

**Minutes of the proceedings of the Council
Monday, 19th April, 2021 at 6.00pm
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Present:

Councillor D Stanley (Mayor)
Councillor H Bills (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors A Ahmed, K Ahmed, R Ahmed, S Ali, A Aston, M Aston, J Baines, N Barlow, C Barnett, C Bayton, I Bevan, R Body, P Bradley, R Burstons, R Buttery, K Casey, B Challenor, S Clark, B Cotterill, J Cowell, S Craigie, T Crumpton, P Drake, C Elcock, M Evans, A Finch, K Finch, J Foster, B Gentle, A Goddard, S Greenaway, M Hanif, D Harley, P Harley, A Hopwood, Z Islam, L Johnson, L Jones, S Keasey, I Kettle, E Lawrence, P Lee, A Lees, K Lewis, P Lowe, J Martin, P Miller, A Millward, S Mughal, C Neale, G Partridge, C Perks, S Ridney, J Roberts, M Rogers, P Sahota, K Shakespeare, A Taylor, E Taylor, L Taylor, D Tyler, D Vickers, V Wale, S Waltho, T Westwood and Q Zada together with the Chief Executive and other Officers

Prayers

The Mayor led the Council in prayer.

56 **His Royal Highness (HRH) Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh**

The Mayor referred, in sympathetic terms, to the recent death of HRH Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh. The Council observed a period of silence as a mark of respect to his memory.

57 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor S Phipps.

58 **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.

Councillors M Evans and D Vickers - Any matters relating to the Castle Hill development and all references to Dudley Zoo - Non-pecuniary interests as members of Dudley and West Midlands Zoological Society Limited.

Councillors L Jones and A Taylor - West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) – Transport Delivery Committee - Non-pecuniary interests as Members of the Committee.

Councillor R Burston - Any references to West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment by the WMCA.

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

Councillor Q Zada – Any references to Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust or health issues generally - Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment as Deputy Chief Operating Officer at Russells Hall Hospital (Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust).

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

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

Councillor S Waltho - Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as a nominated Member of the Council of Governors on the Dudley Group of Hospitals.

Councillor C Neale - Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interest in view of his wife's employment at Russells Hall Hospital.

Councillor D Tyler - Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - Non-pecuniary interest as Chair of Trustees at Dudley MIND.

Councillor K Casey – Any references to West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) – Pecuniary interest in any matters directly affecting his employment by the WMCA.

Councillor Z Islam – Matters relating to Children’s Services – Non-pecuniary interest due to his daughter’s employment with Fort Advocacy Services Ltd. who were occasionally commissioned by Children’s Services to provide independent advocacy services and her involvement with the Dudley Advocacy Charity as an independent parent advocate.

Councillor S Ali – Minutes of the Cabinet - Non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee for the Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor J Cowell – Minutes of the Place Scrutiny Committee (Homelessness Prevention and Response) – Non-pecuniary interest as a Council tenant and in view of her previous engagement with the Homelessness Prevention Team.

Councillor J Cowell – Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee (Housing Maintenance System) – Non-pecuniary interest as a Council tenant.

59 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings held on 22nd February and 1st March, 2021 be approved as correct records and signed.

60 **Mayor’s Announcements**

- (a) Balvinder Heran (Deputy Chief Executive), Luisa Fulci (Director of Digital, Customer and Commercial Services) and Heidi Marsh-Geyton (Acting Director of Public Realm)

The Mayor welcomed the above Officers and the Council wished them every success in their new roles.

- (b) Programme of Events

The Mayor reported on the following events and further information would be circulated to Members:-

- 23rd April, 2021 – St George’s Day Children’s Dragon Trail.
- 17th May, 2021 – International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.
- 24th to 27th June, 2021 – Drive-in Cinema at Himley Hall, incorporating Under 5’s Day and Armed Forces Day.

(c) Councillors Not Seeking Re-election

The Mayor reported that Councillors J Baines, B Cotterill, L Jones, C Perks, D Tyler and V Wale were not seeking re-election on 6th May, 2021. Reference was also made to former Councillors J Cooper and N Richards who had also recently resigned from the Council. The Mayor placed on record his appreciation of the dedicated public service given by those Members.

The Council paid tributes and expressed best wishes for the future. The Mayor also extended best wishes to candidates who were seeking election at the municipal elections on 6th May, 2021.

61 **Capital Programme Monitoring**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor D Vickers and

Resolved

- (1) That progress with the 2020/21 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A, be noted.
- (2) That the Brierley Hill and Himley Road Homes for Sale projects be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.
- (3) That the Highways Maintenance allocation be noted and that the associated expenditure, together with expenditure to be funded from any subsequent annual allocations, be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report.
- (4) That those elements of the Brierley Hill Future High Streets project not already included in the Capital Programme be approved and included in the Capital Programme and that the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise and the Director of Housing and Community Services, as appropriate, be authorised to enter into all legal and funding agreements to ensure successful delivery of the project, as set out in paragraph 8 of the report.
- (5) That subject to completion of the necessary funding agreement, the expenditure on the Dudley Interchange Highway Improvements be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.

- (6) That the Very Light Rail (VLR) Halt project be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report.
 - (7) That the Public Sector Decarbonisation project be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 11 of the report.
 - (8) That the recommendations of the Cabinet in respect of the Towns Fund be approved and that the associated capital spend be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report.
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62 **Regeneration of Portersfield Site**

A report of the Cabinet was submitted.

It was moved by Councillor P Harley, seconded by Councillor D Vickers and

Resolved

- (1) That detailed Ground Investigation Surveys across the Portersfield site be funded at a cost of £105,000.
 - (2) That a budget of £150,000 per annum for each of the next two years, to fund the Council's project management of the development and delivery of the Portersfield project, be approved.
 - (3) That the preparation and submission of a joint planning application with Avenbury (Dudley) Ltd for the development of the Portersfield site, at a cost of £420,000, be approved.
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63 **Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2020/21**

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

It was moved by Councillor C Barnett, seconded by Councillor A Millward and

Resolved

That the annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2020/21 be received and noted.

64 **Notices of Motion**

The Mayor reported that, following consultation with the Group Leaders, it had been agreed that the notices of motion previously submitted would be deferred for future consideration.

65 **Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11**

Written Questions

No written questions had been submitted in advance.

Verbal Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members and Chairs

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Services (Councillor L Taylor) would provide a written response to Councillor A Aston regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the Borough including the question as to whether consideration could be given to adopting an Article 4 Direction in some areas of the Borough to remove permitted development rights for the creation of a HMO.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to a question from Councillor B Challenor concerning building on local green belt land, confirming his support and commitment to a 'brownfield first' policy.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) and the Cabinet Member for Public Realm responded to a series of questions from Councillors K Casey, E Taylor, S Ridney, D Tyler, P Sahota, Q Zada and A Millward concerning the cessation of the agreement with Wolverhampton City Council for the use of the Anchor Lane amenity site by residents of the Dudley Borough.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor P Harley) responded to a question from Councillor S Keasey concerning his support to working with appropriate groups to prevent the use of conversion therapy practices in Dudley.

The Cabinet Member for Public Realm (Councillor K Shakespeare) responded to a question from Councillor J Martin concerning developing a strategy for the use of modern technology systems as part of the waste strategy in the future to enable residents to use neighbouring authorities' civic amenity sites.

At this juncture the Mayor announced that the one-hour period allowed for questions had now expired and any Members indicating to ask a question could either submit it in writing or raise the question at the next appropriate meeting.

66 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business for consideration at this meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.26 pm

MAYOR



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