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The report considered by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee at the meeting held on 9 September 2026 can be found here: Agenda for Finance, Audit and Risk Committee on Wednesday, 9th September, 2026, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

(1) That Cabinet notes the forecast expenditure of £13.570M in 2026/27 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.

(2) That Cabinet approves the adjustments to the capital programme for 2027/28, as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2 and 3, increasing the estimated spend by £0.67M.

(3) That Cabinet notes the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 4 paragraph 8.6 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: Cabinet is required to approve adjustments to the capital programme and ensure the capital programme is fully funded.

Audio recording – 01 hours 10 minutes 27 seconds

The Director Resources presented the report entitled 'First Quarter Capital Budget Monitoring 2026/27' and advised that:

- Project timetable changes and the reason for these were outlined in Table 2 of the report.
- Changes to capital spending on S106 related projects were shown in Table 3.
- The forecast capital receipts totalling £3M would be delayed due to reasons as detailed in Table 4, such as ensuring best value for money when disposing of those assets.
- The delay would mean an increase in internal borrowing and the minimum revenue provision in future years until those capital receipts were realised and could be applied as capital funding.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Paul Ward
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Independent Member John Cannon

In response to questions, the Director – Resources advised that:

- Walsworth Common Pavilion was linked to S106 funding, and they were awaiting enough of this to cover the majority of its cost.
- There was a need to review the timescale and value of the Walsworth Common Pavilion as this had not been done for several years, but this could be done while setting the Capital Programme for next year.
- Other projects detailed in Table 2 would have been reviewed recently.
- The £140K of forecast spending on S106 projects was just for the first quarter.
- The increase in the capital asset figure at paragraph 8.1 since the last report in June may be due to indexation and re-evaluation since then, but this would be checked and an explanation for the increase would be provided.
- Asset values were not based on their sale value as many of them were specialised.
- The increase of £4.438M on the forecast capital expenditure was capital slippage from the previous financial year.

Councillor Paul Ward proposed the recommendations in the report, and this was seconded by Councillor Clare Billing.

As part of the debate, Councillor Elizabeth Dennis highlighted that:

- Projects which had been on the capital programme for a long time such as the Walsworth Common Pavilion should be reprofiled, index linked, marked up for inflation and evaluated in terms of their risks and viability before coming up with plans for them.
- Executive Members and Directors were urged to undertake the above to determine a suitable course of action for each project.

In response to points raised by Councillor Elizabeth Dennis in the debate, Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Resources, advised that:

- It was agreed that there was a need to review schemes on the capital programme as part of the budget.
- They were keen to proceed with projects that had been on the capital programme for several years, but this would be subject to a viable scheme to deliver them.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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