Capital Strategy

2019/20 – 2022/23

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Contents

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

CAPITAL STRATEGY

1 Purpose

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code requires local authorities to produce a capital strategy to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are taken in line with desired outcomes and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.

The Capital Strategy is a key document for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Thames Valley Police and forms part of the authority's integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning. It provides a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It includes an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure.

Throughout this document the term TVP is used to refer to the activities of both the PCC and the Force.

2 Scope

This Capital Strategy includes all capital expenditure and capital investment decisions for TVP. It sets out the long term context in which decisions are made with reference to the life of the projects/assets.

3 Capital Expenditure – Definition

Capital expenditure is incurred on the acquisition or creation of assets, or expenditure that enhances or adds to the life or value of an existing fixed asset. Fixed assets are tangible or intangible assets that yield benefits to TVP generally for a period of more than one year, e.g. land and buildings, ICT, business change programmes, equipment and vehicles. This is in contrast to revenue expenditure which is spending on the day to day running costs of services such as employee costs and supplies and services.

The capital programme is TVP's plan of capital works for future years, including details on the funding of the schemes.

4 Capital vs. Treasury Management Investments

Treasury Management investment activity covers those investments which arise from the organisation’s cash flows and debt management activity, and ultimately represent balances which need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

For Treasury Management investments the security and liquidity of funds are placed ahead of the investment return. The management of associated risk is set out in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code recognises that some local authorities are entitled to make investments for policy reasons outside of normal treasury management activity. These may include service and commercial investments. However, like all police forces in England and Wales, TVP does not have a General Power of Competence, which gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. As such, TVP is prevented from entering into commercial investment activities.

5 Links to other corporate strategies and plans

The PCC produces his Police and Crime Plan every four years. The current version covers the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

The Chief Constable has produced a Force Commitment which is supported by Annual Delivery Plans.

To support these overarching documents a number of interrelated strategies and plans are in place, such as the Financial Strategy, Medium Term Financial Plan, Medium Term Capital Plan, Capital Strategy, Asset Management Plan and the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy.

The operation of all these strategies and plans is underpinned by the Code of Corporate Governance which includes Contract Procedure Rules and the Forces Financial Regulations.

Capital resources should be directed to those programmes and projects that optimise the achievement of these outcomes. The following processes are designed to ensure this happens.

6 The Capital Budget Setting Process

6.1 Introduction

At any given time TVP is committed to rolling medium term revenue & capital plans that usually extend for 4 years setting out the anticipated level of expenditure and the associated funding. The plans are drawn up, reassessed and extended annually and, if required, re-prioritised to enable TVP to achieve the aims and objectives established in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, the Force Commitment and to support national drivers like the National Policing Vision for 2025.

The Medium Term Capital Plan provides the TVP infrastructure and major assets through capital investment, enabling TVP to strengthen and streamline core assets and systems, and provides the framework for delivering innovative policing with a lower resource profile.

Key focuses of the Capital Programme:

- To ensure the property estate remains fit for purpose, identifying opportunities to streamline assets and develop the estate infrastructure; maintaining core sites, improving core training facilities and progressing the Asset Management Plan.

- To ensure provision is made for ICT & Business Change Technology to maintain and develop the existing infrastructure and invest in the core technologies required to provide innovative digital policing services.

- The maintenance and replacement of other core assets where necessary, e.g. vehicles and communication infrastructure.

The plans acknowledge the constrained financial position of TVP and maximise both the available financial resources and the capacity that TVP has to manage change projects.

6.2 Force Collaboration & Wider Sector Engagement.

Although TVP has its own Capital Strategy and Medium Term Capital Plan the natural drivers that encourage local and regional forces to collaborate, such as cost and resource sharing, along with structured collaborations and national plans, can have a significant influence on local decision making.

One of the focal points therefore of the TVP Capital Strategy is to acknowledge regional and national partnership working, both with other forces and in a the wider context of engagement with Local Authorities & Councils, other Emergency Services and the Crown Prosecution Service, to improve overall service to the public.

6.3 The Capital Budget Setting Process & Timetable Overview.

For any particular budget setting year, the process for TVP starts during the summer of the preceding year with the Force Change Department and other key Stakeholder groups for both TVP and other Collaborative Forces agreeing the exact timetable and communication strategy to be adopted to secure investment requirements and ideas from the stakeholder groups covering the key criteria, such as:

- Achievement of high level agreed PCC, Force, Regional or National outcomes;
- Maintenance of the essential infrastructure of the Force;
- Development of improved Force wide capability
- Adjustments to existing prioritised plans / projects.
- Rationalisation & modernisation of estates
- Carbon management & Health and Safety
- Invest to save schemes.

Based on an agreed timetable, business cases for consideration will be submitted into Force Change teams for both TVP and collaborative Forces in order that a joined up approach is made to capital investment.

Over the autumn, the business cases will be subjected to the Forces' Prioritisation Matrix, which provides a score for the project that considers key factors in assessing the importance of the bid. The bids will then be presented to and extensively reviewed by the Chief Constables Management Team and Joint Force Chief Officer Groups with an initial view of potential affordability.

Typically a costed draft Medium Term Capital Plan will then be presented to the PCC late autumn, providing views on affordability and potential funding issues and options.

A final version of the Medium Term Capital Plan will be presented to the PCC in the following January for approval, reflecting the known funding position and any further developmental work on the plan.

The formal PCC approval, agrees the capital budget for the following year, and acknowledges the intention for planning purposes of the remaining years of the Medium Term Plan.

6.4 Identifying Capital Expenditure / Investment Requirements

The need for a capital scheme will typically be identified through one or more of the following processes and will be submitted as a business case into the budget setting process (6.3).

- Senior stakeholders will submit business cases that support delivery of local, force, regional or national objectives. These plans must be sponsored by a member of the Chief Constables Management Team and must identify the requirement, rational, deliverables, benefits, links to Force and/or PCC Priorities, and costs in terms of both capital investment and ongoing revenue consequences.
- Reviews of existing capital projects may identify that budget variances are likely to occur and that either more or less funding is likely to be required, or that the timing of the funding requirement has changed. Full rationales are required to justify variances and these are submitted as per service delivery bids above.
- The other key strategies will inform the capital strategy and a capital scheme bid may arise from that, for example, the Asset Management Plan which rationalises and develops TVP operational buildings and estates may require either sale, purchase or redevelopment of an element of the estate.

6.5 Business Case Prioritisation

Business case prioritisation is achieved by initially applying an agreed Force Prioritisation Matrix to the bid. The matrix reflects the 'Force Commitment', operational priorities, risk profile, benefits and costs and provides an indicative score for each business case.

The Prioritisation Matrix score is subject to extensive review by Chief Officers and senior staff over the course of the budget round to ensure prioritisation is effective and that any appeals are given due consideration.

Detailed discussions are held with Collaborative Partners to agree, as far as possible, Force prioritisation and understand affordability risks and issues on joint ventures.

6.6 Affordability and Financial Planning.

The overall financial position of TVP and hence the scope for future capital expenditure, must take into consideration the combination of the revenue budget, capital programme as well as the position on reserves. The revenue and capital budget positions are intertwined as achieving the TVP priorities may require revenue expenditure or investment in capital items, depending on what is needed, and one impacts the other.

The revenue Medium Term Financial Plan will identify the potential financial position for TVP for the next four years and will include forecasts on inflation, committed growth requirements, forecast productivity and efficiency savings, assumptions around grant and council tax funding and any other information introduced during the budget process.

The revenue position influences the capital position in terms of potential affordability of support for Direct Revenue Financing (DRF) or debt charges (for external borrowing) whereas the capital bid process influences the revenue position in terms of both revenue consequences of capital programmes and also the requirement to financially support capital investment, either through DRF or external borrowing.

The extent to which the annual revenue budget, through the 4 year forecast, is expected to be able to support the capital programme is a key factor to overall financial planning and is becoming more so as other sources of funding cease to be available. The annual police capital grant provides only a small fraction of the funding required to maintain the Forces assets.

6.7 Capital Sustainability.

The financial position is changing. For many years TVP has benefitted from substantial capital reserves, supported by the sale of operational buildings or police houses or from revenue reserves assigned to capital investment.

As we move forward through the next 4 years and beyond the picture moves away from funding of the capital programme through use of accumulate reserves and into a position of funding through either DRF or external borrowing for specific projects.

Beyond the next 4 years almost all capital investment will have been funded from revenue contributions. This is expected to be during a continued period of revenue pressure and uncertainty.

The TVP Strategy is therefore to invest in core infrastructure now that will not only offer overall service improvements to the public, but also maximise revenue savings into the future through more efficient and mobile use of police personnel, enabled by improved Information and Communication Technology systems and other core infrastructure, for example, a connected vehicle fleet and building assets.

The TVP investment strategy will also be influenced by and take account of national visions for policing, regional and local priorities.

6.8 The Formal MTCP Approval Process

As indicated, the PCC receives the updated Capital Programme in January each year as part of the overall suite of budget reports.

The PCC approves the overall borrowing levels as part of the Treasury Management Report. The taking of loans, if required, then becomes an operational decision for the PCC's Chief Finance Officer who will decide on the basis of the level of reserves, current and predicted cash flow, and the money market position whether borrowing should be met from internal or external borrowing.

Once the PCC has approved the capital programme, expenditure can be committed against these approved schemes subject to the normal contract procedure rules and the terms and conditions of funding.

Whether capital projects are funded from grant, contributions, capital allocations or borrowing, the revenue costs must be able to be met from existing revenue budgets or identified (and underwritten) savings or income streams.

Following approval by the PCC, capital expenditure is then monitored on a regular basis.

7 Individual Project Management

Capital projects are subject to high levels of scrutiny. This varies dependant on the type of project and may be influenced by size or by the makeup of regional involvement. Each project will have a Project Manager and potentially a team to implement the project.

Typically projects will have a dedicated Project Board which, if part of a larger programme, may sit under a Programme Board. Programme and Project Boards will have a Senior Responsible Officer.

Detailed oversight is further provided through ICT Project Management Office, the Strategic Estates Group and Force Change Boards.

Regional Projects or Programmes may also report into Regional Boards.

8. Project Funding

Once an approved capital project is initiated, proportionate project funds are released to project managers in stages, called Stage Gates, rather than funding being released in full at the start of the project.

Depending on project size the initial limited release of funds will enable a project to be started and relevant project documentation (e.g. a detailed business case) to be completed. Once that has been satisfied further funds will be released in stages at specific project review points or stage gates within existing project management processes, which will be defined and agreed with project managers at the start of the project and linked to observable project progression points.

This enables the Force to link the release of funds to key project milestones or progress points and enable improved visibility of project progress relative to committed expenditure, thus mitigating the risk of significant project spend variances.

9 Monitoring of the capital programme

The Director of Finance will submit capital monitoring reports to both the Chief Constables Management Team and the PCC on a regular basis throughout the year. These reports will be based on the most recently available financial information. These monitoring reports will show spending to date and compare projected expenditure with the approved capital budget.

For proposed in-year amendments to the annual capital budget, for new schemes not already included in the medium term capital plan, the Director of Finance will prepare a business case for submission to the PCC for consideration and approval, including details on how the new scheme is to be funded.

Monitoring reports presented to the PCC at his public Level 1 meeting with the Chief Constable are published on his website.

In addition, for those business change programmes where a formal Board has been established, a detailed scheme monitoring report is presented to each Board meeting.

10 Performance Management

Clear measurable outcomes should be developed for each capital scheme. After the scheme has been completed, the Chief Constable is required to check that outcomes have been achieved.

Post scheme evaluation reviews should be completed by TVP for all schemes over £0.5 million and for strategic capital projects.

Reviews should look at the effectiveness of the whole project in terms of service delivery outcomes, design and construction, financing etc. and identify good practice and lessons to be learnt in delivering future projects.

11 Funding Strategy and Capital Policies

This section sets out TVP policies and priorities in relation to funding capital expenditure and investment.

11.1 Government Grant

The Police Service only receives limited financial support from the Home Office; annual capital grant is currently less than £1.5m per annum. This grant is not hypothecated and can be carried forward if not spent in the year of receipt.

Specific capital grants may be received for agreed capital works. This applies to TVP as well as the regional policing units for which TVP is the lead force (e.g. Counter-Terrorism Policing and the Regional Organised Crime Unit).

11.2 Capital Receipts

A capital receipt is an amount of money which is received from the sale of an item on the fixed asset register. They cannot be spent on revenue items.

These capital receipts are used to help finance the capital programme. Unfortunately, the pool of assets available for sale is rapidly declining and the financial support these receipts provide is diminishing rapidly.

11.3 Revenue Funding

Recognising that the pool of assets available for sale is declining direct revenue funding (DRF) is seen as a sustainable funding alternative. An appropriate provision for DRF is included in both the annual revenue budget and the medium term financial plan. As TVP moves forward this is understood to become the limiting factor for capital investment as it balances annual revenue funding priorities with long term capital investment strategies.

11.4 Prudential Borrowing

Local Authorities, including the Police, can set their own borrowing levels based on their capital need and their ability to pay for the borrowing. The levels will be set by using the indicators and factors set out in the Prudential Code. The borrowing costs are not supported by the Government so TVP needs to ensure it can fund the repayment costs. The TVP Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy sets out a prudent approach to the amount set aside for the repayment of debt.

Due to the ongoing debt charges (i.e. MRP and external interest charges) TVP will currently only consider external borrowing for long-term estate projects.

11.5 Reserves and balances

Unspent capital grant and capital receipt monies can be carried forward in the Balance Sheet until they are required to fund the capital programme.

TVP also uses money held in earmarked revenue reserves to help fund capital expenditure, most notably the Improvement and Performance Reserve.

HM Treasury guidance on capital projects recognises that there is a potential for projects costs to exceed the initial assessment. This is called Optimism Bias and relates to any project type, although it can have a particularly high impact when relating to the development of complex ICT or business change programmes.

The level of the Optimism Bias (OB) reserve, including the application of monies to support individual projects, will be reviewed on an annual basis. The funding within this reserve can be used to support individual projects where the project is expected to over spend, this requires the production of a further Business Case and representation to the PCC.

The current OB reserve is expected to last until the end of the current MTCP period (i.e. 31st March 2023). All new capital schemes, over and above those in the 2019/20 to 2022/23 MTCP will need to include an appropriate element for OB and funding will be sought appropriately, essentially identifying the Bias as part of the project cost used to influence prioritisation decisions.

11.6 Third party capital contributions

On occasion TVP will receive income from a third party (usually a local authority) who have agreed to contribute towards an asset (e.g. ANPR cameras) that TVP will own.

11.7 Leasing

TVP may enter into finance leasing agreements to fund capital expenditure. However, a full option appraisal and comparison of other funding sources must be made and the Director of Finance and the Chief Finance Officer must both be satisfied that leasing provides the best value for money method of funding the scheme before a recommendation is made to the PCC.

Under the Prudential Code finance leasing agreements are counted against the overall borrowing levels when looking at the prudence of the authority's borrowing.

12 Procurement and Value for Money

Procurement is the purchase of goods and services. TVP has a Procurement Department that ensures that all contracts, including those of a capital nature, are legally compliant and best value for money.

It is essential that all procurement activities comply with prevailing regulations and best practice as set out in the Code of Corporate Governance, which includes Contract and Financial Regulations. Guidance on this can be sought from the Procurement team.

The main aim is to hold 'value for money' as a key goal in all procurement activity to optimise the combination of cost and quality.

13 Partnerships and Relationships with other Organisations

Wherever possible and subject to the usual risk assessment process TVP will look to expand the number of capital schemes which are completed on a partnership basis and continually look for areas where joint projects can be implemented. In support of this initiative:

- TVP has a joint ICT Department with Hampshire Constabulary and a number of ICT and business change programmes are being delivered collaboratively.

- TVP is currently implementing a joint Enterprise Resource Planning solution with Surrey and Sussex Police.

- Other capital schemes, most notably new technology programmes, are being delivered across the SE region is support of the SE Regional Information Technology (SERIT) strategy.

Although TVP procures capital items on behalf of other consortium partners only TVP related expenditure which will be included in the fixed asset register will be included in the medium term capital plan and the annual capital budget.

14 Management Framework

The PCC has given legal consent for the Chief Constable to own short life assets, such as ICT, equipment and vehicles.

Although the PCC owns all land and buildings, on a day to day basis, the Head of Property manages the estate on his behalf.

The Director of Finance manages the medium term capital plan and the annual capital budget and provides regular updates to the CCMT who, collectively, maintain oversight of planned expenditure.

The PCCs Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing and then implementing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, including the Annual Investment Strategy.

During the budget preparation process the CCMT take a strategic perspective to the use and allocation of TVP capital assets and those within its control in planning capital investment. They receive reports on proposed capital projects and make formal recommendations to the PCC during the development of the capital programme.

Having approved the medium term capital plan and the annual capital budget in January each year the PCC formally holds the Chief Constable to account for delivery of capital projects during for public Level 1 meetings.

15 Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect TVP's ability to achieve its desired outcomes and to execute its strategies successfully.

Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of managing them and/or responding to them. It is both a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the organisation caused by undesired events and of ensuring that staff understand and appreciate the element of risk in all their activities.

The aim is to reduce the frequency of adverse risk events occurring (where possible), minimise the severity of their consequences if they do occur, or to consider whether risk can be transferred to other parties. The corporate risk register sets out the key risks to the successful delivery of TVP's corporate aims and priorities and outlines the key controls and actions to mitigate and reduce risks, or maximise opportunities.

To manage risk effectively, the risks associated with each capital project need to be systematically identified, analysed, influenced and monitored.

It is important to identify the appetite for risk by each scheme and for the capital programme as a whole, especially when investing in complex and costly business change programmes.

TVP accepts there will be a certain amount of risk inherent in delivering the desired outcomes of Police and Crime Plan and will seek to keep the risk of capital projects to a low level whilst making the most of opportunities for improvement. Where greater risks are identified as necessary to achieve desired outcomes, TVP will seek to mitigate or manage those risks to a tolerable level. All key risks identified as part of the capital planning process are considered for inclusion in the corporate risk register.

The Director of Finance and Chief Finance Officer will report jointly on the deliverability, affordability and risk associated with this Capital Strategy and the associated capital programme. Where appropriate they will have access to specialised advice to enable them to reach their conclusions.

15.1 Funding Capacity Risk

This is the risk that identified project costs are either understated or escalate during the project lifecycle, for example if project scope changes. This risk is mitigated as far as possible by the identified monitoring process and controls. However a further key mitigating factor is the management of the Optimism Bias reserve.

15.2 Credit Risk

This is the risk that the organisation with which we have invested capital monies becomes insolvent and cannot complete the agreed contract. Accordingly, TVP will ensure that robust due diligence procedures cover all external capital investment. Where possible contingency plans will be identified at the outset and enacted when appropriate.

15.3 Liquidity Risk

This is the risk that the timing of any cash inflows from a project will be delayed, for example if other organisations do not make their contributions when agreed. This is also the risk that the cash inflows will be less than expected, for example due to the effects of inflation, interest rates or exchange rates. Our exposure to this risk will be monitored via the revenue and capital budget monitoring processes. Where possible appropriate interventions will occur as early as possible.

15.4 Interest Rate Risk

This is the risk that interest rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Interest rates will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary contract re-negotiations.

There is also a risk that external interest rates will rise, after the budget has been set, meaning that actual debt charges are higher than those included in individual business cases and more widely in the revenue budget. This risk will be managed by the Chief Finance Officer who will liaise with external Treasury Management advisors to determine the best time to take new external loans.

15.5 Exchange Rate Risk

This is the risk that exchange rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Where relevant, exchange rates will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary contract re-negotiations.

15.6 Inflation Risk

This is the risk that rates of inflation will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates of inflation will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary contract re-negotiations.

15.7 Legal and Regulatory Risk

This is the risk that changes in laws or regulation make a capital project more expensive or time consuming to complete, make it no longer cost effective or make it illegal or not advisable to complete. Before entering into capital expenditure or making capital investments, TVP will understand the powers under which the investment is made. Forthcoming changes to relevant laws and regulations will be kept under review and factored into any capital bidding and programme monitoring processes.

15.8 Fraud, Error and Corruption

This is the risk that financial losses will occur due to errors or fraudulent or corrupt activities. Officers involved in any of the processes around capital expenditure or funding are required to follow the agreed Code of Corporate Governance. TVP has a strong ethical culture which is evidenced through our values, principles and appropriate behaviour. This is supported by the national Code of Ethics and detailed policies such as Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Declaration of Interests.

16 Other Considerations

Capital Schemes must comply with legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), building regulations etc.

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