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Agenda Item No. 5

Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2013/14 for Leisure and Culture, Public Protection, Community Engagement and Voluntary Sector and Transport and Environment Portfolios

Ward(s) All

Portfolio:

Councillor A Harris – Leisure and Culture
Councillor Z Ali – Public Protection
Councillor I Shires – Community Engagement and Voluntary Sector
Councillor T Ansell – Transport and Environment

Summary of report

This report contains the draft capital programme for the Leisure and Culture, Public Protection, Community Engagement and Voluntary Sector and Transport and Environment Portfolios.

Recommendation

The panel are recommended to consider the draft capital programme proposals in this report and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Background papers

Various financial working papers.

Reason for scrutiny

To enable consultation and scrutiny of the draft capital programme 2013/14.

Resource and legal considerations

Revenue

Cabinet on 24 October 2012 presented their draft revenue budget 2013/14 for consultation which was presented to this panel on 14 November 2012. The recommendations from the panel were presented to Cabinet on 12 December 2012. There are currently no further changes to what was previously reported, however the budget is an evolving process with recognition that proposals may change during consultation (which ends in January) and prior to formal recommendation to full Council on 21 February 2013. The draft local government finance settlement for 2013/14 was announced on 19 December 2012, which is currently being analysed, with details to be reported in the budget plan to Cabinet on 23 January 2013.

Capital

Capital programme resources are limited. The financing for capital expenditure on new investments is heavily reliant on grants and other funding received from the Government.

The Government is clearly, in the medium term, planning to significantly reduce government financed capital spending.

Capital allocations and grants from Government and other sources have not yet been provided, therefore best estimates have been used, based on published information to date. Any further reduction in funding will require amendments to the draft programme.

Despite the difficulties, significant investment is planned and funded over the three year 2013/14 to 2015/16 and the draft capital programme is balanced. The council is able to fund all existing commitments and has, through prioritisation of bids and resources and sound treasury management, been able to support new investment into key services, and areas of capital investment need.

The capital programme is presented in three parts:

- Mainstream programme - funded by the council's own resources, through capital borrowing and receipts.
- Externally funded programme - funded from capital grants and third party contributions.
- Leasing Programme – funded from revenue

Table 1 and **2** set out the draft capital programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 for the Leisure and Culture and Transport and Environment Portfolios with further detail of the schemes attached at **Appendix 1**. There are no capital proposals for Public Protection and Community Engagement and Voluntary Sector portfolios.

Table 1: Draft Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17				
Leisure and Culture Portfolio				
Project	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£	£	£	£
<i>Mainstream (council) funded schemes</i>				
Arboretum play area	175,000	0	0	0
Arboretum restoration programme – Illuminated park proposals	270,000	0	0	0
Willenhall memorial park	180,000	60,000	0	0
Greenspace improvement plan	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Allotment and community green strategy – Borneo Street	50,000	0	0	0
Roadway extensions in Streetly cemetery	150,000	0	0	0
Headstone safety in cemeteries	80,000	45,000	45,000	45,000
Willenhall lawn cemetery extension	120,000	0	0	0
<i>Non mainstream (externally) funded schemes</i>				
Blackwood park	95,700	66,100	171,500	151,400
Play strategy	512,000	563,000	724,000	652,000
George Rose park	50,000	56,000	56,000	41,000
High Heath park	129,515	0	0	0
Holland park	230,000	147,200	147,200	148,200
King George V playing fields	280,000	58,500	14,000	15,500
Kings Hill park	55,000	160,000	60,000	22,000
Health in parks	30,000	30,000	35,000	35,000
Bentley green spaces	88,000	100,000	285,000	70,000
Oak Park and Walsall Wood	40,000	110,000	140,000	110,000
Palfrey park	30,000	25,000	15,000	10,000

Pelsall common	78,400	61,600	61,600	61,600
Pleck park	110,000	135,000	75,000	55,000
Reedwood park	115,000	330,000	385,000	275,000
The Croft	66,000	0	0	0
Willenhall Memorial park	123,250	23,750	0	0
Arboretum play area	0	220,000	220,000	165,000

Table 2: Draft Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 Transport and Environment Portfolio				
Project	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£	£	£	£
<i>Mainstream (council) funded schemes</i>				
Highways maintenance	1,450,000	1,700,000	1,900,000	2,100,000
Retained housing land	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
<i>Mainstream (council) funded schemes – reserve list (subject to available funding)</i>				
Verge parking	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
Refurbishment of Fryers Road transfer station / HWRC site	250,000	0	0	0
Hatherton multi storey car park	200,000	0	0	0
Generic highways improvement	125,000	0	0	0
<i>Non mainstream (externally) funded schemes</i>				
LTP highways maintenance	1,945,000	2,028,000	2,028,000	2,028,000
Low emissions town and cities	100,000	0	0	0
Local highways maintenance funding	352,000	188,000	0	0

There is also an allocation within the leasing programme for Transport and Environment portfolio of £3.89m in 2013/14 in relation to the vehicle replacement programme.

Citizen impact

The budget is aligned with service activity in service plans, and the principles of the working smarter programme. The report sets out the plans for future service delivery for the services within the remit of this panel.

Environmental impact

The impact on the environment is considered alongside all budget / capital programme proposals.

Performance management

Financial performance is considered alongside service targets. Managers are required to deliver their service targets within budget, and there are comprehensive performance arrangements in place to monitor and manage this.

Equality Implications

Service managers have regard to equalities in setting budgets / capital programme and delivering services. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken as required prior to final recommendations being made to Council on the budget.

Consultation

Recommendations from the panel will be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 23 January 2013 for their consideration.

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Details of Capital Bids

Arboretum Play Area

To replace and improve the children's play area in Walsall's Arboretum Extension. Whilst the wet play area and some other safety work is being undertaken in September 2012, the proposed scheme would be to replace the rest of the play area. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period. Initial capital is required to pump prime the external funding bids. Without the Council's contribution it is highly unlikely from our conversations with funders that they would consider funding the whole scheme. This match funding is expected to attract significant external investment from 2014/15 to 2017/18.

Walsall Arboretum Restoration Programme – Illuminated Park proposals

This funding would allow the following work to be undertaken to celebrate the restored park: lighting to key routes within the park; illumination of key park buildings including the Bandstand, Boathouse and Lichfield Street Lodge; and illumination of the park landscape features, trees and water features including the Boardwalk. The overall aim would be to create a unique experience in Walsall and allow visitors to view the park from a different and exciting perspective. It would broaden 'the offer' of the park, creating the environment for a diverse and imaginative events' programme utilising the bandstand, centre green and visitor centre.

Willenhall Memorial Park

Landscape improvements to Willenhall memorial park, to include the building of a regional skate park, and improved pedestrian and vehicular access around the park with repairs to existing pathways and boardwalks. £52k has already been secured to support delivery of this project. This will attract further external funding of £95k.

Greenspace Improvement Plan

Prior to 2012/13 the Green Space Improvement Service was allocated £50,000 per year to match and pump prime a variety of schemes in conjunction with external partners and funding agencies to deliver the Green Spaces Strategy. In 2012/13 this figure was increased to £150,000 and the £100,000 increase was ring-fenced to deliver the Doe Bank Park improvement scheme. The council is about to consider adopting a new five-year Green Spaces Strategy for 2012/13 to 2017/18 and the request is to double the baseline financial allocation from £50,000 to £100,000 so that more and better improvements can be undertaken in parks and open spaces throughout the Borough.

Allotment and Community Garden Strategy – Borneo Street

The demand for allotments within Walsall has increased in recent years in line with national trends. Meeting this demand in full would be very challenging particularly in light of the many competing demands for capital funding. This scheme will go some way towards meeting this demand and, because of its central location within the borough alongside a main road (A461), would offer relatively good accessibility for all residents. The proposal is to create 15 new plots on Council owned land at Cartbridge Lane South. The site is located in the Green Belt and is currently available for use as grazing land. However, there has been little demand for this in recent years and there are no tenants at present. In view of these circumstances, the land is immediately available and as such offers an early opportunity to make good the current shortfall in provision. The estimated cost of this scheme is £50,000 and includes some rationalisation of access arrangements to the existing allotment site in Borneo Street.

Roadway extensions in Streetly Cemetery

Burial space at Streetly cemetery is gradually filling up the sections that currently have road and footpath access. Unused sections that are already owned by the council do not have infrastructure (roadway and paths) and this will be required so that the spare land can be used and burials undertaken. The improved access will be necessary for funeral vehicles and mourners to get to the additional grave spaces in the furthest part of the cemetery.

Headstone safety in Cemeteries

The Health and Safety Executive requires all burial authorities to control the risk associated with the operation of their cemeteries, including risks from unsafe memorials. This project has provided funding for continual safety work on memorials since 2005/06. Because of the investment made over the past 6 years, the level of risk has reduced to the extent that the annual investment can now be reduced to £80,000. Investment at this lower level will be necessary to adequately control the risk involved and safeguard the safety of cemetery users as well as council employees. Annual risk assessments are carried out to inform the required investment levels in subsequent years. It is anticipated that the requested amount of £80,000 will be sufficient to meet the council's management of risk within its cemeteries for the forthcoming financial year.

Willenhall Lawn Cemetery Extension

Preliminary investigative work to establish the feasibility of providing further burial space at Willenhall Lawn Cemetery to the east of the existing cemetery and to draw up plans for the development of the land as burial ground with an internal road system, landscaping and cemetery facilities. There are in the region of 500 grave spaces remaining of the existing provision and statistically there are about 115 new full coffin graves purchased each year in this cemetery. The availability of full coffin graves in the cemetery will therefore last until 2016. This funding will support a feasibility study to take place in 2013/14. Should the results of this study signify that the ground is suitable for the burial of human remains then a further capital bid will be made to enable construction to begin in late 2014 for use by early 2016. The proposed extension consists of two areas; the larger is 1.9Ha and the smaller 0.4Ha. It is estimated that this will be sufficient for about 5000 full coffin graves, allowing for infrastructure. At present rates, this will give provision in the Willenhall cemetery for about 35 - 40 years at the current rate of usage.

Blackwood Park (External funding)

Landscape Improvement Plan: to achieve Green Flag status. It is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme which is spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 five year period – total of £515,700.

Play Strategy (External funding)

Provision of 10 new children's play areas, 6 new youth and adult play sites (incorporating 6 new play equipment items) plus 48 new youth or adult play facilities i.e. gym trails. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period. Funding would be sought from HLF, Big Lottery, Landfill Tax Credits, s106, partnership funding bids – total of £3,211,000.

George Rose Park (External funding)

Landscape improvement Scheme - Major improvements to George Rose Park including new bandstand, recreational facilities, woodland, improvements to the 9-a-side pitches, signage etc – total of £238,000.

High Heath Park (External funding)

Improvement Plan – it is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme in 2013/14. The scheme is for new recreational facilities, landscaping and signs.

Holland Park (External funding)

Landscape improvement scheme – It is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme in 2013/14. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period – total of £990,000.

King George V Playing Fields (External funding)

Landscape improvement scheme - Recreational facilities, walls, footpaths, access, pavilion improvements, health and formal sports facilities. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period. £125,000 of s106 funding is expected to be received and ring-fenced for this scheme during 2013/14 – total of £378,500.

Kings Hill Park (External funding)

Landscape improvement scheme to achieve green flag status - Refurbished pavilion and usual range of significant improvements throughout the park. It is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme in 2013/14. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period – total of £311,000.

Health in Parks (External funding)

Installation of outdoor gyms in various parks across the borough – It is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme in 2013/14. Scheme is to install c10 outdoor free gyms to encourage people to exercise – a total of £167,000.

Bentley Green Spaces (External funding)

Area wide improvement plan - The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period. Funding would be sought from HLF, Big Lottery, DEFRA Nature Improvement Areas, Landfill Tax Credits, s106, partnership funding bids – total of £582,000.

Oak Park and Walsall Wood (External funding)

Landscape improvement - Network of paths linking various areas, recreational facilities, access, security, signs, etc. It is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme in 2013/14. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period – total of £510,000.

Palfrey Park (External funding)

Landscape improvement - Additional health facilities and further landscape works to maintain Green Flag status. It is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme over the five year period 2013/14 to 2017/18 – total of £90,000.

Pelsall Common (External funding)

Landscape improvement - Health opportunities, access for the disabled, heritage features, footpaths, seating, signs, recreational facilities, heathland restoration, etc. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period. Funding would be sought from HLF, Big Lottery, DEFRA Nature Improvement Areas, Landfill Tax Credits, s106, partnership funding bids – total of £324,800.

Pleck Park (External funding)

Long-term improvement - Bring Park Lodge back into use, additional health facilities and further landscape works to maintain Green Flag status. It is anticipated that s106 or Community Levy funding will be key towards funding this scheme over the five year period 2013/14 to 2017/18 – total of £485,000.

Reedswood Park (External funding)

Landscape improvement plan – This would be reliant on the capital receipt from the sale of the former Reedswood Golf Course - Health opportunities, access for the disabled, heritage features, footpaths, seating, signs, recreational facilities, heathland restoration, etc. Eradication of Japanese Knotwood. The scheme would be spread over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 period. Funding would be sought from HLF, Big Lottery, DEFRA Nature Improvement Areas, Landfill Tax Credits, s106, partnership funding bids – total of £1,220,000.

The Croft (External funding)

Landscape improvement - To provide improved pedestrian access to the Croft and play area, seating, bins, signage and soft landscaping.

Highways Maintenance

This project is to safeguard progress already made in the condition of Walsall's classified highway network and maintain service levels. This includes alternate funding of highways maintenance to replace revenue funds in the following three years.

Retained Housing Land

During the transfer of its housing stock, approximately 50% of housing land was retained by the council. This proposal relates to an extensive network of footpaths through 'public sector' housing estates which were not included in the housing stock transfer but which are not public highway. There is a £100k budget in 2012/13 for this work and so continual investment in this area through the council's capital programme would help maintain the condition of footpaths in a safe condition, and so reducing the risk of pedestrians tripping on damaged surfaces. This would in turn reduce the liability and the associated cost to the council from claims arising from accidents. The proposal includes collaboration with WHG in coordinating any maintenance works that border WHG areas. This is part of phased work in collaboration with WHG to meet its duty as land owner and enhance the environment for the public.

Verge Parking (Reserve list item)

Construction of between 3 and 6 new residential car parking facilities per annum within residential areas; to provide hardstanding areas.

Refurbishment of Fryers Road Transfer Station / HWRC site (Reserve list item)

Feasibility study for refurbishment or alternative option for Fryers Transfer Station - in time for the new W2R contract by April 2014. A full building survey is required to ascertain the work needed which will be funded through 2012/13 revenue.

Hatherton Multi-Storey Car Park to safeguard income (Reserve list item)

Feasibility work to review the car park. The council aims to deliver parking facilities that support the local economy and meet public expectations. The car park strategy is underway, and the long term solution to the car park will be included in this overall strategy.

Generic highway improvement (Reserve list item)

To fund one off highways improvements necessary for health and safety needs.

LTP Highway maintenance (External funding)

Funding from the Department of Transport for the councils Local Transport Plan to enhance maintenance of roads in the borough.

Low Emissions Town & Cities (External funding)

Potential new DEFRA grant in 2013/14. The bid will be made by Birmingham on behalf of Walsall MBC.

Local Highways Maintenance Funding (External funding)

Funding from the Department of Transport for additional maintenance of roads in the borough.