

Meeting of the Council – 18th April, 2011

Report of the Cabinet

Capital Programme Monitoring

Purpose of Report

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

Background

2. At its meeting on 16th March, 2011, the Cabinet considered a report on Capital Programme Monitoring and made a series of recommendations to the Council which are contained in this report. Other recommendations contained in the report to the Cabinet meeting were determined under delegated powers. A copy of the Cabinet report is available from the Democratic Services Section (Telephone:01384 815236); or by e-mail to richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk; or on the Council's website (follow the links to Meetings and Decisions).

Adult, Community and Housing

New Homes Bonus

3. Commencing in April 2011, the New Homes Bonus will match fund the additional Council Tax raised for new homes and properties brought back into use, with an additional amount for affordable homes, for the following six years. This is with the intention of easing the strains on councils' finances, which might otherwise result from housing growth. Dudley's provisional allocation of New Homes Bonus funding for 2011/12 is £546,000.

It is proposed that this is allocated to support private sector housing grants and loans for renovation and major repair work which will contribute to bringing empty and substandard residential properties back into use, and that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

Affordable Housing at Middlepark Road, Dudley

4. West Mercia Housing Group is undertaking an affordable housing development at Middlepark Road, Russells Hall, consisting of bungalows, houses and sheltered accommodation. This will help to meet a range of local housing needs.

It is proposed to support the development with a contribution of £94,000, and that this be included in the Capital Programme. This can be funded from existing "Section 106" monies provided by housing developers in lieu of affordable housing on site.

New Archive

5. The location of the new Archive and Local History Centre building has been moved from the Black Country Living Museum to the adjacent former Royal Brierley site on Tipton Road. The result is a reduction in cost due to improved ground conditions, with a revised estimated cost of £6m rather than the current approved £7m.

It is proposed that the above be noted and the Capital Programme amended accordingly.

Urban Environment

Sedgley Hall Farm Park, Brook Course Erosion

6. The western brook course within Sedgley Hall Farm Park has been subjected to high levels of water flows, from increased levels of development, during storm conditions over the last 20-30 years. As a result of this, there is evidence of bank erosion. An options appraisal was carried out in March 2009 which recommended stabilisation by a "gabions and terramesh" retaining structure. The works would need to be preceded by a number of mandatory environmental surveys, to ensure that the environmental impact of the works was minimised. The environmental surveys would be carried out in the early spring and the works during the summer dependent upon weather and ground conditions.

The estimated total cost of the works is £350,000, which can be funded by prudential borrowing repaid from Culture and Leisure revenue budgets. It is proposed that the project be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

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.

Equality Impact

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

11. That the Council be recommended:

- That the New Homes Bonus funding for 2011/12 be allocated to support private sector housing grants, and that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly, as set out in paragraph 3.
- That the contribution of £94,000 to West Mercia Housing Group in respect of the affordable housing development at Middlepark Road, Russells Hall be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 4.
- That the reduction in cost of the new Archive and Local History Centre be noted and the Capital Programme amended accordingly, as set out in paragraph 5.
- That the Sedgley Hall Farm Park brook course stabilisation project be approved and included in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 6.



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Leader of the Council