

Joint Executive Advisory Board

11 January 2024

Comments on the Capital and Investment Strategy 2024-25 to 2028-29

At its meeting held on 11 January 2024, the Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) considered a report concerning the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy 2024-25 to 2028-29. Bids in respect of the 15 proposed capital schemes outlined within the appendices to the report were a particular focus for the JEAB.

The Lead Specialist for Finance introduced the report and sought comments from the JEAB in respect of the capital bids. The following points arose from questions, comments and discussion relating to the bids for forwarding to the Executive:

Machinery for Grounds Maintenance at the Crematorium

This bid sought to renew vital grounds maintenance equipment as the machinery in question was nearing the end of its life and required replacing. It was not considered to be an option to not maintain the crematorium gardens of remembrance, where ashes were laid to rest. A total capital sum of £42,000 was sought over the period from 2024/25 to 2026/27. The JEAB indicated its support for the bid.

Wildfield Ballcourt

A capital sum of £30,000 in 2028/29 was bid for Wildfield Ballcourt in Wood Street Village. The Council had entered into a lease to install and maintain a ballcourt on land owned by Surrey County Council with the terms that the Council would remove the ballcourt at the end of the lease. The lease had expired and to avoid removing the ballcourt immediately, the Council was entering into a renewal of five years. Although the surface of the ballcourt was starting to show areas of wear, no maintenance costs, beyond the current routine safety checks and litter removal, were anticipated over the next five years. However, the need to incur repair costs after that time was expected. As visitor use of the ballcourt appeared relatively light, it was questioned whether there was sufficient community need to justify the intended work. The JEAB was advised that there would be opportunities to review the matter before the expenditure in 2028/29. This project would be subject to two business cases, the first to be added to the Provisional Capital Programme, and

the second to enable the scheme to proceed. It was felt that consultation associated with the project should demonstrate a community need, for the facility to continue.

Playground Refurbishments 2024 to 2029

This mandate sought approval to continue the capital programme for playground refurbishments from 2025 onwards to be used to support and supplement available S106 funds, where appropriate. The programme required a total capital injection of £800,000 split over the next four years. The JEAB supported the bid.

ICT

The ICT Team had submitted a bid in respect of replacement / purchases of IT user hardware (laptops, monitors etc.) and infrastructure hardware purchases. The annual Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (licensing and cloud usage charges) renewal would be funded from revenue for the near future. The JEAB accepted the bid.

Bedford Road Multi-Storey Car Park

There were structural issues associated with the brick clad wall at a high level on one corner of the car park. Sections of the brick cladding were loose and required immediate repair. Investigations indicated that sections of the brick cladding and surrounding reinforced concrete frame were failing due to water incursion from adjacent raised flower beds forming part of the flat development situated above the car park. Works were required to remove or tank these flower beds and ensure a safe access, followed by brick cladding and concrete repairs to the concrete frame. The estimated capital cost of the works was £150,000 in 2024/25. The JEAB supported the bid.

Crematorium Broadwater Cottage

Broadwater Cottage was a Grade II listed property located adjacent to the Council owned Crematorium on New Pond Road, and utilised for staff accommodation for the Council's Bereavement Services Lead. Although the cottage underwent substantial refurbishment works over recent years, including measures to mitigate structural issues with roof, the Council had subsequently been advised by independent structural engineers that larger scale structural repairs were required. There were no listed building or other restrictions to prevent the works which were estimated to cost £195,000 over two years. The JEAB endorsed the works.

Leapale Road Multi-Storey Car Park

There were structural issues associated with the brick clad wall at a high level on one corner of the car park. Sections of the brick cladding were loose and required immediate repair. Investigations indicated that sections of the brick cladding and surrounding reinforced concrete frame were structurally unsound. Works at a cost of £150,000 in 2024/25 were required to provide scaffold access and undertake repairs to the brick cladding. The JEAB was advised that funding remained in the Car Park Maintenance Reserves and therefore this bid did not represent a cost to the General Fund. The JEAB accepted the bid.

Slyfield Enterprise Estate

Whilst the Enterprise Estate remained popular with tenants and was fully occupied and income generating, the property had been built in the 1980s and was now nearing the end of its useful life and failing to meet the needs of modern light industrial occupiers and the minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) for commercial property. Accordingly, Assets and Property officers were working towards comprehensive refurbishment or redevelopment to meet modern requirements and to enhance future rental income. It was envisaged that this process would commence in 2025/26 with preliminary work and planning and then progress to refurbishment / redevelopment in 2027/28, requiring total capital expenditure of £5,000,000 over the period. The JEAB supported the bid.

Slyfield Foundation Units

Slyfield Foundation Units comprised a multi-let estate consisting of 12 light industrial letting units. As with Slyfield Enterprise Estate, this property had been built in the 1980s and was experiencing all the same popularity and age related issues as the Enterprise Estate. Therefore, the Assets and Property team were also working towards comprehensive refurbishment or redevelopment to meet modern requirements and to enhance future rental income. It was anticipated that this process would commence in 2025/26 with preliminary work and planning and then progress to refurbishment / redevelopment in 2027/28, requiring total capital expenditure of £2,050,000 over the period. The JEAB endorsed the works.

Stoke Park Gardeners Cottage

The Gardeners Cottage was a detached dwelling house located in Stoke Park, Guildford. The Cottage was utilised for staff accommodation and was currently

occupied. Whilst the Cottage had undergone a series of planned and reactive roofing repairs in recent years, the roof had come to the end of its useful life expectancy and replacement was required at a capital cost of £100,000 in 2024/25. The JEAB accepted the bid.

Billings Roof Replacement

The Billings was a detached brick built former printing works constructed in 1856 and subsequently converted into office units and one warehouse unit. The property formed part of the Council's investment portfolio and was currently let on various leases. The slate roofs at the Billings had come to the end of their useful life expectancy and therefore required replacement. The roof to Unit 4 had been replaced last year and this bid covered the replacement of roofs to Units 1, 2 and 3 at a capital cost of £400,000 over the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years. The JEAB endorsed the bid.

Sydenham Road Car Park

Adjacent to the car park was 12 Trinity Cottage, the owner of which had raised two issues with the Council in relation to the repair and replacement of a party wall and damage to the gable wall of number 12 due to the adjacent Council owned car park. The project was required since initial investigation had indicated that the failing brick wall was likely to be a party wall issue and so jointly owned by the Council and the owner of 12 Trinity Cottage. As such, the Council was likely to be responsible for an apportionment of the costs for rebuilding / repairing the wall. Moreover, the raising of levels to form the car park had potentially led to structural and damp issues to the gable wall of 12 Trinity Cottage. The owner of the Cottage had appointed a local firm of surveyors and engineers and had contacted the Council regarding the above matters. The Council's capital bid towards the works was £50,000 in 2024/25. The JEAB supported the bid.

Investigation and Works to Underground Shelter

An area of open space in Guildford, believed to be an underground shelter dug during World War 2, required investigation. The project sought to establish the full extent of the structure and understand its condition with the possibility of filling the structure to avoid the risk of collapse and potential danger to the public, and return the area to good order. The capital bid of £20,000 would provide funds to pay for the works under the Council's Civil Engineering Contract at the direction of the Council's Engineers. The JEAB approved the bid.

Guildford Bus Station

The Council was responsible for the concrete surface deck and drainage at the Bus Station, which was located adjacent to and partly above the Friary Centre. The deck surfacing and drainage had failed and were allowing water ingress through the concrete deck into the basement car park and electrical substation below. During heavy downpours the basement car park and substation flooded, causing a health and safety risk in addition to making the basement unusable. Whilst some previous repairs had assisted to mitigate the flooding, the leaks remained an issue and immediate work was required to diagnose the cause(s) of the water ingress and resolve the matter. Also, a complete resurfacing of the bus station was needed for long term protection of the deck and column structure underneath. These further works were seen as a matter of urgency and the Council was being pursued by the owner of the freehold beneath the deck to progress them as such.

The North St Development project included an upgrade and refurbishment of the Bus Station in around 2-3 years' time. When these works took place, the Council would have an opportunity to undertake long-term infrastructure repair works to the surface of the bus station. The works proposed now appeared to link in with the proposed redevelopment enabling work to be carried out in tandem.

The capital bid sought £50,000 in 2024/25 and 500,000 in 2026/27. This included £12,000 to be made immediately available to facilitate the appointment of an external consultant(s) to undertake a full survey and provide a report to diagnose the cause(s) of the water ingress and solutions. The appointed consultant would also be asked to provide cost estimates for the proposed works to facilitate a total resurfacing project.

A councillor welcomed a correlation in the report between the proposed Bus Station redevelopment and the interim works the subject of this capital bid. However, it was felt that the report did contain information in respect of the related dependencies and project work in tandem. The Lead Specialist for Finance agreed to review the wording in the bid document and improve its clarity if necessary.

Stoke Cemetery

A section of the Cemetery was waterlogged affecting graves and the main pedestrian footpath. The Council's engineers had developed a draft proposal to divert water to a pre-existing drain, which required the approval of the

Environmental Agency. The engineers required a topographic survey to inform their proposal for the application to the EA and the application also needed to be accompanied by a tiered site assessment. The project aimed to solve the health and safety issues associated with this leak with capital expenditure of £80,000 in 2024/25. A Councillor queried the accuracy of the name quoted in section 7 of the bid and officers undertook to check this with the bid author and make a correction if necessary.

Generally, councillors acknowledged that the proposed works the subject of the capital bids seemed absolutely necessary. As much of the proposed work was linked to water incursion and roof repairs, it was felt that this situation would be exacerbated in the future due to Climate Change.

Having been invited to comment on six recommendations which would be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2024, the JEAB indicated its support for all six recommendations and agreed that its above comments be forwarded to the Executive.