



# Northumberland

## County Council

### CABINET

10 November 2020

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## Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group

Report of: Neil Bradley, Service Director, Strategic Commissioning and Finance

Cabinet Member: Councillor Nick Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

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### 1. Purpose of report

The following report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group via email on 01 October 2020.

### 2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1. **Five Arches Park, Berwick (Parks Enhancement Programme):** accept the grant award of £25,000 from the MHCLG's Pocket Parks programme and approve an overall budget requirement for the project of £68,000 within the 2020-21 capital programme, including an allocation of £43,000 from the existing Parks Enhancement provision.
- 2.2. **Grant Awards - Emergency Active Travel Fund Capital Funding and Ponteland Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme:**
  - Accept the Department of Transport Emergency Active Travel Fund grant award of £69,960 and approve the associated budget provision in 2020-21 capital programme for the installation of cycle stands in town centres.
  - Accept the Environment Agency grant award of £323,000 for Ponteland Surface Water Flood Alleviation and accordingly increase the existing 2020-21 budget allocation for the Callerton Lane, Ponteland highway works.
- 2.3. **Ashington Academy – Refurbishment Grant**
  - Approve a grant award of £1,501,000 to Ashington Academy, from the school refurbishments provision within the 2020-21 capital programme, for the refurbishment and remodelling of elements relating to historical backlog maintenance.

- Note that the funding for each of the identified elements in the scope of works is to be ring-fenced specifically against those items. Any underspends realised against any individual item will revert back to the Council, whilst any overspends will be the liability of the trust.
- Note that, as an Academy, the project will be delivered by the trust themselves, with the Council performing a monitoring role to ensure the scheme is delivered within the constraints of the funding.
- Note the proposed spend profile and amendment of the capital programme phasing to reflect the estimated expenditure for 2020-21 of £394,350 and £1,106,650 for 2021-22.

### **3. Links to Corporate Plan**

The Council's Capital Programme is consistent with the priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018-2021; in particular the 'Living', 'Enjoying' and 'Thriving' priorities.

### **4. Key Issues**

The report outlines proposed amendments to the previously approved Medium Term Capital Programme.

### **5. Background**

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme for 2020-21 to 2022-23 were approved by Council on 19 February 2020.

This paper summarises reports considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group on proposed amendments to the Plan.

## **SUMMARY OF NEW CAPITAL PROPOSALS CONSIDERED BY OFFICER CAPITAL STRATEGY GROUP VIA EMAIL ON 01 OCTOBER 2020**

### **6. FIVE ARCHES PARK, BERWICK (PARKS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME)**

- 6.1. The Group received a paper on the proposed construction of a perimeter path and associated works at Arches Park in Berwick, as part of the Parks Enhancement programme.

#### **Background**

- 6.2. Five Arches Park is a two-hectare site in Berwick, home to Tweedmouth Football Club, enjoyed by local residents and supported by the Friends of Five Arches group.
- 6.3. With the support of Northumberland County Council's Green Spaces and Countryside Team the park's friends group made an application for funding through the Government's Pocket Parks scheme. The scheme provides support, through grants to community-led bodies working in partnership with their local authority, with the aim of creating new pocket parks or bringing existing green spaces up to a safe, usable and inviting standard. In February 2020 the Friends of Five Arches were successful in gaining the maximum £25,000 grant offer in order fund works to restore and renovate Five Arches Park.

#### **Proposal**

- 6.4. The proposed improvements at Five Arches Park focus primarily on works to reinstate and extend a perimeter path but will also include the provision of seating and some planting works.
- 6.5. Colleagues in Technical Services have provided a quote of £63,000 for the required path works and officers anticipate expenditure on the provision of seating and additional planting to come to a further £5,000. The total anticipated costs of the project are therefore £68,000.
- 6.6. It is proposed to meet the remaining £43,000 funding requirement from the existing Parks Enhancement budget provision within the capital programme.

#### **CSG Recommendation**

- 6.7. The group accepted the report and recommends Cabinet to accept the grant award of £25,000 from the MHCLG's Pocket Parks programme and approve an overall budget requirement for the project of £68,000, including an allocation of £43,000 the existing Parks Enhancement provision within the 2020-21 capital programme.

### **7. ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS FOR EMERGENCY ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND CAPITAL FUNDING AND PONTELAND SURFACE WATER FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME**

- 7.1. The Group received a report seeking approval to accept two new grants received from the Department for Transport and Environment Agency, along with the

associated expenditure requirements within the Council's 2020-21 capital programme.

### **Emergency Active Travel Fund Capital Funding**

- 7.2. As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department of Transport (DfT) allocated funding through the Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 1. This funding was allocated to the North East Joint Transport Committee, representing the seven north east local authorities. The funding was made up of both revenue and capital, and in respect to capital Northumberland was allocated £69,960 of this funding. The funding has been received by the Council and is intended to be used to encourage cycling and walking on measures that can be implemented in the short term.
- 7.3. It is proposed that the funding will be used for the installation of cycle stands across the 12 main towns. Officers are in liaison with the Town Councils about whether they want cycle stands, hoops or other storage and the potential locations.

### **Ponteland Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme**

- 7.4. As part of the planning conditions for the Ponteland Schools and Leisure project, significant modifications and improvements were required to Callerton Lane. These works were commenced in the spring of 2020 in order to allow their completion before the completion of the schools' buildings in autumn 2020. At the same time, however, the Council became aware that as part of their wider Ponteland Flood Alleviation scheme, the Environment Agency also had proposals to improve surface water drainage along Callerton Lane to reduce the risk of surface water and fluvial flooding of adjacent housing.
- 7.5. The Environment Agency works were scheduled to take place at a later time but would have involved excavating and placing new drains in the newly improved length of Callerton Lane.
- 7.6. Discussions were therefore held with the Environment Agency to try to combine their surface water drainage improvements with the Council's works, in order to avoid this future damage to newly laid surfaces and the additional traffic and construction disruption that it would cause.
- 7.7. The Environment Agency agreed to separate out the surface water drainage aspects of their scheme, and in turn provide grant support to the Council to allow these works to be incorporated into the Council's Callerton Lane improvement scheme.
- 7.8. In line with this agreement the works have been undertaken and are nearing completion.
- 7.9. The Council has now received official confirmation from the Environment Agency of a grant award of £323,000 for the Ponteland Surface Water Flood Alleviation project.
- 7.10. Approval is therefore sought to accept this funding into the Council's capital programme, combining it with the existing allocation for the Ponteland highway works, and to provide enhanced surface water drainage at Callerton Lane.

### **CSG Recommendation:**

- 7.11. The Group accepted the report and recommends Cabinet to
- Accept the Department of Transport Emergency Active Travel Fund grant award of £69,960 and approve the associated budget provision in the 2020-21 capital programme for the installation of cycle stands in town centres.
  - Accept the Environment Agent grant award of £323,000 for Ponteland Surface Water Flood Alleviation and accordingly increase the existing 2020-21 budget allocation for the Callerton Lane, Ponteland highway works.

## **8. ASHINGTON ACADEMY – REFURBISHMENT GRANT**

- 8.1. The group were asked to consider a report seeking approval for the Council to provide a grant award to Ashington Academy, part of North East Learning Trust, to fund the partial refurbishment and remodelling of the educational and dining facilities of the school.

### **Background**

- 8.2. In 2007, Ashington High School formed part of the Ashington Learning Partnership Trust, which also included Bothal Middle School, Hirst Park Middle School, Central First School and Wansbeck First School. The reorganisation of Ashington Partnership from 3-tier to 2-tier was undertaken in September 2015, and Ashington High School became a secondary school. At this time, Bothal Middle School and Hirst Park Middle School were closed, and Central First School, Wansbeck First School, Ellington First School, Linton First School and Pegswood First School all became primary schools, with Wansbeck First School changing its name to Bothal Primary School.
- 8.3. In September 2016, Ashington High School was judged 'Inadequate' by Ofsted and was removed from Ashington Learning Partnership in order that the school could become a sponsored academy. In November 2017 the school became part of North East Learning Partnership Trust (NELT). To date, Ashington Academy has not had any Ofsted inspections.
- 8.4. Prior to their academisation, when the school was under local authority rule, in 2015 the Council invested c.£3.8m of funds to extend the facilities in order to include a drama studio, music room and a post-16 sixth form centre. A multi-use games area with a 3G all-weather grass pitch, four mini-tennis courts and a full-size netball court were also provided as part of the scheme. There has also been a further £1.1m of investment in, the school with the replacement of the boiler plant, fire alarm and large-scale window refurbishment as part of NCC's School Capital Improvement Programme in 2012-2013.

8.5. At the time of academisation there was around £2.2m of backlog maintenance repairs outstanding at the school. This isn't unusual as the Councils total backlog maintenance liability in our maintained school is currently in the region of £80m.

**Requested Grant**

8.6. The trust has approached the Council for financial support in addressing a number of the issues that were in existence at the time of academy conversion, and therefore seen as the Council's historical issues to address.

8.7. Through North-East Learning Trust (NELT), Ashington Academy have engaged with a design team to compose a feasibility study in order to develop the designs for the remodelling and refurbishment of elements of Ashington Academy. The internal and external works being proposed to be undertaken are the:

- relocation of kitchen and dining facilities to a redundant PE changing facility;
- refurbishment of existing gym to a multi-function space for dining, PE, and exam functions;
- refurbishment of existing main kitchen area to 6th form Dining Café with inbuilt training facility for students;
- options for provision of 2 no Food Technology rooms either within DT 'area' or refurbished in existing location;
- improvements to the Main Assembly hall inc. ceiling renovation, lighting, specialist sound and lighting package for music, drama and performances;
- targeted replacement of heating & lighting in 'The Training Shed' and a cladding replacement scheme due to recent health and safety concerns;
- creation of staff accommodation within the Porches;
- reinstatement of 1 x boys and 1 x girls WCs.
- re-model the enclosure to the grassed area adjacent to the new dining facility and open use to students;
- removal of the decking and canopy area in the quadrangle adjacent to the proposed 6th form café and redevelopment to external seating breakout area for eating and for study; and
- redevelopment of the external central yard spaces to remove multiple changes in level and improve accessibility. Potential addition of covered space(s) and planting to generate interest, an improved aesthetic and a softer environment together whilst creating a designed logic for movement around this large space to improve pedestrian flows.

8.8. The cost estimate relating to these elements are shown below.

DESCRIPTION	COST
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Relocation of Kitchen to Changing Rooms	£221,973
Refurbishment of the gym to multi-purpose space inc.. dining	£166,666
Refurbishment of Kitchen to 6th Form Dining	£306,200
Refurbishment of Food Tech in current location	£190,779
Assembly Hall improvements for Music & Drama	£116,731
Training Shed (Services Up-grade only)	£144,370
'The Porches' remodelling into Offices	£57,897
Bring 2 no. WC blocks back into use	£68,664
External resurfacing	£227,710
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,500,990</b>

- 8.9. The above forecast is £4,010 below the provision in the Council's approved capital programme for 2020-21.
- 8.10. A feasibility study was undertaken by NELT's appointed design team in mid-July 2020 to consider the architectural, mechanical, electrical and structural requirements of the current facilities; alongside a review of the curriculum, schedule of accommodation and educational implications of the Trust's design brief. This has resulted in the proposed scope of works and options outlined above.
- 8.11. Following the approval of the Council's grant allocation for the scheme, a formal agreement will be required to be put in place with NELT determining that any and all risk relating to programme, expenditure, asbestos, planning or any other issues arising prior to, during or after the build process is to be the responsibility of NELT to manage.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 8.12. The group accepted the report and recommends Cabinet to:
- Approve a grant award of £1,501,000 to Ashington Academy, from the school refurbishments provision within the 2020-21 capital programme, for the refurbishment and remodelling elements of the historical backlog maintenance.
  - Note that the funding for each of the identified elements in the scope of works is to be ring-fenced specifically against those items. Any underspends realised against any individual item will revert back to the Council, whilst any overspends will be the liability of the trust.
  - Note that, as an academy, the project will be delivered by the trust themselves, with the Council performing a monitoring role to ensure the delivery of the scheme within the constraints of the funding.

- Note the proposed spend profile and amendment to the capital programme to reflect the estimated expenditure for 2020-21 of £394,350 and £1,106,650 for 2021-22.



## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The capital programme is part of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020-2021. The plan supports the Corporate Plan.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The report outlines proposed amendments to the previously approved Capital programme. The financial implications of these proposals are outlined in the main body of the report.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no direct legal implications.
<b>Procurement</b>	In line with all other capital expenditure, the additional spend will be subject to the Council's recognised procurement procedures.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Property</b>	The properties affected by the proposals are identified in the main body of the report.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The risks associated with the proposals are regarded as acceptable but these risks will continue to be reviewed up to and during implementation of the proposals.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	There are no Crime and Disorder implications.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	There are no Customer Considerations.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	There are no specific Carbon Reduction implications within this report.
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	There are no Health and Wellbeing implications.
<b>Wards</b>	All wards

### **Background papers:**

Medium Term Financial Plan 2020-2021 and Budget 2020-2021 - County Council 19 February 2020.

### **Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

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