

Cabinet

12 September 2019

Capital Investment Fund 2019/20 Quarter 2 Report

Recommendations

That Cabinet approve:

- 1) the allocation of £0.150m from the Capital Investment Fund to fund the installation of In Cab Navigation/Autosalting technology in WCC gritting vehicles and add the scheme to the Capital Programme.
- 2) the use of £0.025m of unallocated resources in the Education Services capital programme to be used for a safeguarding walkway at Westgate Children & Family Centre/Westgate Primary School and add the scheme to the Capital Programme.

1. Purpose of this report and context

1.1. As part of the 2017/18 budget, Council approved the creation of the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) to provide an approach to funding capital schemes in support of the delivery of OOP 2020. Members approved a four-stage approval process for projects seeking funding from the CIF that would be run on a quarterly basis:

- Stage 1: A service specific internal approval process, the conclusion of which is a bid to an Evaluation Panel submitted by the relevant Assistant Director.
- Stage 2: The CIF Evaluation Panel provides a technical evaluation and commentary on the proposal that results in a recommendation to Corporate Board.
- Stage 3: Corporate Board review the evaluation and support/reject the proposal going forward to Members.
- Stage 4: For those schemes Corporate Board support, Cabinet/Council approve/reject the allocation. If approved the scheme is added to the authority's capital programme.

- 1.2. Following the additional resources allocated to the CIF in the budgets on February 6 2018 and February 7 2019, and approvals through the 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years, the CIF now has £42.368 million to be allocated in 2019/20.
- 1.3. A number of schemes have been identified as “priority” schemes with notional CIF allocations, subject to approval by Cabinet and/or Council as they formally bid into the fund. The schemes considered in this report include one of those priority schemes, the Winter Service Gritting scheme. Approximately £37.000 million of the remaining CIF balance is expected to be allocated to these “priority” schemes as and when their business cases are completed and assessed.
- 1.4. Agreeing to the recommendations of this report would reduce the total remaining available CIF funding to £42.218 million. In addition, Cabinet need to be aware that there is insufficient unallocated funding remaining in the CIF to cover all pending schemes coming forward. In order for these schemes to be considered, if Cabinet wish to meet the expected cost of the priority schemes when they come forward for approval and that if these schemes remain a priority then additional revenue funding for their capital financing costs will need to be built into the 2020-25 MTFS to deliver them in full.

2. Description of the Schemes

Winter Service – In Cab Navigation/Auto Salting Technology

- 2.1. The CIF panel considered a bid for Winter Service In-Cab Navigation/Auto Salting technology to be installed in gritting vehicles. This bid is for £0.150 million which had been earmarked as a priority scheme. The proposed scheme is to introduce auto-salting and in cab navigation systems into Warwickshire’s fleet of gritting vehicles, to be completed by mid-October 2019 so the system can begin to be utilised through the 2019/20 winter season.

Westgate Children and Family Centre – Safeguarding Walkway

- 2.2. The CIF panel considered a bid for £0.025 million to fund a safeguarding walkway at Westgate Primary School/Westgate Children and Family Centre. The children and family centre is situated in the grounds of Westgate Primary School and is currently accessed through a gate that is operated by an intercom system. At the moment the gate access to the Children and Family Centre and Westgate Pre-School opens directly onto the school playground.

Safeguarding concerns have been raised regarding the current system where members of the public, after being “buzzed in” by the Children and Family Centre staff have to walk across the playground to attend Children and Family Centre services and the on-site Pre-School. Families need to access the Children and Family Centre throughout the day and as such, often have to walk through the playground whilst children are on break and lunch. In addition to this, the existing gate is extremely heavy and does not close automatically without the person opening it manually shutting it. Also, there had been instances of people leaving the gate open and therefore risking the safety of children at the school and nursery.

3. Evaluation by the Panel

Winter Service – In Cab Navigation/Auto Salting Technology

3.1. The Panel scored the scheme at 80/100. The scores awarded in each section were:

- Fit to the organisation’s strategic objectives: 16/20
- Asset enhancement and strategic investment 40/50
- Financial viability: 16/20
- Political, social and environmental impact: 8/10

3.2. The panel noted that the bid demonstrated that the scheme could deliver savings of £26,000 per year, combined with thermal mapping work already undertaken the savings could potentially increase to between £88,000 and £177,000 per year. The panel also noted that the bid did not explain if there was a cost of training on the new equipment, if so then this should be covered by revenue budgets. Overall this was a strong bid and it is, therefore, recommended that Cabinet approve the scheme and add to the capital programme.

Westgate Children and Families Centre – Safeguarding Walkway

3.3. The Panel scored the scheme at 49.4/100. The scores awarded in each section were:

- Fit to the organisation’s strategic objectives: 4.6/10
- Asset enhancement and strategic investment: 8.8/20
- Vibrant Economy: 7.2/20
- Financial viability: 20.8/40
- Political, social and environmental impact: 8/10

3.4. In considering the bid the Panel questioned why this wasn't picked up as part of previous bid to the CIF for fencing around schools as they both cover the general theme of safeguarding children in school playgrounds. Also the bid needed more detail around if these concerns applied to other sites. The panel agreed that it was not appropriate for this scheme to be funded from CIF hence the low score when considered under the CIF scoring framework but acknowledged that the bid raises a genuine safeguarding issue that must be addressed. Therefore, it is recommended to Cabinet that this scheme is added to the capital programme and funded from unallocated Education capital grant.

4. Financial Implications

4.1. The total cost of the recommendations in the report is £0.175 million which will be funded from borrowing set aside as part of the Capital Investment Fund and Education Capital grant. The revenue allocation to cover the resulting capital financing costs has been included in the 2019/20 budget as approved by Council in February 2019.

5. Environmental Implications

5.1. Environmental implications of these recommendations are:

- The Winter Gritting scheme should reduce salt usage, by having more accurate spread rates the service can look at reducing the amount of salt loaded for each gritting run which will assist in fuel efficiency of vehicles.

6. Background Papers

None

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This report was circulated to the following members prior to publication.
Councillors O'Rourke, Butlin, Chattaway, Boad, Singh Birdi, Warwick and Chilvers.