

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

Present:

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

Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain led the Council in prayer.

58 Apologies for Absence

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

59 Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

60 **Mayor’s Announcements**

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

61 **Suspension of Council Procedure Rules**

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



Resolved

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

62 **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

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

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

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

The motion was then debated by the Council.

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

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

The motion was put to the vote and it was

Resolved

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

Revenue Budget Allocations 2023/24

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

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

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

(e) Dudley Council Tax for each Valuation Band

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

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

(f) Precepts for each Valuation Band

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

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

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

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

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

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

For (40)

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

Abstain (19)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved

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

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

MAYOR

