

Minutes of the proceedings of the Council

Monday, 26th February, 2024 at 6.00pm
in the Council Chamber, The Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present:

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

Prayers

The Mayor led the Council in prayer.

53 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors K Casey, A Hughes, S Mughal, T Russon and C Sullivan.

54 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 with 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.

Councillors D Stanley and A Taylor - 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 care in a care home.

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 of portfolio of property investments.

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

Councillor E Taylor - Non-pecuniary interest as her daughter was employed by Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor N Neale – Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting her employment with the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor S Henley – Any references to matters affecting West Midlands Fire Service – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment.

Councillor J Cowell – Agenda Item 6(d) – Review of Housing Finance and any references to matters relating to housing – Non-pecuniary interest as a Council tenant.

Councillors I Kettle and D Stanley – Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interests as members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees at West Midlands Combined Authority.

Councillor P Lee – Minutes of the Children’s Services Select Committee - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting him as a Dudley Foster Carer.

Councillor K Lewis - Minutes of the Children’s Services Select Committee - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting her as an Early Years Provider.

Councillor S Ridney - Minutes of the Children’s Services Select Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Management Board of the Virtual School.

Councillor R Collins – Minutes of the Health Select Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Patient Participation Group at Russells Hall Hospital.

Councillor M Hanif – Minutes of the Health Select Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as a Member of the Life in Lye group.

Councillor K Westwood – Minutes of the Health Select Committee - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting her employment with Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor P Drake – Minutes of the Planning Committee (Application No. P21/0912 – Former Coseley Baths, Peartree Lane, Coseley) – Non-pecuniary interest as he had raised an objection to the application when it was originally considered by the Planning Committee. Councillor P Drake had taken no part in the debate or the decision-making at the Planning Committee on 14th December, 2023.

Councillor P Drake – Minutes of the Planning Committee (Application No. P23/1139 – Land between Upper Ettingshall Methodist Church and 56 Upper Ettingshall Road, Coseley) – Non-pecuniary interest as he had raised an objection to the application when it was submitted. Councillor P Drake had taken no part in the debate or the decision-making at the Planning Committee on 10th January, 2024.

55 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December, 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

56 **Mayor's Announcements**

(a) Former Councillor Christine Wray

The Mayor referred in sympathetic terms to the recent death of former Councillor Christine Wray. The Council observed a minute of silence as a mark of respect following which tributes were paid.

(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 19th April, 2024.

(c) Charity Climb

The Mayor referred to a charity 'crazy' climb being undertaken by Honorary Alderman Steve Waltho MBE. Members were requested to support this event, which would include a contribution to the Mayor's Charity.

57 **Statutory Recommendations from External Auditor Grant Thornton**

A joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal was submitted setting out the recommendations of the External Auditor, Grant Thornton, under Section 25, Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Following an introduction from A Smith, representing Grant Thornton, the recommendations in the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Legal were moved by Councillor S Clark and seconded by Councillor P Bradley.

The motion was then debated by the Council.

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

The motion was put to the meeting and it was

Resolved

- (1) That the recommendations made by the External Auditor, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be accepted.
 - (2) That the recommendations be incorporated into the Council's Improvement and Sustainability Programme setting out the actions to address the recommendations.
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58 **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 P Bradley.

Following a debate, Councillor P Harley exercised the 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 2023/24 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted.
- (2) That the additions and amendments to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraphs 10 to 21 of the report, be approved.
- (3) That the Prudential Indicators as required to be determined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code of Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Local Government Act 2003, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.
- (4) That the updated Capital Strategy, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be approved.

- (5) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2024/25, as set out in paragraph 25 of the report, be approved.
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59 **Suspension of Council Plan 2022-2025**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

- (1) That the Council Plan for the period from April 2022 to March 2025 be suspended and replaced with a focussed one-year plan for 2024/25.
- (2) That the one-year Council Plan for 2024/25 be focussed on those priorities and projects that will prevent a higher cost, deliver cost reductions / increased income and the delivery of the Council's improvement and sustainability programme.
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60 **Annual Review of the Constitution**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

- (1) That the revision of Article 6 and the associated Scrutiny Procedure Rules, as incorporated in Part 4 of the Constitution, be endorsed.
- (2) That the trial of the revised 'Question Time' session at Full Council meetings be extended for the remainder of this municipal year and that, subject to the outcome of the trial, the necessary revisions to Council Procedure Rule 11 be incorporated in the Constitution for the 2024/25 municipal year.

- (3) That the inclusion of the revised Contract Standing Orders, as approved by the Audit and Standards Committee, within Part 5 of the Constitution, be noted.
 - (4) That the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 24.6 and the associated legal provisions concerning the recording of meetings be noted.
 - (5) That the provisions in Article 12 of the Constitution (Officers), including the deputising arrangements in the absence or inability to act of the Chief Executive, be endorsed.
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61 **Review of Housing Finance**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

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

Following a debate, Councillor L Taylor-Childs exercised the 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 2023/24, as set out in paragraphs 8 to 14 and Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- (2) That the increase in rents for Housing Revenue Account dwellings by 7.7% with effect from 1st April, 2024, as set out in paragraphs 15 to 17 of the report, be noted.
- (3) That the introduction of service charges at full cost recovery, as set out in paragraph 18 of the report, be noted.
- (4) That the Housing Revenue Account revenue budget for 2024/25, as set out in paragraphs 19 to 21 and Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

- (5) That the public sector housing revised capital budgets for 2024/25 to 2026/27, attached as Appendix 3 to the report, be approved and that the consultation arrangements, as outlined in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the report, be noted.
- (6) 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 24 to 29 and Appendix 3 to the report, and that expenditure funded from such resources be added to the Capital Programme.
- (7) That the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities, be authorised to manage and allocate resources to the Capital Programme as outlined in paragraphs 24 to 29 and Appendix 3 to the report.
- (8) That the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities, be authorised to develop and implement service charges as outlined in paragraph 18 to the report.
- (9) 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 24 to 29 and Appendix 3 to the report.
- (10) 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 24 to 29 and Appendix 3 to the report.
- (11) 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 24 to 29 and Appendix 3 to the report.

- (12) That the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy be endorsed.
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62 **Dudley Council Pay Policy Statement 2024/25**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

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

Resolved

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 be approved and adopted.

63 **Treasury Management**

A report of the Audit and Standards Committee was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor A Lees, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

- (1) That the treasury activities in 2023/24, as outlined in the report, be noted.
 - (2) That the Treasury Strategy 2024/25, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, 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.
 - (4) That the delegation to enable the Director of Finance and Legal to update the prudential indicators, as detailed in Section 3 of Appendix 2 to the report, be noted.
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64 **Appointment of Director of Environment**

A report of the Appointments Committee was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

That Nicholas McGurk be appointed to the post of Director of Environment in accordance with the salary and terms of conditions of employment applicable to the post.

65 **The Dudley (Electoral Changes) Order 2024**

A report of the Lead for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) was submitted on the provisions of The Dudley (Electoral Changes) Order 2024, which had been made by Parliament on 16th February, 2024.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor P Harley and seconded by Councillor P Bradley.

Following comments from Councillor S Phipps, Councillor P Harley exercised the right of reply pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

The motion was put to the meeting and it was

Resolved

That the report be noted.

66 **Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

A report of the Lead for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

- (1) That the proposal document published on the Polling Place and Polling Station Review, available on the Dudley Council website, with the alterations mentioned in the report, be approved and adopted for elections in Dudley.
- (2) That the proposed changes, on the changes document published for the wards set out in paragraph 3 of the report, be approved.
- (3) That the changes proposed on the changes document for the Amblecote Ward, with the alteration of S04 polling district remaining at Amblecote Primary School, be approved.
- (4) That the changes proposed on the changes document for the Belle Vale Ward, with the amendments suggested in the report, be approved.
- (5) That the changes proposed on the changes documents for the Brierley Hill and Wordsley South Ward, with the amendments suggested in the report, be approved.
- (6) That the changes proposed on the changes document for the Gornal Ward, with the amendments in the alterations to original proposals due to availability section of the report, be approved.
- (7) That the changes proposed on the changes document for the Hayley Green and Cradley South Ward, with the amendments suggested in the report submitted, be approved.
- (8) That the changes proposed on the changes document for the Lye and Stourbridge North Ward, with the amendment to use the Elton Centre for polling District U04, be approved.
- (9) That the charges proposed on the changes document for the Netherton and Holly Hall Ward, with the amendment of M03 to vote at the alternative venue of Ebenezer Baptist Church, 17 Andrews Street, be approved.
- (10) That the changes proposed on the changes document for the Norton Ward, with the amendment of V06 electors remaining at the Sons of Rest building at Mary Stevens Park, be approved.

- (11) That the changes proposed on the changes document for the Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood Ward, with the alteration for X07 polling district to remain at the Scout Hut, be approved.
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67 **Appointment of Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer**

A report of the Director of Finance and Legal was submitted.

Councillor P Harley informed the Council that recommendation 2 in the report was withdrawn.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

That Mohammed Farooq (Lead for Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer) be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

68 **Composition and Membership of Committees**

A report of the Lead for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

That the revised composition and membership of Committees for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year be determined in accordance with the political balance requirements of Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

69 **Notice of Motion**

Tackling Anti-Social Use of Off-Road Vehicles

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12, Councillor R Priest had given notice of the following motion on 8th February, 2024:

“Anti-social use of off-road vehicles, including quadbikes, motorbikes, scramblers and mini motors is an issue that affects many parts of the borough, and is causing particular nuisance in parks and green spaces. While the use of these vehicles is permitted on private land with the land owners permission, the Road Traffic Act 1988 prohibits their use where no permission has been given.

The Council recognises that tackling the anti-social use of off-road vehicles requires a proactive multi-agency approach involving the local authority, neighbourhood police teams, the wider West Midlands Police and the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Council also recognises that in parts of the borough, there has been a failure to respond appropriately to the anti-social use of off-road vehicles.

The Council additionally recognises that Stevens Park, Wollescote, is one part of the borough where there has been a failure to respond appropriately to the anti-social use of off-road vehicles.

The Council expresses its dissatisfaction with the response of the Police and Crime Commissioner for failing to adequately address the issue of the use of anti-social use of off-road vehicles in the Dudley Borough, particularly in Stevens Park, Wollescote.

The Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the relevant Officer to conduct a survey amongst the elected Members of this Council asking Members to identify areas within their ward where anti-social use of off-road vehicles occurs and use the results of this survey to improve signage discouraging the use of off-road vehicles.

- Introduce a system where elected Members can report addresses to the Council which are suspected to be involved in the anti-social use of off-road vehicles, and the Council to send letters to these addresses outlining the legality of the anti-social use of off-road vehicles and the consequences of their continued use.
- Ask the relevant Directorate to install a trip rail fence around the perimeter of Stevens Park, Wollescote, while maintaining access points for pedestrians, pushchairs, and wheelchairs.
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner informing them of this motion, and the Councils' dissatisfaction with the response of the Police and Crime Commissioner for failing to adequately address the issue of the anti-social use of off-road vehicles in the Dudley Borough, particularly in Stevens Park, Wollescote.
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority in May, once the result of the election to the post is known, requesting an urgent meeting to develop a strategy to tackle the anti-social use of off-road vehicles. This meeting should involve appropriate Cabinet Members, Ward Councillors, and community groups.”

The motion was moved by Councillor R Priest and seconded by Councillor J Clinton.

During the debate on the motion, the following amendment was moved by Councillor T Crumpton and seconded by Councillor K Denning:

“This Council is fully aware that there has been a rise in anti-social behaviour caused by the widespread use of often unlicensed and uninsured young people on untaxed motorbikes and quad bikes.

This Council condemns those few who are making so many people's lives a misery. Our parks and green spaces are being targeted; local roads and pavements see near misses almost every day.

These individuals are known within our communities, not only by their names but where they live. Sadly, however, local people are also intimidated and fearful of retaliation.

The reduction in local neighbourhood policing teams over past years, particularly the massive reduction in PCSOs, has decreased the deterrent but also the relationship between Police and the young people in our communities.

Police are fully aware, in most cases, of who these criminals are but little is being done to bring them to justice.

Recent decisions and funding through the Police and Crime Commissioner have brought in off-road bikes to our Borough. This Council acknowledges the success of the new police off-road bikes team who have visited Dudley undertaking operations, seized bikes and made a number of arrests.

However, such interventions are currently piecemeal and, due to the dramatic cuts in funding for the police over recent years, cannot act as a sufficient deterrent.

Our communities are fed up and frustrated with what they perceive as a lack of support.

The law is clear that anyone caught driving in this manner can:

- Have the bike or other vehicle confiscated and destroyed.
- Be prosecuted and both fined and banned from driving.
- If convicted of dangerous driving face imprisonment.

These are Police powers but the Council can and should, as with other anti-social behaviour, be taking action against the households involved.

This Council resolves:

- That a system for Councillors to report such incidents and any intelligence they have gathered is urgently introduced. Information from this system to be shared with the relevant council directorates to ensure any action that can be taken is taken.
- That the system data is shared with the Police with the objective that any actions being planned are done jointly with both Police and Council.

- That 3 monthly reports are produced and shared wherever possible with local Councillors and the people of Dudley.
- That if sufficient evidence is available Civil and Criminal prosecution will be pursued and publicised.

In addition, that an exercise is undertaken to all petrol stations to advise of the illegality of sales to those under-age; to help with advice to the proprietors to refuse such sales and to prosecute any providers found to have done so.

This problem is not confined to Dudley but is prevalent across the UK. Some Councils have made inroads by working very closely with the Police and communities, but these have had limited success.

This Council instructs the Chief Executive to arrange an urgent meeting with the West Midlands Mayor and the Police and Crime Commissioner and all local Councillors. The objective to greater understand current powers and resources available and the strategies currently being actioned or planned to tackle this increasing problem for the people of our communities.”

Following a debate on the amendment, Councillor R Priest was afforded a right of reply pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.9.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

The following amendment to the original motion was then moved by Councillor L Taylor-Childs and seconded by Councillor N Neale:

“Anti-social use of off-road vehicles, including quadbikes, motorbikes, scramblers and mini motors is an issue that affects many parts of the borough, and is causing particular nuisance in parks and green spaces. While the use of these vehicles is permitted on private land with the land-owner’s permission, the Road Traffic Act 1988 prohibits their use where no permission has been given.

The Council recognises that tackling the anti-social use of off-road vehicles requires a proactive multi-agency approach involving the local authority, neighbourhood police teams, the wider West Midlands Police and the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

This issue is prevalent in a number of areas in the borough including, but not limited to, Wollescote Park, Quarry Bank, Wordsley and Brierley Hill. It is recognised that, locally, there has been a joined-up approach to tackling this issue within the Community Safety Partnership. However, this work is hindered by the lack of regional support and resource from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Both strategy and resource is important to tackling this issue, the PCC recently funded just three off-road bikes for Police use across the West Midlands area. The Council expresses its dissatisfaction with the response of the Police and Crime Commissioner for failing to adequately fund resource to address the issue of the use of anti-social use of off-road vehicles in the Dudley Borough.

The Council therefore resolves to:

- Recognise the impact this behaviour is having on local residents and businesses and resolves to renew its approach to tackling the issue.
- Instruct the Chief Executive and relevant Cabinet Member to write to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner informing them of this motion, and the Council's dissatisfaction with the response of the Police and Crime Commissioner for failing to adequately address the issue of the anti-social use of off-road vehicles in the Dudley Borough.
- Identify a single point of contact within the Community Safety Team for reporting the specific incidents of the anti-social use of off-road bikes. These figures will be communicated to the Police via existing reporting methods within the Community Safety Partnership, with a focus on ensuring intelligence (such as addresses of stored bikes) being followed up by Police and/or Housing Management.
- Instruct the Chief Executive and relevant Cabinet Member to write to the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority in May, once the result of the election to the post is known, requesting an urgent meeting to develop a strategy to tackle the anti-social use of off-road vehicles. This meeting should involve appropriate Cabinet Members, Ward Councillors, community groups and other affected organisations such as the Canal and River Trust.

- Consider the implementation of physical preventative measures, such as trip rails, fencing and entry points when the financial position of the authority allows.
- Ensure that the Council is utilising deployable CCTV, where intelligence indicates there would be a benefit to investigations, to monitor problem areas.”

Following discussion on the amendment, Councillor S Phipps moved a closure motion pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.11, which was seconded, to the effect that the amendment be now put to the vote.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14.11(b) the Mayor was of the opinion that matter had been sufficiently discussed. The Mayor then indicated that, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12.5, the 30 minutes allowed to deal with all notices of motion had expired.

The motion and the amendment would therefore stand referred to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. The notice of motion and the amendment would be included in the summons for that meeting in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2.

70 **Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11**

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor P Bradley and

Resolved

That under Council Procedure Rule 22.1, the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 11 be suspended for this meeting to enable the revised Question Time session to take place as referred to in Minute No. 60(2) above.

Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members and Chairs

The Cabinet Member for Public Health (Councillor I Bevan) responded to questions from Councillor J Foster seeking clarification concerning the situation on Community Forum funding.

The Chair of Audit and Standards Committee (Councillor A Lees) responded to questions from Councillor P Lowe confirming that he had sent an email, on behalf of the Committee, highlighting concerns raised by External Auditors regarding reserves. An internal investigation was being undertaken to retrieve the email to forward to Members of the Audit and Standards Committee for information.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to questions from Councillor P Lowe concerning an email sent by the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee in July, 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services (Councillor D Corfield) responded questions from Councillor R Priest concerning the resurfacing of a Car Park at Toys Lane, Cradley.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities (Councillor L Taylor-Childs) responded to questions from Councillor E Taylor concerning the number of void properties currently in the Council's housing stock, the number of residents currently on the waiting list and the reasons for the delays in void turnaround times.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health (Councillor I Bevan) responded to questions from Councillor S Keasey seeking further clarification on the position regarding Community Forum funding.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services (Councillor D Corfield) responded to questions from Councillor S Phipps concerning the extension of the average speed camera enforcement zone on the A458 between Lye and Cradley to Stourbridge Road, Halesowen and progress on the deployment of speed cameras.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care (Councillor M Rogers) undertook to investigate a request from Councillor J Cowell concerning cases where tenants refusing to pay for the telecare service had retained access to the equipment.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Strategy (Councillor P Atkins) responded to questions from Councillor R Priest concerning utilising the Public Health Grant to fund discounted memberships at the Borough's Leisure Centres for elderly residents.

The Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor P Bradley) responded to questions from Councillor S Keasey concerning the annual International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia event.

The Mayor indicated that the 30 minutes allowed for questions had expired. Any Members indicating to ask questions could either send these in writing or raise the question at the next appropriate meeting.

71 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business for consideration at this meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm

MAYOR