

**Meeting of the Cabinet – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**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.
2. To propose amendments to the Capital Programme.

**Recommendations**

3. That the Council be recommended:
  - That progress with the 2021/22 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A be noted.
  - That the amendment to the capital programme relating to Red House Glass Cone Hot Glass Studio in paragraph 6 be approved.



## **Background**

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

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Public Sector Housing	46,232	70,047	73,675
Private Sector Housing	6,049	5,527	4,145
Environment	6,002	13,948	5,000
Transport	10,149	14,278	2,000
Regeneration	26,395	25,170	9,931
Cultural	17,415	3,392	0
Schools	11,472	11,126	7,000
Social Care, Health and Well Being	418	829	0
Commercial and Customer Services	618	901	738
<b>Total spend</b>	<b>124,750</b>	<b>145,218</b>	<b>102,489</b>
Revenue	2,577	2,394	1,037
Major Repairs Reserve (Housing)	24,892	25,285	25,673
Capital receipts	16,927	25,901	11,820
Grants and contributions	42,352	32,587	7,966
Capital Financing Requirement	38,002	59,051	55,993
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>124,750</b>	<b>145,218</b>	<b>102,489</b>

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

5. 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.

### **Amendments to the Capital Programme**

6. Red House Glass Cone – Relocation of Hot Glass Studio Additional Funding Requirement

A project has been developed to relocate the existing hot glass studio currently located within the Red House Glass Cone to a separated area which is annexed to the Red House Glass Cone offering a new seated public viewing platform area and live glass blowing demonstrations.

The project was originally costed pre covid and capital funding of £50,000 was approved in February 2021 to cover the costs. The initial plan was to disconnect and relocate the current glass blowing equipment (including glass furnace, lehr and glory hole). This kit has been switched off since the beginning of the pandemic and has since deteriorated to a level that is now considered unsafe for reconnection.



Therefore, in order to reopen the facility, new kit will be required. Glass blowing equipment is specialist kit and after lengthy search the additional costs to replace the kit is £63,000. Furthermore an additional £62,000 is also required to cover increased Covid-related costs of building materials.

This would enable us to offer an educational, inspirational and engaging live glass blowing demonstration to an audience who would observe the skill involved in making a glass piece. We would also be able to hire out the hot glass studio once again to artisan glassmakers to continue to practice their skills and earn a living from the bespoke glass pieces they produce.

If this funding is not secured by the end of March 2022 studio will not be up and running for the summer period and therefore will need to be removed from the Commonwealth Games - Queens Baton relay proposals and the International Festival of Glass – missing both opportunities would be disastrous for the site and tourism within the borough.

The total additional estimated costs of £125,000 can be financed from the 2021-22 Regeneration and Enterprise revenue budget. It is proposed that the additional costs for the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

Amendments to the Capital Programme are in normal circumstances made by Council following approval by Cabinet. The proposed amendments in this paragraph are urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred to the next available meeting of the Council. They can therefore be approved by Cabinet as allowed by the Council's Constitution in these circumstances. The decision will be reported to Council for information.

## **Finance**

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

## **Law**

8. 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**

9. 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**

10. These proposals comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity.
11. 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.

## **Commercial / Procurement**

12. 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.

## **Council Priorities**

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



**Kevin O'Keefe**  
Chief Executive



**Iain Newman**  
Director of Finance and Legal

Contact Officer: Jennifer McGregor, Senior Principal Accountant  
Telephone: 01384 814202  
Email: [jennifer.mcgregor@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.mcgregor@dudley.gov.uk)

## **List of Background Papers**

Relevant resource allocation notifications.



## Progress with Major Capital Schemes

### Public Sector Housing

#### New Council Housing

##### Completed:

- Bromley (Pensnett) – 5 affordable two bedroom homes.
- Hinbrook Road (Russell's Hall) - 12 apartments, commenced January 2021.
- Commonside (Pensnett) – 5 affordable homes, 1 x five bedroom, 1 x four bedroom and 3 x two bedroom.

##### On site and progressing:

- None – starts planned for Q1

##### Planning approval achieved and commencement imminent:

- The Vista – 2 affordable two bed bungalows – planned start on site March 2022.
- Corporation Road – 8 affordable homes across 2 sites (two and three bed houses) – planned start on site March 2022.
- Beacon Rise – 11 affordable homes, 8 apartments, 2 x two bedroom and 1 x three bedroom houses.
- New Swinford Hall – conversion to 18 affordable apartments (mix of one and two beds).

##### Planning approved but no commencement programmed in as yet:

- St Georges Rd, Dudley – 7 affordable homes, 3 x two bed, 3 x three bed and 1 x four bed
- Whitegates Road – 3 affordable homes, 1 x four bed and 2 x one bed.

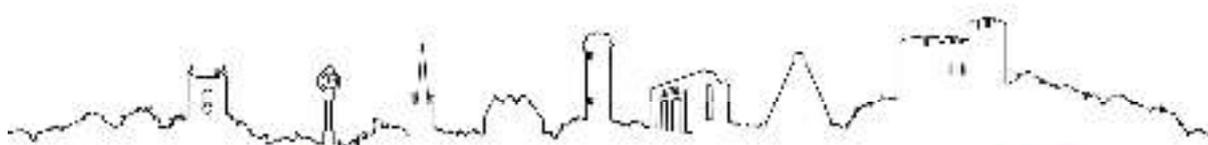
##### Schemes submitted for planning:

- Lower Valley Road – 17 affordable homes, 14 apartments (mix of one and two beds) and 3 x two bedroom wheelchair bungalows.
- Swan St, Netherton – 75 affordable units including a sheltered housing scheme of 54 units.
- Enville St, Stourbridge - 10 affordable apartments
- Colley Lane, Cradley – 9 affordable apartments
- Broad Street, Coseley – 9 affordable houses

##### Schemes due to be submitted for planning:

- Langstone Road, Russell's Hall – 3 affordable bungalows
- Wells Road, Brierley Hill – 6 affordable apartments

There are also ongoing feasibility works on a number of potential affordable sites.



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.

## **Private Sector Housing**

Homes for Sale – Himley Road and Brierley Hill:

- 4 new detached homes likely to commence at Himley Road commencing February 2022
- 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 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. The demolition works to the mobiles and garage buildings at the front of the site have now been completed thus eliminating the health and safety risks associated with these buildings.

### Stevens Park, Quarry Bank Lottery and Council funded project

The refurbishment and extension of Tintern House is essentially complete including a new mess room for Greencare. New community facilities including toilets, community rooms, kitchen, cafe and external terrace are all open to the public.

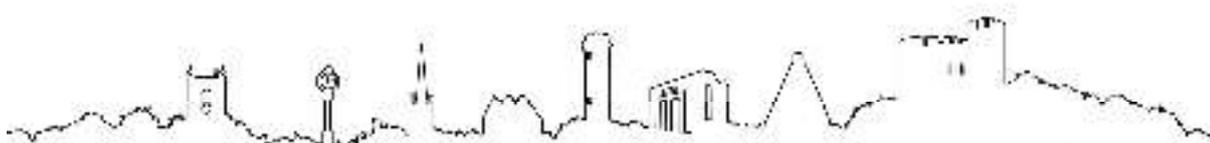
The Emily Jordan Foundation Projects are actively seeking trainees and running their various projects from the house: 'Spokes' (Bicycle restoration and sales) 'Twigs' (Horticultural training and sales) and 'Go Green' (recycling).

Externally, remedial works to the Horticultural Training Area are now complete, as are the majority, of park improvements.

The new Community Development Officer, Emma Jackson, is in place organising a series of events and activities until Autumn 2024.

### Wrens Nest Wardens' Base

The acquisition of 113 and 115 Wrens Hill Road was completed on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Design briefs with input from Green Care, Friends Groups and other interested parties will need to be undertaken to enable the proposed use.



## Regeneration

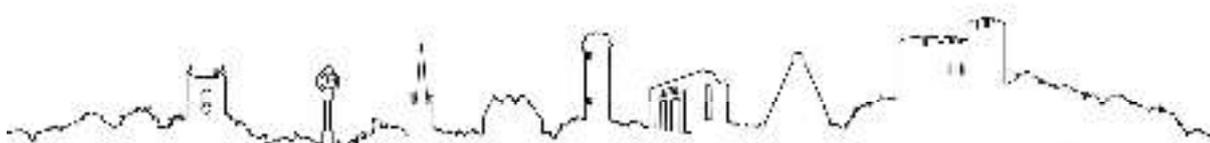
### Dudley Townscape Heritage Initiative

The Townscape Heritage (TH) programme is funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) 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, 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 because 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 is practically complete and in the final defects liability period.
- 208 and 209 Wolverhampton Street: grant offers confirmed and now, following on with difficulties finding appropriate joinery subcontractors, scaffolding due to be erected March/April.
- 204a Wolverhampton Street: work commenced on site in June/July 2021 but experienced difficulties with rendering subcontractors. The work is due to recommence in March, when the weather is more conducive to lime rendering.
- 14 New Street: work underway, but numerous issues have arisen which have required further funding. The external repairs have now been completed and the scaffolding has been dismantled. Internal work and shopfront reinstatement to be carried out when current lease comes to an end in March.
- Fountain Arcade: work is currently underway, including repairs to stonework and shopfront reinstatement.
- Plaza Mall: work to façade off scaffold has been completed and scaffolding dismantled. Further enhancement works to the shopfront will then be carried out.
- 207 Wolverhampton Street: grant offer agreed and project due to start in spring 2022, when the weather is appropriate for lime rendering. The project includes comprehensive repairs to the building and reinstatement of shopfront.

A wide-ranging activities programme, running alongside the capital works programme, has been 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. This has seen the successful 'Growing up in Dudley' project, which has gathered images and oral reminiscences of those 'Growing Up in Dudley' and 'Dudley Days' which held workshops with a small group of participants to create music inspired by connections



with Dudley. 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 formed the focus for the publication and display of much of the material being produced, including the re-issuing of various Dudley trails, and exhibiting of material gathered through the Growing Up in Dudley initiative. It also saw the production of two new virtual tours, for Priory House and the Former School of Art. A blue plaque has now been installed on the former School of Art to commemorate Percy Shakespeare and was officially unveiled January 2022. A 4-page insert about the programme was included in the autumn (2021) edition of the Home magazine.

### **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. It is designed to unlock the potential of high streets across England, fuelling economic, social and cultural recovery. Brierley Hill High Street was one of 68 High Streets across England selected to receive a share of the fund.

The Brierley Hill High Street HAZ is a 4 year programme, due for completion by March 2024. At the start of the programme a grant budget of £1.8m was awarded by Historic England with £400,000 match funding coming from the Council, equating to an overall grant of 81.80% from Historic England. At the end of September 2021 however, this figure was increased further due to an additional £242,171 grant increase provided by Historic England, which with the 18.20% match from the Council provides a total grant increase of £296,052.46. For more information, please refer to the relevant Decision sheet CEX/06/2021 - <http://online.dudley.gov.uk/decision/showdecision.asp?id=5193>

The programme provides grant assistance to third parties to carry out repair, reinstatement and refurbishment works to historic buildings as well as grant assistance towards bringing vacant floorspace back into use. It also provides grant towards public realm improvements, plus there is a programme of complementary education and community engagement activities. The buildings that are considered to be a priority for grant assistance and where the owners are positively engaging with the Council and have appointed a Conservation Accredited Architect include:

- Former Pulse Nightclub, 17 Dudley Road
- 2a and 2 Albion Street
- 96-100 High Street
- Former Brierley Hill Library and Technical Institute, Moor Street
- 3-5 Church Street



In addition, there are several other priority projects where the owners are in the process of appointing a Conservation Accredited Architect and holding pre-application discussions with the local planning authority.

With respect to the public realm parts of the project, a contractor has been appointed and work has now commenced on-site to undertake repairs and architectural reinstatement works to the Brierley Hill War Memorial and its immediate setting (Phase 1), majority of the works for this phase were successfully completed in-time for centenary of the War memorial in November 2021. The remainder of the works will be completed January/February 2022. With respect to the war memorial garden proposals (Phase 2), tenders for this part of the project went out at the beginning of October and the contract was awarded late November. Works on this phase commenced on-site on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 with a proposed completion date of March 2022. This second phase proposes significant stabilization works to the embankment, structural repairs to the intermediate wall that runs through its centre and the laying out of a soft landscaping scheme.

Community engagement and activities are also being positively progressed and developed in conjunction with Brierley Hill Community Forum, Friends of Marsh Park, Dudley Market, Black County Living Museum and with teams in Adult and Community Learning, Museums, Communications and Public Affairs, Dudley Business First and the Historic Environment Team. There is in-place an Activity Plan for the project. This quarter the centenary celebrations for the Brierley Hill War Memorial were delivered by Council officers and the local community. The war memorial was adorned in a sea of hand-crafted poppies. There was a cascade of poppies fixed to the war memorial itself and over 220 individual poppies were fixed to the railings and lampposts throughout the town, each handwritten with the name of the fallen soldier, his age when killed in action and where.

Another major element of the High Street Heritage HAZ is the development of a Cultural Programme. The Arts Council England, National Heritage Memorial Fund and Historic England are providing funding for the development and delivery of the HS HAZ Cultural Programme. On the 25<sup>th</sup> June it was confirmed by Historic England that the application submitted to them jointly by Brierley Hill Community Forum and Dudley Council for funding for a Cultural programme had been successful and that the total sum of £94,000 was to be awarded. Work is now underway on pulling together a programme of cultural events and activities which are required to accord with the milestones and instalment schedule issued by Historic England. On the 9<sup>th</sup> December a Progress update report was submitted to Historic England along with the first claim for an interim payment. On the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 an Expression of Interest was submitted to Historic England for Brierley Hill to be the host of a national music commission in the summer of 2022.

### Public Sector Decarbonisation

As previously reported the council was awarded a grant of approximately £4.4m through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and managed by Salix, the purpose being to switch sites from carbon-intensive forms of heating such as oil and gas, to electrical forms of heating (air source heat pumps) with additional works including Solar photovoltaic (PV),



Working as One Council in  
the historic capital of the Black Country



battery storage and LED lighting upgrades where possible. The scheme covers Dudley Council House and Town Hall, Stourbridge Town Hall and Library, Himley Hall and Ward House as well as the following schools: Amblecote, Caslon, Cotwall End, Glynne, Queen Victoria, Straits and Wrens Nest Primary Schools.

Works commenced during the summer of 2021 with all the installations at the named schools now nearing completion. Network operator approval to the works at the schools has been received and works are in the final stages of full commissioning. Planning permission has been granted for the works at Council House and Ward House and a decision is expected shortly for Himley Hall. Redesign has been required around the work extent for Stourbridge Library which is being limited by available power capacity meaning the final design will have less environmental impact than originally expected. All works were planned to be completed by March 2022, and due to impacts from adverse weather, delayed planning decisions or supply chain delays a project change request has been made with Salix to seek an additional 3 months (to June 2022) to ensure sufficient time to implement all the necessary works and absorb impacts from any further delaying factors.

### 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 November 2021 the council appointed a new central heating installer for council housing as the previous went into administration.

The programme recommenced slowly in December as the contractor mobilised. A project change request has been granted requesting a further 18 months be added to the programme deadlines, to enable this resultant delay to be accommodated which affects the Housing side of the programme. It should also be noted that where homes are sold under the Right to Buy scheme, but have had the benefit of the grant, the council is required to refund the capital impact of the grant. The programme of energy efficiency improvements to the corporate estate is nearing completion, the final element anticipated to complete in June 2022.

### Very Light Rail (VLR)

#### *Track Works:*

Two Very Light Rail test tracks between Castle Hill Bridge and Cinder Bank have now been installed with a test passenger platform located at the Cinder Bank end of the tracks due for completion by the end of March 2022. The full track length (including the extension loop) is 2.3 km. The eastern track is bedded on stone ballast and western track on a concrete track form system. This aspect of the project has now been completed and handed over to the Council. The track route is on a disused Network Rail (NWR) freight track-way which is to be leased from NWR.



The additionally approved Loop Extension works are now complete.

The Coventry prototype vehicle is due to arrive later in 2022 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.

Coventry City Council are finalising a further Grant with the Council for the procurement of additional tools and a Driver Simulator in the sum of £20,000 and £100,000 respectively.

#### *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 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and determined with conditions to be discharged on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018.

Building regulations conditional notification was received on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 and conditional approval received on 25<sup>th</sup> 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 also secured, making the total budget for the project £18.000m.

Tenders were received on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and were evaluated with final recommendation being Clegg Construction as the contractor. Clegg started on site at Castle Hill on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and the formal Completion date for the Innovation Centre was 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Whilst the Project is progressing well the changes referred to previously have led to delays which are still being assessed by the Contract Administrator but have been indicated by the Contractor, Clegg Construction, to a new completion date of 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Associated costs of the delays, assessed as the responsibility of the Council, 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 started work on the system in October 2020. Dudley print map is now available. The Brierley Hill map is being developed. The Wayfinding Legibility Strategy has been developed and the totems and figure posts are being designed. The intention is to cover the costs for the manufacturing and installation through CRSTS funding.

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 working with TfWM to confirm the costs of the complementary measures, the uplift of materials and the public realm interventions.

## CCTV

Phase 1 - Predominantly complete and operational. The only outstanding work is to the healthy hubs where 4 out of the 5 are still waiting fibre circuits. All work is estimated to be complete by end of March 2022.

Phase 2 - reflects the initial extension of coverage approved at the outset of the project. The main problems faced in this phase have been access to staff and materials throughout the last 18 months. Additional public realm cameras in this phase include:

- Cameras in Sedgley Bilston Street – the column has been erected and power has been installed. Network connectivity is currently being installed.
- Wolverhampton Street Dudley – the column has been erected but we are still waiting on Western Power for an installation date. This is being chased by Street Lighting.
- Coronation Gardens – Completed and fully operational. This includes 2 cameras on 4 Ednam Road, 1 in Coronation Gardens, 1 on the junction by college.
- Castle Gate – design work is complete, and columns will be erected shortly. However, this is also awaiting an installation date from Western Power for power.
- The cameras to Lye town centre have been completed.
- All 12 deployable cameras are now operational and available for use.



Phase 3 - work includes the additional cameras requested and approved at Council in 2021, to be sited at:

- Kent Street Upper Gornal – column erected and camera installed. Waiting on Western Power to supply power.
- Shell Corner Halesowen – one of two columns erected, second column to be installed shortly, cameras, power and network yet to be completed.
- Netherton High Street – three columns have been erected, cameras, power and network yet to be completed.
- Wollaston traffic island – column erected, cameras, power and network yet to be completed.
- Toys Lane/Furlongs Road Colley Gate – further site survey investigation required as Highways have vetoed the proposed site.
- Queensway Halesowen – initial feasibility studies have been completed but full design and planning is in progress.

The phase 3 sites above are due for completion no later than April, 2022.

The original location at Jews Lane/Eve Lane Upper Gornal has now been reconsidered and it is proposed to site a fixed camera in Roseville instead. West Midlands Police are also in favour of this revision. We aim to complete this within Quarter 2 of 2022.

Sites also considered but not originally included were at Foxcote Lane/Wynall Lane which followed concerns over lack of power and network connectivity in the area. However, after revisiting the area, the proposal now is to install a fixed camera on the roundabout of Wynall Lane / Wynall Lane South – column erected, cameras, power and network yet to be completed.

Queensway Pedmore has been revisited and a column has been erected in the proposed location, cameras, power and network yet to be completed. Victoria Road, Quarry Bank has been discounted.

### 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 recommended 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.



At the September Cabinet it was agreed that DMBC will use its CPO powers to purchase Farm Foods and the properties required for the associated highways. As a result of the need to CPO properties the start date for the Interchange has been moved to January 2023, Completion is expected Summer 2024. The CPO will be submitted to the Secretary of State by the end of March 2022.

An alternative location for the Interchange during construction has been identified.

Ownership of the Photographic Studio on Birmingham Street has been resolved and the purchase price is being negotiated. Site visits have been arranged in preparation of demolition once the sale has been agreed.

### Dudley Town Centre Highways Infrastructure (Portersfield Link)

As reported previously the WMCA has conditionally approved funding to support changes to the Highways Infrastructure to create access to the Portersfield development site and improve access to 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. Highway design work has currently been frozen to avoid any abortive spend until the review of the overall development site has been completed.

### Black Country Blue Network 2

Some issues have been highlighted with the procurement and the current contract has been ended with contractor for Castle Hill, Sedgley Beacon and Holloway Street . We are currently back out to procurement for these three sites and the additional two sites (Turlis Hill and Coseley) are also being procured. We are still anticipating the project to be delivered on time.

### Dudley Town Hall and former Museum

The tender for the Town Hall Bistro refurbishment was won by J R Slee, who are based in Shrewsbury. They are a family business and whilst working on the usual type of projects, specialise in working on Listed Buildings. Work started on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and progresses well on site with new openings now being formed between the new Bistro and the Town Hall and also the Town Hall and new basement toilets. Work has now progressed to include final electrical items and will shortly start on internal decorations, fitting out toilets, the new kitchen, and the new bar. A slight slippage to the programme occurred due to structural problems which have been addressed. Work to Bistro will be completed by the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022, with the chair store and basement toilets completing by 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022. All works are on track to enable formal opening of the new Bistro in late May.



## Refurbishment of Dudley Council House Campus

Following approval this project is now in the early stages of design with essential remedial work to the roof already on site and progressing well. This is so that external scaffolding will be struck in advance of the Commonwealth Games cycling event. A meeting with Access in Dudley was held and access and disability improvements are now being considered. In addition, a meeting has been held with the Council's equality officer to review the wider campus from staff perspective and comments have been sought from elected members to ensure that all issues with respect to accessibility of main users of the buildings are considered.

The provisional programme will see the pre-contract stage completed in early 2022. Following a report to Future Council Scrutiny in June 2021, officers were asked to report back confirming proposals, incorporating comments made at the meeting and highlighting proposed financial and energy related savings to Scrutiny in March 2022. Initial drafts of overall layout are to be presented to SEB and informal Cabinet in early March. The presentations will highlight some design suggestions around bookable desk areas and collaboration space. Once started, the construction phases are scheduled to take around 2 years to complete

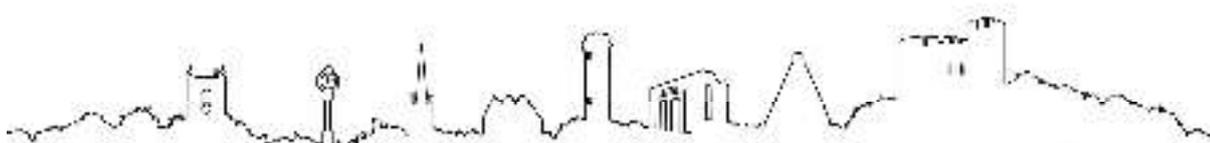
## Brierley Hill (Future High Streets)

The Council secured £9.99m from the Future High Streets Fund in December 2020. This is to support a programme of activity at Brierley Hill, to be implemented in the period 2021 to 2026. The key objectives are to improve footfall, reduce vacancy rates and improve the diversity of shops and facilities. All Future High Streets Funding has to be drawn down by 2023/24. DMBC match funding, identified through existing approvals, will be used to fund projects within the latter part of the programme. The overall investment value of the programme is in the region of £44m.

### *Project summaries:*

Public Realm and Connectivity Improvements (£4.75m) - Funding to connect the new Midland Metro terminus to the High Street, improve existing public realm connectivity between key buildings and provide new public spaces and pocket parks. Lead designer appointed in the autumn of 2021 to prepare and consult on proposals, with a commencement of initial works in Q4 2021/22. The majority of the public realm works will be implemented during 2022/23 and 2023/24 to be ready in advance of the Midland Metro opening.

Key Retail Sites (£1.05m) - The owners of the Moor Centre have submitted a planning application to remodel the precinct and bring parking closer to the shops. If approved, this will free up the rear car park land for development. The Council wishes to redevelop the site for up to 44 homes. The Future High Streets Fund provides the money for site acquisition and remediation. The shopping precinct redevelopment works are programmed for



2022/23. DMBC build out on land to the rear will be during 2023/24 and 2024/25. Combined overall investment value £8m.

Infrastructure and Air Quality Improvements (£255,000) - Future High Streets will provide support to amend two highway junctions at Venture Way. The intention is to improve pedestrian connectivity between the High Street and medical centre; prevent queuing traffic which has resulted in movement delays; and improve air quality levels. The works are programmed to commence in Q4 2021/22 and complete in Q1 2022/23.

Addressing Housing Need (£3.55m) - Discussions are underway to acquire 10 acres of brownfield land known as Daniels Land and the High Plateau. These are two long-term vacant sites, formerly part of the Round Oak Steel Works that have remained undeveloped for over 40 years. Future High Streets funding will support site remediation and preparation costs. Dudley Council's Housing Department will then construct up to 220 new mixed tenure homes to meet local housing needs. Density and housing numbers may increase following the receipt of urban design advice and the completion of detailed design work. There may also be the opportunity to consider the introduction of leisure uses. Following INTU shopping centres entering administration, discussions have continued with Ellandi retail investment which is acting on behalf of the creditors that own the Merry Hill Centre and adjacent land. In December 2021, the creditors appointed a new company Sovereign Capita to manage Merry Hill. DMBC is to make contact at a corporate level to discuss how Sovereign and the Council can work together on a number of Merry Hill projects. This will include Daniels Land and the High Plateau. The intention is to please initial activity around the construction of the Metro rail viaduct that crosses the sites during 2022/23, with remediation works and build out to commence in late 2022/23. Completion is anticipated during 2025/26. A revised Metro delivery timetable is currently under discussion and the programme will be adjusted accordingly once this is confirmed. The overall value of the project is £30m.

Public Library (£308,000) - refurbishment of Brierley Hill public library and ground floor housing department reception area. Scheme designs have been the subject of community consultation and have been well received. Freeholder approval has been received in-principle for the refurbishment works. The estimated cost of works is forecast to be above the identified budget, due to higher-than-expected building materials cost inflation. The building works will be tendered shortly and this will provide final costs certainty. A review is currently being undertaken of additional funding to support the project. The refurbishment works are programmed to commence in the spring and will complete during the summer of 2022.

Public Toilets (£80,000) - Reopening of public toilets to support the High Street visitor return following the coronavirus pandemic, and the provision of welfare facilities for Metro tram drivers. Midland Metro Alliance is making an additional contribution of £38,000 to support the works. Feasibility designs finalised that will also include changing facilities after discussions with stakeholder groups. Works were tendered in January 2022, with a start on site expected during the spring and completion during the summer of 2022.



In addition to the Future High Streets Fund award, the Council has secured further investment from the West Midlands Combined Authority. This is to acquire land to support implementation of the High Street Link. A funding agreement between WMCA and DMBC is due to complete in early 2022. This is a long-term vacant gap site where there is the opportunity to provide a new connection from the High Street to the Metro terminus. The Council has appointed an agent and agreement has been reached to acquire the sites. Initial site safety works will commence in spring 2022, with a start on site of the pedestrianisation works in the autumn of 2022.

A Town Board has now been established to oversee the various interventions underway in Brierley Hill. These include the Future High Streets Fund, Heritage Action Zone and delivery of the Midland Metro. It includes Mike Wood MP, DMBC and business, community and educational sector representatives. The first meeting was held in September 2021 and these will continue on a quarterly basis.

### Leisure Centres

The new Duncan Edwards Leisure Centre opened on Monday 24 January 2022. Very positive feedback received.

Phase 1 of the refurbishment of Halesowen Leisure Centre is complete; again, very well received by customers. Phase 2 which includes improvement to the swimming pool is due for completion on 13 July 2022.

Phase 1 improvements to Crystal Leisure Centre have been completed. The new village style changing rooms and improvements to the leisure pool have received positive comments.

### **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.

Unfortunately, the construction company that were managing both projects went into administration in August and their work on both sites ceased. There was minimal works still to be carried out at Wordsley School therefore Construction and Design, the Councils in house consultants, have picked up the remaining work. The Crestwood School needed a larger amount of work, so it was agreed that the school are continuing with the refurbishment work in the main school building and Construction and Design are completing the works to the new science block and the remaining external works. Both projects still have a small amount of work to be completed.



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 continuing 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.

The SEND Special Provision Fund capital grant conditions were previously relaxed due to the coronavirus pandemic allowing us to carry forward unspent grant into the 2021/22 financial year. This grant funding has now been allocated in its entirety to the following projects:

- A new 12 place base for primary pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs at Hawbush primary school – completed and operational.
- Creation of designated care rooms at Summerhill secondary school and the Glynne primary school to promote the inclusion of children with SEND that include physical disabilities and specific personal care needs – completed.
- Expansion of Woodsetton Special School through a new mobile specifically designed to cater for the needs of children with SEND and to provide the additional space the school requires to meet the needs of an increasingly complex cohort of pupils – this was completed last year and has been in use since September 2021.
- Various capital works at Halesbury School in response to independent Accessibility Study – in progress.

In addition to this carry forward, we have received a further allocation of capital funding for SEND. Projects to be funded are still being scoped with the need for detailed feasibility studies to be undertaken but is likely to include further expansion within our maintained special schools. A tender process has now been completed to establish a further primary SEMH base. This tender has now been concluded and the base will be established at Caslon primary school. The base is now operational and work continues to create an outside play area exclusively for the base.

### Pens Meadow Special School – Acquisition of Land and Buildings

Negotiations are close to completion and will be sent to legal representatives for both parties shortly, for completion.

