



Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 December 2023

Item

Public



Report of the Capital Strategy Task and Finish Group

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Task and Finish Group Chair:	Julian Dean

1. Synopsis

The report and recommendations of the Capital Strategy Task and Finish Group. Capital investment through programmes and projects enables improved outcomes, transformation, and revenue benefits.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This is the report of the Capital Strategy Task and Finish Group. It sets out key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of their work. They prioritised their time, exploring how projects for the capital programme are identified, prioritised, and delivered, with a consistent focus on how learning from the delivery of capital projects took place and informed future work.
- 2.2. They carried out their investigation at pace over three sessions, developing 7 recommendation areas. In completing the work, they walked through the current process to identify, prioritise, and deliver capital projects. This was informed about how the process was implemented by using information and insights from a directorate, as well as examples of local member experiences of capital projects taking place in their electoral division.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. Members are asked to review, comment on and adopt the report of the Task and Finish group.

Report

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this Task and Finish group report, appropriate financial advice would be a consistent and fundamental part of any capital programme project identification, prioritisation and delivery.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

- 5.1. Capital projects can contribute to the realisation of benefits for climate change and the environment. Although this task and finish group investigation has not identified specific examples of such opportunities, it did highlight that the delivery of the capital strategy will deliver financial and non-financial benefits.
- 5.2. Some of these will support delivering demand management which can include investment in electric vehicles and infrastructure, improving physical assets such as buildings, fitting green technology, and piloting innovative approaches, such as pyrolysis.

6. Background

- 6.1. The Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified the Capital Strategy as a work programme topic and commissioned a task and finish group to carry out an investigation.
- 6.2. At their first meeting the task and finish group reviewed their terms of reference and confirmed the focus that they wanted to take in their work. This was to understand the development of the capital programme from the identification and prioritisation of capital projects, through their delivery, to the review and identification of learning, and the related cycle of continuous improvement.
- 6.3. They reviewed the process for identifying, prioritising, and delivering capital projects, walking through the process with officers, asking questions for clarity and identifying strengths and opportunities to make improvements. To further their understanding, they asked questions about how the process was applied in the People Directorate, and also sought more detail on the Highways Capital Programme and Schools Capital Programme because these are within the

overarching capital programme, but are managed separately through the relevant service areas.

- 6.4. Their key findings, conclusions and recommendations are set out in their report, attached at appendix 1. The group's conclusions and recommendations include that:
- Engagement of the Local Member as early as possible as capital projects are being identified and developed, could help identify local issues and situations that could cause projects to be delayed or stopped.
 - That the impact of slippage includes revenue costs, and that there is scope to develop measurement and timely reporting to ensure that the impact of slippage is identified, monitored, understood, and managed.
 - That systematic review and learning, and measurement of progress and impact would contribute to identifying opportunities to continuously improve how capital projects are identified, planned, and delivered.
 - The task and finish group members support investing capital funding in projects that deliver improved outcomes for local people and communities, the Shropshire Plan priorities, demand management, and revenue benefits to the council.
- 6.5. The 7 recommendation areas that the Task and Finish have set out in their report are:
- Recommendation 1 – Realistic Capital Project Timelines, avoiding slippage and improved reporting of delivery, progress and impact
Recommendation 2 – Local member awareness and input.
Recommendation 3 – Systematic review and learning from capital project delivery.
Recommendation 4 – Establish an 'opportunity register' and central external funding team.
Recommendation 5 – Geographic visualisation of capital projects.
Recommendation 6 – Highways Capital Programme
Recommendation 7 – Responding to recommendations and delivery actions

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Council – March 2 2023, Capital Strategy - Appendix 1

Local Member: All

Appendices

Appendix I: Report of the Capital Strategy Task and Finish Group
