

Meeting of the Council – 3rd December 2007

Report of the Cabinet

Capital Programme Monitoring

Purpose of Report

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

Background

2. On consideration of the issues below, the Cabinet, at its meetings held on 12th September and 31st October, 2007, resolved to recommend the Council to approve the proposals set out in paragraphs 19 to 30 (inclusive) below. Other proposals contained in the reports submitted to the meetings were determined by the Cabinet under the powers delegated to it. Copies of the reports are available from Richard Sanders in the Directorate of Law and Property (telephone (01384) 815236 or email richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk) or on the Council's website www.dudley.gov.uk and follow the links to Council Democracy/Decision Making/Committee information.

Adult, Community and Housing

Wrens Nest S106

3. It is proposed to support the provision of four rented bungalows on Wrens Nest Road to meet the needs of the local community with a contribution of £217,000 to Bromford Housing Group, and that this be included in the Capital Programme. The Council would receive 100% nomination rights to these properties.

The contribution can be funded from Section 106 resources (monies provided by housing developers in lieu of providing affordable housing on site).

Providing a Modernised Library Service in Dudley MBC – Modernisation Programme

4. The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 12th September, 2007, approved proposals for the modernisation of the Library Service in Dudley MBC.

The decision was called in and considered at a special meeting of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education held on 24th October, 2007, at which it was resolved to support the modernisation proposals and to ask the Cabinet to ensure that, where appropriate, the reprovided facilities were put in place before any libraries were decommissioned. The decision of the Select Committee was accepted by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 31st October, 2007. All relevant reports are available from the contact details or website address as stated in paragraph 2 above.

In determining the modernisation proposals at its meeting held on 12th September, 2007, the Cabinet also resolved to recommend the Council:

- (a) That the disposal of the Council's assets as identified in paragraph 20 of the report submitted to the (Cabinet) meeting be approved, and that the capital receipts from such disposals be used to contribute towards financing the library modernisation programme; and
- (b) That the additional expenditure for the library modernisation programme be approved, and the Capital Programme be amended accordingly, as set out in paragraph 13 of the report submitted to the (Cabinet) meeting.

The Council is now asked to approve the funding arrangements as set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.

Urban Environment

Wordsley High Street

5. Whilst undertaking the replacement of the existing culvert under the A491 and its extension under the improved road, it was considered appropriate to carry out the further extension of the culvert under the adjoining Council land being sold to a housing developer. The costs amounting to £25,000 have been recovered by disposing of the land for a greater consideration than would otherwise have been the case.

It is proposed that the budget for the project be increased, and £25,000 of the capital receipt be earmarked accordingly.

Saltwells Local Nature Reserve

6. A sum of £30,000 Section 106 funding is available for upgrading Saltwells Local Nature Reserve for the benefit of the local community - which can be used for enhancing public access, signage and interpretation, and managing various wildlife habitats and geological features across much of the nature reserve.

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

Stourbridge Civic Amenity Site

7. Mess-room and toilet facilities at the above site need to be replaced due to age and the dilapidated condition and expanded to reflect the additional staff needed to operate the site and enable targets for recycling and segregation to be achieved.

Upgraded electrical services are also required to meet the increased operational demands on the site.

It is estimated that the necessary works will cost £65,000 which can be financed over ten years by contributions from Waste Care revenue budgets.

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

Flood Damage

8. The Council has received £11,500 of capital grant funding towards necessary reinstatement works following the recent floods. This will be allocated to specific projects in due course.

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

Cradley Forge Embankment

9. The Mouseweat Brook, that part at Cradley Forge, forms the boundary between Dudley and Sandwell and passes through a large raised embankment. Responsibility lies with Dudley and Sandwell Councils and possibly Severn Trent Water as the embankment supports strategic sewers.

The Environment Agency (EA) - the enforcement authority under the provisions of the Reservoirs Act 1975 - has recently given notice that it considers that the embankment comes within the remit of the Reservoir Act as it has the potential to retain in excess of 25,000 cubic metres of water. If so classified, significant works may be necessary to bring the embankment up to the required standards.

In the short term, it is necessary to:

- Appoint a Reservoir Panel Engineer to assess the options to address classification as a reservoir;
- Agree assignment of costs;
- Undertake feasibility work as required following the advice received.

A further report will be brought back to Cabinet in due course when the outcomes are known.

It is proposed that the feasibility work be approved and included in the Capital Programme at an estimated cost of £20,000. This can initially be funded from the resources set aside for urgent priorities. The other responsible parties will be recharged as appropriate in due course.

Council House, Mary Stevens Park - Security Improvements

10. A feasibility study into the proposed fencing and gates to protect the Council House has identified that an additional £8,000 will be required, in addition to the £56,000 already included in the Capital Programme. This can be funded from available Section 106 resources. It is proposed that the budget for the scheme be amended accordingly.

Delivering the Masterplan for Dudley Town Centre

11. The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 31st October, 2007, approved proposals for the creation of an Arms Length Company and the selection of a development partner and associated issues to lead delivery of the Dudley Town Centre Area Development Framework.

In determining the proposals, the Cabinet resolved to recommend the Council that any land or property acquisitions in connection with the project be included in the Capital Programme. The approval of the Council in this regard is requested. The relevant report is available from the contact details or website address as stated in paragraph 2 above.

Children's Services

Children's Centres - Phase 2

12. Integration of Children's Centres and Extended Schools facilities offers an improved range of extended provision that will meet local needs and achieve better value for money. The enhancement of the Phase 2 Children's Centre projects at Olive Hill and Highgate Primary Schools to incorporate Extended Schools facilities in this way would enhance the services available to children aged 0 - 11 and their families. The extra cost of £328,000 can be met from 2008/09 Extended Schools funding, for which provisional allocations have been received from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

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

Chief Executive's

Refurbishment of Aquarius Premises at Cottage Street, Brierley Hill

13. The Council has received a grant of £46,000 from the NHS National Treatment Agency for the provision of substance misuse services, which the Substance Misuse Implementation Group has recommended should be allocated to Aquarius towards the refurbishment of their new premises at Cottage Street.

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

Urgent Amendment to the Capital Programme

Security at Pool Road Multi Storey Car Park, Halesowen

14. In order to minimise future vandalism, an urgent decision (ref. DUE/75/2007) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director of Finance on 19th September 2007 to approve urgent security works to the Car Park and their inclusion in the Capital Programme.

The detailed decision which was considered in private, is available to Members on request to Richard Sanders, Democratic Services, Directorate of Law and Property on (01384) 815236 or email richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk.

Finance

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

Law

16. 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

17. These proposals comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity.
18. 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

19. That the contribution of £217,000 to Bromford Housing Group towards the provision of rented bungalows at Wrens Nest Road be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.
20. That the proposals for the disposal of the Council's assets, the use of the capital receipts arising therefrom and the additional expenditure, in relation to the modernisation of the Library Service, as set out in the resolution of the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 12th September, 2007, and indicated in paragraph 4 above, be approved and that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.
21. That the budget for the Wordsley High Street improvements be increased, and £25,000 of the related capital receipt be earmarked, as set out in paragraph 5.
22. That the project to upgrade Saltwells Local Nature Reserve be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6.
23. That the project to expand the mess-room and toilets and upgrade electrical services at the Stourbridge Civic Amenity Site be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7.
24. That the Flood Damage grant funding be noted and the related expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 8.
25. That the feasibility works at Cradley Forge Embankment be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 9.
26. That the budget for the Council House (Mary Stevens Park) Security Improvements be increased by £8,000 as set out in paragraph 10.
27. That any land or property acquisitions in connection with the Dudley Area Development Framework be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 11.
28. That the extra expenditure on the Children's Centres at Olive Hill and Highgate Primary Schools be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 12.

29. That the allocation of a £46,000 grant to Aquarius towards the refurbishment of their premises at Cottage Street be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 13.
30. That the Urgent Amendment to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 14 be noted.

David Caunt

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Leader of the Council