

To: Cabinet

Date: 6 February 2025

Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Scrutiny feedback to Cabinet – Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2025/26

<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2025/26
<b>Purpose/Description of Report:</b>	The report provided information on the forecast outturn position for 2024/25 for General Fund Capital schemes for both General and Special Expenses and also sets out the proposed General Fund Capital Programme for 2024-29. The capital strategy covering all council funds is also included
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Cllr M Brown, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr S Cox, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources

## **1. Introduction and Overview**

The Scrutiny Committee met on 23 January 2025 to consider a report on the Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2025/26.

The report provided information on the forecast outturn position for 2024/25 for General Fund Capital schemes for both General and Special Expenses and set out the proposed General Fund Capital Programme for 2024-29. In addition, the report contained the updated version of the Capital Strategy for all council funds for 2025/26.

## **2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration**

- Concern was raised that with the state of the finances and the use of reserves, that the Council could be panicked into selling off assets. It was confirmed that the Council has a strategy and there is a plan to

maximise opportunities. There is an approved asset development programme and that decisions would be made to either maximise assets for the Council's benefit or dispose of assets.

- The comment was made that it would be preferable to see assets that aren't used (e.g. garages) sold off instead of assets that are used. In response, it was noted that garages are covered under the Asset Management Plan for the Housing Revenue Account and the plan outlines the improvement of some garages sites and the decision to dispose of sites that aren't used.
- Members noted that the Stockyard project relies on match funding from the Council and as it is increasingly rare for construction projects to stay on budget, concern was raised regarding the liability for the Council if it goes over budget. Members were reassured that Officers are keeping a tight rein on spending and that if costs overrun, then the project would be reengineered, in order to bring down costs. Reference was made to a recent positive internal audit report on this project.
- Concern was raised regarding the policy of patch and mend in the short term, which could lead to extra costs long term. It was clarified that the Council doesn't have funding to do everything it would like to or needs to and that Officers do the best they can where they can but recognise that this area is a risk.

**Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee**