



**EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CAPITAL STRATEGY STATEMENT  
February 2008**

## **1. Introduction**

The Council's Capital Strategy provides a broad framework for asset planning and for decisions on capital investment – expenditure on larger projects or schemes which generally leads to improved corporate or community assets.

The Council undertook a capital expenditure review in 2007 to inform service and budget planning for 2008 to 2012. This has informed the new Medium Term Financial Strategy and a Four Year Financial Plan for 2008-2012. The review also assessed the level of resources available to fund capital investment between 2008 and 2012.

The Financial Policy Panel has provided guidance on the level of investment that is consistent with the Council's medium term financial strategy. The programme will be reviewed annually so that a rolling four year investment programme is maintained and priorities reassessed with specific reference to the Objectives in the Corporate Plan, the Community Strategy and the Asset Management Plan.

The development of the Capital Strategy and the asset management plan assists the Council in major investment decisions. The Asset Management Plan will be updated in 2008/09 to reflect progress made on property and energy management.

## **2. Development of the Capital Strategy**

Member and officer capital groups have been established to oversee the capital programme and monitor capital schemes. The Capital Member Group is made up of Members nominated by the Financial Policy Panel, supported by the Head of Financial Services and attended by Directors as appropriate. The Officer Capital Management Group (OCMG) is chaired by the Head of Financial Services and comprises representatives of the main service, operational and policy areas.

Revenue and capital financial planning timetables are submitted to Financial Policy Panel annually. The Capital Strategy is presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee for approval each year.

## **3. Capital Programme Review 2007**

The Council carried out a full review of capital investment requirements and financing in 2007 to ascertain the extent of capital investment required for the four year period 2008-2012 and how these would meet the Council's statutory requirements or Key Priorities over that period.

The review considered the following areas:-

- availability of capital reserves and other sources of funding for capital schemes
- forecast of new expected capital receipts and the need to generate additional receipts
- capital investment options and the criteria to prioritise this investment
- impact of changes in legislation/government policy.
- the impact of revenue costs and whole life costings

**4. Capital Programme 2008-12**

Options for additional capital investment for the four year programme 2008-12 were developed from the Corporate Plan Priorities, the Asset Management Plan, Best Value Reviews of Venues and performance management reports. New capital bids significantly exceeded capital funds available under the financial strategy by over £5 million.

Based on the currently available capital resources and subject to additional new capital receipts being generated, Council approved the following updated programme for 2008-12 in February 2008.

	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	2011/12 £'000	Total £'000
Electronic Government and IT Development	300	300	200	200	1,000
Property Improvements	200	200	200	200	800
Car Parks	100	108	430	0	638
Town Hall Square	0	300	0	0	300
Waste Strategy and bin replacement*	735	35	35	35	840
Parks, Playgrounds, Open spaces and Countryside	203	130	30	30	393
Auriol Tennis Courts	0	0	0	100	100
Court Recreation Pavilion	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Bourne Hall- main hall	0	208	0	0	208
Playhouse cottages	0	1,000	0	0	1,000
Ewell Court car park	0	70	0	0	70
Contribution to Affordable Housing Scheme	657	500	500	0	1,657
Housing and Disabled Facility Grants	425	425	425	425	1,700
Contaminated Land Strategy*	100	100	100	100	400
St Martins churchyard	30	55	0	0	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>3,431</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>2,090</b>	<b>10,191</b>

\* subject to revenue funding being identified and/or additional government funding

In addition schemes may be added where:-

- there is a carry forward from 2007/08 with specific funding already allocated
- recommended for business case (self financing) review during 2008/09, or
- they can be funded by additional external funding sources e.g. Section 106 agreements or specific grants

Funding for the approved programme is set out below.

	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	2011/12 £'000	Total £'000
Capital Reserves and Receipts	1,633	2,564	1,103	773	6,073
Government Grants	317	317	317	317	1,268
Section 106 Contributions	657	550	500	0	1,707
Revenue Funded	0	0	0	0	0
Other Contribution	143	0	0	1,000	1,143
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>3,431</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>2,090</b>	<b>10,191</b>

## **5. Use of Capital Reserves**

The Council's financial position is reviewed annually following the closure of accounts and prior to service and financial planning for the following year. This includes a review of the projected capital receipts position and other sources of funding for capital schemes.

The Council's Financial Strategy 2008-12 sets out a minimum balance of capital reserves of £7 million, which is required as a contingency for unplanned capital commitments over the four year period and to generate investment income to support the Council's revenue budget. This minimum balance is subject to annual review and may be varied:-

- where capital receipts generated from sale of assets have an adverse impact on the revenue budget, e.g. loss of rental income, or
- for changes in revenue budget targets requiring differing levels of investment income.

## **6. Capital Resources**

Potential capital resources have been identified from

- capital reserves at the end of March 2008
- approved sales of property assets
- on-going receipts from the sale of former Council homes.

The Council needs to achieve additional receipts from sale of assets or other external funding of £5 million (2008 - 2012) if all capital investments identified are to proceed. The Financial Policy Panel has agreed that a property review should be carried out to identify future capital receipts. Potential receipts will be assessed against the impact of disposal on services and the potential for future income streams as defined in the Asset Management Plan.

The Council seeks to maximise partnership funding in the delivery of its key priorities and will commit capital reserves to: -

- finance prioritised capital investment where funding is not available from other sources
- attract partnership funding and/or to achieve partnership objectives
- finance investment that is 'self-funding', for example investment that improves performance and reduces running costs or investment in the maintenance of service assets

The Council will seek to maximise effective investment from all potential funding sources. External sources of financing include monies received in negotiations on the Hospital Cluster site, Section 106 agreements, government grants for Disabled Facilities and Contaminated Land surveys, partnership funding from other Local Authorities or Public and Voluntary organisations.

## **7. Criteria for Assessing Capital Programme Priorities**

The following criteria have been used for appraising future capital investment options and reviewing the on-going capital programme. As a minimum all investment proposals must meet one of the following baseline criteria: -

- investment that will achieve key corporate objectives or key service priorities
- investment required to meet Health and Safety or other new legislative requirements
- investment required for the business continuity of the Council
- investment that will improve service efficiency including cost savings or income generation.
- investment identified in the Council's Asset Management Plan

Investment options which meet the baseline criteria will be subject to a prioritisation rating on a scale of one to four as follows:

One: Investment essential to meet statutory obligation

Two: Investment important to achieve Key Priorities

Three: Investment important to secure service continuity and improvement

Four: Investment will assist but is not required to meet one of the baseline criteria

Prior to schemes being assessed for approval, a detailed project appraisal must be completed and recommended by the appropriate policy committee. A standard capital

appraisal form has been developed which requires details of the scheme (cost estimates, revenue impact, project management resources and expected timescales). It also requires an explanation of how the scheme fits within the baseline criteria. In recommending investment proposals policy committees must ensure they can fund any additional operational costs from within their revenue budget targets.

Where schemes are prioritised for inclusion in the capital programme prior to a detailed evaluation of revenue costs, commitments will not be made until estimates of operational costs have been evaluated and financing in the revenue budget identified. The Council will continue to develop a whole life costing approach to project appraisal.

Capital schemes funded wholly or in part from external sources e.g. Government Grants, Section 106 monies or other contributions are also subject to the same requirements in respect of meeting the baseline criteria and the completion of project appraisals recommended by service Committee.

## **8. Timetable for Approval of Capital Programme**

The timetable and process for approval of capital programme following annual review is as follows:-

- update on level of resources / reserves at end of previous year reported to Financial Policy Panel and Strategy and Resources Committee in June and July
- Members elected onto the Capital Member Group
- a forecast of resources available reported to Financial Policy Panel and Strategy and Resources Committee in September
- budget targets agreed by Strategy and Resources Committee in September
- Approach to capital review agreed by the Capital Member group in September
- Officers in consultation with Directors submit new or updated capital bids to the officer capital management group to validate in October
- Capital member group review all bids in November and prepare recommendations of funding position to Financial Policy Panel in early December
- prioritisation of all investment proposals within the available resources advised by Financial Policy Panel in December
- detailed scheme proposals and project appraisals, including a prioritisation rating for each scheme and identification of how any revenue funding requirements could be met, to be recommended by service committees in January
- rolling four year capital programme to be recommended by policy committees in January
- capital programme for the following year and rolling four year capital programme agreed by Council in February

Any approved capital scheme which has not been committed by the mid year point of the year in which funding is agreed is subject to review by the Capital Member Group / Financial Policy Panel.

Any approved capital scheme where the additional capital or revenue costs are identified prior to commencement of the scheme should be referred back to the relevant policy committee and, if additional funding is required, to Strategy and Resources Committee as soon as possible at any time during the year.

Investment proposals funded wholly from external sources may be submitted for approval at any time during the year. The investment requirements and funding available from section 106 and Hospital Cluster monies are reviewed annually in December by Financial Policy Panel.

## **9. Approach to PFI and Procurement**

The majority of capital schemes fall below a level of investment normally relevant to PFI. PFI options will be actively considered on any major investment decisions of significant financial value e.g. projects with a cost over £5 million.

The Council has developed its Procurement Strategy and strengthened procurement arrangements. As part of this strategy a number of principles and guidelines have been developed to assist all managers including capital scheme budget holders in the purchase of goods and services. The main areas covered include review of procurement options, risk/benefit analysis, risk management, potential for partnership, cost and quality options and assessing the need for specialist skills.

## **10. Managing and Monitoring the Capital Programme**

Detailed monitoring and performance review of the capital programme is the responsibility of the Officer Capital Management Group, overseen by the Capital Member Group. The officer group sets performance and delivery targets for the year, reviews monitoring information and recommends action where appropriate for reporting to Directors, Members, the Financial Policy Panel and policy committees.

Financial monitoring reports are submitted to Members on a quarterly basis. This includes expenditure monitoring and progress on capital receipts against income targets. Budget monitoring reports show the projected outturn and profiled spend for each scheme, highlighting significant variations and slippage and identifying recommended action. Summary reports are sent to all Members at the end of each quarter and recommended changes to the programme are submitted to Committees during the year. Financial Policy Panel will consider major variances from revenue or capital programmes.

Detailed information on the delivery of individual schemes, including assessment of financial and delivery risks and profile of works and expenditure during the year, is agreed with budget holders. This will form the basis against which schemes are monitored during the year. For those schemes considered as most significant, a detailed timetable and milestones will be agreed by the relevant committee at the beginning of the financial year.

For major schemes the Council will employ external consultants to assist in project management.

The Council conducts post implementation reviews on certain capital projects, specifically where the scheme has a high cost or value or there has been a significant variation in cost or time to implement.