
CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING
APRIL 2008 TO FEBRUARY 2009

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Stephen Harker,
Efficiency & Resources Portfolio

Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report presents an update of the Capital Programme including spending and resource levels and requests approval to a number of minor changes to the Programme.

Summary

2. The current projected outturn of the 2008/09 Capital Programme is £136.917million against an approved programme of £136.978million. The investment has delivered a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and more critically, to Council services. Refurbishment of council homes, improved learning environments in schools, better traffic flows and opportunities for sustainable travel have been achieved and are detailed within the report.
3. The overwhelming majority of the Programme is funded by Government grants. Council resources of £7.730M are required to fund the balance of the Programme and the planned repayment of debt. The revenue impact is included in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Cabinet :-
 - (a) Note projected capital expenditure and resources.
 - (b) Approve the resource virements required for Children's Services and Housing Services budgets.
 - (c) Note the contribution of £50,000 received from the Environment Agency in respect of the "Source of the Denes" project and release the funding.
 - (d) Revise the £73,000 underspend previously reported on the Contact Centre to £50,000 in light of additional expenditure identified.

- (e) Note the £84,000 reduction in projected spending on the Pedestrian Heart Scheme to be returned to Corporate Resources.

Reasons

5. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons: -
- (a) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.
 - (b) To maintain effective management of resources.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2008/09 – 2011/12
Accounting Records

John Barrigan : Extension 2323

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to health and wellbeing which this report needs to address
Sustainability	There are no issues relating to environmental impact.
Diversity	There are no specific implications for diversity
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	The proposals do not affect any particular groups within the community
Budget and Policy Framework	The report highlights potential changes to the Council's budget.
Key Decision	The report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Capital Programme referred to in the report supports delivery of the Sustainable Community strategy through appropriate deployment of the Council's resources
Efficiency	The recommendations support the effective and efficient use of resources.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

2008/09 Capital Spend and Resources

6. **Appendix 1** summarises the Council's capital commitments and resources position. The total value of commitments, including 2008-09 spending and projected future spending, is £74.809million. It is estimated that prudential borrowing of £7.730million will be required to fund the capital programme and the planned repayment of £1M of debt. The revenue impact is included in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
7. **Appendix 2** summarises departmental capital budgets, spend position of ongoing capital projects and projected under/overspends. The total approved budgets of all current capital projects, including spending in previous years and projected future expenditure is £136.978million. The projected outturn is £136.917million.
8. **Appendix 3** details the current position of all capital projects that are currently ongoing.

Capital Programme Update

9. The following major areas of work have been undertaken in 2008/09.

(a) Children Services

- (i) The major capital project, to remodel and refurbish Hummersknott School, has seen significant progress. Phase 1 was completed and has been in use since September 2008; Phase 2 (internal works) is progressing well and is scheduled for completion in May 2009; and all other remaining works are due to be completed for October 2009. Work to build the new 700 place Eastbourne Academy on land near Hundens Lane commenced on site in May 2008 and has made significant progress with the main building now constructed. Work is being undertaken on the internal layout and the project is well on course for handover by 10th August 2009. The Pathfinder project to rebuild North Road Primary School commenced on site on the 5th January and Phase 1, the new school build, is scheduled to be completed Christmas 2009.
- (ii) A range of Capitalised repairs were undertaken at various schools across the borough during the school summer holidays with the aim of improving the condition and the suitability of premises. The package of schemes was jointly undertaken in partnership with schools utilising centrally retained Modernisation Funding and schools Devolved Formula Capital. Projects included roofing works at Gurney Pease and Mount Pleasant Primary schools; remodelling of kitchen areas at Red Hall Primary and Hurworth Comprehensive schools; and window replacements at Abbey Infant, Abbey Junior and Branksome Comprehensive schools.
- (iii) Other projects undertaken during 2008/09 were completed utilising Schools Access Initiative funding, which is allocated to enable schools to be more accessible to children with disabilities and special education needs. Funding was

allocated to various schools including Mowden Junior, where a Hygiene facility was incorporated into a suitability project; High Coniscliffe Primary, where the provision of a ramp to the playground area was incorporated into remodelling works; Hurworth Primary, where adaptations include the construction of a ramp and the installation of a hoist within the existing Hygiene facility; and Hurworth Comprehensive, where remodelling works included the provision of a stair lift and DDA compliant doors for the Dining area.

- (iv) Specific suitability related works, funded from a combination of centrally retained grant and Devolved Formula Capital, were undertaken at various schools. Mowden Junior School returned after the summer break to a newly built staff room extension and a specialist resource Classroom. Works were also completed at High Coniscliffe Primary to remodel its KS1 provision. Other projects included the remodelling of teaching areas at Red Hall Primary, Branksome and Longfield Comprehensive schools.
- (v) Mechanical and Electrical schemes, undertaken to ensure continuity of provision, included the replacement of boilers and associated plant at Branksome Comprehensive School; the removal of fire hoses at Bishopton/Redmarshall and Heighington Primary schools; and extending the fire alarm and emergency lighting system at Corporation Road Primary School.
- (vi) Significant variations that have taken place include the postponement of projects at Heathfield Primary School and Hurworth Primary School. With the announcement that both of these schools are to receive £1.5m allocation through the Primary Capital Programme for significant remodelling work, it was felt prudent to postpone smaller areas of capitalised repair work due to take place this year until a more in-depth assessment of overall need could be undertaken.
- (vii) Briefs and Project Initiation Documents have been issued for the projects that are being funded through the Primary Capital Programme where building works are scheduled to be underway during 2009/10 and are being developed for the remainder of the projects that are to be completed within 2010/11. A range of consultation meetings and events have been held and are still ongoing, to ensure that Schools and key stakeholders are fully involved with the design process.

(b) Housing

- (i) Internal Planned Maintenance (IPM) 2008/09 - 423 properties completed at the year end to Park Place, Bank Top, Piercebridge, Red Hall, North Rd, Heatherwood Grove, Harrogate Hill and Rise Carr areas of town. 130 of these properties were completed by our Partners. IPM work this year has also provided all ground floor flats and bungalows with level access showers as well as the normal electrical rewire, bathrooms, kitchens and loft insulation as required. Work at Rise Carr included changing a number of flats from warm air heating to gas central heating. Communal staircases to flats also received new lighting.
- (ii) Roofing 2007/08 work - Haughton Phase 2 completed Nov 08. 2008/09 - 4 Bungalows in Piercebridge were re-roofed in Jan 09 and completed within one and half weeks. Work at Heatherwood Grove is currently underway and is progressing well with approx two thirds of the site complete.

- (iii) Fencing Work 2008/09 – Work to provide 50% of Hundens Lane with new front and rear fencing is now complete. Fencing works to the rear of properties in the Harrowgate area has recently been completed. Fencing has also been identified to be included in the scheme at Bank Top this will be carried out on completion of the landscaping. As soon as the hard landscape work is complete at Whinfield the fencing programme will commence.
- (iv) Footpaths 2008/09 - work to Killinghall Street to provide front garden spaces have been completed. Work to improve the visual appearance of the communal spaces in Rise Carr e.g. repairs to the car parking area, planters and verges is now completed. Work is now complete in the Havelock Street area to improve the footpaths and paved areas to council owned properties, this work also includes repairs to freestanding brickwork and retaining walls. Work in the Bank Top area of town to improve the footpaths and general area has recently been completed.
- (v) Repairs to Garages - Repairs to garage roofs to Cotherstone Moor, Springhill ,Coniscliffe Rd and Lock Street are complete. Work to resurface a number of Garage forecourts were all completed in January 09.
- (vi) Central Heating - 134 properties completed in the Harrowgate Hill, Skerne Park and Albert Hill areas. But work at Branksome delayed because of issues with the Utility Company. 82 properties also had redundant back boilers removed.
- (vii) Environmental Works - 2008/09 Firthmoor is now complete, works included the provision of pavement crossing, vehicle hard standings, new footpaths and secure fencing. Whinfield Phase 1 to upgrade hard standing areas and footpaths to the front of individual properties and flats is now complete. 2009/10 Whinfield Phase 2 has now commenced which includes fencing work to rear of properties and improvements to drying areas.

(c) Transport

- (i) The Council has continued to deliver capital funded actions through the Second Local Transport Plan (2LTP) in support of its Transport Strategy. The objectives of the Transport Strategy are to tackle congestion; improve accessibility to employment, education, shopping, leisure and health; and further improve travel safety and security.
- (ii) Whilst road users in Darlington do not experience the levels of traffic congestion seen elsewhere; tackling traffic congestion is still important, not least due to the need to protect the local economy, and environment, from the detrimental effects of congested roads. In response to this need, the Council is currently implementing its Transport Strategy with an emphasis on tackling traffic congestion through:
 - (I) increasing road capacity at pinch points,
 - (II) further improving the management of the road network to increase traffic flow, and
 - (III) encouraging more sustainable travel behaviour to reduce the pressure on the road network.

- (iii) The new approach to consultation is being followed, with earlier involvement of local people and more opportunities for opinions to be heard. This process is proving better in terms of involvement, although it is delaying the delivery of some schemes.
- (iv) Schemes being delivered (or that have been delivered) that support these aims include
 - (I) Haughton Green Traffic Calming. An outline scheme to reduce traffic levels and speed, intended to lock in the benefits of the DETC by improving conditions for road users and frontages in Haughton Village, has been extensively consulted upon. Cabinet considered a revised proposal and details of the final scheme have been sent to local residents. The scheme is currently scheduled for delivery in June 2009, subject to planned gas works in the area.
 - (II) Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). Further work is being undertaken to deliver CPE by November 2009 funded through the 2LTP and prudential borrowing. CPE will help the Council further improve the management of the road network by reducing inappropriate parking that delays traffic. A major consultation exercise is underway, with a Talking Together event planned for 22 April 2009, providing opportunity for people to comment and ask questions on CPE and Darlington's Parking Strategy.
 - (III) Grange Road Cycle Route. One of seven radial routes being planned for the town. The final element of the scheme in West Street has now been completed, providing an attractive route for pedestrians and cyclists from the south west. A signing scheme is being designed to guide cyclists from Blackwell into the town centre. Improving facilities for walkers and cyclists has been shown to encourage use, thus reducing the pressure on the road network. Cycling levels in Darlington are increasing – up 23% in 2008/09 compared to 2007/08 over the 16 counter sites located across the urban area; and an increase of 9.3% comparing the town centre cordon counts in October 2007 and October 2008.
 - (IV) Skerne Park Road Humps. The existing road humps are being replaced with more bus friendly speed cushions. This will ensure that traffic speeds are kept low, but enable bus operators to run low floor 'easy access' buses to the area. This is one of the measures submitted as part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement major scheme bid.
 - (V) Black Path resurfacing. This well used cycling route has been improved with a sealed surface over almost 1km of route as part of the Cycling Demonstration Town project. The link between Arnold Road and the DETC has also been resurfaced improving this route for both cyclists and pedestrians.
 - (VI) St Theresa's Primary School 20mph zone. This scheme on Harris Street and neighbouring roads has been designed and consulted upon. The scheme has widespread support, but further speed surveys are underway and ongoing consultation with the Police, in order to potentially reduce the

number of speed cushions required. Subject to approval the scheme will be constructed in Q1 2009/10.

- (VII) Safer Route to Dodmire School. A wide-scale consultation has taken place on this scheme which includes the stopping up of Louisa Street, a 20mph zone on neighbouring roads and a toucan crossing on Neasham Road, which has the added benefit of improving access to the GP Surgery. A decision on the final design of the scheme will be taken in April and construction will be programmed for the summer school holidays.
 - (VIII) Employer Travel Plan. To improve access to the Lingfield Point site on McMullen Road a toucan crossing is being installed. In particular, this assists employees arriving by bus, who have found it difficult to cross the road into the site, but it also has benefits for pedestrians and cyclists and for residents on the west of McMullen Road who wish to access the inbound bus stop on the east side of the road. Residents who live on the Lingfield Point site have also requested an improved crossing in order to get to Heathfield School.
 - (IX) School Travel Plans. Planning permission has been granted for cycle parking at St Augustine's, Firthmoor and Red Hall primary schools. In addition work has started at Whinfield School to install cycle parking.
 - (X) Connections Study. Urban Initiatives have been appointed to deliver this study and will undertake three interlinked pieces of work - validate the transport strategy and associated investment programme in relation to addressing congestion and accessibility on the highway network and for existing, planned and potential development sites; assess whether there is any requirement to reserve land for any future transport scheme, including the need or otherwise to continue to reserve all or part of the Cross Town Route (meeting the requirements of the Local Development Framework guidance); and review the connections (travel options) between the Town Centre, key employment and development sites and communities both in Darlington and in neighbouring localities, in particular focusing on maximizing sustainable travel options.
- (v) It is recognised that the capital transport programme needs to be consistent with revenue funded actions to achieve the best results. The Local Motion travel behaviour project continues to deliver good results – for example, evidence from the latest travel survey completed in the autumn of 2008¹ shows that since 2004 the percentage of car trips by residents living in the urban area has reduced by 9% and car mileage (for trips up to 100KM) reduced by 13% (a reduction from 222 to 200 Million miles per year). This is despite an overall increase in car ownership within the survey of over the period 2004 -2008 of 4.3 %, or 1800 cars.
 - (vi) The survey also shows that cycling trips have increased by 120% (around 1.5 Million extra cycle trips per year) and walking trips by 15% (around 3.4 Million

¹ The changes in travel behaviour have been calculated by comparing the results of surveys completed in the same weeks of the year in 2004 and in 2008. For both surveys the respondents were sampled from Darlington's 20 urban wards, with a minimum number of 200 respondents within each ward. The respective net samples sizes were 4,269 (response rate 59%) in 2004 and 4,178 (response rate 60%) in 2008.

extra walking trips per year).

- (vii) Another successful work theme is the Medal Motion campaign in primary schools, the work of the 'Bike It' officer and implementation of school travel plans have contributed to a reduction in the mode share of trips to school by car from 25.8% (2005) to 23.1 % (2008).
- (viii) Delivery of this third strand of the Council's focus on tackling traffic congestion is being helped by the use of external funding from the Department for Transport and Cycling England (for the Cycle Demonstration Town project). Further funding has been secured until 2011 to continue this work, this funding is from Cycling England and through Darlington's involvement in the Interreg IVB programme.
- (ix) Additional capital grant of £1.229M for the Eastern Transport Corridor, approved by DfT in January 2009 in recognition of exceptional circumstances, has been claimed.

(d) Chief Executive Regeneration

- (i) All building works have been completed at the Railway Museum although retention monies remain outstanding. As the main contractor has gone into liquidation these will remain so until the appointed receivers apply for their release.
- (ii) All works have now been completed at Arnold Rd, Allotments with only retention still outstanding. Snagging lists have been submitted to the contractor by those tenants currently on site.
- (iii) Tenders have been received for both the demolition of the bus depot and the construction of the car park, with the demolition having commenced during January 2009.
- (iv) Haughton footbridge - a detailed report was taken to Cabinet on 3rd March 2009.

Capital Spend and Resources Monitoring

10. The following movements in the Capital Programme since the approval of the 2008/09 Capital MTFP have not yet been approved by Members: -

(a) Children's Services

- (i) The majority of increased costs identified in **Appendix 3** represent a mixture of small additional costs and additional work carried out within the existing programme. The increased costs have been managed within Children's Services Contingency budget using existing capital resources.
- (ii) Budgets have been adjusted in respect of Window replacement works at Branksome Comprehensive and the construction project at Borough Rd. Nursery to better reflect the programme of works ongoing.

(b) Corporate Services

- (i) Additional costs have been identified in relation to the building works undertaken at the Contact Centre. A saving of £73,000 had been anticipated but this has reduced to £50,000 following the purchase of essential IT kit.

(c) Housing

- (i) Housing services have identified several budget virements needed within the programme so that allocated resources reflect the programme of work.

(d) Community Services

- (i) The final project costs for the Pedestrian Heart are marginally below the £9.22 million budget as the final account initially submitted by the main contractor has been agreed at a lower value.
- (ii) The sum of £50,000 has been received from the Environment Agency in respect of continuing work on the Source of the Denes project.

Conclusion

- 11. The current projected outturn of the 2008/09 Capital Programme is £136.917million against an approved programme of £136.978million. It is expected that prudential borrowing will be used to achieve the corporate resources of £7.730million that are required to fund commitments. The revenue impact is included in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Outcome of Consultation

- 12. There has been no consultation in the preparation of this report.

