

## **Meeting of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

**Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2023 at 6.00pm  
in the Council Chamber  
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley**

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

1. Apologies for absence
2. To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct
4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2022 as a correct record (Pages 5 – 16)
5. Medium Term Financial Strategy – (Pages 17 – 53)
6. Carbon Reduction Plan – (Pages 54 – 70)
7. Corporate Estates Strategy – (Pages 71 – 77)
8. Progress update on the trial of the use of pesticides and maintaining the Borough's Green Spaces – (Pages 78 – 92)
9. Public Forum
10. Action Tracker - (Pages 93 - 97)

11. To consider any questions from Members to the Chair where two clear days notice has been given to the Monitoring Officer (Council Procedure Rule 11.8).

**Distribution:**

Councillor D Corfield (Chair)  
Councillor P Dobb (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors C Barnett, C Bayton, K Casey, R Collins, C Eccles,  
J Elliott, J Foster, S Henley, M Rogers, T Russon, K Shakespeare



**Chief Executive**

**Dated: 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2023**

**To continue to protect vulnerable people, you are asked to 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 Council House 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.

## General

- Public Wi-Fi is available in the Council House.
- 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.
- Information about the Council and our meetings can be viewed on the website [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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 Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2022 at 6.00 pm  
in the Council Chamber at the Council House, Priory Road,  
Dudley**

### **Present:**

Councillor P Dobb (Vice-Chair in the Chair)  
Councillors C Bayton, K Casey, R Collins, J Elliott, J Foster, S Henley, M Rogers  
and T Russon

### **Dudley MBC Officers:**

A Vaughan (Interim Director of Public Realm), P Parker (Head of Communications and Public Affairs), J Deakin (Waste Operations Manager), R Bowdler (Transport Manager), S Edwards (Project Manager) and K Taylor (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

### **Also in Attendance:**

Mr T Weller (Member of the Public by invitation)

Together with 2 members of the public.

### **15 Ben Corfield – son of Councillor D Corfield**

The Committee observed a minute of silence in respect of the recent tragic death of Ben Corfield, son of Councillor D Corfield.

---

16 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Corfield, C Eccles and K Shakespeare.

---

17 **Declarations of Interests**

No Member made a declaration of interest, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of any matter considered at the meeting.

---

18 **Minutes**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

---

19 **Climate Change and Environment Engagement Feedback, Obtain Views from Scrutiny on their Priorities**

The Committee received a presentation from the Interim Director of Public Realm on the feedback from the Climate Change and Environment Engagement. The Committee were asked to consider the feedback and make comments which would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Waste Management and Climate Change for consideration.

In presenting the information it was reported that the 'Your Borough, Your Future' public consultation, undertaken during a five-week period between 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2022 and 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2022, sought to understand resident's views on what the Council could do and what individuals would be willing to do, to address the challenges of climate change.

The main drivers for change in Waste Management was in response to Government Legislation and Local Policies, however it was recognised that there would be challenges moving forward given the financial constraints of the Local Authority. It was noted that corporate policies had started to incorporate and reflect Dudley's commitment to the climate emergency agenda, together with strategic and operational planning with particular focus on fleet sustainability.

It was noted that 3,195 responses were received to the survey, which was considered positive and demonstrated the importance of this area and the need for change moving forward. A range of events and activities, including roadshows, community forums and visits to community groups, leisure centres, and schools had been organised and held by the Council during the consultation period.

The Interim Director of Public Realm provided an overview on the findings of the survey, with the majority of residents being supportive of the Council reviewing changes to the waste and recycling services in order to increase recycling, make savings and reduce carbon impacts. Although new services such as food waste collections were welcomed, it was noted that this would result in expenditure of up to £4million each year for the Local Authority.

Arising from the presentation, Members asked questions and made comments. Responses were provided where appropriate as follows:-

- a) The Chair suggested that marketing information would need to be targeted and informative in relation to food waste collections.
- b) Councillor C Barnett referred to the legislation in relation to food waste management in which he considered to be an important element to addressing climate change, and emphasised the responsibility of the Local Authority in this regard. The 'Your Borough, Your Future' survey was welcomed, which allowed residents the opportunity to present their views and suggestions.
- c) Councillor S Henley requested that further consideration be given to amending the opening and closing times of the household waste recycling centre to allow users to visit at varying times to help reduce air quality.

In response, the Interim Director of Public Realm advised that further consideration would be given to optimising services provided by the Council and ensuring that the most efficient route was being made available for residents.

- d) Councillor J Foster considered that the responses to the survey were disproportionate and suggested that further work was needed to ensure that effective engagement was made to those that had not responded.

The Head of Communications and Public Affairs acknowledged comments made and confirmed that a multi-channel approach had been undertaken and considered that the fluidity of the sample and response rate was good. Following a request made, the Head of Communications and Public Affairs and Interim Director of Public Realm undertook to provide a breakdown of the areas within the Borough in which respondents of the survey resided to the Committee for information.

- e) Councillor T Russon considered that the response to the consultation was positive, however emphasised the need in ensuring value of investment for the proposed all electric fleet.
- f) Councillor C Bayton highlighted the need for change in order for the Local Authority to meet forthcoming legislation requirements, and referred specifically to the challenges in relation to food waste collection in flatted estates and queried whether those particular residents had contributed towards the consultation. It was also suggested that a dedicated policy was needed to address similar areas including the appropriate receptacles needed for collections dependent on the accommodation.

The Interim Director of Public Realm acknowledged comments made and agreed that bespoke designs would be developed in a number of areas in order to provide an effective and efficient service.

In responding to the question raised by Councillor C Bayton, the Head of Communications and Public Affairs also agreed to include further information in relation to properties in his response as requested by the Committee.

- g) Councillor C Barnett suggested that the survey indicated that residents were aware of the climate change emergency, however considered that there was very little information contained on the Dudley Website that would help inform members of the public, and provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Council and future proposals.

The Head of Communications and Public Affairs acknowledged comments made and referred to discussions held with the Decarbonisation Working Group during December and confirmed that additional information for publication on the Dudley Website would be considered further.



- h) Reference was made to the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment independent review undertaken by Central Government with Dudley being assessed as zero with further action needed. Councillor C Barnett made particular reference to the improvements made by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and considered that the Local Authority was not moving fast enough with regard to Climate Change.

In response, the Interim Director of Public Realm assured the Committee that the Local Authority had made steps and acquired resources including the appointment of dedicated staff. It was confirmed that a new Sustainability Team would be implemented, and a recruitment process for a Climate Change Policy Manager would be undertaken. It was further noted that the Public Realm Directorate would be restructured as the Environment Directorate, and it was hoped that further resources would be identified in order to challenge further.

- i) Councillor R Collins referred specifically to a question within the consultation survey with regards to the Council providing larger bins for more materials to recycle and raised concerns of the space required for those bins, in particular in smaller or terraced properties, and requested whether commingling had been considered by the Local Authority.
- j) Councillor R Collins also suggested that residents within her Ward had been notified of the roadshows the day before the event and queried whether there would have been more attendance and participation if sufficient notice had been given.

In responding to comments made, the Interim Director of Public Realm reported on the significant response to the consultation and that commingling was a legitimate consideration for the Local Authority moving forward. It was also acknowledged that the storage of waste bins would be easier in some areas than others.

- k) Mr T Weller referred to the extensive information developed over time in relation to Climate science and raised concerns about resource completion and emphasised the need to address sustainable living.
- l) The Interim Director of Public Realm provided an overview of the process involved with Anaerobic Digesters in which the biogas produced would be generated into renewable electricity. It was noted that the nearest Anaerobic Digestion Plant was based in Kinver, Stourbridge.

- m) In responding to a question raised by Councillor J Foster in relation to Employee Engagement, the Head of Public Affairs and Communication confirmed that 8% of Council employees had responded to the consultation, recognising that a significant proportion of employees were Dudley residents. It was noted that further Employee and Elected Member engagement would be undertaken during the process.
- n) In responding to comments made, the Committee agreed to formulate a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Waste Management and Climate Change 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.
- o) A further report on progress made was also requested to be submitted to the Committee in six months.
- p) In responding to a question raised by Councillor J Elliott in relation to lessons learnt and participation in surveys moving forward, the Head of Public Affairs and Communications reiterated that the response to the survey was good and above expectations and confirmed that stakeholder mapping and programme of events together with a multi-channel approach had been implemented during the consultation period. The lack of notice for events and the condensed consultation period would be considered moving forward with a comprehensive process and programme developed for future engagement.

The Chair thanked officers for the information presented and work undertaken.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the presentation on the feedback from the Climate Change and Environment Engagement be noted.
- (2) That the Head of Communications and Public Affairs and Interim Director of Public Realm be requested to provide a breakdown of location and the properties in which the respondents to the survey resided, for information.
- (3) 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.

- (4) That a report on progress made be submitted to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee in six months.
- 

## 20 **Transport Fleet Services**

The Committee received a presentation from the Transport Manager on the Transport Fleet Services. In presenting the information it was reported that the Fleet Service was a Council wide service operated predominately from the Lister Road Depot, Dudley as a traded service.

It was noted that there were currently over 478 vehicles within Dudley Council's fleet, including refuse collection, highways and green care vehicles, with regular meetings undertaken to ensure the safe management of the vehicles, drivers and operation. The Committee were advised that the Grey Fleet utilised by Housing Maintenance Teams had been replaced with Council provided vehicles.

It was noted that the Council's overall transport costs equated to £6million, with fuel costs of £1.5million per annum, and in light of the geographical size of Dudley, the average annual mileage undertaken was 5,000 miles per annum. The Transport Manager advised that the replacement cost of the Fleet that were due by age profile up to and including 2023-24, was £11.8million for diesel, rising to £21.6million for low carbon alternative fuels, diesel and electric.

Data analysis identified a significant increase of the number of vehicles replaced since 2020, despite challenges arising from manufacturers and the Covid-19 Pandemic.

It was noted that the Lister Road Workshops currently operated from 5.30am until 6.15pm, however this would be reviewed to ascertain whether there was a demand for availability outside of core hours. The re-location of the Taxi testing operation, currently undertaken at Narrow Boat Way, would also be considered.

The challenges faced in attracting and retaining vehicle Technicians was mentioned together with the increasing costs of Fleet vehicles over the last two years. The significant increase in fuel costs and age profile of the waste collection Fleet was also referred to.

The Transport Manager advised the Committee that the Council operated specialist type vehicles and plant of which electrical versions were currently not available and that future technology, such as hydrogen, was not considered mainstream. It was emphasised that Depot and Council wide electronic infrastructure required substantial investment.

The opportunities available included the use of whole life costing to help justify a higher initial outlay on the basis of lower running costs in conjunction with the determination of Transport Services in decarbonising the Fleet. It was confirmed that 24 vehicles had been removed from the Fleet over the past four months, in conjunction with other saving initiatives within Transport, this had generated savings of £402k and reduced Carbon Dioxide emissions.

Reference was made to the draft Fleet Strategy 2022-2032, attached as Agenda Item No. 7b within the agenda, which focused primarily on supporting frontline operations in the most cost effective and environmentally considerate way. It was emphasised that safety, quality and efficiency was complimentary and led to better utilisation and associated cost reductions. Although the financial constraints of the Local Authority were acknowledged, the priority was to operate a high-quality maintenance regime whilst remaining competitive in marketplaces.

The success of the strategy would be dependent on the support and cooperation of all employees that utilised the transport services. Focus would also be given for the service to provide additional opportunities and become intelligence consultation led in relation to the procurement and modification of high-quality vehicles that met operational demands whilst achieving best value. The need for vehicle replacement parameters to be maximised in order to achieve long-term service life was also mentioned.

It was reported that spare vehicles within Public Realm would no longer be retained by the client departments and that the Transport Services function would be restructured to provide a 'fully managed' service.

The difficulties in inspecting, servicing and maintaining the diverse specialist plant and equipment within the Local Authority would require further consideration for procuring external contracts or hire where better value for money could be demonstrated.

Reference was made to the Government's announcement whereby the sale of new diesel vehicles would no longer be permitted, including new non-zero emission Light Goods Vehicles (under 3.5ft) by 2030. The Local Authority declared a climate emergency in 2020 with a commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2041, and it was confirmed that the proposed Fleet Strategy established the framework for the Council to achieve a zero emissions fleet within the timescale of the period of the Strategy.

Arising from the presentation, Members asked questions and made comments. Responses were provided where appropriate as follows:-

- a) Councillor M Rogers although welcomed the presentation given, considered that the budget of £1,676,200 for vehicle maintenance and overheads did not reflect the size of the fleet and requested clarification on the number of vehicles located at the Lister Road Depot and the proposed review of future vehicle manufacturers.

In responding, the Transport Manager confirmed that the budget had been allocated reflecting the aging profile of the vehicles, and that approximately 147 vehicles were currently based at the Lister Road depot. He also confirmed that manufacturers, such as Mercedes and Dennis Eagle, were being considered in relation to 100% Battery Electric Vehicles.

- b) In responding to a question raised by Councillor M Rogers in relation to the replacement of diesel vehicles totalling £11.8m, the Transport Manager reported that currently there were no suitable alternative to an economic efficient replacement of diesel crane vehicles, however further investigation would be undertaken. It was also confirmed that there were no hybrid vehicles currently operating within the Fleet.
- c) Members were assured that whilst the safe operation of vehicles for employees, contractors, other road users and the public was maintained in order to meet statutory commitments, the purpose of the Fleet Strategy reinforced these principles.
- d) Councillor C Bayton undertook to submit detailed questions to the Transport Manager for a response, however requested clarification as to the purpose of the presentation to the Scrutiny Committee and in particular whether the Fleet Strategy had already been approved and endorsed.

In responding, the Interim Director of Public Realm clarified that the presentation had been submitted to the Scrutiny Committee to allow for discussion and comments which would be considered as part of the formal decision-making process. He commented positively on the current position of the Fleet and stated that constructive steps had been made in raising questions and the focus needed for the replacement of the Council's Fleet Vehicles. Members were assured that the replacement vehicles and systems would be adequately tested prior to formal approval and implementation.

- e) Councillor C Bayton reiterated that reports submitted for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee should clearly outline the purpose of the report and the response or observations required by Members. She also shared her disappointment that the Local Authority had not developed an overarching Climate Change and Transport Policy.
- f) In responding to a question raised by Councillor S Henley in relation to proposed savings achieved by generating waste collection into sustainable fuel which could then be utilised in the new fleet vehicles, the Transport Manager referred to the work undertaken in other Local Authorities including Manchester and Nottingham which would assist in identifying the appropriate model for Dudley. Due to the uncertainty of future usage and costings, further analysis would be undertaken utilising a whole life costing plan.
- g) Councillor C Barnett undertook to submit detailed questions to the Transport Manager for a response, however he believed that the replacement of the Fleet was driven by forthcoming legislation requirements and queried whether the Council had the determination to complete prior to the deadlines stipulated by Government. He also referred to the proposed change to an electric Fleet, and whilst it was acknowledged that the fuel generated at the electricity Waste to Power plant was not diesel, it was not considered to be net zero, and therefore queried whether reducing the mileage of vehicles was the predominant aspiration.

In responding, the Transport Manager confirmed that the main objective was the reduction in the number of fleet vehicles and further assessments undertaken in relation to the journeys undertaken with discussions needed with customers regarding future usage.

- h) Councillor C Barnett referred to the number of aging diesel fuelled taxi vehicles within Dudley, and queried whether the Local Authority had given consideration to employees commuting to the workplace, and the measures that could be introduced to alleviate the mileage used.

The Interim Director of Public Realm referred to taxi vehicles that operated within different areas and the challenges faced by the Local Authority in implementing policy in areas including identifying replacement vehicles or fuel consumption.

- i) Councillor K Casey welcomed the information presented and stated that the Local Authority should lead by example by transitioning the Fleet to electric vehicles and raised concern to the length of time taken by the Council in considering the replacement. He also suggested that additional Government Funding should be petitioned in relation to the Climate Change agenda.
- j) Reference was made to the number of fleet vehicles replaced since 2020, and in responding the Transport Manager confirmed that there were no electric vehicles purchased during this period.
- k) Councillor J Foster raised concerns of the absence of a covering report to accompany the agenda items to allow sufficient preparation time for Members to effectively scrutinise and requested that the comments made by Members at the meeting be considered and reflected in the Fleet Strategy.
- l) Following a suggestion, it was agreed that a further report be submitted to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee at the first meeting of the next Municipal Year together with a feasibility study and programme or prior to formal approval by the Cabinet.
- m) Mr T Weller suggested that electric trams should replace buses and all metro extensions withdrawn. He also referred to the incineration undertaken at the Lister Road Depot and urged that waste should be recycled, and solar panels installed to generate electricity for usage. He recommended that Officers monitor the mileage of each vehicle per annum to allow longer life usage; that drivers be encouraged to switch off vehicles whilst stationary, and employees be inspired to cycle to their workplace to help reduce vehicle usage.

The Transport Manager expressed his thanks for the discussion undertaken and acknowledged comments made by Members, which would be considered further.

The Chair thanked the Transport Manager for the presentation given and work undertaken.

## **Resolved**

- (1) That the presentation on the Transport Fleet Services be noted.

- (2) That a further report be submitted to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee at the first meeting of the next Municipal Year together with a feasibility study and programme or prior to formal approval by the Cabinet.
- 

## 21 **Public Forum**

A Cradley and Wollescote resident was in attendance and requested clarification as to whether Dudley was utilising powers awarded to Local Authorities outlined within the revised Environment Act 2021; queried whether an Environmental Policy had been implemented, and the support available to Dudley residents for the replacement of efficient boilers. He also suggested that further information was needed for residents specifying materials that could be recycled and how these should be separated when collected by refuse collectors.

In responding to a question raised, Councillor C Barnett confirmed that the Local Authority had not developed an Environment Policy.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the member of the public for his attendance and the questions asked.

### **Resolved**

That the Interim Director of Public Realm be requested to arrange for a written response to be provided to the member of public.

---

## 22 **Action Tracker**

### **Resolved**

That the Action Tracker as outlined in the report, be noted.

---

## 23 **Closing remarks of the Chair**

The Chair wished everyone a happy Christmas and thanked all those in attendance for their contributions to the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm

CHAIR



---

**Meeting of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee –  
23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023**

**Joint Report of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal, Deputy  
Chief Executive, and Interim Director of Public Realm**

**Medium Term Financial Strategy**

**Purpose**

1. To consult the Scrutiny Committee on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26 as approved by Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022, with emphasis on those proposals relating to the committee's terms of reference. For this committee the relevant items are those relating to paragraphs 25 and 26, and Appendices C and D.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Committee considers and comments on the Cabinet's proposals for the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2024/25, taking into account the considerations set out in paragraph 37.

**Background**

3. The Council approved the General Fund budget for 2022/23 and the MTFS up to 2024/25 on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022. A report on the 2021/22 outturn was considered by Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 our unringfenced reserves<sup>1</sup> were 21% of net expenditure. The most recent comparable information available for other councils shows that average unringfenced reserves were 45% of net expenditure at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

---

<sup>1</sup> In order not to distort comparisons, this excludes reserves in respect of Section 31 funding of increased Business Rates Retail relief and Local Tax Income Guarantee grant.

## External Audit

4. The External Auditors (Grant Thornton) presented their 2020/21 Annual Auditor's Report to Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022. They did not identify any significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements to secure financial sustainability. However, they recommended that the Council should take urgent action to reduce the significant reliance on use of reserves in the Medium Term Financial Strategy by approving savings schemes and tight scrutiny of additional spending proposals.

## Forecast 2022/23 Position

5. The forecast General Fund position after transfers from / to earmarked reserves is as follows.

| Directorate                               | Latest Budget<br>£m | Outturn<br>£m | Variance<br>£m |
|---|---------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Chief Executive                           | (0.3)               | 0.2           | 0.5            |
| Adult Social Care                         | 112.0               | 114.3         | 2.3            |
| Children's Services                       | 79.9                | 82.9          | 3.0            |
| Health and Wellbeing                      | 3.8                 | 3.8           | -              |
| Finance and Legal                         | 5.1                 | 5.8           | 0.7            |
| Digital, Commercial and Customer Services | 5.3                 | 5.6           | 0.3            |
| Housing and Community                     | 3.0                 | 2.8           | (0.2)          |
| Public Realm                              | 54.7                | 55.9          | 1.2            |
| Regeneration and Enterprise               | 11.5                | 14.6          | 3.1            |
| Corporate, Treasury and Levies            | 9.8                 | 9.1           | (0.7)          |
| <b>Total Service Costs</b>                | <b>284.8</b>        | <b>295.0</b>  | <b>10.2</b>    |
| Total Resources                           | (287.0)             | (287.5)       | (0.5)          |
| <b>Use of Balances</b>                    | <b>(2.2)</b>        | <b>7.5</b>    | <b>9.7</b>     |

6. Further detail is provided in Appendix A. The significant variances are as follows:

- Pay – the budget assumed a 2% pay award. The agreed pay award is £1,925 on all scale points which equates to a 6.5% average increase on Dudley's mix of staffing. This is partially

offset by the reversal of the National Insurance Levy from November and the forecast net impact is a pressure of £5m on the General Fund.

- Staff vacancy savings of £3.0m.
- Energy and fuel prices – after taking account of government support the forecast net impact is £1.5m.
- Increased net costs of social care placements, both for children and adults, of £5.1m
- Trading income shortfalls, particularly in catering, car parks and leisure, of £1.6m.
- Delays in the capital programme and other cash flow factors that reduce financing costs by around £0.6m (note that this is only a short-term effect and rising interest rates are likely to create pressure in future years).
- An increase in Section 31 grant for Business Rates of £0.5m.
- Other net pressures of £0.6m.

7. Progress with delivery of specific savings within the current budget is set out in Appendix B. Performance on delivery of savings supports and is consistent with the forecast 2022/23 position outlined above and in Appendix A.
8. The majority of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) services are met from the High Needs Block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As previously reported, we (in common with many other councils) have been experiencing significant financial pressures from increasing demand for children that require additional educational support. Notwithstanding the high-level recovery plan that has been agreed, there is a forecast deficit on the DSG, mainly resulting from pressures on the High Needs Block of £24.2m at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The Government has regulated temporarily to ensure that this pressure does not impact the General Fund and we are awaiting confirmation that this will be extended beyond the current year. As such this deficit is not included in Appendix A.

9. The Department for Education (DfE) acknowledges the pressures which local systems are experiencing delivering special educational needs and disability (SEND) services. Its 'Delivering Better Value in SEND programme' is aiming to support local authorities to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people while ensuring services are sustainable. This optional programme is currently providing dedicated support and funding to 55 local authorities. Dudley has been selected to participate in the programme to work alongside Newton Europe, in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) and outcomes are expected to be known in 2023.

### General Fund Balances

10. The impact of the outturn shown above leaves the forecast main unallocated General Fund Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 as follows:

|  | <b>Original<br/>Budget<br/>£m</b> | <b>Latest<br/>Position<br/>£m</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Forecast balance 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022                       | 26.3                              | 26.3                              |
| 2021/22 outturn (as reported to June Cabinet) <sup>2</sup>         |                                   | +0.9                              |
| <b>Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022</b>                       | <b>26.3</b>                       | <b>27.2</b>                       |
| Planned addition to Reserves approved by Council March 2022        | +2.2                              | +2.2                              |
| Forecast adverse 2022/23 outturn                                   |                                   | (9.7)                             |
| <b>Forecast General Fund Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023</b> | <b>28.5</b>                       | <b>19.7</b>                       |

11. It should be noted that the Council's overall level of unringfenced reserves remains relatively low.

### Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26

12. In updating the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, Members will need to consider carefully:

- (a) the levels of Government support allocated to the Council;

<sup>2</sup> This is £0.1m better than the position reported to Cabinet in June, due to the correction of roundings.

- (b) proposals for additional spending, opportunities to free up resources (including savings), and Council Plan priorities;
- (c) the implications of spending levels in later years as part of the Council's medium term financial plan;
- (d) the views of consultees;
- (e) the external factors and risks inherent in the Strategy;
- (f) the impact on Council Tax payers;
- (g) the potential impacts on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. Members will need to have due regard to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. (Further details are set out in the Equality Impact section below).

### Government Funding

13. The Chancellor delivered the Autumn Statement on 17<sup>th</sup> November, which included the following indications for funding at the national level:
- £1.0bn of grant funding in 2023/24 and a further £1.7bn in 2024/25 to support adult social care and discharge.
  - Deferral of adult social care charging reform from October 2023 to October 2025 with the existing funding for this being retained to manage care costs.
  - Services Grant reduced by £0.2bn to reflect the fact that councils will not be required to pay the National Insurance Levy.
  - Other grants will be maintained in cash terms for two years and will be increased by 1% in real terms from 2025/26.
  - Business Rates will be frozen, but councils will be compensated through grant for the income shortfall compared with an inflationary uplift based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

14. We are awaiting full details of the proposed Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 including details of how the extra funding above will be allocated to individual councils. At this stage we have made reasonable assumptions, based on past experience, about funding allocations to Dudley.

### Council Tax

15. Accounting for Council Tax Collection Fund surpluses and deficits and associated grants is complex, particularly in terms of timing. Latest forecasts indicate a Council Tax surplus for 2022/23 of £1.0m, mainly as a result of accounts being credited for unclaimed Energy Rebate and Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claimant numbers having reduced more quickly than anticipated.
16. Looking forward and taking account of the economic climate, we are not forecasting any further reduction in CTR claimant numbers and we are allowing for a slowdown in new house building and a reduction in the collection rate from 99% to 98.5%. Forecasts have also been adjusted to reflect current numbers of households in receipt of discounts and exemptions. The position will continue to be monitored closely and any updated forecasts reported to Cabinet in February.
17. The Autumn Statement announced that Council Tax referendum limits for 2023/24 will allow a basic increase of up to 2.99% and in addition an Adult Social Care Precept of up to 2%. Forecasts in this report are based on a 4.99% Council Tax increase in 2023/24 and 2.99% for later years.

### Business Rates

18. Accounting for Business Rates Collection Fund surpluses and deficits and associated grants is complex, particularly in terms of timing. Latest forecasts indicate a Business Rates surplus for 2022/23 of £1.7m, which is due to release of funds from the appeals provision and a favourable opening balance at the start of 2022/23.

19. There is still some uncertainty concerning the impact of the 2017 revaluation on our Business Rate and grant income, in particular the impact of appeals under what was then a new “Check, Challenge, Appeal” process. We have made a provision and kept this under review in the light of actual appeals received together with external advice on potential future appeals and comparisons with other councils.
20. The next revaluation of all properties for business rates will take effect from 1 April 2023. Revaluation is done to maintain accuracy in the rating system by reflecting the changes in the property market since the last revaluation in 2017. Revaluation does not raise extra revenue nationally. This is because the government will reduce the tax rate – known as the multiplier – to offset the overall change in rateable value at the national level. Changes in rateable value at individual authority level will be offset by changes to top-up grants, tariffs and Government support to fund the transitional arrangements offered to businesses. Therefore our forecasts are based on revaluation being cost neutral.
21. Future years forecasts reflect actual levels of empty property and other reliefs, numbers of properties in rating and the ongoing impact of our review of appeals set out above. We have also adjusted forecasts of Business Rates and Section 31 Grant income to reflect the Consumer Price Index. The final budget and MTFs will include adjustments between retained business rates, business rates grant and tariff to reflect the precise impact of revaluation and inflationary uplifts (the combined value of these three lines in paragraph 30 is a reasonable forecast at this stage).

### Combined Authority

22. The West Midlands Combined Authority (CA) receives three elements of funding via the constituent authorities as follows:
  - The Transport Levy to fund its transport functions, allocated by statute on a population basis.
  - A contribution to reflect assumed real terms growth in the central share of business rates from 2016/17 onwards to fund its regeneration activities, under the terms of the Devolution Deal.

- A further contribution to fund its non-transport functions currently allocated by agreement partly on a population basis and partly by equal shares.

23. Forecasts in this report assume that the Transport Levy will be uplifted by 2% year on year.

### Base Budget Forecasts

24. The Base Budget reflects the impact on spending of forecast inflation and other anticipated changes, before directorate additional spending or savings proposals are taken into account. Details are as follows.

|                                      | <b>2023/24</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                      | <b>£m</b>      | <b>£m</b>      | <b>£m</b>      |
| 2022/23 base                         | 284.8          | 284.8          | 284.8          |
| Pay (note 1)                         | 10.8           | 13.7           | 16.8           |
| General price inflation (note 2)     | -              | 4.7            | 8.9            |
| Income uplift (note 3)               | -1.6           | -2.6           | -3.7           |
| Pensions (note 4)                    | 1.0            | 1.0            | 1.0            |
| Combined Authority (see paras 22-23) | 0.4            | 0.8            | 1.2            |
| Treasury (note 5)                    | 4.7            | 9.1            | 8.2            |
| Remove previous contingency (note 6) | -1.1           | -1.1           | -1.1           |
| Other adjustments (note 7)           | 0.8            | -0.3           | -0.6           |
| <b>Base Budget Forecast</b>          | <b>299.8</b>   | <b>310.1</b>   | <b>315.5</b>   |

Notes:

(1) This allows for an average pay increase of 6.5% in the current year, 4% increase for 2023/24 and a further 2% increase for 2024/25. The 1.25% increase in employer's National Insurance has been removed following reversal of the social care levy by Government. Note that Central Government does not control Local Government pay directly.

(2) No general provision has been made for 2023/24, with any specific inflationary issues being reflected in additional spending in paragraph 25 below.



(3) Assumes a general increase of 2% per year on fees and charges, with exceptions being reflected in savings in paragraph 26 below.

(4) A new triennial review is currently underway, and the associated risks are noted in paragraph 32 below. Combined employer’s contributions are expected to be 21.5% for 2023/24 onwards and are subject to the completion of the 2022 review. There will be no benefit from a three year upfront payment as in previous years.

(5) Impact of Capital Programme, treasury management and investment income forecasts.

(6) The existing Medium Term Financial Strategy includes a £1.1m contingency in relation to Market Sustainability. Specific additional spending has now been identified within this report so, to avoid double counting, the contingency has been removed.

(7) Fall-out of previous one-off items, transfer of Telecare and Enabling Communities to General Fund, works and Metro route enhancements, a provision for potential severance costs and other adjustments.

### Additional Spending

25. The following table outlines proposed additional directorate spending arising from a combination of demographic, inflationary and other unavoidable service pressures as well as improvements to services to residents and growth in organisational capacity. Further detail is provided in Appendix C.

|   | <b>2023/24</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | <b>£m</b>      | <b>£m</b>      | <b>£m</b>      |
| Chief Executive                           | 0.3            | 0.2            | 0.2            |
| Adult Social Care                         | 1.9            | 1.9            | 1.9            |
| Children’s Services                       | 2.9            | 1.1            | 1.1            |
| Finance and Legal Services                | 0.5            | 0.5            | 0.5            |
| Digital, Commercial and Customer Services | 1.2            | 1.5            | 1.2            |
| Regeneration and Enterprise               | 2.5            | 2.5            | 2.7            |
| Housing and Community                     | -              | -              | -              |
| Public Realm                              | 2.9            | 3.0            | 3.2            |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>12.2</b>    | <b>10.7</b>    | <b>10.8</b>    |

## Savings

26. In total the following saving (including proposed increases to service income) proposals have been identified. Details are set out in Appendix D.

|   | <b>2023/24</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | <b>£m</b>      | <b>£m</b>      | <b>£m</b>      |
| Chief Executives                          | 0.1            | 0.1            | 0.3            |
| Adult Social Care                         | 1.8            | 2.9            | 3.9            |
| Children's Services                       | 0.7            | 1.3            | 2.7            |
| Finance and Legal Services                | 0.2            | 0.3            | 0.4            |
| Health and Wellbeing                      | 0.1            | 0.1            | 0.1            |
| Digital, Commercial and Customer Services | 0.3            | 0.9            | 2.1            |
| Regeneration and Enterprise               | 1.0            | 1.5            | 2.0            |
| Housing and Community                     | 0.1            | 0.1            | 0.1            |
| Public Realm                              | 3.5            | 4.2            | 4.3            |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>7.8</b>     | <b>11.4</b>    | <b>15.9</b>    |

## Public Health

27. The 2022 Autumn Statement included provision to maintain 2021 Spending Review levels, assuming the overall increases of 2% for 2023/24 and 1.7% for 2024/25 that were announced in February 2022 when the 2022/23 Public Health Grant allocations were issued. Actual allocations for 2023/24 have not yet been announced and are expected in January / February 2023.
28. In 2022/23 there is a forecast surplus on the Public Health Grant due largely to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and post-pandemic review of service needs. This surplus will be added to the ringfenced Public Health Reserve. Programmes of work are being planned, in line with council priorities, to ensure that the best use is made of these reserves, including support for the review of Family Safeguarding provision.
29. The overall forecast position for the Public Health Grant funded budget can be summarised as follows:

|                               | 2023/24      | 2024/25      | 2025/26      |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                               | £m           | £m           | £m           |
| Base budget forecast          | 22.4         | 22.8         | 23.0         |
| One-off spending plans        | 2.3          | 0.6          | 0.3          |
| GF switch family safeguarding | 1.8          | -            | -            |
| <b>Total spend</b>            | <b>26.5</b>  | <b>23.4</b>  | <b>23.3</b>  |
| Forecast grant                | 22.4         | 22.8         | 23.0         |
| <b>Deficit</b>                | <b>(4.1)</b> | <b>(0.6)</b> | <b>(0.3)</b> |
| Reserve brought forward       | 5.2          | 1.1          | 0.5          |
| Reserve carried forward       | 1.1          | 0.5          | 0.2          |

### Medium Term Financial Strategy

30. The MTFs reflecting the revised spending proposals set out above, and forecasts of likely resource availability can be summarised as follows.

|  | 2023/24      | 2024/25      | 2025/26      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|  | £m           | £m           | £m           |
| <b>Base Budget Forecast – see para 24</b>                  | 299.8        | 310.1        | 315.5        |
| <b>Additional Spending – see para 25</b>                   | 12.2         | 10.7         | 10.8         |
| <b>Savings – see para 26</b>                               | (7.8)        | (11.4)       | (15.9)       |
| <b>Total Service Spend</b>                                 | <b>304.2</b> | <b>309.4</b> | <b>310.4</b> |
| Council Tax  | 147.2        | 152.6        | 158.1        |
| Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit) –<br>Council Tax         | 1.0          |              |              |
| Retained Business Rates                                    | 94.9         | 97.5         | 99.5         |
| Business Rate Grant  | 18.4         | 18.9         | 19.3         |
| Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit) –<br>Business Rates      | 1.7          |              |              |
| Tariff   | (6.0)        | (6.2)        | (6.3)        |
| New Homes Bonus  | 0.5          | 0.5          | 0.5          |
| Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF)                           | 16.6         | 16.6         | 16.8         |
| Social Care Grant  | 17.2         | 17.2         | 17.3         |
| Services Grant   | 3.7          | 3.7          | 3.8          |
| Assumed additional funding from<br><b>Autumn Statement</b> | 5.0          | 8.5          | 8.6          |
| Lower tier grant   | 0.4          | 0.4          | 0.4          |
| <b>Total Resources</b>                                     | <b>300.6</b> | <b>309.7</b> | <b>318.0</b> |

|                                     |             |              |              |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Deficit funded from Balances</b> | <b>3.6</b>  | <b>(0.3)</b> | <b>(7.6)</b> |
| Balances brought forward            | 19.7        | 16.1         | 16.4         |
| <b>Balances carried forward</b>     | <b>16.1</b> | <b>16.4</b>  | <b>24.0</b>  |

31. The table above assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% in 2023/24 and 2.99% each year after. Based on proposed referendum limits, this would not require a referendum in accordance with Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

### Estimates, Assumptions & Risk Analysis

32. The proposals in this report are based on a number of estimates, assumptions and professional judgements, which are subject to continuous review:
- i. that pay inflation does not vary materially from current forecasts;
  - ii. that the 2023/24 finance settlement and any specific grant income is in line with forecasts (noting in particular that there is uncertainty around the assumed allocation of additional Autumn Statement funding to Dudley);
  - iii. that the underlying impact of any local government funding reforms (if they occur during the life of this MTFS) is neutral;
  - iv. that underlying net income from Business Rates rises in line with forecast CPI, and that income and expenditure in respect of the EZ is in line with current forecasts;
  - v. that the impact of appeals against Business Rates is contained within the provisions assumed in this report;
  - vi. that the cost of Council Tax Reduction awarded will not substantially exceed forecasts, and the underlying tax base will continue to grow as anticipated;

- vii. that cash limited non-pay budgets will be managed so as to absorb any price inflation not specifically provided for in 2023/24 and any inflationary pressures in 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be no more than the amount provided for;
- viii. that income and expenditure relating to treasury management activity are in line with forecasts;
- ix. that government policy on maximum underlying Council Tax increases without the need for a referendum will be in line with the levels announced at the Autumn Statement;
- x. that the Adult Social Care market is able to absorb National Living Wage pressures within the proposed provision;
- xi. that employer contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) are in line with the indicative figures provided pending completion of the triennial review;
- xii. that any impact of social care reforms at the end of the MTFS period can be met within the available funding;
- xiii. that there will be no material losses to the Council as a result of loans, guarantees and/or grant clawback;
- xiv. that spending pressures in relation to Special Education Needs and Disability can be contained within the Dedicated Schools Grant;
- xv. that there will be no call on the Council to underwrite the commitments of the West Midlands Combined Authority beyond the contributions outlined in this report;
- xvi. that the savings proposals set out in Appendix D will be delivered as planned;
- xvii. that the new arrangements for Energy for Waste are mobilised in line with the proposed timetable;

- xviii. that there will be no other unplanned expenditure (including any resulting from demographic, legislative or case law pressures) or shortfalls in income, which cannot be met from reserves.
33. The assumptions set out above are subject to uncertainty. In the event that outcomes are more negative than the assumptions in this report, then action (to reduce levels of expenditure or increase income) may become urgent.

## Consultation

34. Thousands of people have taken part in the budget consultation over the past few years. Last year there were more than 1,000 valid responses received after an extensive promotion period through the media, social media and through the e-bulletin. Hard copies were also made available in libraries, leisure centres and at Dudley Council Plus. This year, the council will continue to consult far and wide using the extensive reach it has through a range of communications channels as well as working with partner organisations and community groups to encourage more people to have their say. The results will be reported back to Cabinet in the spring.
35. Detailed consultation will also be undertaken with groups identified as being potentially affected by the specific savings proposals, with a particular emphasis on equalities issues. Further information is set out in the Equality Impact section below.
36. A consultation document will be distributed to representatives of Non-Domestic Ratepayers setting out the provisional budget proposals in this report. Consultees will be offered the opportunity for a meeting to be held if there is sufficient interest. Further detailed information (as required in pursuance of the statutory duty to consult) will be distributed in February for comment before the Council Tax setting meeting.

37. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Scrutiny Committees will be asked to consider the issues set out in this report and any related specific issues relevant to their Council Plan and service responsibilities in the January cycle. In framing their responses, the Scrutiny Committees will be asked to consider both the spending and funding implications (including the impact on Council Tax) of any observations they may wish to make.

## **Finance**

38. This report is financial in nature and relevant information is contained within the body of the report.

## **Law**

39. The Council's budget setting process is governed by the Local Government Finance Acts 1988, 1992, and 2012 and the Local Government Act 2003.
40. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to report on the robustness of estimates made for the purpose of final budget calculations, and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves and this will be included in the final budget report.
41. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new chapter into the Local Government Finance Act 1992 making provision for Council Tax referendums to be held if an authority increases its Council Tax by an amount exceeding principles determined by the Secretary of State and agreed by the House of Commons.
42. The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 are designed to enable a local authority to compensate employees whose employment terminates on grounds of redundancy or in the interests of the efficient exercise of the authority's functions. Any local arrangements in place must also be compliant with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Equality Act 2010.

## **Risk Management**

43. The Corporate Risk Register recognises the risk that the Council may be unable to set and/or manage its budget so as to meet its statutory obligations within the resources available. At the last review point, this risk was allocated the maximum rating of 25 (Extreme), reflecting the significant overspend in the current year. The forecasts and proposals in this report improve the outlook. However, significant risks and uncertainties remain (as set out in paragraph 32). The risk rating will be reviewed in due course once the Local Government Finance Settlement has been received and budget proposals have been finalised.

## **Equality Impact**

44. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 - the general public sector equality duty - requires public authorities, including the Council, to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't;
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.
45. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
  - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
  - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.



46. The legislation states that "the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities." In practice, this means that reasonable adjustments should be made for disabled people so that they can access a service or fulfil employment duties, or perhaps a choice of an additional service for disabled people is offered as an alternative to a mainstream service.
47. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
  - tackle prejudice, and
  - promote understanding.
48. Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.
49. The duty covers the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
50. An initial assessment of the budget proposals has been made. Where proposals are likely to have a significant equality impact, they will undergo an equality impact assessment informed by consultation with the protected groups who may be adversely affected. The results of this process and any steps which emerge that might help to mitigate any potential impact of the budget proposals on the protected groups will be reported to Members so that they can pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in making decisions on the budget. In making decisions on budget proposals, Members will need to weigh the Public Sector Equality Duty against the forecast financial position, risks and uncertainties set out in this report.

51. With regard to Children and Young People, a substantial element of the proposed budget for the Children's Services Directorate will be spent on maintaining and improving services for children and young people. The expenditure of other Directorates' budgets will also have a significant impact on this group.

### **Human Resources / Organisational Development**

52. Proposals for the replacement of the obsolete e-learning system for employees are included in paragraph 25 and Appendix C.
53. Severance costs required to achieve the proposed savings, including those relating to pension strain, are dependent on the proportion of savings to be met from staffing reductions and the age and length of service of the individuals being made redundant, and therefore cannot be precisely calculated at this stage. It is considered that the provision of £1.0m during the term of the MTFs should be sufficient to cover the costs of any redundancies necessary to achieve the savings proposed in this report.

### **Commercial / Procurement**

54. Proposed savings in paragraph 26 and Appendix D include savings from a number of commercial services including Leisure Centres.

### **Environment / Climate change**

55. Proposed savings in paragraph 26 and Appendix D include new energy from waste arrangements which represent an opportunity for the Council to consider a broader Energy Strategy and deliver on net zero targets.

### **Council Priorities**

56. The aspirations set out in the Council Plan can only be delivered if the Council is financially sustainable.




.....  
**Kevin O'Keefe**  
Chief Executive



.....  
**Iain Newman**  
Director of Finance and Legal



.....  
**Balvinder Heran**  
Deputy Chief Executive



.....  
**Andy Vaughan**  
Interim Director of Public Realm

Contact Officers: Rachel Cooper  
Telephone: 01384 814844  
Email: [rachel.cooper@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.cooper@dudley.gov.uk)

## 2022/23 Forecast Outturn position

|                            | Latest Budget<br>£'m | Latest Outturn<br>£'m | Variance<br>£m | Comment variance  |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| Chief Executives           | (0.3)                | 0.2                   | 0.5            | Cost of pay award £0.2m, senior management cover £0.2m and pressures on CAPA £0.1m.   |
| Adult Social Care          | 112.0                | 114.3                 | 2.3            | Cost of pay award £1.1m and pressure on care packages £5.0m. Offset by additional client contributions (£1.8m), vacancy savings (£1.5m) and maximising use of grant (£0.5m).  |
| Children's Services        | 79.9                 | 82.9                  | 3.0            | Cost of pay award £0.7m, net CLA placement pressure £1.9m, transport £0.8m, CDT pressures £0.4m, Innovate social work teams £0.4m and legal fees £0.1m. Offset by vacancy savings (£0.9m), Staying Put grant (£0.2m) and Supporting Families (£0.2m). |
| Health and Wellbeing       | 3.8                  | 3.8                   | -              |   |
| Finance and Legal Services | 5.1                  | 5.8                   | 0.7            | Cost of pay award £0.6m, coroners £0.2m, Covid grant repayment £0.1m and care leavers support £0.1m. Offset by vacancy savings (£0.3m).   |

|   | <b>Latest Budget<br/>£'m</b> | <b>Latest Outturn<br/>£'m</b> | <b>Variance<br/>£m</b> | <b>Comment variance</b>   |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Digital, Commercial and Customer Services | 5.3                          | 5.6                           | 0.3                    | Cost of pay award £0.3m.  |
| Housing and Community                     | 3.0                          | 2.8                           | (0.2)                  | Cost of pay award £0.1m. Offset by vacancy savings and maximising use of grant (£0.3m).   |
| Public Realm                              | 54.7                         | 55.9                          | 1.2                    | Cost of pay award £0.9m, 37% increase to Street Lighting energy and other utilities £0.5m, increased fuel costs £0.4m, sickness cover for front line Waste Care operatives £0.2m. Offset by 13 month credit note for inventory correction (£0.4m), additional income (£0.3m) and vacancy savings (£0.1m). |
| Regeneration and Enterprise               | 11.5                         | 14.6                          | 3.1                    | Cost of pay award £1.0m included within the following variances: Sport and Leisure pressures of £1.2m, Catering £0.8m, Property £0.5m, Bereavement £0.3m, Halls £0.2m, Regeneration projects £0.2m. Offset by other savings (£0.1m).  |

|                            | <b>Latest Budget<br/>£'m</b> | <b>Latest Outturn<br/>£'m</b> | <b>Variance<br/>£m</b> | <b>Comment variance</b>   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Corporate & Treasury       | 9.8                          | 9.1                           | (0.7)                  | Pressures of £0.5m recharges to DSG. Offset by net saving on slippage of capital programme and borrowing costs (£0.6m), Brexit grant refund (£0.1m), Past Service pension contribution surplus (£0.3m) and other savings (£0.2m). |
| <b>Total Service Costs</b> | <b>284.8</b>                 | <b>295.0</b>                  | <b>10.2</b>            |   |
| Total Funding              | (287.0)                      | (287.5)                       | (0.5)                  | Net favourable variance due to Business Rates S31 grant and reserve (£0.5m).  |
| <b>Use of Balances</b>     | <b>(2.2)</b>                 | <b>7.5</b>                    | <b>9.7</b>             |   |

## Delivery of existing Medium Term Financial Strategy

|   | £'000 | Comment                   |
|---|-------|---------------------------|
| <b>2021/22</b>  |       |                           |
| <b>Adults</b>   |       |                           |
| Streamline the Lye Community Project  | 50    | Achieved                  |
| Cease the moving and handling team and transfer functions to Occupational Therapy   | 50    | Achieved                  |
| Maximise contributions to social care (Fairer Charging)   | 580   | Achieved                  |
| Glebelands contract remodelling.  | 30    | Achieved with alternative |
| Supported Living Package reviews in Mental Health   | 20    | Achieved                  |
| Review and update the charging policy for transport   | 160   | Achieved                  |
| Contract out aspects of the money management function   | 30    | Achieved with alternative |
| Integrated Commissioning Hub restructure - assume straight 5% saving whilst still creating Cross Directorate / Council Programme resource     | 70    | Achieved                  |
| Restructure of Mental Health Team and efficiencies from exit of Section 75 agreement.   | 250   | Achieved                  |
| Streamline of the invoice processing functions following the implementation of Successor Social Care IT system                                | 60    | Part of pressures         |
| Continuing Health Care contributions to offset general fund expenditure on complex Learning Disability care                                   | 500   | In progress               |
| Reduction of 50% of the budget for hospital avoidance placements  | 290   | Part of pressures         |
| Reduce the Residential Care Placement for older people budget by 5% to reflect the increasing shift to domiciliary care.                      | 120   | Part of pressures         |
| Residential Care Charging Fraud Initiative – tackle fraudulent asset disposal in regard to Residential Care financial assessment and charging | 200   | Achieved                  |

|   | £'000        | Comment                                |
|---|--------------|--|
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>2,410</b> |  |
|   |              |  |
| <b>Children's Services</b>  |              |  |
| Managed step down from external residential placements                              | 425          | In progress but new pressures emerging |
| Movement of external placements into internal residential placements                | 375          | In progress but new pressures emerging |
| Review of home to school transport for SEND children                                | 220          | In progress but new pressures emerging |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,020</b> |  |
|   |              |  |
| <b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>  |              |  |
| Dudley Town Hall - increase the catering and bar offer.                             | 50           | In progress                            |
| Himley – staff re-structure   | 40           | Delayed                                |
| Bereavement: stop locking cemetery gates  | 30           | Not achievable                         |
| Leisure Centres: Options Plus Discount scheme - reduce or remove certain categories | 20           | Delayed                                |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>140</b>   |  |
|   |              |  |
|   |              |  |
| <b>22/23</b>  |              |  |
| <b>Adults</b>   |              |  |
| Streamline the Lye Community Project  | 50           | Achieved                               |
| Cease the moving and handling team and transfer functions to Occupational Therapy   | 60           | Achieved                               |
| Glebelands contract remodelling.  | 30           | Achieved with alternative              |
| Review and update the charging policy for transport                                 | 60           | In progress                            |



|   | <b>£'000</b> | <b>Comment</b>            |
|---|--------------|---------------------------|
| Contract out aspects of the money management function   | 30           | Achieved with alternative |
| Integrated Commissioning Hub restructure - assume straight 5% saving whilst still creating Cross Directorate / Council Programme resource                                 | 90           | Achieved                  |
| Restructure of Mental Health Team and efficiencies from exit of Section 75 agreement.   | 150          | Achieved                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>470</b>   |                           |
| <b>Children's Services</b>  |              |                           |
| Managed step down from external residential placements  | 425          | Unachievable              |
| Movement of external placements into internal residential placements  | 375          | Unachievable              |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>800</b>   |                           |
| <b>Chief Executive</b>  |              |                           |
| Income from Boundary signs  | 40           | In progress               |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>40</b>    |                           |
| <b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>  |              |                           |
| Estate rationalisation - Regent House Dudley  | 50           | Achieved                  |
| Estate rationalisation - Cottage St Offices, Brierley Hill  | 30           | Achieved                  |
| Himley - increase in car park income generation due to recent price increase. Per Decision Sheet DRE/25/2021.   | 20           | Achieved                  |
| Halls - net increase in income from ticket sales, bar, and food as a result of increased number of shows following additional capital investment per recent Business Case | 100          | In progress               |
| Leisure Centres - increase in income as a result of increasing the price of peak usage of the leisure pool at CLC and badminton   | 100          | Achieved                  |
| Bring bars back in-house for Stourbridge Town Hall & Cornbow Hall   | 10           | In progress               |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>310</b>   |                           |

|   | £'000      | Comment  |
|---|------------|----------|
| <b>Housing and Community</b>  |            |          |
| Remove funding earmarked to match fund PSCO recruitment with Police | 250        | Achieved |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>250</b> |          |

Where savings have been partly implemented or delayed, the financial impact is reflected in the 2022/23 outturn forecast in Appendix A or is being met from directorate earmarked reserves.

## Additional Spending

| <b>Adult Social Care</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Funding for market pressures as a result of cost of care increases | UN              | 1,940                    | 1,940                    | 1,940                    |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 | <b>1,940</b>             | <b>1,940</b>             | <b>1,940</b>             |

| <b>Children's Services</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Transport pressures for special educational needs.   | UN              | 650                      | 650                      | 650                      |
| Children with Disabilities Team - Direct payments, due to demand, in year growth and inflationary pressures (national living wage) | UN              | 450                      | 450                      | 450                      |
| Looked After Children placements - net forecast pressures on external residential placements.                                      | UN              | 1,800                    | -                        | -                        |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 | <b>2,900</b>             | <b>1,100</b>             | <b>1,100</b>             |

| <b>Chief Executive</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Replacement of obsolete e-learning system for employees  | UN              | 100                      | 60                       | 60                       |
| Increase to Strategic Contingency Fund   | EM              | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |
| Contribution to ongoing Communication and Public Affairs service pressures but with reduced ongoing resource for Forging the Future now that this has been implemented | OR              | 20                       | -                        | -                        |
| Internal communications and engagement officer   | OR              | 20                       | 20                       | 20                       |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 | <b>240</b>               | <b>180</b>               | <b>180</b>               |

| <b>Finance and Legal Services</b>  | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Additional costs of Black Country Coroner and contract with Dudley Group Hospitals | UN              | 200                      | 200                      | 200                      |
| Increase in external audit fees  | UN              | 330                      | 330                      | 330                      |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 | <b>530</b>               | <b>530</b>               | <b>530</b>               |

| <b>Digital, Commercial and Customer Services</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Upgrade of Umbraco web content management system from version 7 (end of life in Sept 2023) to version 10 to remain Public Services Network (PSN) compliant.                                  | UN              | 30                       | -                        | -                        |
| Migration of Umbraco to hosting in cloud.  | OR              | -                        | 70                       | 30                       |
| Robotic Process Automation pilot study / proof of concept.   | OR              | 50                       | 40                       | 40                       |
| Relocation and reuse of 17 surplus contracted Virgin Media fibre circuits (@£4k each) because of schools not re-contracting in January 2021 to a new DGFL contract plus 1 new circuit (@£6k) | UN              | 80                       | 80                       | 80                       |
| Replacement of core data centre storage that is unsupported from 2023.   | UN              | 60                       | 60                       | 60                       |
| Upgrade or replacement of our contract management system.  | OR              | -                        | 60                       | 30                       |
| Permanent funding for Commercial Business Analyst post.  | OR              | 60                       | 60                       | 60                       |

| <b>Digital, Commercial and Customer Services</b>  | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| E5 licensing model to enable additional benefits of using the enhanced security, telephony, Business Intelligence, and data management.             | OR              | 340                      | 470                      | 490                      |
| Royal Mail price increase   | UN              | 100                      | 110                      | 120                      |
| Northgate cloud migration   | OR              | 120                      | 70                       | 70                       |
| Investment in a business intelligence tool that allows us to derive insight from data and become an organisation that makes decisions based on data | OR              | 30                       | -                        | -                        |
| Contractual inflationary pressures on Libraries   | UN              | 280                      | 350                      | 140                      |
| Additional costs arising from investment in new firewall technology   | UN              | 90                       | 90                       | 90                       |
| <b>Total</b>  |                 | <b>1,240</b>             | <b>1,460</b>             | <b>1,210</b>             |

| <b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Burial land requirements – debt charges relating prudential borrowing of £3.9m in relation to the cost of land purchase and subsequent works required. | UN              | -                        | 80                       | 150                      |
| Dudley Canal Maintenance Agreement with Dudley Canal Trust   | UN              | 10                       | 20                       | 20                       |
| Costs of more deployable CCTV cameras and reconnecting existing cameras  | EM              | 40                       | 40                       | 70                       |
| Black Country Plan   | UN              | 120                      | 130                      | 250                      |

| <b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Forecast under-achievement of school catering income based on 2022/23 activity   | UN              | 450                      | 450                      | 450                      |
| Electricity Prices Admin Buildings, Leisure Centres & Bereavement Services   | UN              | 1,000                    | 1,000                    | 1,000                    |
| Gas Prices Admin Buildings, Leisure Centres & Bereavement Services   | UN              | 300                      | 300                      | 300                      |
| Leisure Centres income under-achievement   | UN              | 300                      | 300                      | 300                      |
| Impact of National Living Wage on outsourced Cleaning Contract for Admin Buildings   | UN              | 20                       | 40                       | 60                       |
| Salary costs to retain Impact Project staff for a 3 month period prior to the commencement of the UK Shared Prosperity fund. | OR              | 160                      | -                        | -                        |
| Loss of income in relation to future regeneration proposal   | EM              | 80                       | 80                       | 80                       |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 | <b>2,480</b>             | <b>2,440</b>             | <b>2,680</b>             |

| <b>Public Realm</b>                         | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vehicle Fuel price increases                | UN              | 400                      | 400                      | 400                      |
| Electricity Prices Street lighting & Depots | UN              | 1,800                    | 1,800                    | 1,800                    |
| Pop-up Household Waste and Recycling        | EM              | 120                      | 120                      | 120                      |
| Removal of Public Health Funding            | UN              | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |
| Growth for Parks Development                | EM              | 300                      | 300                      | 300                      |
| Investment in Commercial Waste Business     | OR              | 70                       | 70                       | 70                       |
| EFW contract inflation                      | UN              | -                        | 120                      | 200                      |

| <b>Public Realm</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Waste disposal - inflation pressures across the three main disposal contracts | UN              | 60                       | 120                      | 180                      |
| <b>Total</b>  |                 | <b>2,850</b>             | <b>3,030</b>             | <b>3,170</b>             |

Key

UN – Unavoidable cost pressures

EM – Elected Member priority

OR – Officer recommendation

## Proposed Savings

| <b>Adult Social Care</b>  | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Income generation through fairer cost policy change, financial reviews and implementing charge on first day of confirmation permanent stay in a care home | 30                       | 70                       | 100                      |
| Increase in joint funding agreements  | 600                      | 1,040                    | 1,700                    |
| Transformation of service structures  | 370                      | 570                      | 650                      |
| Application of eligible grant funding to support services   | 50                       | 70                       | 70                       |
| Deploy pre-payment cards and apply new approaches to the financial oversight of Direct Payments   | 100                      | 210                      | 210                      |
| Review, assessment, and appropriate financial packages of care  | 230                      | 370                      | 460                      |
| New bed based banding framework   | 120                      | 250                      | 350                      |
| Increase charges to Private residents for Telecare services   | 130                      | 160                      | 160                      |
| Reduce the Creative Support contract by 50% when current extension ends   | 160                      | 160                      | 160                      |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,790</b>             | <b>2,900</b>             | <b>3,860</b>             |

| <b>Children's Services</b>  | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Efficiency savings - review of expenditure budgets for low/medium risk areas inclusive of car mileage (post lockdown), supplies and services, premises, and a review of terminated pension agreements. Staffing savings arising from vacancy review | 350                      | 350                      | 350                      |
| Youth Justice Service - reorganisation following changes to service delivery  | 90                       | 90                       | 90                       |



| <b>Children's Services</b>  | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Redirection of grant funding via partnership delivery to support Early Help                     | 40                       | 40                       | 40                       |
| Cessation of voluntary sector contract  | 30                       | 30                       | 30                       |
| Education Business Partnership - vacancy review   | 30                       | 30                       | 30                       |
| Families Come First - prior year growth funding released now service embedded                   | 110                      | 110                      | 110                      |
| Efficiency as a result of implementing market forces and avoiding excessive use of agency staff | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |
| Family Safeguarding   | -                        | 540                      | 2,000                    |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>750</b>               | <b>1,290</b>             | <b>2,750</b>             |

| <b>Chief Executive</b>  | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vacancy management in HR&OD   | 60                       | 90                       | 130                      |
| Remove vacant Corporate PMO & Performance Support Assistant post  | 30                       | 30                       | 30                       |
| Vacancy management and reduced hours / posts in Communication and Public Affairs team (including Graphic Design and Forging the Future support) | -                        | -                        | 160                      |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>90</b>                | <b>120</b>               | <b>320</b>               |

| <b>Digital, Commercial and Customer Services</b>                                   | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reduction in c.4 customer service advisors in DC+ and increase customer self-serve | -                        | 120                      | 470                      |
| Efficiencies resulting from new Libraries service / contract                       | -                        | 360                      | 1,080                    |
| Removal of ADSL on completion of Fibre Optic installations                         | 10                       | 10                       | 10                       |

| <b>Digital, Commercial and Customer Services</b>  | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Not recruiting a role on digital and a role in technology   | 70                       | 70                       | 70                       |
| Reduction in printing costs   | 30                       | 40                       | 50                       |
| Reduction in print and mailing costs  | 30                       | 150                      | 210                      |
| Virtualisation and consolidation of servers   | 30                       | 40                       | 50                       |
| Advancing to E5 Technology provides the most advanced functionality of Microsoft Office applications and additional security, giving an opportunity to rationalise other applications that are no longer required | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |
| Northgate cloud migration savings   | -                        | 60                       | 60                       |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>270</b>               | <b>950</b>               | <b>2,100</b>             |

| <b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>   | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cease providing support for existing (and prospective) community groups/centres  | 80                       | 80                       | 80                       |
| Review and reduction in cleaning consultancy services  | 20                       | 20                       | 20                       |
| Dell Stadium - to implement price changes from September 2022  | 30                       | 30                       | 30                       |
| Saving of annual subscription to the Black Country Consortium as a result of the winding up of the BCLEP/BCC                       | 50                       | 50                       | 50                       |
| Leisure Centres - savings  | 560                      | 560                      | 560                      |
| Phased transfer of the school meal service   | -                        | 500                      | 1,000                    |
| Himley - net increase in car park income and secondary spend due to increased visits as a result of the installation of Play Area. | 70                       | 90                       | 90                       |

| <b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>   | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Halls - net increase in income from ticket sales, bar and food as a result of increased number of shows following additional capital investment of £550k | 50                       | 110                      | 110                      |
| Estate rationalisation - Regent House Dudley   | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>960</b>               | <b>1,540</b>             | <b>2,040</b>             |

| <b>Finance and Legal</b>   | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reduced costs of self-insurance  | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |
| Vacancy management in Revenues and Benefits  | 80                       | 120                      | 210                      |
| Adjust Members' Allowance budget to reflect entitlement to no more than one responsibility allowance | 50                       | 50                       | 50                       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>230</b>               | <b>270</b>               | <b>360</b>               |

| <b>Housing and Community</b>                          | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Staff costs to be met from Homelessness grants.       | 40                       | 40                       | 40                       |
| Reduce abortive fees for Disabled Facilities Grants   | 10                       | 10                       | 10                       |
| Reduce costs incidental to Disabled Facilities Grants | 20                       | 20                       | 20                       |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>70</b>                | <b>70</b>                | <b>70</b>                |

| <b>Public Realm</b>   | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Review Depot security   | 40                       | 40                       | 40                       |
| Parking - Review of charges (free hours remain)   | 140                      | 140                      | 140                      |
| Utilise Symology as the IT system for Street Lighting and end the contract with Mayrise as from 31st March 23 | 10                       | 10                       | 10                       |
| Review of current free surface car parks  | 40                       | 90                       | 90                       |
| Street Lighting Energy- Invest to save proposal, LED lighting across the Borough                              | 140                      | 300                      | 450                      |
| Review of car parks maintenance   | -                        | 30                       | 30                       |
| Closing NBW facility and move to Lister Road - Lease expires March 24   | -                        | 30                       | 30                       |
| Efficiencies for MOT's  | 50                       | 60                       | 60                       |
| Stores review   | 170                      | 210                      | 210                      |
| Fleet review  | 150                      | 190                      | 190                      |
| Energy For Waste arrangements   | 2,000                    | 2,000                    | 2,000                    |
| Review of parking enforcement   | 100                      | 200                      | 200                      |
| Reducing Market Saturday Rounds from 2 to 1   | 10                       | 10                       | 10                       |
| Savings from not deploying waste to HWRC  | 200                      | 200                      | 200                      |
| Trade Waste - Round Optimisation  | 50                       | 50                       | 50                       |
| Growth in Commercial Waste Business Unit  | -                        | 170                      | 170                      |
| Review of Green Care working practices.   | 80                       | 80                       | 80                       |
| Savings from Directorate Restructure phase 1  | 30                       | 30                       | 30                       |
| Depot review - Blowers Green  | 10                       | 10                       | 10                       |
| Street Lighting efficiency review   | 70                       | 70                       | 70                       |

| <b>Public Realm</b>  | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Changes to standby/call out arrangements for winter gritting | 20                       | 20                       | 20                       |
| Review of HWRC operating hours                               | 210                      | 210                      | 210                      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>3,520</b>             | <b>4,150</b>             | <b>4,300</b>             |

| <b>Health and Wellbeing</b>  | <b>2023/24<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2024/25<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Continued work on Public Health Grant funded substance misuse preventative measures, to reduce use of rehabilitation beds. | 100                      | 100                      | 100                      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100</b>               | <b>100</b>               | <b>100</b>               |

# Carbon Reduction Plan Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

January 2023



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



# Content

- Climate Emergency UK Scorecard
- Progress update
- Carbon Reduction Plan
- Carbon Reduction Plan Teams and Timeline
- Links to Strategy
- Priority Actions



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



••• No Council  
is Doing  
Enough



83% Councils have declared a Climate Emergency,



Action plans and related documents after 2015 and before 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 have been used as part of the Climate Action Scorecards.



Progress has been made, but we need to do more.



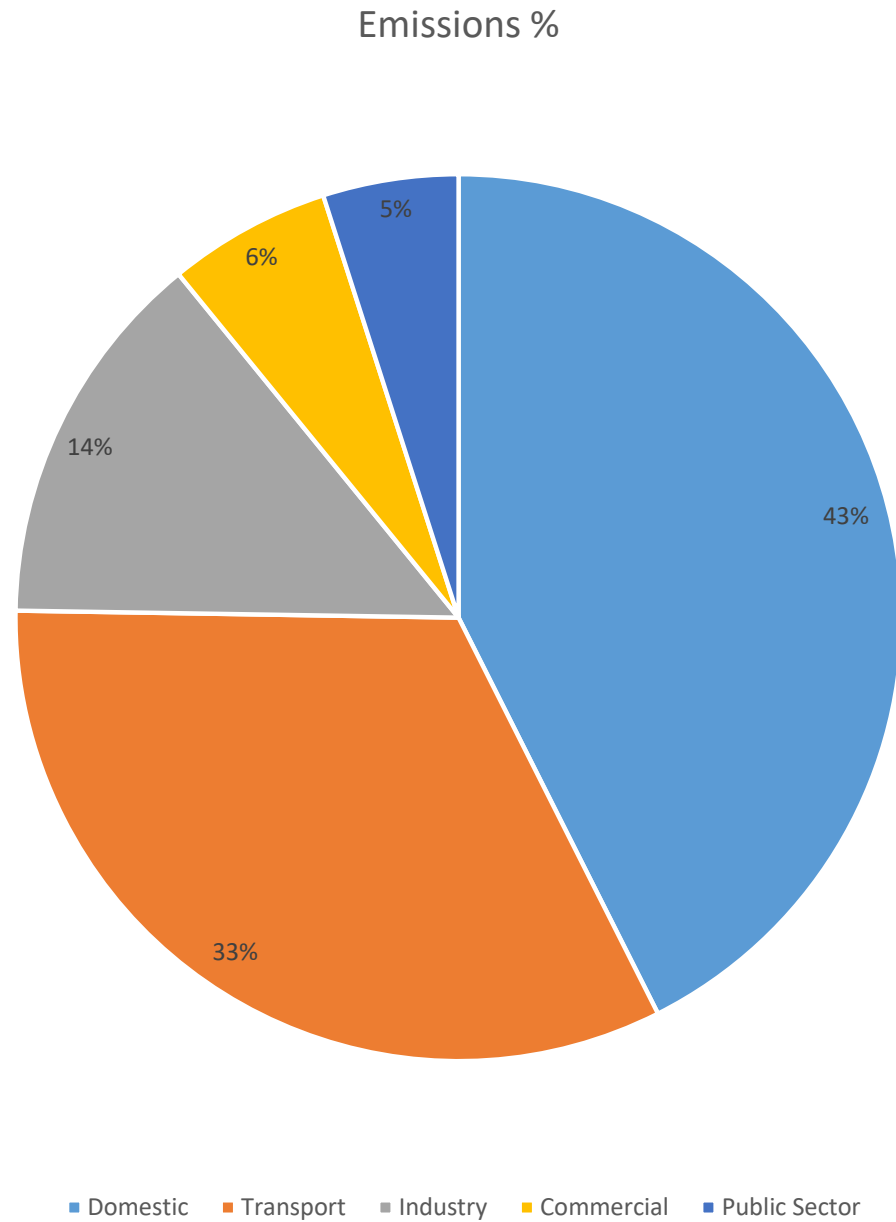


# 2021 Baseline

| Section                                       | <a href="#">Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council</a> | Average single tier council |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Total score                                   | <b>0%</b>   | <b>50%</b>                  |
| Section 1 Governance, development and funding | 0/21  | 10.3/21                     |

- CLIMATE PLAN SCORECARD
- This council's climate plans as of 20th September 2021 were assessed and scored by trained Climate Emergency UK volunteers, as part of the Council Climate Plan Scorecards project.
- [Show the full Scorecard Read more about the scoring process](#)
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council scored **zero points** in this assessment. This is because the council either didn't have any published plans at the time of the assessment, or [the plans didn't qualify](#).

# Dudley Emissions Breakdown per Sector.



# Average Mitigation Rates 13.1%

- The results in this report show that for Dudley to make its fair contribution to delivering the Paris Agreement's commitment to staying “well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C” global temperature rise, then an immediate and rapid programme of decarbonisation is needed. At 2017 CO<sub>2</sub> emission levels, Dudley will exceed the recommended budget available within 7 years from 2020. **To stay within the recommended carbon budget Dudley will, from 2020 onwards, need to achieve average mitigation rates of CO<sub>2</sub> from energy of around -13.1% per year.** This will require that Dudley rapidly transitions away from unabated fossil fuel use. For context the relative change in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy compared to a 2015 Paris Agreement reference year are shown in Table 3.

- Table 3: Percentage reduction of annual emissions for the recommended CO<sub>2</sub>-only pathway out to 2050 in relation to 2015**

- 

| Year | Reduction in Annual Emissions (based on recommended pathway) |
|------|--|
| 2020 | 23.0%  |
| 2025 | 61.9%  |
| 2030 | 81.2%  |
| 2035 | 90.7%  |
| 2040 | 95.4%  |
| 2045 | 97.7%  |
| 2050 | 98.9%  |

••• Draft  
••• Methodology  
••• – 7 Sections  
•••

Buildings and Heating

Transport

Governance and Finance

Planning

Biodiversity

Collaboration and Engagement.

# Climate Emergency UK - Scorecard

| Sections   | Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council | Average single tier council score |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Governance, development and funding</a>      | 0/21                                | 10.3/21                           |
| <a href="#">Mitigation and adaptation</a>                | 0/18                                | 9.0/18                            |
| <a href="#">Commitment and integration</a>               | 0/7                                 | 4.1/7                             |
| <a href="#">Community, engagement and communications</a> | 0/9                                 | 5.1/9                             |
| <a href="#">Measuring and setting emissions targets</a>  | 0/5                                 | 2.9/5                             |
| <a href="#">Co-benefits</a>                              | 0/4                                 | 2.2/4                             |
| <a href="#">Diversity and inclusion</a>                  | 0/5                                 | 0.9/5                             |
| <a href="#">Education, skills and training</a>           | 0/5                                 | 2.3/5                             |
| <a href="#">Ecological emergency</a>                     | 0/4                                 | 2.1/4                             |

| <b>Council name</b>   | <b>Similarity</b> | <b>Has plan</b> | <b>Carbon Neutral by</b> | <b>Declared emergency</b> |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Redditch Borough Council</u></a>               | 87%               | No              | 2050                     | Sept. 23, 2019            |
| <a href="#"><u>Bury Metropolitan Borough Council</u></a>      | 86%               | Yes             | 2038                     | July 10, 2019             |
| <a href="#"><u>Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council</u></a>  | 86%               | No              | 2030                     | Dec. 4, 2019              |
| <a href="#"><u>Greater Manchester Combined Authority</u></a>  | 86%               | No              | 2038                     | July 26, 2019             |
| <a href="#"><u>Tamworth Borough Council</u></a>               | 86%               | No              | 2050                     | Oct. 19, 2019             |
| <a href="#"><u>Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council</u></a> | 85%               | No              | 2038                     | March 28, 2019            |
| <a href="#"><u>Sheffield City Council</u></a>                 | 84%               | Yes             | 2050                     | Feb. 6, 2019              |
| <a href="#"><u>Gloucester City Council</u></a>                | 84%               | Yes             | 2030                     | July 11, 2019             |
| <a href="#"><u>Worcester City Council</u></a>                 | 83%               | No              | 2030                     | July 16, 2019             |
| <a href="#"><u>Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council</u></a>  | 83%               | No              | 2038                     | Feb. 24, 2020             |



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



# Low Carbon Electricity

- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the carbon budget related to electricity use from the National Grid in Dudley are largely dependent upon national government policy and changes to power generation across the country. **It is recommended however that Dudley promote the deployment of low carbon electricity generation within the region and where possible influence national policy on this issue.**



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



# Council Progress Update

- Focus on the corporate estate, CLS Consultancy on behalf of DMBC have carried out a baseline assessment of the corporate estate, including grey fleet for scope 1&2 emissions.
- This will provide us with a baseline 2019, aspirations for the next 5 years and ideas for decarbonising the corporate buildings.
- This work was completed in September and will feed into the wider Carbon Reduction Plan.
- An internal working group on behavioural change delivered the first meeting in August, it's important that this work feeds into the wider plan on Carbon Reduction.
- Review on commercial benefit of Solar PV, will start October 2022.
- Trajectory's to demonstrate reaching Net Zero by 2041 are currently being reviewed.



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





# Carbon Reduction Plan

- A wider Borough plan now needs to be commissioned, this plan will support the aspirations of the West Midlands and tie into future innovation and funding opportunities.
- We will start with our own operations, using the data collected during the past 3 months, this will inform the baseline and also commercial business cases.
- Each directorate will take ownership for delivery of carbon targets.
- Workstreams will define priority actions, policy, funding, capital expenditure, resource and delivery of targets and KPI's.
- A Energy/decarbonisation, Waste and Climate Emergency strategy will be commissioned, this will set out the vision, sense of direction and provide a 5 year action plan for the council, all supported by marketing and communications.
- Set up governance arrangements to monitor progress



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



# Teams and Timeline

## Buildings

- Housing Directorate
  - Property and capital projects
  - Regeneration and new builds
  - Sustainability
  - Planning Policy
  - Trading Standards
- 
- **Cross cutting: Communications**
  - **Cross cutting: Finance and Procurement**

## Transport

Transportation  
Fleet Services

## Waste & Offsetting

Waste and Fleet  
Air Quality



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



# Cabinet Report: Timeline

- | • <b>Expected Date</b> | <b>Proposed activity</b>   |
|------------------------|--|
| • October – December   | Scoping policies, programmes and projects to develop the scope for the Carbon Reduction Plan.                                    |
| • February 2023        | Tender for consultants to start the Dudley Carbon Reduction Plan   |
| • February – March     | Engagement programme with key stakeholders   |
| • April                | Cabinet Report   |
|                        | Request to consult with residents on the final carbon reduction plan   |
| • September            | Final draft of Carbon Reduction Plan incorporating engagement and consultation outcomes CRP to Cabinet and Council for approval. |



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



# Links to Strategy

- Circular Economy, links to West Midlands Industrial Symbiosis programme WMISP.
- Waste Strategy,
- Heat Decarbonisation/Energy Strategy, links to smarter cities.
- Climate Emergency Strategy, building a resilient Dudley.



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



# Priority Actions

| Priority Action  | Cost over 10 years (£) and staff requirements |
|--|---|
| <p>Buildings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use baseline data from CLS study to inform decisions on installed measures. Set up a £1M invest to save scheme.</li> <li>2. Consider opportunities for heat networks, starting with EFW, use of generated electricity and EV Fleet.</li> <li>3. Local generation, using public sector to create energy hubs</li> <li>4. Consider opportunities for demand side response, energy storage and smart/flexible technologies</li> <li>5. Heat pump installer training, links to skills gaps and green jobs.</li> <li>6. Initiate exemplar new build projects of LA owned or partially owned housing at a very high standard of energy efficiency.</li> </ol> |   |

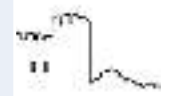
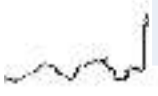


Working as One Council in  
the historic capital of the Black Country



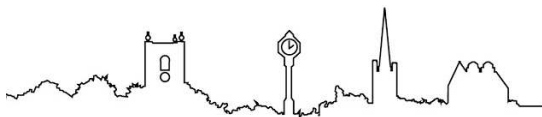
# Priority Actions

| Priority Actions   | Costs over 10 years (£) and staff requirement |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Publicity campaign</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Run a major publicity campaign covering all aspects of the Net Zero Plan.</li> <li>2. Set up Council staff champions, to be advocates on Climate Change.</li> </ol>   | <p>Up to 2 FTE<br/>£100K until 2026</p>       |
| <p><b>Planning Policy</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore opportunities to raise new build non-domestic carbon emissions standards above the National Planning Policy Framework.</li> <li>2. Initiate low carbon heat networks schemes in cost effective and heat density locations, acting alone or in a public – private partnership</li> <li>3. Introduce carbon offsetting, offset payment from developers who can't meet Net Zero targets, £300 per tonne.</li> </ol> |   |

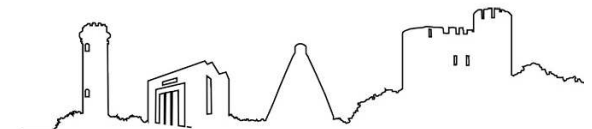


# Corporate Estates Strategy Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023



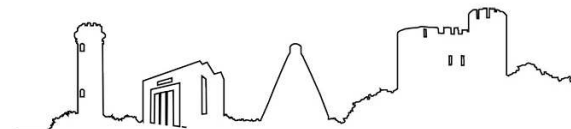
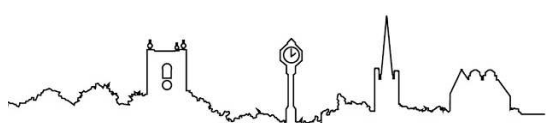
Working as One Council in  
the historic capital of the Black Country



# Existing Estate Strategy 2017 - 2022

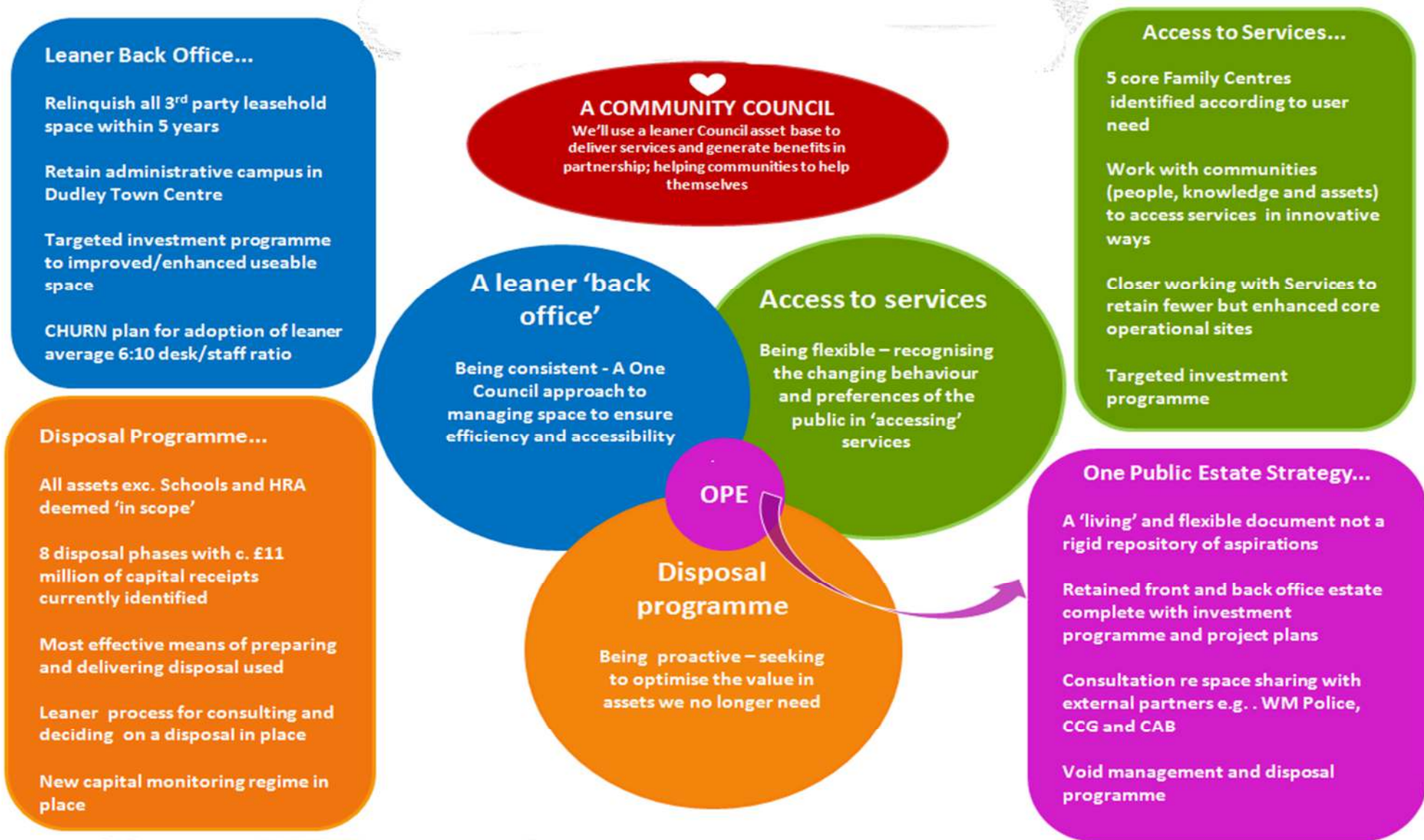
## Is based upon 4 key principles

- **A clear rationale for owning properties** - requiring a regular process of review and reporting to confirm individual properties are fit for their intended purpose.
- **Clear objectives for property** - monitoring and management of asset performance to ensure that objectives are being met and remain relevant.
- **Responsible stewardship of public assets** – ensuring the asset is managed and maintained in the most appropriate manner; ensuring the asset value is not adversely affected.
- **Clearer links between the Council's property and its borough wide objectives** – reflecting the principles of One Public Estate and Elected Members' interest in the performance of the portfolio in functional, financial and social terms.





# Existing Strategy 2017 – 2022... on a page



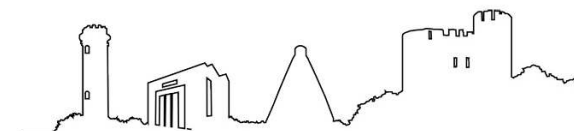
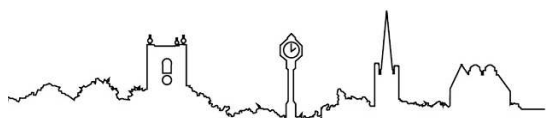
**Working as One Council in**  
 the historic capital of the Black Country



# Existing sites – summary with annual costs

Lease

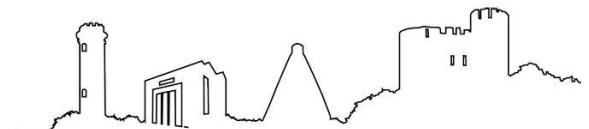
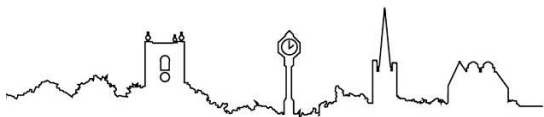
| Area                        | Annual running (e.g. gas, elec, water etc) costs (i.e. guaranteed saving on disposal) £ | Forecast Variance £ | Average R&M costs (i.e. 'opportunity' annual costs saved through disposal) £ |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------|--|
| Dudley (8 offices)          | 1,209,000   | 270,000             | 137,000  |
| Brierley Hill (2 offices)   | 926,000   | 9,000               | 9,000  |
| Stourbridge (2 offices)     | 204,000   | 48,000              | 49,000   |
| Sedgley (1 office)          | 293,000   | Nil                 | Nil  |
| Kingswinford (3 offices)    | 261,000   | 13,000              | Nil  |
| Leased in (21 varied sites) | 1,112,896   | Nil                 | 18,000   |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>£4,005,896</b>   | <b>£340,000</b>     | <b>£213,000</b>  |



# Developing the new Strategy 2023 – 2028 - phase 1

## Phase 1 – high level assessment involved

- Agreement as to which sites would be in/out of scope
- Collation of high level data e.g. running and maintenance costs
- Seeking a steer from Informal Cabinet **in October 22** on which sites/groups of sites to focus on as part of the detailed assessment
- Seeking an agreement from Informal Cabinet on assets to be retained, where possible, would be those
  - most suitable,
  - sustainable
  - and with efficient running costs
- Commissioning a parallel piece of work with external property company to ascertain potential developable value of specific assets



# Developing the new Strategy 2023 – 2028 - phase 2

## Phase 2 involves:

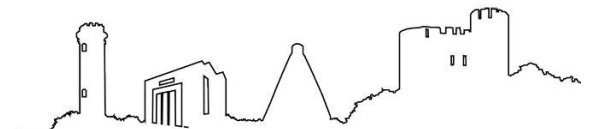
- Assessment of the findings from the external property report
- Detailed site by site assessment of those sites remaining in scope from phase 1 including:
  - Recommendation to retain/dispose
  - Rationale of recommendation e.g. assumptions, pros and cons
  - Commentary on disposal/developable value
- Recommendations on retained office need including
  - Desk numbers and occupancy proposal (based on Council workstyles and service need)
- Proposed implementation plan
- Report back to Informal Cabinet in **April 23** (plus subsequent iterations of ratifying a decision to sign off Estate Strategy)



# Developing the new Strategy 2023 – 2028 - phase 3

## Phase 3 will involve:

- Assigning a programme manager to oversee the various projects within the Implementation Plan
- Delivery of the plan where projects may include some or all of the following areas:
  - Communications with stakeholders
  - Identification and assignment of appropriate resources
  - Alterations to accommodation to be retained e.g. alterations to the offices to create the right work environment
  - Preparation for property to be disposed or developed e.g. relocation of essential equipment or utilities
  - Churn of staff and equipment from offices being disposed of to those being retained
- Delivery of the programme may take longer than the 5 year life of the strategy (2023 – 2028)



**Meeting of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee–  
23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023**

**Report of the Interim Director of Public Realm**

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

**Purpose of report**

1. On 28th September 2022 a progress report was provided to Scrutiny on the trial of the use of pesticides and maintenance of the Borough's green spaces.
2. A request was made that the Head of Street and Green Care and Amenity Services provide a full report to Scrutiny in January 2023 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.

**Recommendations**

3. It is recommended:-
  - That the contents of the report are noted.
  - That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm considers using non-glyphosate Katoun Gold/Chikara for managing grass edges & obstacles and shrub beds as part of future annual weed control programmes, equivalent to a 37% reduction in the use of glyphosate.
  - That during 2023/24, Officers undertake a review of shrub beds to determine their current condition and appropriateness.
  - That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm considers commissioning a detailed review of where foamstream could be used effectively and including a review of sweeping schedules across the Borough.

## Background

### Current Use

4. Each year, a weed control programme takes place on Council owned highways, parks and open spaces which sees treatment of 2,318,406 lin. M of edges, 43,179 obstacles and 210,976 sqm of shrub beds.
5. Similar to many other local authorities across the country, the Council uses glyphosate as part of its weed control programme. Used around the world to kill weeds and other unwanted vegetation, and as a non-selective chemical, glyphosate will kill most plants. Along with other ingredients, glyphosate-based herbicides prevent weeds from synthesizing proteins, which subsequently causes them to die.
6. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee received a report on the Council's use of glyphosate. The report outlined alternative treatments and methods that could be considered to reduce and / or eradicate the use of glyphosate for managing weed control in the Borough. These alternatives are set out in Table 1.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Katoun Gold | A contact acting total herbicide containing pelargonic acid which is derived from sustainable plant origins (Sunflower & Oilseed Rape meal). Once applied the product causes dehydration in weeds within hours, degrades rapidly and has no residual herbicide activity.  |
| Chikara     | A residual herbicide and a water dispersible granule formulation. It is a soil acting systemic, pre-emergent and early post-emergent herbicide. Chikara combines both a contact and residual mode of action to control germinating weeds on natural surfaces not intended to bear vegetation, and permeable surfaces over-lying soil. |
| Foamstream  | Made from natural plant oils and sugars. Foamstream is combined with hot water and applied to weeds using a lance. The foam insulates the hot water, ensuring the heat is not lost to the atmosphere. This ensures the heat covers the plant for long enough for it to kill or severely damage the plant.                             |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Strimming         | Use of mechanical trimmers to cut long grass around perimeters, obstacles, under trip rails and against wall lines. |
| Weed Rippers      | Mechanical pedestrian machines for physically removing weeds from hard surfaces.                                    |
| Hoe and Hand Weed | Manual techniques to remove weeds, using simple gardening tools.  |
| Flame Guns        | Use of flames to destroy vegetative matter.   |

Table 1: Alternative treatments and methods to the use of glyphosate.

## **2022 Trials**

7. During 2022, the Grounds Maintenance Team within Green Care carried out trials on alternatives to the use of glyphosate at four locations across the Borough, as agreed with the Cabinet Member and as set out in Table 2.

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Gig Mill Estate, Norton   | <i>Grass Edges, Obstacles and Perimeters:</i> controlled by trimmer's.<br><i>Shrub Beds:</i> hoe and hand-weed, with an application of mulch during the winter period.<br><i>Highways and Hard Surfaces:</i> manual control utilising weed-rippers and other manual methods.  |
| Hurst Green, Halesowen    | <i>Grass Edges, Obstacles and Perimeters:</i> application of pelargonic acid (Katoun Gold) plus Chikara, followed by application of pelargonic acid (Katoun Gold).<br><i>Shrub Beds:</i> application of pelargonic acid (Katoun Gold) plus Chikara and follow up applications of pelargonic acid (Katoun Gold).<br><i>Hard Surfaces / Highways:</i> applications using the Foamstream System and manual removal as necessary. |
| The Straits, Lower Gornal | <i>Grass Edges, Obstacles and Perimeters:</i> application of pelargonic acid (Katoun Gold).<br><i>Shrub Beds:</i> application of pelargonic acid (Katoun Gold).<br><i>Hard Surfaces / Highways:</i> application using the Foamstream system. No manual removal / interventions.   |



|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Hawbush Estate,<br>Brierley Hill | <i>Grass Edges, Obstacles and Perimeters:</i> controlled by strimmer's<br><i>Shrub Beds:</i> applications using the Foamstream system. No manual removal / interventions.<br><i>Hard Surfaces / Highways:</i> applications using the Foamstream system. No manual removal / interventions. |
|----------------------------------|--|

Table 2: Trial Areas

**Findings**

Were the trials successful?

8. Appendix 1 provides a selection of before and after photographs from each of the trial areas. As shown in Appendix 1, each trial was ultimately successful in that the technique that was applied worked and either killed or removed the weeds that were present.
9. Table 3 provides a summary review of each element used across the trial areas.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Katoun Gold | There were no difficulties in applying Katoun Gold- it is applied in the same way as the Council's current glyphosate treatment, which can lead to a negative perception from the public. Katoun Gold shows effects within a couple of hours.   |
| Chikara     | There were no difficulties in applying Chikara- it is applied in the same way as the Council's current glyphosate treatment, which can lead to a negative perception from the public. Chikara shows effects within a couple of hours.   |
| Foamstream  | Foamstream was shown to be effective in treatment of weeds, with results quickly evident on site. Using the machine is not practical on main roads or in areas with high numbers of parked cars. Considerable time ends up being lost with needing to refill the machine with water. Two operatives are required to drive and operate the machine, with the treatment taking longer to apply than a conventional spray. The machine is diesel/petrol powered and requires vehicle mounting. |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Strimming         | The use of strimmers provided an instant response and helped to provide a tidier look and feel, with their use not being weather dependant. Whilst the operation is more labour intensive, it is considered that it may be possible to use strimmers to maintain grass edges, obstacles and perimeters instead of using glyphosate. |
| Weed Rippers      | Weed rippers were used on the Gig Mill estate, Norton. Weed rippers are considered effective where weeds are already established, but effective use requires two operatives.  |
| Hoe and Hand Weed | Whilst effective, this operation is more labour intensive particularly where, for example, shrub beds are empty and would benefit from restocking.  |

Table 3: Summary of each element used.

Public Feedback

10. 359 weed related enquiries were received by Public Realm between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. Of these, 14 related to roads within areas where weed control trials were being undertaken, as set out in Table 4.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Gig Mill Estate, Norton       | 6 |
| Hurst Green, Halesowen        | 4 |
| The Straits, Lower Gornal     | 1 |
| Hawbush Estate, Brierley Hill | 3 |

Table 4: Enquiries relating to weeds per trial area

11. 16 formal complaints relating to weeds were received by Public Realm between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> November 2022. Of the complaints, 7 related to the practice of weed spraying, 5 of which were from Stourbridge, whilst the remaining 9 related to the presence of weeds or lack of maintenance across different parts of the Borough.

## **Recommendations**

12. As stated previously, each trial was ultimately successful in that the technique that was applied worked and either killed or removed the weeds that were present.
13. Whilst the Council safely uses glyphosate as part of its weed control programme, Officers are aware that there is a view that the authority should look to move away from its use.
14. Should the Council wish to reduce its use of glyphosate then it is the recommendation of Officers that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm considers the use of non-glyphosate Katoun Gold/Chikara for managing grass edges & obstacles and shrub beds. Officers consider that this option could potentially result in a 37% reduction of the use of glyphosate and could offer the most cost effective of those options trialled for weed control associated with grass edges, obstacles and shrub beds.
15. In the case of shrub beds, Officers would also recommend that a review be undertaken to determine their condition and appropriateness. In some cases, it may be possible to restock or replace a shrub bed with a more appropriate solution to reduce the likelihood and impact of weed growth.
16. It is not possible to use non-glyphosate Katoun Gold/Chikara for the management of hard surfaces and highways. Whilst the trials that have been undertaken have shown that the use of foamstream could help the Council with its weed control programme, Officers have found that it would not be possible to use it as a simple direct and wholesale replacement for the use of glyphosate at all locations.
17. Should the Council wish to reduce its use of glyphosate for the management of hard surfaces and highways then the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm could consider commissioning a more detailed review of where foamstream could be used effectively. This piece of work could also include a review of sweeping schedules across the Borough, which could help reduce the likelihood of weeds appearing as well as removing weeds that have been treated and are dead but still visible.

## Finance

18. Approximately £330,000 is spent per year on weed control across the Borough. Of this total, approximately £160,000 is spent treating 2,318,406 lin.M of grass edges and 43,179 obstacles, £70,000 is spent treating shrub beds and the final £100,000 spent treating hard surfaces.
19. A recommendation of this report is that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm considers the use of non-glyphosate Katoun Gold/Chikara for managing grass edges & obstacles and shrub beds. Whilst this could result in a 37% reduction in the use of glyphosate, Officers expect this could result in an additional cost of at least £37,000 per annum, as set out in Table 5.

| Location  | Current Cost (Glyphosate) | Future Cost (Katoun Gold) | Additional Cost |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Grass Edges (2,318,406 lin. M) & Obstacles (43,179) | £160,000                  | £177,000                  | £17,000         |
| Shrub Beds (210,976 sqm)                            | £70,000                   | £90,000                   | £20,000         |
|   |                           |                           | <b>£37,000</b>  |

Table 5: Financial impact of replacing glyphosate

20. The cost of using techniques for managing grass edges & obstacles and shrub beds and considered by Officers as alternatives are given in Tables 6 and 7 below.

| Location  | Current Cost (Glyphosate) | Future Cost (Strimming) | Additional Cost |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Grass Edges (2,318,406 lin. M) & Obstacles (43,179) | £160,000                  | £362,000                | £202,000        |
|   |                           |                         | <b>£202,000</b> |

Table 6: Financial impact of alternatives for grass edges and obstacles

| Location                 | Current Cost (Glyphosate) | Future Cost (Hoe and Hand Weed) | Additional Cost |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Shrub Beds (210,976 sqm) | £70,000                   | £326,000                        | £256,000        |
|                          |                           |                                 | <b>£256,000</b> |

Table 7: Financial impact of alternatives for shrub beds

21. As to hard surfaces, it is the view of Officers that the use of foamstream would not be a simple direct and wholesale replacement for the use of glyphosate at all locations. Whilst subject to a detailed review of where it could be used effectively, Table 8 provides indicative costs for the use of foamstream across the Borough, assuming varying weed coverage.

| Location                  | Current Cost (Glyphosate) | Future Cost (Foamstream) | Additional Cost         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hard Surfaces (20% weeds) | £100,000                  | £180,000                 | £80,000                 |
| Hard Surfaces (40% weeds) | £100,000                  | £360,000                 | £260,000                |
|                           |                           |                          | <b>£80,000-£260,000</b> |

Table 8: Financial impact of alternatives for hard surfaces

## Law

22. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.
23. Pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 a local authority has a general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do.

## **Risk Management**

24. No risks have been identified in the Council's Risk Management Framework.

## **Equality Impact**

25. None.

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

26. None.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

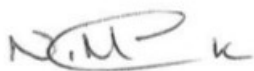
27. None.

## **Environment/Climate Change**

28. The use of non-glyphosate Katoun Gold/Chikara for managing grass edges & obstacles and shrub beds could result in a 37% reduction in the use of glyphosate.

## **Council Priorities and Projects**

29. It is considered that this report has a positive benefit on helping Dudley be a safe and healthy borough, in making it an affordable and attractive place to live with a green network of high-quality parks, waterways and nature reserves that are valued by local people and visitors.



## **pp Interim Director of Public Realm**

Report Author: Edward Bradford  
Telephone: 01384 815550  
Email: [edward.bradford@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:edward.bradford@dudley.gov.uk)

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Selection of before and after photographs

# Gig Mill Estate - Norton

Caslon Corner – Before with Weeds



After Hand Weed



Before with Weeds



After Hand Weed



Manor Lane – With Weeds



Manor Lane – After Weed Ripper



**Manor Lane – After Hand Weed**



**Caslon Crescent – Before Treatment**



**During Treatment**



**Corner of Westwood Ave & Rosemary Lane – Two Days after Treatment**



**The Broadway – Moss at the Back of Flats - Two Days after Treatment**



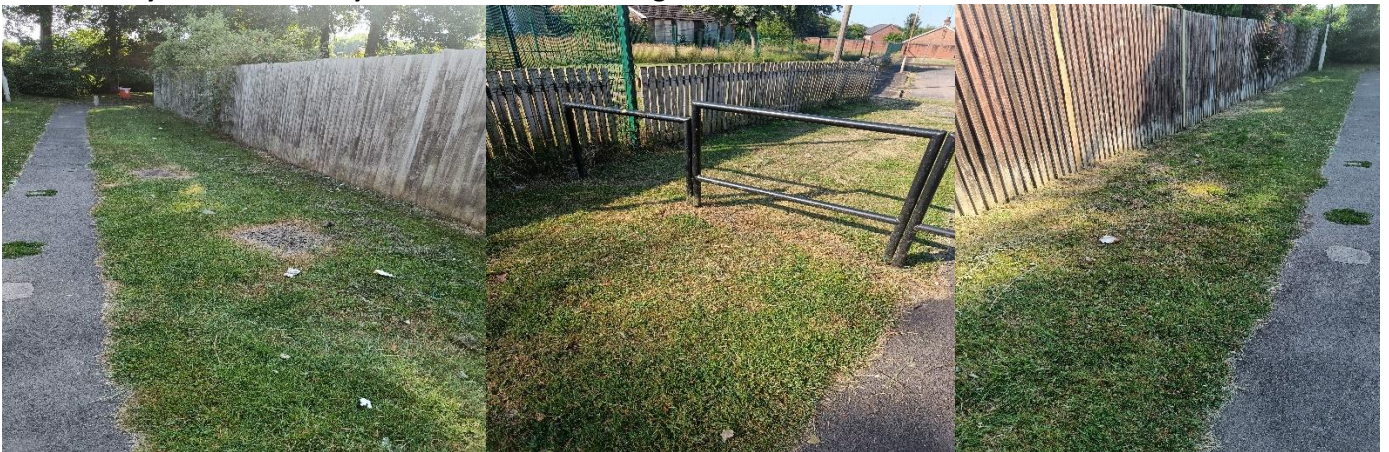


Hawbush Estate – Brierley Hill

Hawbush Estate



Lower Valley Road – Bushways Close - After Strimming



# Hurst Green – Halesowen

**Mayfield Road – Before**



**During**



**2 days after application**



**Lilac Way – Just After Application**



**Hurst Green Open Space – 24Hrs after Treatment**



**Fairfield Park – 24Hrs after Treatment**



# The Straits – Lower Gornal

Browning Road - May

Before



After



Browning Road – June (3 weeks after May treatment)



Tennyson Open Space – May - Before



After – 1Hr



After – 24Hrs



## Heath Lane - Stourbridge

(Weedripper Work)

**Before**



**After (approx. 1hr work)**



**Action Tracker – Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

| Subject (Date of Meeting)  | Recommendation/action   | Responsible Officer/Area   | Status/Notes   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Work Programme for the Committee for 2022/23 (20<sup>th</sup> June, 2022)</p> | <p>That the following specific elements be included in the Work Programme for detailed scrutiny whilst considering the relevant topic items:-</p> <p>Cycling Provision in Dudley</p> <p>Transport and Housing performance indicators related to Climate Change and Environment</p> <p>Stourbridge Household Waste Recycling</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> | <p>Chair/Vice Chair/<br/>Democratic Services/<br/>Responsible Officers</p> | <p>To be considered by the Chair and Vice Chair for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme</p> |

|  |  |                                 |   |
|--|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Carbon Reduction Plan (28 <sup>th</sup> September, 2022) | Minute No. 11 (2) Provide an update regarding the data usage from 2019, concerning eleven corporate buildings, which will be fed through to the Wider Carbon Reduction Plan. | Interim Lead for Climate Change | Briefing note circulated 15/12/2022 – <b>Completed</b>          |
|  | Minute No. 11 (3) Provide feedback of the work undertaken of the working group established to drive forward behavioural change.  | Interim Lead for Climate Change | Responses circulated by G Scholes 14/12/2022 – <b>Completed</b> |
|  | Minute No. 11 (5) Submit a full plan to the Scrutiny Committee once the necessary information has been obtained and the plan formulated.                                     | Interim Lead for Climate Change | Response to be provided and Circulated - <b>Ongoing</b>         |

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Air Quality Monitoring in the Borough (28 <sup>th</sup> September, 2022)             | Minute No. 12 (2) That the Pollution Control Officer be requested to consider the accessibility issues highlighted for various devices and platforms regarding the GMIS system.  | Pollution Control Officer   | For Information  |
|  | Minute No. 12 (3) That the Head of Environment and Trading Standards be requested to provide further data after the end of the year, specifically regarding the Wordsley area.   | The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards            | To provide further information once available and circulated for information                     |
| Climate Change and Environment Engagement Feedback (21 <sup>st</sup> December, 2022) | Minute No. 19 (2) That the Head of Communications and Public Affairs and Interim Director of Public Realm be requested to provide a breakdown of location and the properties in which the respondents to the survey resided, for information.                        | Director of Public Realm/Head of Communication and Public Affairs | To provide further information once available and circulated for information                     |
|  | Minute No. 19 (3) That the Cabinet Member for Waste Management and Climate Change be requested 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. | Director of Public Realm/Cabinet Member                           | To be considered by Cabinet Member and response to be provided and Circulated - <b>Completed</b> |

|  |   |                          |   |
|--|---|--------------------------|---|
|  | Minute No. 19 (4) That a report on progress made be submitted to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee in six months.   | Director of Public Realm | Include the report to the annual scrutiny programme for consideration at the Scrutiny Committee July 2023   |
| Transport Fleet Services (21 <sup>st</sup> December, 2022) | Minute No. 20 (2) That a further report be submitted to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee at the first meeting of the next Municipal Year together with a feasibility study and programme or prior to formal approval by the Cabinet. | Transport Manager        | Include the report to the annual scrutiny programme for consideration at the Scrutiny Committee July 2023 (Transport Manager to advise if formal approval was required by Cabinet prior to July 2023) |



## Future Business – Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee

| <b>Date of Meeting</b>       | <b>Work Programme</b>   | <b>Responsible Officer/Area</b> | <b>Notes</b> |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 27 <sup>th</sup> March, 2023 | Update report on Climate Change Strategy, Action Plan and performance management arrangements | Interim Lead for Climate Change | Report       |