

Report to: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND CAPITAL MONITORING PANEL

Date: 17 August 2023

Executive Member: Councillor Bill Fairfoull – Deputy Executive Leader

Reporting Officer: Tony Decrop – Assistant Director Children’s Services
Paula Sumner – Assistant Director Early Help and Partnerships

Subject: **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE CAPITAL SCHEMES UPDATE REPORT**

Report Summary: This report provides an update on the Children’s Social Care and Early Help property capital schemes and sets out details of the major approved schemes in this area of Children’s Services.

Recommendations: That Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel be recommended to:

- (i) Note the progress as set out in the report and approve the reforecasting of £1.641m of spend on the Boyds Walk project from 2023-24 to 2024-25.
- (ii) Add the capital funding from the Department for Education Family Hubs Grant for financial years 2023-24 (£100,100) and 2024-25 (£69,600) to the capital programme.

Corporate Plan: The schemes set out in this report supports the objectives of the Corporate Plan and enable the delivery of the Children’s 7-point plan.

Policy Implications: In line with Policy and Financial Framework .

Financial Implications: This report provides an update in relation to the schemes already approved and any updates on progress. The Education Capital programme is funded entirely by Grants and contributions, which means the council has to prioritise this spending on priority schemes. It is critical value for money considerations are at the heart of our decision-making.

(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer)

There is total budget approved of £2.863m for 2023/24 with a request included in this report for an additional £0.100m to bring total available funding to £2.963m

	Amount £m
Approved Programme Budget	2.863
Remaining Funding	2.863
Proposed Programme Changes	0.100
Total Funding	2.963

A substantial element of the Boyd’s walk project has slipped into 2024/25, which will delay the impact of revenue benefits associated with the opening of the children’s home. Council owned residential homes typically provide places at £2k per week lower than external homes.

If the Boyd’s Walk project costs increase by £0.200m this will create a cost pressure on the scheme that will need to be funded from elsewhere. There is a grant bid underway for an additional £0.700m but there is a risk that if this is unsuccessful the council will have to fund the additional costs.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the
Borough Solicitor)**

This report is intended to provide Members with an update on progress of the various projects. No decisions are sought in relation to the projects, which are subject to their own due diligence, governance and decision-making save for the recommendation to cabinet to add the capital funding from the Department for Education Family Hubs Grant for financial years 2023-24 (£100,100) and 2024-25 (£69,600) to the capital programme.

Risk Management:

This is covered in the content of the report.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by Contacting Tony Decrop, Assistant Director of Children's Services by:



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Children’s Social Care and Early Help property capital projects, within the Capital Programme managed by the Directorate and sets out details of the major approved property capital schemes in this Directorate.
- 1.2 Full details of existing schemes are set out below:

Scheme Name	2023/24 Approved Budget Allocation £m	Re-Profiled into 24/25 budget £m	2023/24 Budget addition (Subject to Approval) £m	2023/24 Budget (Subject to Re-Profiling Approval) £m	2024/25 Budget after Re profiling and additions Subject to Approval £m
Respite Unit	0.367	0	0	0.367	0
Boyds Walk	2.408	1.641	0	0.767	2.454
Unallocated Short Breaks	0.088	0	0	0.088	0
Family Hubs	0	0	0.100	0.100	0.070
Total	2.863	1.641	0.100	1.322	2.524

2. PROGRESS UPDATE

Respite Unit

- 2.1 As reported to committee on the 14th March 2022, the purchase of a respite property did not conclude due to the report on title and the service conclusion that the property would not be fit for the purpose it is intended. The delivery of edge of care respite will now form part of the work Salford City Council are undertaking as Sector Led Improvement Partners commissioned by the DFE which will inform are future model and provision of in-house Children’s Homes. The way forward on capital spend will also be influenced by the Governments response to the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care (Stable Homes Built on Love), that includes proposals to establish regional commissioning care co-operatives (GM is already considering this proposal).

Boyds Walk Replacement

- 2.2 Boyds Walk is Children’s Home for children with disabilities requiring long term and short-term care. The property from which the service operates is not fit for purpose. The property has significant health and safety, safeguarding and Children’s Home Regulation deficiencies and Ofsted, Fire Service and Children’s Services senior management are all of the same opinion that an urgent replacement is required. An Executive Cabinet was approved at the 26th October 2022 meeting that recommends a new build replacement for Boyds Walk on the former Flowery Field Infant School vacant site. A bid to the DFE Children’s Home Capital Programme funding opportunity was successful (50% of estimated capital cost and a Grant Offer Letter has been signed for £1.600m).
- 2.3 The start of the project has been delayed due to the DFE requirement for formal consultation on the appropriation of land (former Infant School site). The decision to approve the appropriation of land for an alternate use has now been agreed by the Minister.
- 2.4 RIBA Stage 2 has recently been completed and at this early stage, the project is anticipated to be approx. £0.200m over budget. The main reasons for this are a small increase in the gross internal floor area, soft market testing of market of the mechanical and electrical works required coming back significantly higher than first estimated and the requirement to have

a sub-station to accommodate the new capacity brought by the scheme. Early value engineering has been undertaken during stage 2 and the current cost of the project includes risk and inflation contingencies, which may be taken out as the project moves through its RIBA stages. Further value engineering will also be considered, especially for mechanical and electrical works, in order to manage cost within the original funding envelope.

- 2.5 It is worth noting that a £0.700m capital bid to the NHSE is being drafted and will be submitted in August. If successful, this bid will reduce the Council's 50% contribution to the scheme and / or provide a contingency for the scheme. The success, or otherwise, of this bid will be reported in future monitoring reports.

Unallocated Short Breaks

- 2.6 The unallocated short breaks funding will be utilised to support home adaptations needed to accommodate children with disabilities.

Family Hubs

- 2.7 In May 2022, Tameside Council was one of seventy-five local authorities identified to receive a £169,700 share of the £301.750 million to implement the Family Hubs and Best Start for Life Programme in the years 2022-25.

- 2.8 The Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme is a jointly overseen by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) with funding allocated for October 2022 to March 2025. There is an expectation that local authorities meet all the requirements of the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme by 31st March 2025.

- 2.9 Family hubs are a way of joining up locally and bringing existing family help services together to improve access to services, connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Family Hubs bring together services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core. They can include hub buildings and virtual offers. How services are delivered varies from place to place, but the following principles are key to the family hub model:

- **More accessible** – through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, virtual offers and outreach.
- **Better connected** – family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services and providers (state, private, voluntary) – through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives, to families with children of all ages, reduces fragmentation (even though an emphasis on early years and the 'Start for Life' offer will remain).
- **Relationship-centred** – practice in a family hub builds on family strengths and looks to improve family relationships to address underlying issues.

- 2.10 The Tameside Family Hub model is well under way utilising revenue grant funding from the Department for Education to provide a new updated model of providing support to Tameside families. The new capital investment in the Family Hubs and Best Start for Life Programme will be used to support our Family Hubs to have stable IT infrastructure so that our workforce and partners are able to have good reliable connectivity. The capital spending will also enable bringing in IT equipment into Family Hubs for families to use to access websites such as the Local Offer or Children's services pages. Some capital funding will be used to repair our outdoor areas to support with the delivery of early years sessions externally. In addition, our family hubs will be re-branded with new signs at our hub and spoke locations.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As set out at the front of the report.