

Meeting of the Council – 5th December 2005

Report of the Cabinet

Capital Programme Monitoring

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the proposals of the Cabinet regarding certain amendments to the Capital Programme and matters associated therewith.

Background

2. On consideration of the issues below, the Cabinet at its meeting held on 2nd November, 2005, resolved to recommend the Council to approve the recommendations in paragraph 19 below. Other proposals contained in the report submitted to the meeting were determined by the Cabinet under the powers delegated to them. Copies of the reports submitted to the Cabinet meeting, are available from Richard Sanders in the Directorate of Law and Property (telephone 01384 815236 or e-mail Richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk or on the Council's website www.dudley.gov.uk (Committee Information).

Urban Environment

3. Review of Highways Capital Programme
Following a review of the 2004/05 outturn and the resources required to fund the current years programme, a number of variations in project costs have been identified which now need to be reflected in budgets, as set out below.

	Variation £'000
Queensway Realignment (Halesowen Bus Station)	-469
Enville Street	+152
Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network	+217
Local Safety Schemes	+5
Education, Training & Publicity	-3
Speed Management	-8
222 Bus Service	+14
Travel Plan Co-ordination	+15
Safe Routes to School	+15
Foster Street Subway	+15
Feasibility & Review	-31
Signs, Markings & Guardrails	-20
Urban Traffic Control	+23
Package Monitoring	-1

Primary Route Network Structural Maintenance	+63
Jews Lane	+27
Contingency brought forward	-14
Total	NIL

In particular, the detailed design of the Queensway road alignment adjacent to the proposed Halesowen Bus Station has identified a forward visibility issue that has resulted in the commencement of the works having to be deferred until an acceptable solution is designed. Consequently, it is expected that the current year's budget is unlikely to be fully spent.

Meanwhile, the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network (BHSAN) design contract and the Enville Street Improvement scheme are both progressing ahead of schedule. Preparations are continuing for a CPO Public Inquiry for the BHSAN that has been arranged to start on 10th January 2006. Substantial completion at Enville Street is expected by the end of March 2006.

It is proposed that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

Liveability

- The Friends of Mary Stevens Park have been successful in securing £2,500 from the Ernest Stevens Trust and £5,000 from the National Lottery's "Awards for All" programme. This can be used to supplement the existing Liveability funding to support delivery of the improvements to Mary Stevens Park identified as part of the recently completed park masterplan - in particular the extension to the children's play area.

It is therefore proposed that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

Green Waste Collection

- To improve the Council's recycling performance, and improve service delivery, the introduction of a wheeled bin collection service for 'green' garden waste is proposed. The first phase will involve the acquisition of 25,000 wheeled bins in the current year at a cost of £410,000. This will initially be financed either by leasing or borrowing (subject to financial evaluation), the ongoing costs of which can be funded from the current Green Waste revenue budget.

It is proposed that this expenditure be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Bell Street Multi Storey Car Park Refurbishment

- Following completion of a Structural Appraisal, the then Executive was informed in July 2004 that refurbishment of Bell Street Car Park, to give a further life of 30 years, would cost £2m - and agreed that design and preparation of documents should proceed on this basis. A detailed brief was agreed with the consultants to take on board structural and environmental improvements.

Based on experience with cathodic protection (the preferred structural protection system) on a similar car park refurbishment which they had just completed, revised costings prepared by the consultants have shown that the likely cost of the full

refurbishment is now approximately £4m. At this level of cost the preferred option is no longer sustainable and an alternative strategy is required.

Against the background of potential redevelopment opportunities and the master planning associated with Stourbridge, it is considered that a strategy that seeks to replace the car park in the short term is now necessary. This will be the subject of a future report.

A structural risk assessment, taking on board structural deterioration, has been undertaken, and this indicates that, with some temporary measures and repairs, the car park can be maintained as usable in the short term. In addition a monitoring regime will carry out inspections to ensure continued structural integrity. The estimated cost is £130,000 over 3 years, which can be met from resources earmarked for car park improvements.

It is therefore proposed that this course of action be approved, and that the expenditure be included in the Capital Programme.

King Street Footbridge

7. The bridge provides a secure pedestrian access from the Flood Street Car Parks to the Town Centre. Previous repairs have secured the safety of the main span and approach ramps to enable continued use. This minimal work was undertaken in light of the possibility of closure following construction of the Metro route. Such closure is no longer anticipated, and there is now a need to complete the refurbishment.

This work entails replacement of the safety fencing associated with the access steps (currently closed) together with concrete repairs to various areas of the structure. Slippage within the Bridge Assessment and Strengthening programme provides an opportunity to undertake this work at an estimated total cost of £110,000.

It is proposed that this expenditure be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Education & Lifelong Learning

Targeted Capital Funding

8. The Council has been successful in its bid for resources (in the form of supported borrowing) to rebuild Wrens Nest Primary School (£4.424m) and Old Park Special School (£4.139m). These allocations represent 80% of total scheme costs (£5.530m and £5.174m respectively), the remaining 20% needing to be found from other capital resources. For Wrens Nest, this can be met from the Basic Need formula funding allocation; for Old Park the necessary resources will need to be identified in due course.

It is proposed that subject to the 20% contribution for Old Park being identified, these projects be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities

9. The Council has been awarded capital funding under the above initiative amounting to £18,467 for 2005/06.

Subject to Learning and Skills Council (LSC) approval, the funding will be used to support small local voluntary and community organisations to enhance existing premises or to buy equipment to support training and teaching - which could include surveys and minor works with regard to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance.

It is proposed that the funding be noted, and that the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme.

Adult and Community Learning Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Allocation 2005/06

10. The Council has been notified by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) of a capital grant of £113,550 to carry out improvements to its Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provision to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

It is proposed that the funding be noted, and that the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme.

The Hillcrest School and Community College Specialist Status

11. The School has been awarded Specialist School Status in Arts, with an associated grant of £100,000 from the Department for Education and Skills. Together with required sponsorship funding of £50,000; devolved capital of £294,000; school reserves of £506,000; and anticipated "Expanding Popular Schools" funding of £400,000 from the DfES, this provides total resources of £1.350m for a new stand-alone building to include two dance studios, two drama studios, associated changing areas and toilets, and a music suite, to form the school's International Performing Arts Academy.

It is proposed that subject to the Expanding Popular Schools funding being confirmed, the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Priory and Wrens Nest Children's Centre

12. During the evolution of the above project, extra costs have been identified amounting to £90,000. For example, full time security has had to be provided on the Wrens Nest site for the duration of the works, and temporary accommodation has had to be provided for both Wrens Nest and Priory Primary Schools while the works are proceeding.

This can be funded from Directorate reserves and revenue resources, and it is proposed that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

Finance, ICT and Procurement

Benefits and Dudley Council Plus Telephony

13. The Capital Programme currently includes a project to install a new telephony system to provide specific Call Centre technology, initially for use within Revenue Services, the Benefits Division and Dudley Council Plus. Necessary enhancements to the system are estimated to cost £15,000, of which £5,000 can be met from Government grant funding, and the balance of £10,000 from available revenue resources.

It is proposed that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

Adult, Community and Housing Services

Future Development of the Local Authority Residential Homes and further development of Housing with Care

14. A report in relation to the above issue was submitted under separate cover to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2nd November, 2005. A copy may be obtained from the sources referred to in paragraph 2 above. A number of decisions were made by the Cabinet, under the powers delegated to them, including the closure and re-provision of Arcal Lodge in the near vicinity of the existing building, as far as is practicable. The Cabinet also recommended that any capital receipts from the sale of Arcal Lodge buildings and land be re-invested into Housing with Care developments and Council approval is requested in this connection.

Re-provision of Audnam Centre

15. A report in relation to the above issue was submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2nd November 2005. A copy may be obtained from the sources referred to in paragraph 2 above. A number of decisions were made by the Cabinet under the powers delegated to them, including approval to the closure of the Audnam Centre by the end of 2006. The Cabinet also recommended that the capital receipt arising from the disposal of the Audnam Centre be utilised to improve facilities in the three other Adult Learning Centres and Council approval is requested in this connection.

Finance

16. This report is financial in nature and information about the individual proposals is contained within the body of the report.

Law

17. The Council's budgeting process is governed by the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and the Local Government Act 2003.

Equality Impact

18. These proposals comply with the Council's policy on Equal Opportunities.

Recommendations

19. That the Council be recommended:

(a) That the Highways Capital Programme be amended, as set out in paragraph 3.

- (b) That the Capital Programme be amended to include £7,500 towards the extension of the children's play area at Mary Stevens Park, as set out in paragraph 4.
- (c) That the expenditure on Green Waste wheeled bins, and its inclusion in the Capital Programme, be approved, as set out in paragraph 5.
- (d) That the course of action set out in paragraph 6 regarding Bell Street Multi Storey Car park be approved, and that the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme.
- (e) That the expenditure to complete the refurbishment of King Street Footbridge be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7.
- (f) That subject to the 20% funding contribution for Old Park being identified, the projects to rebuild Wrens Nest Primary School and Old Park Special School be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 8.
- (g) That the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities funding be noted, and the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 9.
- (h) That the Adult and Community Learning DDA funding be noted, and the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 10.
- (i) That subject to the Expanding Popular Schools funding being confirmed, the project for an International Performing Arts Academy at the Hillcrest School and Community College be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 11.
- (j) That the Capital Programme be amended to include the extra costs of the Priory and Wrens Nest Children's Centre project, as set out in paragraph 12.
- (k) That the Capital Programme be amended to include the enhancements to the Benefits and Dudley Council Plus Telephony system, as set out in paragraph 13.
- (l) That any capital receipts arising from the sale of Arcal Lodge buildings and land be re-invested into Housing with Care developments as set out in paragraph 14.
- (m) That the capital receipt from the disposal of the Audnam Centre be used to improve facilities in the three other Adult Learning Centres as set out in paragraph 15.

David Caunt

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

List of Background Papers

Relevant resource allocation notifications.