

**Blaby District Council
Council**

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| Date of Meeting | 25 February 2025 |
| Title of Report | Recommendations of the Cabinet Executive:5 Year Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2029/30 This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan |
| Lead Member | Cllr. Maggie Wright - Finance, People & Performance (Deputy Leader) |
| Report Author | Finance Group Manager |
| Strategic Themes | All Themes: Enabling communities and supporting vulnerable residents; Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment; Growing and supporting our economy; Keeping you safe and healthy; Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people |

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed Capital Programme and resources for the next five financial years commencing in 2025/26. The Capital Programme covers our planned expenditure on the acquisition, construction and/or enhancement of non-current assets, i.e., those assets with a useful life of greater than one year.
- 1.2 The report also presents the Council's updated Capital Strategy at Appendix B.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That the 5 Year Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2029/30, set out at Appendix A, is approved.
- 2.2 That the application of capital resources of £1,422,512 for 2025/26, including a borrowing requirement of £680,012, is approved.
- 2.3 That the Capital Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30 is approved.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To obtain approval for the proposed level of capital expenditure in 2025/26 and the suggested method of financing that expenditure.
- 3.2 To provide a longer-term forecast of capital expenditure and financing

requirements for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30.

3.3 To ensure compliance with the Prudential Code.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

The Council approved its current Capital Strategy on 27th February 2024. The Capital Strategy is a high-level document that considers the Council's future capital spending plans and available capital resources, together with the implications for the revenue account. The strategy also sets out the overall governance process for setting the Capital Programme.

Part of the governance process involves the approval of a rolling 5 Year Capital Programme based around the Council's strategic priorities and planned renewal and replacement of existing assets.

The summarised 5 Year Capital Programme, covering the financial years 2025/26 to 2029/30, is attached at Appendix A. The starting point is the existing 5-year programme, which was also approved by Council at the above meeting. The Senior Leadership Team has reviewed the existing programme and separated the schemes into the following categories as a way of targeting resources where the need is most urgent or where longer-term savings will be generated:

- Invest to Save schemes.
- Essential schemes or those where the Council is contractually committed.
- Desirable schemes subject to affordability and full business case.
- Schemes that are externally funded.

Consideration has also been given to where schemes can be, or need to be, deferred to a future financial year. The headline proposals were considered by Cabinet Members Informally in November 2024, and shared with Scrutiny in January 2025, although some of the detail has since been refined to reflect emerging priorities and slippage to the planned programme of works.

4.2 Proposal(s)

As can be seen at Appendix A, the total proposed Capital Programme for the next five years amounts to £12.4m, of which just over £1.4m falls in 2025/26. At this point in time, many of the schemes put forward for inclusion in the Capital Programme require further refinement in terms of specification and cost. Some of those schemes may also require separate approval from Council before proceeding. In cases such as this a further report will be brought before Council at the appropriate time.

Across the life of the 5 Year Capital Programme, it is forecast that just under £1.0m of capital expenditure can be met from the Council's own resources

(e.g., capital receipts and reserves), and another £3.3m from capital grants and contributions. This leaves a projected borrowing requirement of £8.1m between 2025/26 and 2029/30.

The estimated borrowing requirement in 2025/26 is £0.7m with the remainder of the programme being funded from a mixture of government grant, Section 106 contributions, capital receipts, and earmarked reserves.

The main expenditure requirements in 2025/26 are as follows:

- Disabled Facilities Grants (£630,000) - the precise grant allocation has not yet been released but is expected to be broadly the same level as 2024/25. The Capital Programme will be updated as soon as allocations are announced and will be reported to Council through the quarterly monitoring process.
- Fleet Vehicle Replacement Programme (£304,000) – this allows for 2 District Cleansing vehicles (£100,000) and 4 Open spaces vehicles (£204,000).
- Leisure Centres (£175,000) – this allows for replacing the gym equipment at Enderby and Huncote Leisure centre. The costs formed part of the Leisure contract which has been approved at full Council. Discussions have been undertaken with SLM and the replacement of equipment is expected to be undertaken during 2025/26.
- Replacement / Upgrade of Service Specific IT Systems (£152,000) – this allows for second phase of the end user devices rollout, and a graduation of the Finance system to a cloud based platform.

Capital Financing Costs

The Council writes down borrowing costs on an annuity basis using the weighted average life of assets funded through borrowing. This is in line with the Council's approved Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, and links to the Treasury Management Strategy also on this agenda.

The additional MRP chargeable in respect of schemes in the 2025/26 Capital Programme, based on a weighted average life of 9 years, averages out at £76,000 per annum. This charge will not be charged to the General Fund budget until 2026/27, the year after the borrowing is incurred. There will also be additional revenue costs in respect of loan interest payable, and other running costs. The revenue costs arising from the five year proposals is £18,122 for 2025/26, but amount to £2,579,099 over five years, subject to all schemes being required to progress. The costs may reduce depending upon the type of resources applied.

The revenue costs above have been built into the base budget and medium-term financial strategy. Capital schemes that fall within the category of "Invest to Save" are expected to generate efficiencies and savings in future financial years, although these savings have yet to be quantified and included within the base budget.

In most cases, the capital proposals in this report are indicative, and will be refined as the procurement process for each scheme gets underway. An allowance for inflation has been built into the estimates for future years but scheme costs are nevertheless subject to change due to the passage of time. Where there is a significant departure from the estimates, outside of tolerances permitted by the financial regulations, a further report and business case will be brought back to Council with the final costs when they are known.

Officers will closely monitor the progress of expenditure against the Capital Programme and, if the revenue implications become prohibitive, because of increasing costs or changes to available funding, schemes may be recommended for deferral. Similarly, if it becomes apparent that the Council can utilise more of its own resources to fund capital expenditure, instead of borrowing, this will also be considered to reduce ongoing revenue costs.

UK Shared Prosperity Funding

The Council expects to receive an allocation of £691,969 in 2025/26 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The grant conditions specify that £127,000 of that allocation forms capital expenditure. Local authorities may spend more on capital schemes if they so wish, subject to the approval of a revised Investment Plan. Capital schemes to be funded from the 2025/26 allocation have not yet been proposed therefore they are not currently included in the Capital Programme. Once proposals have been received these will be added to the Capital Programme and reported to Cabinet and Council as part of the routine quarterly monitoring process.

4.3 Capital Strategy

The 2021 Prudential Code made it incumbent upon local authorities to produce an annual Capital Strategy. This is largely in response to the major expansion of local authority investment activity over recent years into the purchase of non-financial investments, particularly property.

The main issues raised in the Code are:

- A local authority should define its risk appetite and its governance processes for managing risk.
- A local authority should assess the risks and rewards of significant investments over the long term, to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the authority. CIPFA has not defined what longer term means but it infers a timescale of 20-30 years in line with the financing time horizon and the expected life of the assets, while medium term financial planning, at a higher level of detail, is probably aimed at around a 10-year time frame and to focus on affordability.
- The Prudential Code stresses that local authorities should ensure that their approach to commercial activities should be proportional to its overall resources.
- A local authority should have access to the appropriate level of expertise to be able to operate safely in all areas of investment and capital

expenditure, and to involve members adequately in making properly informed decisions on such investments.

Since Blaby does not have any non-financial assets, it has not been considered necessary to produce a 20-to-30-year Capital Strategy. For that reason, only the capital proposals for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 have been built into the updated Capital Strategy which appears at Appendix B. In addition to the updated capital plans, the strategy has also been revised to ensure that it reflects the latest governance processes involved in setting the 5 Year Capital Programme.

4.4 Significant Issues

In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and there are no areas of concern.

5. Environmental impact

- 5.1 A Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is not required for this report but all capital bids are required to make clear how they help to achieve the Council's Carbon Net Zero target.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 6.1 The costs are detailed in the body of this report and in Appendices A and B.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

7.1

| Current Risk | Actions to reduce the risks |
|---|---|
| Investment in capital schemes which may not be aligned to Council priorities, or which might not be affordable. | All bids submitted for inclusion in the capital programme are reviewed against the Council's priorities, whether the investment supports service delivery, and the capital and revenue consequences for the budget. |
| That the authorised capital expenditure is exceeded as projects progress throughout the year. | The projects are monitored throughout the year by Senior Leadership Team, which highlights any possible variances at the earliest opportunity. |
| That the revenue costs arising from the Capital Programme are unaffordable in light of changes to local government funding. | Future year's schemes may need to be reviewed and, where necessary deferred or stopped completely, if revenue savings need to be identified. |

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 None. It is important to produce a 5-year Capital Programme as a minimum requirement of the Capital Strategy, and that the programme aligns with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix A – 5 Year Capital Programme

- 9.2 Appendix B – Capital Strategy

10. Background paper(s)

- 10.1 None

11. Report author's contact details

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