



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

15 September 2021

Report Title:	Housing Capital Programme 2021/22
Cabinet Portfolio	Safer, Stronger Communities
Cabinet Member	Councillor Jeanie Bell
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	Yes
Public Notice Issued	17 August 2021
Wards Affected	All
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Borough priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence and care across our communities	X
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	X
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	X
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

1. Summary

This report presents to Cabinet the 2021/22 Housing Capital Programme for approval.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Cabinet is **recommended to:**

- i) **Approve the allocation of resources within the 2021/22 Housing Capital Programme as outlined at Appendix 1,**
- ii) **Approve the continued ringfencing and recycling of specific Housing capital receipts to support the programme of activity until 2023/24.**

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 This report presents Cabinet with the proposed allocation of funds to identified schemes contained within the overall Housing Capital Programme for 2021/22.

4. Background / Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1 The Council receives an annual allocation from Government for the delivery of housing related initiatives and interventions. For 2021/22, it has been awarded a total allocation of £3.148m from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the Disabled Facilities Grant. The Housing Capital programme consists of this allocation and additional funding from both capital receipts and borrowing. From this overall allocation, the following programmes are funded:
 - Mandatory disabled facilities grants / minor adaptations for disabled householders
 - Housing financial assistance to vulnerable householders
 - Emergency fund (minor repairs / heating repairs) to vulnerable householders
 - Empty property capital support / enforcement compensation
 - Affordable warmth / energy efficiency intervention programmes
- 4.2 This programme provides support to vulnerable households, including residents who have a disability and require additional support to maintain living independently at home together with residents who require additional support, due to their financial circumstances, to meet the costs of heating their homes.
- 4.3 The available funding is targeted at delivering the Council's statutory responsibilities and strategic objectives in addition to the provision of match funding for partner contributions to

ensure the successful delivery of specific projects.

4.4 Attached at Appendix 1 is the proposed allocation of resources within the 2021/22 Housing Capital Programme 2021/22. Most of the available funding has been allocated to deliver existing statutory functions such as Disabled Facilities Grants and action to tackle empty homes and deliver housing enforcement action. Funding of £0.273m has also been allocated to support partner funding contributions to deliver specific projects such as the delivery of the Affordable Warmth heating replacement and insulation programmes and the Foundations (FILT) Gas Safe initiative. Whilst the Council can determine the allocation of this funding, it should be noted that there is limited flexibility to target funding away from these projects and programmes due to existing commitments and duties of the Council.

4.4 During 2020/21, the Housing Capital Programme delivered the following outputs:

- 402 Disabled Facilities Grants, including the delivery of 113 level access showers / wetrooms, 77 ramps to properties, installation of 140 lifts / hoists and 3 property extensions;
- 38 properties received Housing Financial Assistance for major heating / other works to remove hazards;
- 120 properties received Emergency Fund Minor Works, with the majority relating to heating system repairs and controls: and
- 303 Minor Structural Adaptations to properties, including installation of external steps and rails.

4.5 The programme, via the delivery of the outputs listed in section 4.4, has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents of the borough. The installation of the adaptations funded via this programme enables residents to remain living independently and safely in their own home - preventing the need for potential residential care admissions and reducing the need for additional domiciliary care support. The installation of adaptations also prevents future hospital admissions through falls prevention and enables safe discharge from hospital by creating a safer home environment. The affordable warmth related interventions have delivered direct financial savings to residents and also will have contributed towards more energy efficient consumption in the borough and reduction in health issues exacerbated by poorly heated homes.

4.6 The programme has also delivered the outcomes for residents within the challenging context of the pandemic, with restrictions in place during periods of 2020/21 that prevented services from operating within properties. Services have adapted to meet the regulations in place to enable safer working practices and the continuation of the programme to ensure that residents in need can receive this additional support.

5 Community Impact Assessment

5.1 A Community Impact Assessment has been completed in advance of this proposal and has identified that failure to allocate suitable resources will disproportionately affect the Borough's most vulnerable residents, including residents with a disability and households at risk of fuel poverty. The provision of support and interventions offer a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics in relation to disability.

6 Consideration of Alternatives

6.1 The funding allocated via the Disabled Facilities Grant is awarded with specific grant conditions attached and Capital Receipts have also been previously ringfenced to ensure that they are designated towards housing related activity.

7. Conclusions

The proposed 2021/22 Housing Capital Programme provides financial support to meet identified needs across a number of housing-related services, ensuring that vulnerable residents can receive additional support as required in areas such as aids and adaptations and addressing fuel poverty.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

8.1.1 This programme provides funding to meet a number of statutory duties, including the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants. Failure to adequately fund the Council's statutory housing enforcement function including existing Compulsory Purchase Order commitments could lead to legal challenge.

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.2.1 As outlined in Section 5 of the report, the Community Impact Assessment has identified positive implications for residents with protected characteristics by the direct provision of support to meet needs.

8.2.1 Social Value

8.2.1.1 The Council's Home Improvement Agency co-ordinates the delivery of the Housing Capital Programme. All contractors registered on the Home Improvement Agency Contractor List for grant funded works are located within 30 miles of St Helens borough, therefore the delivery of this programme has a positive impact on local employment.

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment

8.2.2.1 The proposals within the programme assist residents at risk of fuel poverty via specific affordable warmth schemes to offer greatest assistance to those residents who have low incomes. The delivery of the interventions within this programme also supports the delivery of the emerging Climate Response Plan for the borough.

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing

8.2.3.1 The identified Housing Capital Budget will enable the direct provision of aids and adaptations, helping residents to remain residing in their own home and maintaining independent living, which has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of eligible residents.

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights

8.2.4.1 Provision of a Housing Capital Programme enables the Council to target resources at the most vulnerable households in the Borough, including direct provision of Disabled Facilities Grants, Emergency Funding and Affordable Warmth interventions through the Home Improvement Agency.

8.3 Customers and Resident

8.3.1 The services supported by the Housing Capital Budget are accessible to eligible residents. Applications for DFG and emergency / minor adaptation works are supported following health and social care referrals. Specific programmes including Affordable Warmth interventions also consider direct referrals from residents and Carers.

8.4 Asset and Property

8.4.1 The delivery of the Housing Capital programme will enhance and improve the accessibility of properties within the borough.

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource

8.5.1 There are no direct staffing implications.

8.6 Risks

8.6.1 There are no direct risks to the delivery of this programme as funding is secured for 2021/22 programme costs. The three-year programme enables funding across the years to be adjusted to take account of changes in demand.

8.7 Finance

8.7.1 The table below illustrates the current financial profile in relation to the Capital Programme. The total resources available for 2021/22 is £5.051m, which includes an allocation of £1.127m carried forward from 2020/21 due to the impact of the pandemic on expenditure profiles. The 2020/21 allocation also included an additional allocation received from Government in December 2020.

Current Capital Programme	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000
Disabled Facilities Grant & Adaptations	4,508	2,834	2,774
General Fund Housing (Housing Assistance)	60	50	-
Housing Clearance & Enforcement	99	50	-
Insulation Measures & Fuel Poverty	384	275	-
Total	5,051	3,209	2,774
Funding Summary			
Disabled Facilities Grant	4,419	2,774	2,774
Borrowing	478	323	-
Capital Receipts	145	112	-
Other Contributions (Foundations Indep.Living Trust)	9	-	-
	5,051	3,209	2,774

8.7.2 The table below presents the proposed expenditure for 2021/22 and for future years, assuming that the DFG allocation remains unchanged. This also includes an additional £0.135m of Capital Receipts programmed in for 2023/24.

Proposed Capital Programme	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000
Disabled Facilities Grant & Adaptations	3,179	3,541	3,604
General Fund Housing (Housing Assistance)	100	100	100
Housing Clearance & Enforcement	50	50	50
Insulation Measures & Fuel Poverty	273	400	470
Total	3,602	4,091	4,224
Funding Summary			
Disabled Facilities Grant	3,380	713	326
Disabled Facilities Grant (Unconfirmed)	-	3,148	3,148
Borrowing	213	230	358
Capital Receipts	-	-	257
Capital Receipts (loan repayments)	-	-	135
Other Contributions (Foundations Indep.Living Trust)	9	-	-
	3,602	4,091	4,224

8.7.3 Appendix 1 provides a more detailed presentation of the individual schemes proposed. The total value of the 2021/22 Housing Capital Programme is £3.602m and this can be contained within the confirmed funding resources of £5.621m. The balance from this overall resource will be carried forward into 2022/23 to secure the programme for the next financial year.

8.7.4 The Council has previously confirmed the ability to ringfence housing related capital receipts for allocation into the future Housing Capital Programme and it is requested that this approach is maintained for the coming three-year period outlined. Capital receipts for this programme are generated by loan repayments for properties that have previously received financial support via Government programmes or initiatives, as well as the sale of empty properties previously subject to Compulsory Purchase Orders. The available capital receipts and funding through borrowing which is programmed for 2022/24 will enable the Council to consider and develop capital schemes to support energy efficiency retrofit programmes aligned to externally funded programmes such as Warm Homes Grant, together with the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration.

8.8 Policy Framework Implications

8.8.1 The delivery of the Housing Capital Programme supports the Council's Borough Strategy objectives of 'Promote good health, independence and care across our communities' and 'Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all'. Targeting local contractors helps to support the delivery of the outcome 'Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy'.

9. Background papers

9.1 None.

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 – 2021/22 Housing Capital Programme.