

Portfolio Holder Decisions

Date: Monday 29 July 2024

Time: 12.00 pm

Venue: Virtual meeting

Membership

Councillor Peter Butlin

Councillor Martin Watson

Items on the agenda: -

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Additions to the Education Capital Programme | 3 - 10 |
| 2. Government Funding for Growth Hubs | 11 - 16 |

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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Portfolio Holder Decision Additions to the Education Capital Programme

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property
Date of decision	29 July 2024
	Signed

1. Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property:

- 1.1 approves the addition to the capital programme of a contribution to the scheme at Aylesford School at a cost of £0.200 million to be funded from S106 receipts;
- 1.2 approves the addition to the capital programme of a contribution to the scheme at Wolvey CofE Primary School at a cost of £0.075 million to be funded from S106 receipts; and
- 1.3 approves the addition to the capital programme of contributions to the Early Years schemes at:
 - Creative Flair (Kenilworth);
 - Cheeky Monkeys Day Nursery (Nuneaton);
 - St John's Primary School (Kenilworth);
 - The Burrow Nursery & Pre-School (Kenilworth);
 - Budbrooke House Children's Nursery (Warwick);
 - Little Millers Nursery (Wolvey);
 - Bright Kids (Lower Quinton);
 - Knightlow Children's Partnership (Rugby);
 - Happy Days Nursery (Warwick)

at a cost of £0.640 million, £0.185 million to be funded from S106 receipts and £0.455 million from the Department for Education (DFE) Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder has delegated authority to add schemes to the Capital Programme where the value is less than £2,000,000 and the scheme is fully funded from external grants, developer contributions or from revenue.

2.2 Funding from developer contributions can only be used for a limited range of purposes specified in the relevant agreement. The Infrastructure Team has confirmed the availability and use of the funding.

3. Background information

Aylesford School

- 3.1 In September 2022 £0.102 million was agreed by Cabinet to use towards the refurbishment of the school's washroom facilities.
- 3.2 However, the project was delayed due to the discovery of asbestos, which closed half of the school. Therefore, these original funds remain allocated but unspent.
- 3.3 Since original approval, costs have now increased. In addition, the scope of the proposed work has expanded meaning that the toilets will now be entirely redeveloped and replaced to support the safeguarding of students through the provision of safe, clean, and age-appropriate washrooms.
- 3.4 The school's current provision is poorly designed and outdated and there are issues with vaping and general supervision. Introducing modern facilities will tackle these issues.
- 3.5 Work will include:
- Structural alterations to remove walls.
 - Additional cubicles and toilets
 - Construction of new washroom entrances with landscaping
 - Installation of vape detection devices.
 - New floors and ceilings
 - Installation of electric external shutters for access.
 - Additional CCTV (for supervised hand wash areas only)
- 3.6 The school would like to carry out this work over the summer holidays 2024.
- 3.7 The total requested amount to complete this project is estimated at an additional £0.200 million and would be funded by developer funding.
- 3.8 The £0.200 million available under the s106 agreement is specifically for increase of provision at Aylesford School.
- 3.9 The school are responsible for all upfront costs, payment of S106 contributions will be made upon receipt of proof of qualifying spend and no other costs will be incurred by the Council.

Wolvey CofE Primary School

- 3.10 The school propose to increase the teaching space available to cope with demand for places at the school and to allow for future growth.
- 3.11 Work would be carried out to renovate an area in the school that is currently underutilised as an ICT room. The school will be purchasing a class worth of laptops from their capital so that ICT teaching can be improved and delivered consistently to a whole class in one session within their classrooms.
- 3.12 The ICT room will be split into 4 breakout rooms, a fifth room outside of the ICT room would be created at the same time. This would create spaces to allow staff to focus on children who need additional assistance in a supportive environment.
- 3.13 Interventions are currently carried out in the corridor which, at times, can be disruptive. The breakout rooms would also be used for specialist learning (e.g. music lessons), SEN working and breakout groups.
- 3.14 At the same time, a new corridor between the school and staff room would be installed allowing the school to reutilise a space within the staff room to provide enhanced cooking facilities for children during DT lessons.
- 3.15 The funding would also be used to update the children's toilets as they are accessed by all children within the school and nursery.
- 3.16 The school would like to carry out this work over the summer holidays 2024.
- 3.17 The total cost for this project is estimated at circa £0.075 million and would be funded by developer funding.
- 3.18 The £0.075 million available under the s106 agreement is specifically for additional teaching space at Wolvey CofE Primary School.
- 3.19 The school are responsible for all upfront costs, payment of S106 contributions will be made upon receipt of proof of qualifying spend and no other costs will be incurred by the Council.

Early Years

- 3.20 The extension of funded places for working parents sees all LA's needing to increase their early years place sufficiency to meet forecast demand.
- 3.21 To support the creation of the additional places that will be required, LA's have been provided with a capital expansion funding amount of £999,360 for allocation from the DFE.
- 3.22 All providers of early years and childcare places in Warwickshire were provided with the opportunity to apply for the grant; applications were reviewed and assessed by a mixed panel from School Place Planning and Early Years Teams.

- 3.23 Assessment of the applications were made based on factors as noted within the capital grant [guidance](#) including local sufficiency data, increased demand data, cost evaluation, quality grading of provider, additional external capital contributions and compliance elements.
- 3.24 The following projects were chosen as valid capital projects and to maximise the allocation of the grant across providers in Warwickshire, it is proposed to use relevant developer contributions alongside the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant, where available.

Creative Flair (Kenilworth)

- 3.25 To address increased demand, it is proposed to convert an existing large double garage into usable nursery space.
- 3.26 Key features of the garage conversion will be:
- Insulating all walls, loft, the new internal wall (to storage room) and the floor.
 - Piped underfloor heating will be run from the existing property boiler to ensure a consistently warm environment is created without the need for radiators.
 - Replacement and enlargement of side windows and doors to improve insulation and the entry of natural light.
- 3.27 As a result of this expansion, three 0-2yr old spaces and four 2-3yr old spaces would be created.
- 3.28 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.023 million which is proposed to be funded entirely by S106 contributions available for increasing early years/pre-school provision in the local area.
- 3.29 The nursery is hoping to complete this work by September 2024.

Cheeky Monkeys Day Nursery (Nuneaton)

- 3.30 In response to increased demand in the Nuneaton area, it is proposed to expand Cheeky Monkeys Day Nursery.
- 3.31 Plans include creating additional learning space, extending dining/catering areas and to create a SEN learning space for children with additional needs. Planning has already been agreed in principle.
- 3.32 As a result of this expansion, twelve 0-2yr old, sixteen 2-3yr old spaces and sixteen 3-4yr old spaces would be created.
- 3.33 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.203 million, £0.100 million of which is proposed to be funded by S106 contributions available for increasing the provision of pre-school places in the local area with the remainder being funded by the nursery.
- 3.34 Work is anticipated to be completed by October 2024.

St John's Primary School (Kenilworth)

- 3.35 To address demand created by substantial residential development in Kenilworth, the school propose to repurpose available space in the neighbouring Children's Centre to accommodate both additional pre-school places through the remodelling of office spaces and the creation of a dedicated room for 2-year-olds in the existing playroom.
- 3.36 This expansion aligns with the school's broader growth to 2FE (due for completion in September 2025) and can be executed with minimal disruption to existing early years operations.
- 3.37 It is proposed to fund the project using £0.035 million from available s106 contributions for early years in the Kenilworth area and a contribution from the school of £0.020 million.
- 3.38 Upon completion (anticipated by April 2025), the expanded provision would offer a total of 84 available three-hour sessions per day, translating to 1,260 hours of provision for 2 to 4-year-olds throughout the week.

The Burrow Nursery & Pre-School (Kenilworth)

- 3.39 The Burrow is proposing to extend one of their classrooms to allow for higher numbers of 2-year-olds. This is in response to a higher demand for places; there are currently waiting lists, for all 5 days, for this age group.
- 3.40 The extension would provide an additional 28 square meters of space, helping to provide space for an additional 10 2–3-year-olds. The space will also have a toilet and a small kitchen area.
- 3.41 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.060 million. It is proposed that the Council fund £0.027 million of this from S106 contributions available for increasing early years/pre-school provision in the local area and £0.003 million from the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant. The remaining £0.030 million will be funded by the nursery.
- 3.42 No planning is required so work is anticipated to be completed over the summer holidays ready for September 2024.

Budbrooke House Children's Nursery (Warwick)

- 3.43 Budbrooke House Children's Nursery is an Ofsted outstanding preschool in Warwick, they currently provide 45 spaces a day, for children 2, 3, 4 and 5 years of age.
- 3.44 To meet the demand from development in nearby Hampton Magna the nursery propose to build a timber framed rear extension, allowing them to open a baby and toddler room for 11 additional children, aged 0-2 years.
- 3.45 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.085 million, £0.065 million of which is

proposed to be funded by the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant. The remaining £0.020 million will be funded by the nursery.

- 3.46 The nursery would carry this work out over the summer ready for additional children in September 2024.

Little Millers Nursery at Wolvey Primary School

- 3.47 The nursery is currently housed in an external modular building on the Wolvey CofE Primary School site.

- 3.48 The proposal to increase provision is to refurbish and reconfigure another modular building, which is adjacent to the current nursery provision.

- 3.49 As a result of this expansion, fifteen 2–3-year-old spaces and four 3–4-year-old spaces would be created.

- 3.50 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.052 million, £0.045 million of which is proposed to be funded by the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant with the remainder funded by the nursery.

- 3.51 It is planned for these works to take place during the summer holidays with a view to the new spaces being available from September 2024.

Bright Kids (Lower Quinton)

- 3.52 Bright Kids nursery propose to expand their existing building with an extension and a partial second floor.

- 3.53 As a result of this expansion, twelve 0-2yr old spaces and fifteen 2-3yr old spaces would be created.

- 3.54 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.275 million, £0.075 million of which is proposed to be funded by the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant with the remaining £0.200 million funded by the nursery.

- 3.55 It is hoped that building works would start by March 2025 and complete prior to September 2025 when the 30 hours funding becomes applicable to all eligible age ranges.

Knightlow Children's Partnership (Rugby)

- 3.56 The nursery is proposing to meet the current demand for under 2 places by extending the baby room into the current covered decking area at the back of the existing room to allow the nursery to offer a further 9 spaces for 0–2-year-olds.

- 3.57 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.125 million which is proposed to be funded by the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.

Happy Days Nursery (Warwick)

- 3.58 Happy Days Nursery serves a high number of NHS staff due to the location of the nursery being next to Warwick Hospital.
- 3.59 The proposal is to convert a large warehouse located within, but at the back of the nursery, which is currently a completely void and unused, wasted space. By converting this space, it will create a whole new pre-school suite.
- 3.60 By completing the expansion, the nursery will be able to offer an additional 44 places to the families in need of childcare. This translates into seven 0–2-year-old spaces, thirty-one 2-3yr old spaces and six 3–4-year-old spaces.
- 3.61 The total estimated cost of the project is £0.142 million which is proposed to be funded by the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.
- 3.62 Work is expected to be completed by September 2024.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The contribution towards the capital works outlined in section 3 amounts to £0.915 million and will be funded by developer contributions and the DFE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.
- 4.2 Funding from developer contributions can only be used for a limited range of purposes specified in the relevant agreement. The developer funding earmarked for use on the schemes at Aylesford School and Wolvey CofE Primary School names the respective schools within the obligation wording so they cannot be used elsewhere. Colleagues in the Infrastructure Team and Finance have confirmed the use and availability of the funding in line with the relevant agreement.
- 4.3 Following the first round of applications for the DfE Childcare Expansion Capital Grant, funding remains to explore further projects at other settings in areas with sufficiency pressures.

5. Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The changes to Building Regulations in June 2022 have significantly strengthened sustainable construction methods and whilst not solely changed for environmental purpose, they ensure that future construction recognises environmental challenges.
- 5.2 The associated capital works are anticipated to be minimal with the additional accommodation requirements involving small scale internal alterations and refurbishment.

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Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Butlin - Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Peter Butlin

Corporate Board – Nigel Minns

Legal – Peter Endall

Finance – Brian Smith

Equality – Hannah Laurence

Democratic Services – Nicole Conway, Amy Bridgewater-Carnall

Councillors – Chair & Spokes of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Local Member(s) - Cllr Holland, Cllr Warwick, Cllr Cooke, Cllr Spencer, Cllr Tromans, Cllr Matecki, Cllr Seccombe, Cllr Keeling

Portfolio Holder Decision Government Funding for Growth Hubs

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Economy
Date of decision	29 July 2024
	Signed

1. Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Economy:

- 1.1 Authorises the Executive Director for Communities to agree terms and conditions with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) for a grant for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire in 2024/25 on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.
- 1.2 Authorises the Executive Director for Communities to award the 2024/25 grant from DBT for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire to Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub Limited (CWGH) on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.
- 1.3 Authorises the Executive Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, to agree terms and conditions with DBT for any subsequent grants for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire in 2025/26 and any later years on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.
- 1.4 Authorises the Executive Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, to award any subsequent grants from DBT for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire in 2025/26 and any later years to CWGH on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 Following closure of Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership and in line with the wider integration of LEP functions into local democratic institutions, responsibility for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire has now been transferred to Warwickshire County Council.
- 2.2 In 2023/24, the Council was awarded a £0.261 million grant by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire which Cabinet agreed to award to Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub (CWGH) in full.

- 2.3 The Council is now expecting a grant offer from DBT for a further £0.261 million in 2024/25. Approvals are, therefore, required both for the Council to be able to agree grant terms and conditions with DBT and for the Council to be able to award the grant to CWGH.
- 2.4 Approval is also sought for the Executive Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy to be able to agree any subsequent grant terms and conditions with both DBT and CWGH for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire in 2025/26 and any later years on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.

3. Background information

Issues

- 3.1 In July 2023, Cabinet agreed that the Council would become a shareholder of Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub Limited alongside Coventry City Council (CCC). In November 2023, the Council and CCC entered into all necessary arrangements and agreements including the Articles of Association and a new Shareholders Agreement. The CWGH Board also agreed a new Three-Year Business Plan.
- 3.2 In November 2023, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Autumn Statement that funding for Growth Hubs in England would continue in 2024/25.
- 3.3 In March 2024, DBT confirmed that core funding had been agreed to support the Growth Hub network across all of England. DBT also confirmed, where institutional boundaries have not changed (like in Warwickshire), that combined, unitary or upper tier authorities would receive the same grant allocations as 2023/24. New allocations have been put in place (elsewhere in England) where new boundaries have been created.
- 3.4 In late May 2024, DBT confirmed that the Council would receive an allocation of £0.261 million payable this financial year specifically for the purpose of the 'giving of advice and support to businesses via the Growth Hub'. The grant is again only for delivery in Warwickshire. Funding for delivery in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area including Coventry has (like in 2023/24) been allocated to WMCA.
- 3.5 In order to enable DBT to draw up a formal grant offer letter, the Council has been asked to submit a delivery plan confirming Growth Hub deliverables and priorities for 2024/25 against five headings:
- Management, Governance, and Strategic Coordination
 - The Customer Journey
 - Strategic Partnerships and Business Support Simplification
 - Data, Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation and Value for Money
 - Business and Economic Intelligence

3.6 The Council has also been asked to confirm use of the grant in 2024/25 including the expenditure and forecast quarterly spend.

3.7 The 2024/25 grant is expected to be awarded under Section 11 of the Industrial Development Act. Approval is, therefore, required for the Council to be able to agree grant terms and conditions with DBT.

Options

3.8 The Council's options are limited. Not accepting the grant from DBT is considered a non-option. DBT are only allocating funding for Growth Hub delivery to combined, unitary or upper tier authorities in England. CWGH also plays a key role in the local business support landscape and the delivery of key Council priorities including the new Warwickshire Economic Growth Strategy.

3.9 Withholding a proportion of the grant in 2024/25 to fund the additional costs incurred by the Council in managing and administering the grant has also been considered. However, this has been discounted on the grounds of maximising support for CWGH and the Council being able to fund its costs in 2024/25 via the separate Post Local Enterprise Partnership grant (see 4.6 below).

3.10 It is, therefore, recommended that the 2024/25 grant from DBT for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire is used to support delivery of the new Business Plan agreed by CWGH Board. In particular, it is recommended that the Council agrees grant terms and conditions with DBT and that the Council awards the expected £0.261 million grant to CWGH in full.

3.11 In 2023/24, CWGH used the DBT grant to provide 352 businesses in Warwickshire with 'light touch' triage, information and/ or signposting support and a further 380 businesses with 'medium intensity' information, diagnostic and brokerage support. A further 107 businesses in Warwickshire also received 'high intensity' support e.g., account management.

3.12 It is unclear at this stage whether Government will continue to fund Growth Hubs in 2025/26 and beyond (even before the recent General Election and the change in Government). However, further Government funding is a potential scenario given the Growth Hub network now exists across England. Approval is, therefore, sought for the Council to be able to agree any subsequent grant terms and conditions with both DBT and CWGH for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire.

Timescales

3.13 The Council is now expecting a formal grant offer letter from DBT. The Council will only enter into a Grant Agreement with CWGH for the 2024/25 grant funding once an agreement with DBT is in place.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 It recommended that the grant from DBT for Growth Hub delivery in Warwickshire is used to support delivery of the new Business Plan agreed by CWGH Board. In particular, it is recommended that the grant is allocated to CWGH in full in order to support specific operational delivery costs in Warwickshire including the costs of the business navigators and account managers.
- 4.2 The 2024/25 grant will be awarded under Section 11 of the Industrial Development Act. It is expected to be payable quarterly in advance and that DBT will have the ability to recover any net underspends at the end of the year.
- 4.3 The DBT grant will be used in Warwickshire alongside the £0.1 million grant agreed by the Council to support CWGH in 2024/25, expected contributions from some of the district and borough councils and some commercial income.
- 4.4 All DBT grant conditions will be passed down to CWGH (where relevant) including the financial risk. Governance and monitoring requirements are already in place to provide assurance that both the Council and CWGH are meeting both the grant conditions and the English Devolution Accountability Framework (2023), relevant Assurance Framework and other statutory requirements.
- 4.5 A Subsidy Control Assessment will be undertaken in order to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control Act, and the subsidy will be published on the Government subsidy transparency database.
- 4.6 There is not any revenue impact on the Council in 2024/25 as a result of the decision. The Council's additional costs involved in managing and administering the DBT grant will be covered by the separate Post Local Enterprise Partnership grant already awarded to the Council as a Section 31 grant. The revenue impact in any future years will need to be considered at that point. It is expected, if the Post LEP or equivalent grant is no longer available, that the Council would be able to use a proportion of any future grants for Growth Hub delivery to fund reasonable management and administration costs.

5. Environmental Implications

- 5.1 CWGH already plays an important role promoting and signposting businesses in Warwickshire to environmental and low carbon support programmes. This includes the new Warwickshire Business Energy Advice Service commissioned by the Council and the District/ Borough Councils.

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Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

Members and officers consulted and informed
Portfolio Holder – Councillor Watson
Corporate Board – Mark Ryder, Purnima Kandula
Legal – Sarah Eley, Caroline Gutteridge, Sioned Harper, Harminder Nagra
Finance – Caroline Jones
Equality – Delroy Madden
Democratic Services – Helen Barnsley, Nicole Conway
Other Officers – Fay Winterburn, Isobel Woods
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