

Report of_[x1]: Executive Director, City Regeneration
To_[x2]: City Executive Board
Date_[x3]: 19th May 2008
Item No_[EM4]:
Title of Report _[x5]: Approval of 2008/2009 Building Improvements capital budgets


Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report_[x6]: To seek City Executive Board capital project approval to spend allocations  in the 2008/09 capital programme for building improvement projects.



Key decision_[x7]: No

Risk_[BL8]: Failure to carry out the works will result in further deterioration to the buildings concerned and/or will expose the Council to potential risk for failing to address certain health and safety issues.



Board Responsibility Councillor Price ~ Asset Management
Councillor Turner ~ Finance and Budget



Scrutiny Responsibility_[x9]: Scrutiny Committee A

Ward(s) affected_[x10]: All

Report Approved by: Councillor Price ~ Board Member, Asset Management
Councillor Turner ~ Board Member, Finance and Budget
Councillor Cook ~ Board Member, City Development
Mel Barratt ~ Executive Director ~ City Regeneration
John Hill ~ Business Manager, Built Environment
Sarah Fogden ~ Finance
John Wade ~ Parks Manager



Rachel Tregidga^[EM11] ~ Asset Manager
David Clark ~ Town Hall Manager
Paul Spencer ~ Climate Change Officer
Lindsay Cane ~ Legal

Policy Framework^[x12]: **City Council Asset Management Plan, Improve Oxford's environment, economy and quality of life.**

Recommendation(s)^[x13]: **Executive Board is recommended to grant capital project approval for the spending of the 2008 / 09 capital budget for building improvement works and to authorise officers to implement the schemes as outlined in the report when sufficient financial receipts are available.**



Background^[x14]



There is a considerable maintenance backlog on the Council's non-housing property portfolio, which has been gradually increasing in recent years and is now estimated to be in excess of £10 million. In addition, some critical Health and Safety improvement works have been identified in recent months

Current Position and Proposed Works

2. In order to begin to address the most critical maintenance works, the capital programme for 2008 / 09 includes a sum of £200,000 for building improvements. This was reduced at the draft budget stage last year from £700,000
3. Proposals to spend this budget allocation are set out below. In arriving at this list of work the criteria used have been to deal with the most urgent Health and Safety works, works to keep buildings operational, and works to prevent serious deterioration to the fabric of properties. The projects are listed in priority order.
 - a) New heating for Headington Community Centre ~ £30,000.

The heating system at Headington Community Centre is a very basic, inefficient warm air system. Earlier this year the boiler failed and is beyond repair. Since the boiler failure, heating has been provided by the use of electric fires as a temporary solution only. It is proposed to install a new energy efficient gas fired radiator heating and hot water system throughout the building. The new system will use modern condensing boilers with time controls and area zoning so that the system can be operated to suit the use of the building in whole or part.

Failure to carry out this work will mean that the Centre has to continue using electric fires for heating which will be expensive, environmentally inefficient and will not meet Centre users expectations.

Discussions have been held with officers in the Energy Management section of Environmental Development but this project will, unfortunately, not be eligible for Climate Change funding.

b) Parks Properties (Health and Safety Works) ~ £40,000

Surveys have been carried out in recent months of the Parks Properties (pavilions and depots) to identify the works required for the buildings to meet the recent Fire Safety Regulations, and to upgrade electrical installations within the buildings. The surveys have identified a range of improvements to doors, building fabric, emergency lighting, electrical installations etc which are required in order for the buildings to comply with the relevant standards. More straightforward works of signing and management arrangements have already been carried out.

Failure to carry out this work will mean that the parks properties will fail to comply with the Fire Safety and Electrical Regulations, which are required to meet our obligations under Health and Safety legislation. This work is necessary for the Council to comply with its Health and safety obligations.

c) Community Centres (Water By-laws improvements and Legionella prevention works) ~ £30,000

Surveys have been carried out around all of the Council's Community Centre buildings. This work has identified improvements to the buildings water installations that will improve the systems to meet the water by-laws and also assist in preventing the development of Legionella. These works involve the up-grading of water tanks and pipework and the installation of new equipment to treat against the risk of Legionella.

Failure to carry out this work could result in the Council being served an improvement notice by Thames Water. Without the equipment to treat against Legionella the systems will continue to be at risk. Both of these items are necessary for the Council to comply with Health and Safety legislation.

d) Parks and Cemeteries (Stone Wall repairs) ~ £10,000

There are a number of stone walls around the parks and cemeteries that have deteriorated significantly. In one instance the wall has partially collapsed and the remainder has had to be taken down to make it safe. This wall now needs to be re-built. These walls are usually on the boundary of the properties and should others fail this could have consequences for public safety. The Council seeks to keep its parks and cemeteries in good repair.

e) Littlemore Community Centre (Accessible Toilet) ~ £20,000

Within the existing capital programme a budget already exists for the creation of a new accessible toilet at Littlemore Community Centre. However, further consideration has now been given to this project and it is apparent that additional finances will be required to achieve the required outcome. It is proposed that an additional £20,000 be allocated to allow the scheme to proceed.

Failure to carry out this work will mean that the Community Centre will not be compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

f) Town Hall (Roof and Guttering Repairs) ~ £20,000

Areas of roofing and guttering around the Town Hall, particularly in the inner courtyards, are now deteriorating and require repair. This work will require the erection of scaffolding in the courtyards to allow safe working access to the areas. There is a particular need to overhaul, repair and decorate the guttering in these areas in order to maintain its safety and integrity.

Failure to do this work will eventually lead to increased problems with leaks that will cause deterioration to the building fabric, and more extensive and expensive longer terms repairs to the building.

g) Investment Properties (External repair and Decoration) ~ £50,000

The Council retains the responsibility for the repair and decoration of many of its investment properties, particularly in the city centre area. Due to lack of available finance this work has not been carried out for a number of years.

Failure to carry out this work will eventually lead to deterioration of the building fabric and more extensive and expensive longer terms repairs to the building.

Financial Implications

4. The financing for these schemes was a new bid at Council in February 2008. The new spend can only proceed when the Section 151 Officer is assured that savings have been delivered, as agreed by Executive Board on 21st January 2008. The level of underspend in 2007/008 means that new schemes are now being allowed to proceed.
5. It is proposed that North East Area Committee (for the heating works at Headington Community Centre) and South East Area Committees (for the proposed DDA improvements at Littlemore Community Centre) be approached to seek part funding fro these works from their funding allocation. If this is successful then any capital funding released will be re-directed to carry out further stone walling and Town Hall repairs identified above.

Legal Implications

6. As indicated in the details of the schemes above, failure to carry out the works may result in the Council not fulfilling its obligations with regard to Health and Safety or the Disability Discrimination Act.

Staffing Implications

7. There are no particular staffing implications. The works will be designed and supervised by the in-house staff from Building Design and Construction and Oxford City Homes will be used to carry out the work wherever possible.

Conclusions

8. The above list of projects are amongst the most urgent from the overall maintenance backlog requirements and are necessary to keep the buildings and properties operational and safe.

Recommendations

9. Executive Board is recommended to grant capital project approval for the spending of the 2008 / 09 capital budget for building improvement works and to authorise officers to implement the schemes as outlined in the report when sufficient financial receipts have been obtained.

Name and contact details of author^[x15]:

John Bellenger,
Section Manager; Building Design and Construction
St Aldates Chambers,
Oxford OX1 1DS
Telephone 01865 252775
Email; jbellenger@oxford .gov.uk

Background papers^[x16]: None



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