

**CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL****CAPITAL STRATEGY**

1. The Council will formulate a multi-year Capital Programme with the aim of working towards a long-term Capital financial planning horizon.
2. All planned Capital expenditure, Capital bids and proposed Capital investment in new or existing assets, whether through grant funding or otherwise, must support the Council's 2022-2027 Corporate Strategy and underlying Corporate Priorities and associated Service objectives. Asset Management Planning should help inform the setting of the Capital Programme and essential expenditure on existing Council assets.
3. The Council currently operates a Corporate Project Management Group (which provides projects with appropriate support, advice and direction), a Capital Monitoring Group (which provides the operational management of the in-year Capital expenditure and funding position) and a Development Group (which provides a wider strategic input on Capital development proposals and opportunities). All 3 groups have key roles to play but with each one having their own specific Terms of reference.
4. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy will set out the approach to Treasury related activities for Investments and Borrowing and will take account of and be fully aligned with the Capital Programme proposals and will factor in proposed borrowing levels (both external and internal) consistent with these plans and a prudent approach. The Treasury Management Strategy will also include the Council's Minimum Revenue Policy for the provision for repayment of debt over its life.
5. The Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy are managed by officers who are professionally qualified accountants who are required to undertake Compulsory Professional Development (CPD).
6. The guiding principles for the Council's current and future Capital planning will include:
  - Pursuing efficiency to make the best use of existing assets which includes land & buildings and information technology. E.g. Rationalisation of redundant and/or under-utilised buildings should reduce revenue costs and also generate potential capital receipts.
  - All major capital projects (grant funded or otherwise) require a funding strategy as part of the business case being developed.
  - The Capital Programme will normally be set so that no Prudential Borrowing is undertaken to fund the core Capital Programme except where funding specific Capital projects. There will need to be a business case to support the use of Prudential Borrowing e.g. Consideration would be given to use Prudential borrowing when revenue savings can be identified which would be used to fund the capital financing costs of the initial capital investment.

- Invest to save schemes that produce revenue savings following an initial capital investment will continue to be regarded as high priority as they can provide a positive contribution to the medium term revenue budget position (e.g. Energy efficiency measures). This could also include schemes that are a capital investment to avoid future cost increases.
- Identify, lever in and maximise external grant funding opportunities where possible, although in isolation this may not always be the overriding driver to undertake a capital project.
- Exit strategies should be considered as part of any grant funding bids and successful grant awards.
- Corporate Capital earmarked reserves will be maintained to provide one-off funding to support the Capital Programme. Where revenue savings can be achieved in advance of the annual budget requirement, these may usefully be applied to earmarked reserves to support future Capital priorities. In particular the Council's matched funding contribution for the Band B 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme will be mainly supported through funding set aside in the Investing in People's future earmarked reserve.
- Capital receipts are regarded as a positive contribution to the overall Capital Programme and will be allocated in accordance with the balance available at the start of the year. A list of proposed Asset disposals will be maintained and regularly monitored. Appropriate consideration of major disposals will take place as and when they arise.
- If a Capitalisation Direction is made available by WG it will be considered and utilised as, when and if this is deemed appropriate by the Corporate Lead Officer: Finance & Procurement as Section 151 officer.
- The Council will continue to hold Investment Properties as part of its Corporate Estate. This is a form of commercial activity as the Council aims to lease these properties out at market rates and therefore make a commercial return. At present the Council's commercial activity represents a low risk as it is not significant relative to the context of the Council's overall budget and financial position. Should any new opportunities become available, then a business case would need to be produced which should include financial and legal due diligence, including ensuring compliance with the revised Prudential Code (December 2021) requirements which prohibit borrowing where obtaining financial returns is the primary aim, and the use of specialist internal/external advice where appropriate, together with the following appropriate governance arrangements.
- Appropriate due diligence relative to the nature, scale and area of activity will be undertaken when considering Capital grants to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties within the Capital Programme.

7. The key priority areas that the Council will focus on in its forthcoming Capital Programme include:

- Working with the private and public sector across the region, through the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, the Growing Mid Wales Growth Deal, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Funding to boost the local and regional economy.
  - Implement Ceredigion Economic Strategy
- a) Creating caring and healthy communities including
- Providing funding for mandatory and discretionary Disabled Facilities grants.
  - Review and develop specialist residential accommodation schemes either by the Council or in conjunction with RSL and other partners.
  - Cylch Caron – the Ceredigion Local Service Board project for the delivering of health and social care in the Tregaron area
  - Establishing wellbeing centres
- b) Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages including
- Continuing to modernise Schools through the 21st Century Schools programme and other funding routes.
- c) Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities including
- Developing Coast Protection schemes
  - Carbon Management – Seek to further reduce carbon emissions and to reduce energy costs / mitigate as far as possible future increases, by enabling energy efficiency measures in both Council assets and also the private and RSL Housing stock.
  - Vehicle Replacement –to review the wider vehicle fleet across all services and transition towards an Ultra Low Emission Vehicle fleet.
  - Essential improvements to Buildings, Bridges and Roads.