

## **Meeting of the Council – 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2009**

### **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 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2009, 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](mailto:richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk) ; or on the Council's website [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk) (follow the links to Council Decisions / Committee Information).

#### **Adult, Community and Housing**

##### **Oak Lane Traveller Site, Kingswinford**

3. During the last 12 months there have been a number of incidents on the site that have posed threats to the health and safety of Council employees, contractors and residents. Unlawful occupation of vacant plots has also taken place.

Risk assessments have highlighted the need to provide greater safety and security measures to safeguard persons working or residing on the site. A number of measures have already been put in place and others are due to be implemented imminently. It is now proposed to install heavy duty wireless CCTV on the site that can be recorded or viewed live by remote access by Council officers. The estimated cost is £20,000. It is also proposed to install automatic electronic barriers to the site to prevent unauthorised access at a cost of £30,000. Both of these schemes can be funded from Directorate resources.

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

#### **Urban Environment**

### Dudley Wood BMX Track and Fencing

4. Following the inclusion of the above project in the Capital Programme at an estimated cost of £52,000, tenders have now been received such that the estimated cost is now £62,000. The additional costs can be funded from Directorate resources.

It is proposed that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly

### Growth Point

5. In December 2008, the Black Country was allocated up to £8.3m of funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government as a designated Housing Growth Point area to assist with housing delivery in the sub-region. This will be used for projects which will facilitate the delivery of new housing, including masterplanning work, site investigations and infrastructure improvements. Sandwell Council is the accountable body for the funding, but decisions on the allocation of funding and changes to the programme will be managed by the Black Country Regeneration Lead Officers. The funding has been split into allocations for projects which will be of joint benefit to the Black Country, with the remainder split amongst projects which are of benefit to individual local authorities. The initial indicative allocation for Dudley MBC is £800,000 over the next 2 years.

It is proposed that this allocation be noted and that any associated capital spend be included in the Capital Programme.

### Connections to Opportunities (C2O)

6. This region wide initiative has been developed by Advantage West Midlands (AWM) to address economic exclusion and the challenge of the West Midlands output gap (the shortfall between West Midlands output per head and the national average). The objectives are, via Local Strategic Partnerships and their local partners, to:
  - support innovative bottom up approaches to tackling worklessness through the third sector, local and community groups - avoiding duplication with existing provision, whilst dovetailing with local circumstances;
  - reduce economic exclusion in key target groups by helping them towards employment, specifically looking at those furthest from the job market (target beneficiaries include long term workless, disabled people and those with health conditions, lone parents, ethnic minorities, older people (over 50), people with low or no qualifications and other groups, for example, ex-offenders, drug users, and vulnerable families);
  - identify critical success and failure factors and develop case studies analysing the approaches undertaken and to look for replicable approaches for possible future interventions.

Indicative allocations have been set based on the incidence of worklessness, totalling £730,000 for Dudley Borough over the next 3 years. Approval will be via full applications to AWM and will be appraised against programme criteria. AWM will be looking for clear strategic fit between applications and individual areas' priority objectives, particularly those enshrined in Local Area Agreements (LAA).

In view of the focus on worklessness within our LAA and the delivery remit resting with the Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership (EDRP), the Dudley Community Partnership has agreed that the EDRP will be responsible for endorsing Dudley's applications to ensure linkage with other related activities, e.g. City Strategy and the Sustainable Urban Development Programme, and that Dudley MBC will be the accountable body.

The Cabinet, under delegated powers, authorised the Director of the Urban Environment to submit full applications on behalf of the Council to AWM for funding for projects through Connections to Opportunities, and to accept any grant funding arising from the applications and the Interim Director of Law and Property to sign the necessary funding agreements with AWM and any agreements with third party organisations. The Cabinet resolved further that, subject to funding being confirmed, any capital elements of the scheme be included in the Capital Programme.

#### Himley Hall - Extension of Fire Alarm System

7. Following a Fire Risk Assessment, extension of the Fire Detection System at Himley Hall was approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme at an estimated cost of £30,000. Tenders have now been received, indicating a revised total cost of £35,000. The additional costs can be met from existing directorate reserves.

It is proposed that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

### **Children's Services**

#### Coseley Youth Centre Relocation

8. The existing Coseley Youth Centre is situated off Whitehouse Street, Coseley. It is currently intended to demolish this to provide a site for development of Extra Care Housing. It is desirable that the existing services provided by the centre should continue within the immediate vicinity, and a feasibility study has indicated the Clayton Park site, which is ideally located across the road from the existing centre and in an area where young people wish to meet.

The building would be of a modular design, thus reducing the build time on site, with an estimated capital cost of £565,000. Of this total, £300,000 can be met from the housing land disposals, while the balance of £265,000 can be funded initially from the Directorate's 14-19 capital budget pending the final identification of a funding package.

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

#### Play Pathfinder Project

9. The Council has been allocated an additional £50,000 of Play Pathfinder funding for the Sycamore Adventure Playground. This extra funding will contribute to allowing children with disabilities to have an overnight short break in the new adventure playground building, and ensure that inclusive indoor and outdoor play is available for all children including those with a disability.

It is proposed that the extra funding allocation be noted, and the Capital Programme be amended accordingly

## **Finance**

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

## **Law**

11. 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**

12. These proposals comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity.
13. 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**

18. That the Council be recommended:
  - That the safety and security measures at the Oak Lane Traveller Site be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.
  - That the Capital Programme be amended to reflect the increased costs of the Dudley Wood BMX Track and Fencing project, as set out in paragraph 4.
  - That the Growth Point funding allocation be noted, and any associated capital spend included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 5.
  - That, subject to funding being confirmed, any capital elements of the Connections to Opportunities scheme be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6.
  - That the Capital Programme be amended in respect of the revised costs of the extension of the fire alarm system at Himley Hall, as set out in paragraph 7.

- That the project to relocate Coseley Youth Centre be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 8.
- That the extra Play Pathfinder funding allocation be noted, and the Capital Programme be amended accordingly, as set out in paragraph 9.

*David Caunt*

Leader of the Council