

ANNUAL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2026/27

1. STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

1.1 The Council's capital investment programme brings together many aspects of the Council's services and financial planning. This is driven by the 2025 refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan which sets out the Council's drivers in the development and prioritisation of the capital proposals as described below:

- Responding to climate change, including providing electric vehicle charging points, securing investments in renewable energy and support local community led and community owned renewable energy projects. (Responding to the climate emergency)
- Deliver a programme of activities through the Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds (Supporting the economy)
- Providing good quality affordable housing, with an emphasis on social rent and provision for young people, military veterans and families. (Delivering Housing)
- Promote community activity through CrowdFund Cotswold (Supporting Communities)
- Ensure the leisure and culture contracts deliver core provision and positive community outcomes (Supporting Communities)
- Digital transformation: accelerating the use of digital technology to improve council services, enhance accessibility and promote digital inclusion across communities (Preparing for the future)
- Develop a fleet replacement programme and adapt to changes in waste legislation. (Delivering good services)
- Improve and digitise engagement with the customers of the Waste and Environment Services (Delivering good services)
- Invest in and maintain our car parks (Delivering good services)

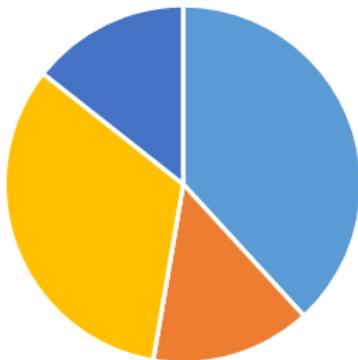
1.2 The Council has historically been able to manage funding its capital programme through the use of capital receipts. The Council expects to fund the majority of its capital programme going forward from the use of capital receipts and through revenue contributions to capital outlay (RCCO). This discussed in more detail within Section 3 of this report.

2. CAPITAL RESOURCES AND FINANCING

- 2.1** The capital programme is planned to be fully financed from a combination of existing resources, external grants and contributions, capital receipts, and contributions from revenue (RCCO), no borrowing is anticipated avoiding associated interest and minimum revenue provision charges. The Capital Strategy prioritises the use of external grants and funding where possible to support Council Plan priorities. Where included, capital receipts assumptions are based on a prudent level of expected capital receipts from asset sales, loan repayments and other sources.
- 2.2** Resources of £18.4m have been identified to fund the four-year capital programme from 2026/27 to 2029/30, with £2.8m of this being financed through capital receipts and £2.3m through revenue contributions. If any borrowing is required, the Council will ensure that any borrowing will be undertaken in accordance with the Prudential Code for local authority capital finance and within the framework and policies set out in this capital strategy.
- 2.3** Revised or additional capital budgets funded from corporate resources may be approved by Cabinet or Council, in accordance with the Council's Financial Rules. Based on the current capital programme and available resources, the Council does not anticipate the need for new external borrowing over the medium term. The capital programme is fully funded from grants, revenue contributions, capital receipts, and earmarked reserves. Borrowing will only be considered if circumstances change or for value for money reasons. Whilst the Council has no current plans to borrow, prudential borrowing remains an option should future capital investment be justified subject to a full business case and assessment of affordability, sustainability and prudence and Council approval as appropriate.
- 2.4** A breakdown of the resources utilised to fund the capital programme is shown in **Chart 1** and **Table 1** below:

Chart 1 – Resources to fund the Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2029/30

Funding



- Government Grants and contributions
- Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)
- Debt
- Capital Receipts
- Earmarked Revenue Reserves

Table 1 – Capital Financing

	2024/25 Actual (£m)	2025/26 Revised forecast (£m)	2026/27 Budget (£m)	2027/28 Budget (£m)	2028/29 Budget (£m)	2029/30 Budget (£m)
Specific Resources						
Government Grants and contributions	3.4	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8
Other specific Revenue resources	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SUBTOTAL Specific Resources	3.4	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8
Corporate Resources						
Debt	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital Receipts	3.4	0.8	3.8	1.0	0.4	0.9
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.5	0.0	0.0
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.0
SUBTOTAL Corporate Resources	3.7	0.9	7.7	2.3	0.4	0.9
TOTAL Resources	7.1	3.0	9.4	4.1	2.1	2.7

3. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

3.1 Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as land, property, or vehicles, which will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10,000 are not capitalised and are treated as operational expenditure and charged to the revenue budget. For details of the Council's policy on capitalisation, see the Council's accounting policy which are contained with the annual Statement of Accounts [statement-of-accounts-2024-2025](#).

3.2 Based on the above strategy to support the delivery of the Council Plan outcomes, the proposed Capital Programme totals £9.4m in 2026/27 and £18.4m over the four-year period to 2029/30 as summarised below in **Table 2**:

Table 2 – Estimates of Capital Expenditure

Spend by Council Priority Area	2024/25 Actual (£m)	2025/26 Forecast (£m)	2026/27 Budget (£m)	2027/28 Budget (£m)	2028/29 Budget (£m)	2029/30 Budget (£m)
Responding to Climate Emergency	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supporting Communities	1.3	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.6
Delivering Good Services	1.5	0.8	7.1	1.8	0.4	0.4
Delivering Housing	2.5	1.6	1.8	2.2	1.8	1.8
Supporting the Economy	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SUBTOTAL Priority Areas	6.8	3.0	9.4	4.1	2.1	2.7
Capital investments	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	7.1	3.0	9.4	4.1	2.1	2.7

- 3.3** New projects and priorities are identified through the Council's financial planning process and are added to the capital programme. Further detail on planned expenditure in each of the Council Priority areas is included within Annex D of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.4** The Council manages capital risks through its business case appraisal and approval arrangements. Capital programme expenditure and treasury management performance is regularly monitored and reported to Members at the Audit and Governance Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in accordance with the Constitution. Capital risks have also been considered by the Chief Finance Officer as part of the annual report on the adequacy of Council reserves.

4. CAPITAL FINANCING- EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- 4.1** Where capital expenditure is funded from external resources such as grants and contributions the financing cost is nil.
- 4.2** The Council will continue to support the community through the allocation of Disabled Facilities Grant which is funded through a grant of approximately £1.7m per year.

5. CAPITAL FINANCING- INTERNAL RESOURCES

- 5.1** **Financing from Capital Receipts:** Capital receipts from the disposal of assets represent a finite funding source and it is important that a planned and structured approach to disposals is taken to support the corporate priorities of the Council.
- 5.2** **Asset management:** An updated asset management strategy was adopted by Cabinet in May 2024, supported by detailed Asset Management Plans for all land and

property assets to ensure the Council is achieving the maximum benefit from its assets. Carter Jonas have been instructed to undertake this work. The strategy will help ensure that the Council's capital assets are maintained and developed and continue to contribute effectively to the delivery of the Council's services, support the local economy or provide income in line with expectations. Where there are opportunities to use assets more effectively to delivery Council Priorities, businesses cases are presented to the Cabinet or Council for approval.

- 5.3 Asset disposals:** When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. The Council is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts "flexibly" on service transformation projects up until and including 2029/30 (subject to guidance from Government). Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts.
- 5.4** All land and buildings which are surplus to existing use will be reviewed before any Council decision is made, to ensure the re-use or disposal of the asset provides best value in supporting the Council's objectives.

5.5 **Table 3** shows forecast of Capital Receipts over the medium-term.

Table 3: Capital Receipts Receivable

Capital Receipts	2024/25 Actual (£m)	2025/26 Forecast (£m)	2026/27 Budget (£m)	2027/28 Budget (£m)	2028/29 Budget (£m)	2029/30 Budget (£m)
Asset sales*	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ubico Loans repaid for Vehicle purchase	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.3	1.3
Other Loans repaid	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	1.1	1.5	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.4

* Asset sale receipts include receipts from “Right to Buy” asset disposals from Bromford Housing Association and the disposals outlined in paragraph 5.6.

5.6 The Council made a decision to dispose of the vacant Visitor Information Centre in Bourton on the Water and Old Station and Memorial Cottages in 2024/25, both sales are expected to complete in the 2024/25 financial year. At this stage, no other significant disposals are planned between 2025/26 and 2029/30 but in light of the Asset Management Strategy this will be an evolving position.

5.7 The Council’s Audit and Governance Committee receive information on the Council’s asset portfolio as part of its consideration of the financial statements.

Financing from Earmarked Reserves

5.8 The table below sets out the value of the current Capital Programme that is planned to be financed from earmarked reserves. This includes:

- **£1.3m** from the *Extended Producer Responsibility Grant* reserve to finance capital expenditure for the Waste and Recycling fleet replacement programme;
- **£0.65m** from the *Housing Delivery* earmarked reserve to support the Bromford Joint Venture partnership;
- **£0.4m** from the *Asset Management and Property* reserve to fund asset management expenditure; and
- **£0.1m** from the *Climate Change* reserve to finance the Fuel Bunkering project.

Table 4: Capital Programme Funded by earmarked reserves

Reserve Funding	2025/26 Forecast (£m)	2026/27 Forecast (£m)	2027/28 Budget (£m)	2028/29 Budget (£m)	2029/30 Budget (£m)
Service Improvements	0.0	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.0
Investment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	0.0	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.0

6. CAPITAL FINACING – DEBT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- 6.1** Local authorities are required by law to set an overall limit on their debt outstanding, including loans and other long-term liabilities. This 'prudential limit' may not be exceeded, so the Council's proposed limit allows for risks, uncertainties, and potential changes during the year which may need to be accommodated within this overall limit. The outstanding borrowing for the Council after use of internal resources (such as capital receipts or revenue reserves) is outlined in **Table 1**.
- 6.2** The Council's debt liabilities and its investments arising from day-to-day cash flows need careful management in order to manage the costs and risks. This is the subject of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Policies.
- 6.3** The Council has a low to moderate appetite for taking financial risk and this is reflected in this Capital Strategy. Treasury Management risks are managed through the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy

Borrowing Strategy

- 6.4** The Council has reviewed its capital programme and confirms that no further prudential borrowing is expected to be required over the medium-term financial period. All currently approved schemes are fully financed through grants, contributions, capital receipts and reserves. The Council remains compliant with the CIPFA Prudential Code and maintains the governance, controls and monitoring arrangements necessary to support borrowing should the need arise in future. Notwithstanding the current position, the Council retains the option to undertake borrowing where a robust business case demonstrates clear service or financial benefit and where such borrowing is affordable, sustainable and prudent.
- 6.5** The Council's main objectives when borrowing is to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility to adapt to changes in the future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council will therefore seek to strike a balance between lower-cost short-term loans and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher.
- 6.6** Local Authorities must not borrow more than or in advance of their needs purely to profit from the investment of extra sums borrowed. The Council currently has no plans to borrow in 2026/27 to invest in new capital schemes. Any funds borrowed will be in relation to specific schemes and based upon the cash required for the chosen schemes. There are no plans to borrow in advance of need.
- 6.7** The Council does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and therefore retains full access to the Public Works Loans Board.

6.8 The cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt financed capital expenditure and reduces when debt is repaid through revenue or other capital receipts. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the CFR, except in the short term. The CFR for each financial year is set out in Table 5 below and shows that the estimated borrowing complies with this.

6.9 **Table 5 – Capital Financing Requirement by General Fund services (Council Priorities) and Capital Investments**

Capital Financing Requirement	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual (£m)	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast (£m)
Investment in Council Priorities	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4
Capital Investments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL CFR	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4

Liability Benchmark

6.10 To compare the Council's estimated borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark is calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end. The liability benchmark is currently -£9m and is forecast to rise to -£0.07m over the next three years as the Council's earmarked reserves are forecast to reduce

6.11 **Table 6** below shows that the Authority expects to remain borrowed above its liability benchmark until 2026/27. This is because a deliberate decision was made to borrow additional sums through a Community Municipal Investment to give local people a chance to invest in a cleaner, greener, healthier future for the Cotswolds.

Affordable Borrowing Limit

6.12 The Council is also legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also known as 'authorised limit for external debt'). In line with statutory guidance, a lower 'operational boundary' is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 6 – Forecast Debt and Prudential Indicators

	Actual as at 31/03/2025 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2026 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2027 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2028 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2029 (£m)
Forecast outstanding borrowing / Debt	(0.26)	(0.16)	(0.05)	0.00	0.00
Capital Financing Requirement	0.36	0.46	0.43	0.40	0.36
Liability benchmark	(8.87)	(9.03)	(5.99)	(0.07)	(1.12)
Authorised limit	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Operational boundary	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

6.13 The Council's full MRP statement is included as **Appendix 1** and is also mirrored in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy.

Revenue Budget Implications

6.14 Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to revenue, the interest payable on loans and provision for repayment of loans (MRP) will be. Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue, which is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. This charge is known as financing costs. The proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream, i.e., the amount funded from Council Tax, Business Rates and General Government Grants is shown in **Table 7**.

Table 7 – Financing costs as a proportion of revenue (£m)

Financing costs	Actual as at 31/03/2025	Forecast to 31/03/2026	Forecast to 31/03/2027	Forecast to 31/03/2028	Forecast to 31/03/2029
Financing costs (£m)	0.012	0.009	0.035	0.033	0.032
Proportion of net revenue stream	0.07%	0.05%	0.21%	0.19%	0.19%

6.15 Further details on the revenue implications of capital expenditure are covered in section 5 of the 2026/27 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy report.

Sustainability

6.16 Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 40 years into the future. The Chief Finance Officer is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable, and sustainable because the net budget demand on the Council and the risks within the programme have been reviewed and are within the Council's risk appetite and tolerances.

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

7.1 Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Authority's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Authority is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

7.2 Due to decisions taken in the past, the Authority currently has £0.2m of borrowing at an average interest rate of 2.2% and £31.0m of treasury investments at an average rate of 4.16%.

7.3 Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

7.4 The Authority's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which investments to buy, and the Authority may request its money back at short notice.

Table 8 Treasury management investments in £millions

Treasury Management Investments	Actual as at 31/03/2025 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2026 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2027 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2028 (£m)	Forecast to 31/03/2029 (£m)
Near-term investments	11.5	11.5	3.8	0.1	1.1
Longer-term investments	12.5	12.7	12.7	10.3	10.3
TOTAL	24.0	24.2	16.5	10.4	11.4

7.5 Further details on treasury investments are included in Section 4 of the Treasury Management Strategy [Annex A]

7.6 **Risk management:** The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities. The treasury

management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks. The treasury management prudential indicators are included within **Table 4a** of the Treasury Management Strategy [Annex A]

7.7 Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Chief Finance Officer and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. Quarterly reports on treasury management activity are presented to the Audit and Governance Committee, Overview and Scrutiny and then Council. The Audit Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

8. INVESTMENTS FOR SERVICE PURPOSES

8.1 The Council makes investments to assist local public services, including making loans to local charities, housing associations, local residents and its employees to support local public services, stimulate local economic growth and support Council priorities of providing socially rented housing and promoting carbon neutral development and infrastructure. Total investments for service purposes are currently valued at £2.3m with the largest being a loan facility to a local housing association with a current balance of £1.9m.

8.2 Risk management: In light of the public service objective, the Authority is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments, however it still plans for such investments to break-even or generate a small profit after all costs. A limit of £3.6m is placed on total investments for service purposes to ensure that plausible losses could be absorbed in budgets or reserves without unmanageable detriment to local services.

8.3 Governance: Decisions on service investments are made by the relevant service manager in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and must meet the criteria and limits laid down in the Investment strategy. Most loans and shares are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that adequate due diligence is carried out before investment is made. At this time, independent advice may be sought from organisations such as Arlingclose as Treasury Advisors.

8.4 Further details on service investments are in Sections 3 and 4 of the Annual Non-Treasury Investment Strategy: [Annex B]

9. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

- 9.1** Commercial investments or activities are those the Council invests in purely for financial gain. With Government financial support for local public services declining, the Authority has previously invested in commercial property purely or mainly for financial gain. Total commercial property investments are currently valued at £4.205m, with the largest being £1.4m (Cirencester town centre property leased as retail units) at 31 March 2025 providing a net return after all costs of 6.07% (forecast 5.69% in 2025/26).
- 9.2** With financial return being the main objective, the Authority accepts higher risk on commercial investment than with treasury investments. The principal risk exposures include: vacancy periods (voids) between tenants, cost of material repairs to property, risk of fire or flood damage. These risks are managed by acquiring properties with long leases and with tenants with a strong covenant and insuring the property. In the longer term, the changing nature of the high street for retail occupants may require the Council to review its commercial property holdings. These risks are managed by the Council's Property Services Team. The Council also has a Corporate Risk Register which is reported quarterly to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee and includes any significant risks arising from commercial investments. In order that commercial investments remain proportionate to the size of the authority, and to ensure that plausible losses could be absorbed in budgets or reserves without unmanageable detriment to local services, these are subject to an overall maximum investment limit of £10m.
- 9.3** Decisions of commercial investments are made by the Council in line with the criteria and limits approved by Council in the Investment Strategy. Property and most other commercial investments are also capital expenditure, and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the Capital Programme. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that adequate due diligence is carried out before an investment is made.
- 9.4** Further details on commercial investments and limits on their use are included in Section 5 of the Non-Treasury Investment Strategy.

Table 9: Prudential indicator: Net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream

PI: Net Revenue Stream	2024/25 Actual (£m)	2025/26 Forecast (£m)	2026/27 Forecast (£m)	2027/28 Forecast (£m)	2028/29 Forecast (£m)
Total net income from service and commercial investments (£m)	0.27	0.37	0.52	0.52	0.53
Proportion of net revenue stream	1.59%	2.26%	3.04%	3.04%	3.08%

10. OTHER LIABILITIES

10.1 In addition to debt of £0.2m detailed above, the Authority is committed to making future payments to cover its pension deficit (valued at £13m). It has also set aside £1m to cover risks of Business Rate valuation appeals.

11. GOVERNANCE

11.1 The CIPFA Prudential Code expects local authorities to consider and approve a number of 'prudential indicators'. These relate to the capital programme generally as well as borrowing and are set out in the sections above.

11.2 The Council will use borrowing in accordance with the CIPFA 'Prudential' system as a tool for delivering policy and managing its finances. Local authorities may borrow to finance capital expenditure, and the affordability of debt is the key constraint. Prudential borrowing is an important way to fund the Council's own priorities where external funding cannot be obtained. The Council sets and monitors prudential indicators to manage its debt exposures.

11.3 To ensure that borrowing remains at an affordable and sustainable level, the Council will seek over the medium term to manage its new prudential borrowing for normal service delivery at a level which is close to the amount which it sets aside from the revenue account each year for debt repayment (i.e., MRP).

11.4 The Council is mindful of Government and CIPFA advice that commercial investments including property must be proportionate to the resources of the authority. The Council is not planning any investments primarily for yield. All service and commercial investments will have regard to the guidance and lending terms issued by HM Treasury.

11.5 The arrangements for realising investments and managing liquidity risk will depend on the purpose and nature of the investment in each case. Where investments have

been made to support service purposes and have been funded from cash resources, there is not a funding pressure to have an investment exit route in place. Where investments are funded by borrowing, the Council's MRP Policy sets out the arrangements to repay debt without resorting to a sale of the investments.

11.6 Financial and property investment decision making will follow the Council's Business Case governance requirements, with particular attention to expert due diligence, robust financial appraisal and taking external advice in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. New investments must reflect the Council's core priorities and must be agreed by the Chief Finance Officer before presentation of any Council decision report.

11.7 Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by the Chief Finance Officer. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by finance and reported quarterly to Cabinet.

11.8 Advisers will be used where necessary to ensure that the Council is provided with sufficient skills and understanding to support robust decision making. In particular, the Council's treasury management adviser (Arlingclose) can provide support in relation to financial investments.

11.9 Officer and Member training will be available through the Council's treasury advisers. Information relevant to investment decisions will form part of Council decision reports to members. Due diligence requirements for investments will ensure that officers are aware of the core principles of the prudential framework and local authority regulatory requirements. These arrangements will support the capacity, skills and culture of the Council in making and managing investments for service and commercial purposes.

12. MANAGEMENT OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

12.1 In the above context of needs and resources, the Council has developed policies and high-level processes to ensure the effective management of capital. This will be overseen by the Council through strong governance and assurance processes for capital planning, capital appraisal and approval, project management, and capital monitoring and review.

12.2 Service managers contribute annually, in the autumn, to the Council's revenue budget and capital programme. The Finance Team collates proposed changes to the Capital Programme for consideration by the Cabinet as part of the Council's budget setting process. The financing cost (which can be nil for projects funded from Council resources or external grants) is included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and

detailed budgets for the forthcoming financial year. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers both the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the detailed budget. The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are reported to Cabinet when the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and detailed budget proposals are considered. Cabinet recommends the final Capital Programme and revenue budgets to Council in February each year.

12.3 The Council will need to consider the best approach for the consideration of capital business cases for projects which support the priorities of the Council prior to recommendation for approval of expenditure by Cabinet or Council. For full details of the Council's proposed capital programme see the revenue and budget papers considered by Cabinet and Council in February 2026 [Annex xx].

12.4 All use of capital resources, including capital receipts, will be prioritised across the Council as a whole in relation to the Council's key priorities.

12.5 The Council's MTFS sets out the financial challenges and risks which the Council is currently managing. The Council's risk appetite is moving from low to moderate and Members are prepared to consider investments with a moderate level of risk for which there is an appropriate level of financial return. A combination of the Chief Finance Officer, the Council's Legal Team and Strategic Finance team, Managers and Directors will support Council Member governance structures in ensuring that where risks are taken, they are fully understood and proactively managed.

12.6 The staff responsible for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions are professionally qualified and experienced. Use is also made of external advisors and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisors and other specialist advisors to support on specific transactions as required. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to the relevant skills and knowledge when required.

12.7 In-year revised or additional capital budgets may be approved by Cabinet or Council. The Financial Rules set out the decision-making process for approving additional in-year capital budgets. The Council will decide upon changes to the prudential borrowing limits.