

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Council

Capital Programme 2017/22

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. The paper proposes a programme of capital investment for the next four years. It includes a review of the current year programme.
- 1.2. It sets out the legal and regulatory framework which governs local authority capital investment, which requires councils to ensure its capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable
- 1.3. There are revised codes of practice and government guidance which require the council to set a capital investment strategy to strengthen risk management in decision-making and to ensure the focus is on the longer term sustainability and risk of capital plans, to avoid exposing public funds to unnecessary or unquantified risk.
- 1.4. The paper sets out an initial strategy and set of principles to guide investment decisions.
- 1.5. The paper proposes a programme of £158.5m over the current and next four years and identifies how this can be funded.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Paying for capital Investment

- 2.1. Capital is a key enabler and investment in the right things can underpin and support the achievement of the Council's strategy.
- 2.2. The Local Government Act, 2003 requires capital spending to be accounted for separately. The council also has to fund capital expenditure in certain ways. These include:
 - Grants and other external funding;
 - Borrowing;
 - Capital receipts from the sale of council assets;
 - Direct contributions from the council's revenue budget.

2.3. There are restrictions to each type of funding;

- **Grants and external funding** are usually from government, non-governmental public bodies and from private sector partners. These are allocated for specific schemes or areas of spending. Many government grants, however, are no longer ring-fenced (except for investment in schools) and this allows the council to allocate funding to areas of priority.
- Access to other forms of funding to promote regional growth and infrastructure development in the region are available through the **Local Enterprise Partnerships**.
- For funds raised through **borrowing** Part 1, section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 sets some specific requirements. It places a duty on the council to set an affordable limit to its borrowing and to keep this under review. The cost of all future borrowing for capital purposes falls wholly on the council and it must ensure that its revenue budget is sufficient to carry the cost of financing its debt.
- **Capital receipts** come from the sale of surplus assets – for example buildings or land no longer required for council purposes. Normally councils must use these receipts for new capital investment- they cannot be used to cover the day-to-day costs of running council services. However for the plan period government has waived these rules so that councils can apply receipts to short-term expenditure on service transformation in the same year.
- **Direct contributions from revenue** are also permitted. In addition, if the council chooses to **lease an asset** rather than purchase it the lease costs are paid for from the revenue budget. For reasons of value for money, the council has purchased new vehicles and equipment rather than entering into lease arrangements for a number of years now, but the option remains.
- The council also operates a **Property Trading Account (PTA)**, which is a ring fenced account through which the council manages its commercial properties. It is focussed on generating a commercial return to the council and the MTFP sets a target of generating an extra £1.25m income over the MTFP period for revenue purposes and the capital programme assumes a contribution of capital funding from the PTA of £1.8m.

Deciding what is affordable

2.4. Councils are required by regulation to give due regard to the CIPFA 'Prudential Code of Practice' when setting their capital programme. The objectives of the code are to ensure that the capital investment plans of the council are:

- Affordable
- Prudent , and
- Sustainable

And that the council has regard to:

- Service objectives

- Value for money
- Proper stewardship of its assets
- Practicality of achieving its investment plans

2.5. The prudential code requires that the council agree a series of ***indicators and limits*** for the forthcoming year. This is to help in deciding what is affordable and what is prudent. They are specific to the council with key indicators and limits being set for each year of the capital programme.

Proper practice also requires that over the medium term borrowing will only be for a capital purpose. The council should ensure that gross external debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year, plus the estimate of the financing requirements for the current and next two financial years.

2.6. A Revision of the CIPFA Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code and from the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) has been released well into the planning process. It is recognised that full compliance may well take place after the 2018/19 budget cycle, but at the earliest opportunity.

2.7. One of the key changes in the Code is the requirement for a capital investment strategy, this identifies the need to strengthen the consideration of prudence and risk management in decision making to ensure the focus is on the longer term sustainability, the risk of capital plans and avoiding exposing public funds to unnecessary or unquantified risk.

Capital Investment Strategy

2.8. To achieve the best from its capital investment strategy the council must focus its investment decisions on the key outcomes it wants for the residents of North Lincolnshire. The initial strategy set out here starts to shape the council's approach and forms the basis for developing a full strategy during 2018/19. It will ensure that the council complies with the revised code and adopts best practice in managing its investment resources.

Outcomes

2.9. The council's ambition is for North Lincolnshire to be the best place to live, work, visit and invest and for the council to be the best it can be. It is therefore essential that every pound that is invested works towards delivering the council's strategic outcomes. That is investment in communities which are:

Prosperous

Providing access to excellent childcare, education/higher education/skills for life.

Delivering higher salaried employment opportunities, quality housing and services and vibrant leisure and living

Safe

Investing in protection for vulnerable children and adults, safe communities, safe roads

Well

Providing clean, green environments, healthier living, excellent health care

Connected

Excellent accessibility by rail, road, super fast broadband for all, and Vibrant resilient communities

And investment in the council's operational capability through focussing investment on its fewest best assets, that facilitate new ways of working; which in turn support an engaged, healthy and empowered workforce, highly engaged with the communities it serves.

2.10. Cabinet has approved a set of principles for the budget process which apply equally to capital investment as to revenue spending decisions. The key **principles** are:

- Investment is aligned to our **agreed priorities**
- Investment decisions are based upon business cases that are informed by needs analysis, research, and that demonstrate a positive contribution to **outcomes** and a sustainable council
- Investment is prioritised in areas that can contribute to **reducing costs** and create additional savings or income
- And in investment which enables more people to be self-reliant and independent and that promotes **resilient communities**
- Investment in the **fewest best assets** to deliver our business
- Investments that result in **tangible benefits** and that do not create legacy costs
- **Investment in success** – if we can't meet the desired quality standards, if the investment doesn't deliver the intended benefit (financial or outcome) we will make an informed decision not to continue to invest
- A clear understanding of **risk and reward** when planning the use of resources, ensuring appropriate mitigation plans are in place to manage identified risks

2.11. Capital resources are not unlimited and therefore **prioritisation of resource** is key. A finite programme needs to work for us, make a difference and generate returns. In extending the capacity of the programme it is important to avoid erosion of capital funding capacity through investment in schemes which may stand up on an individual basis, but collectively do not deliver the impact they could or exposes the council to too much collective risk. Schemes need to be evaluated relative to each other as well as independently.

2.12. For planning purposes the position has been taken that the current capital programme is at the limit of what is prudent in terms of the internal resources currently available for the period of the plan. With revenue budgets reducing in

real terms over the plan period, the percentage of spend already tied up in borrowing costs is approaching the upper limit set by council of 12%. The MTFP provides for the appropriate level of borrowing after taking account of grants and other external funding, and an ambitious target of capital receipts to be generated through the sale of surplus assets.

- 2.13. The current programme has been reviewed to assess the current allocation of resources and to give scope for re-prioritisation. It is important to be clear whether the current mix of projects and allocations are the best enablers for the transformation of service delivery which underpin the council's ambitions for the future.
- 2.14. If additional borrowing is required it must be robustly self-financing. Scheme proposals which deliver a positive return should be vigorously tested, monitored and evaluated. All will have risk attached and if those risks are borne out will have real revenue consequences. Schemes that require Council intervention to stimulate private sector investment should be tested against full return generated even if it is indirect (such as NNDR or Council Tax Growth).
- 2.15. A key theme within the revised prudential code is understanding risk, **risk management** and proportionality and how much of the local authority resources can be put at risk.
- 2.16. Adopting a risk-based approach to capital investment means taking account of the council's appetite for risk to inform the investments it makes and in particular how much it puts into higher risk projects. An assessment of the risk profile of the current programme also provides context for decisions and how new investment proposals affect the mix of risk and reward. Higher risk investments should be assessed for their potential impact.
- 2.17. For schemes considered higher risk, a **full Business Case** will be required to provide in-depth analysis and evidence and a more detailed appraisal than for other schemes.
- 2.18. Evaluation is an essential component and requires judgement. The thoroughness of an evaluation should depend upon the scale of the impact of a programme or scheme, and also be informed by the level of public interest. There may be a high level of media interest around a project which requires a significant degree of expenditure, or one which is highly complex, unusual, or represents a pilot for future large scale programmes. Evaluation reports should be widely disseminated in the organisation, and published where appropriate, to contribute to the knowledge base upon which future decisions will be taken.
- 2.19. **Prudential indicators** must be reviewed regularly and revised where necessary. Details of these are shown in either **Appendix A** to this report or are as part of the Treasury Management report also included on the Council agenda.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The proposed programme

- 3.1. The current programme has been reviewed to give a revised forecast of capital expenditure. It has re-phased a number of schemes, updated the capital funding and reallocated resource to cover cost pressures. The Senior Leadership team has also reviewed and challenged the current disposition of funding between schemes.
- 3.2. In addition the programme has been rolled forward to 2021/22. In the latter two years there is a forecast of continued grant funding for the schools investment programme, road and transport infrastructure, and disabled facilities grant. In addition provision is made for the council's rolling programmes, such as the replacement of fleet vehicles and the maintenance of council buildings; and for further use of the capital receipts flexibility to support transformation spending. In total this provides for a substantial investment of £158.5m over the current and next four years, funded by a combination of council (49%) and external funding (51%).
- 3.3. The programme has been re-aligned to the four best place outcomes and to the key strands of investment for delivering council transformation. It shows the following investment picture:

Planned programme	2017/18 £000's	2018/19 £000's	2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	2021/22 £000's	Total £000's
Outcome Area:						
Safe	3,182	5,567	1,107	285	285	10,426
Well	9,925	5,308	530	40	20	15,823
Prosperous	17,559	27,263	10,630	2,424	2,257	60,132
Connected	12,927	12,160	7,740	7,282	7,282	47,391
Council Transformation:						
Work well - Digital	1,220	2,201	436	0	0	3,857
Work well - Office space (CSH)	1,095	5,512	200	0	0	6,807
Best Assets - Operational Buildings	753	1,067	1,486	1,500	1,500	6,306
Best Assets - Fleet	630	1,826	909	0	0	3,365
Capital Receipts Flexibility	2,070	1,284	500	500	0	4,354
Total	49,361	62,188	23,538	12,031	11,344	158,461

3.4. It includes:

- Safe
A significant investment in LED street lighting; the A161 safer Roads Fund; and investments in equipment for vulnerable adults including telecare

- **Well**
Investments in leisure and well-being including Axholme North and Barton leisure centres; Normanby Hall country park; outdoor leisure opportunities
- **Prosperous**
Investment in schools; town centre regeneration including the Ongo office development; Scunthorpe Library Hub; flood defence and infrastructure works to enable the Lincolnshire Lakes development; and investment in local economic infrastructure to support growth and generate income streams
- **Connected**
Large-scale investment in the roads infrastructure; community grants and housing adaptation grants to enable people to remain living at home in their communities.

3.5. The revised programme also provides investment in council transformation through digital solutions; the few best assets programme, including the Church Square House extension; investment in the vehicles and equipment which enable quality service delivery; and investment in the costs of service transformation.

More details are provided in the appendices to this report.

New investment

- 3.6. The Council operates an agile capital programme which is prioritised according to the resources available. Some schemes are aggregated into a single pot, so that prioritisation can be determined through the plan period, providing the space to develop and evaluate a range of business cases and to determine which are the optimum investments.
- 3.7. The proposed programme is shown by scheme in **Appendix C**. It is for council to confirm or modify this programme, taking into account its affordability alongside other investment proposals.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

Affordability & Prudence

- 4.1. **Appendix B** identifies funding of £158.5m to finance the capital programme over the five year period. The funding breakdown is outlined below:

Grant and External Funding (£80.0m)

- 4.2. The council seeks to maximise external funding sources to deliver council objectives for the area. This includes government funding, LEP funding and funding through partners and private sector investment. Some funding sources require match funding from the council; that includes housing and infrastructure investment.

Capital Receipts (£11.9m)

- 4.3. The council has a programme of asset disposals, to release underperforming assets or ones which are no longer needed. This generates capital receipts which reduces the need for long term borrowing.
- 4.4. The overall programme requires £11.9m of receipts over five year. There are risks and opportunities attached to large-scale disposal programmes. The capital receipts programme brings an opportunity to make land available for housing and business growth. Risks are linked to the market conditions and there needs to be an appropriate balance in the rate land and property is brought to market that is effectively managed to ensure the council can secure a good return. Any shortfall in capital receipts would be covered by further borrowing, which would create additional costs on the revenue budget. This risk is mitigated through the prudential limit which is set at 12%.

The Director of Operations has an active programme of disposals and with initiatives to generate extra disposals has confirmed the forecast of general receipts in this report.

- 4.5. The Council proposes to take advantage of the Capital Receipt Flexibility where capital receipts may be used on transformational revenue expenditure. The capital programme presented here includes proposals to use a total of £4.4m of capital receipts in this way between 2017/18 and 2020/21.

Borrowing (£64.5m)

- 4.6. The borrowing required to underpin the proposed capital programme is significant and adds to the council's existing debt. The anticipated revenue cost of borrowing for the programme presented here is included in the MTFP.
- 4.7. On the basis of the current capital expenditure forecast it is expected that debt by the end of 2017/18 will be £184.9m. Further borrowing from 2018/19 onwards in respect of the capital programme of £41m is proposed in this report.
- 4.8. The Prudential Indicators show the revenue impact of current and planned borrowing in several ways (**see Appendix A**);
- The cost of borrowing as a percentage of the council's revenue stream. This exceeds 11% by 2019/20, and puts North Lincolnshire in the upper quartile of councils
 - An estimate of the total capital financing requirement, which is the underlying need to borrow, £267.5m by 2019/20. This is higher than the actual level of borrowing as the council adopted a policy of internal borrowing between 2008 and 2015, applying its internal cash balances as a temporary source of finance for the capital programme. This may need refinancing.
 - The comparison of actual net debt to the council's underlying need to borrow as measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

- 4.9. These measures show that the proposed programme increases the proportion of revenue resources committed to debt financing in the plan period.
- 4.10. The decision concerning the appropriate level of borrowing is one for the Council advised by its Chief Financial Officer. It is also a matter of judgement as to what proportion of the revenue budget should pay for day-to-day costs and what proportion should finance longer term investment.
- 4.11. The Council agreed in February 2016 to set a target of between 10% to 12% for its capital financing costs as a percentage of the net revenue stream. This took account of:
- Historic debt levels, which constitute a high proportion of financing costs
 - The uncertainty and volatility surrounding future levels of grant funding
 - The potential impact on revenue stream of reductions in the level of settlement funding and business rate retention
 - The extent of other priorities on revenue resources
- 4.12. In my view these parameters continue to be appropriate, but the percentage range should be seen as a limit not a target. Debt is a long-term cost, which ties up revenue resource and needs to be weighed against the merits of investment in day to day operating costs. For that reason it is preferable that new capital investment is either accommodated within existing limits by re-prioritisation or can be robustly justified in terms of financial return. The limit should be reviewed as financial circumstances change.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

The Capital programme needs to be contained within available resources and levels of borrowing which are affordable within the revenue budget. By 2021/22 the capital financing costs will exceed £14m. This is after taking into account the recent adjustments made for MRP technical changes and an increase in use of capital receipts to fund the programme. This budget purely serves to fund external interest payments and debt repayment.

5.2 Part 1, section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the council to determine an affordable borrowing limit and to keep this under review. The proposed basis for measuring what is affordable is discussed in section 4.

5.3 The further reduction of available revenue resources and service pressures faced by the council over the next four years make it imperative that careful consideration is given to the extent that capital expenditure may impact on the revenue budget. Calls for additional internally resourced capital schemes or contributions to match funded schemes should be carefully considered against other priorities and where possible financing costs should be kept to the lower end of the affordability benchmark.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Individual capital schemes are subject to impact assessment as appropriate.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 The capital programme is developed from the council's strategic and service planning. There is also a Local Transport Plan and an Asset Management Plan for schools.

7.2 These plans help the council to identify its priorities for capital investment. Service managers and users, including head teachers, take a full role in drawing up the plans.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 To approve a revised capital programme for 2017/22.

8.2 To approve the initial capital investment strategy outlined in section 2.

8.3 To confirm that, subject to the approval of the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Finance, further capital projects, fully funded by external sources or which are self-financing, may be added to the capital programme when known and assessed by a proper business case.

8.4 To approve the Prudential Indicators contained in **Appendix A**, as modified by changes made to the capital programme, in accordance with Part 1, sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act, 2003.

8.5 To authorise the Chief Financial Officer to determine the methods of capital financing within the available funding (revenue budget, capital receipts, borrowing, specific external funding and leasing)

8.6 That the Chief Financial Officer be delegated authority to:

- borrow within authorised limits and the operational boundaries for external debt
- effect movement between agreed borrowing figures and long term liabilities, in accordance with option appraisal and the achievement of value for money for the council. Movements are to be reported to cabinet or council as appropriate at the next meeting following the change

8.7 To report any amendments required to Prudential Indicators during 2018/19, to Audit Committee, Cabinet or Council as appropriate

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE

North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Peter Fijalkowski
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: none

	Indicator	2018-19 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000
(i)	Estimates of capital expenditure	62,188	23,538	12,031	11,344
(ii)	The ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream (Prudential Code 2013)	10.47%	11.17%	11.34%	11.19%
(iii)	An estimate of the capital financing requirement	267,120	267,513	261,684	255,536
(iv)	Comparison of Gross Debt to Capital Financing Requirement (-) Below CFR)	-34,414	-30,590	-26,767	-22,943

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Work well - Office space (CSH)	1,095	5,512	200	0	0	6,807
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Capital Receipts Flexibility	2,070	1,284	500	500	0	4,354
Total	49,361	62,188	23,538	12,031	11,344	158,461
Funding Analysis						
External & Grant Funding	21,771	25,481	13,920	9,531	9,344	80,046
Internal Funding:						
Revenue Funding	117	28	0	0	0	145
Internal & External Borrowing	23,458	35,448	5,577	0	0	64,483
Property Trading Account	644	1,219	0	0	0	1,863
Capital Receipts	3,370	12	4,041	2,500	2,000	11,923
Total	49,361	62,188	23,538	12,031	11,344	158,461
Percentage Internally Funded	55.9%	59.0%	40.9%	20.8%	17.6%	49.5%

Scheme by Outcome Area/ Area of Transformational Activity	2017/18 £000's	2018/19 £000's	2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	2021/22 £000's
Safe					
Street Lighting & LED	1,650	4,380	822	0	0
A161 Safer Roads Fund	973	308	0	0	0
School Safety Zones	101	56	0	0	0
Additional Defibrillators	20	0	0	0	0
Telecare Investment	214	255	156	156	156
Learning Disability & Tech	91	439	0	0	0
Community Equipment	133	129	129	129	129
Total Safe	3,182	5,567	1,107	285	285
Well					
Pods Construction	70	0	0	0	0
Brigg Recreation Ground Redevelopment	107	97	0	0	0
Axholme North Sports Centre	5,227	1,766	200	0	0
Waste Transfer Station	337	0	0	0	0
Winterton Gym & Skate Park	150	22	0	0	0
Barton Leisure & Wellbeing Investment	149	1,293	92	0	0
Countryside Rights of Way	28	0	0	0	0
Carbon Management	35	198	0	0	0
Ancholme River Path / Isle Cycleways	500	543	0	0	0
Barrow Market Place	35	0	0	0	0
Belton Picnic Area	289	0	0	0	0
Dragonby Energy Efficiency	96	20	20	20	20
Environmental Improvements	100	41	0	0	0
Humberhead Levels Landscape Partnership	207	143	30	20	0
Visitor Centres	100	329	0	0	0
Moors Railway	98	0	0	0	0
Cremator	29	30	0	0	0
Baysgarth - Prosperous Communities Programme	150	0	0	0	0
Midland Road Contaminated Land	1	0	0	0	0
Community Services Infrastructure & HRC Sites	276	298	92	0	0
20-21 VAC Refurbish Visitor Facilities	16	34	0	0	0
Barton Sports Facility	614	66	0	0	0
Leisure Equipment Replacement	87	0	46	0	0
Normanby Hall Country Park Investment	546	308	50	0	0
Plowright Dressing Room Refurbishment	60	10	0	0	0
Skate Parks & Multi Use Games Areas	209	0	0	0	0
Winterton Artificial Pitch	0	0	0	0	0
Burton Sports Centre	190	110	0	0	0
Epworth Pool	186	0	0	0	0
Parks & Play Areas	33	0	0	0	0
Total Well	9,925	5,308	530	40	20
Prosperous					
Scunthorpe Library Hub Investment	794	224	0	0	0
Lincolnshire Lakes Flooding Prevention	4,503	3,996	3,996	0	0
Lincolnshire Lakes Blue Offer	400	1,600	0	0	0
Northern Junction Lincolnshire Lakes Roundabout	0	4,000	0	0	0

Digital Recognition- Car Parks	9	172	0	0	0
Town Centre Regeneration - Car Parking	100	0	0	0	0
Property Trading Account Developments	20	419	0	0	0
Market Investments	790	1,318	0	0	0
Investment Property Schemes	1,450	8,256	2,294	0	0
Boosting Town Centres	20	180	0	0	0
Enabling Housing Growth	209	0	700	0	0
Normanby Enterprise Phase 7	300	140	0	0	0
Formula Capital Devolved To Schools	303	698	381	375	375
Schools Investment Programme	3,783	4,715	3,259	2,049	1,882
Early Years Capital Fund	1,415	335	0	0	0
School Wellbeing Funding	100	50	0	0	0
Ongo Office Accommodation	3,363	1,160	0	0	0
Total Prosperous	17,559	27,263	10,630	2,424	2,257
Connected					
Local Transport Plan	8,651	6,296	5,632	5,632	5,632
Trent & Humber Flood Works	1,500	0	0	0	0
Home Assistance/RHHA Loan	430	1,328	153	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,116	2,913	1,650	1,650	1,650
Enhanced Communities General	0	150	0	0	0
Community Capital Grants	170	1,023	305	0	0
Prosperous Communities Programme	210	408	0	0	0
War Memorials	4	42	0	0	0
Westcliff Regeneration	844	0	0	0	0
Changing Places Toilets	2	0	0	0	0
Total Connected	12,927	12,160	7,740	7,282	7,282
Council Transformation					
Best Assets - Fleet	630	1,826	909	0	0
Best Assets - Operational Buildings	753	1,067	1,486	1,500	1,500
Capital Receipts Flexibility	2,070	1,284	500	500	0
Work well - Digital	1,220	2,201	436	0	0
Work well - Office space (CSH)	1,095	5,512	200	0	0
Total Council Transformation	5,768	11,890	3,531	2,000	1,500
Total Capital Programme	49,361	62,188	23,538	12,031	11,344