

# Cabinet

25 January 2022

## Revenue Investment Funds 2021/22 - January 2022 Report

### Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme Phase 2 bid as detailed in section 2 amounting to £0.969m from the Preventing Vulnerability Investment Fund.
- 2) Authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to procure and enter any agreements to give effect to the above proposals on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

### 1. Purpose of the report and context

- 1.1. As part of the 2021/22 budget, Council approved the refocusing of the remaining amounts in the Revenue Investment Funds into three funds aimed at Preventing Vulnerability, Tackling Climate Change and Place Shaping & Economic Growth. The funds provide opportunities to run initiatives to meet the Council's objectives outside of services' core delivery budgets.
- 1.2. The current breakdown of these funds is shown below:

Council Investment Funds	Resource as at 01/04/21 £000s	Agreed Future Commitments as at 01/04/21 £000s	Approvals 2021/22 £000s	Uncommitted funding remaining £000s
<b>Preventing Vulnerability</b> – A fund to pump-prime upfront investment in demand management and early intervention initiatives prior to the financial benefits accruing.	5,831	(1,342)	0	4,489
<b>Climate Change Fund</b> – A fund to invest in priorities flowing from the Climate Change Task and Finish Group and Council Plan 2025	2,990	(31)	(216)	2,743
<b>Place Shaping and Economic Growth</b> – A fund to deliver investment in growth and commercial outcomes for Warwickshire	10,189	(2,017)	(661)	7,511
<b>Total MTFS Allocation</b>	<b>19,010</b>	<b>(3,390)</b>	<b>(877)</b>	<b>14,743</b>

- 1.3. The funds are outside of core budgets, and members approved a four-stage approval process for projects seeking funding:
- Stage 1 – A project proposal document is developed and reviewed by Gateway Group/Corporate Board as to the strategic fit with the priorities in the Council Plan;
  - Stage 2 – The business case for the project is then prepared and an Investment Panel, made of representatives from Finance, Project Management Office and managers from services across the organisation, provides a technical evaluation and commentary on the proposal;
  - Stage 3 – Gateway Group use this technical evaluation alongside their own analysis of project governance and feasibility, to recommend the projects to Corporate Board if under £0.1m per project, or Cabinet if over this value for approval; and
  - Stage 4 – Cabinet approve/reject the allocations over £0.1m and note the projects under this value approved by Corporate Board. If the project is approved, funding is transferred to the service, and if savings have been identified flowing from the investment these are built into the medium-term financial strategy.
- 1.4. The scheme detailed in section 2 of this paper has been considered for strategic fit and robustness by Corporate Board and is recommended for approval. Subject to Cabinet’s decision today the amounts remaining unallocated in the three Investment Funds will be as below:

Preventing Vulnerability Fund	£3.520m
Climate Change Fund	£2.743m
Place Shaping and Economic Growth Fund	£7.511m

## **2. Description of the Investment Fund bid**

### **SEND and Inclusion Change Programme Phase 2**

- 2.1. Corporate Board recommend approval of £969,325 from the Preventing Vulnerability Investment Fund for Phase 2 of the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme with the project sponsor being the Assistant Director, Education.
- 2.2. This funding is in addition to the £2.430m funding bid submitted as part of the MTFs for 2022/23 and 2023/24. This funding request is intended to fund Phase 2 of the programme until March 2022, whilst the MTFs allocation will provide funding from April 2022 until the completion of the programme in September 2023 for the remainder of Phase 2 and all of Phase 3.

- 2.3. The SEND and Inclusion Change Programme (SICP) was commissioned by Cabinet in June 2020 to deliver fundamental transformation to the SEND system. It is recognised that there are significant challenges to Warwickshire's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services, outcomes for children and young people are falling, while costs for the service are increasing above the available funding. It is acknowledged that the funding challenge is a national issue affecting most councils.
- 2.4. The programme brings together the recommendations of an external review carried out by IMPOWER, the DSG Recovery and Sustainability Plans, Transformation and the SEND and Inclusion Strategy into one strategic framework. It also supports the Council Plan vision to 'Make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations.' The programme focuses on four key areas:
- Improving the outcomes for our children and young people with SEND
  - Making decisions in a clear, fair, and transparent way
  - Ensuring that systems are sustainable, so that we are working within our allocated funding
  - Securing education, employment, and training for our young people with SEND (age 16-25)
- 2.5. The programme is implemented via a phased approach and the original funding bid only covered phase 1, whilst phases 2 and 3 were still being developed, so a further funding bid was always envisaged to complete the full programme requirements:
- Phase 1 of the SICP (October 2020 – September 2021) was funded through £1.436m drawn from the Preventing Vulnerability Fund and the Change Fund, approved by Corporate Board and Cabinet in July 2020.
  - Phase 2 of the SICP (October 2021 – September 2022) will be funded through a combination of this request to the Preventing Vulnerability Fund for 2021/22 activity and a proposal for a time-limited MTFs allocation for the 2022/23 activity. The total cost of this phase is forecast to be £1.982m.
  - Phase 3 of the SICP (October 2022 – September 2023) is also part of the proposed time-limited MTFs allocation that formed part of the 2022/23 budget and MTFs report to Cabinet in December 2021. The total cost of this phase is forecast to be £1.417m.
- 2.6. The projects scheduled in Phase 2 are enabling projects to support infrastructure and behaviour changes to improve the customer experience and develop sustainable business processes. These initiatives will improve the effective use of resources creating a more sustainable SEND education system and ensure that the Council is able to discharge its statutory obligations in a

timely manner improving the experience of children and young people. An overview of these projects is provided in Appendix A.

- 2.7. The enabling projects of Phase 2 in 2022/23 will underpin the delivery of financial savings next financial year by allowing the council to increase the number of placements in mainstream settings, reduce placements in independent specialist provision, deliver better value for money when commissioning alternative provision and expend access to Early Years provision. The delivery of these savings is built into the MTFs and necessary to balance the medium term financial position of the Council.
- 2.8. There is already evidence from the financial monitoring in the current year that Phase 1 of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme is starting to deliver the anticipated non-financial and financial benefits. Ofsted's written feedback in the Local Area Inspection report identified that the programme addressed the key challenges and was a key mitigation to some concerns raised with the existing system during the inspection, so continued support of the programme is critical.

### **3. Environmental Implications**

- 3.1. There are no environmental issues or concerns arising from the initiatives proposed in this document.

### **4. Financial Implication**

- 4.1. The current MTFs proposals include a proposed £2.430m allocation for 2022/23 and 2023/24 beyond the level set out in this report for the project to enable the completion of Phase 2 and Phase 3 and the delivery of the savings set out in this report. This funding is subject to approval by Council in February 2022.
- 4.2. If this funding is not approved the programme will have to pause and a new funding bid will need to be submitted as part of the MTFs refresh in 2022/23. The delay in the delivery of the programme will mean benefits are not realised as planned and further funding will need to be committed to fund the DSG High Needs Block deficit in the future.

### **5. Background Papers**

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: The Chair and Party Spokes of Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Appendix A – SEND and Inclusion Change Programme Phase 2 Projects

Phase 2 Projects				
No	Delivery Stream	Project	Project Deliverables	Project Benefits
1	SEND Transformation	Inclusion Framework for school trials (previously Changing the Conversation)	The project is a trial as recommended by IMPOWER, to assess approaches to support children in mainstream settings and avoid the need to apply for EHC plans: put in place a multidisciplinary team available free of charge, to enable settings to access advice, interventions, or capacity-building training relating to meeting the needs of children/ young people identified at SEN support level.	The trial is a cost-effective way of testing whether this solution (the framework) will work and should therefore be rolled out across the county. If the trial is successful then it will contribute to the below benefits which will be seen in the county-wide rollout that will follow this project, and at programme level.
2	SEND Transformation	County-wide SEMH campaign (Impower)	A campaign to deliver key messages to schools, families, and young people on social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) intervention and needs	Children and young people, parent/carers, education settings and wider professionals recognise (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) SEMH needs Professionals understand the educational impact of SEMH needs All people living/working in Warwickshire are more aware of how they can support themselves, each other and access support of children's SEMH when needed
3	SEND Transformation	Trial 3: Child centred inclusion pathways (Impower)	Establish a multi-agency 'Warwickshire inclusion team' Engage with identified and willing SEND children / young persons and their families to develop an understanding of how to amend their educational provision to improve outcomes Set up multi agency team meetings with all professionals and both settings to map out and monitor agreed transitions Use data and understanding of needs to identify key groups of SEND children, where a child may have been placed in specialist setting but placement opportunities are available in mainstream education	Provision is more closely aligned to children/young people's level of need and working towards short- and long-term outcomes Reviewing the appropriateness of support is routine and consistent

Phase 2 Projects				
No	Delivery Stream	Project	Project Deliverables	Project Benefits
4	SEND and Inclusion Strategy	Annual Reviews	A revised internal process for setting, attending, receiving, and reviewing EHC plans.	WCC will meet its statutory duties to complete 12-month annual reviews as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND regulations and the Code of Practice statutory guidance.
5	SEND and Inclusion Strategy	Tribunal pathway	Review the current tribunal pathway and look at options to support an improved response to the route of redress for CYP and their families	
6	SEND Transformation	Developing WCC Transitions guidance	Review and update transition guidance to provide a clear pathway for children and young people, parent, and carers. This will enable a smoother transition experience	Children and young people experience smoother transitions
7	SEND and Inclusion Strategy	Improving outcomes for SEND learners at each key stage	Review and identify strategies to improve attainment and progress at each key stage	Better outcomes for children and young people with SEND
8	SEND and Inclusion Strategy	Workforce Development	Ensuring that the wider workforce in schools and settings are trained appropriately to deliver the SEND and Inclusion guidance. To address issues of confidence both in terms of staff feeling appropriately skilled to support children with SEND and parents having confidence in them.	More children and young people with SEND having their Educational needs met in mainstream settings Appropriate use of Resource Provision Efficient and effective use of allocated resources creating a sustainable SEND education system