

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 - QUARTER 3 TO 31 DECEMBER 2020

COMMENTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

At a virtual meeting on 25 February 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered the report and unanimously agreed to support the recommendation to the Executive.

Members of the Board asked a number of questions, when the following points were confirmed:

- As part of the Capital Strategy and improvements to the monitoring of the capital programme, there was now a Capital Review Group who were looking at business cases in an overarching way which included peer review, and were determining whether projects were realistic and ensuring that risks were highlighted at an early stage. It was noted that there were now standardised business case templates and guidance on the information to be included which would ensure all relevant information was captured to be able to make more informed decisions. It also provided a reminder to officers on what information the scrutiny committees and the Executive would need to see. This was being gradually implemented and as a result business cases were coming through in a much better format.
- It was recommended that Scrutiny Committees should have regular periodic reports right from the start in the larger projects.
- Highways schemes in particular needed to be better managed in terms of risks and budget forecasting. Future highways schemes, such as the North Hykeham Relief Road, should have more scrutiny of the risks going forward. It was recognised that not all risks could be mitigated against due to third party and contractor involvement.
- Specific schemes and projects in the capital programme were considered by the relevant scrutiny committee, such as the Special Schools capital scheme appraisals which were being brought forward to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. It was thought that members of the Board would benefit if future Capital Budget Monitoring reports about live schemes included information about when and with what result those schemes had been considered by a scrutiny committee so as to highlight that a scrutiny appraisal had taken place.
- Training on finance and the scrutiny of major projects should be provided so that councillors had the skills and confidence to interrogate the financial information presented at the scrutiny committees. This training had been incorporated into the Induction programme for councillors after the elections on 6 May 2021.

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