

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/2014
HEADS OF SERVICE COMMENTS

Public Sector Housing

Appendix A sets out details on the re-profiling of £2.410m of current year's funding into the next financial year. This will not alter the total amount that will be spent but the timing of when this expenditure will be incurred.

In addition, Appendix A also provides details on budget changes that will reduce the total value of the capital programme by £0.879m. Of this, £0.150m relates to the Firbeck and Findon scheme where funding needs to be transferred from capital to revenue to meet compensation costs that cannot be capitalised. The remaining funding is ring fenced for the HRA and, consequently, consideration will be given to allocating this funding to other Housing Public Sector capital schemes as part of the budget setting process for 2014/2015.

In December 2012, Council approved the tendering of the Kitchen and Bathroom Programmes. However, the average cost of kitchens and bathrooms has since increased by 11% and 5% respectively. There are a number of factors that have contributed to the increases but the main reasons are: tenants have had the option to structurally alter the property to increase the size of their kitchen, more extensive plastering in kitchens and bathrooms, increased demand for showers with additional costs of pumps, and increased design and licence fees associated with material procurement under the Fusion 21 framework contract. However, due to the lower than expected demand for replacement bathrooms, there will be an underspend on the Bathroom Scheme this year that can be used to fund additional expenditure on Kitchens.

Additional programmes of work relating to Roofing and Drainage have emerged that were not foreseen at the time the budget was agreed. These now need to be incorporated into the programme. Accordingly, savings generated from underspends elsewhere have been transferred to finance additional expenditure on these newly emerged works.

There have been no changes to the Replacement Windows and Doors, Disabled Adaptations, Environmental Improvements, and Lifts schemes which are fully committed.

All of the remaining schemes are progressing and should be substantially completed by the end of the financial year.

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<p>Housing Strategy</p>
<p>Part of this budget was transferred into the Findon and Firbeck scheme at Council in July. The balance is to be used to fund the Regenda Partnership of developing up to 77 units of Affordable Housing. It is envisaged that this scheme will also attract Housing and Community Agency funding and provide some £1.6m of inward investment to the Borough along with New Homes Bonus.</p>
<p>Regeneration and Estates</p>
<p>The Estates ICT budget has been reprofiled into 2014/2015 as an interface with the Housing Simdell system is being investigated. The Culvert Debris Screens will be designed during the remainder of the current year and built during next summer when there is a reduced chance of flooding. The Greenshoots project is the subject of a separate report elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda but it is anticipated that some of the approval will be spent towards the end of the financial year. Demolition works at Gorsey Place are nearing completion.</p>
<p>Property Management</p>
<p>The Corporate Property Programme comprises a number of projects within Property Services. Most of the projects have commenced or are soon to commence and the Programme will be largely delivered by 31st March.</p>
<p>Community Services - Private Sector Housing</p>
<p>Our Partner (Helena Housing) is no longer pursuing the Empty Home Initiative with the Council so the approvals have been reprofiled whilst a new initiative is investigated.</p> <p>Renovation Grants and Disabled Facility Grants are both demand led and demand for both is lower than anticipated. Both budgets have, therefore, had an element of reprofiling to finance future demand. The Disabled Facility Central Government Grant was higher than anticipated and has facilitated a reduced capital pot requirement.</p> <p>The Clearance Programme is now completed.</p>

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Other Community Services

Contaminated Land schemes are completed for the current time and a small contingency has been reprofiled into 2014/2015.

The CCTV schemes are progressing and will be completed this financial year as will the Parish Children's Play projects. The Leisure Trust funding is part of an on-going agreement and the budget will also be fully spent.

The Play Area Improvements Budget is an ongoing Capital Programme in line with the Council's Play Strategy. Three new schemes, utilising section 106 monies, have been included in the Programme and should be completed this financial year. Three Parishes Children's' Play schemes will also be completed this year.

A new Flood Alleviation scheme at Abbey Brook has been added to the Programme and will be complete by the end of the financial year. This additional expenditure has been funded by Government Grant.

It is unlikely that Moor Street Improvements will be completed this year and a further review will take place later in the year. Sandy Lane Car Park Extension, however, will be completed this year.

Planning

The remaining approval for the Skelmersdale Town Centre/Skelmersdale Vision Project is a contingency for environmental improvements following the acquisition of land and has been reprofiled into next year.

The remaining Planning schemes are demand led and budgets on the Free Tree Scheme, Conservation Area Enhancement Grants and Buildings at Risk have been re-aligned to match anticipated demand.

The full cost of upgrading the Planning ICT System was higher than anticipated and funding has been agreed to ensure its phased completion.

Street Scene

The tender exercise for the procurement of the replacement Blue Bins is complete and an order has been placed for their acquisition. Additional funding has also been secured for Phase 2 of this scheme and significant investment should take place this year.

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Corporate Services

Progress made on delivering Parish Capital Schemes rests with individual Parishes and is not within the direct control of the Borough Council. Part of this budget has been reprofiled into the new financial year and part has been given back to the Capital Pot.

ICT Infrastructure Development is rated at a "concerned" level in the Council's Key Risk Register, and a new ICT strategy is being drawn up to ensure that this risk is effectively controlled. Expenditure to date in this area has been limited but will increase significantly once the strategy has been put in place. Work on the new Website Content Management System has also commenced and a number of purchase orders have been raised for this project.