

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972
(applies to Appendices A and B only)

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **8 March 2022**
Title: **Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/2022**
Portfolio Area: **Performance & Resources – Cllr C Edmonds**
Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

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RECOMMENDATION:

It is RECOMMENDED that the Hub Committee resolves to endorse the contents of the Report.

1. Executive summary

1.1 The report advises Members of the financial position as at 31st January 2022 for the purposes of budget monitoring.

1.2 All capital projects are within the individual capital budgets approved by Members. The total approved capital budget is **£4,232,493** of which £1,042,500 has been profiled into 2021/22. £849,043 of this allocation has been spent to date (Appendix A).

2. Background

2.1 The capital programme for 2021/22 was approved by Council on 16 February 2021 (CM36 and HC56 refer). This report provides an update on the Capital Programme.

3. Outcomes/outputs

Members are requested to note the following updates on Capital Projects:

3.1 Community Project Grants (previously Village Hall & Community Project Grants)

The Council has a Community Grants programme that can support capital schemes across the Borough for things such as large sports equipment, repairs to village halls or large scale tree planting. The maximum typical grant available to any scheme is £5,000 or up to 50% of the project's costs, whichever is the lower.

Currently actual plus committed expenditure is £20,000. This has contributed to a total of 7 schemes with a total value of £103,000 (the difference being match funding from other parties). Schemes supported so far this year include playground equipment replacement, pavilion repairs, village hall refurbishment and a disability access project.

3.2 Affordable Housing

The budget for Affordable Housing in 2021/22 is £50,000. The budget brought forward from previous years is £189,000 giving a total of £239,000.

In recent times the capital programme has facilitated affordable housing developments in rural areas by providing a sum of money, normally between £10,000 and £15,000 per plot, to enable the development to proceed. These schemes are typically on exception sites and therefore do not necessarily rely on cross subsidy from open market properties although the JLP allows for this now. Evidence from a Registered Provider (RP) is provided to ensure additional money is required to make the scheme viable. Money is normally required where there are abnormalities on the site or there is a shortage of public subsidy.

This budget is anticipated to be required to assist with the redevelopment of the hostel in Tavistock. The planning application has now been approved subject to any S106 agreement. A future

report will be provided to Members with the final business case once the final tender process has been concluded.

3.3 Private Sector Renewals including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of DFG applications significantly reduced in the first part of last financial year. Following the relaxing of the lockdown measures, the number of applications has increased beyond levels expected in a "normal" year. This may result in a number of grant applications that have been approved but waiting for work to commence due to shortages in labour and materials. There has also been volatility in material costs so we have reviewed our schedule of rates for bathroom adaptations this year and will need to do again by the end of the financial year. So far the council has completed 60 grants in 2021/22.

Spend on DFG's is based on demand, over which the Council has no control, and at present the service is processing and approving applications in line with this demand. The council is currently undertaking a rebranding exercise on DFG's to highlight the service/offer to residents who may not identify themselves as being eligible.

The Council has a healthy budget as a result of good performance and astute negotiations. With a wider Private Sector Renewal (PSR) Policy, the Council is able to spend the Better Care Fund on other areas such as home assistance and Energy Company Obligation top-ups.

The Council is using part of the funding to support wider fuel poverty interventions and supplement national grant programmes. This will also have a positive impact on climate change by supporting vulnerable lower income households to access lower carbon solutions.

3.4 Community Housing Schemes

The Community Housing Strategy was put in place to support the development of homes accessible to those with local connections for whom the cost of market housing (to purchase and rent) is beyond their reach. Due to the current property market, smaller lower cost housing is being sold at unaffordable local prices.

The Brentor Community Housing scheme planning application pack is now complete in readiness for submission to Dartmoor National Park Authority for their consideration in the usual way. However, before

submitting the application, we are finalising the last stages of land assembly. The application will be submitted thereafter at the earliest opportunity. Subject to a successful planning application, the Council has approved the expenditure of £85,000 from the Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn) Earmarked Reserve, to undertake detailed design, specification and tendering of the Brentor scheme.

3.5 Hayedown Depot – Statutory Compulsory Improvements

The depot upgrade and drainage are being considered by Engineers as part of the Fire Prevention Plan, a legal requirement for the site. Initial indications are that the budget may be insufficient but further value engineering and design considerations need to be undertaken. Members will be kept updated when further information is available.

3.6 Parklands Leisure Centre – contribution to moveable floor

The moveable floor at Okehampton, Parklands Leisure Centre was a Sport England requirement of lottery funding that was levered in to finance a large part of the building.

Since Parklands was built, there have been difficulties with the operation of the moveable floor. This money has been set aside within the capital programme as a partnership contribution to the cost of an engineering solution if the floor breaks down. There have been several repair works over the past few months but the floor is now working as it should. It is felt prudent to leave the budget in at this point.

3.7 Tavistock Viaduct

As part of the Amended Budget proposals for 2020/21, Members approved reducing the budget from £100k to £20k. This was following a Condition Survey being undertaken on the Viaduct which advised that the initially proposed extensive repair works would not now be required during 2020/21 and the capital budget can be limited to further vegetation clearance and some drainage improvements. The team will continue to review in parallel with any tree work required along Tavistock Viaduct Walk and will report back as necessary.

Further to the approval of a £40K capital budget for the Tavistock Viaduct Walk at Council in February 2020, a walkover geotechnical assessment of the cutting was undertaken by specialists in early 2021. Following clearance of strips of vegetation and trees to expose the rock face, further rope-access inspections will be undertaken this

winter, focussing on relatively higher risk areas first including some scaling of loose rock where necessary. The budget will continue to be utilised this financial year to facilitate this work and should be carried forward into future financial years as this work will be phased over the coming years, in part due to seeking to avoid any major vegetation removal in any one year.

3.8 Car Park Resurfacing

Officers have identified a number of car parks across the Borough which are in need of resurfacing. A budget of £30,000 per annum has been built into the capital programme budget to be funded by a £30,000 contribution annually from the Car Park Maintenance Reserve.

3.9 Green Homes Grant

The Council continues to hold funding under the Government's Green Homes Grant (GHG) scheme and continues to work towards the delivery. The grant is used to deliver energy saving measures for eligible households and was initially due to be delivered during 2021/22. However, due to major supply chain difficulties nationally, a review of the process has been required and we have now secured a local approach to delivering these grants. We have approved grants with an average grant allocation of £11,600 to date with most applicants using a local installer based in Plymouth.

Currently there are 20 grants approved in West Devon totalling £233,000 (including 14 air source heat pumps) out of a total budget of £600k. There are more surveys being booked and planned so further requests for approvals are expected.

Applications are still being accepted and all existing applicants have been written to just before Christmas encouraging them to take up the revised offer. Further communication was sent in January to encourage residents to apply.

We are working with partners in Community Energy to support the leads we have generated. Discussions are also being had with BEIS for an 8 week extension to the end of June 2022 to complete the project. We are confident the grant allocation we have will remain secured and spent on measures across the borough.

West Devon is also part of the Devon Sustainable warmth project, which is a consortium of Devon Authorities and is the next green

home grant phase. West Devon has been allocated £500k and is due to start in the spring.

The full report was presented at Hub on 20th October 2020, minute ref HC 31.

3.10 New Payroll Solution

The replacement of the Payroll and HR system is running according to plan with implementation well underway. The current plan is for go-live in March/April which will enable us to cancel the contract with the current payroll provider. The new system will provide enhanced functionality and a more user friendly interface for users.

3.11 Replacement of IT Hardware

Following extensive analysis of performance requirements, a number of platforms and configurations were considered, including cloud. A replacement for the existing servers and storage was purchased and the new hardware has now been installed. Migration of the Council's applications to the new servers is almost complete and we are already seeing improvements in performance and monitoring

3.12 S106 Deposits

The list of S106 Deposits are shown in Appendix C totalling **£1,337,356.07**.

Some of these S106 Agreements have a clause within the S106 Agreement which states that the Council shall be entitled to use up to a five per cent (5%) part of the total payments and contributions payable pursuant to the provisions of the Agreement, towards the costs to be reasonably and properly incurred by the Council in monitoring compliance with the S106 Agreement and in assessing the details submitted to the Council for approval pursuant to the S106 Agreement.

For clarity, the figures shown in Appendix C are before any monitoring fee has been deducted by the Council.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 This is considered on a project by project basis as part of the project appraisal document and initial business case for each capital project.

5. Proposed Way Forward

5.1 This is considered on a project by project basis.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>Statutory powers are provided by the S1 Localism Act 2011 general power of competence.</p> <p>The capital programme is implemented in line with the Council's legal requirements, which are examined on a project-by-project basis. To date there are no undue legal concerns.</p> <p>The public interest has been assessed and it is considered that the public interest will be better served by not disclosing the information in the Appendices A and B. Accordingly this report contains exempt Information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
Financial Implications to include reference to Value for Money		<p>All capital projects are within the individual capital budgets approved by Members. The total approved capital budget is £4,232,493 of which £1,042,500 has been profiled into 2021/22. £849,043 of this allocation has been spent to date (Appendix A).</p> <p>The regular monitoring of the Capital Programme ensures the Council has arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p>

Risk		<p>The Council demonstrates that capital investment contributes to corporate priorities, provides value for money and takes account of the revenue implications of the investment. Regular monitoring of the capital programme and consideration of new pressures enables Members to control the programme and secure appropriate mitigation where problems arise.</p> <p>There is regular quarterly monitoring of the Capital Programme to Members where any cost overruns are identified at an early stage.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The Capital Programme supports all of the Thematic Delivery Plans within 'A Plan for West Devon'.
Consultation and Engagement Strategy		External consultation and engagement has not been undertaken with regard to this report.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		<p>The Council declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency on 23 July 2019 and a Climate Change Action Plan was presented to Council in December 2019.</p> <p>Further detail is set out in the Council's 'A Plan for West Devon' strategy.</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Safeguarding		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Other implications		None

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Exempt Appendix A – Details of capital expenditure to 31st January 2022

Exempt Appendix B – Details of Exempt schemes approved as part of the 2021/22 Capital Budget

Appendix C – S106 Summary WDBC as at 31st December 2021

Background Papers:

None