

Report to Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership Board

29 February 2024

Subject:	Improving the Millennium Centre
Report Author	Allison Blakeway Economic Development Project Manager Rebecca Jenkins Levelling Up Partnership Programme Manager

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out the proposed delivery approach for the Improving the Millennium Centre Project

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the WLUP Board approve the delivery of the Friar Park Millennium Centre project subject to agreement from the Friar Park Millennium Centre Board, and Section 151 Officer sign-off

3. Background

- 3.1 The Improving the Millennium Centre project aims to improve the Friar Park Millennium Centre to meet the demands from an extended community (as a result of the proposed Friar Park Urban Village) and enhance the skills delivery offer for residents including an improved library presence.



- 3.2 The Friar Park Millennium Centre currently provides a range of activities and facilities for local community use. As part of public consultation in relation to the Friar Park Urban Village development, residents raised a key concern around the future capacity of the centre, and its ability to continue to meet the needs of the existing and expanded community. In addition, key service providers have identified the potential to extend the existing services to meet existing and new and existing demands.
- 3.3 £2m capital has been granted for the project via the Levelling Up Partnership.
- 3.4 Project work to date has included formation of a project group to set out the project requirements and production of designs. This includes representatives of the Council, the Friar Park Millennium Centre Management team, and existing and future service providers.
- 3.5 The overall objective was to ensure that the centre is integral to ensuring future community cohesion and integration between existing residents and the anticipated new homes over the next 10 years through futureproofing and accommodating the requirements of an expanded community. 630 new homes are expected at Friar Park Urban Village, and planning consent has recently been granted for circa 100 homes on the former Phoenix Collegiate college site nearby.
- 3.6 Specifically, the project seeks to provide:
- Expanded library
 - Community café
 - New training/meeting room
 - Additional events space
 - Relocation of play-space, especially the ballpark and sensory room
 - Retention/upgrading of existing facilities, including kitchen and storage facilities.
- 3.7 As part of this work, existing issues relating to the ongoing maintenance of the building have been explored. Wherever possible, these issues are sought to be addressed as part of the proposed works.



- 3.8 The proposal will result in a 160sq. m. extension to the rear of the property to primarily accommodate a new events space with associated toilets and kitchen/servery, together with remodelling of the current entrance and library area to accommodate the additional facilities.
- 3.9 The headline analysis of the costs indicate that the scheme can be delivered within the LUP budget of £2.0m including a 10% contingency. Further work is currently underway to provide greater certainty on cost and will be reported verbally at the WLUP Board meeting.
- 3.10 Representatives of the Friar Park Millennium Centre have participated in the development of the proposal and the Millennium Centre Board will consider the proposal in February 2024. Feedback will be provided to the WLUP Board during the meeting
- 3.11 A capital appraisal will be required to be undertaken by the Council as part of project assurance arrangements. Project delivery will not commence until this review is complete and authorisation provided by the Council's S151 Officer.

Consultation and Engagement

- 3.12 The project was identified for inclusion within the LUP due to feedback from residents as part of the Friar Park Urban Village masterplan consultation. Residents expressed their concerns around the capacity of the centre given the development of the Friar Park Urban Village which is anticipated to create a further 630 new homes. In addition, planning consent for circa 100 homes has also been provided on the former Phoenix Collegiate college site nearby recently.
- 3.13 Initial information about the project was shared at the Millennium Centre Christmas event and with Ward Members in early December.
- 3.14 Further information will be shared with residents once final designs have been produced and consultation will take place through the planning process.
- 3.15 A project communication and engagement plan is included on the WLUP Board agenda.



Monitoring and Evaluation

3.16 Project output measures were submitted to DLUHC as part of a return made prior to the Grant Funding agreement being issued. The measures were proposed as follows:

- Improved library facility
- Extended meeting spaces
- Improved Kitchen / Storage facilities

3.17 The outputs are on track for achievement.

3.18 The project is expected to contribute to the LUP programme outcome measures of:

- Resident satisfaction with their local area as a place to live
- Skills / qualifications gained (or equiv. measure)
- Numbers of participants in community activities (or equiv. measure)

3.18 Any actual or forecast overspend on the total project budget will be reported to the WLUP Board as part of ongoing monitoring.

1.20 Project Milestones are set out as follows:

Milestone	Date
Complete Design process	Feb-24
Millennium Centre Board approval to progress to delivery phase	Feb-24
WLUP Board approval to progress to delivery phase	Feb-24
Appoint Design team	March 2024
Public information/consultation event	April 2024
Submit Planning Application	April/May 2024



Confirm construction contract	June 2024
Start on Site	July 2024
Complete Works	March-25

4. Implications

Resources:	<p>£2m capital has been granted for the Millennium Centre project</p> <p>A capital appraisal is pending for the Millennium Centre Project and delivery will not commence until authorisation from the Council's S151 Officer is made.</p> <p>The LUP Grant includes the requirement for all spend to be made by March 2025. This is an area of risk in the project.</p>
Legal and Governance:	<p>Procurement for the project will be in accordance with Sandwell MBC's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Contracts.</p>
Risk:	<p>Key risks have been identified. The project risk register will be reviewed as part of the project capital appraisal.</p> <p>Main risks are associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design requirements exceeding budget costs. A high level cost assessment indicates costs are anticipated at circa £1.9m including 10% contingency and fees. Further analysis is currently underway. - Timescales – exceeding LUP Grant deadline of March 2025. Based on the delivery plan, an 8 month build programme is currently anticipated, resulting in works completion in Spring 2025.
Equality:	<p>An EqIA screening has been undertaken. Based on the building design, no negative equality impacts have been identified. The screening will be reviewed once final designs have been produced.</p>



Health and Wellbeing:	<p>The underpinning objective of the LUP is to ‘level up’ and reduce inequalities. The proposed interventions focus on tackling health inequalities in a multi-faceted way and compliment public health programmes.</p> <p>Improvements to the Millennium Centre are expected to lead to improvements in residents’ satisfaction with their local areas as a place to live, through increasing access to community activities and skills development opportunities.</p>
Social Value	<p>The proposed interventions will be delivered in accordance with the Council’s Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Climate change impacts will be considered as part of selection of building materials and approach as part of final designs.</p>
Corporate Parenting:	<p>Young peoples’ views and opinions (voice of the child) will be considered through the public consultation process and through oversight from the WLUP Board.</p> <p>The project includes space that will enable additional youth service provision, an increase in advice and support around skills and employment, and an improved library presence at the Millennium Centre. For young people and their families who access this, positive impacts include emotional health benefits, and support with education and employment opportunities.</p>

