

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	12
Report No	HC/31/23

Date: 14 September 2023

Report Title: Capital Programme Review – General Fund

Report By: Head of Corporate Finance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council in March 2023 agreed a single year capital budget for 2023/24 in recognition of the ongoing capital review and need to address the affordability of the prior capital programme. At that time the Council's capital programme totalled £475m over the coming 5 years, contrasted with a planned affordability level of £300m (being £60m per annum).
- 1.2 A number of Member briefing sessions have provided Members context to the capital review process, and the affordability parameters which have under-pinned the review. The report provides Members with relevant information to inform the review.
- 1.3 The review process has indicated that due to rising capital costs and inflation, the costs of delivering the then capital programme had increased from £475m at March 2023 to £566m at July 2023. This has widened the gap between the current programme and an affordable level.
- 1.4 This report provides for Members the output of the capital programme review process, and a new recommended capital programme covering the 5 year period 2024/25 to 2028/29. Any projects which fall beyond the 5 year duration will be reflected in 'future years' and a future capital review would need determine priorities, phasing and affordability for 2029/30 and beyond.
- 1.5 The proposed programme will see £343m of General Fund capital investment over the 5 year period, with the principles under-pinning the review process set out in section 6 of this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Note the capital review process as described in this report;
 - ii. Note the extent to which the cost of financing the Capital Programme impacts on the Council's revenue budget, the affordability parameters set out within this report, and the planning assumption for loan charge implications to be managed within an estimated annual increase of £1.5m p.a. (Paragraph 5.7);
 - iii. Agree the revised capital programme as set out on **appendices A and B** including the updated project costs reflected;

- iv. Note the further projects and capital budgets as set out on **appendix C** which are not incorporated within the capital programme at this time, and will require future assessment and consideration in relation to affordability and priority;
- v. Note that should material circumstances alter, for example a funding decision in relation to LEIP Phase 3 projects, then the Council would have the opportunity at that point to consider again its capital programme, and whether scope to revisit priorities at that time;
- vi. Agree to bring a further Capital Programme report to Council in October 2023.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – the capital programme recommendations have been developed on the basis of the financial outlook and affordability set out within this paper, and on the basis that the current level of capital programme is not affordable, and is placing a growing pressure on the revenue budget through loan charge costs in the short to medium term, as well as the longer-term implications of a high level of debt.

The proposed capital programme, at £343m over the 5 years, while somewhat higher than the affordability planning assumption of £300m, nonetheless represents a level of capital which can more readily be funded in the context of the challenging financial outlook for the coming years. The annual loan charge impact for future revenue budgets will be factored into the process for future revenue budget setting. The proposed capital programme is within the Prudential Indicators and Limits agreed by the Council in its Treasury Management Strategy Statement in March of this year. Future indicators will be updated to reflect the recommendations arising from this report.

- 3.2 Legal – there are no specific implications to highlight in this report.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – the capital programme provides for investment across a broad range of localities, facilities and service areas.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – the Council’s capital programme will support the Council to deliver policy expectations.
- 3.5 Risk – there are a range of relevant risks pertaining to the capital programme. In terms of capital investment projects and prioritisation, the level of need is expected to exceed available capital investment, and as such there is an ongoing process of prioritisation and ensuring the available capital is targeted at the most pressing project priorities. That also needs to be a dynamic process, recognising that needs may change and new or different requirements may have to be responded to. Through the work of Council Officers, and reporting to relevant Committees, existing processes already provide mechanisms for management of the capital programme and regular reporting on needs, priorities and programmes.

In relation to costs and financing, inflation rates remain high and there is ongoing pressure in relation to rising contract and material costs. This has been mitigated through updated project costings within the programme, however with capital budgets being finite, all Services will need to manage cost within the budgets agreed by Council. Any material risk to individual project budgets, for examples through the tendering process, will be reported to Members under existing reporting arrangements. In relation to capital financing, and as noted within this report, interest rates remain high and represent a significant pressure and risk to the capital programme. The revised level of capital programme mitigates this risk through ensuring the level of

capital reduces from current levels and the expected level of borrowing is within affordable parameters.

- 3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – the capital programme provides for capital investment which will support the Council in managing health and safety and related risks across its asset estate. These risks will need to be prioritised and managed within available resource.
- 3.7 Gaelic – the capital programme will support investment in activity related to Gaelic language and culture provision.

4. Current Capital Programme

- 4.1 The last substantive review of capital was undertaken in December 2021 with at that time a 15 year capital programme agreed based upon 5 years firm plus 5 years indicative plus 5 years outline. The average annual net capital budget in that programme was £63m p.a., however, much of that programme was very heavily front loaded, i.e. higher spend in the earlier firm years of the programme. Some changes to that programme have been agreed by Council since December 2021.
- 4.2 In March 2023, report HC/01/23 to Council agreed a single year 2023/24 capital budget in recognition of the need to review the capital programme and that *“it is evident that the approved capital programme is no longer affordable.”* That report stated that *“On a long term basis a sustainable annual level of capital investment is estimated to be in the order of £55 to £60m.”*
- 4.3 Officers have progressed the capital review in the subsequent months, leading to the recommendations as set out within this report.

5. Capital Affordability

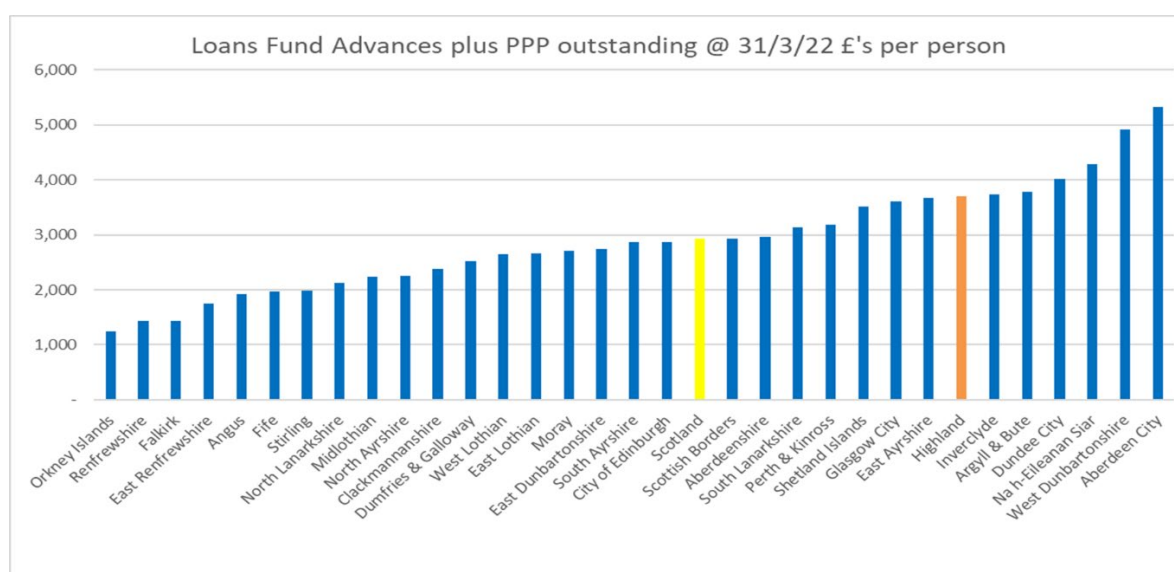
- 5.1 The capital programme is funded through a number of different ways:
 - Scottish Government General Capital Grant;
 - Council Borrowing, the financing costs of which are repaid over the longer-term and charged to revenue through loan charges;
 - Project specific income which can include specific Scottish Government grants, grants and contributions from other parties, Developer Contributions, etc.
- 5.2 The project costs reflected within the capital programme are net of project specific income, and as a result for the purposes of this report, and affordability considerations, it is the combination of Scottish Government General Capital Grant and Council borrowing that are the focus.
- 5.3 The baseline level of Scottish Government capital grant has been in the region of £22m per annum. In any given year this could vary as a result of adjustments or specific and targeted funding additions. For example, in 2023/24 over and above the £22m baseline grant, there is an addition of £5.5m capital grant which is intended to support the Council to meet pay award costs. As a result, that element can be ignored as far as core and sustainable funding expectations for the capital programme. Given the financial challenges across the public sector and facing the Scottish Government budget, it seems reasonable to conclude that the baseline £22m grant is a realistic planning assumption going forward. There is the risk that Scottish Government funding for capital could reduce into future years, conversely there is always the potential it

could increase, but recent precedents suggest that if this was to happen it would most likely be for additional or targeted resource.

5.4 Borrowing has in recent years been the most significant aspect of capital programme funding, and as capital programmes have increased over successive years, it has been borrowing which has also increased to fund that higher level of investment. While the Council has the discretion to determine its level of capital programme and borrowing required, it must be done so within the Cipfa Prudential Code which the Council has adopted, and the Council’s Annual Treasury Management and Strategy Statement which is the route through which the principles of the Code are adopted and implemented.

5.5 The graph and table below give some context and historic analysis of the Council’s capital borrowing and funding position, which is very relevant to decisions on affordability going forward. ‘Loans Fund Advances’ represent the cumulative cost of capital investment expenditure, less the costs written down and charged to revenue via loan charges principal repayments in past years. This accumulated cost is then charged against revenue into future years (up to 60 depending on asset type) to charge the cost to revenue on a term representative of the useful life of the asset. For the graph below, sourced from Scottish Government published statistics, the cost of PPP ‘debt’ is included to give an overall position per Local Authority.

Graph 1 highlights that in relative terms the Council’s capital ‘debt’ per member of the population is at the upper end compared to other Local Authorities. This position is reflective of past capital investment decisions, over decades.



The annual loan charges costs met from the revenue budget are a combination of (a) the main element being loan charges on historic ‘debt’ plus (b) loan charges on new/future capital investment and borrowing. Affordability is therefore driven by both factors, but the legacy of a high level of historic ‘debt’ to be repaid is a significant factor.

Table 1 below shows a historic comparison of the level of General Fund Loans Fund capital advances, showing the change over time in the level of capital spend, its impact on borrowing, and the resulting growth in loans charge principal repayments which charge the costs of capital to the revenue budget. 2023/24 is based on current budget and quarter 1 forecasts.

Table 1

	General Fund opening debt	Principal instalment	Net Capital expenditure	General Fund Outstanding debt
2009/10	453,908,424	-21,986,367	36,386,814	468,308,872
2010/11	468,308,872	-24,665,444	47,314,828	490,958,257
2011/12	490,958,257	-25,830,160	42,277,322	507,405,419
2012/13	507,405,419	-26,501,824	32,840,685	513,744,280
2013/14	513,744,280	-27,132,652	50,380,487	536,992,114
2014/15	536,992,114	-28,239,807	48,885,980	557,638,288
2015/16	557,638,288	-28,182,353	80,769,834	610,225,769
2016/17	610,225,769	-28,620,203	71,396,633	653,002,199
2017/18	653,002,199	-28,228,538	48,173,473	672,947,134
2018/19	672,947,134	-29,496,860	52,445,024	695,895,298
2019/20	695,895,298	-30,310,605	56,437,356	722,022,050
2020/21	722,022,050	-29,902,521	18,814,568	710,934,097
2021/22	710,934,097	-33,337,681	65,155,062	742,751,477
2022/23	742,751,477	-5,669,509	67,070,684	804,152,652
2023/24	804,152,652	-32,607,246	97,460,000	869,005,406
	Average	-26,714,118	54,387,250	

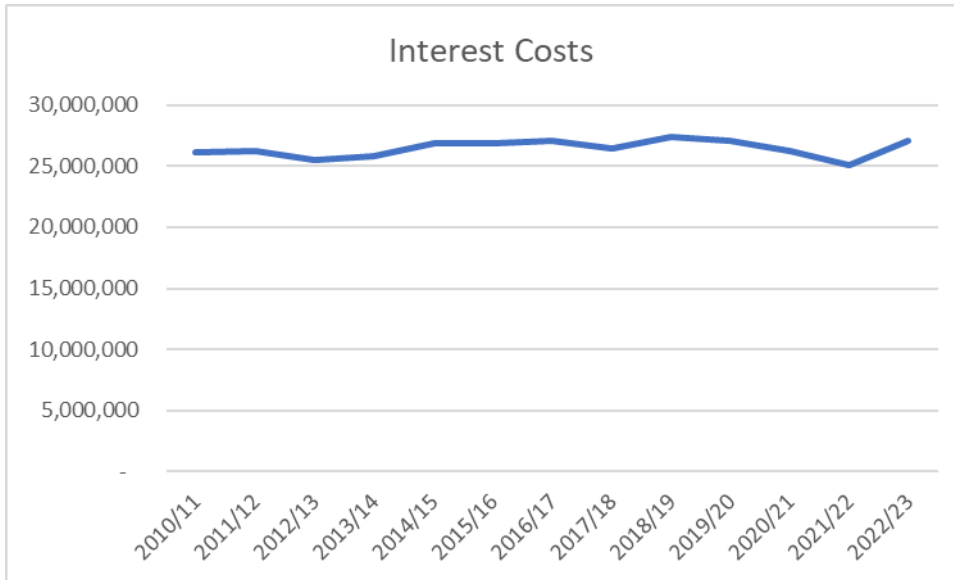
Of particular note is that over the years shown, the level of loans fund advances outstanding has increased from circa £450m in 2009 to £869m forecast by end of 2023/24. That is driven by capital expenditure which on average has been £54.3m net per annum, contrasted with annual principal repayments through loan charges of on average £26.7m. Both the level of debt and the annual principal repayments have grown over that period, based on the level of capital expenditure.

The £60m affordability assumption used within this report for the capital review, is derived from an assumed £22m p.a. of baseline Scottish Government capital grant, plus a nominal £35m p.a. of annual loans charge principal repayments or new capital borrowing. I.e. combined £57m or on a rounded basis £60m p.a.

This, as shown in the table below, is based upon the rationale that a circa £60m per annum capital programme, funded by new capital borrowing of £35m per annum, all other things being equal would not increase the overall level of General Fund capital advances and debt to be repaid. I.e. so long as the level of new borrowing is no greater than the annual principal repayments, the level of debt would be static. Which in turn would mitigate against pressure on loan charge budgets going forward. The table below gives an illustration over 5 years.

Year	Opening Debt	Est. Loan Charge Principal Repayment	New net capital expenditure met from borrowing	Closing Debt
2024/25	£869,005,406	-£35,000,000	£35,000,000	£869,005,406
2025/26	£869,005,406	-£35,000,000	£35,000,000	£869,005,406
2026/27	£869,005,406	-£35,000,000	£35,000,000	£869,005,406
2027/28	£869,005,406	-£35,000,000	£35,000,000	£869,005,406
2028/29	£869,005,406	-£35,000,000	£35,000,000	£869,005,406

5.5 Given interest rates have been at a low level, and stable, over the past 10 or more years, the increase in loan charges over that time has been almost exclusively driven by the increase in principal repayments shown in table 1 above. Even with the increase in debt over that period, the annual level of interest cost has remained fairly stable, as shown in the graph below. That situation will clearly alter in current and forward years due to the increase in interest rates since March 2022.



5.6 The table below sets out the increases in Bank of England base interest rates over the past year. There are expectations of a likely further increase in Bank of England base rate to 5.5%, and that rate then likely to persist for 12-18 months before an easing back over subsequent years to the Bank of England target level. Even with a more affordable level of capital programme, there remains the risk that interest rates put pressure onto loan charge budgets i.e. an annual increase in the loan charge budget will still be required to accommodate interest rate increases.

- 03 March 2022 to 0.50%
- 17 March 2022 to 0.75%
- 05 May 2022 to 1.00%
- 16 June 2022 to 1.25%
- 04 August 2022 to 1.75%
- 22 September 2022 to 2.25%
- 03 November 2022 to 3.00%
- 15 December 2022 to 3.50%
- 02 February 2023 to 4.00%
- 23 March 2023 to 4.25%
- 11 May 2023 to 4.50%
- 22 June 2023 to 5.00%
- 3 August 2023 5.25%

5.7 The report to Council in March 2023 had indicated a budget outlook for the forthcoming financial years which assumed a £1.5m p.a. annual increase in loan charge costs to accommodate rising interest rates and based upon an assumed significantly reduced

level of capital programme which has been the context for this capital review. In that scenario, this would still require the Council in each year to make provision for an annual increase in loan charges of that level, and with the resulting implications for the budget gap/savings targets as a result.

The intent with the capital programme review is to arrive at recommendations which fall within that affordability assumption. This is to avoid a scenario whereby if the capital programme had continued at existing levels, the Council would be faced with potential pressures in the revenue budget of loan charges of several million pounds in each year of the programme.

Loan charge modelling undertaken indicates that the proposed 5 year capital programme within this report can be accommodated within that overall outlook, subject to assumptions made. It is however important to note that the front-loading of the capital expenditure profile in the early years, and those early years also being where the highest level of interest rates are assumed, gives an impact with a significant front-loading of the loan charge cost increases.

By way of illustration, 2024/25 is forecast at present to have a budgetary impact requiring an additional £3m to be fed into loan charges in that year. The impact in subsequent years is forecast to be a declining level of loan charge increase, such that over the 5-year programme term the programme could fall within the overall loan charge planning assumption.

There are a considerable number of assumptions within this modelling, ranging from annual level of capital, expenditure cashflows, interest rate assumptions and asset type and expected useful life. This is also an iterative process with any change to individual project cost and phasing having a knock-on effect into loan charges.

The forecast for 2024/25 does illustrate the consequence of a capital programme above the £60m affordability assumption, and the impact of interest rates. Quite clearly if the Council does not arrive at a capital programme at a more affordable level, the pressure on loan charges would be significantly higher as a result. With the separate agenda report on budget update providing an updated outlook that 2024/25 and subsequent years are facing a much larger budget gap than forecast, before factoring in the implications of this revised capital programme.

The intent would be through re-profiling of capital expenditure over the 5 years, where feasible to do so, and further review of Treasury Management assumptions, actions are taken with the aim of 'smoothing' the loan charge cost over the 5 year period, to align as closely as possible to a £1.5m per annum revenue budget requirement.

In the short-term there are risks to the scope to achieve this change, with much dependent on the interest rate position and the timescale for interest rates falling. Conversely, in the latter years, on the presumption of a return to a more normalised interest rate level, expectations are that loan charge budget requirement would be more manageable.

Even with these risks and challenges, the revised level of capital programme results in a substantially lower loan charge budgetary impact than would have been the case if the Council did not revise its capital programme to an affordable level.

On an annual basis, and aligned with the revenue budget planning timetable, loan charge assumptions will be re-modelled to ensure that for each year's annual revenue budget there is an up to date assessment.

6. Capital Review Principles

6.1 The capital review and recommendations within this report are under-pinned by the following principles:

- **Affordability** – the capital programme must be affordable, prudent and sustainable to the Council, considering implications for the revenue budget in the short, medium and longer-term. Recognition that capital resources are not infinite and need to be set in the context of a currently challenging financial outlook for the Council.
- **Delivering strategic priorities** – clear alignment with the Council's programme '*Our Future Highland*', in the context of what is affordable.
- **Deliverable** – the level of capital programme, and the internal and external resources necessary to support the programme, must be deliverable. The goal should be to deliver on annual budgetary amounts agreed, and pro-actively manage slippage and risks to avoid underspend and project delay.
- **Flexible and responsive to opportunity** – in addition to delivering what the Council commits to in the programme, a flexible response is necessary to ensure the Council is able to adjust and adapt as other opportunities may arise, and where these can be accommodated within the Council's capital funding strategy. This approach would include, for example, (i) ensuring some resource is allocated to planning and preparation of 'shovel ready' projects to be well placed to maximise external funding opportunities (ii) using the capital programme and investment to support invest to save and income generating opportunities where business cases demonstrate financial return beyond the cost of capital financing.
- **Supporting Health and Safety and compliance** – the Council has an obligation to ensure its assets operate in a compliant environment and Health and Safety is managed for our communities, users of assets and council staff. The programme should provide a 'generic' budget line for core investment in each asset group, which takes account of Health and Safety and compliance requirements, risk and affordability.
- **Need, evidence and data driven** – the capital programme should be underpinned by a needs driven approach, using available evidence to support capital prioritisation and investment decisions. This would include, for example, using of School 'Core Facts' and school roll forecasts relating to capacity, condition and suitability needs; road condition survey data; and so on.
- **Supporting asset rationalisation** – the Council has a vast number of assets and has already taken a number of actions to review and rationalise its estate. The capital programme should support that asset rationalisation approach, investing only in those assets where a need to retain is clear, and supporting actions and decisions to disinvest where possible.
- **Environmental considerations and Net Zero** – to support the Council's Net Zero Strategy and the transition to assets which align with that strategy.

7. Capital Programme Recommendations

The proposed programme is summarised as follows. There is significant front-loading of expenditure on the current profile and analysis. Further Officer work is necessary to seek to smooth out the expenditure profile, balancing funding/affordability factors against service and user needs/and deliverability. The table below indicates a target level of re-profiling across the years of the programme which the Officer Capital Programme Board will take forward, with reports back through relevant Committees.

Summary for HC 14th September report									
Proposed General Fund Capital Programme Summary									
	Total	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	Avg p.a		
	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
Core Budget Provison (appendix A)	162,141	33,553	33,259	31,858	31,753	31,718	32,428		
Named Specific Projects (appendix B)	181,335	93,767	48,628	26,941	10,296	1,703	36,267		
Total programme before re-profiling	343,476	127,320	81,887	58,799	42,049	33,421	68,695		
Re-profiling Target	-	- 35,000	- 12,000	7,000	18,000	22,000	-		
Total Proposed Programme	343,476	92,320	69,887	65,799	60,049	55,421	68,695		

7.1 Core Budget Provision £162m over 5 years

Appendix A sets out the proposed capital programme making provision for a core capital budget for each of the main asset types and capital investment needs. These budgets allow Services and the relevant Committees to prioritise investment across their assets within these budget lines. For many of the asset types, this budget represents not only the core element of capital investment, but in some instances the sole capital budget allocated for that asset group.

These core budgets include investment in:

- Roads, Bridges, Street Lighting
- Schools Estate Improvement
- Property Estate Investment
- Health and Social Care Facilities
- Fleet, Plant, Equipment and ICT
- Other infrastructure incl Flood Prevention, Piers and Harbours
- Waste Management and Recycling
- Bereavement Services
- Community and Leisure Services

These core capital budgets, sometimes referred to as generic budgets, provide for essential investment to maintain service delivery and invest in health and safety, risk and compliance needs within the available budget.

Despite the scale of the affordability challenge being faced over the next few years, the proposed programme in the main sustains these budget lines at current annual capital programme levels.

In the context of increasing demands across many of the Council's asset groups, and the impact of inflation, there is the risk that inevitably a prioritisation of this resource to highest need will still be necessary.

7.2 As noted earlier at paragraph 1.3, overall costs have increased relative to the current approved programme, with the costs at July 2023 update being £566m relative to £475m at March 2023. This has been a further factor in the need for review. Appendix D provides analysis of the movement in project budget from March 2023 to the current proposed programme. This represents a number of factors including revised profiling of spend, increase in estimated cost, and revision of project scope. Approval of the recommendations in this report, and the revised capital programme, will also formally approve those new updated project budgets.

7.3 After consideration of the Core Capital budget as set out in Appendix A, the remainder of the capital programme, consisting of a number of named and specific projects, has been reviewed to consider opportunity to re-phase, revise scope and re-prioritise in light of the affordability context.

The range of options considered by Officers has included:-

- Is there still an absolute need and priority to deliver the project?
- Can the project be slipped beyond the life of the current 5 year capital programme?
- Can the project be slipped within the life of the current 5 year capital programme?
- Can the scope of the investment in the project be revised and scaled back?

Appendix B sets out the proposed capital programme as a result of this review. The following paragraphs provide further context to the review process and recommendations reached.

The projects funded and provided for within this part of the programme include:

- Tain 3-18 Campus (LEIP Phase 1)
- Broadford Primary and Nairn Academy (LEIP Phase 2)
- New Tornagrain Primary School
- A revised budget and scope of project across a number of Highland schools
- A890 Stromeferry rockface stabilisation works
- Bridges including Naver, Invercoe and Infirmary Bridge Inverness
- Piers and Harbour project investment at Kinlochbervie, Uig, Portree, Lochinver
- Inverness Castle Redevelopment (City Region Deal)
- Fort William Waste Transfer Station and Landfill Restoration
- Burial Ground investment at various sites across the Highlands

The following sections provide some further context to the proposed programme at appendix B.

7.4 The School Estate and Capacity Needs

The recommendations are founded on data and evidence to determine where additional capacity is required, and the expected timeline of that need. While there

continues to be extensive house building in a number of parts of the Highland, and this gives rise to school capacity pressures, latest population projection and other data is suggesting a lower school capacity impact from new housing development. This is driven by a combination of factors including lower birth rates, a lower pupil product ratio per house, wider economic factors and cost of living crisis leading to some slowdown in the housing market.

As a result, for a number of capacity driven school investment projects, including new school builds, current assessment is that the need is not expected to be required within the life of the new 5-year capital programme. Projects assessed as not being required within the 5-year programme are Ness Castle Primary Phase 2, Stratton Primary School and East Inverness Secondary.

Capital investment has been included for Tornagrain Primary School because forecast school roll forecast data indicates the need to provide for additional capacity within the 5-year period.

In all cases there is a recognition that school roll forecasts continue to be kept under regular review, and if circumstances change and the need and timescale for delivery alters, future capital programme reviews provide the opportunity to revisit assumptions.

7.5 Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP)

LEIP is the Scottish Government's school estate funding programme which, through a bid process, councils can secure revenue funding over a 25 year period, equivalent to circa 50% of expected capital costs using Scottish Future Trust metrics, to meet outcome targets set by Scottish Government. The outcome targets, and intent behind the programme funding, is to ensure the revenue funding provides for future maintenance and lifecycle in the new schools. The revenue funding is not intended to meet loan charge and capital financing costs, with the revenue funding model ultimately putting the cost of capital for LEIP projects onto councils.

The recommended revised programme continues the Council's commitment to deliver the 3 major projects funded through the confirmed LEIP Phase 1 (Tain 3-18 Campus) and Phase 2 (Nairn Academy and Broadford Primary) programmes. Significant capital investment has been provided within the programme for the updated expected capital costs for these 3 projects. The revised budget for Tain had previously been agreed by Council. The budgets for Nairn and Broadford reflect updated estimates of capital cost and Members are asked to approve these revised figures.

The Council has recently been notified of an increase in LEIP revenue funding for Tain, recognising cost movements over time. The Council will continue to engage with Scottish Government and the Scottish Futures Trust regarding the revenue funding for the Nairn and Broadford projects.

In relation to LEIP Phase 3, there is still no announcement from Scottish Government nor any clarity on a timeline for an announcement. The Council had submitted the following bids in October 2022 and in expectation of an announcement by the end of that calendar year.

- A single bid consisting of a bundle of three new primary school buildings at Beaully, Dunvegan and Park.
- A replacement building for St Clement's Special School on a new site in Dingwall.

- A new primary school at Tornagrain to the east of Inverness.

Given the scale of the affordability challenge faced by the Council, and in the absence of a decision by Scottish Government and funding commitment from the LEIP Phase 3 programme, there are significant risks relating to ongoing development of these projects in the absence of a Scottish Government decision.

Within the affordability parameters set out in this report, and recognising the need to make suitable provision for the range of ongoing investment, including health and safety investment across the Council's assets (see Appendix A), even were the Scottish Government to announce a LEIP Phase 3 outcome, it would not be possible to accommodate all the Phase 3 projects within the capital programme at planned affordability levels.

Considering the factors highlighted in the paragraphs above, the recommendations within this report are that only one of the LEIP Phase 3 projects is included within the proposed programme at this time: Tornagrain Primary School. This being driven by capacity needs assessment and it being unavoidable that the Council need make provision for this project. The capital costs for the project reflect the net cost factoring in Developer Contributions.

For the other LEIP Phase 3 bids, ongoing capital funding to progress the current intended scope of the projects is not provided in the proposed capital programme over the next 5 years. Instead, a revised level of capital budget provision has been included for Beauly, Dunvegan, Park and St Clement's to allow for essential investment in the existing buildings which may arise over the next 5 years and pending a new build in the future. This revised budget is a reduced level of capital and is intended for essential maintenance works and health and safety investment.

Should circumstances alter, which may include clarity on LEIP Phase 3, then the Council would need determine at that point its commitment to these projects and a decision made as to the funding to be allocated, and necessary capital programme re-prioritisation that would be necessary.

7.6 Further Additional Projects

Appendix C sets out further additional projects, and increased budget requests that have come forward from Services as part of the review process. As these relate to increases to core budget lines in some cases, they have been shown here and not incorporated in the totals referred to at paragraph 7.1 and appendix A. In other cases the proposal relates to a wholly new project or capital budget, and these would need considered on an exceptional basis and in recognition that the affordability challenge faced by the Council has necessitated a focus on prioritising existing capital commitments, rather than consideration of new and additional proposals. These are also not included in the proposed revised programme for this reason.

Investment proposals in Appendix C are therefore not part of the recommended capital programme at this time.

7.6 Main Programme Changes and Re-prioritisation

Appendix D provides a summary of key programme changes for the named projects shown, contrasting the prior capital programme with that proposed in this report. Highlighting the major reductions/re-phasing/re-prioritisation within the programme.

8. Revised Capital Programme – Affordability and future approaches

- 8.1 Future reports to Council will consider any further amendments to the capital programme. This could include further assessment of the proposals on appendix C of this report, updated assessment of affordability in light of updated treasury management forecasts; Local Government Finance settlements and external funding sources; and the scope for incorporation of new or additional business case-driven investment where the costs of capital/loan charges can be met from the expected project return.

It is recommended that further work is undertaken to support future capital reviews, and to bring back to Council a new Capital Strategy which would provide the context and framework for future capital investment decisions. That would consider, amongst other things, criteria used to inform capital decision making, and how the capital strategy can support the Council in realising income generation and growth and saving opportunities.

Designation: Head of Corporate Finance

Date: 5 September 2023

Author: Brian Porter, Head of Corporate Finance and Kate Lackie,
Interim Depute Chief Executive

Background Papers:

Appendices:

Summary for HC 14th September report

Proposed General Fund Capital Programme Summary

	Total Net £'000	24/25 Net £'000	25/26 Net £'000	26/27 Net £'000	27/28 Net £'000	28/29 Net £'000	<i>Avg p.a Net £'000</i>
Core Budget Provison (appendix A)	162,141	33,553	33,259	31,858	31,753	31,718	32,428
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Total programme before re-profiling	343,476	127,320	81,887	58,799	42,049	33,421	68,695
Re-profiling Target	-	- 35,000	- 12,000	7,000	18,000	22,000	-
Total Proposed Programme	343,476	92,320	69,887	65,799	60,049	55,421	68,695

Core Project Budget Provision within Proposed programme

	Total	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
SCHOOLS - ESTATE MANAGEMENT	25,740	5,148	5,148	5,148	5,148	5,148
School Estate Improvement Programme	25,125	5,025	5,025	5,025	5,025	5,025
School Residential Properties	615	123	123	123	123	123
PROPERTY ESTATE ASSET MANAGEMENT	45,546	9,110	9,109	9,109	9,109	9,109
Council Property Estate Investment	45,546	9,110	9,109	9,109	9,109	9,109
COMMUNITY AND LEISURE FACILITIES	2,221	445	445	445	443	443
HLH Properties - Life Cycle Investment	1,358	272	272	272	271	271
Community & Leisure Facilities	863	173	173	173	172	172
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PROGRAMME	2,696	540	539	539	539	539
Adult Services (NHS)	2,000	400	400	400	400	400
Children's Services/Out of Authority	696	140	139	139	139	139
ROADS	40,016	8,005	8,004	8,003	8,003	8,001
Roads General Infrastructure Improvements	39,045	7,810	7,810	7,809	7,809	7,807
Dingwall Development Infrastructure	740	148	148	148	148	148
Safer Routes to School	231	47	46	46	46	46
BRIDGES	8,936	1,788	1,787	1,787	1,787	1,787
Major Bridges	8,936	1,788	1,787	1,787	1,787	1,787
ACTIVE TRAVEL	4,419	884	884	884	884	883
Bus Shelters	109	22	22	22	22	21
Active Travel Transformation	4,310	862	862	862	862	862
LIGHTING & COMMUNICATIONS	2,206	442	441	441	441	441
Lighting Structural Works	2,206	442	441	441	441	441
FLOOD PREVENTION - STUDIES	519	105	104	104	103	103
Surface Water Management Plans	248	50	50	50	49	49
Coastal Flood Prevention Studies	271	55	54	54	54	54
HARBOURS & FERRIES	1,100	220	220	220	220	220
Harbours Health & Safety and General Structural	1,100	220	220	220	220	220
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	286	286	-	-	-	-
Town & Countryside Regeneration	185	185	-	-	-	-
Wester Ross Visitor Hubs	63	63	-	-	-	-
Misc Assets, Bridges & Structures	38	38	-	-	-	-
WASTE MANAGEMENT - INFRASTRUCTURE & BANKS	255	51	51	51	51	51
Household Green Bin Replacements	195	39	39	39	39	39
Waste Recycling Centre Office/Welfare Facilities	60	12	12	12	12	12
BEREAVEMENT SERVICES	2,199	441	440	440	439	439
War Memorials	1	1	-	-	-	-
Memorial Safety	25	5	5	5	5	5
Bereavement Services General	2,173	435	435	435	434	434
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES	166	34	33	33	33	33
Public Convenience Upgrades	166	34	33	33	33	33

Core Project Budget Provision within Proposed programme

	Total	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
VEHICLES & PLANT	12,768	2,554	2,554	2,554	2,553	2,553
Vehicle & Plant Purchases	12,768	2,554	2,554	2,554	2,553	2,553
ICT	13,068	3,500	3,500	2,100	2,000	1,968
ICT Core Equipment	13,068	3,500	3,500	2,100	2,000	1,968
CORE PROGRAMME TOTALS	162,141	33,553	33,259	31,858	31,753	31,718

Named Projects within the Proposed Capital Programme

Project Description	Total Net £'000	24/25 Net £'000	25/26 Net £'000	26/27 Net £'000	27/28 Net £'000	28/29 Net £'000
SCHOOLS - MAJOR PROJECTS	6,500	2,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Charleston Academy	1,500	300	300	300	300	300
Culloden Academy	3,500	1,500	500	500	500	500
Plockton Residence	1,500	300	300	300	300	300
SCHOOLS - LEIP FUNDED	129,250	61,106	36,423	23,021	8,700	-
Tain 3-18 Campus - LEIP 1	36,956	35,156	1,800	-	-	-
Nairn Academy - LEIP 2	54,771	15,000	25,000	13,771	1,000	-
Broadford Primary - LEIP 2	18,973	9,500	9,173	300	-	-
Beauly Primary School - LEIP 3	800	200	200	200	200	-
Dunvegan Primary School - LEIP 3	1,500	1,100	100	100	100	100
Park Primary School - LEIP 3	250	50	50	50	50	50
St Clement's School - LEIP 3	500	100	100	100	100	100
Tornagrain Primary School - LEIP 3	15,500	-	-	8,500	7,250	- 250
HOUSING (NON-HRA)	1,100	966	134	-	-	-
Longman Travelling People Site	1,100	966	134	-	-	-
ROADS	1,750	550	50	550	50	550
A890 Stromeferry Rockface Stabilisation	1,750	550	50	550	50	550
BRIDGES	12,155	7,555	4,600	-	-	-
B863 Invercoe Bridge, Lochaber	120	120	-	-	-	-
Naver Bridge	11,500	6,900	4,600	-	-	-
Infirmery Bridge	535	535	-	-	-	-
FLOOD PREVENTION - SCHEMES	210	210	-	-	-	-
Braehead Coastal Protection	210	210	-	-	-	-
HARBOURS & FERRIES	9,986	6,986	3,000	-	-	-
Kinlochbervie Harbour	3,000	-	3,000	-	-	-
Lochinver Harbour	3,000	3,000	-	-	-	-
Portree Harbour	2,000	2,000	-	-	-	-
Uig Ferry Terminal and Link Span	1,986	1,986	-	-	-	-
CAR PARKS	707	417	200	30	30	30
Rose Street Multistorey	707	417	200	30	30	30
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	10,823	9,564	1,259	-	-	-
Inverness Castle	10,823	9,564	1,259	-	-	-
WASTE LANDFILL RESTORATION	4,032	1,246	207	2,140	416	23
Landfill Restoration Programme	4,032	1,246	207	2,140	416	23
WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS	1,853	1,798	55	-	-	-
Fort William WTS	1,853	1,798	55	-	-	-

Named Projects within the Proposed Capital Programme

Project Description	Total Net £'000	24/25 Net £'000	25/26 Net £'000	26/27 Net £'000	27/28 Net £'000	28/29 Net £'000
BEREAVEMENT SERVICES	1,969	819	1,150	-	-	-
Crematorium	1,200	50	1,150	-	-	-
Burial Ground Kilmorack	120	120	-	-	-	-
Burial Ground Glen Nevis	265	265	-	-	-	-
Burial Ground Dores	254	254	-	-	-	-
Burial Ground Alness	130	130	-	-	-	-
VEHICLES & PLANT	500	200	200	100	-	-
Mechanical Street Sweepers	500	200	200	100	-	-
ICT	500	250	250	-	-	-
Care First System Replacement	500	250	250	-	-	-
TOTALS	181,335	93,767	48,628	26,941	10,296	1,703

New Projects and Additional Requests for Existing Projects - No Recommendation at this time

Project Description	Total Net £'000	24/25 Net £'000	25/26 Net £'000	26/27 Net £'000	27/28 Net £'000	28/29 Net £'000
<u>Existing Generic Projects with No Current Provision</u>	12,025	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405
Private Sector Housing Grants	7,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Salix Energy Efficiency Match Funding	3,125	625	625	625	625	625
Flood Risk Management Act Studies	1,400	280	280	280	280	280
<u>Existing Generic Projects Additional Requests</u>	4,875	977	977	975	974	972
ICT Core Equipment	1,133	227	227	227	226	226
Lighting Structural Works	2,794	559	559	559	559	558
Major Bridges	182	37	37	36	36	36
Burial Grounds General	617	124	124	123	123	123
Memorial Safety	75	15	15	15	15	15
War Memorials	74	15	15	15	15	14
<u>New Project Requests</u>	64,087	16,797	9,538	9,418	13,697	14,637
B851/B862 South Loch Ness Road Improvements	2,500	500	500	500	500	500
Ledmore Radio Mast Replacement	200	-	-	200	-	-
South Kessock Flood Study	100	-	-	50	50	-
Aviemore Burn Flood Study	80	50	30	-	-	-
Nethy Bridge Flood Study	100	50	50	-	-	-
River Coilte Flood Study	80	-	50	30	-	-
Ussie Burn Flood Study	80	-	-	-	50	30
Coastal Change Adaptation Plan	100	50	50	-	-	-
Uig Harbour Pier Structural	3,000	-	3,000	-	-	-
Kyle Fisher Pier Structural	1,000	-	-	1,000	-	-
Corran Ferry LUF Match Funding	5,200	5,200	-	-	-	-
Sconser Raasay SVRP Infra Upgrade	200	200	-	-	-	-
Green Freeport - Tomich Junction	3,350	3,350	-	-	-	-
VECTEC Fuel Mgt Replace	500	500	-	-	-	-
Jet Patcher Replacement	350	350	-	-	-	-
SWAN2 Implementation	2,406	1,172	1,234	-	-	-
Depot Upgrades	11,000	1,000	1,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Chromebook Refresh	9,000	-	-	-	4,500	4,500
Minor Bridges & Culverts	5,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Heavy Fleet Decarbonisation	8,850	350	1,000	1,500	2,500	3,500
Decarb Fleet - Depot Alterations	3,000	-	-	1,000	1,000	1,000
EV Infrastructure (Pathfinder Proj)	1,200	1,200	-	-	-	-
EV Infrastructure (Highland Wide)	4,500	900	900	900	900	900
Traffic Mgt Improvs (Signals)	500	380	120	-	-	-
Waste Bank Replacements	941	170	179	188	197	207
Green Waste Storage Areas	400	200	200	-	-	-
Digital Waste Tracking System	250	75	125	50	-	-
Street Sweeping Bays	200	100	100	-	-	-
Total New Projects and Additional Requests	80,987	20,179	12,920	12,798	17,076	18,014

Summary of main changes in specific project proposals

Project Description	Mar-23	New		Inc /
	Programme Total Net £'000	Programme Total Net £'000		(dec) Net £'000
SCHOOLS - MAJOR PROJECTS	123,546	6,500	-	117,046
Charleston Academy	14,524	1,500	-	13,024
Culloden Academy	10,059	3,500	-	6,559
Plockton Residence	12,000	1,500	-	10,500
Ness Castle Primary Ph1	- 1,813	-	-	1,813
Ness Castle Primary Ph2	7,776	-	-	7,776
Stratton Primary	22,000	-	-	22,000
East Inverness Secondary	59,000	-	-	59,000
SCHOOLS - LEIP FUNDED	132,785	129,250	-	3,535
Tain 3-18 Campus - LEIP 1	36,400	36,956		556
Nairn Academy - LEIP 2	37,920	54,771		16,851
Broadford Primary - LEIP 2	12,365	18,973		6,608
Beauly Primary School - LEIP 3	10,350	800	-	9,550
Dunvegan Primary School - LEIP 3	10,600	1,500	-	9,100
Park Primary School - LEIP 3	11,000	250	-	10,750
St Clement's School - LEIP 3	12,150	500	-	11,650
Tornagrain Primary School - LEIP 3	2,000	15,500		13,500
COMMUNITY & LEISURE	4,831	-	-	4,831
Inverness Leisure Centre/Aquadome	2,600	-	-	2,600
Eden Court Theatre Redevelopment	2,231		-	2,231
HOUSING (NON-HRA)	-	1,100		1,100
Longman Travelling People Site	-	1,100		1,100
ROADS	8,393	1,750	-	6,643
A890 Stromeferry Rockface Stabilisation	679	1,750		1,071
Inshes Roundabout	5,053	-	-	5,053
Inverness West Link	- 1,339	-	-	1,339
NC500 LUF Match Funding	4,000	-	-	4,000
BRIDGES	14,756	12,155	-	2,601
B863 Invercoe Bridge, Lochaber	3,808	120	-	3,688
Naver Bridge	6,140	11,500		5,360
Infirmiry Bridge	535	535		-
A884 Acharn & Achnagavin Bridge	2,042	-	-	2,042
White Bridge	233	-	-	233
Dulsie Bridge	459	-	-	459
B8007 Glenmore Bridge	737	-	-	737

Summary of main changes in specific project proposals

Project Description	Mar-23	New		Inc /
	Programme Total Net £'000	Programme Total Net £'000		(dec) Net £'000
A831 Comar Refurbishment	802	-	-	802
ACTIVE TRAVEL	93	-	-	93
Aviemore Active Travel Path	93	-	-	93
FLOOD PREVENTION - SCHEMES	4,471	210	-	4,261
Braehead Coastal Protection	-	210		210
Smithton / Culloden Flood Alleviation	- 9	-		9
River Nairn & Auldearn Burn FPS	377	-	-	377
River Gynack FPS / NFMS	393	-	-	393
Mill Burn FPS	570	-	-	570
Golspie FPS / NFMS	687	-	-	687
River Peffery FPS	1,237	-	-	1,237
River Thurso FPS	1,216	-	-	1,216
HARBOURS & FERRIES	4,977	9,986		5,009
Kinlochbervie Harbour	1,600	3,000		1,400
Lochinver Harbour	1,600	3,000		1,400
Portree Harbour	1,777	2,000		223
Uig Ferry Terminal and Link Span	-	1,986		1,986
CAR PARKS	116	707		591
Rose Street Multistorey	116	707		591
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	12,236	10,823	-	1,413
Inverness Castle	11,834	10,823	-	1,011
Storr Visitor Management	10	-	-	10
Dell of Spey	56	-	-	56
Ardersier Path	26	-	-	26
Inverness Rail Station	310	-	-	310
WASTE LANDFILL RESTORATION	1,187	4,032		2,845
Landfill Restoration Programme	1,187	4,032		2,845
WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS	-	1,853		1,853
Fort William WTS	-	1,853		1,853
BEREAVEMENT SERVICES	1,359	1,969		610
Crematorium	590	1,200		610
Burial Ground Kilmorack	120	120		-

Summary of main changes in specific project proposals

Project Description	Mar-23 Programme Total Net £'000	New Programme Total Net £'000	Inc / (dec) Net £'000
Burial Ground Glen Nevis	265	265	-
Burial Ground Dores	254	254	-
Burial Ground Alness	130	130	-
VEHICLES & PLANT	121	500	379
Mechanical Street Sweepers	121	500	379
ICT	125	500	375
Care First System Replacement	125	500	375
TOTALS	308,996	181,335	- 127,661