

Meeting of the Cabinet – 24th June 2021

Joint Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Legal

Capital Programme Monitoring

Purpose of Report

1. To report progress with the implementation of the Capital Programme, including the 2020/21 outturn position.
2. To propose amendments to the Capital Programme.
3. To propose approval of a funding bid.

Recommendations

4. That the Council be recommended:
 - That the outturn position for 2020/21, as set out in paragraph 4 and Appendix A be noted.
 - That progress with the 2021/22 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix B be noted.
 - That subject to the request for Lottery funding being successful, extra spend on the Quarry Bank Park project up to the value of the grant be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 10.
 - That the footpath works at Marlborough Gardens and Ascot Gardens be approved and included in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 11.
 - That the project to install Solar Panels at the new Dudley Leisure Centre be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 12.
 - That the revised budget of £1,079,000 be approved for the Town Hall/Bistro, as set out in paragraph 13.

- That a budget of £4m be approved for the refurbishment of the Council House, as set out in paragraph 14.
 - That Phase 3 of the CCTV upgrade programme be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 15.
 - That the extra expenditure of £90,000 on the Stourbridge Crematorium renovation project be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 17.
 - That the urgent amendment to the Capital Programme be noted, as set out in paragraph 18.
5. That the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise be authorised, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise, to make bids to the Levelling Up Fund in later bidding rounds, as set out in paragraph 16.
6. That further work be undertaken to explore the potential for the development of training facilities at Ward House, as set out in paragraph 13.

Background

Capital Spending and Financing 2020/21

7. The Council's capital expenditure in the year totalled £89.123m, as follows. A comparison with budget is shown in Appendix A.

	£'000
Public Sector Housing	35,712
Private Sector Housing	5,436
Environment	7,466
Transport	10,216
Regeneration and Corporate Landlord	18,608
Culture, Leisure and Bereavement	13,221
Schools and SEND	14,453
Social Care, Health and Well Being	694
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	489
Total spend	89,123
Revenue	6,693
Major Repairs Reserve (Housing)	24,086
Capital receipts	9,669
Grants and contributions	41,033
Capital Financing Requirement	7,642
Total funding	89,123

8. The table below summarises the *current* 3 year Capital Programme updated where appropriate to reflect latest scheme spending profiles.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Public Sector Housing	60,914	59,449	71,168
Private Sector Housing	9,502	6,074	1,483
Environment	13,703	5,996	5,000
Transport	14,731	2,000	2,000
Regeneration and Corporate Landlord	38,952	11,248	3,556
Culture, Leisure and Bereavement	17,907	0	0
Schools and SEND	16,692	10,000	0
Social Care, Health and Well Being	512	435	0
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	781	268	268
Total spend	173,694	95,470	83,475
Revenue	5,514	714	879
Major Repairs Reserve (Housing)	25,025	25,309	25,621
Capital receipts	33,758	8,280	10,447
Grants and contributions	47,972	10,657	8,214
Capital Financing Requirement	61,425	50,510	38,314
Total funding	173,694	95,470	83,475

Note that the capital programme is subject to the availability of government funding.

9. An update on progress with the Council's most significant capital schemes is shown in Appendix A. It is proposed that the current position be noted.

Environment

Quarry Bank Park

10. An application for an additional grant for £127,400 Covid-19 related costs has been submitted to the Lottery. This will be decided upon in mid-June, and if the additional grant request is successful, it will enable works that have been omitted from the project to be completed within the defects liability period. We should be informed by the Lottery if we have been successful with our application on Thursday 17th June 2021 and will report progress verbally to Cabinet.

It is proposed that subject to the request being successful, extra spend up to the value of the grant be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Marlborough Gardens and Ascot Gardens

11. This project will enable residents from the 2 roads to park on their driveways through widening of 2 footpaths by the Council and reduction in front gardens across all properties in the 2 roads. The residents of these two roads previously used some parking in nearby garages. That parking is no longer available due to the owner re-developing the sites after taking the proposal through the planning process. The

parking arrangements were an informal, private arrangement between the owner of the garages and the residents.

The impact of the development has created congestion issues which cannot be solved through off road parking. Whilst the works are subject to the residents all formally agreeing to reductions to their front gardens, they have all informally agreed and are keen for this work to commence. The works will involve widening 2 footpaths, the council formally adopting the road and the associated civils works in the area.

The scheme is estimated to cost £92,000. The revenue costs of debt charges and ongoing maintenance will be charged to the Directorate of Public Realm. It is proposed that the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Regeneration and Corporate Landlord

12. Dudley Leisure Centre Solar Panels

When the new Duncan Edwards Leisure Centre was being designed, constraints with the electricity network prevented the installation of solar panels on the roof. However, the roof design was future-proofed and the situation changed. Following additional low-carbon investment directly from Western Power, a solar photovoltaic (PV) system can now be installed.

The total cost to install a large system (around 120KWp) is estimated at £132,000. As the panels will reduce the amount of electricity that needs to be imported into the site, there will be a saving of around £5,000 in the first year. Total savings over 25 years are estimated to be more than £266,000. The project will also achieve an annual reduction in carbon emissions of around 23 tonnes.

The debt charges on the borrowing initially required to finance the installation can be funded from the revenue savings. It is proposed that the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

13. Dudley Town Hall and former Museum

A report to upgrade Dudley Town Hall to create a new bistro and bar and to create a new training site at the former museum (to replace Saltwells which would be closed) was considered at Full Council on 18 February 2019. Council decided that, subject to a report being submitted to the Place Scrutiny Committee prior to investment, the former Museum and Dudley Town Hall project be approved and included in the Capital Programme. On the 20th March 2019 it was considered by Place Scrutiny Committee where the project was supported subject to more detailed work on the business case in relation to catering suppliers, which was ultimately completed. A budget of £1.5m was approved.

Design work commenced on both premises but as work progressed and additional detailed (intrusive) surveys were undertaken, it became clear that allowances set within the original forecast based on visual surveys, would be insufficient. In March 2020, the Covid pandemic hit and work was initially suspended before later recommencing then ceasing again later in the year. An operational decision was

made to cease design work on the former museum until design resources were freed up and a way forward could be determined that met the brief within budget.

Work on the proposed Dudley Town Hall Bar and Bistro continued and went out to tender at the end of 2020 and were returned in February 2021. From 7 companies asked to tender only 3 submissions were returned. The lowest tender was £781,672 plus costs for surveys, ICT, professional fees and furniture and equipment meaning that the total cost of the work would be £997,000. In addition, Planning requirements have since insisted on additional toilets (not previously required) being installed in the basement. This will add a further £82,000 to the cost. The total cost of the works to the Town Hall/Bistro will therefore be £1,079,000.

In relation to training, an alternative potential approach has been identified, making use of space at Ward House and linking to the existing use of the wider Himley site as a training and conference centre. This would require a smaller capital budget currently estimated at approximately £360,000. It would enable the former Museum to be disposed of on a commercial basis beneficial to the regeneration of Stone Street Square and would release the net revenue budget of £154,000 a year on the closure of Saltwells (as Ward House already has a sufficient revenue budget). Further work is required to consider the level of demand for both traded and non-traded face to face training, commercial opportunities across the wider site and alternative accommodation for social care staff who currently use Ward House.

It is proposed that the revised budget of £1,079,000 be approved for the Town Hall/Bistro and that further work be undertaken to explore the potential for the development of training facilities at Ward House.

14. Refurbishment of Dudley Council House Campus

The proposed refurbishment of the Council House was originally considered by Cabinet on 12th February 2020 and subsequently Council on 24th February 2020. Council resolved that the proposal not be approved and that detailed proposals be brought forward and adequately scrutinised by a Scrutiny Committee. This matter was considered by the Future Council Scrutiny Committee on 9th June 2021.

The refurbishment will address long standing maintenance problems, increase desk capacity and provide an improved working environment for elected members, staff and visitors alike. It will also safeguard a Grade II listed building long into the future. The project proposes to make essential repairs to roofs, heating and power as well as refurbish office space and toilet areas. There will also be improvements to the security of door access and the replacement of the Council Chamber microphone system. The high level estimated cost is £4m and a detailed design would follow approval. The works are likely to take around 2½ years and subject to the detailed design and planning, take place in phases. It will also be an opportunity for the Council to consider how it might need to adapt to make best use of new space within the campus through improved work styles.

The Scrutiny Committee resolved to support the proposal to identify and make available finances that enable the implementation of the work outlined within the report presented to the Committee in accordance with the indicative timeline. It is now proposed that a budget of £4m be approved for the refurbishment of the Council House.

15. CCTV Phase 3

Phase 1 of the programme saw the Council's existing public realm CCTV camera system completely upgraded, together with a new, state of the art CCTV control room created in Dudley. This is now complete. Work on phase 2, paid for from the Phase 1 budget, includes the existing traffic cameras and additional camera locations identified as part of previous consultation and is expected to be complete late summer of 2021.

Phase 3 proposes a further expansion of the CCTV camera system and will cover areas recently highlighted as needing CCTV cameras that were not previously considered as part of Phase 1 or Phase 2. An additional 8 cameras are considered necessary at the following locations:

- Colley Gate – near Toys Lane/Furlong Lane crossing
- Cradley – the Queenway
- Wollaston - Island at Meriden Avenue
- Upper Gornal – near Jews Lane/Eve Lane shopping precinct
- Halesowen North – Shell Corner

Based on Phase 1 and 2 costs, an allowance of £30,000 is required for each camera to cover new equipment, column, power and installation back to the control room equating to a total of £240,000. In addition, those 8 cameras would require a total of £24,000 annually to meet additional running costs.

The revenue costs (including debt charges) will be charged to Directorate of Regeneration and Enterprise budgets. It is proposed that the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme

16. Levelling Up Fund

The Government's Levelling Up Fund will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities. This includes a range of high value local investment priorities, including local transport schemes, urban regeneration projects and cultural assets. The Fund is jointly managed by HM Treasury (HMT), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT). The fund focusses on three strands; transport investments, regeneration and town centre investment, and cultural investment. The council is to receive £125,000 for Capacity Funding – to support the bid submission. The first round of bids are to be submitted by 18th June. Due to the complexity of the bid process, the need to procure bid consultants, undertake MP/community engagement and to develop in more detail the emerging projects Dudley is not in a position to submit into the first round but will look to submit a bid in each MP's area in later rounds (no dates yet announced). All bids must be supported in writing by local MPs. We are in the process of discussing projects with the relevant MPs.

It is proposed that the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise be authorised, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise to make bids to the Levelling Up Fund in later bidding rounds. Details of successful bids will be reported back to Cabinet and Council to request inclusion in the Capital Programme.

17. Stourbridge Crematorium

The Stourbridge Crematorium renovation project is now complete. There is currently £126,000 budget remaining for the much-needed replacement flower room. However, following the receipt of quotes, an additional £20,000 is required. This is due to an increase in material costs, a factor confirmed by Corporate Landlord Services.

As the crematorium upgrade work has been completed and the flower room is due for completion later this year, it is proposed to complete the project by arranging for the resurfacing of the flower terrace between the crematorium building and the flower room, as the recent work has highlighted the need for this to take place. This work would ensure that the crematorium can continue to accommodate a significant amount of family flowers each day and would be aesthetically pleasing for bereaved families for many years to come. The cost of the resurfacing work is expected to be approximately £70,000.

The total extra expenditure of £90,000 can be financed initially from prudential borrowing, with resulting debt charges funded from existing revenue budgets.

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

Urgent Amendments to the Capital Programme

18. Woodside Library and Fire Station demolition

It was agreed in February 2020 that the Council would fund the ordinary demolition costs of Woodside Library and Fire Station up to a maximum of £250,000 to facilitate relocation of the Library building to the Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) as part of the “Forging Ahead” masterplan for the museum site. However, as the costs for the Forging Ahead programme of works has increased a decision (ref. CEX/03/2021) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director Finance and Legal on 8th March 2021 to pay all £250,000 towards the de-construction of Woodside Library and the subsequent handover of the building to the BCLM rather than only the ordinary demolition costs.

Finance

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

Law

20. 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.

Risk Management

21. Risks, and their management, are considered prior to proposals being brought forward to include projects in the Capital Programme. This includes risks relating to the capital expenditure itself, funding of that expenditure (e.g. grant availability and conditions), and ongoing revenue costs and/or income.

Equality Impact

22. These proposals comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity.
23. With regard to Children and Young People:
- The Capital Programme for Schools will be spent wholly on improving services for children and young people. Other elements of the Capital Programme will also have a significant impact on this group.
 - Consultation is undertaken with children and young people, if appropriate, when developing individual capital projects within the Programme.
 - There has been no direct involvement of children and young people in developing the proposals in this report.

Human Resources / Organisational Development

24. The proposals in this report do not have any direct Human Resources / Organisational Development implications.

Commercial / Procurement

25. All procurement activity will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, and the relevant officers will take the procurements through the Procurement Management Group to monitor compliance at the relevant Gateways.

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

26. A number of capital projects are under review in light of potential changes to working practice following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Council Priorities

27. Proposed capital projects are in line with the Council's capital investment priorities as set out in the approved Capital Strategy.



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List of Background Papers

Relevant resource allocation notifications.

2020/21 Capital Outturn

Service	Budget*	Outturn Spend	Variance	Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Public Sector Housing	34,256	34,256	0	
Private Sector Housing	4,817	4,820	3	See note 1
Environment	4,969	4,968	-1	
Transport	8,903	8,903	0	
Regeneration and Corporate Landlord	11,782	12,170	388	See note 2
Culture, Leisure and Bereavement	13,411	13,414	3	See note 3
Schools and SEND	9,599	9,598	-1	
Social Care, Health and Well Being	467	468	1	
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	526	526	0	
Total	88,730	89,123	393	

* Updated where appropriate to reflect latest scheme spending profiles

1. Minor final outturn variance on Homes for Sale project.
2. Increased costs of CCTV Control Room project, mainly resulting from inherent building condition issues revealed during refurbishment and a collapsed drain.
3. Increased costs of Gornal Wood Cemetery Cremated Remains Graves project, as a result of more plots being provided than originally planned.

Progress with Major Capital Schemes

Public Sector Housing

New Council Housing

Completed:

- Worcester Road (Darby End, Dudley) – external works now completed.
- The Broadway (Norton, Stourbridge) – 10 affordable one, two and three bedroom bungalows all completed and allocated (early April)
- Tenlands, Halesowen – 3 affordable bungalows (2 x one bedroom and 1 x 4 bedroom dormer bungalow) – completed (end May)

On site and progressing:

- Hinbrook Road (Russells Hall) - 12 apartments. Commenced January 2021 and completion due December 2021.
- Hollywell Street – 4 affordable 2 bedroom homes
- Branfield Close (Hurst Hill) – 3 affordable homes; 2 x two bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom
- Commonsides (Pensnett) – 5 affordable homes; 1 x five-bedroom home, 1 x four-bedroom, 3 x two-bedroom
- Bromley Lane (Pensnett) – 5 affordable 2 bedroom homes
- Forge Road (Stourbridge) – 3 homes; 2 x one bedroom and 1 x two bedroom

The programme will also support the delivery of:

- the Brierley Hill Future High Streets Fund project by delivering new housing in the Brierley Hill area, subject to the purchase of land from the private sector, now that we have a successful MHCLG bid. Notably Daniels Land and the High Plateau, and rear of the Moor Street Shopping Centre.
- the mixed tenure redevelopment of the current Dudley Leisure Centre site in Wellington Road.

Private Sector Housing

Homes for Sale – Himley Road & Brierley Hill

- 4 new detached homes likely to commence at Himley Rd in Quarter 1.
- Feasibility and design briefs are progressing for Homes for Sale as part of the wider mixed tenure regeneration of Brierley Hill within the Future High Streets Fund project at Daniels Land and the High Plateau, and rear of the Moor Street Shopping Centre.

Environment

Lister Road Depot Redevelopment

The overall project is currently paused in order to review links with other sites and ensure the best strategic use of space. Further proposals will be brought back to Cabinet and Council in due course. However, it is intended to proceed immediately with the demolition of identified buildings at the Lister Road site to ensure Health & Safety compliance and in preparation for further works to commence once any other proposals are brought back to Cabinet and Council.

Stevens Park, Quarry Bank

The project with £1.4m Lottery funding & £0.4m Council funding, started on site in November 2020. Building work to Tintern House, although complicated by a range of unforeseen issues, has progressed steadily & park improvements are nearing completion

Resolving issues has necessitated additional work and structural alterations culminating in a delay to the programme and a significant drawdown on contingencies. Approximately two weeks' delay to date have been due to Coronavirus. Value engineering exercises have continued alongside close monitoring of the budget, with frequent discussions & reporting to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The capital works are now expected to be completed in July and an application for an additional grant for £127,400 Covid-19 related costs has been submitted to the Lottery. This will be decided upon in mid-June & if the additional grant request is successful it will enable works that have been omitted to be completed within the defects liability period.

We are closely liaising with our charity partner The Emily Jordan Foundation Projects who will occupy the majority of Tintern House and from which they will run their various projects: 'Spokes' (Bicycle restoration & sales) 'Twigs' (Horticultural training & sales) & 'Go Green' (recycling).

Wrens Nest Wardens' Base

Following a number of queries raised by the Council's legal section, which have now been answered by Dudley College's solicitors, a final report in relation to the purchase of the houses will be completed this week. Once this has been submitted to the Council's conveyancing team and subject to everything being in order, completion of the purchase will proceed.

Transport

Street Lighting (Invest to Save)

The street lighting lantern conversions to LED technology programme on main roads is complete apart from the remainder of 385 lanterns, received recently from our supplier. These will be installed over the next 2-3 months on the remaining outstanding areas, all of which require traffic management and permit arrangements to be put in place.



Regeneration

Dudley Townscape Heritage Initiative

The Townscape Heritage (TH) programme is funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund which offers grant assistance to carry out repair, reinstatement and refurbishment works to historic buildings, as well as a programme of complementary education and community engagement activities. The Phase 2 TH programme, which is operating with a grant budget of £1.178m from the NLHF and £300,000 match funding from the Council, commenced in February 2017. Following agreement by the Heritage Fund for an extension to the Grant Expiry Date, in the light of delays as a consequence of the pandemic, the programme is now due to run until December 2022.

The programme focuses on buildings in the town centre's historic core. The work at 203/204 Wolverhampton Street has been completed. Other properties within the programme include the following:

- 216 Wolverhampton Street: the project has reached practical completion and only snagging items remain to be completed.
- 208 and 209 Wolverhampton Street: grant offers confirmed, but work has not started on site due to difficulties with contractor, delays as a consequence of the pandemic, increases in materials cost and problems with sub-contractors. Applicants have confirmed their wish to continue, but the contractor has now confirmed withdrawal. The second lowest tenderer will now need to be approached. A further small increase will be required to move the projects forward.
- 204a Wolverhampton Street: work expected to commence on site in June 2021 with a three-month contract.
- 14 New Street: work underway, but a number of issues have arisen which have required further funding. The external repairs have now been completed and the scaffolding has been dismantled. Internal work is now underway.
- Fountain Arcade: grant approved and contracts signed. Initial opening up works have been carried out. A pre-contract meeting has been arranged w/c 21st May prior to commencement on site. A press release will be issued once a start date has been confirmed.
- Plaza Mall: scaffolding has been erected and work is well underway. More extensive deterioration has been revealed following the removal of the paint to the façade. The full extent of the repairs is currently being ascertained and costed. An increase in funding will be required to enable all the work to be carried out, to be approved by the Heritage Fund.
- 207 Wolverhampton Street: an offer of grant has been approved by the Heritage Fund and issued to the applicant, awaiting signature by the applicant.
- Crown: a small package of work to the external boundary treatment currently being developed.

It was anticipated that the majority of work would take place through spring/summer 2020. However, work has been delayed as a consequence of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and will now be carried out throughout 2021, with most projects commencing spring/summer 2021.

Activities are also being progressed and developed in conjunction with teams in Adult and Community Learning, Museums, Communications and Public Affairs and the Historic Environment Team. A revised programme has been agreed with the Heritage Fund which has been adapted in light of Covid-19 restrictions. Further activities have been included in the programme which work with delivery partners (Co Lab) who already have established links with the community of Dudley. A project which seeks and utilises the oral reminiscences of those 'Growing Up in Dudley' has been launched. The TH programme is working with education colleagues to share material produced as part of the programme and develop teaching resources. The project also works closely with the Historic Environment Team to produce information in the form of trails and leaflets to enhance understanding and appreciation of the historic environment. The project continues to work with volunteers where possible. The Heritage Open Days event in September will form the focus for the publication and display of much of the material being produced, including the unveiling of a blue plaque for Percy Shakespeare on the former Dudley Museum and School of Art, the re-issuing of various Dudley trails and information panels and exhibiting of material gathered through the Growing Up in Dudley initiative.

Brierley Hill High Street Heritage Action Zone

The High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme (HSHAZ) is a nationwide initiative designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets for the communities who use them. It is Government funded and run by Historic England with the aim of making the high street a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time. Brierley Hill High Street was one of 68 High Street across England selected to receive a share of the fund.

The Brierley Hill High Street HAZ is operating with a grant budget of £1.8m from the Historic England and £400,000 match funding from the Council. It is a 4 year programme, due for completion by March 2024. The programme provides grant assistance to third parties to carry out repair, reinstatement and refurbishment works to historic buildings. It also provides grant towards public realm improvements, plus there is a programme of complementary education and community engagement activities.

Since March, work has been underway on engaging with property owners about the grant assistance that is available, this has resulted in the owners of the Brierley Hill Institute, No.17 Dudley Road and No. 2 -2A Albion Street appointing Conservation Accredited Architects in order to help them progress proposals and their grant applications. Several other property owners are in the process of appointing a Conservation Architect. With respect to the public realm parts of the project, a Conservation Architect, Landscape Architect and Structural Engineer have been working together on undertaking a condition survey and on drawing up proposals for the Brierley Hill War Memorial and its associated memorial gardens with the view of going out to tender and getting a contractor on-site early summer. Community engagement and activities are also being progressed and developed in conjunction with Brierley Hill Community Forum with plans evolving for the Heritage Open Days event in September. In early June it is proposed that a formal launch/promotion of the High Street Heritage Action will be progressed in order to ensure maximum community engagement.



Low Carbon Place Strategy

The Council was awarded approximately £2.5m European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to deliver a project that will reduce carbon emissions. This is a joint project between Housing and Corporate Landlord Services that will reduce carbon emissions from council owned homes as well as corporate buildings such as the Council House. £2.5m of match funding is being met from existing HRA budgets.

In December 2020 the council's central heating installer went into administration, and as a result no grant-eligible boiler installs have been complete in 2021. A tender process to appoint a new installer is underway and it's hoped that the programme will recommence in the autumn. A programme of energy efficiency improvements to the corporate estate is nearing completion.

Public Sector Decarbonisation

The council has been awarded a grant of approximately £4.4m through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

The primary intention of the funding is to switch sites from carbon-intensive forms of heating such as oil and gas, to electrical forms of heating that have a trajectory to becoming zero-carbon (as the proportion of the UK's electricity generated from renewables increases).

The grant includes funding to install air source heat pumps, solar photovoltaic (PV) and battery storage and LED lighting. The list of sites to be targeted through this grant are below (subject to final approval from the funders):

- Amblecote Primary School
- Brook Primary School
- Caslon Primary School
- Cotwall End Primary School
- Dudley Council House/Town Hall
- Glynne Primary School
- Himley Hall
- Milking Bank Primary School
- Queen Victoria Primary School
- Straits Primary School
- Ward House
- Wrens Nest Primary School
- Stourbridge Town Hall and library

Final proposals are being drawn-up with the council's energy efficiency contractor, Larkfleet, with works expected to start during the summer of 2021.

Very Light Rail (VLR)

Track Works:

The intention is to install two Very Light Rail test tracks between Castle Hill Bridge and Cinder Bank with a test passenger platform located at the Cinder Bank end of the tracks. Full track length will be approximately 2km. The eastern track is bedded on stone ballast and western track will be bedded on concrete track form system as part of a later phase of work. This aspect of the project has now been completed and handed over to the Council.

The additionally approved Loop Extension works are due to complete by the end of June 2021. The track route is on a disused Network Rail (NWR) freight track-way which is to be leased from NWR.

The Coventry prototype vehicle will now be arriving at the site early August 2021 for testing.

Additional works identified as required by Coventry City Council have been procured, which are being funded through a grant from Coventry of £1.293m. This includes new equipment, workshop and a Research and Development Halt.

National Innovation Centre (NIC):

A planning application for the proposed new building for the Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre (VLRNIC), including a pedestrian foot bridge link to Tipton Road and links to future Metro line, car parking, rail vehicle test track sidings and linking lines into the VLRNIC engineering hall was submitted on 12th December 2017 and determined with conditions to be discharged on 2nd March 2018.

Building regulations conditional notification was received on 22nd February 2018 and conditional approval received on 25th May 2018.

Funding has now been confirmed from the Government's Get Britain Building (GBB) Fund (£12.350m) and LEP (£0.650m). ERDF grant of £5.000m was secured some months ago, making the total budget for the project £18.000m.

Tenders were received on 10th January 2020 and were evaluated with final recommendation being Clegg Construction as the contractor. Clegg started on site at Castle Hill on 26th October 2020 and the formal Completion date for the Innovation Centre is 25th February 2022. Whilst the Project is progressing well on site a number of changes have lead to delays which are being assessed by the Contract Administrator but would mean a completion by the end of March 2022. Associated costs of the delays, if any, are anticipated to be contained within the Contract sum by the Project team.

Metro Complementary Measures

The £9.1 million budget is to fund the works associated with the delivery of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension.

The legal agreement with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) states that the Council will fund the complementary measures along the route including pedestrian's crossings. The Council has also agreed with TfWM to fund the uplift of materials where the Metro is built through Dudley Town centre in order to provide high quality public realm. Large public realm interventions have been identified along the route at key stops, notably Station Drive (now Dudley Castle), Flood Street and Brierley Hill, to be funded by this programme of works. The £1million accelerated funding associated with the Towns Fund will be used to fund works to adopt Zoological Way, part of the works for the new loop road to access the Metro stop and some of the public realm work along Castle Hill.

Other interventions along the route, which the Council needs to fund, include creating a new wayfinding system to improve legibility, increase walking and cycling to tram stops and to provide a consistent recognizable branded signage across the borough to residents and visitors giving the information that is needed. The consultant to develop the wayfinding system has been appointed through the OJEU process and will start work on the system in October 2020.

Midland Metro Alliance (MMA) are constructing the Metro extension for TfWM. TfWM have approved MMA's costs and the next stage of the design process has started. The Council is now working with TfWM to confirm the costs of the complementary measures, the uplift of materials and the public realm interventions. This is expected to take 12 months. The Council has appointed a consultant to develop a legibility and wayfinding strategy on an 18 month contract.

CCTV Control Room

Phase 1 has been completed which included a new CCTV Control Room, associated public realm cameras which are now operational. The Emergency Planning team has been relocated to the new facility from Himley.

Work on phase 2 continues albeit there have been some delays due to the pandemic. Phase 2 includes the existing traffic cameras and additional camera locations identified as part of previous consultation. Work on phase 2 continues with an expected completion late summer 2021. The new radio link from the CCTV control room to WM Police's control room has been commissioned and users will now be trained.

12 Deployable cameras have been assembled, with 4 currently actively deployed and monitored from the control room

In Lye, all 6 columns have been installed with 5 out of the 6 cameras operational; the camera on Lye Junction is awaiting installation of fibre circuit from Virgin Media. This is now in progress having been delayed due to contractual and construction issues. The remaining camera is expected to be completed July 2021.

Work has started on the additional cameras at Coronation Gardens, Wolverhampton Street and Castle Gate in Dudley and Bilston Street in Sedgley. These are expected to be operational August 2021.

Dudley Interchange

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has now secured all the funding for the Interchange. TfWM are out to competitive tender to secure a contractor for the works. Gateley Hamer have recommenced the CPO process. Counsel advice recommends that the CPO is split into two - one for the Interchange and associated highways works and another for the Portersfield scheme and highway works. Assuming all land required can be acquired by negotiation then construction for the highways will start at the end of the year and for the Interchange will start in February 2022.

Ownership of the Photographic Studio on Birmingham Street has been resolved and it is hoped to acquire the property in the next few weeks.

Dudley Town Centre Highways Infrastructure (Portersfield Link)

As reported previously the WMCA has conditionally approved funding towards the creation of the Highways Infrastructure to create access to the Portersfield development site and the wider Town Centre. This funding amounts to £6.0m. In addition to ongoing design work, some site clearance has already been carried out to allow for intrusive site investigation to provide information to support the design process. In terms of land acquisition for the highways, a CPO will be developed as part of the overall development of the site.

Black Country Blue Network 2

Still awaiting grant agreement from Accountable Body. Procurement exercise unsuccessful – working with internal Procurement on pre-market engagement and retendering process. Likely now to be significant delays in start (Autumn). Still anticipating that the project milestones will be delivered in the timeframes for the funding.

Cultural

Leisure Centres

The construction of Dudley Leisure Centre continues at pace. Work has continued since last March with minimal delays and consequently the scheme is forecast to be completed on time and within budget with the new centre to open early in the calendar year 2022.

The refurbishment of Halesowen Leisure Centre is well underway The programme of work is scheduled to take 56 weeks with completion expected at the end of March 2022.

Phase 1 improvements to Crystal Leisure Centre are progressing well. The focus is currently on creating a more modern village style changing facility. The programme of work is scheduled to take 26 weeks with completion expected mid/end July 2021.



Schools

Schools Basic Need Projects

The next phase of projects to be funded from Basic Need capital grant has been agreed, with Brierley Hill Township secondary school places as a priority. The plans include expansion to both Wordsley and Crestwood Secondary Schools to meet projected growth with an additional 300 pupil places for each school.

The construction works for the main building programme at Wordsley School started on site in December 2019, and the works scheduled at Crestwood School started in April 2020. Both projects have continued on site throughout the Covid lockdown, but with slippage in the programme due to availability of materials and resources though that period. Although there have been issues with Covid lockdown, both schemes are progressing well.

The new science block at Crestwood School has been completed and the school has taken possession, and works have moved onto refurbishing the original science rooms into general teaching classrooms. The Classroom Block at Wordsley School is near completion and will be handed to school imminently with the sports hall following. Both projects are scheduled to complete

Numbers for both primary and secondary school places continue to be closely monitored and processes are in place to recommend capital projects to address any projected growth across both sectors.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Projects

We are in the process of re-profiling our special school and mainstream provision to bring it more closely in line with the current SEND pupil cohort and the special provision capital funding is a key component in this process.

In having undergone an Ofsted/Care Quality Commissioning (CQC) inspection into SEND in the local area our plans were shared with the inspection team. We wanted to take into account feedback on planned use of the funding before confirming projects.

We have confirmed capital funding to provide a 12 place Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) base at Hawbush Primary School, and converting space at Summerhill Secondary School into a care room to enable a range of complex needs to be met at this school. Both the base and the care room were completed within the Summer Holidays and is now open for use.

Other projects to fully utilise the grant are still currently being scoped.

The SEND grant conditions have been relaxed due to Covid, allowing us to carry forward unspent grant into next financial year. We have since commissioned a SEND project at the Woodsetton School which is anticipated to be completed around the midpoint of the 2021/22 financial year. In addition to this carry forward, we have received a further allocation of capital funding for SEND.

Healthy Pupil Capital Fund

As reported previously, the Council has been allocated £226,000 from the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund (HPCF) to improve children's and young people's physical and mental health by improving and increasing availability to facilities for physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and wellbeing and medical conditions. Funding is provided from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, also known as the "Sugar Tax".

All projects have now been completed and funds transferred to the schools. The remaining minimal balance will be allocated to another project that meets elements of the funding.

Pens Meadow Special School – Acquisition of Land and Buildings

The surrender of the existing lease and purchase of all the land and buildings of the existing Pens Meadow School and surrounding NHS-PS land is due to be completed. In addition to the £1.780m purchase price, a further £0.079m Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) is payable.