

Meeting of the Cabinet – 6th July 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, including the 2019/20 outturn position.
2. To propose amendments to the Capital Programme.

Recommendations

3. That the Council be recommended:
 - That the outturn position for 2019/20, as set out in paragraph 5 and Appendix A be noted.
 - That progress with the 2020/21 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix B be noted.
 - That with regard to the Emergency Active Travel Fund the capital element of the final allocation be included in the Capital Programme, and that the Director of Public Realm be authorised in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environmental, Highways and Street Services to determine the detailed measures to be implemented, and incur the relevant revenue and capital expenditure, as set out in paragraph 7.
 - That the budget for the Crystal Leisure Centre Heat Pump project be increased by £200,000, as set out in paragraph 8.



- That the Brierley Hill Heritage Action Zone project be approved and the capital elements be included in the Capital Programme, with a maximum Council contribution of £0.4m proportionate to private sector match funding as set out in paragraph 9.
- That the urgent amendments to the Capital Programme be noted, as set out in paragraphs 11-15.

Background

Capital Spending and Financing 2019/20

4. The Council's capital expenditure in the year totalled £77.702m, as follows. A comparison with budget is shown in Appendix A.

	£'000
Public Sector Housing	37,881
Private Sector Housing	11,315
Environment	2,775
Transport	8,152
Regeneration	4,983
Cultural	2,496
Schools	8,327
Social Care, Health and Well Being	755
Commercial and Customer Service:	1,018
Total Expenditure	77,702
Revenue	4,235
Major Repairs Reserve (Housing)	24,129
Capital Receipts	23,586
Grants and Contributions	22,323
Capital Financing Requirement	3,429
Total Financing	77,702



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

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Public Sector Housing	48,645	46,789	39,357
Private Sector Housing	7,447	300	300
Environment	16,948	6,100	3,000
Transport	11,234	3,373	2,373
Regeneration	15,558	5,168	4,804
Cultural	18,883	12,060	0
Schools	27,783	500	0
Social Care, Health and Well Being	1,240	0	0
Commercial and Customer Services	818	489	268
Total spend	148,556	74,779	50,102
Revenue	4,815	3,512	3,886
Major Repairs Reserve (Housing)	24,638	24,982	25,481
Capital receipts	20,026	16,846	10,227
Grants and contributions	34,878	1,630	70
Capital Financing Requirement	64,199	27,809	10,438
Total funding	148,556	74,779	50,102

Note that the capital programme for future years is in particular subject to government grant allocations, some of which have not yet been announced.

6. An update on progress with the Council's most significant capital schemes is shown in Appendix B. A number of projects are under review pending consideration of working practices and the Council's financial position in light of Covid 19. It is proposed that the current position be noted.



Transport

7. Covid 19 Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF)

The Council has been provisionally allocated EATF funding by the Department for Transport for the implementation of measures that will support active travel / social distancing as part of the Transport Recovery response to Covid 19. Once confirmed, funding will be allocated to Local Highway Authorities via the West Midlands Combined Authority. For Dudley the provisional allocations are as follows:

- Tranche 1 (for temporary measures to be delivered within 4-8 weeks of receipt)
Capital £237,000
Revenue £54,000
- Tranche 2 (for more permanent measures to be delivered during 2020/21)
Capital £946,000
Revenue £216,000

At this stage, both final allocations and relative capital/revenue splits are subject to confirmation.

It is proposed that the capital element of the final allocation be included in the Capital Programme, and that the Director of Public Realm be authorised in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environmental, Highways and Street Services to determine the detailed measures to be implemented, and incur the relevant revenue and capital expenditure.

Regeneration

8. Crystal Leisure Centre Heat Pump

The Capital Programme currently includes £600,000 for installing a new low-carbon heating system at Crystal Leisure Centre. The project involves the drilling of a borehole to extract ground water, from which heat is extracted using heat pumps, before the water is returned to the ground via a second-borehole. Both boreholes have now been drilled and on-site testing is underway. Initial results are positive, suggesting adequate ground water availability. A number of costs have increased in the last year, with total project costs now estimated at £800,000 (an increase of £200,000). The scheme will generate income from the Government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) as well as savings on gas. The predicted savings are now estimated at £95,000 per year having been previously estimated at £86,000, the increase being due to additional opportunities to reduce energy use that have been highlighted.

The capital cost can be financed initially by prudential borrowing with the consequent debt charges being funded by the net saving detailed above. It is therefore proposed that the project budget be increased by £200,000.



9. Brierley Hill Heritage Action Zone

The High Streets Heritage Action Zones Programme is a nationwide initiative designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets for the communities who use them. It is funded by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and run by Historic England. The programme is divided into three complementary strands:

- (a) undertaking physical works to buildings;
- (b) facilitating cultural activities and events;
- (c) a community engagement programme.

Historic England has confirmed an award of £1.8m grant to the Council for such capital and revenue works at Brierley Hill towards a total cost of £3.240m for a 4 year programme including a full time project manager.

The Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) would also providing match funding to some of the public realm works within the Future High Streets Fund bid. This is a wider high street recovery programme to help town centres adapt and change.

£1.040m of the £1.440m match funding required for the HAZ would come from private sector applicants, and opportunities are being pursued to access further match funding from other sources. However, should no other external match funding be available the remaining £0.4m would have to be financed by the Council initially by prudential borrowing. The resulting debt charges of approximately £25,000 per year for 25 years can be funded from existing Regeneration and Enterprise revenue budgets.

The Historic England and Council funding would be drawn down over a number of years up to 23/24 and would only be required as and when private sector match funding is secured. Should lower than expected private sector investment be forthcoming this would result in a pro-rata reduction in the Council's contribution.

Due to current uncertainties around Covid-19, the commencement date for the programme would be likely to be autumn 2020.

It is proposed that the project be approved and the capital elements be included in the Capital Programme, with a maximum Council contribution of £0.4m proportionate to private sector match funding.



Urgent Amendments to the Capital Programme

10. Amendments to the Capital Programme are in normal circumstances made by Council following approval by Cabinet. The items below relating to Saltwells Nature Reserve Wardens' Base, Dudley Interchange and the Source and Meadow Road Youth Centres were to be considered by Cabinet on 17th March and, subject to approval by Cabinet, by Council on 6th April. As a result of those meetings being cancelled, in order for the relevant projects to be progressed proposals were considered via the Decision Sheet process in accordance with the delegated authority to the Leader to make urgent amendments to the Capital Programme in consultation with the Director of Finance and Legal.

11. Saltwells Nature Reserve Wardens' Base

As at March 2020 Corporate Landlord Services had negotiated with Western Power and South Staffs Water in relation to the installation of utilities. Tenders had been returned and were being evaluated. Early indications were that the total cost of the project (excluding land acquisition) would be in the region of £550,000 which is £100,000 higher than the original estimate for the scheme approximately 5 years ago. (These figures have subsequently been confirmed.) Opportunities for value engineering were limited without compromising the community benefits of the facility as well as potential income generation. Any opportunities to use Section 106 funding towards the extra cost will be maximised; any remaining balance will need to be initially financed by prudential borrowing with resulting debt charges to be funded from further Green Care savings.

A decision (ref. DFL/02/2020) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services on 31st March 2020 that the budget for the Saltwells Nature Reserve Wardens' Base be increased by £100,000.

12. Interchange / Metro Land Acquisition for Highways Works

The Capital Programme currently includes a £3.6m contribution to assist Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM) in the delivery of a new Transport Interchange linking Bus and Metro as well as assisting the efficient working of Dudley Town Centre when the Interchange and Metro are complete. Cabinet on 12th Feb 2020 approved commencement of the CPO process covering acquisitions necessary to facilitate the Interchange and surrounding highway improvements.

The cost of land required for the highway improvements is included in a bid to WMCA, which is yet to be approved. Early acquisition by negotiation in advance of CPO is encouraged by the CPO code of good practice, and an opportunity has now arisen to acquire some of the relevant land. Alongside the WMCA bid other potential funding opportunities are being explored. In the meantime any acquisition would be at risk pending external funding confirmation.



A decision (ref. DFL/02/2020) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services on 31st March 2020 that the purchase of land up to the value of £1.5m (which is the current estimate of the total third party land acquisition included in the WMCA bid) to facilitate the Dudley Interchange and surrounding highway improvements be approved.

13. The Source and Meadow Road Youth Centres

Within Dudley there are two remaining DMBC run youth centres that deliver services within their North and South catchment areas of the borough. These large centres require modernisation which has been highlighted in recently completed Building Development Plans that were undertaken by Corporate Landlord Services. The plans highlight areas requiring modernisation in order to bring the centres up to date and provide a more welcoming and friendly environment for our children and families. With regard to some of the larger items such as electrical installations, heating systems, access and security, the ongoing repairs and maintenance budget will not suffice to deal with these substantial capital costs estimated to be £135,000. These can be funded from 14-19 Diplomas, SEN & Disabilities capital grant balances held in reserves.

A decision (ref. DFL/02/2020) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services on 31st March 2020 that the expenditure of £135,000 on modernisation of the Source and Meadow Road Youth Centres be included in the Capital Programme.

14. Funding of Family Centre improvements and the Sycamore Adventure soft play scheme

The Capital Programme currently includes three projects which were originally approved to be funded from Troubled Families resources as follows.

- Refurbishment of unused catering kitchen at Stourbridge Family Centre to enable use as office / practitioner space - £80,000.
- Improvement of car parking facilities at Brierley Hill and Stourbridge Family Centres - £50,000.
- Enhancement and development at Sycamore Adventure to include soft play facilities - £50,000.

Following a review of project funding a decision (ref. DFL/03/2020) was made by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services on 6th May 2020 that the above projects be instead funded from uncommitted 14-19 Diplomas, SEN & Disabilities capital grant balances. This would free up unringfenced Troubled Families revenue funding. An urgent decision was required in order that the proposed revised funding could be actioned in the Council's 2019/20 accounts.



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 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

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

Commercial / Procurement

20. 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

21. 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.



2019/20 Capital Outturn

Service	Budget*	Outturn Spend	Variance	Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Public Sector Housing	37,881	37,881	0	
Private Sector Housing	11,315	11,315	0	
Environment	2,754	2,775	+21	See note 1
Transport	8,147	8,152	+5	See note 2
Regeneration	5,773	4,983	-790	See note 3
Cultural	2,495	2,496	+1	See note 4
Schools	8,351	8,327	-24	See note 5
Social Care, Health and Well Being	755	755	0	
Commercial and Customer Services	1,018	1,018	0	
Total	78,489	77,702	-787	

* Updated where appropriate to reflect latest scheme spending profiles

1. Extra outturn spend on Mary Stevens Park Pool of £15,000 met from Lottery funding; Higher than expected installation costs of street recycling bins of £6,000 met from revenue budgets.
2. Minor outturn overspend on pedestrian measures funded from Section 106 resources.
3. Contingencies of £740,000 for Metro Wall not required; previous abortive costs of £64,000 relating to SME element of Very Light Rail project written off to revenue budgets; tender costs in excess of budget by £24,000 for Corbyn Road extension project; other net outturn underspends of £10,000.
4. Minor outturn variance.
5. To provide funding for the Corbyn Road overspend above from remaining 14-19 Diplomas, SEN & Disabilities capital grant.



Progress with Major Capital Schemes

Public Sector Housing

New Council Housing

On site and progressing:

- Stewarts Road (Halesowen) – 14 affordable homes commenced on site end July 2019 – due for completion August 2020.
- Portway Close (Kingswinford) – 8 affordable homes commenced September 2019– due for completion Summer 2020.
- Kinfare Rise (Gornal) - 3 affordable 2 bedroom houses. Commenced end March 2020 and due for completion Nov 2020
- Redfly Lane (Pensnett) - 6 affordable 2 bedroom houses. Commenced on site end March 2020 and due completion Dec 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

Planned starts (with planning approval received):

- The Broadway (Norton, Stourbridge) – a mix of 10 affordable 1, 2 and 3 bedroom bungalows). Planned start June 2020
- Hinbrook Road (Russels Hall) - 12 apartments and 1 bungalow. Planned start late Summer 2020

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

A new development framework is being progressed and procurement has commenced, completion and award due June 2020.

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.

The project has been paused at the completion of the drainage works in phase 2 for the project team to re-evaluate the suitability of the existing proposals in light of ‘new ways’ of working post Covid. This is a positive move to ensure project feasibility, purpose and value for money.

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.

Stevens Park, Quarry Bank

It has not been possible to complete the evaluation process and the award of the contract as previously specified. This has been due to a number of factors but the main issue has been the COVID-19 pandemic. In consultation with the HLF it was agreed that, as we were uncertain of the impact the crisis would have on the tenderers, we should postpone the award while we review our position.

In addition to this there has been a need to carry out a small amount of value engineering, and make some minor amendments to the layout of the building to comply with Planning recommendations. These included the addition of fire doors and systems to allow the safe evacuation of the building and the repositioning of the lift to allow its use from an equality perspective.

We are now waiting for clarifications from all the tenderers in relation to a suite of questions based on the above and, subject to the responses and whether systems of work can be put in place to comply with the COVID-19 guidelines and regulations, we are hoping the contract will be awarded so that work can start on site in the Autumn

Wrens Nest Wardens' Base

Negotiations regarding the purchase of the two buildings have now been concluded and the Corporate Landlord Service Property Manager is currently conducting the required consultation exercise in relation to objections or any other relevant comments.



Saltwells Wardens' Base

The contract for the new building was awarded in May. It is currently being manufactured off site. All works are due to be completed in December.

Transport

Street Lighting (Invest to Save)

Approximately 5,950 street lighting lantern conversions to LED technology on main roads have been completed. This is approximately 90% of the total works. The programme will continue to progress over the next few months due to the impact of COVID-19 but is programmed to be complete by end of August 2020. All lanterns have been delivered with the exception of one final order of 605 lanterns which is due at the end of June. In addition, external contractors have installed around 325 of over 370 12 metre columns forming part of this project. This portion of the project is also programmed for completion by end of August. 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.

In response to Nitrogen Dioxide exceedances in Halesowen Road in Netherton, a number of measures are being investigated to reduce obstruction to traffic flow on Halesowen Road at key pinch-points. The impact of these measures are being evaluated through the use of mobile air quality monitors. Officers will meet with members to discuss the most suitable solutions going forward.



Regeneration

Dudley Townscape Heritage Initiative

The Townscape Heritage (TH) programme is funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund 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 (grant offer confirmed and work started on site in March), 208 and 209 Wolverhampton Street (offers confirmed and work ready to start), 204a Wolverhampton Street (grant offer confirmed and accepted and ready to start on site) and 14 New Street (grant offer confirmed and ready to start on site), Fountain Arcade (tenders received and grant application being prepared), Plaza Mall (tenders received and grant application being prepared) and 207 Wolverhampton Street (planning approval granted, tender documents currently being drafted). 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. A successful Heritage Open Day (HOD) was held in September 2019 and the HOD for September 2020 is already being planned. The volunteer programme continues to be successful, with a number of volunteers assisting with both the TH programme and also with the Museums team. The Geological Trail has now been launched and is available in leaflet and webpage form and we continue to do reprints of the Heritage Architectural Trail. We have been liaising with Dudley College to facilitate conservation skills training on site and in the classroom. We also arranged a conservation / maintenance training day. However, events have now been put on hold for time being.

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 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 subject to a collaboration agreement with NWR who will also operate the test track. 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 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 January 2020 and have been evaluated with final recommendation report in its final draft. No contract will be let until funding has been confirmed.



Metro Retaining Wall

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) approved funding of £4,335,000 on 27th November 2017 and a grant was issued via Coventry City Council. This has been expended since November 2017.

Formal completion of the retaining wall was certified on 5th June 2020.

The final account for the project is almost completed and is indicating a saving against the budget of £740,000 mainly as a result of contingencies not being required.

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, 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 recognizable 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.

CCTV Control Room

The refurbishment of 8 Parsons Street to accommodate the new CCTV control room was suspended in early March due to the Covid pandemic. The Contractor is currently planning to mobilise in the next 2 to 3 weeks leaving around 10 weeks' worth of work remaining. A revised completion programme is to be confirmed.



Across the borough, new CCTV cameras replacing old had largely been completed before the suspension of the contract. Upon recommencement, work will also continue on the additional cameras highlighted by West Midlands Police, Community Safety and Members. We await an indicative installation schedule following recovery from the Covid closedown but it is likely to be around August / September 2020.

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.

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 WMCA Transforming Cities Fund which has been approved and a potential £7m contribution from the Black Country LEP. The bid for the LEP funding has been submitted 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

Following approval to proceed, design work to provide new dining and bar facilities for Dudley Town Hall culminated in a formal planning application being submitted in June 2020. Due to delay caused by Covid 19, it is anticipated that the project will be tendered slightly later than envisaged, during July / August 2020 with a scheduled completion during March 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 upgrade of the cremators and enhancement works to the chapel will commence in August. The crematorium will be closed for 4 months.

Leisure Centres

The contract for the new Dudley Leisure Centre has been signed and work has started on site. Cost certainty will soon be known for Halesowen and Crystal Leisure Centres but final designs have yet to be agreed. The current budget is £31.3m.



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. Although there have been issues with availability of construction materials during Covid lockdown 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. Contractors are now back on site and moving forwards with landscaping.

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 of design stage.

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 22 schools, leaving 22 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 7th September 2020 and Children's Services on 16th November 2020.

