

Guildford Borough Council
Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2024/25 to 2025/26

When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold to generate a capital receipt. Capital receipts are normally ringfenced to finance the capital programme such as purchasing or developing new assets or to repay debt.

On 6 February 2018 the Secretary of State issued a direction under Section 16(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 2003 and guidance under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 to allow local authorities to spend capital receipts on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners. Within this definition, it is for individual local authorities to decide whether or not a project qualifies for the flexibility. The direction has applied from the financial years 1 April 2016 to 1 April 2021 without amendment. In February 2021, the scheme was extended for financial years from 1 April 2022 to 1 April 2024, and it was announced as part of the LG Finance Settlement in December 2023 to extend the scheme further.

The set up and implementation costs of any new processes or arrangements are classified as qualifying expenditure which can apply for the flexible use of capital receipts.

Examples of projects include:

- Sharing back-office and administrative services with one or more other council or public sector bodies;
- Investment in service reform feasibility work, e.g. setting up pilot schemes;
- Collaboration between local authorities and central government departments to free up land for economic use;
- Funding the cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation (staff or non-staff), where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation;
- Sharing Chief-Executives, management teams or staffing structures;

- Driving a digital approach to the delivery of more efficient public services and how the public interacts with constituent authorities where possible;
- Aggregating procurement on common goods and services where possible, either as part of local arrangements or using Crown Commercial Services or regional procurement hubs or Professional Buying Organisations;
- Improving systems and processes to tackle fraud and corruption in line with the Local Government Fraud and Corruption Strategy – this could include an element of staff training;
- Setting up commercial or alternative delivery models to deliver services more efficiently and bring in revenue (for example, through selling services to others); and
- Integrating public facing services across two or more public sector bodies (for example children’s social care, trading standards) to generate savings or to transform service delivery.

A policy on the flexible use of capital receipts was previously approved by Council as part of the Capital and Investment strategy in February 2019 to help finance the transformation costs of the Future Guildford transformation project (should it be required), and again in November 2021 for the Collaboration costs with Waverley BC. As the Government has now extended the scheme further, we can take advantage of this flexibility to help fund transformation, service redesign costs and any costs associated with our savings programme from 2024/25.

The recommendation in this report is to request Councillors to approve the flexible use of capital receipts strategy, for the transformation costs incurred in 2024/25.