



**Report to: Cabinet, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016**

**Report of: Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of the Council**

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**Subject: MAJOR PROJECTS – PROGRESS REPORT**

**1. Recommendation**

**1.1 That Cabinet note the progress that has been made on major projects during the last 12 months.**

**2. Background**

- 2.1 In 2015, the Council approved a new Corporate Plan "Proud of our past, focused on our future". 2015-16 has seen the delivery of a number of key strategies in the Corporate Plan, for example the adoption of the SWDP, the enhancement of the market offer through the development of a range of markets across the city centre and riverside under the banner "Worcester Markets", maintaining green flag status in Gheluvelt Park and Cripplegate Park and hosting of major events including the European Wheelchair Basketball Championships and the Worcester 10K.
- 2.2 The Corporate Plan also identifies a number of key projects. This report provides an update on the progress that has been made against some key Corporate Plan projects as well as some other major projects that have been approved by Cabinet during 2015/16.

**3. Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre Contracts**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 15 September 2015, Cabinet approved the award of 2 strategically important contracts for the construction of a new swimming pool at Perdiswell and a ten year contract for the management and operation of the Council's leisure centres. Both of these contracts are important strategies in theme 2 of the Corporate Plan – "Growing a vibrant city with sports, leisure and retail".
- 3.2 The construction of the swimming pool has progressed to RIBA Stage E and the project objectives for the pool hall excavations are progressing as anticipated. Phase 1 of the Sports Hall works will be completed over a three week period to coincide with the Easter holiday period, with phase 2 to be completed over the summer holidays. The successful delivery of the project on time and to budget appears feasible at this stage.
- 3.3 The mobilisation of the Council's contract with Freedom Leisure has been completed and the new operator is working closely with the construction team to mitigate any impact on the users of the Perdiswell leisure centre during the build programme for the new swimming pool.

- 3.4 When completed Worcester will be the proud owner of a regional competition standard 8-lane swimming pool and a leisure centre with an 8-court sports hall, 3 studios and a state of the art 120 station gymnasium. New classrooms will give Heart of Worcestershire Further Education College's 10,000 students modern educational and sporting facilities and Worcester Swimming Club will once again be able to hold their galas and open meets in Worcester.

#### **4. Crematorium refurbishment**

- 4.1 At its meeting on 28 July 2015 Cabinet approved an investment in a project for the refurbishment of the Crematorium, which has now been completed. An alternative Chapel facility was provided near by so that the service continued to be provided throughout the period of works.
- 4.2 The major refurbishment of the chapel included lighting, carpet and redecoration, with new seating replacing the fixed pews. Audio visual facilities are now available inside the chapel, in the new waiting room and outside for larger services. The scheme also includes new office and reception facilities at the main Crematorium building that provide improved customer service.

#### **5. Cathedral Square**

- 5.1 The redevelopment of Cathedral Square contributes to Corporate Plan theme 4 – “Continuing to enhance our city centre and riverside”. Phase 1 of the project for the redevelopment of Cathedral Square has been completed, namely the highways works, island and crossing reconfiguration. Phase 2 of the project is underway with the demolition of the retail units. The reconstruction of the front elevation of the retail units is scheduled for completion by the end of 2016. Thereafter, phase 3 will commence with the work to the public realm space to the front of the retail units. The project is on target for completion, including occupation of the retail units in Spring 2017.
- 5.2 Once completed, Cathedral Square will provide a focal point bringing together the retail and leisure offer at the end of the High Street and the heritage attractions of the Cathedral, the Commandery and the Museum of Royal Worcester.

#### **6. Commandery Improvements**

- 6.1 At its meeting on 28 July 2015, Cabinet agreed to invest up to £260,000 in improvements to the Commandery Museum. The Council has recently appointed an exhibition designer who will be preparing outline designs and concepts which will be presented in April 2016. This will include a presentation to members. Final designs are to be signed off in Summer 2016. Thereafter, the Council will tender for the works which will be carried out later in the Winter of 2016/17. The launch of a new visitor experience will take place in Spring 2017.

#### **7. Vehicle purchase**

- 7.1 Theme 5 of the Corporate Plan – “Ensuring our city is clean green and safe” includes a strategy for providing new tools, vehicles and equipment to support delivery of the Council’s operational services. The Council has invested further in its fleet during 2015/16, with three Refuse Collection Vehicles received (in addition to the seven RCVs received in the previous year). Seven Road Sweepers will be delivered in April

this year with a further eight neighbourhood ancillary vehicles scheduled for delivery in summer 2016.

## **8. Diglis Public Realm**

- 8.1 At its meeting on 28 July 2015, Cabinet delegated authority to officers to award a contract for the next phases of the project to improve the public realm at Diglis. At the time of writing, officers have completed the formal tendering process and work will be commencing in Spring 2016 to carry out landscaping works, which will include new boundary fencing, pathways for walking and cycling, and new planting. This builds on the work that was carried out last year including installation of a new play area and opening up views of the river. This project also contributes to Corporate Plan theme 4 – “Continuing to enhance our city centre and riverside”.

## **9. Refurbishment of Gheluvelt Toilets and Splashpad**

- 9.1 At its meeting on 28 July 2015, Cabinet agreed to invest £200,000 of New Homes Bonus in a scheme to provide new toilets at Gheluvelt Park as part of an enhanced facility by rebuilding the Sons of Rest building to also replace the existing community room and provide a refreshment kiosk. Officers have been progressing the design work as preparation for going out to tender. The project is still on target for opening the new facility in Spring 2017 as planned.

## **10. Street nameplates**

- 10.1 At its meeting on 27 October 2015, Cabinet allocated £40k over two years to replace and refurbish street name plates across the city, supporting the Corporate Plan theme 5 of ensuring our city is clean green and safe.
- 10.2 During 2015/16, the Council has installed 270 new street nameplates following referrals from local councillors, the public and Council staff. Officers have also worked with the BID to identify further street nameplates for renewal in 2016/17, which will be supplemented by further referrals from councillors and members of the public.

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**Background Papers:** None