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## **Meeting of the Cabinet – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020**

### **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 2020/21 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A be noted.
  - That the Very Light Rail expenditure totalling £943,000 be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6.
  - That the project to provide 170 cremated remains graves at Gornal Wood Cemetery be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7.
  - That the Maitland Road Children's Home refurbishment be funded from uncommitted 14-19 Diplomas, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities capital grant balances, as set out in paragraph 8.
  - That the urgent amendments to the Capital Programme be noted, as set out in paragraphs 9-11.



## **Background**

4. The table below summarises the *current* 3 year Capital Programme.

	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Public Sector Housing	48,645	46,789	39,357
Private Sector Housing	7,442	295	295
Environment	16,948	6,100	3,000
Transport	15,276	3,373	2,373
Regeneration	16,737	5,168	4,804
Cultural	19,083	12,060	0
Schools	29,171	500	0
Social Care, Health and Well Being	1,240	0	0
Commercial and Customer Services	818	489	268
<b>Total spend</b>	<b>155,360</b>	<b>74,774</b>	<b>50,097</b>
Revenue	5,088	3,516	3,890
Major Repairs Reserve (Housing)	24,638	24,982	25,481
Capital receipts	20,026	16,846	10,227
Grants and contributions	40,509	1,630	70
Capital Financing Requirement	65,099	27,800	10,429
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>155,360</b>	<b>74,774</b>	<b>50,097</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.

### **Regeneration**

6. Very Light Rail (VLR)

Coventry City Council has been awarded £1.8m of Get Britain Building funding towards their Very Light Rail project, the equipment for which will be tested at the Castle Hill facility. Of this total £943,000 will be contracted to Dudley Council to progress:

- a 360m<sup>2</sup> workshop to be built near to Test Track 1 at Castle Hill to provide secure stabling of small rail vehicles and protection of project assets whilst on site (£543,000);



- 3 critical pieces of equipment (a mini-shunter, high power rapid charger and 4 portable lifting jacks) that support the testing of the Coventry VLR prototype vehicle on Test Track 1 (£400,000).

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

## **Cultural**

### 7. Gornal Wood Cemetery – Cremated Remains Graves

It is necessary to increase the amount of cremated remains burial space within Gornal Wood Cemetery. An area has been identified which would provide a further 170 cremated remains plots. Preparation costs are estimated to be approximately £125,000. The plots would generate income of approximately £500,000 over six years based on current prices, enabling the preparation costs to be recovered within two years.

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

## **Social Care**

### 8. Maitland Road Children's Home

This home is currently closed to children and was in urgent need of repair and refurbishment. Following an Ofsted inspection, no children could be admitted until the requirements from the monitoring visit in March had been met. Covid-19 has affected the timescales in which the home had to be refurbished. The Council had until the 1<sup>st</sup> of October to get the work done and to be ready to open the home. This work is now under way. Once the refurbishment is completed Maitland Road will provide a homely environment for children and young people, which is proven to help young people progress whilst in care. In addition to this, the cost of placing a young person in a Dudley Local Authority care home is far less than using an external provision. The cost of the refurbishment is £148,000.

It is proposed that the project be funded from uncommitted 14-19 Diplomas, SEN & Disabilities capital grant balances which would free up revenue funding.

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

### 9. Very Light Rail (VLR) Test Track 1

In order to progress with the letting of the contract for this project a decision (ref. DRE/17/2020) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director of Finance and Legal on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 that certain costs be funded by prudential borrowing and that the related expenditure is included in the Capital Programme.

The detailed decision which was considered in private, is available to Members on request to Democratic Services (Telephone 01384 815238 or e-mail [Democratic.Services@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@dudley.gov.uk)).



10. Very Light Rail (VLR) Test Track Loop Extension

The Test Track project forms a critical part of the VLR project as it provides a unique offer for the Innovation Centre and its research activities. The costs for the test track have been fully approved for grant funding from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership and includes match funding, by way of materials for the construction of the track. Negotiations are ongoing with Network Rail in relation to the issue of free materials and depending on the outcome of these negotiations there may be a financial implication to the Council, as referred to in Decision Sheet DRE/17/2020.

Detailed design and procurement of the Test Track has progressed in line with the agreed programme in order to ensure an operational track by the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 in readiness for the delivery and commencement of testing of the new Coventry VLR Test Vehicle. This programme constraint is still in place and the project started on site on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in order to meet this date.

To support the development of the Coventry VLR project, a 15m radius loop needs to be added to Test Track 1 at a cost of £990,000. This will provide useful capability that can be exploited in the future by VLR and associated projects. The 15m radius loop will be a unique facility in the UK enabling the cornering behaviour of new rail vehicles to be tested on the tightest bend that might be needed in urban rail schemes. By its design, it will allow both right hand and left hand cornering behaviour to be fully examined.

Test Track 1 will increase from £2,201m to £2,901m as a result of this extension.

The additional cost of £990,000 is progressing through the Black Country LEP Project Change Request system. It received approval by the LEP Funding Sub Group on 1<sup>st</sup> July and the LEP Board on 13<sup>th</sup> July and is now awaiting final sign off by the Black Country Joint Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> September. It was proposed that this work be carried out as part of the Test Track 1 project. No additional match funding is required from the Council.

In order to comply with project timescales a decision (ref. DRE/20/2020) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director of Finance and Legal on 7<sup>th</sup> August to include the Loop Extension to Test Track 1 currently being built at Castle Hill in the Capital Programme.

11. Towns Fund Bid

The Council is working with Dudley College to submit a Towns Fund bid in January 2021. The bid will be to fund a circa 4,500m<sup>2</sup> higher education facility for health and life sciences. The main project cost is approximately £25m.

However, as detailed in a letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, the Government is bringing forward £5bn



of capital investment projects nationally, supporting jobs and the economic recovery. Dudley's offer is £1m to deliver capital projects that can be delivered in financial year 2020/2021. MHCLG are particularly encouraging capital projects that will support towns in responding to immediate challenges, including:

- Improvement to, or new parks and green spaces and sustainable transport links
- Improvements to town centres including repurposing empty commercial properties
- Demolition or site remediation where this will have an immediate benefit

Given the spend timescales detailed above, a draft decision sheet has been prepared by the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Director of Finance and Legal and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise for approval on 15<sup>th</sup> September to approve the submission of a funding bid of £1m to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Towns Fund to fund an element of the £9.1m Metro Complementary measures project that is already in the Capital Programme and was previously identified as being funded by prudential borrowing / Enterprise Zone resources.

## **Finance**

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

## **Law**

13. 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**

14. These proposals comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity.
15. 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**

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

## **Commercial / Procurement**

17. 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**

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



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## **List of Background Papers**

Relevant resource allocation notifications.



## Progress with Major Capital Schemes

### Public Sector Housing

#### New Council Housing

##### Completed:

- Stewarts Road (Halesowen) – 14 affordable homes – completed August 2020

##### On site and progressing:

- Portway Close (Kingswinford) – 8 affordable homes commenced September 2019– due for completion September 2020;
- Kinfare Rise (Gornal) - 3 affordable 2 bedroom houses. Commenced end March 2020 and due for completion November 2020;
- Redfly Lane (Pensnett) - 6 affordable 2 bedroom houses. Commenced on site end March 2020 and due completion December 2020;
- Worcester Road (Darby End, Dudley) – 10 affordable homes including 8 x 2 bedroom houses and 2 x bungalows. Commenced on site May 2020 and due completion Summer 2021;
- The Broadway (Norton, Stourbridge) – a mix of 10 affordable 1, 2 and 3 bedroom bungalows). Start June 2020, completion due summer 2021.

##### Planned starts (with planning approval received):

- Hinbrook Road (Russells Hall) - 12 apartments and 1 bungalow. Planned start October / November 2020.

##### Schemes with planning awaiting approval:

- Tenlands, Halesowen – 3 bungalows.

Other feasibility sites are currently being investigated for both affordable homes and potential private sales.

##### The programme will also support the delivery of:

- The Brierley Hill Future High Street Fund project by delivering new housing in the Brierley Hill area, subject to a successful MHCLG bid, and positive outcomes from private sector land assembly;
- New sheltered housing and redevelopment on the site of the high-rise blocks at Arley and Compton Courts.

#### Forward Delivery

A new Public Contracts Regulations 2015 Compliant £500m development framework has also been procured and can be used to deliver all new housing schemes for the Council and / or any venture it is involved with, for schemes, irrespective of tenure, commencing from Autumn 2020 to Autumn 2024, delivering schemes into 2025. The framework has 7 potential providers, over four Lots as follows.



- Lot 1 – Micro sites targeting SME developers. Small infill sites of up to 6 units or up to £1m in value.
- Lot 2 – Small sites targeting SME developers. Infill sites of more than 6 and over £1 million and up to 30 units or scheme value of £1 million to £5m.
- Lot 3 – Intermediate sites and Supported Housing. All sheltered / supported schemes (irrespective of unit numbers) and other schemes for over 30 units (or over £5m) and up to 100 units.
- Lot 4 – Large development sites of more than 100 units and/or greater than £20m.

Schemes may include estate regeneration, such as demolition, reconfiguration of estates and flatted developments' refurbishment together with any new housing provision and can include other associated buildings.

Commercial potential is addressed and the Framework can be used by other public bodies - for a fee.

## Environment

### Lister Road Depot Redevelopment

The project to date has been designed to be delivered in three distinct phases as follows:

Phase 1 – Demolition and new car parking area. This work is now complete. The original budget was circa £400,000. The completed work has a final spend value of £523,000 largely attributable to unforeseen ground conditions.

Phase 2 – Demolition, new vehicle storage buildings, welfare facilities, revised car parking and road layout. Site investigation works commenced in August 2019, which resulted in previously unknown mine shafts and landfill being detected. The cost to fill the mine shafts, stabilise ground conditions and dispose of the contaminated spoil is £125,000. A redesign and relocation of the proposed mess facilities, and further planning has resulted in further project spend of an unbudgeted nature plus significant programme delay. Main construction for phase 2 was expected to commence in August 2020, however only drainage works have been completed to date.

Phase 3 – Subject to re-evaluation of the project, currently comprises demolition and build of new office accommodation block plus additional electricity infrastructure works to facilitate electric commercial vehicle charging on the site to future proof the infrastructure.

The project was paused at the completion of the drainage works in phase 2 (beginning of June 2020) for the project team to re-evaluate spend to date and the suitability of the existing proposals in light of 'new ways' of working post Covid. New proposals are now being developed which will provide a more flexible and sustainable solution.





### Stevens Park, Quarry Bank

The Tender Evaluation Report and Strategic Procurement Plans for Contracts 1 and 2 has now been submitted to Dudley Councils' Procurement Management Group and has been approved and has also received approval from the Lottery Fund

Letter of Intent and rejection letters will be issued in the first week in September and following a standstill and mobilisation period of four to six weeks, works for Contract 1 could commence in early October 2020 with Contract 2 following one week later in mid to late October.

Due to COVID-19, a reduced contingency of 5% of the capital works value has been agreed and the project team will discuss potential savings with the successful contractors and suggest items that could be omitted from the contract works if contingencies are considered insufficient.

It is understood that any items considered for omission from the contract works could be carried out by either in-house council staff and/or by volunteers.

As part of the project a 'Wheels for All' bid has also been submitted, which could see additional funding for inclusive cycling on the park.

The lease drawings for Tintern House can now be finalised and governance issues clarified with the Emily Jordan Foundation.

### Wrens Nest Wardens' Base

Notice to purchase the 2 semidetached properties from Dudley College will be submitted to Legal Services within the next couple of weeks, who will then draw up all necessary agreements and finalise the purchase. Due to unknowns, such as searches and any issues raised on the Dudley College side, it is not possible to give an exact timescale for completion of the purchase, but it is hoped that this will be before the end of December. The cost of this purchase will be £120,000, plus any fees.

### Saltwells Wardens' Base

The footing/base slab is now being excavated and the shuttering for the concrete pad and the pour will be completed in the first week of September.

Conduits are in place and are ready for services to be connected as soon as the building is delivered, apart from that for waste water, which is currently being finalised and should be ready before delivery.

The rest of the base, which is being manufactured off site, is 45% complete and the whole project is currently running on time to be delivered in December.



## Transport

### Street Lighting (Invest to Save)

Approximately 6,500 street lighting lantern conversions to LED technology on main roads have been completed. This is over 95% of the total works. The programme will continue to progress over the next 2-3 weeks to complete the outstanding approximately 200 lantern installations. All lanterns have been delivered. In addition, external contractors have installed around 350 of over 370 12 metre columns forming part of this project. This portion of the project is also programmed for completion by the end of September. All proposed new columns are now in stock.

### Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide

Funding has been received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to implement measures that will aim to improve air quality at key locations on the A461 and A491 corridors. The measures include the upgrading of a number of traffic signal installations with more efficient equipment that will assist in improving traffic flow on the Key Route Network. These capital improvements will be complemented by an upgrade in the bus fleet that serve these areas thereby reducing vehicle emissions and this element will be implemented by Transport for the West Midlands and bus operators. Work to upgrade the traffic signal equipment on the A461 corridor was completed in December 2019. Works to upgrade the traffic signals at the junctions of Brierley Hill Road and Lawnswood Road at A491 High Street, Wordsley were substantially completed in April 2020, with some minor signal validation work still required once traffic levels have returned to normal conditions. Spend is forecast to be within budget.

The most recent available monitoring data suggests a general reduction in measured concentrations of nitrogen dioxide over the past 3 years within Netherton and it is likely that recent changes in traffic movements associated with Covid-19 may demonstrate further improvements. It is expected on-going parking enforcement activity and recent improvements in the bus fleet for bus services operating in the area may have contributed to this trend. Given additional air quality monitoring equipment has been installed more recently it is suggested the situation continues to be closely monitored going forward in order to determine future steps.

## 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, 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, the programme is now due to run until December 2021.



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 (work started on site, halted during lockdown, now recommenced), 208 and 209 Wolverhampton Street (grant offers confirmed, but work has not started on site due to difficulties with contractor and now pending confirmation of applicants' and contractor's positions as consequence of Covid-19), 204a Wolverhampton Street (work was ready to start on site prior to lockdown, now able to recommence, pending opening up works), 14 New Street (work started on site 10<sup>th</sup> August), Fountain Arcade (tenders received and being analysed to enable grant application to be submitted), Plaza Mall (grant application being considered with view to offer confirmation week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> August) and 207 Wolverhampton Street (tender documents currently being drafted with view to return of tenders September). It has been anticipated that the majority of work would take place through spring/summer 2020. However, work has been halted as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic. Whilst some projects may be able to re-start, others will be dependent on the business owners being able to continue and this will have to be assessed once the situation improves.

Activities are also being progressed and developed in conjunction with teams in Adult and Community Learning, Museums, and Communications and Public Affairs. The Heritage Open Day September 2020 is currently being planned, but as a digital rather than a physical event. Virtual tours are currently being developed. The volunteer programme has been successful, with a number of volunteers assisting with both the TH programme and also with the Museums team. However, this has been suspended whilst non-essential work in Council buildings is being discouraged. The Geological Trail and Architectural Trails have been developed and are in both leaflet and webpage format. There will be further reprints as required or to coincide with events (e.g. launch of UNESCO Global Geopark), when circumstances allow. Research to augment the Architectural Trail is being carried out with a view to include the trail on the TrailTale free app. Liaison continues with Dudley College to facilitate conservation skills training in the classroom, when students return to college. Further activities are being explored for further discussion with the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

### Low Carbon Place Strategy

The Council has been awarded approximately £2.5m European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to deliver a project that will reduce carbon emissions. This 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 to be met from existing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets.

The installation of new domestic heating systems has ceased as a result of Covid-19. Council officers are in discussion with MHCLG (Ministry for Homes, Community and Local Government) regarding the process for re-profiling grant outputs and expenditure.



The council has appointed Larkfleet to deliver a programme of energy efficiency retrofit at certain corporate buildings. The contractor has completed an initial appraisal of energy saving opportunities at all 'phase 1' buildings. Physical works are expected to start at the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

### 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 will be bedded on stone ballast and western track bedded on concrete track form system, the western track to form a later phase of work. The track route is on a disused Network Rail (NWR) freight track-way which is to be leased from NWR. A planning application was submitted on 10th November 2017 and determined with reserved matters on 25th January 2018.

Tenders have been received for the track and evaluation / recommendation completed. These works commenced on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and assuming that they continue as planned, completion is expected in February 2021.

#### *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.

Tenders were received on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and have been evaluated with final recommendation report currently going through sign off stages before issuing of Contract to the selected Contractor, Clegg Construction

Funding has now been confirmed from the Government's Get Britain Building (GBB) Fund (£12.4m) and LEP (£0.6m).

Construction is anticipated to commence in October 2020 with completion expected in February 2022.

### 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.

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 recognisable branded signage across the borough to residents and visitors giving the information that is needed.

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 is about to go out to tender to secure a supplier and designer for the wayfinding system.

### Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Control Room

The refurbishment of 7 St James/8 Parsons Street to accommodate the new CCTV control room was suspended in March due to the Covid pandemic. The Contractor has now resumed work on site and building work is scheduled for completion on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020. This will then be followed by the specialist fit out of the new video wall fittings and operational testing. All work will be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

As previously reported, phase 1 has been completed with all existing CCTV cameras across the borough replaced and fully operational. Initial locations for additional cameras have been identified and desktop surveys undertaken. On site surveys are currently being scheduled with installations starting early September 2020 once details are finalised. Work has also been considered to replace and migrate existing traffic cameras to the new system and control room.

Enigma Security have now taken over the operational duties within the Control room following a competitive tender and TUPE of staff from their predecessor, OCS.

The estimated project cost at that outset was £1.680m later increased to £1.980m to accommodate an extended public space camera network. This included an estimate of £690,000 for building works to the new Control Room at 7 St James's Road. In addition, the building would provide adequate space for a new Disaster and Contingency Control Room to be located adjacent to the CCTV control room to form a new major incident response and command centre. 7 St James Road also accommodates the Dudley Police Team. Whilst the CCTV camera work was facilitated in house by Digital and ICT Services, the building refurbishment was externalised via a procurement framework due to a lack of capacity in house. During the building project, issues arose which were not foreseen at the time of the initial forecast. This was because the estimate at that stage was not based on



detailed survey work which could only have been done once elements of the building had been exposed, e.g. removing floors to reveal joists. Other additional work included additional fire stopping, electrical and mechanical work plus heritage related work as a result of the building being in a conservation area and the impact of delay due to Covid-19.

As a result, additional work totalling £314,000 was essential for the new CCTV Control Room to be/remain operational once completed. Most of these items would ordinarily have been addressed via the Council's Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) budgets had they arisen under normal circumstances. However, having been highlighted at the same time, they were picked up as part of the refurbishment project. These extra costs can be met by re-profiling future R&M budgets.

### Dudley Interchange

The Council allocated £3m towards an initial estimated project cost of £18m. The cost is now estimated at £20m. The remaining funding will be secured through a £10m contribution from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Transforming Cities Fund which has been approved with the £7m gap being pursued through Government Economic Recovery funding, led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). Project co-ordination meetings are being held on a monthly basis with TfWM. In addition, formal governance is being established with the Dudley Transport Coordination Board having been created.

A total further sum of £2.1m has been approved to support third party land acquisition associated with the delivery of Interchange / town centre highway connectivity improvements. Negotiation regarding third party land acquisition is ongoing in advance of the formal Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process.

### Former Dudley Museum and Enhancement to Dudley Town Hall Catering Provision

Design works are now nearing completion for the Town Hall. The design team are working with planners on a number of queries relating to the planning application. Due to this, and delay caused by Covid 19, it is anticipated that the project will be tendered slightly later than envisaged, during September 2020 with a scheduled completion during March / April 2021 for the Town Hall Bistro. Design Work has also been delayed on the refurbishment of the Former Dudley Museum. Further consideration is also being given to future training requirements post-Covid.

## **Cultural**

### Stourbridge Crematorium

The refurbishment works at Stourbridge Crematorium commenced on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August and are scheduled to take four months to complete.

### Leisure Centres

The construction of Dudley Leisure Centre continues at pace with most of the steel work now in place. Work continued through lockdown with minimal delays and as a consequence the scheme is forecast to be completed on time and in budget.



The design work associated with both Halesowen and Crystal Leisure Centres has been completed and we are now ready for the construction phase, subject to necessary planning permission.

## **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.

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.

### Priority Schools Building Programme

As reported previously, the Council has received formal confirmation from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of a revised grant allocation of £2,515,000 for the rebuild of the Key Stage 1 block at Huntingtree Primary School. Due to issues around obtaining construction materials during Covid lockdown work stopped on site for a brief time. The project is now complete and the school has full use of the site.

### 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 an 8 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. These projects are nearing completion.

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



### 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".

Schools continue to update the Council on their progress and there has been a constant stream of invoices coming through, though a number of schools are having projects carried out in the spring for external works. Information on school specific plans for the use of the fund was distributed to Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet members in November 2019. We have received confirmation of completion of works from 23 schools, leaving 21 outstanding. A number of projects had to be put on hold due to Covid lockdown.

### **Social Care, Health and Wellbeing**

#### Social Care ICT

Work on the Successor Programme has continued and good progress has been made despite challenges around COVID. Project timelines remain on track with Adults Social Care due to go live on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and Children's Services on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

