Stroud District Council

Capital Strategy

Contents

Section 1 – Principles of the SDC Capital Strategy

1. Introduction

Welcome to the Capital Strategy for Stroud District Council. The following document sets out how the Council sets out its priorities for Capital investment including links to existing delivery plans and strategy documents. It also considers the ways in which capital expenditure may be financed, including the impact that the Strategy has on the budgets of both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The strategy will also set out the links with Treasury Management objectives and determine the authority's approach to risk in those objectives.

This document is a fundamental part of the Council's business planning process from both a financial and service perspective. It sets out a framework whereby the authority's capital resources can be effectively allocated to those projects which may help the Council achieve wider corporate objectives, protect existing assets and support financial sustainability.

Principles of the Capital Strategy	
	1. Capital Investment is a vital tool in delivering strategic priorities
	2. The capital programme will include only these schemes which assist in delivering a Council priority
	3. The Council will not consider schemes purely to generate a commercial return, as part of the budget strategy to close the gap between expenditure and resources
	4. The evaluation of capital schemes for inclusion on the programme will follow an agreed process which allows scrutiny whilst not limiting innovation and adaptability
	5. The funding of the capital programme must be considered alongside the revenue budget and balance sheet position as part of the Council's integrated financial planning
	6. Capital projects will be monitored and evaluated, both during and after their completion, to ensure their efficient progress and that any lessons learnt can be transferred to other Council schemes

2. Background

As part of its wider treasury management objectives the Council must have regard to the "Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities" (henceforth to be referred to as the Prudential Code), as produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA). The 2018 revision of the Prudential Code introduced the requirement for authorities to produce a Capital Strategy representing as it does best practice in financial planning. The 2021 revision of the Prudential Code has further amended the requirements for a Capital Strategy. This document is Stroud's Capital Strategy and it sets out baseline practices. As the capital ambitions of the authority continue to grow the Strategy will serve as a basis for building that capital programme and can be updated as and when new priorities, schemes or methods of financing are introduced. It is a live document forming a fundamental part of the ongoing strategic planning of the Council.

3. Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure is incurred on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of an asset. These assets can be tangible such as buildings or vehicles, as well as intangible such as software products or licenses. Revenue expenditure is that which is incurred on the day to day running costs of the Council.

4. Linkage between revenue and Capital

Capital and revenue expenditure are often treated as separate components of local authority budgets and funding for each is considered separately. However, it should be regarded as a vital component of successful financial planning that revenue and capital budgets are intrinsically linked, therefore this capital strategy should be deemed to form a key part of the authority's medium term financial planning process.

The impact of capital expenditure upon the revenue budgets of the authority must be an intrinsic part of assessing capital projects at the business case stage.

The following table sets out some of the key impacts of capital expenditure upon the revenue budget.

Revenue Savings

- Direct Income from assets
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Savings in labour costs

Revenue Costs

- Running costs of new assets
- Minimum Revenue Provision (loan principal)
- Interest costs from borrowing (or lost investment interest if internally borrowing)
- Revenue funding of capital programme

As an indication of the current cost of the existing capital programme, the proposed Council budget for 2022/23 includes the following sums for loan principal and interest costs.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
General Fund	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
MRP	1,041	1,215	1,171	1,122
Interest	133	95	95	95
GF Total	**1,174**	**1,310**	**1,266**	**1,217**
Housing Revenue Account				
VRP	-	-	-	-
Interest	3,379	3,379	3,379	3,379
HRA Total	**3,379**	**3,379**	**3,379**	**3,379**

5. The Purpose of Capital Investment

Investment through Capital Expenditure should enable the better delivery of service priorities.

Service priorities are those areas that the Council has identified through the Council Plan. Capital expenditure may be a specific component of the corporate priority itself, such as the delivery of new affordable housing within the District or investment in an asset which helps to achieve the priority, such as new leisure facilities to improve public health.

6. What are our Council priorities?

The Council vision is “Leading a community that is making Stroud district a better place to live, work and visit for everyone”. This vision is to be realised through the Council Plan.

Council priorities are set out in the Council Plan 2021-26. There are three distinct priorities:

- Environment and Climate Change
- Community Resilience and Wellbeing
- Economy, Recovery and Regeneration

The Council Plan can be found at
https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s1742/Item%2012a%20-%20Appendix%20A%20-%20Draft%20Council%20Plan%202021%20-%202026.pdf

The Delivery Plan will be reviewed annually and progress will be monitored quarterly by Strategy and Resources Committee.

7. Existing Capital Priorities

The Capital Programme includes a number of high profile Capital Schemes and Priorities. These priorities are;

- New Build Housing, existing stock maintenance and support for affordable homes – the provision of housing is a key element of the Council Plan and the capital programme reflects this. The HRA capital programme now includes a second phase of new house building. To support the provision of future new builds the capital programme now also includes a budget for the purchase of land. This is a strong example of the use of capital planning to identify assets required (land) to support the provision of a Council priority (housing).

- Regeneration of the Canal – Support for the redevelopment of the Canal is a key component of the Council's capital programme. "Stroudwater Connected" represents the next critical phase of the canal redevelopment that has bid successfully for £8.9m of HLF Lottery funding. Also, the Council has committed capital funds of £3 million to support the project.

- Redevelopment of Brimscombe Port – Brimscombe Port is the Council's primary mixed use regeneration scheme for the upcoming period. Successful completion of the project will produce an increase in housing supply and provision for business accommodation as well as the restoration of a historically significant inland port. Funding for the scheme is likely to be drawn from a variety of sources including Council contributions, a loan from Homes England and funding through a joint venture agreement with a delivery partner.

- Addressing climate change will require significant investment and the current capital programme includes borrowing of £1.432m for water source heat pumps at Ebley Mill and Brimscombe Port.

- The Council is most of the way through a £1.8m investment in ICT infrastructure transformation.

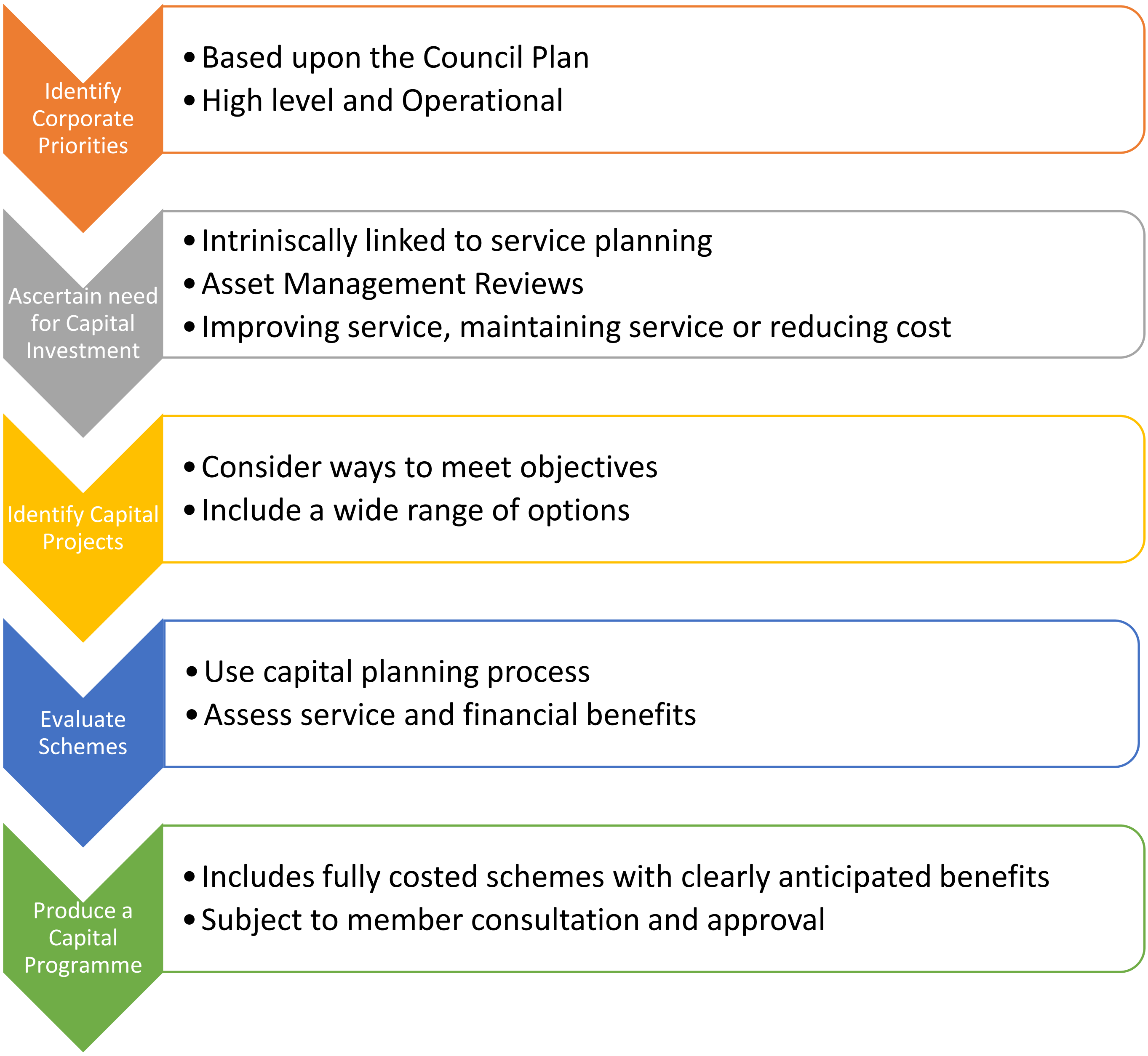
- Support for waste and recycling through effective asset and fleet management – under the terms of the Ubico contract the Council is responsible for procuring the vehicles and equipment required. It is vital that the Council plans long-term to secure the assets that are required. Failure to do so risks inefficiencies in providing the service and the financial costs of operating aging machinery.

As the Capital Strategy should be considered a live document these schemes and priorities are subject to change.

8. Achieving priorities through capital investment.

Capital expenditure and investment is a key tool in achieving Council priorities. Targeted investment can provide the Council with the assets it needs to deliver high quality, value for money services in accordance with the Council Plan. Capital investment opportunities may be targeted to deliver additional corporate priorities.

The diagram below is an illustration of the key principles and processes for initiating a capital project up to approval stage.



It should be recognised that the ideas for capital schemes could come from a wide variety of sources including officers, external stakeholders, individual members or Council committees.

9. Asset Management

Asset Management is the process by which the authority considers whether its assets are appropriate to deliver the high quality services demanded by residents. This process may identify a number of different outcomes for assets including;

- Change in use to meet the demands of a service
- Investment is required to improve the condition of an asset
- A new asset is required to better meet the Council priorities
- The need to dispose of the asset to realise its value in monetary terms

The Council will use active asset management to consider both its current asset base and its future asset base. The capital programme will be used to bridge the gap to ensure that the authority has sufficient assets in the long term.

The current capital programme does not include any allowance for backlog maintenance. This should be considered in future revisions to the capital programme as part of the asset management process.

The Council has an existing Corporate Asset Management Strategy and the principles contained within that document are those which are to be used in the asset management process.

10. Capital Disposals

The asset management process may determine that the value of an asset is best realised through disposal. Sale of assets should be through an open market process to determine the best value.

Cash received from a sale of a property is a capital receipt. The use of these funds is restricted to purchasing new assets or repayment of existing debt. Decisions as to the use of Capital Receipts are to be made by Council after receiving advice from Strategy and Resources Committee and the Section 151 Officer. The Council will not make decisions about the ring-fencing of capital receipts before amounts are known and the use of such receipts has been considered in the light of the Council's overall financial position.

The existing General Fund capital programme is not dependent on a planned programme of capital receipts.

The HRA capital programme includes assumptions on levels of right to buy receipts as well as other capital receipts.

11. Multi-Year Capital Projects

Capital projects deliver assets which will provide services to the Council for a number of years. As a result of the significance and complexity of a number of these projects they may take a number of years to plan and deliver.

When setting the Capital Programme, Council will approve the schemes to be included, the budget for their delivery and the timescale in which they are to be achieved. Unless schemes have clearly defined development and delivery phases with separate objectives, budgets and timescales Council should be asked to approve a budget to cover the whole of the project being delivered. Approval of the entire budget at the point of inception gives certainty for the project and assists officers in ensuring delivery.

The budget for approval will include an expected cash flow projection showing how much of the anticipated project budget will be incurred in each year of the Capital Programme. Any variations in timing of cash flows between years will be reported as part of the budget monitoring process. This should be regarded as part of the normal development of a capital project.

The Section 151 Officer will use delegated powers to re-profile capital expenditure between years after consideration of the Council's overall financial position.

Changes in the profile of a capital project which require additional money added to the overall budget will be reported to members.

12. Use of capitalisation flexibilities.

Regulations around the flexible use of capital receipts allow the authority to use new capital receipts to fund the revenue costs of Council re-structuring which will generate savings in future years. This is subject to the Council approval of a policy on the flexible use of capital receipts. The Council currently has no proposal to make use of these flexibilities.

Section 2 – Selecting, Approving and Monitoring Capital Schemes

13. **The Importance of Capital Business Cases**

The processes described in the following section are to be regarded as the authority's formal procedures for setting and monitoring capital projects. This process has been developed to ensure that the Council's capital programme contains schemes which are in line with objectives, meet its asset management requirements and are both affordable and deliverable. This process will give elected members confidence that decisions they are being asked to make regarding the capital programme have been based on a sound system of decision making.

All capital schemes to be considered in the capital programme must have been the subject of an evaluation process including a business case to ensure the Council can target its capital resources effectively.

14. Information to be considered in Capital Decision Making

When making decisions as to which schemes are included on the capital programme the presented business case must include information on these main factors.

- Financials – All anticipated costs and potential revenue streams must be set out. This should include risk analysis to show factors which may impact upon those numbers and where appropriate sensitivity analysis to show potential future scenarios.

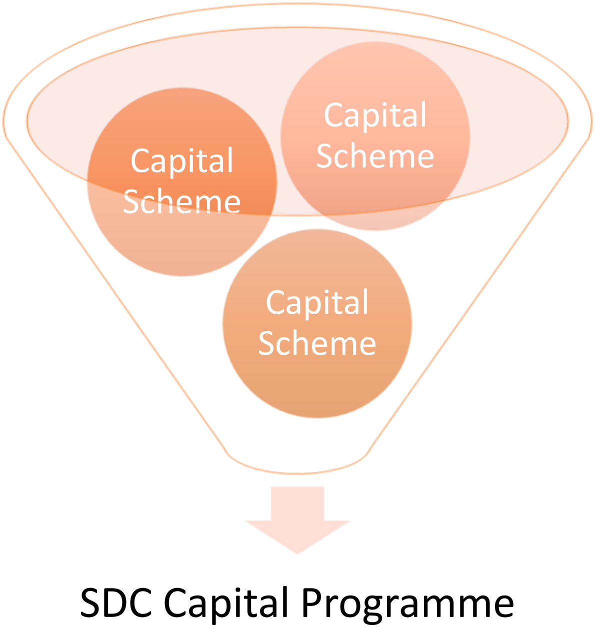
- Strategic Objectives – As discussed capital schemes must meet Council priorities and the ability of a scheme to impact upon objectives must be clearly demonstrated. This should include the wider social and environmental impact of the capital project. This must be accompanied by evidence supporting the conclusions made.

- Capacity - All capital schemes, even those funded by external sources, require officers within the Council to implement them and this must be considered as part of the appraisal process. Where a project requires the procuring of additional resource to deliver the scheme this detail must be included in the financial analysis.

- Deliverability - The success of capital projects depends not just on the financial and non-financial resources of the District Council. External factors which impact on the deliverability of the project should also be considered as part of the planning process.

The purpose of this evaluation process is effectively to act like the image below.

Ideas for a range of capital schemes should be considered and it is those which best fit the strategic vision of the Council within the financial parameters available which make it onto the Capital Programme.



15. **Governance of the Capital Programme**

This strategy sets out the governance relationship relating to the capital programme and the respective role of Members and Officers in relation to the decision making process. The roles of the various groups are as follows.

Decision making on the capital programme is likely to be an iterative and often circular process with information flowing both ways between these respective groups.

As an example the following timescale may be followed for producing the capital programme during the main budget setting process. This should not be regarded as definitive as capital projects are often regarded as they arise.

Apr – Jun – Officers produce list of new capital project ideas

July – Strategic Leadership Team assess those to require business cases

September – November – Regeneration and Investment Board work with Officers to select schemes and produce a capital programme.

December – Capital Programme incorporated within overall Council budget. Service Committees consider their budget for the upcoming year.

February – Budget approved by Strategy and Resources Committee and Council.

Strategy and Resources Committee

- Formally agrees the capital programme
- Receives budget monitoring reports covering financial and non-financial elements of capital schemes

Policy Committees

- Review capital business cases for additions to the programme
- Recommends the capital programme for the following year on to Strategy and Resources Committee

Strategic Leadership Team

- Reviews Business Cases submitted
- Performs initial sift of viable schemes
- Approves proposed list of capital schemes
- Discussions will include Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Section 151 and Head of Property Services

Service Managers / Heads of Service

- Identify priorities and opportunities for capital investment
- Act as, or appoint, project mangers to lead on schemes and complete outline business cases

16. In-Year Capital Decisions

Selecting projects to go onto the Capital Programme must remain possible outside of the usual capital budget setting process. The authority needs the flexibility to take advantage of schemes which present themselves at any stage during the year.

Capital schemes presented in year should go through the same appraisal process as schemes considered at budget setting time. The business case must indicate whether they are self-financing (through an external grant or savings/income which meet borrowing costs) or require the commitment of Council resources.

In rare cases there may be insufficient time for a capital purchase to go through the full Committee cycle, such as in the case of an opportunity land purchase. In such an instance where it is above delegated powers of officers the decision will be made by the Section 151 Officer and Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee. This only applies where there is an existing budget approved by full Council which may be used.

Capital schemes fully funded by external grants should not automatically be included on the capital programme without a process of due consideration as even fully funded schemes have a cost in relation to officer time.

17. **Monitoring Capital Projects**

Effective monitoring of projects is a vital element of good capital governance.

Capital projects are often significant not only in terms of financial resources required but in terms of organisational capacity, impact upon Service delivery and reputational risk. It is therefore vital that there is sufficient monitoring carried out upon schemes to allow stakeholders to be informed of progress and for members and officers to make decisions as required.

In order to meet the requirement Strategic Leadership Team will receive a monitoring report showing the current spend against capital projects at the end of each financial quarter, with an outturn report at year-end. Strategic Leadership Team may then invite project managers for schemes with variances deemed to be significant, either financially or in terms of project progress, to attend the meeting to present a progress report.

Policy Committees will receive information on the progress of capital projects as part of the finance budget monitoring reports already received. Committees may also add specific projects to their work plan should they wish to scrutinise projects in depth.

Schemes requiring additional funding to be committed by the District Council as a result of either changes in cost estimate or extensions of scope will be the subject of a report to, and decision by, both Strategy and Resources Committee and Council. This should be regarded as a key element of a well-managed capital programme.

18. **Post Project Evaluation**

All Capital Projects must be the subject of a post project evaluation. This must be completed by the Project Manager. This should not be regarded as an onerous process but simply the final stage of good project management. Key findings will be reported to the relevant service Committee. A Corporate Register of completed projects and listed key lessons is to be maintained and managers planning new projects must have due regard for any lessons previously learnt. As part of the year-end closedown process the finance team will request a copy of the completed post project evaluation for all projects which have completed in year.

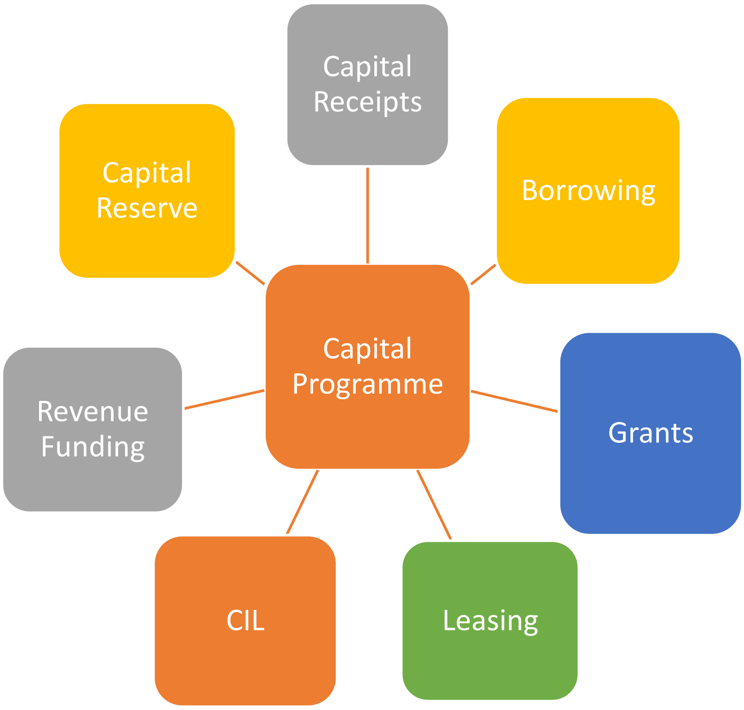
Section 3- Financing the Capital Programme

19. Capital Funding

There are a number of distinct sources of funding which can be utilised to finance capital expenditure. Some funding sources are ring fenced and can only be used for Housing Revenue Account capital expenditure, or a particular capital project. Consideration of funding must be made when projects are at the planning stage. No capital project will be put forward without funding having been identified to complete the project. Where capital schemes are in multiple phases, perhaps requiring an initial development phase to ensure funding for the final phases, this will be considered as part of the planning stage and clearly reported.

Capital funding cannot be used to fund revenue costs which may arise from a capital scheme such as a consultant's costs on feasibility before a project is identified.

The possible options for Capital Financing are shown in the table diagram below followed by a clarification of the characteristic and potential usage of each one.



20. SDC Resources

Capital Receipts

The sale of assets with a value of more than £20,000 generates income known as capital receipts. Legislation requires these to be spent on either new capital investment or the repayment of existing debt. The government is allowing some flexibility in the use of capital receipts up until 31 March 2022 to fund revenue costs of transformation projects where these are expected to generate revenue savings in future years (See Section 12).

HRA Right to Buy compulsory sale of council houses generate receipts that may be retained to cover the cost of transacting the sales and to cover outstanding debt on the property sold, but a proportion of the remainder must be surrendered to Central Government.

All other HRA capital receipts may be retained provided they are spent on affordable housing, regeneration or paying off housing debt.

General Fund capital receipts can be retained in full. These can arise from the sale of land and buildings, vehicles, plant and equipment, and also through the repayment of loans or grants.

An active asset management planning process is needed to review the asset requirements of the Council and therefore to identify surplus assets which may be sold to generate capital receipts.

Capital Reserve

Reserves are set aside from revenue resources and earmarked for particular purposes. The capital reserve is earmarked to be used to finance properly authorised capital schemes. At any one time, some or all of the capital reserve will be earmarked to finance part of the current year and future years' capital programme.

Leasing

One way of acquiring new assets is to lease. This is commonly used to procure lower value assets that may be below the £20,000 de minimis level for treating as capital expenditure, for example small vehicles or photocopiers. The cost of leasing should always be compared with other means of financing, in recent years it has not been the most cost effective source of capital funding.

For accounting year 2022-23 a technical distinction between finance leases and operating leases will end with the introduction of IFRS16. This will mean an increase in the Council's CFR, an increase in property, plant and equipment long term assets totals on the balance sheet, together with a corresponding long term liability representing the principal element of future lease payments. For Stroud District Council the impact for current leased assets is assessed to be immaterial with the only assets affected photocopiers, some leased vehicles and some leased-in land used as part of two car parks. The de-minimis level will further limit the already low impact. Detailed calculations will be required during 2022-23 financial year for disclosures, and accounting entries required for that year. There will be no impact on costs or cash flows for the Council, the impact will be of a presentational and compliance nature.

Prudential Borrowing

The Council is able to borrow money on the money market or from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) to fund capital schemes. A preferential PWLB certainty rate of interest is allocated to Councils who apply for it, and it is the policy of this Council to take advantage of the certainty rate each year.

For all schemes initially funded from borrowing, the Council will have to fund the repayment and interest costs as there is no longer any central government "supported borrowing" allocations and related revenue support.

The Council is only able to borrow for "unsupported borrowing" (also known as Prudential Borrowing) under the guidance contained in the CIPFA Prudential Code whereby, in summary, the Council is required to ensure that all borrowing is both prudent and affordable. All schemes funded from prudential borrowing are approved by full Council. As part of the Treasury Management Strategy each year full Council approves a limit for affordable borrowing and capital schemes will be considered in the light of that limit.

As required by the 2021 Prudential Code this Council states it will not undertake capital investments that are primarily for financial return and finance them with borrowing, as this would breach the prohibition of borrowing to invest for financial return.

21. External Funding

Capital Grant from Government or Government Agency

Central government and government agencies provide capital grant funding that can be either ring fenced or non-ring fenced. Examples of ring fenced grants that the Council has received are disabled facilities grants (DFG's) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) canal project funding.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Any monies received from developers for infrastructure from the Community Infrastructure Levy will not be allocated to a specific service but will be allocated under the CIL arrangements ("the Regulation 123 List") in line with Council's capital scheme priorities.

The process for allocating CIL funds will be in accordance with the process agreed by Strategy and Resources Committee.

Section 106 Agreements

Developer consents may attract Section 106 funding to spend on a particular asset or site as an alternative to CIL.

Capital contributions from partner organisation

When capital projects are devised it is open for project managers to invite funding from a range of partner organisations. Partner organisations in recent years have included Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud Town Council, Cotswold Canals Trust and Friends of the Cowle Museum.

Revenue contributions

Services who are leading a capital project may make savings within their revenue budgets during a particular year and in some circumstances use that saving to part-fund a capital project.

22. Policy on use of Capital Funding

The Council will look to use external funding sources where possible to meet the funding requirements of its capital programme.

Where the use of SDC resources are required the authority will look to utilise reserves, revenue funding or capital receipts as these create no long term revenue cost implications on the Council.

Borrowing will be used as the last possible source of funding and should be restricted only to those schemes which generate sufficient savings or income to meet the costs of interest and the Minimum Revenue Provision.

Any borrowing incurred to support the provision of new build housing within the Housing Revenue Account must be demonstrated to be affordable over a period of 30 years.

Major Sources of Funding for the Capital Programme – Risks and Restrictions

General fund Receipts	HRA Receipts	Capital Reserve	Revenue Funding	Borrowing	Grant funding / S106
• Restrictions - Used for capital expenditure or debt repayment only • Risks - Can only be used once	• May only be used on the HRA	• Restrictions - None. Also usable on revenue expenditure • Risks - Can only be used once. Decision required as to best use	• Restrictions - None • Risks - Decision required as to best use	• Restrictions - For capital expenditure only. Must be within affordable limit set by Council. Not for capital investments. • Risks - Creates an ongoing MRP and interest liability over the life of the asset	• Restriction - Dependent on grant conditions • Risks - Objectives set out by third party. Not in line with SDC priorities.

23. Relationship between Capital Strategy and Treasury Management

Treasury management refers to the processes of managing and reporting on the Council's performance in matters of investment and borrowing.

The Council's policy on Treasury Management has numerous links to the Capital Strategy. It is not intended that this Strategy replace the reporting requirements of the Treasury Management Strategy and includes a summary of the major points of that strategy and associated governance processes.

Key Treasury decisions are the responsibility of full Council and are contained within the Treasury Management Strategy.

These include

- Approved limits on borrowing
- Limits for investment types and counterparty limits
- Planned capital expenditure
- Estimates for the future Capital Financing Requirement
- Policy on the Minimum Revenue Provision

Detailed discussion on these matters is delegated to the Audit and Standards Committee who then make recommendations on to full Council.

The key impact of a capital programme using borrowing is the creation of a "Capital Financing Requirement" (CFR). The CFR represents the need to borrow external funds as a result of expenditure funded through borrowing. Having a CFR creates the need for a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), a sum to be put to one side each year from the General Fund for repayment of debt.

The Council's MRP policy is to make provision for the repayment of debt equally over the life of the asset that the borrowing relates to.

The current projections of General Fund MRP are shown in the table below.

	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Opening CFR	15,202	16,906	16,670	19,948	19,279
Borrowing	2,805	805	4,493	502	87
Budgeted MRP	(1,101)	(1,041)	(1,215)	(1,171)	(1,122)
Closing CFR	**16,906**	**16,670**	**19,948**	**19,279**	**18,244**

The Treasury Strategy approved in February 2021 sets out the following limits for borrowing. These will be revised by as part of the Treasury Management Strategy to be considered by Council in February 2022.

	2021/22 (£m)	2022/23 (£m)	2023/24 (£m)
Authorised Debt Limit	143	150	153

The Audit and Standards Committee receive at a minimum a mid-year monitoring report for Treasury management and an end of year outturn report. Where circumstances require, such as a material fall in the value of investments, a report would be prepared and presented to the next meeting of the Committee by the S151 Officer.

Section 4- Risk Management

24. Embedding Risk Management in the Capital Programme

The Capital Strategy must be considered alongside the principles of risk management. Risks are inevitable within a capital programme, as with all aspects of Council operations, and effective management of risk is a vital part of the capital strategy.

The Council has a pre-existing "Risk Management Policy Statement & Strategy" which sets out the authority's approach to risk and risk management. All principles included within that document should be considered as embedded within the Capital Strategy.

For the purpose of clarity, the Risk Management Policy Statement is repeated here

> The Council is committed to securing **effective risk management** as part of its responsibility to deliver effective public services within its district.
>
> It acknowledges that effective risk management **helps strengthen its capacity and ability to efficiently meet its corporate priorities and core business.**
>
> In managing its risks, SDC commits to:
> (a) Operate in a **culture of creativity and innovation, rather than risk avoidance;** and
>
> (b) Act consistently within recognised best practice to **identify, evaluate and secure the proportionate control of its risks**.

The types of risk the authority is exposed to in the Capital Programme are summarised below;

- Financial Risk – The risk of significant cost overruns or income generation not performing as expected. The authority has a low appetite for this risk as it would impact upon available resources. Mitigation will be in the form of close scrutiny of capital spending through the budget monitoring process.

- Strategic Risk – The risk of not delivering key Council priorities or projects. Mitigation will be in the form of careful selection and planning of capital projects before commencement and project managers reviewing project progress and taking corrective action where necessary. Major changes in the outcomes of schemes will be reported to the appropriate Committee.

- Governance risk – The risk of capital spending decisions not being appropriately considered and decisions not being made at the correct level. Mitigation is the governance principles contained within the capital strategy.

- Resourcing risk – The risk that insufficient funds are available to fund the capital programme or that the incorrect type of funds is applied to capital projects. This is mitigated by the financing of capital projects being reviewed by the S151 Officer as part of the budget setting and the outturn.

25. **Knowledge and Skills within the organisation**

The Capital Programme is developed and monitored within the finance team by professionally qualified accountants who are required to undertake Continuing Professional Development to ensure their knowledge remains relevant. They have many years of experience in managing local authority capital programmes.

The Property Services team has officers of multiple disciplines who are experienced at leading capital projects, managing the Council's property portfolio and working within the local property market. They have experience of dealing with acquisitions, disposals, new commercial and residential development and redevelopment of brownfield sites. The team of Chartered Surveyors are required to undertake Continuing Professional Development to retain their membership of the RICS.

Legal Services will be provided by One Legal who will form a key part of the decision making around Capital projects. All solicitors are required to complete an annual Statement of Competence to the regulatory body to ensure any professional training needs are identified and addressed.

Where necessary external advice may be sought for all types of financial, property and legal advice. These costs, or at least appropriate estimates, will be included in the business cases of capital schemes.

Officers will work with members to ensure that training needs for elected members are appropriately identified. As a minimum annual training will be provided around the Treasury Management Strategy.