

Meeting of the Council – 1st December, 2008

Report of the Cabinet

Capital Programme Monitoring

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the recommendations of the Cabinet on proposed amendments to the Capital Programme.

Background

2. At its meeting on 29th October, 2008, the Cabinet considered a report on Capital Programme Monitoring and made a series of recommendations to the Council which are contained in this report. A copy of the Cabinet report is available from Democratic Services (Telephone: 01384 815235) or by e-mail steve.griffiths@dudley.gov.uk or on the Council's website www.dudley.gov.uk (follow the links to Council Decisions / Committee Information).

Adult, Community and Housing

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

3. A programme of development work on the Primary Social Care Database is required to support the Transforming Social Care agenda. The cost of these works is estimated to be £461,000 over the next 4 years. This can be funded from the Social Care IT Infrastructure grant, for which an allocation of £316,000 has been received, with the balance of £145,000 from the Transforming Social Care grant allocation.

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

Private Sector Housing Investment Programme

4. As a result of the sharp reduction in capital receipts from house and land sales in the current economic climate, we anticipate a fall in the level of capital resources available to support both the public and private sector housing investment programmes in this financial year. It is therefore proposed to realign the resources for adaptation works (Disabled Facilities Grants, Housing Assistance Grants and public sector Adaptations) to maintain equity of provision between the private and the public sector investment programmes, as a result of which, the use of capital receipts to support the private sector programme would reduce by £0.8m. This would be offset by the previously approved additional investment in Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) of £2m over this year and the next, funded from prudential borrowing, and also by a substantially increased Government DFG funding allocation in 2008/09 (an additional £0.8m) ensuring that the planned reductions in DFG waiting time will remain achievable. Additional Government funding for Kickstart has also increased the resources available for Housing Assistance activities.

Regional Housing Pot

5. In June, the Cabinet was advised that the Council had been notified of its Capital Grant allocation from the Regional Housing Pot of £810,000 for 2008/09, to be targeted towards housing renewal and renovation projects. These resources would be directed to individual projects and activities in due course on the basis of local priorities.

It is now proposed that the allocation be directed towards supporting regeneration activity on the North Priory estate, in partnership with Bromford Housing Group.

13-51 Orchard Street Brierley Hill Regeneration Project

6. On 29th October, 2008, the Cabinet considered a joint report of the Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Law and Property on the use of compulsory purchase powers, if necessary, to facilitate the implementation of the Orchard Street Regeneration Project. The Cabinet resolved:-

- (1) That the Council make a Compulsory Purchase Order(s) under Section 226(1) (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for the acquisition of the land shown on the Plan submitted to the meeting, or the acquisition of new rights, for the purpose of regenerating Orchard Street.
- (2) That the Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services and of Law and Property, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Economic Regeneration and Housing, be authorised to:-
 - (a) Take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order(s) including the publication and service of all notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry;
 - (b) Negotiate and acquire interests in land and new rights within the Compulsory Purchase Order(s) either by agreements or compulsorily;
 - (c) Settle all compensation claims and ancillary claims fees and costs arising as a direct consequence of the Compulsory Purchase Order(s);
 - (d) Approve agreements with land owners setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Order, including where appropriate seeking exclusion of land or new rights from the Order and/or making arrangements for relocation of occupants.
- (3) That, subject to the approval of the Council, the cost of the acquisition of properties be included in the Capital Programme.

A copy of the full report to the Cabinet on the 13-51 Orchard Street, Brierley Hill Regeneration Project is available from Democratic Services (Telephone: 01384 815235) or by e-mail steve.griffiths@dudley.gov.uk or on the Council's website www.dudley.gov.uk (follow the links to Council Decisions / Committee Information).

Urban Environment

BMX Track Upgrade and Ball Stop Fencing at Swallow Close, Dudley Wood.

7. A package of works has been developed for the redevelopment of the BMX Track at Dudley Wood Open Space, and the erection of Ball Stop Fencing to the edge of an adjacent sports pitch to the frontages of houses at Swallow Close.

The work to the BMX track would upgrade it to a facility capable of providing riding challenges of a professional BMX cyclist standard, at an estimated cost of £32,000. The project is being promoted through the Saltwells Tenants and Residents Association and Bowling Green Tenants and Residents Association together with the Youth Club based at Dudley Wood.

In tandem with this work, a 4m high Ball Stop Fence is planned for the frontage to housing at Swallow Close, at an estimated cost of £20,000. The scheme is again being promoted through the Saltwells Tenants and Residents Association and Bowling Green Tenants and Residents Association. The fence will require planning permission and consultation will take place through that process.

The Birmingham Foundation has recently confirmed a total contribution of £20,000 Fair Shares funding for the above projects, and the balance can be met from Section 106 resources.

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

Transport Asset Management

8. The Department for Transport (DfT) has provisionally allocated £70,300 to Dudley as a “capital reward grant” claimable against qualifying expenditure incurred in 2008/09 on the production of Transport Asset Management Plans (AMPs), subject to a formal bid for the funding being successful.

It is considered that there is opportunity to demonstrate innovation and collaborative working in undertaking the necessary data collection exercise by adopting a joint West Midlands approach, which should also reinforce the bids for this and future AMP funding. The West Midlands Asset Management Group (WMAMG) has been established to progress this approach.

The West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub Committee has also agreed to establish a West Midlands Joint Initiatives budget to secure completion of the AMPs. This budget (amounting to around £1.3m over the remaining years of the Local Transport Plan) would be centrally controlled and administered by the WMAMG.

In the current year Dudley would receive £70,300 from the West Midlands Budget enabling the reimbursement of this amount to Dudley from the DfT in 2009/10. This, along with the other District's allocations totalling £537,000 would then in turn be reinvested in the overall project, giving total projects resources of around £1.8m. Future years' funding from Joint Initiatives would be based on local requirements to bring all West Midlands AMPs up to a common standard.

Discussions are ongoing with DfT to establish whether a joint West Midlands bid can be made thereby further reducing administration costs.

It is proposed that the funding allocation be noted, that the above arrangements for West Midlands AMP be agreed, and any related capital expenditure be included in the Capital Programme.

Turls Hill and Swanbrook Valley Open Space

9. Following a successful bid to the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust, funding of £15,000 has been secured to resurface existing paths across the Turls Hill and Swanbrook Valley open space. This will improve access to the site and build on the work being carried out through the Liveability project.

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

Wrens Nest

10. Funding of £711,000 has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards access improvements, enhanced interpretation and educational programmes at the Wrens Nest, including the employment of a Learning and Community Development Officer. In addition, the viewing platform for the Seven Sisters mine will be re-opened, once again providing public access to this Scheduled Ancient Monument. The total project cost is £1,012,000, with the matchfunding totalling £301,000 being met from existing Dudley MBC budgets and Section106 funding (£181,000), English Heritage (£20,000) and an application for Landfill Tax Credit (£100,000).

It is proposed that subject to the necessary matchfunding being secured, the project be approved and the capital elements included in the Capital Programme.

Himley Hall - Extension of Fire Alarm System

11. Following a Fire Risk Assessment in accordance with current legislation, several extensions to the Fire Detection System in Himley Hall are required, particularly in the upper floors of the building. Costs for the required works are estimated at £30,000 which can be met from Directorate reserves.

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

Crystal Leisure Centre

12. Improvement works are required to the pool tank, beach, changing areas, wave machine, skimmer covers, lights, wall and flooring in order to bring them into line with current standards. The total cost of the works is £60,000, of which £50,000 can be found from existing Directorate capital resources and the balance of £10,000 from corporate capital resources set aside to meet urgent priorities.

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

Children's Services

Ellowes Sports College

13. A grant for £725,000 has been awarded to Ellowes Sports College by the Department for Children, Schools and Families as part of the national Sports Colleges Facilities initiative, to provide an artificial sports surface. The facility will allow the school to continue its commitment to provide at least two hours per pupil of high quality physical education and sport each week, as well as working towards the Government's five hours target. It will also be available for community use outside of school hours.

It is proposed that the grant allocation be noted, and the project included in the Capital Programme.

School Travel Plan Grant 2008/09

14. The Council has been awarded £98,000 of School Travel Plan Grant, which provides funding to schools to implement measures aimed at encouraging children to walk, cycle or take the bus to school safely, thus reducing car use. This funding will benefit 16 schools in the Borough.

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

Old Park School Specialist College

15. The Old Park School has been awarded specialist status for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Communication and Interaction, which brings with it a capital grant of £100,000. Together with the necessary £20,000 matchfunding from sponsorship raised by the school, this sum is planned to be used for a Communication and Interaction Resource Base that will allow staff and partners to receive hands-on experience and advice on communication/ICT equipment and resources.

It is proposed that the grant allocation be noted, and that the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

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 Equality and Diversity.
19. With regard to Children and Young People:
- The Capital Programme for Children's Services 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.

Recommendations

20. That the development work on the Primary Social Care Database to support the Transforming Social Care agenda be approved and included in the capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.
21. That the realignment of resources for Housing adaptation works be approved, as set out in paragraph 4.
22. That the Regional Housing Pot allocation for 2008/09 be directed towards supporting regeneration activity on the North Priory estate, in partnership with Bromford Housing Group, as set out in paragraph 5.
23. That the cost of the acquisition of properties, as necessary, in connection with the 13-15 Orchard Street, Brierley Hill Regeneration Project be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6.
24. That the redevelopment of the BMX Track at Dudley Wood Open Space, and the erection of Ball Stop Fencing to the frontages of houses at Swallow Close be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7.
25. That the Transport Asset Management funding allocation be noted, that the arrangements for West Midlands AMP be agreed, and any related capital expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 8.
26. That the scheme to resurface paths across the Turls Hill and Swanbrook Valley open space be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 9.
27. That subject to the necessary matchfunding being secured, the Wrens Nest project be approved and the capital elements included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 10.
28. That the extension of the Fire Alarm System at Himley Hall be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 11.
29. That the improvement works at Crystal Leisure Centre be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 12.
30. That the grant to Ellowes Sports College for an artificial sports surface be noted, and that the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 13.
31. That the School Travel Plan Grant allocation be noted, and the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 14.
32. That the grant allocation in respect of the Old Park School Specialist College be noted, and that the Communication and Interaction Resource Base project be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 15.

David Caunt

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Leader of the Council