds outlined in the capital programme for the leisure centre stock condition / asset management plan were sufficient to carry out essential 'health and safety' works at Flitwick Leisure Centre. The Executive report set out four options in relation to the redevelopment of Flitwick Leisure Centre and the re-provision of football facilities. If it was recommended to proceed with this scheme the Council would have to identify further savings elsewhere in the capital programme. Should the Council decide not to proceed with the scheme at this time, then the report recommended that an up to date condition survey be undertaken to determine essential works required to maintain the leisure centre in a satisfactory operational condition. The Chairman agreed to address these concerns with the Portfolio Holder outside of the meeting.
 - 1.4 The Committee also queried the use of capital funding to upgrade street lighting to EU standards and queried whether such work was essential. It was suggested that, for example, lighting columns should only be replaced in circumstances where they were unsafe and should not be replaced unnecessarily. The Director of Sustainable Communities advised that the Council had inherited responsibility for 21,000 streetlights. Due to previous underinvestment the stock was aged and suffering from increased rates of failure. The continuing capital programme for street lighting would remedy all problems with the stock over a seven year period. This was based on a survey of all street lamps in 2009/10. The issues to be dealt with included replacement of street lighting columns as they became dangerous, progressively replacing electrical components in otherwise safe columns with high efficiency lanterns and modern control gear. The outcomes will be a safe well maintained stock, greatly reduced levels of failed lights, removal of a revenue pressure and revenue savings.

NOTED
the Capital Programme

Customer & Central Services Committee: 17 January 2011

Comments Regarding the Draft Budget, Capital Programme & Statutory Review of Fees & Charges as presented to Executive on 11 January 2011

At its meeting of 17 January 2011 the Customer & Central Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the draft budget proposals for 2011/12 to 2013/14, together with the capital programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 and the statutory review of fees and charges for 2011/12. Detailed below are the comments and recommendations flowing from this meeting, which the Executive is asked to consider today.

1. *Capital Programme*

a) Block/Rolling Budgets

Members referred to an item included within the capital programme for Customer and Shared Services entitled "CBC Corporate Property Block Budget", which had a budget of £4M in 2011/12. In response to queries Members were informed that the sum was made up of a number of individual projects, some of which were substantial in cost terms (i.e. over £100k).

Members also referred to an item entitled "ICT Infrastructure" which had a budget of £1M over the same period and expressed concern over the absence of any detail on the constituent projects for this item.

Following further comment Members were advised that there was no financial threshold within the capital programme above which items were required to be identified separately (rather than contained within block or rolling programmes).

It was Members opinion that this arrangement was unsatisfactory and that in future the capital programme should list all individual projects above £100k rather than, as was the case now, being contained within block and/or rolling programmes.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive

that consideration be given to amending the presentation of the capital programme to ensure that all projects above £100k are listed individually.

b) Affordability and Sustainability

The issue at (a) above led Members to discuss whether the review of the capital programme had been sufficiently robust and whether there was further opportunity to remove items not deemed a priority. Whilst acknowledging that many of the Council's intended savings were dependent on investment to enable changes to processes the Committee felt that, in some cases, the amounts stated appeared substantially larger than had been anticipated. Members therefore felt the capital programme should be revisited to ensure its affordability and sustainability.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive

that consideration be given to revisiting the capital programme to ensure that all items contained within it are essential, affordable and sustainable.

c) Optionality: Schools Capital Funding

Members briefly discussed the recently received capital grant of £18M from the Department for Education for schools capital funding and requested that this item be included in the Council's capital programme, together with details of the optionality that exists regarding this grant, such that Members are able to review education spending in light of the Council's full budget.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive

That consideration be given to including the schools capital funding grant of £18M in the Capital Programme, together with details of the optionality that exists regarding this grant.