

CORPORATE CAPITAL STRATEGY

PURPOSE

This strategy sets out the Council’s approach to capital investment and the approach that will be followed in making decisions in respect of the Council’s Capital assets.

Capital investment is an important ingredient in ensuring the Council’s vision is achieved and given that capital resources are limited it is critical that the Council makes best use of these resources.

The Strategy sets the policy framework for the development, management and monitoring of this investment and forms a key component of the Council’s planning alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

It sets out the strategic influences on the Council’s capital investment plan and how the Council is going to work with these influences to bring about the best advantage to meet local needs – including working with Partners:

- the Local Enterprise Partnerships (Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent) of which the council is a Member;
- the West Midlands Combined Authority as a Non-Constituent member;
- Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue and Crime;

with the aim to drive economic regeneration, deliver local plan objectives and access inward investment to support the delivery of local capital priorities.



The Council plans to update its approach to Asset Management and long term asset planning to improve the way strategic property objectives can be delivered. This will enable the development of a longer term plan for the management and maintenance of its assets, whilst identifying the funding ambition gap to maximise inward investment opportunities for funding from Partners.

It also links to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance to give a clear and concise view of how much it can afford to borrow and sets its risk appetite. It is intended to give a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

The Capital Strategy is a 'live' and dynamic document, which will update and evolve as strategic influences and priorities change. The Corporate Capital Strategy will be reviewed annually and an update presented to Council in February each year as part of the MTFS report.

The Council has an ongoing capital programme of over £55m for 2018/19 and an asset base valued at £219m (as at 31st March 2018).

The Capital Strategy will:

- Reflect Members' priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan including the approach to the allocation of its capital resources and how this links to its priorities at a corporate and service level;
- Balance the need to maintain the Council's existing asset base against its future ambition and associated long term asset needs, and consolidate assets where appropriate;
- Recognise that growth is the strategic driver for financial self-sufficiency;
- Be affordable in the context of the Council's MTFS;
- Seek to ensure value for money through achieving a return on investment or by supporting service efficiency and effectiveness;
- Be flexible to respond to evolving service delivery needs;
- Seek to maximise investment levels through the leveraging of external investment through working with regional / County partners;
- Recognise the value of assets for delivering long-term growth as opposed to being sold to finance capital expenditure;
- Recognise the financial benefits and risks from growth generated through investment to support investment decisions; and
- Reflect the service delivery costs associated with growth when assessing the level of resources available for prudential borrowing.

The capital strategy feeds into the annual revenue budget and MTFS by informing the revenue implications of capital funding decisions. The implications for the MTFS are fully considered before any capital funding decisions are confirmed.

The Strategy is supported by the leadership of the Council and in accordance with the CIPFA Code the Executive Director Finance confirms that the capital strategy as set out for the three year period for the General Fund, and five year period for the Housing Revenue Account, is affordable and sustainable, and presents the associated risk management issues.

It is recognised that the current capital programme needs to have a longer-term focus for the purposes of the capital strategy, ideally looking to a 20-30 year timeframe. As a result, the following action is to be taken:-

The process for the consideration of capital expenditure within the MTFS process to be reviewed and refined to ensure that there are provisional plans for expenditure out to a 10 year timeframe, with an indication of requirements out to 20-30 years.

The Capital Appraisal Process

As part of the Council's business planning process, managers and Assistant Directors are required to consider the capital resources needed to deliver their services now and into the future (5 year timeframe). The asset management plan and HRA business plan also inform the capital strategy.

All capital bids should be prepared in light of the following list of criteria, and the proposed investment should address and be assessed with regard to:

- the contribution its delivery makes towards the achievement of the Council's Corporate Priorities;
- the achievement of Government priorities and grant or other funding availability;
- the benefits in terms of the contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives and compliance with the Corporate Capital Strategy requirements of:
 1. Invest to save
 2. Maintenance of services and assets
 3. Protection of income streams
 4. Avoidance of cost.

The current de-minimis for capital expenditure is £10k per capital scheme.

It is important that capital investment decisions are not made in isolation and instead are considered in the round through the annual budget setting process.

All proposed schemes requiring capital investment should have as a minimum the following information:

- A description of the scheme;
- The expected outputs, outcomes and contribution to corporate objectives;
- The estimated financial implications, both capital and revenue;
- Any impacts on efficiency and value for money;
- The nature and outcome of consultation with stakeholders and customers (as applicable);
- Risk assessment implications and potential mitigations; and
- Any urgency considerations (e.g. statutory requirements or health and safety issues).

Corporate Management Team and Service Managers identify the potential need for capital investment, in light of service delivery plans and the Asset Management plan. This will take account of issues including the condition of council owned assets and future maintenance requirements, health and safety requirements, statutory obligations of the council, operational considerations and emerging opportunities for investment including possible sources of external financing.

The Asset Strategy Steering Group (ASSG) review capital bids prior to consideration by Members. Once capital bids have been prioritised, Executive Management Team will review the outcome of the deliberations of the ASSG and will make recommendations to Cabinet through an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) report on a proposed budget package which will include capital budget proposals.

The MTFS report (including capital budget proposals) will ultimately be considered by Budget Setting Council each year.

It is recognised that further action is required to fully embed the capital appraisal process, including proper consideration of options and risk, into the capital strategy and planning processes at Tamworth, and ensure that this is not just a 'tick-box' exercise. Therefore the following is planned:-

- 1) Consideration of service units' capital requirements to form part of the business planning process and a template drawn up to ensure this is properly considered and captured on Pentana, the performance management system;**
- 2) The capital appraisal process and associated documentation to be reviewed and updated where appropriate to ensure proper consideration given to whole life costs of scheme; alternative options; risk management, etc, and to address the concerns outlined on completion of the CIPFA Property Capital Strategy Self-Assessment Checklist.**

Approach to Risk Management

The Authority is committed to the culture of Risk Management ensuring that its reputation is not tarnished by an unforeseen event nor is it financially or operationally affected by the occurrence.

Risk Appetite

The risk appetite is “the amount of risk that an organisation is prepared to accept, tolerate, or be exposed to at any point in time” (CIPFA). The Authority will manage the risks by reducing, preventing, transferring, eliminating or accepting the risk.

Whilst the Authority acknowledges that it will have “severe” (red) risks from time to time, it will endeavour to reduce those to an acceptable level either through controls or ceasing the activity (if applicable). Sometimes risks are identified and even though managed, may still remain “severe” (red risk).

Risk Management Roles and Responsibilities

The importance of establishing roles and responsibilities within the risk management framework is pivotal to successful delivery. Considering risks must be embedded into corporate policy approval and operational service delivery.

The agreed roles and responsibilities within the risk management framework are outlined in the table below:

Group /Individual	Role
Corporate Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide leadership for the process to manage risks effectively.• Review and revise the Risk Management Policy and Strategy in accordance with the review period.• Monitor and review the Corporate Risk Register on a quarterly basis including the identification of trends, upcoming events and potential new corporate risks.
Audit & Governance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor the effectiveness of the Authority’s risk management arrangements, including the actions taken to manage risks and to receive regular reports on risk management.• To monitor the actions being taken to mitigate the impact of potentially serious risks
Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide strategic direction with regard to risk management.
Directors / Assistant Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide leadership for the process of managing risks.• To ensure that risk management methodology is applied to all service plans, projects, partnerships and proposals.• To identify and manage business /operational risks.• To ensure that the management of risk is monitored as part of the performance management process.

Group /Individual	Role
Directors / Assistant Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all risks are identified, recorded and effectively managed in their area or responsibility. • To review and update their risk register on at least an annual basis but appropriate to the risk. • To determine the method of controlling the risk. • To delegate responsibility if appropriate for the control of the risk. • To notify the Director of new risks identified for consideration for inclusion on the corporate risk register.
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that risk is effectively managed in their areas. • To ensure that they notify their managers of new and emerging risks.
Head of Internal Audit Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the risk management strategy is regularly reviewed and updated. • Promote and support the risk management process throughout the Authority. • Advise and assist managers in the identification of risks.

The Audit & Governance Committee will regularly review the Risk Management Policy and Strategy to ensure their continued relevance to the Borough. They will also assess performance against the aims and objectives.

Specific capital risks are contained within a register in the Capital Strategy, alongside mitigating actions.

Monitoring of Approved Capital Schemes

The monitoring of progress on individual schemes is reported to Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis and to Cabinet quarterly. Service managers provide project updates as well the current and project spend for the year, together with any need to re-profile spend to future financial years.

An annual Capital Outturn report is prepared for Cabinet in June each year which details the final outturn for the year, the latest project update from the Service Manager and any proposals to re-profile spend to future financial years for Cabinet approval.

A post implementation review is not appropriate or necessary for all capital projects. They should be prepared where learning is identified which could assist future projects or where there is a significant financial or political impact. Directors should encourage the collation of data during the project and identify any lessons learned which will assist in improving the process in the future.

It is recommended that:

- a) **Post implementation review is completed for each scheme where learning is identified which could assist future projects or where there is a significant financial or political impact;**

- b) The Asset Strategy Steering Group meet to:**
- i. scrutinise the completed post implementation reports;**
 - ii. review the management and monitoring of the capital programme; on a quarterly basis with appropriate feedback and challenge – identifying improvements to improve the future management of the capital programme.**

The full capital appraisal and monitoring process and guidance for managers can be found on the intranet at this link:-

<http://infozone.tamworth.gov.uk:901/financial-guidance>

Review of Asset Management Plan

The Council's Asset Management Plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. This will identify any assets held by the Council that are no longer either required or fit for purpose and appropriate recommendations made regarding retention for alternative use or disposal.

The Corporate Asset Management Strategy was last updated in 2015 relating to the following assets:

Asset Description	Value (31/03/15)
Investment Properties	£14,588,052
Land and Buildings	£6,537,500
Total	£21,125,552

It details an estimated 10 year maintenance cost for each asset (**totalling c.£8m**) based on the inspections that had been undertaken.

Asset Type	Estimated Backlog Costs (10 years)
Non-Operational - Commercial	£3.288m
Non-Operational - Retail	£1.861m
Operational Properties - Direct	£0.482m
Operational Properties - Indirect	£1.052m
Non-Operational – Community spaces	£0.194m
Non-Operational – Cemetery Land	£0.179m
Operational Properties – Office & Admin.	£1.038m
Other Properties	£0.333m
Total	£8.427m

It has been identified that the Council, through this strategy and through the development of a long term strategic plan, needs to take a longer-term view of the assets required to deliver its Corporate Plan priorities and to support its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), including spend required (and associated potential funding streams) to address the identified maintenance and repairs backlog for corporate assets. This could include the option to invest in or dispose of current asset holdings or make further acquisitions.

It is recognised that significant further work is required in this area in order to deliver a robust capital strategy, and the following action is to be undertaken:-

The Asset Management Plan is to be reviewed and updated, with an up to date stock condition survey. This should set out the detailed capital resources/expenditure required to maintain assets, together with the associated timeframe, to inform options appraisal and feed into the capital strategy for ASSG/CMT review of potential schemes.

HRA Business Plan and Stock Condition Survey

The Local Plan to 2031 has a target of 177 units of new housing, of which only 40 units per year are likely to be delivered by private developers. This represents only 21% of the total required number of new affordable homes – leaving 79% of need unmet.

The HRA Business Plan has the potential to address some of this unmet need. However the extent to which it can make up a shortfall depends on the resources available within the HRA.

The Council's Housing Stock

As at April 2018, the Council's stock comprised 4,269 homes, 390 leasehold properties and 1,454 garages. Of the 4,269 homes, 2,391 (56%) are houses, 1,278 (30%) flats or maisonettes, 235 (5.5%) are bungalows.

A further 365 properties (8.5%) are sheltered accommodation located in 10 separate schemes and comprising a mixture of flats and bungalows.

1029 properties (24%) are of non-traditional construction. These include:

- 6 high-rise blocks on the Balfour Estate and comprising 358 1 and 2 bedroomed flats.
- 281 Wates; 161 Laing Easiform; 151 Wimpey No Fines; 49 Concrete Block and 29 Airey properties

Tamworth's Council housing stock is spread across the Borough with particular concentrations in the electoral wards of

- Stonydelph
- Glascote
- Amington
- Belgrave

These areas represent regeneration priority areas for the Council.

The construction type, location and mix of properties in Tamworth have implications for the Investment Programme and Business Plan.

Unfunded Aspirations

We know that resources within the Business Plan are unlikely to allow the Council to achieve all that it wants to do. However, over the course of the next thirty years opportunities may arise and there may be scope to progress these if the Business Plan has capacity at the time.

Three areas in particular will continue to be actively considered as priorities if additional resources become available:

- New affordable housing
- Regeneration of additional estates
- Investment in early help and preventative based strategies

Where savings are achieved when delivering existing Business Plan commitments, these may be used on the priority areas above.

Investment Programme

A key element of the new Business Plan is the revised investment programme. Although the Council has not had the benefit of a new stock condition survey, it has developed a comprehensive investment programme based on statutory requirements and the expected life of key building components.

The revised investment programme has assessed the types and volumes of work required over thirty years. From this, projections of likely repair and maintenance activity have been used to inform annual maintenance budgets and contracts with maintenance providers.

Our investment programme is subject to annual review so the projected number of properties benefitting from planned work may change. However, over the next five years the Council expects to

- Carry out around 12,800 day to day repairs each year
- Inspect the electrical systems of 572 homes each year
- Renew or provide smoke detectors in 483 properties each year
- Ensure around 283 properties meet the Council's Lettable Standard when they become vacant each year
- Renew the fencing of up to 285 properties each year
- Replace / renew 228 gas central heating systems each year
- Replace / renew 242 kitchens each year
- Replace / renew 142 bathrooms each year
- Fully rewire 140 homes each year
- Renew the fascias, soffits and rainwater guttering and downspouts of 114 properties each year
- Re-roof 85 homes each year

Year one of the Business Plan assumes that stock investment is in line with the capital programme for 2018/19. Thereafter, it reflects 29/30ths of the Investment Programme (v6), pending the results of the authority's updated stock condition survey. The Business Plan assumes that stock investment costs are fixed, and that budgets would not vary with changes in number of dwellings.

Regeneration Projects

The following regeneration projects have been accommodated within the Business Plan:

- Retention of garage sites (£500k budget in 2018/19)
- Strode House car park and garages (£530k budget in 2018/19)
- Tinkers Green (£5.373m during 2018/19 and 2019/20, after allowing for slippage and known additional costs)

- Kerria (£4.405m during 2018/19 and 2019/20, after allowing for slippage and known additional costs)

New Build & Acquisitions

The following new build / new supply projects have been accommodated within the Business Plan:

- Redevelopment of garage sites (£7.4m from 2018/19 to 2022/23, after allowing for virement of £2.6m for use at Tinkers Green)
- Other acquisitions (£2.41m from 2018/19 to 2022/23, after allowing for virement of £90k for use at Tinkers Green)
- Additional provision and resources have been allowed in 2018/19 for slippage on schemes at Kettlebrook, Dosthill and Coton Lane. The cost of these schemes in 2018/19 is assumed at £1.894m.

Financing

Financing of the investment programme has been assumed in line with the 2018/19 budget, plus resources that have subsequently slipped from 2017/18. From 2019/20 onwards the Business Plan assumes that resources identified by the medium term financial strategy continue to be available, and that resources generated from the sale of council houses are used to help pay for the HRA capital programme.

Use of 141 Right to Buy receipts has been assumed in line with the MTFS, and the budgets for schemes that have slipped into 2018/19. The plan currently assumes no use of 141 Right to Buy receipts after 2022/23 and implies that any unused receipts will be returned to the Government. This is in line with the assumptions within the MTFS.

The Business Plan assumes that the authority will borrow any additional sums it needs to finance the HRA investment programme.

Capital Programme

Following a review of the Capital Programme approved by Council on 27th February 2018, a revised programme has been formulated including additional schemes which have been put forward for inclusion.

A schedule of the capital scheme appraisals for the General Fund (GF) & Housing Revenue Account (HRA) received for consideration is attached at **Appendix I – General Fund (GF) and Appendix J – Housing (HRA)**, together with the likely available sources of funding (capital receipts / grants / supported borrowing etc.).

With regard to the contingency schemes/allocation, **£35k** remains in current year GF contingency funds and **£100k** remains in current year HRA contingency funds (which will be re-profiled into 2019/20 to provide contingency funding).

To inform discussions, the proposals have been reviewed by the Asset Strategy Steering Group and Corporate Management Team with initial comments & suggestions for each of the schemes outlined below.

General Fund

A significant increase in net funding has been proposed which means that insufficient resources are available to finance all of the GF schemes submitted therefore, should the schemes progress either:

- 1) the Council would need to use supported borrowing to fund the shortfall – funding from borrowing would impact on the revenue budget through interest costs on the debt at c.2.5 to 3% p.a. plus debt repayment costs of 4% p.a. (based on a 25 year asset life); or
- 2) the potential use of part of the capital receipt from the Golf Course sale – which would mean the resources would no longer be available for investment through the Commercial Investment Strategy projects (and therefore impact on the revenue account through loss of potential investment income at c.4% p.a.); or
- 3) Fund the spend from revenue through a direct contribution to the capital programme.

The minimum approved level of GF capital balances is £0.5million which, should the programme progress without amendment, would mean over £1.1m in borrowing would be needed (or use of the capital receipt) over the next 3 years (£2.1m over 5 years).

1) **Technology Replacement – Infrastructure upgrade/Network Security/Refresh of Thin Clients**

Project Score: 72

A revised capital submission had been prepared for £60kp.a. (no change from the provisionally approved programme) for ongoing, large scale upgrade and maintenance to the TBC infrastructure, in line with agreed device lifecycles.

The Council is also on a journey towards digital self service for customers and demand for flexible resilient and available IT services to support this requires continued investment into the authority's hardware and related software.

External factors including legislative requirements from central government in the guise of the Public Sector Network (PSN) Code of Connection, *and the increase in required investment into cyber security to keep the council's network secure and available.* It should be noted that corporate applications are excluded from this schedule of planned work.

No savings / payback from the investment have been identified.

In light of the ongoing priority review of ICT systems, the minimum budget requirement for 2019/20 was requested – including a detailed breakdown of the proposed spend.

Future year's budgets removed – as this will be informed by the conclusions of the priority review and ICT Strategy.

2) Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

Project Score: 72

The provisional programme included £360k p.a. fully funded by redistributed Better Care Fund (BCF) grant. A revised capital submission has been received to increase this to £650k p.a. part funded by £400k BCF grant – net additional cost of £250k p.a.

During the 2018/19 budget process, it was noted that a Government review of the approach to DFGs was planned during 2018 and so it was agreed that the 2018/19 financial year budget be increased to £650k to deal with the immediate demand/backlog.

The additional £250k p.a. net funding would need to be funded via capital receipts (with an associated revenue loss of investment interest), borrowing (with revenue interest/debt repayment costs) or a revenue contribution.

3) Replacement of Castle Grounds Play Area

Project Score: 60

A new capital submission had been prepared for potential spend of £375k in 2021/22 (net of £25k S106 funding).

Replacement of the existing play area within the Castle grounds, the existing facility was installed in May 2006 and although well maintained will need to be replaced to ensure facilities are retained for the public.

The additional £375k net funding would need to be funded via capital receipts (with an associated revenue loss of investment interest), borrowing (with revenue interest/debt repayment costs) or a revenue contribution.

4) With regard to the provisional programme:

a) CCTV Camera Renewals

An updated appraisal has not been prepared for the provisional funding of £15k p.a. – budget removed pending the conclusions from the priority review. £15k remains available in 2018/19 and could be carried forward if required.

b) Street Lighting

An updated appraisal has not been prepared – following inclusion of a rolling programme with an annual spend required from 2016/17. The Council has its own stock of street lighting across the borough, mainly in housing areas and other communal parts such as play areas and car parks. The street lighting assets are inspected and maintained by Eon on behalf of the Council under the terms of Staffordshire County Council PFI contract with Eon.

Eon have produced a replacement street lighting programme which spans 40 years and includes the replacement of all the lighting columns based on 'their life expectancy' and a lighting head replacement programme based on providing more efficient low energy lighting heads.

A significant increase in replacements has been included for 2023/24 at a cost of £584k. The proportion relating to HRA lighting is to be identified.

c) Energy Efficiency Upgrades to Commercial & Industrial Units

An updated appraisal has not been prepared following inclusion of a rolling programme with an annual spend of £75k required from 2017/18 for 5 years.

To fund a degree of improvement to industrial units when they become vacant in order to be able to re-let them – as, with effect from April 2018, it will not be possible to enter into long term lease agreements for commercial and industrial units with and EPC rating of 'E' or less.

Depending on void levels, we could expect to lose around £20k p.a. increasing by £20k p.a. for the next 5 years (c.£300k over 5 years).

If we are able to let on License or Tenancy at Will arrangements we may be able to maintain a level of income but there will be an increase in other costs such as NNDR payments, repair costs, security costs and the like.

Investment in enveloping works to improve energy efficiency will prolong the life of the estate at the current rent levels but ultimately Sandy Way phase 2 will require a more significant investment project to give a long life expectancy.

d) Gateways Project

An updated appraisal has not been prepared following inclusion of £70k p.a. for 3 years from 2018/19 (net cost after use of TBC S106/CIL funds of £75k, £50k and £120k respectively) with plans for significant capital works in future years for Phase 3 Corporation Street and Phase 4 Railway Station forecourt - which will draw in funding and professional support from SCC (funded by SCC through the Regional Growth Fund / S106 receipts).

e) Amington Community Woodland

An updated appraisal has not been prepared following inclusion of £50k p.a. for 5 years from 2018/19 on the creation of a community woodland on 7.5ha of the ex-municipal golf course - funded by the S106 income.

6) General Fund Capital Contingency Budget

The remaining 2018/19 contingency budget of £35k will be be rolled forward to 2019/20.

Housing

The proposed 5 year Housing Capital Programme is attached at **Appendix J**.

Updated Capital programme schemes have been proposed amounting to £35.34m over 4 years, £44.5m over 5 years (including the provisionally approved £2m p.a. relating to the Development Housing on Garage Sites; £0.5m p.a. for Other Acquisitions; and £0.5m Retention of Garage Sites budget). This compares to the total provisionally approved programme *over 4 years* of £28.67m – additional costs of £6.67m, partially offset by lower repairs costs in the HRA.

The minimum approved level of HRA capital balances is £0.5million which, any funding from borrowing would impact on the revenue budget through interest costs on the debt at c.2.5 to 3% p.a. but it should be noted that while there are no debt repayment costs for the HRA, the Government had previously set a debt cap of £79.407m.

The current HRA Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) stands at £68.041m with planned borrowing of £7.214m relating to the Tinkers Green and Kerria Regeneration projects, which means £4.152m would be available for additional borrowing up to the debt cap.

However, it should be noted following the recent announcement by the Prime Minister, the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap is being removed to enable councils to build more homes. They intend to remove the borrowing cap by issuing a determination revoking previous determinations that specified a local authority's limits on indebtedness - with further details confirmed in the Budget at the end of October 2018.

The capital programme has been reviewed and updated:

Housing Revenue Account

Cabinet on 27th September 2018 authorised that £298m detailed in the HRA Business Plan Investment plan be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2019/20 to 2024/25 noting updates to the stock condition modelling and other financial HRA impacts can be assessed through the process and the financial position adjusted accordingly. The Capital Programme has been updated to reflect the HRA Business Plan Investment plan.

With regard to the provisional programme:

a) Retention of Garage Sites

£500k p.a. for 2 years from 2018/19 was included to invest in retained garages to meet demand and to provide alternative uses including parking areas.

b) Development Housing on Garage Sites / Other Acquisitions

Funding of £2m p.a. from 2018/19 has been provisionally approved for redevelopment of Garage Sites for housing with £0.5m p.a. for other housing acquisitions.

No spend is likely in 2018/19 for redevelopment of Garage Sites and so the planned £2m programme will be deferred by 1 year.

DEBT AND BORROWING AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Details of the Council's borrowing need (Capital Financing Requirement – CFR), current and forecast debt, and other prudential indicators as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance will be set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Treasury Management Policy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2019/20.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

The Council's Commercial Investment Strategy set out a number of alternative investment options to generate improved returns of c. 4 to 5% p.a. (plus asset growth) including:

- Set up of trading company to develop new income streams;
- Local investment options – Lower Gungate/Solway Close development including the potential to drawdown funding from the Local Growth Fund/ Local Enterprise Partnerships (GBS and Staffordshire);
- Investments in Diversified Property Funds – a savings target to return c.4% p.a. from £12m invested has already been included from 2019/20.

Note: these would represent long term investments of between 5 – 10 years (minimum) in order to make the necessary returns (after set up costs).

CIPFA defines commercial investments as those which are taken for mainly financial reasons. These may include investments arising as part of business structures, such as loans in subsidiaries or other outsourcing structures; or investments explicitly taken with the aim of making a financial surplus for the organisation. Commercial investments also include non-financial assets which are held primarily for financial benefit, such as investment properties.

The Code requires that such investments are proportional to the level of resources available, and that the same robust procedures for the consideration of risk and return are applied to investment decisions. All such investments are therefore included within the capital strategy/investment strategy, setting out the risk appetite and including specific policies and arrangements for such investments, and a schedule of existing material investments and risk exposure.

Investment in Property Funds

As part of the Capital Programme, the Council has since 2018/19 begun to invest in Commercial Property Funds to establish a portfolio which is managed to generate a revenue return to the Council to support financial sustainability and to protect the provision of services to residents, along with maintaining and growing the capital value of the investment. A capital scheme of £12m is included within the 2018/19 capital programme to generate a target net additional income of c. £300k per annum, financed from part of the capital receipt from the sale of the former Golf Course.

A Property Fund Manager selection exercise was undertaken following the appointment of Link Asset Services to provide support and advice in the identification and selection of suitable UK-focussed property funds.

At the outset, the Council was looking to engage with funds that had a broad remit of exposures to different property types, rather than being focussed on one particular area, such as shopping centres. Link Asset Services looked to the “Balanced Fund” universe of UK property funds, as outlined in the AREF/IPD UK Quarterly Property Fund Index, for the starting point for selection. This universe is the industry accepted standard for balanced property funds and included 27 funds as at the close of September 2017.

From this initial list, a number of funds were removed in instances where the Council would not be able to invest, for example those that are solely for pension funds and others where investor types are limited, excluding Local Authorities. The Council also looked to exclude funds below a minimum size threshold of £750m. This left 10 funds from which to further shortlist, and each was sent a copy of a questionnaire to complete, which had been drawn up in conjunction with Link Asset Services and focussed on a number of key areas. Following consideration of the completed questionnaires, a shortlist of 6 funds was drawn up, and the Fund Managers were invited to attend the Council's offices and give a presentation on their fund and answer questions from the selection panel, which consisted of Council officers and Link Asset Services. Further details of the selection process were included in Link Asset Services' report presented to Members on 21st February 2018.

The result of the process was to look to consider splitting investment across the following six funds:-

BlackRock UK Property Fund
Hermes Property Unit Trust
Lothbury Property Trust
Schroder UK Real Estate Fund
The Local Authorities Property Fund (CCLA)
Threadneedle Property Unit Trust

This will provide the Council with a range of approaches to property fund investment, diversification across a number of funds, rather than a concentration in only one or two options, as well as the ability to take advantage of entering a number of funds via the secondary market, whereby the Council would be purchasing units from investors looking to exit the particular fund, and may potentially gain access to a fund at a lower level of cost than via the primary route.

The Council is able to invest in property funds under legislation contained within the Local Government Act 2003.

Members endorsed the above approach and approved investment in the above property funds, making use of both primary and secondary markets as appropriate, at full Council on 27th February 2018.

Investments in property funds as at September 2018 are as follows:-

Schroders UK Real Estate Fund - £1.85m, with an estimated return/yield of 3.2%

Threadneedle Property Unit Trust - £2.0m, with an estimated return/yield of 4.7%

Total investments - £3.85m, with an estimated return of 4.0% plus any capital growth.

Fund	Settlement Date	Standard Entry Cost	Actual Entry Cost/Saving	Net consideration	Fees	Total Cost	Estimated Return p.a.
		£	%	£	£	£	%
Schroders UK Real Estate Fund	08-May-18	1,880,516	-1.60%	1,782,933	12,951	1,795,884	
Schroders UK Real Estate Fund	08-May-18	69,612	-1.60%	66,000	479	66,479	
		1,950,128	-1.60%	1,848,933	13,431	1,862,364	3.20%
Threadneedle Property Unit Trust	31-Jul-18	2,052,709	3.50%	2,000,249	7,046	2,007,295	4.68%
Totals				3,849,182	20,477	3,869,659	4.00%

Performance information is received from each fund on a monthly/quarterly basis and a monitoring spreadsheet has been established to track income received and growth in the funds. Income generated is reported to CMT monthly and to Members quarterly as part of regular financial healthcheck reports, as well as in the regular Treasury Management reports presented to Cabinet and Council (three each year). Performance management/monitoring is also undertaken with reference to the financial press and Link Asset Services advice.

Due to recent uncertainty around arrangements for Brexit and the associated potential impact on the economy, it has been decided to delay any further investment in property funds until there is more clarity. The remaining £8m will be re-profiled into 2019/20, as reported to Members in the Quarter 3 Performance and Financial Healthcheck report to Cabinet, and in the 2018/19 Mid-Year Treasury Review Report to Council in December 2018.

The MTFs includes assumed income of £480k p.a. from 2020/21 arising from the investment of £12m in property funds – with a projected revenue return of 4% p.a.

The annual revenue return is dependent on the property fund achieving rental income returns on the commercial property portfolio which has been relatively stable in the past due to the quality of the commercial property owned by the fund. With regard to the growth (or contraction) in the overall asset value – over the longer term, growth has been consistent but can be subject to market correction (and losses) in the short term. However, it has been recognised that the funds will be a long term investment for 10-15 years and would not be redeemed to realise a loss. A budget / reserve of £600k will also be available to mitigate any losses.

While this does go some way towards achieving a balanced budget and MTFs, the Council currently has reserves and balances totalling c.£50m and other plans to achieve savings in the future.

Regeneration of Town Centre and Purchase of Gungate site

Council on 11th April 2018 approved the purchase of the Gungate site within Tamworth town centre, incorporating the site of the former Gungate shopping precinct; a private pay and display car park currently leased to NCP for a term of 26 years; and a Council run pay and display car park leased to the Council on a peppercorn lease until 2062. This was funded from a £4million capital budget financed from capital receipts from the sale of the Golf Course. Following the purchase of this site, the Council is now in receipt of an additional income stream in respect of the area leased to NCP.

The Council is entitled to purchase land to hold as an investment and regeneration opportunity under the Local Government Act 1972; and the Local Government Act 2003 gives the Council the power to invest for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment, or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs.

As part of this report, Members also approved the development of a regeneration opportunity including further site acquisition should this be beneficial; including formal negotiations with Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Police to look at the inclusion of land bordering the site; and to commence masterplanning works to bring the site to a commercially viable development opportunity.

The report to Council recognised that any return from future redevelopment is not guaranteed, and that it could take several years to get a major regeneration project up and running. Initial plans are for a mixed housing/leisure development. The Council is currently working with Aspinall Verdi and Altair to develop options for the site, and resources have been secured from the Local Government Association (LGA) to pay for 40 days' consultancy; and an £80k grant has been received from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. It is expected that this will take approximately 8 - 10 months to complete.

Solway (Tamworth) Ltd

In line with plans set out in the Commercial Investment Strategy, Council on 17th July 2018 approved the establishment of Solway (Tamworth) Ltd, a trading company to be wholly owned by the Council, with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Executive Director Finance as Directors of the Company. The disposal of land owned by the Council at Solway Close to be purchased by the Company for the development of private housing for rent was also approved, with a budget of £4million being established from capital receipts from the sale of the Golf Course to provide a loan for the company to purchase the land.

Extensive legal advice was received from Trowers and Hamlins on potential options and governance models, and tax advice and a financial viability model was obtained from KPMG to inform decision making. A full risk assessment as part of the business case was developed and reported to Members.

It has been projected that the Council will earn a return to the General Fund from the Company from the following sources:-

- Debt interest charged to the Company on the planned loan from the Council - market interest rate will be applied to comply with state aid legislation;
- A return on equity invested (through dividends) which reflects profits back to the Council from the Company offering the properties for rent at market value; and
- The repayment of the loan over approx. 30 years.

Including projected land acquisition costs (generating a capital receipt for the Council) the projected start-up and construction cost for 20 dwellings is £3.6m which will be financed via a loan from the Council to the company of £1.7m (48%) and an equity investment as sole shareholder of £1.9m (52%).

The table below details the target returns to the Council's General Fund over the next three years. Beyond this, the Council will receive a steady inflation-linked income, plus debt repayment and asset growth. The financial viability model prepared by KPMG shows over a 30 year timeframe annual returns to the General Fund ranging from £160k to £231k.

General Fund Returns	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	£	£	£
Interest on loan (c 4.5%)	66,887	77,342	75,457
Dividends (c 4.5%)	0	41,358	34,078
Sub-Total (Revenue)	66,887	118,700	109,535
Debt repayment (capital receipt)	0	41,104	42,046
TOTAL	66,887	159,804	151,581
Return	3.90%	4.50%	4.30%

Commercial and Industrial Property

The following table details the Council's current holding of commercial and industrial property.

INVESTMENT	VALUATION @ 31/03/18 £	INCOME 2017/18 £	RETURN %
Amington Industrial Estate	6,495,150	265,540	4.09%
Lichfield Industrial Estate	2,949,000	153,513	5.21%
Local Centre Shops	1,921,500	218,876	11.39%
Misc Corporate Property	6,169,100	1,187,965	19.26%
Sandy Way Industrial Units	2,426,800	253,370	10.44%
Tamworth Business Centre	855,750	97,000	11.34%
Town Centre Shops	1,568,202	135,364	8.63%
Total	22,385,502	2,311,628	10.33%

The corporate asset management strategy report prepared by Ridge in October 2015 indicated estimated costs of maintenance over 10 years of £3.288m for non-operational commercial property and £1.861m for non-operational retail property.

The above assets currently deliver a return for the Council and assist in balancing the MTFs. The capital programme includes £75k p.a. to ensure Industrial properties are compliant with the Energy Act and have Energy Performance Certificates as with effect from April 2018 it will not be possible to enter into long term lease agreements for commercial and industrial units with an EPC rating of 'E' or less. Many of our units fall into this category and will require a degree of improvement once they become vacant in order to relet-

The Council also has a Building Repairs Fund of c.£400k p.a. which should be included in the planned approach to asset management.

A disposals policy is in place at the Council, however there is currently no plan or strategy to manage those assets which may be surplus to requirements/do not generate a return.

It is recognised that the following action needs to be taken:-

- 1) Corporate asset viability model to be developed, identifying whole life costs and value for money of each group of assets, with reference to demand, costs and income generated**

- 2) The Asset Strategy Steering Group to consider the results of this modelling and identify poorly performing and well performing assets, and as a result develop a plan for future maintenance and investment, and options appraisal/disposals plans as appropriate**
- 3) Risk register around corporate asset management to be developed**
- 4) Process for monitoring performance of commercial property to be established, and reporting on a routine and exception basis to be implemented**
- 5) A planned approach to be established for the use of the Building Repairs Fund for both planned maintenance & responsive repairs & Building Condition Standards.**

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Treasury Management staff are either AAT or CCAB qualified and the three CCAB qualified staff must complete the annual CPD requirements of their professional accountancy bodies. Link Asset Services are currently contracted to provide treasury management advice and guidance, and have also been engaged to provide other one-off pieces of work, eg. property funds review in early 2018 and guidance/review of the draft Capital Strategy in December 2018.

Training for Members with regard to treasury management is undertaken on a regular basis, most recently in February 2018, where there was also a presentation to Members from Link Asset Services with regard to our investments in property funds.