

Meeting of the Council

**Monday, 17th April, 2023 at 6.00pm
at Dudley Town Hall, St James's Road, Dudley**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the numbered agenda items listed below.

Agenda - Public Session (Meeting open to the public and press)

Prayers

1. Apologies for absence
2. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct
3. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 27th February and 6th March, 2023 as correct records (Pages 7 - 29)
4. Mayor's Announcements
5. To receive reports from meetings as follows:

Meeting of the Cabinet dated 16th March, 2023

Councillor P Harley to move:

(a) Capital Programme Monitoring (Pages 30 – 51)
6. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2022/23 (Pages 52 - 93)

7. Notices of Motion

(a) Levelling Up

To consider the following notice of motion received from Councillor P Sahota on 29th June, 2022:

“On Monday 27th June, 2022, a report was presented to the Cabinet describing progress with levelling up bids made on behalf of the Borough's 5 MPs.

It was disappointing to note that the two opportunities - in the form of 2 rounds of bidding - have yet to produce any confirmed investment from Government.

It is particularly disappointing and of concern that for the two most deprived constituencies - Dudley South and Dudley North - there is even less detail about the steps being taken to address this and the success of levelling up investment arising from bids in a 'potential' round 3 is uncertain.

One reason given for this failure relates to the level of information and evidence required to justify each bid. Four of the 5 MPs belong to the party in Government, and include those holding party and Government positions, which would suggest they have significant access to information and guidance. Therefore, it is unclear why the criteria for successful bids was not known or foreseen.

The people of Dudley have been seriously let down by this failure and, instead of levelling up Dudley, it risks further decline in those areas badly in need of this investment.

This Council undertakes to write to the Government outlining our concerns and to seek an urgent meeting with Government representatives leading on the levelling up agenda for advice and support to ensure that any round 3 bids made are successful.”

NB: The above motion was moved by Councillor P Sahota and seconded by Councillor J Foster at the Council meeting on 27th February, 2023.

(b) Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort

To consider the following notice of motion received from Councillor P Dobb on 13th October, 2022:

“His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort will celebrate their Coronation on 6th May 2023.

Dudley Council has an important role to play in facilitating the celebrations that will take place associated to this historic occasion, much like it has done for previous events such as Jubilees. Therefore, this Council resolves to once again support the waiver of temporary road closure license fees to enable communities to celebrate together with traditional street parties.

Additionally, the Leader of the Council is requested to explore opportunities for a large-scale event to take place to mark the occasion within the Dudley Borough, enabling borough residents to gather and celebrate this occasion in a similar fashion to other events throughout the year, such as Armed Forces Day.”

(c) Dropped Kerb Funding for Disabled Residents

To consider the following notice of motion received from Councillor S Phipps on 28th February, 2023:

“Dropped kerbs can be very costly for local residents who wish to ensure that they can access their driveways legally and safely or convert existing gardens into driveways. With costs regularly exceeding £2,000 and only increasing, the financial burden on those who have no choice but to use a driveway is excessive.


Dudley Council currently charges local residents for the installation of dropped kerbs regardless of their circumstances. Whilst it is noted that providing this service free of charge would be unduly costly to the taxpayer, it is also noted that many residents who need a dropped kerb to ensure they can fully use disability adapted vehicles safely are priced out of doing so.

Therefore, this Council resolves to instruct the Deputy Chief Executive to prepare proposals for a dropped kerb disability support scheme trial to be submitted to Cabinet. The scheme would provide either the full funding for the installation of a dropped kerb, or a percentage depending on the applicant's financial circumstances. An assessment process would be carried out for applicants to determine the following:

- That the primary reasons for the residents requiring the installation of a dropped kerb is linked to their disability and will enable them to become more mobile;
- That the applicant does not have the financial means to afford the installation without causing undue financial hardship;
- Any other criteria as deemed necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the funding available."

8. Questions from Members under Council Procedure Rule 11
9. To consider any business not on the agenda which by reason of special circumstances the Mayor is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972

Distribution: All Members of the Council



Chief Executive
Dated: 5th April, 2023

Meetings at Dudley Town Hall:

Health and Safety

To continue to protect vulnerable people, please note the following information when attending meetings:-

- Do not attend if you feel unwell; if you have tested positive for Covid-19; if you are self-isolating or if you suspect that you are symptomatic.
- Windows/doors will be opened to provide adequate ventilation.
- Sanitise your hands when arriving and leaving the building and wash your hands regularly.
- Hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes are available at various locations.
- People suffering from long term conditions or living with vulnerable people are encouraged to wear face masks in meeting rooms, communal areas and when moving around the building. Surgical masks are available at reception.
- All people are encouraged to be vaccinated to limit any potential ill-health effects.
- Be respectful of everyone's personal space and preferences when you attend meetings.
- If you cannot maintain distancing or in a crowded environment, please wear a mask

Public Gallery

- Seating in the public gallery is subject to limits on capacity and will be allocated on a 'first come' basis.

Toilets

- Toilet facilities are available on site and are subject to safety measures that are in place. All the toilets have hand washing facilities.

No smoking

- There is no smoking on the premises in line with national legislation. It is an offence to smoke in or on the premises. You cannot use e-cigarettes and/or similar vaping devices.

In Case of Emergency

- In the event of the alarms sounding, please leave the building by the nearest exit. There are Officers who will assist you in the event of this happening, please follow their instructions.

Submitting Apologies for Absence

- Elected Members can submit apologies by contacting Democratic Services (see our contact details below).

Private and Confidential Information

- Any agendas containing reports with 'exempt' information should be treated as private and confidential. It is your responsibility to ensure that information containing private and personal data is kept safe and secure at all times. Confidential papers should be handed to Democratic Services for secure disposal. If you choose to retain the documents you should ensure that the information is securely stored and destroyed within six months.

Recording and Reporting

- The use of mobile devices or electronic facilities is permitted for the purposes of recording/reporting during the public session of the meeting. The use of any such devices must not disrupt the meeting – Please turn off any ringtones or set your devices to silent.
- The public session of this meeting will be recorded and broadcast on the Council's YouTube Channel. The webcast can be viewed by clicking on the following link <https://www.youtube.com/user/dudleymbc>

General

- Public Wi-Fi is available in the Town Hall.
- Information about the Council and our meetings can be viewed on the website www.dudley.gov.uk

If you need advice or assistance

- If you (or anyone you know) requires assistance to access the venue, or if you have any other queries, please contact Democratic Services - Telephone 01384 815238 or E-mail Democratic.Services@dudley.gov.uk

If you are reading these documents on an electronic device, you have saved the Council £7.00 (on average) per printed agenda and helped reduce the Council's carbon footprint

**Minutes of the proceedings of the Council
Monday, 27th February, 2023 at 6.00pm
in the Town Hall, St James's Road, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor S Greenaway (Mayor)
Councillor A Goddard (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors R Ahmed, S Ali, A Aston, M Aston, P Atkins, C Barnett, C Bayton, D Bevan, I Bevan, H Bills, R Body, D Borley, S Bothul, P Bradley, R Buttery, K Casey, B Challenor, S Clark, J Clinton, R Collins, D Corfield, J Cowell, T Creed, T Crumpton, A Davies, P Dobb, P Drake, C Eccles, M Evans, K Finch, J Foster, D Harley, P Harley, S Henley, M Howard, A Hughes, L Johnson, S Keasey, I Kettle, E Lawrence, P Lee, A Lees, K Lewis, P Lowe, J Martin, P Miller, A Millward, N Neale, S Phipps, M Qari, K Razzaq, S Ridney, M Rogers, T Russon, P Sahota, D Stanley, W Sullivan, A Taylor, E Taylor, L Taylor-Childs, M Westwood, T Westwood and Q Zada together with the Chief Executive and other Officers

Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain led the Council in prayer.

46 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Clinton, J Elliott, M Hanif, A Hopwood, S Mughal, S Saleem and K Shakespeare.

47 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interests, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members:

Councillor A Aston – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment by the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Councillor M Evans and A Taylor - Any matters relating to Castle Hill development and all references to Dudley Zoo - Non-pecuniary interests as Members of Dudley and West Midlands Zoological Society Limited.

Councillor A Millward and D Stanley - West Midlands Combined Authority – Transport Delivery Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as Members of the Committee.

Councillor P Miller – Any matters relating to Adult Social Care – Non-pecuniary interest as his wife had visits from Gateway Dementia Centre in Brettell Lane.

Councillor K Casey – Any references to West Midlands Combined Authority – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment with West Midlands Combined Authority.

Councillor I Bevan – Any references to Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust/Russells Hall Hospital – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment.

Councillor Q Zada – Any references to health issues and any matters affecting his portfolio of property investments. Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment or his portfolio of property investments.

Councillors I Kettle and P Miller – Any references to West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority - Non-pecuniary interests as Members of the Authority.

Councillor E Taylor - Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as her daughter was employed at Russells Hall Hospital.

Councillor N Neale - Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee or health issues generally - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting her employment with Dudley Group of Hospitals (NHS) Foundation Trust.

Councillor A Hughes – Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as the parent of two children with special educational needs and who had attended specialist nursery provision.

Councillor P Lee - Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting him as a Dudley Foster Carer.

Councillor K Lewis - Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting her as an Early Years Provider.

Councillor P Lowe – Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interest in relation to the progress update on the development of the Black Country Integrated Care System and Dudley's Integrated Health and Care Model, in view of his employment as National Officer for Managers in Partnership (Unison).

Councillor R Collins – Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interest in view of her voluntary role as a Patient Safety Partner at Dudley Group NHS Russell's Hall Hospital and as a Ward Member for Brockmoor and Pensnett.

Councillors J Cowell and J Clinton – Minutes of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interests in relation to housing matters as Council tenants.

Councillor J Foster – Minute No. 19 of the Audit and Standards Committee (Internal Audit Report) - Non-pecuniary interest due to her attendance at the event referred to in that report during 2019.

Councillor S Ali – Minute No. 19 of the Audit and Standards Committee (Internal Audit report) - declaration for transparency purposes that he was a Member referred to in that report.

48 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th November, 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

49 **Mayor's Announcements**

(a) **Former Councillor Rosemary Tomkinson**

The Mayor referred, in sympathetic terms, to the death of former Councillor Rosemary Tomkinson, who had served as Mayor of the Borough in 2003/04.

The Council observed a period of silence as a token of respect to her memory. Members of the Council then paid individual tributes.

(b) **Mayor's Annual Charity Ball and Civic Awards**

The Mayor reported that tickets were on sale for the Annual Charity Ball and Civic Awards taking place at the Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill on 31st March, 2023.

(c) **Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort**

The Mayor reported that applications for street parties would close on 10th March, 2023. Members were requested to encourage residents to submit applications as soon as possible.

50 **Capital Programme Monitoring**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

The recommendations of the Cabinet were moved by Councillor P Harley and seconded by Councillor S Clark.

Following the debate, Councillor P Harley exercised his right of reply pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

The motion was put to the meeting and it was

Resolved

- (1) That the progress with the 2022/23 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report submitted, be noted.

- (2) That the amendments to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraphs 10 to 13 of the report submitted, be approved.
 - (3) That the capital projects proposed in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, as set out in paragraphs 14 to 16 of the report submitted, be added to the Capital Programme, subject to the approval of revenue funding by the Council at its meeting on 6th March, 2023.
 - (4) That the Prudential Indicators as required to be determined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Local Government Act 2003, as set out in Appendix C to the report submitted, be agreed.
 - (5) That the updated Capital Strategy, as set out in Appendix D to the report submitted, be approved.
 - (6) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2023/24 be approved as set out in paragraph 17 of the report submitted.
-

51 **Annual Review of the Constitution**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

The recommendation of the Cabinet was moved by Councillor P Harley and seconded by Councillor S Clark.

Following the debate, Councillor P Harley exercised his right of reply pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

The motion was put to the meeting and it was

Resolved

That the updates and amendments to the Constitution, as set out in the report submitted, be approved.

52 **Deployment of Resources: Housing Revenue Account and Public Sector Housing Capital**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

The recommendations of the Cabinet were moved by Councillor L Taylor-Childs and seconded by Councillor S Clark.

Following the debate, Councillor L Taylor-Childs exercised her right of reply pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

The motion was put to the meeting and it was

Resolved

- (1) That the latest Housing Revenue Account outturn forecast for 2022/23, as set out in paragraphs 5 to 9 and Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the increase in rents for Housing Revenue Account dwellings by 7% with effect from 3rd April, 2023, as set out in paragraphs 10 to 13 of the report submitted, be noted.
- (3) That the Housing Revenue Account revenue budget for 2023/24, as set out in paragraph 18 and Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
- (4) That the public sector housing revised capital budgets for 2023/24 to 2027/28, attached as Appendix 3 to the report, be approved and that the consultation arrangements, as outlined in paragraph 4 of the report submitted, be noted.
- (5) That the Director of Housing and Communities and the Director of Finance and Legal be authorised to bid for and enter into funding arrangements for additional resources to supplement investment in the public sector housing stock, as outlined in paragraphs 19 to 28 and Appendix 3 to the report submitted and that expenditure funded from such resources be added to the Capital Programme.
- (6) That the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, be authorised to manage and allocate resources to the Capital Programme as outlined in paragraphs 19 to 28 and Appendix 3 to the report submitted.

- (7) That the Council confirm that all capital receipts arising from the sale of Housing Revenue Account assets (other than any receipts that may be specifically committed to support private sector housing) should continue to be used for the improvement of Council homes, as set out in paragraphs 19 to 28 and Appendix 3 to the report submitted.
 - (8) That the Director of Housing and Communities be authorised to continue to buy back former right to buy properties, to buy other properties, and to buy land where required to assemble a viable site for housing development, subject to a robust assessment of good value for money and sustainability in terms of lettings, maintenance and major works, as set out in paragraphs 19 to 28 and Appendix 3 to the report submitted.
 - (9) That the Director of Housing and Communities be authorised to procure and enter into contracts for the delivery of the Capital Programme, as outlined in paragraphs 19 to 28 and Appendix 3 to the report submitted.
 - (10) That the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy be endorsed.
-

53 **Dudley Council Pay Policy Statement 2023/24**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor S Keasey, seconded by Councillor S Clark and

Resolved

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 be approved.

54 **Treasury Management**

A report of the Audit and Standards Committee was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor A Lees, seconded by Councillor S Clark and

Resolved

- (1) That the treasury activities in 2022/23, as outlined in the report submitted, be noted.
 - (2) That the Treasury Strategy 2023/24, attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted, be approved.
 - (3) That the Director of Finance and Legal be authorised to effect such borrowings, repayments and investments as are appropriate and consistent with the approved Treasury Strategy and relevant guidance.
-

55 Notices of Motion

(a) Planning Regulations – Renewable Energy

At the Council meeting on 10th October, 2022, the following motion had been moved by Councillor R Buttery and seconded by Councillor T Russon.

“That this Council, being mindful of the environment and the impact of fuel bills on homes and businesses, notes that as a borough we are constantly striving to find innovative ways to support our residents and our environment.

That representations be made to the Government requesting that national planning regulations are updated so that any domestic or commercial property, be it new build or an extension that involves a new roof space be required to fit solar panels to the roof to a minimum of 30% roof area. This would help to generate electricity for that domestic or commercial property, thus reducing the bills for the user of the property and having a positive impact on the environment.

That the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise submit a report to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee outlining the existing position and the planning policies Dudley currently has in place in relation to renewable energy.”

The following amendment had subsequently been moved by Councillor K Casey, seconded by Councillor J Foster and debated at the Council meeting on 10th October, 2022:

“This Council wholeheartedly supports the need to move to more sustainable and environmentally friendly methods of energy generation, both locally and nationally, ensuring that as a borough and a country we are able to achieve our Net Zero targets as quickly as possible.

Therefore, in addition to the updating of planning laws to ensure new builds and extensions have a requirement for solar panels, and in line with our aims to reduce carbon emissions and meet our Net Zero targets, this Council wishes to express its deep concern and opposition to the Government’s recent lift on the ban relating to fracking activities and calls on them to re-evaluate and reverse their decision.

In line with our declaration of a climate emergency, this council recognises the seriousness of the climate crisis and that increasing our reliance on fossil fuels, not reducing it, which fracking does, is not a sensible way forward, and is one that will ultimately hinder our Net Zero ambitions.

The Council also acknowledges the very serious and wide range of concerns that residents have on this issue, the potential for Dudley and the Black Country to be a real focus for fracking activity in the coming 12 months given identified oil and gas reserves in what is known as the Worcester Basin, and the issues fracking activities have raised in areas where trials have already been taking place.

Therefore, instead of extending activities linked to fossil fuels, we call on the Government to reverse the lift on the ban and further accelerate investment and support for renewable methods of energy generation.

If this issue is to be taken as seriously as it needs to be, we also collectively make a call on Government to outline clearly what further investment and funding can be committed for local councils to assist with meeting Net Zero targets.

Dudley Council resolves to write to Government to:

- Outline our concerns and opposition to the lifting of the ban on fracking activities.
- Make a call that they look again and reverse their recent decision, and instead of extending fossil fuel exploration and usage, further accelerate investment in sustainable and renewable energy generation.

- Set out in detail what further financial support can be given to local councils like Dudley to ensure that we are able to achieve the collective aim of reaching Net Zero as quickly as possible.”

Following a further speech on the amendment, Councillor R Buttery exercised her right of reply to the debate pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

The original motion was the subject of further debate by the Council.

At the conclusion of the debate on the original motion, Councillor R Buttery exercised her right of reply pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

The original motion was put to the vote and it was

Resolved

That this Council, being mindful of the environment and the impact of fuel bills on homes and businesses, notes that as a borough we are constantly striving to find innovative ways to support our residents and our environment.

That representations be made to the Government requesting that national planning regulations are updated so that any domestic or commercial property, be it new build or an extension that involves a new roof space be required to fit solar panels to the roof to a minimum of 30% roof area. This would help to generate electricity for that domestic or commercial property, thus reducing the bills for the user of the property and having a positive impact on the environment.

That the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise submit a report to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee outlining the existing position and the planning policies Dudley currently has in place in relation to renewable energy.

(b) Levelling Up

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12, Councillor P Sahota had given notice of the following motion on 29th June 2022:

“On Monday 27th June, 2022, a report was presented to the Cabinet describing progress with levelling up bids made on behalf of the Borough's 5 MPs.

It was disappointing to note that the two opportunities - in the form of 2 rounds of bidding - have yet to produce any confirmed investment from Government.

It is particularly disappointing and of concern that for the two most deprived constituencies - Dudley South and Dudley North - there is even less detail about the steps being taken to address this and the success of levelling up investment arising from bids in a 'potential' round 3 is uncertain.

One reason given for this failure relates to the level of information and evidence required to justify each bid. Four of the 5 MPs belong to the party in Government, and include those holding party and Government positions, which would suggest they have significant access to information and guidance. Therefore, it is unclear why the criteria for successful bids was not known or foreseen.

The people of Dudley have been seriously let down by this failure and, instead of levelling up Dudley, it risks further decline in those areas badly in need of this investment.

This Council undertakes to write to the Government outlining our concerns and to seek an urgent meeting with Government representatives leading on the levelling up agenda for advice and support to ensure that any round 3 bids made are successful.”

The motion was moved by Councillor P Sahota and seconded by Councillor J Foster.

The motion was the subject of debate by the Council. During the debate, the Chief Executive indicated that, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12.5, the 30 minutes allowed to deal with all notices of motion had expired.

This motion, together with the other remaining motions on the agenda, would therefore stand referred to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. The notices of motion would be included in the summons for that meeting in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2.

56 **Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11**

Written Questions

No written questions were submitted in advance.

Verbal Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members and Chairs

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Councillor R Buttery) responded to questions from Councillor A Hughes concerning support and provision for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise (Councillor D Stanley) responded to a question from Councillor C Bayton concerning the sale of the Russells Hall Youth Centre.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise (Councillor D Stanley) responded to questions from Councillor C Eccles concerning the closure of the café at Crystal Leisure Centre.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to questions from Councillor M Qari concerning the implementation of learning from complaints and Ombudsman investigations.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to a question from Councillor S Phipps concerning support and assistance to friends' groups in the Borough.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing (Councillor I Bevan) responded to a question from Councillor R Collins concerning High Oak surgery and action to address health inequalities in the Brockmoor and Pensnett Ward.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to questions from Councillor P Lowe concerning missed recycling collections.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to a question from Councillor P Bradley concerning the adoption of roads and pathways at Clockfields Estate, Amblecote.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to questions from Councillor K Casey concerning Delegated Decision Sheet 16 (Advisory On Street Disabled Parking Places).

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing (Councillor I Bevan) responded to questions from Councillor H Bills concerning the Halesowen Your Home Your Forum.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise (Councillor D Stanley) responded to questions from Councillor P Sahota concerning café provision at leisure centres and ongoing issues at Shell Corner and the need for appropriate consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities (Councillor L Taylor-Childs) responded to questions from Councillor J Cowell concerning the appointment of a Fire Door/Front Door contractor. This issue had been raised at the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader of the Council responded to a question from Councillor S Phipps concerning cycling provision, with particular reference to Halesowen, and support for undertaking a feasibility study to identify a site and develop a velodrome in the Dudley Borough.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to a question from Councillor J Martin requesting an update on action to implement the Government's Waste Strategy and Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Councillor R Buttery) responded to questions from Councillor S Ridney concerning the timescale for the provision of a new primary school on the Coseley School site and future aspirations.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to a question from Councillor R Body concerning improved provision for cyclists in the Borough.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to a question from Councillor C Barnett concerning standards for cycle lanes in the Borough.

57 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business for consideration at this meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

MAYOR

**Minutes of the proceedings of the Council
Monday, 6th March, 2023 at 6.00 pm
in the Town Hall, St James's Road, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor S Greenaway (Mayor)
Councillor A Goddard (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors R Ahmed, S Ali, A Aston, M Aston, P Atkins, C Barnett,
C Bayton, D Bevan, H Bills, D Borley, S Bothul, P Bradley, R Buttery,
K Casey, B Challenor, S Clark, J Clinton, R Clinton, R Collins, D Corfield,
J Cowell, T Creed, A Davies, P Dobb, P Drake, C Eccles, J Elliott,
M Evans, K Finch, J Foster, D Harley, P Harley, S Henley, A Hopwood,
L Johnson, S Keasey, I Kettle, E Lawrence, P Lee, A Lees, K Lewis,
P Lowe, J Martin, P Miller, A Millward, N Neale, S Phipps, M Qari,
K Razzaq, S Ridney, M Rogers, P Sahota, D Stanley, A Taylor, E Taylor,
L Taylor-Childs, T Westwood and Q Zada together with the Chief
Executive and other Officers

Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain led the Council in prayer.

58 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors I Bevan, R Body, T Crumpton, M Hanif, M Howard, A Hughes, S Mughal, T Russon, S Saleem, K Shakespeare, W Sullivan and M Westwood.

59 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members:

Councillor A Aston – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment by the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Councillor S Henley – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment by the West Midlands Fire Service.

Councillors M Evans and A Taylor - Any matters relating to the Castle Hill development and all references to Dudley Zoo - Non-pecuniary interest as members of Dudley and West Midlands Zoological Society Ltd.

Councillors A Millward and D Stanley - West Midlands Combined Authority – Transport Delivery Committee - Non-pecuniary interests as Members of the Committee.

Councillor P Miller - Any matters relating to adult social care - Non-pecuniary interest as his wife received visits from Gateway Dementia Centre in Brettell Lane.

Councillor K Casey – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Councillor Q Zada – references to health issues and any matters affecting his portfolio of property investments – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly relating to his employment or relevant to his portfolio of property investments.

Councillors I Kettle and P Miller – Any references to West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority - Non-pecuniary interests as Members of the Authority.

Councillor E Taylor – Any references to Russells Hall Hospital - Non-pecuniary interest relating to her daughter's employment.

Councillor N Neale – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting her employment with Dudley Group of Hospitals (NHS) Foundation Trust.

60 **Mayor's Announcements**

There were no additional Mayor's announcements at this meeting.

61 **Suspension of Council Procedure Rules**

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor S Clark and



Resolved

That, under Council Procedure Rule 22.1, the time restriction of five minutes referred to in Council Procedure Rule 14.4, be suspended to enable the Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal and the Lead Opposition Spokesperson for Finance and Legal to speak for longer than five minutes on Minute No. 62 below and to enable the Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal to speak for longer than five minutes to exercise his right of reply to the debate.

62 **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal was submitted, setting out recommendations concerning the deployment of General Fund revenue resources, a number of statutory calculations that had to be made by the Council and the Council Tax to be levied for the period from 1st April, 2023 to 31st March, 2024.

Following a speech by Councillor S Clark (Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal) it was moved by Councillor S Clark, and seconded by Councillor L Taylor-Childs, that the recommendations set out in the report submitted to the meeting be approved and adopted.

Councillor S Ali (Lead Opposition Spokesperson for Finance and Legal) addressed the meeting on behalf of the Labour Group.

The motion was then debated by the Council.

At the conclusion of the debate, Councillor S Clark exercised his right to reply pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

At this juncture, Councillor S Keasey raised concerns about an allegation that a derogatory and offensive reference had been made in relation to him during the debate. The Mayor indicated that the Monitoring Officer would be requested to consider the matter.

The motion was put to the vote and it was

Resolved

- (1) That the Council note:
 - (a) The actions of the External Auditors as set out in paragraph 14 of the report.
 - (b) The forecast variances to budget in 2022/23 and progress with delivery of savings, as set out in paragraph 15 and Appendices A and B to the report.
- (2) That, with effect from 1st April, 2024 and subject to the enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, for properties which have been empty (i.e. unoccupied and unfurnished) for more than one year, an Empty Homes Premium of 100% be applied, resulting in a 200% Council Tax charge being payable in these circumstances, as set out in paragraph 31 of the report.
- (3) That the Director of Finance and Legal, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal, be authorised to finalise Council Tax reductions funded from the Council Tax Support Fund 2023 as set out in paragraph 32 of the report.
- (4) That the Director of Finance and Legal and the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, following consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and Opposition Group Spokesperson, be authorised to approve any minor changes to the 2023/24 budget proposals resulting from the final allocation of Public Health Grant, as set out in paragraph 44 of the report.
- (5) That, subject to any amendments arising from the above, the following be approved:
 - (i) The budget for 2023/24 and Directorate allocations set out below, including the Public Health budget, as set out in the report:

Revenue Budget Allocations 2023/24

Directorate	£m
Adult Social Care	117.802
Children's Services	90.465
Health and Wellbeing	3.830
Chief Executive	0.008
Corporate and Treasury	15.133
Finance and Legal	6.058
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	5.371
Regeneration and Enterprise	14.833
Housing and Community	3.221
Public Realm	54.769
Total Service Budget	311.490

- (ii) The statutory amounts required to be calculated for the Council's spending, contingencies and contributions to reserves; income and use of reserves; transfers to and from its collection fund; and Council Tax requirement; as referred to in Section 67(2)(b) be now calculated by the Council for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as follows:
- (a) £765.075m being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (*The Council's spending, contingencies, contribution to reserves and specified transfers from the general fund to the collection fund*).
- (b) £617.905m being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Sections 31A (3) of the Act (*The Council's income, use of reserves, and specified transfers from the collection fund to the general fund*).

- (c) £147.170m being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- (d) £1568.3980 being the amount at (c) above divided by the Council Tax base of 93,834.60 calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(e) Dudley Council Tax for each Valuation Band

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1,045.60	1,219.87	1,394.13	1,568.40	1,916.93	2,265.46	2,614.00	3,136.80

being the rounded amounts given by multiplying the amount at (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different bands.

(f) Precepts for each Valuation Band

That it be noted for the year 2023/24, the major precepting authorities have issued the following amounts in precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
West Midlands Police	135.03	157.54	180.04	202.55	247.56	292.57	337.58	405.10
West Midlands Fire and Rescue	48.68	56.79	64.90	73.02	89.24	105.47	121.69	146.03

- (6) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts in Appendix L to the report, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, agrees the following levels of Council Tax for 2023/24:

<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
1,229.31	1,434.20	1,639.07	1,843.97	2,253.73	2,663.50	3,073.27	3,687.93

- (7) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out in the report, be approved.
- (8) That the Council determine that a referendum relating to Council Tax increases is not required in accordance with Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as set out in paragraph 50 of the report.
- (9) That Cabinet Members, the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive and Directors be authorised to take all necessary steps to implement the decisions of the Council, in accordance with the Council's Financial Management Regime.

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 16.4 and under the provisions of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the voting on the motion was recorded as follows:-

For (40)

Councillors P Atkins, D Bevan, D Borley, S Bothul, P Bradley, R Buttery, B Challenor, S Clark, J Clinton, R Clinton, R Collins, D Corfield, T Creed, A Davies, P Dobb, J Elliott, M Evans, A Goddard S Greenaway, D Harley, P Harley, S Henley, A Hopwood, L Johnson, S Keasey, I Kettle, E Lawrence, P Lee, A Lees, K Lewis, P Miller, A Millward, N Neale, S Phipps, K Razzaq, M Rogers, D Stanley, A Taylor, L Taylor-Childs and T Westwood.

Abstain (19)

Councillors R Ahmed, S Ali, A Aston, M Aston, C Barnett, C Bayton, H Bills, K Casey, J Cowell, P Drake, C Eccles, J Foster, P Lowe, J Martin, M Qari, S Ridley, P Sahota, E Taylor and Q Zada.

63 **Local Government Act 1972 - Urgent Item of Business – Membership of the Cabinet and Committees**

The Mayor was of the opinion that a report on the membership of the Cabinet and Committees should be considered at this meeting, as an urgent item of business, pursuant to the provisions of Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The reason for urgency was to ensure that the relevant appointments were confirmed prior to the next programmed cycle of meetings during March, 2023.

A report of the Lead for Law and Governance was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor S Clark and

Resolved

- (1) That the appointment of Councillor D Corfield as the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm, and the consequential changes to the membership of Committees, be noted.
- (2) That Councillor P Dobb be appointed as the Chair and Councillor T Russon be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

MAYOR

Meeting of the Council – 17th April, 2023

Report of the Cabinet

Capital Programme Monitoring

Purpose of Report

1. To report progress with the implementation of the Capital Programme.
2. To propose amendments to the Capital Programme.

Recommendations

3. The Council is recommended:
 - That the progress with the 2022/23 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendices A and B, be noted.
 - That the expenditure for additional Changing Places toilets, funded by additional grant, be included in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 5.
 - To note the decision to authorise the Director of Finance and Legal to increase loan support to Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation (BCIMO) by up to £712,000, in view of the cash flow issues outlined, and to amend the Capital Programme to include the City Regional Sustainable Transport Strategy (CRSTS) grant as set out in paragraph 6.

Background

4. The table below summarises the *current* 3 year Capital Programme updated where appropriate to reflect latest scheme spending profiles.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Public Sector Housing	63,401	59,665	50,816
Private Sector Housing	7,640	10,871	1,459
Environment	5,943	16,907	3,000
Transport	10,880	6,615	2,000
Regeneration and Corporate Landlord	11,987	16,613	23,106
Culture, Leisure and Bereavement	2,566	5,029	1,900
Schools and SEND	8,822	27,598	22,600
Social Care, Health and Well Being	884	200	0
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	1,465	1,285	913
Total spend	113,588	144,783	105,794
Revenue	3,687	3,870	3,265
Major Repairs Reserve (Housing)	23,942	25,500	26,000
Capital receipts	34,200	21,667	17,324
Grants and contributions	50,685	17,290	14,705
Capital Financing Requirement	1,074	76,456	44,500
Total funding	113,588	144,783	105,794

Note that the Capital Programme is subject to the availability of Government funding.

Changing Places Grant

5. The Department of Levelling Up and Housing and Communities created a Changing Places Fund in 2022/23 for the installation of large accessible toilets for severely disabled people across England. The Council has already received £150,000 for the first round of Changing Places grant allocations.

The Council has been successful in securing funding for £70,000 in the second round of allocations to fund an additional toilet at Stourbridge Town Hall.

It is recommended that the Council includes the additional expenditure and grant of £70,000 in the Capital Programme for 2023/24.

Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation (BCIMO) City Regional Sustainable Transport Strategy (CRSTS) grant

6. On 17th August 2022, the Cabinet considered a report on a loan request for BCIMO. This was considered in private session and copies of the report are available to Members on request. The Cabinet resolved: (1) that the current financial position of Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation (BCIMO), the potential implications for the Council and the risks, as set out in the report submitted, be noted; (2) that the Director of Finance and Legal be authorised to pay additional loan support to BCIMO up to £100,000 per month between now and the end of June 2023; (3) that the Chief Executive be authorised to formally communicate to BCIMO, Coventry City Council and the Combined Authority that no further support will be provided beyond the amounts or after the end date referred to above. To date £723,000 has been advanced.

In recent months BCIMO has applied for £1.2m of CRSTS development funding split into two tranches:

- First tranche of £712,000 for costs incurred in 2022/23: (a) an extension to the existing pit and additional electrical power points and IT system in the Engine Hall of the National Innovation Centre (NIC) to support the delivery of BCIMO's two major projects - the CAF Trams and Coventry Very Light Rail; (b) to enable the NIC to become fully operational for future projects through the purchase of audio-visual equipment for the whole building, IT system for the whole building, and furnishings for the building; and (c) to support the development of further CRSTS applications required to secure £12m over the next few years.
- Second tranche of £488,000 for costs incurred in 2023/24. These are still being identified but will include the purchase of key pieces of equipment and additional support to aid the Business Case development.

This passed initial approval stages at the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board on 13th January, 2023 and was recommended to progress to Department for Transport (DfT) and Treasury (HMT). However, it was understood that only the first tranche of funding could be used without DfT/HMT approval, as it had been agreed that, if DfT/HMT approval was not secured, there would be no clawback of this funding i.e. £712,000. The Council is the party requesting funding for a project for this grant. BCIMO is incurring expenditure to be funded from the grant and the Council has so far submitted claims for £106,000 to the WMCA on their behalf.

Ordinarily these claims should be paid within three months, but payment has been delayed as a result of the legal agreement with WMCA not being in place. A template of the agreement has been received and has been reviewed by the Council's legal team and deemed to be acceptable. At the time of originally writing this report, the Council was awaiting feedback from a meeting between Coventry City Council and Transport for West Midlands to better understand the reasons for delay. An update was given at the Cabinet meeting.

In the meantime, works to be funded from the CRSTS are in effect being cash flowed by the Council loan, pending receipt of grant from the WMCA. If there is an ongoing delay in receipt of funds from the WMCA, then the existing loan approval is likely to be insufficient. In view of the decisions taken in August 2022, the Cabinet authorised the Director of Finance and Legal to increase loan support by up to £712,000 in view of these cash flow issues and amend the capital programme to include the CRSTS grant.

Amendments to the Capital Programme are, in normal circumstances, made by Council following a recommendation from the Cabinet. This decision was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred to this meeting of the Council. The urgent decision was therefore approved by the Cabinet as allowed by the Council's Constitution. In accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, the Mayor agreed that this decision was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred. The scrutiny call-in procedure did not apply to the decision concerning loan support to BCIMO.

It should also be noted that, as part of their strategy to become self-sustaining, BCIMO are exploring other sources of funding where expenditure has to be incurred in advance and these are likely to require further loan support from the Council.

Finance

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

Law

8. 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.

Risk Management

9. Risks, and their management, are considered prior to proposals being brought forward to include projects in the Capital Programme. This includes risks relating to the capital expenditure itself, funding of that expenditure (eg: grant availability and conditions), and ongoing revenue costs and/or income.
10. Risks associated with lending to BCIMO were outlined in a report to the Cabinet in August 2022.

Equality Impact

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

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

Commercial / Procurement

14. 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.

Environment / Climate Change

15. Individual capital projects should be separately assessed for their environmental impact before they commence and major schemes with climate change impacts will include details of this in their progress reports going forward.

Council Priorities and Projects

16. Proposed capital projects are in line with the Council's capital investment priorities as set out in the approved Capital Strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Hand', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

.....
Leader of the Council

2022/23 Capital Programme Progress to Date

Service	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Variance £'000	Comments
Public Sector Housing	63,401	63,401	0	
Private Sector Housing	7,640	7,792	152	1
Environment	5,943	5,957	14	2
Transport	10,880	10,880	0	
Regeneration and Corporate Landlord	11,987	13,087	1,100	3
Culture, Leisure and Bereavement	2,566	2,792	226	4
Schools and SEND	8,822	8,822	0	
Social Care, Health and Well Being	884	884	0	
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	1,465	1,465	0	
Total	113,588	115,080	1,492	

Note:

1. Additional costs expected for the Homes for Sale programme however these costs should be covered by additional sales revenue.
2. The additional costs of £9k for the flood defences work will be met by a contribution from revenue and the £5k Green Spaces projects' overspend is being funded by a contribution from the Community Forum.
3. Additional costs for the Very Light Rail project as reported to Cabinet in June 2022.
4. Additional costs for the leisure centre projects which were previously reported to Cabinet in October 2022 as forecast to be in the region of £200k overspent.

Progress with Major Capital Schemes

Public Sector Housing

New Council Housing

Completed:

- The Vista – 2 affordable two bed bungalows
- Corporation Road A – 3 affordable two bed houses

Projects on site

- New Swinford Hall – conversion to 18 affordable apartments - completion May 23
- Corporation Road B – 5 houses - completion May/June 23
- Whitegates Road – 3 houses - completion April 23
- St Georges Road – 7 houses - completion July 23
- Beacon Rise – 11 homes - completion December 23 – with £605k Homes England Grant secured
- Lower Valley Road – 17 affordable homes, 14 apartments (mix of one and two beds) and 3 x two bedroom wheelchair bungalows. £935,000 Homes England Grant secured - completion early 24
- Swan Street – 75 units – 54 Sheltered and 21 houses - £4m Homes England Grant secured.

Planning approval secured and to progress

- Fairfield Road – 3 units
- Broad Street – 9 number units
- Enville Street – 10 number units – knotweed and clearance during winter
- Howley Grange Road – 4 number units
- Tenacre Lane – 4 number units
- Hurst Hill – 8 number units

Planning approval achieved and commencement on successful site acquisition – CPO proposed

- Colley Lane, Cradley – 8 affordable apartments

Planning submitted

- Langstone Road – 3 number units

Private Sector Housing

Homes for Sale

- Himley Road – 4 new detached homes - completion End March 2023 – ongoing marketing/viewing. Open day planned Mid-March 2023

Environment

Stevens Park, Quarry Bank Lottery & Council funded project

The refurbishment & extension of Tintern House is complete including a new mess room for Greencare. New community facilities including toilets, community rooms, kitchen, cafe & terrace are all open to the public. Remedial works to the café terrace have just been agreed.

The Emily Jordan Foundation Projects are running their projects: 'Spokes' (Bicycle restoration & sales) 'Twigs' (Horticultural training & sales) & 'Go Green' (recycling).

The Community Development Officer is carrying out a series of events & activities until Autumn 2024.

Wrens Nest Wardens' Base

The acquisition of 113 and 115 Wrens Hill Road was completed on 6th August 2021.

Meetings over the course of 2022 culminated in Officers holding a couple of workshops in October and November with the Friends of Wrens Nest and architects from Corporate Landlords to develop an initial preferred design option for a Wardens Base and Visitor Facility.

Officers are preparing a report outlining the work to date and which will seek a decision to progress the project further.

Dudley Townscape Heritage

The Townscape Heritage (TH) programme is funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) 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, operating with a grant budget of £1.178m from the NLHF and £300,000 match funding from the Council, commenced in February 2017. An extension to the grant expiry date has been agreed by the Heritage Fund and the programme is now due to complete September 2023, to enable all spend on projects to be drawn down.

The programme focuses on buildings in the town centre's historic core. The work at 203/204 Wolverhampton Street, 216 Wolverhampton Street and 204a Wolverhampton Street has been completed, with 14 New Street and Fountain Arcade being practically complete. Other properties within the programme include the following:

- 208 and 209 Wolverhampton Street: work off the scaffold has been completed, including re-rendering and replacement windows. The shopfronts are in manufacture and are due for installation shortly.
- Plaza Mall: work to façade off scaffold has been completed, with only minor outstanding issues to be addressed. The shopfront is currently in manufacture and is due to be installed during January.
- 207 Wolverhampton Street: project includes comprehensive repairs to the building and reinstatement of shopfront. Work has commenced on site and is due for completion by April, although completion is dictated by the weather-sensitive lime rendering works.

A wide-ranging activities programme, running alongside the capital works programme, has been developed and delivered in conjunction with teams in Adult and Community Learning, Museums, Communications and Public Affairs and the Historic Environment Team. A revised programme was agreed with the Heritage Fund which was adapted in light of Covid-19 restrictions. Further activities were included in the programme working with delivery partners (Co Lab) who already have established links with the community of Dudley. This has seen the successful 'Growing up in Dudley' project, which has gathered images and oral reminiscences, and 'Dudley Days' which held workshops with a small group of participants to create music inspired by connections with Dudley. Teaching resources have been produced as part of the programme and have been shared with schools. The project also works closely with the Historic Environment Team to produce information in the form of trails and leaflets to enhance understanding and appreciation of the historic environment, including a suite of guides, which are currently being drafted, to assist owners of historic buildings. The project continues to work with volunteers where possible and research has been carried out on the former Woolworth's building resulting in a new document produced for the Heritage Open Day in September 2022. A further document about Fountain Arcade has also been drafted and will be added to the suite of building leaflets included on the Dudley Heritage Open Days webpage, where the virtual tours of a number of buildings are available, and the Historic Environment Team's webpage. A new exhibition display in the form of 4 pull-up banners about the history of Dudley were produced for the Heritage Open Day and these are currently on display at the Museum. The programme has also included the installation of a blue plaque on the former School of Art to commemorate Percy Shakespeare, a 4-page insert in the autumn (2021) edition of the Home magazine and the printing of the City ID map for Dudley. A training session for bricklaying students at Dudley College

has also taken place in October, where 3 students received hands-on training from a conservation bricklaying specialist.

Brierley Hill High Street Heritage Action Zone

The High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme (HSHAZ) is a nationwide initiative designed to secure lasting improvements to historic high streets for the communities who use them. It is Government funded and run by Historic England with the aim of making the high street a more attractive, engaging, and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time. It is designed to unlock the potential of high streets across England, fuelling economic, social, and cultural recovery. Brierley Hill High Street was one of 68 High Streets selected to receive a share of the fund.

The Brierley Hill High Street HAZ is a 4 year programme, due for completion by March 2024. At the start of the programme a grant of £1.8m was awarded by Historic England with £400,000 match funding coming from the Council, equating to an overall grant of 81.80% from Historic England and an overall budget of £2.2m. At the end of September 2021, this figure was increased with an additional grant of £242,171 from Historic England, which with the 18.20% match from the Council provides a total grant increase of £296,052.46 and an overall budget of just under £2.5m. The programme provides grant assistance to third parties to carry out repair, reinstatement and refurbishment works to historic buildings as well as grant assistance towards bringing vacant floorspace back into use. It also provides grant towards public realm improvements, plus there is a programme of complementary education and community engagement activities. The spend profile and the priorities for funding have been agreed and approved by Historic England.

Public Realm Programme and War Memorial

With respect to the public realm parts of the programme, for years one and two, the priority has been works to the Brierley Hill War memorial. The works to the memorial have been divided up into two phases. Phase 1 commenced on-site in August 2021 and focused on installing lighting, repairs and architectural reinstatement works to the Brierley Hill War Memorial and its immediate setting. Phase 2 commenced on-site late November 2021 and focused on the War Memorial Garden where significant stabilisation works to the embankment have been undertaken along with structural repairs to the intermediate walls that runs through its centre plus the laying out of a soft landscaping scheme. Works on both phases are now complete and we are now in the rectification period where any defects identified need to be remedied before final certificates can be issued.

In terms of public realm proposals for the Civic Hall Green and St Mary's Church, this has been out to public consultation along with the rest of the public realm proposals being delivered through the Future High Street Fund. A display of the proposals was provided at 'Your Home Your Forum' on the 31st October 2021 and plans of the proposals were erected on a display in Brierley Hill library along with information being made available on-line <https://www.regeneratingdudley.org.uk/brierley-hill-projects> The consultation ended on the 28th November 2022. Temporary road Traffic Management works for delivery of the scheme commenced on-site from the 8th January 2023 onwards, for more information click on this link: <https://connect.dudley.gov.uk/news/Pages/Brierley-Hill-town-centre-improvements.aspx>

Buildings Programme

As part of the original bid submission to Historic England, a number of historic buildings were identified to be a priority for grant assistance. Contact has now been established with the owners of all the priority projects and the majority of them are positively engaging with the Council and have now appointed a Conservation Accredited Architect in order to progress their proposals. Grants have been offered and accepted on two projects and four other building schemes are currently out to tender, grant offers will be made once the tender reports are received. Several other priority projects are in the process seeking the necessary planning consents and drawing up tender documentation. This part of the programme is very dependent on the acceptance of grants by building owners and on contractors being appointed and being able to manage time pressures (imposed by the tight spend window for the project), significant rising costs and material delays.

Community Programme

Community engagement and activities are also being positively progressed and developed in conjunction with Brierley Hill Community Forum, Friends of Marsh Park, Dudley Market, the Black Country Living Museum and also with teams in Adult and Community Learning (ACL), Museums, Communications and Public Affairs, Dudley Business First and the Historic Environment Team. There is in place an Activity Plan for the project. In the Autumn and winter of 2022 the focus has been on the Heritage Open Day/week which took place from 10th-18th September. An Architectural Heritage Trail for Brierley Hill was published along with a visitor print map for the town. Both have been distributed throughout the town centre with hard copies being made available in the Library, Market, Civic Hall and various other venues. Copies of the visitor print map have been distributed further afield in venues within an hour's drive of the town. In November of 2022 the main focus was on getting the war Memorial ready for Remembrance Sunday with the help of a lot of volunteers from the local community and from groups such as 'Crafting for Communities, Top Church

Training, Harry's Café, and ACL. In December 2022 a video was produced and launched by Historic England about one of the projects that has been funded through the High Street HAZ Community programme, the 'Brierley Hill Bell Ringers', it was promoted by the BBC on Midlands Today on 5th January 2023. For more information click on this link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-64165568> and to view the video click this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00pweEHzydA> Also in December 2022 the programme was able to provide support to the delivery of the Round Oak Steelworks event at Dudley Archives which was arranged to commemorate the 40th anniversary of its closure.

Cultural Programme

Other major element of the High Street Heritage HAZ is the development of a Cultural Programme in conjunction with Brierley Hill Community Forum. The Arts Council England, National Heritage Memorial Fund and Historic England are providing funding for the development and delivery of the HS HAZ Cultural Programme providing the total sum of £94,000. On 16th November a fifth Progress update report was submitted to Historic England by DMBC, prepared in conjunction with the Cultural Consortium Project Coordinator, this will result in a further interim payment from Historic England to the Council.

Work is now underway on delivery of a programme of cultural events and activities. One such project being 'Round Here'. Brierley Hill was one of six High Street Heritage Action Zones selected to take part in this National Commission (for more info click on this link: <https://historicengland.org.uk/get-involved/high-street-culture/round-here/#Midlands>), other successful High Street's being Weston-Super-Mare, Huddersfield, Tottenham, Chatham Inra and Barrow-in-Furness. 'Live Music Now' have release the fully produced and finished version of the song created with Brockmoor Primary School during the summer of 2022 called 'Beauty of Brierley Hill' and performed live on 10th July 2022 at Brierley Hill Civic Hall. The song is now available to view on YouTube <https://youtu.be/ANEyH2fpmVg> and Facebook https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0heLtuHw8pduE2TKyD49ffPTygNdinakaon5xqe2p2hS9tRR8ZVMAhcvn2tbipocwl&id=100081555706241&sfnsn=scwspmo.

Public Sector Decarbonisation

As previously reported the Council was awarded a grant of approximately £4.4m through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and managed by Salix, the purpose being to switch sites from carbon-intensive forms of heating such as oil and gas, to electrical forms of heating (air source heat pumps) with additional works including Solar photovoltaic (PV), battery storage and LED lighting upgrades where possible.

The scheme covers Dudley Council House and Town Hall, Stourbridge Library, Himley Hall and Ward House as well as the following schools: Amblecote, Caslon, Cotwall End, Glynne, Queen Victoria, Straits, Milking Bank and Wrens Nest Primary Schools.

Works commenced during the summer of 2021 with all the installations at the named schools and corporate sites. All works are now practically completed at the various locations (Education & Corporate) including Solar Panels LED Lighting and Air Source Heat Pumps, with the exception of some final testing and commissioning for some of the ASHP installations which is still on going. Due to increased usage of the Council House, the installation of the controls to the ASHP have been delayed temporarily.

Low Carbon Place Strategy

The Council was awarded approximately £2.5m European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to deliver a project that will reduce carbon emissions. This is 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 is being met from existing HRA budgets. In November 2021 the council appointed a new central heating installer for council housing as the previous went into administration.

The programme recommenced slowly in December 2021 as the contractor mobilised. A project change request has been granted requesting a further 18 months be added to the programme deadlines, to enable this resultant delay to be accommodated which affects the Housing side of the programme. It should also be noted that where homes are sold under the Right to Buy scheme, but have had the benefit of the grant, the council is required to refund the capital impact of the grant. The programme of energy efficiency improvements to the corporate estate is nearing completion. The outstanding works of Solar PV at Halesowen Leisure Centre and optimised buildings at 4 Ednam and 3-5 St James, are due to be completed by the end of March 2023.

Very Light Rail (VLR)

Following a detailed review of the various issues, delays and variations previously reported the project Quantity Surveyor, RLB have now presented their assessment of the final account for the project which is indicating an overspend of approximately £890,000 against the available budget. This is based on formal project handover having taken place on 16 September 2022.

Works continue in closing out outstanding issues.

The project team have completed the paperwork to receive an additional £400,000 of ERDF funding which will be used to fund some of the overspend.

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 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 (now Dudley Castle), Flood Street and Brierley Hill, to be funded by this programme of works. The £1million accelerated funding associated with the Towns Fund will be used to fund works to adopt Zoological Way, part of the works for the new loop road to access the Metro stop and some of the public realm work along Castle Hill.

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. The consultant to develop the wayfinding system has been appointed through the OJEU process and started work on the system in October 2020. Dudley print map is now available. The Brierley Hill map is being developed. The Wayfinding Legibility Strategy has been developed and the totems and figure posts are being designed. The intention is to cover the costs for the manufacturing and installation through a combination of UKSPF and CRSTS funding.

Midland Metro Alliance (MMA) are constructing the Metro extension for TfWM. In July 2022 the WMCA Board confirmed that costs had increased for the WBHE and therefore it will be phased. The first phase finishes at Flood Street, Dudley and will be open to passengers in Summer 2025.

The Council is continuing to work with TfWM to confirm the scope of the complementary measures, the uplift of materials and the public realm interventions given the change in delivery by TfWM.

Towns Fund

Dudley Town Centre is one of 100 towns invited by Government to bid for the £3.6bn Town Deal Fund. The aim of the Fund is to secure long-term economic growth and improved productivity. This will be achieved through investment in connectivity, land use, skills, and enterprise infrastructure. DMBC's successful bid was announced in July 2020 and, following a Full Business Case process, was fully confirmed in August 2022, allowing DMBC to draw down the main £25m grant from September 2022.

Full planning permission was granted for the scheme at November 2021 Planning Committee under application P21/1505. After a short period to confirm the application would not be called in by DLUHC the application planning consent was granted on 16 December 2021.

In the current macro-economic environment of high inflation, there are cost implications on the main construction period moving from 2023/24 to 2024/25. Cost modelling undertaken by independent cost consultant shows a £3-5m shortfall in funding for the consented 4332 m² building. Therefore, the DMBC and Dudley College are seeking funding from public bodies which benefit from the scheme including regional government and the NHS. The team are also seeking funding of specific items of equipment from private sector donors. If additional funding cannot be found, a contingency option has been agreed with partners to construct a 3618m² building, omitting floor four and plans for an NHS diagnostic hub. Current estimates show this option can be delivered within £25m Towns Fund award, however this estimate may increase as we update cost estimates to reflect increasing rates of forecasted inflation.

In March 2022 it was agreed that DMBC would use an insurance-backed alliancing contract provider that will provide contract documentation, facilitation and advisory services to Dudley MBC required to prepare and execute an insurance-backed alliancing construction contract. DMBC will be the lead authority for this contract for construction consultancy services. Total costs of using the IPI method of construction procurement will be up to £1.4m However, based on previous experience from Dudley College, we expect these costs will be balanced by significant savings over the course of the contract. These savings will principally come from insuring against cost overrun and a more transparent financial approach to contractor profit and costs.

CCTV

Phase 1 - Predominantly complete and operational. The only outstanding work is to the healthy hubs where 4 out of the 5 are still waiting fibre circuits. Installation of fibre circuits in progress and should be completed by 31st March 2023.

Phase 2 - reflects the initial extension of coverage approved at the outset of the project. The main problems faced in this phase have been access to staff and materials throughout the last 18 months. Additional public realm cameras in this phase include:

- Cameras in Sedgley Bilston Street – now completed and operational.
- Wolverhampton Street Dudley – the column has been erected but we are still waiting on Western Power for an installation date. Anticipated completion of connection in late November.
- Coronation Gardens – now completed and fully operational.
- Castle Gate – design work is complete. Columns have been erected, camera heads to be installed shortly. Waiting confirmation of power installations and fibre optic circuit.
- The cameras to Lye town centre have been completed and are operational
- All 12 deployable cameras are now in use.

Phase 3 - work includes the additional cameras requested and approved at Council in 2021, to be sited at:

- Kent Street Upper Gornal – column erected, and camera installed. Anticipated completion in late November Installation of fibre circuits in progress and should be completed by 31st March 2023.
- Shell Corner Halesowen – columns erected with one head and power connected. Anticipated overall completion in late November Installation of fibre circuits in progress and should be completed by 31st March 2023.
- Netherton High Street – completed.
- Wollaston traffic island – column erected, cameras, power and network yet to be completed. Anticipated completion late November Installation of fibre circuits in progress and should be completed by 31st March 2023.
- Toys Lane/Furlongs Road Colley Gate – location now agreed and works commissioned. Anticipated completion late November Installation of fibre circuits in progress and should be completed by 31st March 2023.
- Queensway Pedmore – column erected, and camera installed. Anticipated completion late November Installation of fibre circuits in progress and should be completed by 31st March 2023.
- Wynall Lane – column erected, and camera installed. Anticipated completion in late November Installation of fibre circuits in progress and should be completed by 31st March 2023.

The original location at Jews Lane/Eve Lane in Upper Gornal has now been reconsidered and it is proposed to site a fixed camera in Roseville instead. West Midlands Police are also in favour of this revision. Site was surveyed on 15th November with final recommendations to be provided on completion of Phase 3.

Dudley Interchange

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has secured all the funding for the Interchange. Gateley Hamer are appointed to manage the CPO process. Counsel advice recommended that the CPO is split into two - one for the Interchange and associated highways works and another for the Portersfield scheme and highway works.

At the September 2021 Cabinet it was agreed that DMBC will use its CPO powers to purchase Farm Foods, the Photographic Studio on Birmingham Street and the properties required for the associated highways. As a result of the need to CPO properties the start date for the Interchange has been moved to Spring 2024, Completion is expected Summer 2025. Work was delayed as counsel recommended that a single planning application is required for both the building and the highway works. New planning application has been submitted. Updated report in relation to the CPO was approved at June Cabinet. Approval was granted by Planning Committee on 12th September.

In December Gateley Hamer submitted the CPO to the Planning Casework Unit (PCU) for confirmation by the Secretary of State. The next step will be that the PCU informs Gateley Hamer what representations it has received in the relation to the CPO, and whether it intends to hold a public inquiry. The PCU will appoint an inspector and notify us of a 'relevant date' from which the CPO timetable starts to run.

An alternative location for the Interchange around Coronation Gardens during construction has been identified.

Dudley Town Centre Highways Infrastructure (Portersfield Development)

As reported previously the WMCA has conditionally approved funding to support changes to the highways Infrastructure to create access to the Portersfield development site and improve access to the wider Town Centre. This funding amounts to £6.0m. In addition to early design work, some site clearance was carried out to allow for intrusive site investigation to provide information to support the design process. In terms of any land acquisition required for highway changes this will be covered under a CPO that will be required for the overall development of the site. Highway design work relating to realigning Trindle Road was previously frozen to avoid any abortive spend until the review of the overall development site has been completed. Alternative highway options, including high quality sustainable access measures, are currently being reviewed as part of the overall development aspirations.

Black Country Blue Network 2

Sedgley Beacon, Holloway Street (phase 1&2) and Castle Hill are all in progress. Sedgley Beacon should be completed in January 2023. Ecological surveys have been completed for Turls Hill and Coseley. Procurement exercise was carried out, but tenders came in too high therefore we are having to re-tender based on rescheduled work programme. It is still anticipated that the projects can be delivered in the timescales (project due to end June 23) but will be very tight and will require close monitoring.

Refurbishment of Dudley Council House Campus

Essential maintenance work is now well underway. Roofing works are progressing well, asbestos removal is complete and the new air source heat pumps have been installed at the rear of 4 Ednam to serve the Council House campus.

Building and ICT work to the new collaboration room in the ground floor link corridor has been completed; furniture being delivered in January and the room became useable in February. The churn of people, furniture, and equipment from the senior leadership areas on the first floor has been completed and work is now in progress, phase 1 due to complete in early April 2023. Further phases include:

- **Phase 2** - Basement and remaining 1st and 2nd floor areas – churn April, then contractor starts on site 1st May and completes 18th August 2023
- **Phase 3** - Ground floor incl. reception – churn July, then contractor starts on site 21st August and completes 22nd Dec 2023
- **Phase 4** - Old Police Building – churn December 2023, then contractor starts 2nd Jan 2024 and completes 17th May 2024
- **Phase 5** - Car Park – contractor starts 20th May and completes 9th August 2024

Brierley Hill (Future High Streets)

The Council secured £9.99m from the Future High Streets Fund in December 2020. This is to support a programme of activity at Brierley Hill, to be implemented in the period 2021 to 2026. The key objectives are to improve footfall, reduce vacancy rates and improve the diversity of shops and facilities. All Future High Streets Funding has to be drawn down by 2023/24. DMBC match funding, identified through existing approvals, will be used to fund projects within the latter part of the programme. The overall investment value of the programme is in the region of £44m.

Project summaries:

Public Realm and Connectivity Improvements (£4.75m) - Funding to connect the new Midland Metro terminus to the High Street, improve existing public realm connectivity between key buildings and provide new public spaces and pocket parks. Lead designer appointed in the autumn of 2021 to prepare and consult on proposals. The majority of the public realm works will be implemented during 2022/23 and 2023/24. Phasing of works around the Midlands Metro terminus to be reviewed, following West Midlands Combined Authority's decision in July 2022 to delay the implementation of Metro works from Dudley to Brierley Hill. Improvement works at the High Street commenced on site on 4 January 2023 and will run until the spring of 2024.

Key Retail Sites (£1.048m) - The owner of the Moor Centre has failed to secure planning approval to move the car parking from the rear of the site to the front. As the result, the Council's acquisition and redevelopment of the rear car park cannot be progressed within the Future High Street spend timescales. Following consultation with the Department for Levelling Up, a formal Project Change Request was submitted in September 2022 to move funding from the Moor Centre to support the public library (£365k) and public toilet refurbishment works (£194k). Tenders for both of these projects are double the original estimates. This is the result of materials shortages, the high rate of inflation and transportation costs. The remainder of funding (£489k) will be transferred to the public realm programme where similar cost increases are expected. The Department for Levelling Up approved this project variation in January 2023 (as per paragraph 13 of the main report). The refurbishment works to the Library and Public Toilets are expected to commence in March and will complete in June 2023.

Infrastructure and Air Quality Improvements (£255,000) - Future High Streets will provide support to amend two highway junctions at Venture Way. The intention is to improve pedestrian connectivity between the High Street and medical centre; reduce queuing traffic which has resulted in movement delays; and improved air quality levels. The works have now completed.

Addressing Housing Need (£3.55m) - Discussions are underway to acquire 10 acres of brownfield land known as Daniels Land and the High Plateau. These are two long-term vacant sites, formerly part of the Round Oak Steel Works that have remained undeveloped for over 40 years. Future High Streets funding will support site remediation and preparation costs. Dudley Council's Housing Department will then construct up to 220 new mixed tenure homes to meet local housing needs. An urban design study has been prepared that will inform the preparation of an architect's brief. This will allow detailed design proposals to be progressed for the sites.

Following INTU shopping centres entering administration, discussions have continued with Sovereign Centros which is the current managing agent acting on behalf of the creditors. The intention is to phase initial activity around the construction of the Metro rail viaduct that crosses the sites. A valuation has been agreed by the Council and creditors. Early construction of the Metro viaduct and Embankment tram halt is key to delivery of the housing redevelopment project. West Midlands's Combined Authority's decision in July 2022 to delay the Metro link from Dudley to Brierley Hill has severely impacted upon the delivery programme and the proposed redevelopment works are unable to proceed within the FSHF timescale. The Housing Department's capital programme has been reduced and it is now unlikely the Council will proceed with the acquisition and redevelopment project. As the result, a review is being undertaken of how much of the Future High Streets funding can be reallocated to replacement projects within the programme in the period to 2023/24. This could include the introduction of new project activity, although this will need to be accompanied by an economic appraisal report that confirms value for money. Discussions are also being held with West Midlands Combined Authority and Homes England over their acquisition of the land and the introduction of a more flexible funding package to remediate the sites and provide infrastructure. A second Project Variation Request will be submitted to the Department of Levelling Up in spring 2023.

Public Library (£308,000) - refurbishment of Brierley Hill public library and ground floor housing department reception area. Scheme designs have been the subject of community consultation and have been well received. Freeholder approval has been received in-principle for the refurbishment works. Tenders are significantly over budget due to inflation and increases in the cost of building materials. A Project Variation Request was submitted in September 2022 to move funding from the Moor Centre to support the project. If approval is forthcoming, the library refurbishment works will commence in April 2023.

Public Toilets (£80,000) - Reopening of public toilets to support the High Street visitor return following the coronavirus pandemic, and the provision of welfare facilities for Metro tram drivers. Midland Metro Alliance is making an additional contribution of £38,000 to support the works. Feasibility designs finalised that will also include changing facilities after discussions with stakeholder groups. Tenders are significantly over budget due to inflation and increases in the cost of building materials. A Project Variation Request was submitted in September 2022 to move funding from the Moor Centre to support the project. If approval is forthcoming, the toilet refurbishment works will commence in March 2023.

In addition to the Future High Streets Fund award, the Council has secured further investment from the West Midlands Combined Authority. This is to acquire land to support implementation of the High Street Link.

A funding agreement between WMCA and DMBC completed in March 2022. This is a long-term vacant gap site where there is the opportunity to provide a new connection from the High Street to the Metro terminus and Health Centre. A start on site for the pedestrianisation works is expected in the autumn of 2023.

A Town Board has now been established to oversee the various interventions underway in Brierley Hill. These include the Future High Streets Fund, Heritage Action Zone, and delivery of the Midland Metro. It includes Mike Wood MP, DMBC and business, community, and educational sector representatives. The Town Board meets on a quarterly basis.

Schools

Schools Basic Need Projects

Now that the project at Wordsley School and Crestwood Schools are now complete, focus is now on ensuring there are sufficient secondary school places in the Halesowen area. Talks with Halesowen Secondary Heads is ongoing.

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.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Projects

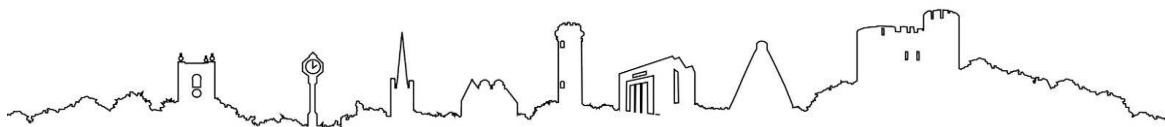
We are continuing the process of re-profiling our special school and mainstream provision to bring it more closely in line with the current SEND pupil cohort and the special provision capital funding is a key component in this process.

In addition to funds carried forward from previous years, we have received a further allocation of capital funding for SEND. Projects to be funded are still being scoped with the need for detailed feasibility studies to be undertaken but is likely to include further expansion within our maintained special schools. A tender process has now been completed to establish a further primary SEMH base. This tender has now been concluded and the base will be established at Caslon primary school. The base is now operational, and work continues to create an outside play area exclusively for the base.



Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report 2022/2023



Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country





**Chair -
Councillor
Paul Bradley**

Annual report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

2022/23 Municipal Year



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Daniel Bevan**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters relating to Children and Young People Services in the Directorate of Children's Services and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Re-Visit Update

Throughout the Municipal Year, Members considered reports on SEND as follows: -

On 13th June 2022 a report was received on the findings from a recent SEND re-visit and next steps together with the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP). Appended to the report was the SEND revisit findings letter, the SEND APP and the SEND Improvement Programme Communications and Engagement Strategy.

On 5th September 2022 Members received a report on the current progress of the SEND APP, the SEND Operational Performance data and a School Inclusion update. The joint area SEND revisit in Dudley findings letter was appended to that report.

On 19th January 2023 a verbal update was provided in relation to the Ofsted Inspection when improvements to services since 2021 were referred to and the overall judgment that, although some services still required improvement, the inspection was overall more positive in the detail.

Outcomes:

- *The Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions was requested to provide details of the work undertaken in relation to Post 19 provision for young people with complex needs, once structures and co-produced work was implemented.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to submit the APP to a future meeting.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

Throughout the Year Members considered reports on key performance indicators within the Directorate of Children's Services and noted the Directorate's performance against those indicators.

Outcomes:

- *There was a request that the Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions be requested to provide details of those areas within the Borough where Time for Two's placements were not being taken up for Members to promote placements in their Wards.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to report on the further analysis assessing the outcomes for children supported by Families Come First and My Safety Plans.*

Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Members considered a report that had been emailed to them prior to the meeting and uploaded to the Council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) requesting Members to provide comments and questions prior to the meeting.

Outcome:

- *The report was approved for publication in line with statutory requirements.*

Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2021-2022

A report was submitted on the role and appointment of the Independent Children's Safeguarding Scrutineer detailing the work of the Partnership to engage with children and young people. The priorities for 2021/22 were considered by Members.

Outcomes:

- *There was a request to advise Members of the number of children in care who had been placed out of Borough.*
- *The Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions was requested to undertake a tracking exercise and advise*

Members of the number of those Post 16 entering the Youth Service who had experienced problems at school.

- *A joint meeting of the Children and Young People and Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee and the Children's Corporate Parenting Board Working Group would be arranged to consider child poverty and obesity as soon as practicably possible.*

Integrated Early Years, Family Hubs and Start of Life in Dudley.

A report was submitted to the November meeting of the Committee on the details of the progress of the Local Authority 's work on the development of the Integrated Early Years' Service Family Hubs and Start of Life.

Outcomes:

- *The delivery of the Integrated Early Years' Service following remodelling work to bring three distinct teams into a single leadership and management model was acknowledged.*
- *The delivery of the new Family Hubs and Start of Life programme in Dudley linked to grant conditions and funding over the financial years 2022 to 2023 and 2024 to 2025 was to be facilitated by Officers.*
- *There was a request that a visit to the Leapfrog Specialist Nursery Provision in Netherton be arranged.*

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2021/22

Details of the Dudley Safeguarding Service statutory responsibility for overseeing and ratifying the care plans for children and young people in care via the activity of the IRO's was presented to Members. The service was also duty bound to provide the Committee with an annual report outlining the activity of the service, the impact for children and recommendations for service improvement that would enhance young people's experiences.

Outcomes:

- *The report would be utilised to inform strategic planning for the Dudley children and young people in care population.*
- *The report is to be used to hold the Safeguarding Service to account in the ongoing delivery of services to children and young people in care.*

Serious Violence Statutory Duty and Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing providing information on the new statutory duty upon Local Authorities and other specified authorities in relation to serious violence and to report on the current activities to meet that duty. The Safer Dudley – Preventing and Reducing Serious Violence in Dudley Strategy for 2023 to 2026 was appended to the report.

Outcomes:

- *It was requested that once developed Members be further consulted on the Serious Violence Strategy.*
- *The work of the Safe and Sound Board in undertaking their statutory duty around prevention of serious violence on behalf of the Local Authority was supported.*
- *The Head of Service Consultant in Public Health was requested to forward to Elected Members details of the support services available to tackle violence and serious crime.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

A joint report was submitted of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal, and the Director of Children's Services on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26, with the emphasis on those proposals relating to the Committee's terms of reference, specifically Children's Services.

Outcome:

- *The Director of Finance and Legal was requested to investigate the possibility of offering a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to Foster Carers and provide Members with the detail surrounding the savings against the base budgeted for children's placements.*

Home to School Transport Policy

Members considered a report on the Home to School Transport Policy. Appended to the report were the Consultation on the proposed changes to the Transport Policy for children and young people, the Home to School analysis and feedback, the aged four to sixteen proposed Transport Policy, the proposed Post sixteen Transport Statement, the Parent Carer Forum's Transport Consultation response, an email from a

parent containing comments on the aged four to sixteen new proposed Transport Assistance Policy and feedback from a parent on the proposed aged four to sixteen proposed new Transport Assistance Policy.

Outcome:

- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the new proposed Home to School Transport Policy.*

Feedback from the Joint meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Working Group, the Health and Adult Social Care Services Scrutiny Committee Working Group and the Children's Corporate Parenting Board Working Group

Having considered the feedback report, Members ratified the actions suggested by the joint Working Group as follows:-

Outcomes:

- *the short-term crisis interventions that the Council provide be noted, and that Public Health be tasked to research into good and innovative practises in other parts of the country, in respect of the long-term strategy to tackle the cycle of poverty embedded in parts of Dudley's Communities to assist with the development of the Dudley Strategy, and to report back to a future meeting of the joint working group.*
- *the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health provide a detailed Ward by Ward breakdown of the percentage of children living in poverty within the Dudley Borough.*
- *That a clear set of Key Performance Indicators and robust monitoring of the council's activities on poverty reduction be agreed as part of the Dudley strategy.*
- *That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health provide a list of the Schools in the Borough taking part in the National Breakfast Club Scheme and the companies schools work with to provide breakfast club supplies.*
- *That the Leadership of the Council be recommended to write to Central Government, as a matter of urgency, to request additional funding during the current cost of living crisis to assist families. It is acknowledged that the Government have to date made money available to assist families with fuel and food however as the crisis deepens, more families who would traditionally not have found themselves in relative poverty were*

now struggling. Demand on the voluntary sector was growing and resources were not keeping pace.

- That the Housing and Communities Directorate be reminded of their Corporate Parenting role and responsibilities and be a named and active key partner within the Dudley Strategy.*
- That a report on the role and responsibilities of the Private Sector Housing Team; what powers of enforcement they have at their disposal and an understanding of how they put the child at the centre of the work they undertake, be submitted to a future meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee Working Group.*
- That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health, pursue the arrangements of a meeting with the Department for Works and Pensions, to raise concerns of the impact of the change in benefit eligibility and to consider the possibility of sharing data and to notify a school when a child was eligible for free school meals.*
- That a further report on ideas and initiatives Dudley could utilise to develop healthy High Streets and provide advice on whether fast-food delivery organisations require a special license to deliver food, be submitted to a future meeting of the joint Working Group.*
- That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health, provide the joint Working Group Members with a copy of the delivery plan in relation to the Family Hub Funding.*
- That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health, provide an update on the number of schools enrolled on the Apprenticeship Levy.*
- That Public Health undertake research and benchmark with other Authorities in relation to the Car Free Streets Scheme and provide a report outlining the advantages and disadvantages to a future meeting of the Working Group.*
- That a further report to review the data and progress made in relation to Mental Health needs and support for children and young people, be submitted to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee in 12 months and included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.*
- That the Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing provide a briefing note on the services commissioned and provided by Cranstoun.*

Children's Services Improvement Update

Members considered a report on the progress of the improvement actions set out in the 2022/23 Improvement Plan, and in the oversight of the Dudley Children's Improvement Partnership.

Outcomes:

- *The updated report received by the Committee was noted.*
- *The Committee noted the outcome of the Ofsted ILACS inspection from November 2022, and that the inspection shaped the next development plan.*
- *The Department for Education's recommendation that Dudley Children's Services is no longer in need of support and supervision was noted.*

Other Items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year

Scrutiny Committee

- Education Outcomes Update
- Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23
- Children's Services Improvement Plan Update
- Dudley Virtual School Annual Report

Ongoing Items to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

Items that have been considered by the Committee but are incomplete requiring further scrutiny and inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2023/24 are listed below: -

- Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report
- Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report
- Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report
- Integrated Early Years, Family Hubs and Start of Life in Dudley
- Serious Violence Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Education Report
- Dudley Virtual School Annual Report
- Social Care Improvement Updates

Items suggested for inclusion in the work programme for 2023/24

- Good and innovative practices in other parts of the country, in respect of the long-term strategy to tackle the cycle of poverty embedded in parts of Dudley's Communities to assist with the development of the Dudley Strategy.
- The role and responsibilities of the Private Sector Housing Team: what powers of enforcement they have at their disposal and an understanding of how they put the child at the centre of the work they undertake.
- Ideas and initiatives Dudley could utilise to develop healthy High Streets and provide advice on whether fast-food delivery organisations require a special license to deliver food.
- Public Health undertake research and benchmark with other Authorities in relation to the Car Free Streets Scheme and provide a report outlining the advantages and disadvantages.
- That the data and progress made be reviewed in relation to Mental Health needs and support for children and young people and details be submitted to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee during the 2022/23 municipal year.
- Care Leavers accommodation and related issues.



**Chair -
Councillor
Peter Dobb**

Annual report of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee

2022/23 Muncipal Year



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Thomas
Russon**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters concerning Climate Change and the Council's decision to declare a Climate Emergency. This includes the development and implementation of a Carbon Reduction Plan and action to support the United Nations sustainable development goals. The role includes contributing to the environmental sustainability agenda and action to address the corporate priority to create a cleaner and greener place, working collaboratively with partners, businesses and communities to achieve long term goals.

Chair of the Committee

During 2022/23, the Committee was chaired by Councillor Damian Corfield until his appointment to the Cabinet in February, 2023.

Public Forum

The Committee has considered the ongoing arrangements for engaging with the public and partner organisations. Public involvement and engagement is imperative for effective scrutiny and there is an ongoing need for the public to be included in discussions.

Outcome:

- The Lead for Law and Governance, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, was authorised to invite any member of the public or representatives of partner organisations to future meetings where they have a specific interest or specialist knowledge in relation to Climate Change and Environmental issues.*

Carbon Reduction Plan

The Committee received a presentation on 28th September, 2022 on the Carbon Reduction Plan. This gave a progress update of the work carried out on the Carbon Reduction Plan together with priority actions. An internal Working Group was established to drive forward behavioural change and a team of Officers has been working on eleven corporate buildings, to provide information on data usage, to be incorporated into the wider Carbon Reduction Plan.

The Committee received a further presentation on 23rd January, 2023 giving a progress update along with priority actions. The Climate Emergency UK Scorecard assessment was outlined together with a brief summary of work carried out to identify concepts to decarbonise corporate buildings. An overview was provided of the ongoing work to drive forward behavioural change. The development of the Dudley Carbon Reduction Plan is ongoing with a view to submitting the final draft Carbon Reduction Plan, incorporating engagement and consultation outcomes, to the Cabinet in September, 2023.

Outcome 28th September, 2022:

- *That the Lead for Climate Change provide an update regarding the data usage from 2019, concerning eleven corporate buildings, which will be fed through to the Wider Carbon Reduction Plan.*
- *That the Lead for Climate Change provide a review of the work undertaken of the working group established to drive forward behavioural change.*
- *That the Lead for Climate Change provide information regarding the costings of CLS consultancy.*
- *That the Lead for Climate Change submit a full plan to the Scrutiny Committee once the necessary information has been obtained and the plan formulated.*

Outcomes 23rd January, 2023:

- *That a further update and information including statistical information in relation to Low Carbon be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee within the next six months.*

- *That the Interim Lead for Climate Change be requested to provide comparative information of the neighbouring Boroughs in relation to the Climate Plan Scorecard and circulate to Members.*

Air Quality Monitoring in the Borough

The Committee considered the current measures in place to monitor air quality in Dudley and proposals to improve air quality in the future. The methods used to monitor air quality were outlined, together with the national objectives and requirements that the Local Authority is obligated to report to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

Outcomes:

- *That the Pollution Control Officer consider the accessibility issues highlighted for various devices and platforms regarding the Geographical Management Information System.*
- *That the Head of Environment and Trading Standards provide further data after the end of the year, specifically regarding the Wordsley area.*

Progress update on the trial of the use of pesticides and maintaining the Borough's green spaces

The Committee received a presentation on the progress of the trial of alternatives to the use of Glyphosate in maintaining the Borough's green spaces.

The alternative methods that were used as part of the ongoing trial were outlined with a view to a full report concerning the details of the trial being provided to the Committee once completed.

The Committee considered a further report in January, 2023 regarding the progress on the trial of the use of pesticides and maintenance of the Borough's Green Spaces. The alternative methods that were used at four locations across the Borough were demonstrated at the meeting, together with information on public feedback received concerning the use of pesticides.

Outcomes 28th September, 2022:

- *That the Head of Street and Green Care and Amenity Services provide a full report to the Scrutiny Committee setting out figures and cost implications of the weed control used for the trial, what areas were trialled, how easy it was for residents to give feedback and an overview of the effectiveness of the trials.*

Outcomes 23rd January, 2023:

- *That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm, in view of the Scrutiny Committee comments, consider the use of alternative methods in place of non-Glyphosate, Katoun Gold/Chikara, for managing grass edges and obstacles and shrub beds as part of future annual weed control programmes.*
- *That a review of shrub beds undertaken by Officers to determine their current condition and appropriateness during 2023/24 be supported.*
- *That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm be recommended to consider commissioning a detailed review of where foam stream could be used effectively and including a review of sweeping schedules across the borough.*
- *That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm, in consultation with the Head of Neighbourhood Services be recommended to explore costings in relation to the planting of wildflowers.*

Climate Change and Environment Engagement Feedback

The Committee received a presentation on feedback obtained from the Climate Change and Environment Engagement. The 'Your Borough, Your Future' public consultation and engagement was carried out to provide an understanding of residents' views to address challenges of climate change and further consideration was to be given to new services such as food waste collections.

Outcomes:

- *That the Head of Communications and Public Affairs and Interim Director of Public Realm provide a breakdown of the location and the properties in which the respondents to the survey resided.*
- *That the Cabinet Member for Waste Management and Climate Change be recommended to consider prioritising and maximising the facilities at the Roundhill Anaerobic Digestion Plant based in Gibbet Lane, Kinver for food waste for the Dudley Borough.*
- *That a report on progress made be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in six months.*

Transport Fleet Services

The Committee received a presentation on the Transport Fleet Services operated predominately from the Lister Road Depot as a traded service. The Council's fleet vehicles and overall transport costs were outlined together with the draft Fleet Strategy which focussed on supporting frontline operations in the most cost effective and environmentally considerate way.

Outcomes:

- *That a further report be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee at the first meeting in the 2023/24 Municipal Year, together with a feasibility study and programme, prior to formal approval by the Cabinet.*

Household Waste and Recycling Centre, Stourbridge and Pop-up Site Performance

The Committee considered a report and presentation on the usage and performance of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre, Stourbridge and the Pop-Up site, Dudley.

Outcomes:

- *That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm be recommended to consider the provision of domestic waste disposal units within local communities throughout the Borough.*

- *That a review of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre Strategy in line with the end of the existing contractual arrangement C058-The Management and Operation of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre in March 2024, be considered as part of the Annual Scrutiny Programme for the 2023/24 Municipal Year, by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.*

Cycling Provision in Dudley

The Committee considered a report and presentation regarding the current progress on all matters associated with Cycling provision across the Dudley Borough.

Outcomes:

- *That the Head of Transport and Highway Services be requested to provide a breakdown of cycling provision/training courses on a ward basis to the Committee for information.*
- *That the Head of Transport and Highway Services be requested to provide further details in relation to the three Dudley Schools selected to pilot the School Streets initiative.*

Other items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year

- Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23
- Terms of Reference
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Corporate Estates

Future items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items to be rolled forward and included in the work programme for 2023/24:

- Progress Update - Climate Change and Environment Engagement Feedback
- Transport Fleet Services – Feasibility Study and Programme
- Area Based Transport Strategy
- Anaerobic Digestion and Food Waste Collection
- Carbon Reduction Plan Update

- Waste Management Strategy Update
- Planning policies in relation to renewable energy
- Presentation on Planning and Developers actions to Climate Change
- Brockmoor Housing Retrofit Scheme
- Achieving Net Zero



**Chair -
Councillor
Ed Lawrence**

Annual report of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee

2022/23 Municipal Year



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Adam Davies**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Directorates of Chief Executive's, Digital, Commercial and Customer Services, Finance and Legal and Regeneration and Enterprise and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Call-In of Decision Sheet – Changes to the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure to cease elected Member involvement in Disciplinary Appeals

An additional meeting was scheduled to respond to the call-in of the decision of the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Human Resources concerning changes to the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure to cease elected Member involvement in Disciplinary Appeals. The decision had been called-in at the request of five Members of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, as set out in the Council's Constitution. The Cabinet Member of Commercialisation and Human Resources, Chief Executive and the Assistant Director People and Inclusion attended the Committee to address the meeting and to respond to questions.

Outcomes:

- That the Future Council Scrutiny Committee recommends that no objection be raised to the decision in which case no further action is necessary and that the decision of the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Human Resources be implemented with immediate effect.*
- The Members who did not vote in favour of the resolution above reserved their right, following the meeting and with agreement by the Chair, to make a minority report pursuant to the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution. The following recommendations was made by the opposition group for future consideration:*

- (a) *That the equality impact assessment is properly conducted on this decision and a future Committee hears a report back on the outcome including figures relating to previous cases.*
- (b) *That consultation processes for decisions that impact on the wider Council membership and the workforce are reviewed and improved.*
- (c) *That work on the benchmarking information is completed and presented to a future committee with proper analysis. Benchmarking activity should continue alongside the implementation of this decision to determine whether the decision has been a success in Dudley and other local authorities.*
- (d) *That information is provided on the financial implications of the decision, including officer time devoted to dismissal appeals and any other relevant information.*
- (e) *That in future, to drive and sustain improvement in Appeals processes, periodic dip sampling of documentation related to all completed cases is undertaken by Members of the Committee, in camera, with issues arising incorporated into periodic reports to public sessions of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee.*

Call-In of Decision Sheet – The Closure of the Café at The Crystal Leisure Centre

The Committee considered the call-in of the decision of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise concerning the closure of the Café at The Crystal Leisure Centre, Stourbridge. The decision had been called-in at the request of five Members of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, as set out in the Council's Constitution. The former and existing Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise, Director of Regeneration and Enterprise and Head of Culture, Leisure and Bereavement Services attended the Committee to address the meeting and to respond to questions.

A number of concerns were raised by some Members in relation to the number of significant repairs required at the Leisure Centre and the reasons why the café had not been considered under phase one of the refurbishment project, lack of public consultation with service users and evidence of full options appraisals that could be explored and market tested. Some Members considered that the decision should be referred

to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise for further consideration taking into account the concerns raised during the meeting.

Outcomes:

- *That the Future Council Scrutiny Committee recommends that no objection be raised to the decision in which case no further action is necessary and that the decision of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise be implemented with immediate effect.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee received the corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the year. Specific officers attended meetings to provide a summary and respond to questions asked by the Committee. In view of the number of items to be considered, the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report in relation to Quarter 2 was e-mailed to the Committee for comments. Additional information in relation to COVID-19 in Dudley was included in all reports submitted, together with two Directorate Service Summary documents providing detailed accounts of service delivery for each Quarter.

Outcomes:

- *Detailed scrutiny has been undertaken of specific performance indicators that are reported as 'below target' with responses provided by relevant Directorates.*
- *Further information was requested on the training provided to Managers to deal with complaints. This will be provided during the consideration of the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report in relation to Quarter 4 in the 2023/24 Municipal Year.*
- *That the Corporate Performance Manager be requested to arrange training with the Local Government Association in relation to performance management, to be extended to all Members. Training videos and documents have since been developed and made available to the Members Portal.*
- *That the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee be recommended to scrutinise the Key Performance Indicators in relation to Fly-Tipping as part of their annual scrutiny programme.*

- *That the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report be considered at the first meeting of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee of the 2023/24 Municipal Year to consider future reporting.*

Council's Bid for City Status

During consideration of the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2022/23, Members suggested the inclusion of an additional item in relation to the Council's Bid for City Status. Following receipt of the feedback from the Government, it was considered that there was insufficient data to fully scrutinise this area and therefore it was agreed that the item would not be included in the Programme. A copy of the feedback letter was circulated separately to Members for information.

Digital and Technology Services Update

The Committee received an update on ongoing and planned developments relating to Digital and Technology Services. During the meeting, the Committee was fully supportive of the upgrade to the Microsoft E5 Licences and understood that although this was a large financial investment it was necessary to make sure the Council's Information Technology systems can be as secure as possible and give the staff the tools to work smarter in the new style of hybrid working.

Outcomes:

- *That the update on the ongoing and planned developments relating to Digital and Technology Services, as summarised in paragraph 2 of the report submitted, be noted.*
- *That the Head of Technology Systems and Services be requested to provide detailed information in relation to the financial costs associated with the proposed upgrade to Microsoft E5 Licences to the Committee for information.*
- *That the Director of Digital, Customer and Commercial Services be requested to provide further information in relation to budgets and the restructure of the ICT Team to the Committee for information.*

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23

The Committee considered a report on the annual delivery plan for the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. The Head of Human Resources, Organisational Development and Inclusion presented the report and invited comments from the Committee to enable further consideration and development of the delivery plan over the longer term.

Outcomes:

- During the discussion, Members supported the potential adoption of 14pt size font as the corporate standard for Council Committee reports to promote inclusion. The proposal was presented and subsequently approved by the Strategic Executive Board and reflected within the revised Corporate Report Template and adopted across the Directorates.*
- That the comments and views of the Committee concerning the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual delivery plan 2022/23, as summarised within the minutes, be considered further and incorporated in the ongoing development of the delivery plan.*
- That the Scrutiny Working Group, comprising all Members of this Committee, provide further contributions to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual delivery plan and review progress.*
- That the Equality, Development and Inclusion Team, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, develop further training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, tailored to reflect the Dudley context, and that the training be provided to Members of this Committee and made available to all Members of the Council. This training was provided to all Members on Thursday 2nd November, 2022 and has been recommended to be included in future Annual Member and Development Training Programmes.*

Feedback from the Future Council Scrutiny Committee Working Group – Consultation Process Review Across the Authority

The Committee received feedback from the Future Council Scrutiny Committee Working Group meeting held on 27th July, 2022 to consider the consultation process review across the Authority, following a request made at the Scrutiny Committee in 8th June, 2022.

In light of deliberations at the Working Group, it was apparent that existing resources should be used more effectively to promote/support consultation engagements with the public, suggestions of which included publications within the existing Your Borough Your Home magazine, Council Tax publications and through Elected Members who were considered to be a prime asset within the Community. It was also considered vital that the Equality and Diversity Inclusion Strategy was adopted and instilled in all aspects of a consultation process to ensure all communities were aware and provided with an opportunity to engage in any process. Whilst the overall approach to consultations is recognised to be satisfactory, it is considered that more needs to be done in relation to working together as one Council and sharing information across directorates to provide a centralised and consistent approach.

Outcomes:

- *That the Chief Executives Office to lead a review of consultation processes across all directorates, to collate information and identify best practice areas to inform a consistent corporate approach.*
- *That the Scrutiny Committee support the continued use of a multi-channel approach to communicating with the wider public and key stakeholders to raise awareness of consultations and encourage participation.*
- *That the outcomes of the review of consultation process be e-mailed to the Scrutiny Committee for information.*

Future Council Scrutiny Progress Tracker and Future Business

The inclusion of a standing item was adopted to all Scrutiny Committee agendas highlighting progress on outstanding actions and future business for Members information.

Major Regeneration and Town Centre Projects (including Funding Agreements, Future Projects and Borough Wide Vision)

The Committee considered a report on the major regeneration projects in Dudley town centre, Brierley Hill and other town centre proposals and projects in development.

Outcomes:

- *That the update on the major regeneration projects in Dudley town centre, Brierley Hill and other town centre proposals and projects in development, be noted.*
- *The Director of Regeneration and Enterprise was requested to provide responses to queries raised in relation to:*
 - *Sustainable connectivity and active travel throughout the Borough;*
 - *Plans to improve the Pensnett to Wolverhampton Path;*
 - *Temporary relocation of Dudley Town Centre Bus Stops during the Dudley Interchange construction works;*
 - *Colley Gate By-Pass*
 - *Proposals to convert Lye By-Pass to a two-way road.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

A joint report of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Directors of Finance and Legal, Digital, Commercial and Customer Services and Regeneration and Enterprise was submitted on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26, with emphasis on those proposals relating to the Committee's terms of reference.

Outcomes:

- *That, subject to comments made above, the proposals for the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26, as set out in the report and Appendices to the report submitted, be noted.*
- *That the Director of Finance and Legal, in conjunction with the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise, be requested to provide a written response in relation to Forging the Future to the Committee for information.*
- *That the Director of Finance and Legal be requested to provide the triage list utilised during the MTFs process to the Committee for information.*

- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to provide supplementary information in relation to the Strategic Contingency Fund to the Committee for information.*
- *That the Director of Finance and Legal refer the request for further information in relation to the proposals included in the one-off spending plans totalling £2.3m for the 2023/24 financial year within the Public Health Grant funded budget, to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing for a response to be circulated to the Committee.*

Stalled Sites – Strategies for bringing back into use privately owned vacant land and property

The Committee considered the report on the strategies being deployed by the Local Authority to bring back into use privately owned land and property which remained derelict or untidy of where development was stalled.

Outcomes:

- *That the Head of Economic Growth and Skills be requested to confirm whether the initial long list of 68 sites had been identified for housing redevelopment; investigate the work undertaken by neighbouring local authorities in relation to the redevelopment of derelict sites and provide a response to the Committee; and refer the question in relation to further borrowing from the Housing Revenue Account in order to facilitate additional residential developments to the appropriate officer for a response.*
- *That the appropriate decision taker be requested to consider additional staffing capacity and resources to enable the Local Authority to maximise their powers in relation to enforcement in particular in relation to derelict and stalled sites.*
- *That updates on progress made in relation to derelict and stalled sites, as discussed at the Working Group, be circulated to all Members on a quarterly basis for information. Following the meeting, work was ongoing to upload information to the Council's Corporate Programme and Project Management System (Verto) in order for reporting to be consistent with corporate reporting. A page dedicated to this area with links to Verto will also be created on the Members Portal.*

Update on the Council House Refurbishment

The Committee considered a detailed presentation on progress made in relation to the refurbishment of the Council House. Arising from concerns by the Committee, the Head of Corporate Landlord Services was requested to consider to the installation of additional Electric Vehicle Charging Points within the Members Car Park, including those allocated for disability parking; the allocation of a small number of car parking spaces in the Members Car Park for larger sized vehicles and consideration for replacing the term 'Disabled' with 'Disability'.

Outcomes:

- *That the Head of Corporate Landlord Services consider and incorporate the comments and suggestions made by the Committee, if deemed appropriate.*
- *The Team Manager – Facilities Management was requested to provide further information and cost savings in relation to the installation of LED lighting.*

Other Items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year

- Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23
- Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension Update

Ongoing Scrutiny Items

Items that have been considered by the Committee but are incomplete requiring further scrutiny and inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2023/24 are listed below.

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23 (July, 2023)
- Council House Refurbishment Updates
- Consultation Process Review – Outcomes
- Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports
- Stalled Sites – Strategies for bringing back into use privately owned vacant land and property Updates



**Chair -
Councillor
Matt Rogers**

Annual report of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

2022/23 Muncipal Year



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Phil Atkins**

Our role involves the scrutiny of local health and associated services, as a contribution to the Council's community leadership role and in line with our statutory duties. This includes the scrutiny of local NHS bodies and matters falling within the portfolio responsibility of appropriate Cabinet Members.

High Oak Surgery

The Committee undertook a full scrutiny review on the relocation of High Oak Surgery. A single subject Scrutiny Committee was held on 15th June, 2022, which members of the public, stakeholders and Ward Councillors were invited to attend and make representations. A joint report of Dudley Integrated Health and Care Trust (DIHC) and the Managing Director for Dudley at Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was considered, which provided context around the temporary relocation of High Oak Surgery, including the current provision of services provided at the Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre. The report also outlined the changes in primary care, a health needs analysis of the local population and the next steps in determining the future location of the surgery.

Following the conclusion of DIHC High Oak Public Conversation, a further single subject meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was arranged and held in the Pensnett community on 10th January, 2023. Local residents, Ward Councillors and Stakeholders were again invited to make representations and an update on the current situation was provided by DIHC.

Outcomes:

15th June, 2022

- That the information contained in the report and the associated presentation concerning High Oak Surgery be noted.

- That this Committee believes that the GP surgery and services should revert back to Pensnett.
- That the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing be supported in undertaking further discussions with partner organisations and that a further report on the outcomes be submitted to the Committee in due course.
- That the views expressed by the Committee, as summarised above, be considered further and that responses be provided to specific issues raised by Members.
- That further work be undertaken with the CCG to develop a joint engagement plan and to ensure that consultation is real and meaningful, however, this is subject to and dependent on services being returned to Pensnett as per the pre-Covid situation.
- That the Stakeholder Panel be reinstated and that a meeting of the Panel take place in advance of the next meeting of this Committee in respect of the High Oak surgery.
- That the Chair and Vice-Chair be authorised to determine the arrangements for a further meeting of this Committee to consider the High Oak issue taking account of the views and suggestions made by Members at this meeting.

(Arising from comments raised in relation to the level of public transport operated between Pensnett and the Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre, located in Venture Way, Brierley Hill, a letter on behalf of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was sent to Transport for West Midlands, outlining the concerns and asking for a re-evaluation as a matter of urgency to support the local community.)

10th January, 2023

- That the report and verbal update provided at the meeting in relation to High Oak Surgery, be noted and endorsed.
- That the comments made at the meeting, be submitted to DIHC and taken into consideration as part of the public conversation.
- That the agenda item in relation to High Oak Surgery remain on the Scrutiny Committee's working programme, with a further update provided to the Scrutiny Committee in April, 2023.

Local and National Covid-19 Developments and Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP)

Members considered a report which provided a final update on Dudley's Local Outbreak Management Plan, the Local and National Covid-19 development and the Local Authority's position at the end of the pandemic phase of the response. An overview of all the work undertaken throughout the pandemic was provided, together with the system-wide response implemented to mitigate the impact on the health and social care system, communities and local economy. It reported that although the LOMP specifically for Covid-19 was no longer required, Dudley's local response plans would be reinvigorated to incorporate lessons learned from the pandemic.

Outcomes:

- That the final update in relation to the pandemic phase of Covid-19 be received and noted.
- That the lessons learned from the pandemic and the plans moving forward, be received and noted.
- That the Government's strategy for Local Authorities to have a reduced role in Covid-19 specific activities and that no additional Covid -19 specific local funding has been provide and that a LOMP specifically for Covid-19 is no longer necessary to be maintained by the Local Authority, be noted.
- That the Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing circulate a breakdown of how the additional financial support provided, in terms of Government grants, was allocated to each individual Ward, to all Members of the Scrutiny Committee.
- That the Head of Health Protection circulate the findings from the community engagement, together with what barriers were identified, particularly from the BAME communities and lessons learned, to all Members of the Scrutiny Committee.
- That the Head of Health Protection circulate data in relation to the percentage of residents that are unable to have the vaccination for any reason, if available, to all Members of the Scrutiny Committee.

Feedback from the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Working Group

The Committee received a feedback report from the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Working Group held on 29th September, 2022, in relation to the work undertaken by the Council's Mental Health, Health and Safety and Corporate Landlord teams on the Woodside Day Centre. The recommendations formulated at the Working Group were submitted for consideration and approval.

Outcomes:

- That the information contained in the report submitted on the feedback from the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Working Group, be noted.
- That the short-term capital required to ensure Woodside Day Centre is committed from the Adult Social Care capital budget and the proposed partial re-opening and use of the two portacabins on site, subject to remedial works, be noted and endorsed.
- That the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, in conjunction with the Director of Adult Social Care, be recommended to seek a land valuation for the site and report back to a future meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Working Group with options for future provision of the service identified.

Corporate Quarterly Performance Reporting

The Committee received the Corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the year. The Director of Adult Social Care and Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing attended meetings to provide a summary and respond to questions asked by the Committee.

Outcomes:

- That the Director of Adult Social Care draft a letter, on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, expressing the Committees serious concerns in relation to the impact and difficulties the Social Care sector was experiencing and requesting additional financial support for carers and care providers.

Annual Adult Safeguarding Report and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

The Committee considered the Annual Adult Safeguarding report and received an update on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). The report highlighted that the number of safeguarding referrals continued to

increase year on year, with an increase in self-neglect referrals also reported. Legislation in relation to the implementation of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards was awaited from Government.

Outcomes:

- That the report on Dudley Safeguarding Adults Board's Annual Report for 2021/22, be received and noted.
- That the Cabinet be recommended to refrain from making any additional resource cuts in relation to Safeguarding, irrespective of budgetary issues and pressures, and that consideration be given as to how to enhance and positively address areas of neglect, to ensure that the service was fit for purpose.
- That the Independent Chair (Safeguarding) and Director of Adult Social Care be requested to continue to update the Committee on the level of safeguarding demand and performance of the Directorate.

Progress update on the development of the Black Country Integrated Care System (ICS) and Dudley's Integrated Health and Care Model

Throughout the municipal year, the Committee received regular updates on the development of the Black Country Integrated Care System and Dudley's Integrated Health and Care Model.

Outcomes:

- That the position in relation to the development of the Black Country Integrated Care System, including the integrated care board and the development of Dudley's Integrated Health and Care Model, be noted.
- That the Dudley Managing Director - Black Country Integrated Care Board, be requested to provide a further report on the significant changes in the care system and the impact this had on the role of a Councillor and provide further clarity on the specific role of a Councillor and the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the ICB and ICP, in particular how all parties could be involved to ensure Dudley's priorities would be incorporated.
- The Dudley Managing Director be requested to invite Brendan Clifford to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to discuss the composition of the ICS and the role of the Scrutiny Committee and Councillors.

Impact of the Dudley Telecare Digital Strategy

The Committee considered a report and received a presentation on the implementation and impact of the digital strategy and the progress of the Telecare Service Review. The ways in which the telecare service supported the wider health and social care system were highlighted, together with the risks from the switchover from analogue to digital and the charging model and future developments for the service were outlined.

Outcomes:

- That the impact of the digital strategy and digital offer be noted and appraised by Members.
- That the awareness and impact of the analogue to digital switch cover be noted.
- That data in relation to how quick calls were responded/ answered be circulated to the Scrutiny Committee following the meeting.
- That a letter on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee be sent to the Telecare Services team expressing their thanks for their exemplary service.
- Consideration be given to the development of an information pack/booklet for Elected Members and that information on the service be included as part of the induction training for Elected Members.

Update on the Health Inequalities Strategy

The Committee considered a joint report and presentation on the Health Inequalities Strategy and to seek support on adopting a system wide approach to addressing the inequality gap in Dudley and to explore ways to increase the input of the wider system. The priorities for the Borough and the Council to address wider determinants were also presented, together with a picture of the population in Dudley in terms of the percentage of residents with a long-term health condition, unemployed and living in poverty.

- That the report on adopting a system wide approach to addressing the inequality gap in Dudley, be noted.
- That a further report and action plan, taking into account all of the comments made at the meeting and outlined above, be submitted to the first meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year.
- That a progress update on the Violence Prevention Strategy, be submitted to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Other items considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2021/22 Municipal Year

- Food Safety and Standards in Dudley Borough
- Update Report regarding Primary Care Dental Services
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Primary Care Strategy
- Feedback from the Joint Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Working Group, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Working Group and the Children's Corporate Parenting Board Working Group

Future items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items to be considered at Scrutiny Committee on 24th April, 2023:-

- NHS Quality Accounts
- Serious Violence Strategy

Items to be rolled forward and included in the work programme for 2023/24:-

- High Oak Surgery
- Woodside Day Centre
- Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) Hub
- Mental Health and Inequalities
- Director of Public Health Annual Report
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Review of the Dudley Health and Wellbeing Board
- Progress update on the development of the Black Country Integrated Care System (ICS) and Dudley's Integrated Health and Care Model
- Health Inequalities Strategy



**Chair -
Councillor Mark
Westwood**

Annual Report of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

2022/2023 Muncipal Year



**Vice-Chair –
Councillor
Wayne Sullivan**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Directorates of Housing and Community Services and Public Realm and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Minutes – 9th June, 2022

Councillor D Stanley commented on the minutes of the meeting held on 30th March, 2022. Additional comments were incorporated in the minutes of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee held on 9th June, 2022.

Outcome:

- *That the Head of Housing Maintenance be requested to provide Members with a written response providing accurate Key Performance Indicator figures relating to PI 2194, percentage of gas compliance.*
- *That the Interim Head for Neighbourhood and Communities be requested to send information to all Members of the Committee on the engagement event at Baylie and Kennedy Courts in relation to compliance in general.*

Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23

The Committee considered reports on the annual scrutiny programme 2022/23.

Outcome of the meeting held on 9th June, 2022:

- *That a meeting be arranged to discuss and agree a Scrutiny Programme for 2022/23.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 23rd June, 2022:

- *That a Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Working Group meeting be arranged to discuss progress on the Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA), to include outcomes on the ARK Consultancy report.*
- *That the Head of Traffic, Transportation and Engineering Services be requested to provide a written response in relation to the programme of maintenance/repair work to the highway infrastructure and the issues associated with the programmed work, to include improvement strategies and planning techniques.*
- *That two separate Working Groups be established to provide for the informal consideration and formulation of recommendations concerning items associated with Housing and Communities and Public Realm to comprise all Members of this Scrutiny Committee.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive provide a draft programme of potential items to be discussed at future Working Groups to be submitted to the next Working Group.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee received the Corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the financial year 2022/23. Specific officers attended meetings to provide a summary and responded to questions asked by the Committee. In view of the number of items that were considered by the Committee, the Corporate Quarterly Performance report in relation to Quarter 2 was e-mailed to the Committee for comments.

Outcome of the meeting held on 9th June, 2022:

- *That the Corporate Performance Manager be requested to refer the specific issues raised by the Committee to relevant Officers or Cabinet Members for appropriate responses.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide a comprehensive response to Councillor D Stanley in relation to the void property located in Sedgley.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive, together with the Director of Housing and Communities, investigate the progress of anti-social behaviour complaints received and particularly, any cases not progressed and respond to Members of the Committee.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide a detailed breakdown of figures in relation to strategic investments and the overall percentage of rent loss through voids to all Members of the Committee.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to provide background information on the ARK Consultant report to Councillor J Cowell.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to circulate information on stock investment decisions, the number of Inspectors employed, and the timescales involved in making decisions to all Members of the Committee.*

- *That the Head of Housing Options and Support be requested to provide a written response to Members of the Committee outlining details of the challenges faced and delays associated with the refurbishment of Jack Newell Court.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 21st September, 2022:

- *That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm be requested to review recycling options and facilities in the Borough, together with the possibility of introducing fortnightly recycling and residual waste collections and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.*
- *That the Interim Director of Public Realm and the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide Members with a management and officer structure of Directorates, to include service responsibilities.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 29th March, 2023:

- *That the Head of Neighbourhood Services be requested to provide statistics in relation to the number of fly tipping recorded and the number of fixed penalty notices issued to all Members of Council.*
- *That the Head of Traffic and Highways Services be requested to circulate information on the School Street Scheme pilot.*

Housing and Communities Directorate report on the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee received reports on areas agreed within the 2022/23 Annual Scrutiny Programme, approved by the Committee in relation to Social Housing White Paper, customer and value for money quality services.

Outcome of the meeting held on 21st September, 2022:

- *That the aspirations and commitments of the Social Housing White Paper and its impact upon Dudley MBC, be noted.*

- *That the Community Housing Vision and progress in its implementation be noted.*
- *That activity to improve void performance for empty homes and garages be noted.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 17th November, 2022:

- *That the activity around compliance, assets, capital investment, development and fuel poverty be noted.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for a comprehensive response to be provided to Members on the percentage of income retained by the Council from capital receipts received through the Right to Buy Scheme.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to pursue the requirements for a Fire Door Contractor and provide a response to Members.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide a comprehensive response to Members on details of the housing 30-year maintenance plan to include information considered when assessing the overall baseline valuation of housing stock for strategic assessment management purposes.*

Developing a Neighbourhood Approach – Street Cleanliness and Environmental Quality

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Street, Green and Amenity Services providing an overview on developing a neighbourhood approach to street cleanliness and environmental quality.

Outcome:

- *That the comments made by Members be noted and referred back to the Directorate of Public Realm for consideration.*
- *That the Head of Street, Green and Amenity Services be requested to circulate statistics for fly tipping, including prosecutions, to all Members of the Committee.*

Public Forum

The Committee heard representations from members of the public concerning Affordable Housing, Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA), High-Rise Aerial Fund, High Plateau and Daniels Land sites, Key Performance Indicators relating to PI 1889, Rent Loss, and the Review of high-rise properties.

Outcome of meeting held on 17th November, 2022:

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for information to be circulated to the member of the public on the definition and criteria of affordable housing and areas that had been identified for such housing.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for feedback to be provided to the Housing Board on a recommendation made by the Committee on 31st March, 2022 in relation to the consideration of appointing non-voting Co-opted Members to represent the Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association, to comment on Housing issues only.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for a written response to be provided to the member of public in relation to the suggestion to review procedures for the allocation of funding from the High-Rise Aerial Fund.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 29th March, 2023:

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities and the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise provide a joint response to the member of public in relation to issues associated with sites located at High Plateau and Daniels Land, which had been designated for housing development.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities provide a written response to the member of public in relation to issues associated with rent loss and the rationale regarding investment decisions.*

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities provide a written response to the member of public providing an update on the review of high-rise properties in the Borough.*

Public Realm – Transport and Highways Progress Report on Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a report on progress on all matters associated with Transport and Highways, in particular, strategic transport and partnership working, highways maintenance, asset management and a neighbourhood approach to traffic and highways functions.

Outcomes:

- *That the information contained in the report and presentation submitted to the meeting be noted and the comments made by Members be referred back to the Directorate of Public Realm for consideration.*
- *That the Head of Traffic, Transportation and Engineering Services be requested to provide a comprehensive response to Members of the Committee on the strategies and funding obtained to improve the cycle and bus corridor, with particular reference to the A4123 and A461 schemes.*

Developing the Neighbourhood Approach to Delivering Services to keep Dudley Clean and Safe

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Street, Green and Amenity Services providing an overview on developing the neighbourhood approach to delivering services to keep Dudley clean and safe.

Outcome:-

- *That the presentation be noted and the comments made by Members be referred back to the Directorate of Public Realm for consideration.*

Action Tracker and Future Business

The Committee received information on outstanding actions following recommendations made throughout the 2023/23 municipal year, which included items to be considered at future meetings.

Outcome of the meeting held on 26th January, 2023:

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide information to all Members of the Committee in relation to the length of time a fire door contractor had not been in place, whether the contract awarded to ABCA had been agreed and signed and the length of time expected for the new contractor to carry out the required work.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 29th March, 2023:

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities forward copies of responses in relation to Minute Nos. 28 – Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association and High-Rise Aerial Fund to all Members of the Committee.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Housing and Communities and the Interim Director of Public Realm on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26, with emphasis on those proposals relating to the Committee's terms of reference. Items directly relevant to this Committee were those in relation to the Housing and Community Services and Public Realm Directorates.

Outcome:

- *That the Director of Finance and Legal be requested to provide statistics on the number of individual library facilities available within the Borough to all Members of the Committee.*

Annual update on the Safe and Sound Partnership priorities and update on improvements to managing neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour

The Committee received a report providing an overview of Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) and an update on the ongoing work to improve the management of neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.

Outcome:

- *That the information contained in the report be noted and the comments made by Members be referred back to the Directorate of Housing and Communities for consideration/action.*

Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23

The Committee considered the annual scrutiny report 2022/23.

Outcome:

- *That the annual scrutiny report for 2022/23 be noted.*
- *That consideration be provided to establishing separate Scrutiny Committees for Housing and Communities and Environment moving forward as it was considered that there were not enough meetings to scrutinise the wide range of services both Directorates managed.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities and the Interim Director of Environment be requested to circulate a detailed version of the Management and Officer structure to all Members of the Committee.*
- *That consideration be provided to including an item on the Directorates investment and spending programme in the draft Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2023/24.*
- *That Members be requested to e-mail the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee identifying work areas for consideration for scrutiny for the 2023/24 annual scrutiny programme.*

Customer Experience and Consumer Regulation Update

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Housing and Communities on Customer Experience and Customer Regulation Update.

Outcome:

- *That the presentation and comments made by Members be noted and referred back to the Service for consideration.*

Other Items Considered by the Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year

- Overview of Public Realm
- Review of Housing Finance

Briefing Notes considered by the Committee through e-mail

- *Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports – Quarter 2*

Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Working Group

- Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23
- *Progress on the Housing Board/Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA).*

Ongoing items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items requiring further scrutiny or to be included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2023/24 are listed below:-

- *Medium Term Financial Strategy*
- *Review of Housing Finance*
- *Issues associated with anti-social behaviour*
- *Future plans for the Lister Road Depot, people and workforce and progress with the work on partnership and neighbourhoods*
- *Progress on grounds maintenance, green and open space*