

Minutes of the Cabinet

**Thursday, 22nd September, 2022 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

Present:

Cabinet Members

Councillor S Clark (Deputy Leader in the Chair)
Councillors I Bevan, R Buttery, R Clinton, S Keasey, N Neale, S Phipps,
S Saleem and L Taylor-Childs.

Opposition Group Members Nominated to attend the Cabinet

Councillors S Ali, A Aston, C Barnett, C Bayton, K Casey, J Foster and S Ridney

Observer

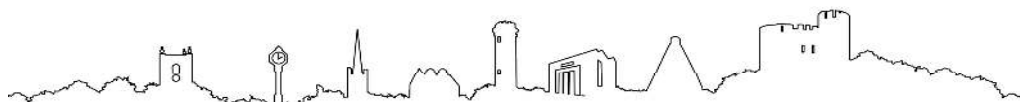
Councillor R Collins

Officers

K O'Keefe (Chief Executive), H Martin (Director of Regeneration and Enterprise),
I Newman (Director of Finance and Legal), M Abuaffan (Acting Director of Public
Health and Wellbeing) and S Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager).

37 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Harley,
P Lowe, P Sahota and Q Zada.



38 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

39 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th August, 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

40 **Capital Programme Monitoring**

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal was submitted on progress with the implementation of the Capital Programme.

Councillor C Bayton referred to Leisure Centres, including the need to embed the installation of solar panels in new buildings at the early stage of planning. The Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Human Resources (Councillor S Keasey) referred to a review of the commercial aspects of the operation of leisure centres. The Director of Regeneration and Enterprise noted that the installation of solar panels at Duncan Edwards Leisure Centre was a future option.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Councillor R Buttery) responded to comments made by Councillor S Ridney concerning secondary school places in the North of the Borough in the context of major developments in the area.

In response to a question from Councillor C Barnett concerning the Round Oak Steelworks Memorial, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise (Councillor S Phipps) confirmed that work in connection with the project had been undertaken by the Borough Artist. The Cabinet Member also undertook to check on the consultation that had taken place with local history groups.

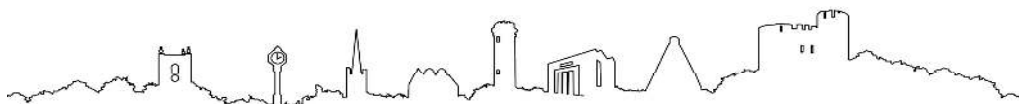


Councillor J Foster commented on paragraph 9 of the report (Pensnett Play Area) and queried who had made the proposal referred to in that paragraph and to whom the proposal had been made. The Deputy Leader (Councillor S Clark) undertook to check with the Deputy Chief Executive on the suggested lack of contact with the Chair of the Community Association and consultation with Ward Members. In response to a question from Councillor C Barnett, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm (Councillor S Saleem) clarified that the proposals involved the development of two play areas in Pensnett.

Resolved

That the Council be recommended:

- (1) That progress with the 2022/23 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted.
- (2) That the budget of £4.6m currently included for the Lister Road development project be removed from the Capital Programme subject to a revised proposal in the future as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
- (3) That, subject to the funding bid being successful, a budget for the Lye Library improvement project up to the value of the grant be approved and included in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.
- (4) That the extra expenditure of £15,000 on the Round Oak Steelworks Memorial project be approved and included in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.
- (5) That the additional projects, summing to £250,000 for private sector housing stock, be approved and included in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 7 of the report.
- (6) That a revised total budget of £49,000 be included in the Capital Programme to create a play area at Pensnett Coppice as set out in paragraph 8 of report.



- (7) That part of the Lister Road substation project budget be used to fund gas enhancement works at Lister Road as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.

41 **2022/2023 Forecast General Fund Revenue Outturn**

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal was submitted on the forecast General Fund Revenue Outturn for 2022/23 and the implications for the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal (Councillor S Clark) referred to the significant budget pressures outlined in the report, particularly those associated with the pay award and energy prices. Measures were outlined in the report for further work to be undertaken to reduce the overspend in 2022/23 and to identify savings for future years. A letter had been sent to the Prime Minister concerning the Council's financial position, a copy of which could be shared.

In response to a question from Councillor C Bayton, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise (Councillor S Phipps) indicated that fees and charges relating to leisure centres would be subject to the usual annual review. Councillor C Bayton also referred to the potential impact of the temporary closure of Council offices at 3/5 St James's Road and 4 Ednam Road, Dudley. Assurances were given that measures were in place to manage the closures without disruption to services. Significant work was ongoing in connection with the Corporate Estates Strategy.

Councillor S Ali expressed concerns regarding the financial position outlined in the report and the consequences for future financial years. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal (Councillor S Clark) indicated that further detailed reports would be submitted to meetings of the Cabinet as the financial year progressed.

Resolved

That the forecast revenue outturn position for 2022/23 and the effect on balances at 31st March 2023 be noted.

42 Wind Down of New Heritage Regeneration Ltd

A report of the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise was submitted on the financial performance of New Heritage Regeneration Ltd (NHRL) and proposals for the wind-down of the company.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That NHRL be wound down as of 31st December, 2022.
- (3) That the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise be authorised to work with the Chief Executive Officer of NHRL to conclude the negotiations with Homes England on the property portfolio.
- (4) That, on the assumption the property portfolio is retained, the income stream be ringfenced for regeneration purposes (including to cover the costs of the transferred staff salaries and pension strain).
- (5) That the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise be authorised to conclude the necessary Human Resources and staffing issues.

43 Nature Conservation Sites

A report of the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise was submitted on the proposed designation of Nature Conservation Sites in the Borough.

Resolved

Clockfields (Culverhouse Drive, Stourbridge):

- (1) That the designation of a new Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) at Culverhouse Drive be approved.



Land at Uffmoor Lane, Halesowen:

- (2) That the extension and upgrade of a section of the Stour Valley SLINC and Stream at Tack Farm SLINC to a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), to be known as Stour Valley SINC (Tack Farm), be approved.
- (3) That the designation of Tack Farm Hedges SLINC be approved.

Land at Pedmore Lane, Stourbridge:

- (4) That the extension of the Pedmore Lane SLINC be approved.

44 **Questions to the Leader under Cabinet Procedure Rule 2.5**

No questions had been submitted under this agenda item.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL