

CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

Agenda Item 7 (b)

Contact Details:- Trevor Wilson
Designation:- Head of Finance
Ext. No:- 2801
E Mail Address:- Trevor.Wilson@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:- Accountancy Year-end files 2007/08
Financial Implications:- Addressed in report
Equalities Implications:- Addressed in report
Legal Implications:- none
Options: To accept or reject request additional funding for projects
Risks:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tenders have been received for two of the projects included in the approved Capital Programme for 2008/09. Both are in excess of the budget provision allocated:

1. Silver Street pavilion, Silver End – the lowest tender received is £515,170 against the budget provision in the programme of £320,000. The project is for the construction of a new pavilion providing changing rooms for four teams and match officials, toilets and a small kitchen area and the provision of car parking. The project is on the edge of a conservation area and the specification is to a high standard and includes solar water heating panels on the roof, rainwater harvesting and natural ventilation. Additional budget allocation of £195,170 requested.
2. Spring Lodge, Witham - car park and entrance roadway – the lowest tender received is £303,240 against the budget provision in the programme of £250,000. Entrance roadway to be tarmac, car parking to be a mixture of brick paving and grass-crete. Efficient lighting of area but to a level appropriate to help address nuisance issues. This is the last element of the overall project on the Spring Lodge site, which has involved the refurbishment of the community hall, relocation of the Jehovah's Witness building and the provision of new accommodation for St. John Ambulance and the scout troop. Additional budget allocation of £53,240 requested.

The outturn of the capital programme for 2007/08 is reported under a separate item on tonight's agenda. The outturn records an underspend on General Fund projects of £2.233million but with a recommendation for £2.066million carry forwards, leaving unused resources of £166,000. Of this sum, the Finance Director has already approved, allocations totalling £75,000 for the following schemes:

- Urgent repairs to Rickstones Pavilion - £40,000;
- Urgent repair works to a section of wall and railings at Witham Public Park, Maldon Road, Witham - £30,000; and
- Replacing the pond dipping platform at the John Ray Park, Braintree - £5,000.

This leaves a balance of unused capital resources of £91,000.

The total additional funding requested for the two projects is £248,410. If the unused capital resources are allocated to these projects then the balance of £157,410 could be met from a contribution from the revenue balance (Revenue Outturn for 2007/08 is reported under a separate item on tonight's agenda).

Additional Capital Resource

The Council received notification from GO-East, on 14th April 2008, of an allocation of £193,200 under the Local Authority Housing Capital Grant Allocations 2008/09. The allocation is for improving non-decent properties in the private sector occupied by vulnerable people (and those with families). The grant itself carries no conditions and can be used to support any legitimate capital allocation activities. However, in terms of monitoring, EERA propose to survey local authorities during the third quarter of 2008/09 to establish the scope of activity supported by the funding.

The capital programme 2008/09 currently has allocations of £286,000 for Disabled Facility Grants and £300,000 for Renovation Grants; both are expected to be required in full. The total spend on private sector grants in 2007/08 was £764,543.

It is recommended that the allocation be used for the purpose specified i.e. adding to the budgets already provided for grants to the private sector. Whilst this grant is available for 2008/09 only, there is an opportunity to bid for funds for future years and with this in mind officers are currently investigating ways of providing additional focus to assist vulnerable people. Possible additions/ enhancement include:

- Offering a Quick Access Disabled Facility Grant scheme linked to hospital discharge procedure; and
- Promotion of a scheme with landlords to bring empty unoccupied properties back into use for letting with an enhanced renovation grant of up to £12,000 from £9,000. Targeted to family size homes and on the condition that the homes be let for 5 years.

A separate report on possible proposals will be presented to a future Cabinet meeting.

DECISION

- 1. Members agree the requests for additional funding for the Silver Street Pavilion and the car parking and roadway improvements at Spring Lodge, Witham and RECOMMEND for approval by Full Council. Funding of the required budgets from the unused balance of capital resources (£91,000) and a revenue contribution (£157,410).**
- 2. Agree to the additional allocation of capital grant of £193,200, as notified by GO East, being added to the budget for Grants to Private Sector Housing and RECOMMEND for approval by Full Council.**