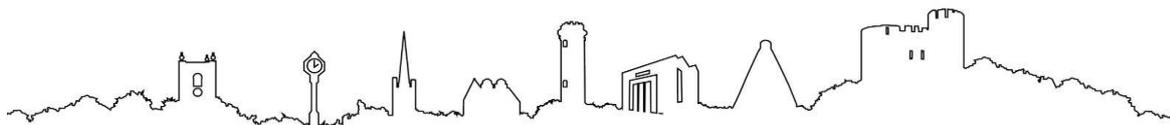




Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report 2021/2022



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





**Chair - Councillor
Paul Bradley**

Annual report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Bryn Challenor**

2021/22 Muncipal Year

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters relating to Children's and Young People Services in the Directorate of Children's Services and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Children and Young People's Plan Update

A report was submitted to Members on the Improvement Plan and an update on the progress made against the Improvement Plan and the Department for Education Strategic (DfE) Targets. Members considered details of the improvement to the quality of practice, the progress against Ofsted areas of priority and the progress of Partners in Practice (South Tyneside) support to the Fostering Service.

Outcomes:

- *Members supported the proposal to provide Corporate Leaders with an understanding of the Improvement Plan and Dfe strategic priorities, in order to drive changes to support improvement within Corporate Directorates, and Strategic Partnership Boards, and support the development of frontline practice and engagement with children and young people.*
- *The Service Director for Children's Social Care was requested to provide Members with details of Social Worker caseloads and details of the structure of the Service.*

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme.

Throughout the year Members considered reports on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme as follows:

A progress report on delivering the Written Statement of Action Improvements in response to the Office in Standards Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection findings together with the wider improvements and transformation that Children's Services were and had implemented across the Dudley SEND Partnership.

A progress update on key areas of operational performance and elements of the wider improvements and transformation being implemented across the Dudley SEND Partnership.

The key areas of operational performance progress and elements of the wider improvements and transformation that was being implemented across the Dudley SEND Partnership.

Outcomes:

- *The Service Director Early Help/Schools SEND was requested to provide Members with details of the Not in Education, Employment or Training data within the Borough.*
- *There was a request that a report be submitted on the results of the self-assessment of the Local Area System.*
- *The Service Director for Education, SEND and Family Solutions agreed to provide further information to Members on the number of Education and Health Care Plans requested by schools compared to those requested by a parent and the number of cases where the Council has followed the Proceed to Name process over the past 12 months.*
- *It was agreed that the Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions would submit to a future meeting of the Committee the findings on the evaluation of the SEND Toolkit.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports.

Members considered reports on quarters 1 and 2 Corporate Quarterly Performance for Children's Services during the periods 1st April to 30th June 2021, 1st July to 30th September 2021 and 1st October to 31st December 2021.

Outcomes:

- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to provide a verbal update to Members following the review of Phase 1 implementation of Successor LCS, on the functionalities of the new system.*
- *It was agreed that the Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions would submit the Strategic Plan evidencing that the Service was working closely with partners to improve inclusion and all families formed part of the Strategic Plan.*
- *The Service Director Early Help/Schools and SEND agreed to provide Members with the data in relation to the number of grandparents who cared for children not accessing Nursery provision.*

Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report (1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021)

A report was considered by the Committee providing supplementary information with regard to issues raised from the Children's Services Annual Complaints, Comments and Compliments report.

Outcome:

- *The Service Director of Children's Social Care was requested to circulate the quarterly audit summary report, detailing complaints that had been audited to Committee Members.*

Children and Young People's Improvement Plan: Update Report

Throughout the 2021/22 municipal year Members received updates in relation to the progress made against the Improvement Plan and the Department for Education (DfE) Strategic Targets; the progress in the improvement to quality practice; the progress against Ofsted areas for priority and the progress of partners in practice, South Tyneside, support to the fostering service.

Outcomes:

- *Members supported the proposal to provide Corporate Leaders with an understanding of the Improvement Plan and DfE strategic priorities, in order to drive changes to support improvement within Corporate Directorates and Strategic Partnership Boards and support the development of frontline practice and engagement with children and young people.*
- *The Service Director of Children's Social Care agreed to circulate to Members an updated list of the number of Social Workers still not booked on the SMART Planning Training.*

Local Government Association Scrutiny Training

C Burgess and D Madden outlined an offer from the Local Government Association (LGA) to support the effective scrutiny of Children's Services. Detailed presentation slides were circulated covering the purpose and role of scrutiny, the statutory context for the scrutiny of Children's Services, corporate parenting and the features of effective scrutiny.

Outcome:

- *The proposed approach was supported by Members and it was agreed that further training and development activity would be pursued by the LGA in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Council Officers.*

Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2020/21

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services on the Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2020/21. The report reflected the work carried out under the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements between April 2020 and March 2021.

Outcome:

- *It was agreed that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group would be established, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, to consider the detailed issues raised by the Committee concerning the demographic and health inequalities section of the report*

Annual Independent Reviewing Officer Report

Members considered a report on both Child Protection and Children in Care activity within the service.

Outcome:

- *Members agreed that the report would be used to inform strategic planning for the Dudley children and young people in care population and that the report would be used to hold the Safeguarding Service to account in the ongoing delivery of services to children and young people in care.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

A joint report was submitted of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal and the Director of Children's Services on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2024/25, with emphasis on the proposals relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference, specifically Children's Services.

Outcome:

- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the Edge of Care intensive work to support children at risk of moving into care, to remain with their families.*

Education Report

The Committee considered a report on key areas of operational performance, progress and elements of the wider improvements and transformation being implemented within the Education Service.

Outcome:

- *The Head of Education Outcomes and Inclusion was requested to submit details to Members of the number of young people who were EHE, who had proceeded to secure a University place.*

Home to School Transport

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services detailing changes proposed to the Dudley Metropolitan Council's approach to the Policy on the provision of Home to School Transport to children and young people with a specific focus on: -

- Increasing the independence of pupils and students.
- Ensuring that the transport support provided for eligible children and young people of compulsory school age, between the ages of 5 and 16 years of age

by the Council's Policy would not exceed the statutory minimum, rationalising the Council's Home to School Transport Appeals process.

- Achieving efficiency savings and the use of available resources.

Outcomes:

- *The Committee as part of the Consultation process recommended Home to School Transport Appeals should continue to be determined by Elected Members.*
- *Members were requested to advise the Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions of any further community groups or stakeholders that should be consulted in relation to the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy.*
- *The Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions was requested to advise Members of: -*
 - (a) The five Wards identified in the Equality Impact Assessment, as having higher impact for young people and their families as a result of the changes in Policy.*
 - (b) The rationale and further details for the preferred options for the appeals process, as contained in the report submitted.*
 - (c) Further details in relation to how long former Officers should be retired prior to dealing with appeals.*

Early Help in Dudley

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services on the progress of Dudley's Early Help partnership arrangements focusing specifically on Early Help delivery throughout 2021. The report included work encompassing the launch of the refreshed Early Help Strategy 2021/2024, early help demand, delivery and the impact of support across the partnership throughout the previous 12 months of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Outcomes:

- *The delivery of the Early Help Strategy 2021-2024 with particular reference to the five pillars of delivery contained in the report submitted was supported by Members.*
- *The re-calibration of the contribution of the partnership to early help in the Borough was supported by Members.*

Feedback from the Joint Children and Young People and Health and Adult Social Care Services Scrutiny Committee Working Group.

Members having considered a presentation on Children and Young People Inequalities suggested actions the following actions.

Outcomes:

- *It was agreed that the Consultant in Public Health, Head of Service for Healthy Communities, Places and Workforce be requested to present the highlights of the 0 to 19 Needs Assessment to a future meeting of the joint Working Group.*
- *The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing was requested to submit reports on obesity and child poverty to a future meeting of the Joint Working Group with an emphasis on the suggestions by Members during the meeting, and to provide details of partners to be interviewed.*

Other Items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2021/22 Municipal Year

Scrutiny Committee

- Children and Young People's Plan
- Social Care Improvement Updates
- Dudley Virtual School Annual Report

Ongoing Items to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

Items that have been considered by the Committee but are incomplete requiring further scrutiny and inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2022/23 are listed below: -

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan
Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports
Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report
Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report
Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report
Social Care Improvement Updates
Medium Term Financial Strategy
Education Report
Early Help
The Virtual School
Early Help in Dudley
Dudley Virtual School Annual Report

Items suggested for inclusion in the work programme for 2022/23: -

Edge of Care Report
The highlights of the 0 to 19 Needs Assessment to a future meeting of the joint Working Group should it be re-appointed.
Obesity and child poverty to a future meeting of the Joint Working Group should it be re-appointed with an emphasis on the suggestions by Members during the Joint Working Group meeting, and to provide details of partners to be interviewed.



Chair -
Councillor
Angus Lees

Annual report of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee



Vice-Chair -
Councillor Ed
Lawrence

2021/22 Municipal Year

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Directorates of Chief Executive's, Digital, Commercial and Customer Services, Finance and Legal and Regeneration and Enterprise and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Minutes

At the meeting on 24th November, 2021, the Committee expressed the view that the names of Members that raised questions and made comments would be documented in the minutes going forward. This was agreed and adopted for all Minutes going forward.

At the meeting on 19th January, 2022, a request was made that consideration be given to the inclusion of a standing item in relation to outstanding actions on future Scrutiny Committee agendas from the next Municipal Year.

Scrutiny review of the Black Country Draft Plan

The Committee was given the task of undertaking an in-depth scrutiny review of the Black Country Draft Plan. Specially convened meetings were arranged, and broadcasted live on the internet and recorded for viewing on the Council's You Tube channel, with detailed information on the decisions made by the Cabinet on 5th July, 2021 concerning the approval of the Draft Black Country Plan consultation document; the public consultation on the document in line with the legal requirements and in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2020; specific environmental and infrastructure requirements as a result of the proposed allocations in the Draft Black Country Plan where relevant officers attended and responded to comments and questions; and an overview of marketing and communication for the consultation. Members of the Public attended the meetings and had the opportunity to make comments and raise questions during Public Forum. Concerns and issues were raised during consideration of this item in relation to the proposed use of green spaces and green belt sites in Dudley Borough.

Outcome of the meeting held on 15th July, 2021:

- That the Cabinet be recommended to consider an extension of the consultation period by up to four weeks. This recommendation was considered by the Cabinet on 21st July, 2021, where it was resolved that the Council continue with the eight-week consultation on the Black Country Plan and that authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise, to take any necessary and consequential action.*

- *That, following consultation with the Chair, additional meetings of the Committee be arranged, alongside the consultation exercise, for an in-depth scrutiny review to be undertaken in connection with the Draft Black Country Plan.*
- *That Members of the Committee be requested to email Democratic Services on specific areas they wished to explore as part of the scrutiny review.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 1st September, 2021:

- *Officers were requested to liaise with the Communications and Public Affairs Team to make improvements to the website as a matter of urgency. The Council was also asked to provide further assistance in cases where people were struggling to use the website by providing additional printed copies of the comment forms as required.*
- *The Communications Plan to be reviewed with Officers.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 6th October, 2021:

- *That consideration be given to including a review of the Council's consultation processes in the future scrutiny programme, following consultation with the Communications and Public Affairs and Public Health teams.*
- *That a recommendation be formulated requesting the Director of Public Health to undertake an evaluation of localised data for Dudley on growth population, and if there are additional resource implications, consideration be given to the procurement of the work as needed. During the Scrutiny Committee on 24th November, 2021, the Committee was provided with a response to the recommendation in that the Council's Public Health Intelligence Team confirmed that they did not have the relevant skills or experience to advise on the datasets used to determine population growth and recommended a referral to Office of National Statistics. The work needed would be externally commissioned and require someone with demography experience, potentially from an academic background and would take time to both commission and undertake. This work would not be completed in the timeframe to assist with the Plan.*
- *The Head of Communications and Public Affairs was requested to provide a breakdown to Members of the costs associated with the delivery of a letter to each household throughout the Black Country*
- *The Planning Manager be requested to provide a breakdown on the costs associated with the management of the Black Country Plan website.*
- *The Planning Manager be requested to provide a written response to comments raised in relation to DUH038 (Boundary by Heath Road, Copse Road and Lea Bank Road - Dudley Wood).*

Outcome of the meeting held on 2nd March, 2022:

- *Following consideration of a report submitted on the outcomes of the consultation, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise be recommended to consider the removal of all green spaces and green belt sites in Dudley Borough as identified within the Black Country Plan.*

Independent Remuneration Panel

The Committee considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel established in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Leader and Opposition Group Leader attended the meeting to provide any submissions or respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee if necessary.

Outcomes:

- *That the comments made by the Committee in response to the Independent Remuneration Panel report on the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme be noted.*
- *The Scrutiny Committee recommended that the review of Members' Allowances be considered upon the average figure based on the three other neighbouring Black Country Councils, namely, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.*
- *That the Director of Finance and Legal consider the detailed implications of the comments and observations made by the Scrutiny Committee and, following consultation with both Group Leaders, the final report was considered by full Council on 12th July, 2021. The report and recommendations were approved and adopted.*

Proposed Improvement to the Council House Campus in Dudley

The Committee considered the proposal to refurbish the Council House Campus, addressing long standing maintenance problems, increase desk capacity and provide an improved working environment. Arising from concerns by the Committee, the Head of Corporate Landlord Services was requested to prioritise works in relation to the steps outside the Council Chamber and disabled facilities at the Council House.

Outcomes of the meeting held on 9th June, 2021:

- *A further update report to be provided in six months' time, outlining confirmed proposals, incorporating suggestions and comments made by the Committee if deemed appropriate, and proposed financial and energy savings. The Committee considered this report on 16th March, 2022.*
- *The proposal to identify and make available finances that enables the implementation of the work outlined within the report in accordance with the indicative timelines, was supported.*

- *The Head of Corporate Landlord Services was requested to provide an overview of the financial impact to the Council, including borrowing and Council Tax percentages, should the proposed refurbishment be approved.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee received corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the year. Specific officers attended meetings to provide a summary and respond to questions asked by the Committee. In view of the number of items to be considered, the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report in relation to Quarter 2 and 3 was e-mailed to the Committee for comments. Additional information in relation to COVID-19 in Dudley was appended to all reports submitted.

Outcomes:

- *Detailed scrutiny has been undertaken of specific performance indicators that are reported as 'below target' with responses provided by relevant Directorates.*
- *Performance Reports and Scorecards be circulated to each Scrutiny Committee in accordance with their remit for information and consideration.*

West Midlands Local Transport Plan – Green Paper Engagement and Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme

Representatives from Transport for West Midlands attended the Committee to consult on the development of a new West Midlands Local Transport Plan including the publication of the transport Green Paper, proposed West Midlands Leaders summit and COP26 prospectus and the wider programme for developing and adopting a new Local Transport Plan.

In consultation with the Chair of the Committee, it was agreed that a report be submitted to the Future Council Scrutiny Committee on 16th March, 2022 to provide Members with an update on the development of a new West Midlands Local Transport Plan and in particular the engagement on the new Local Transport Plan Core Strategy, which commenced on 7th February 2022.

Outcomes of the meeting held on 8th September, 2021:

- *That the progress on development of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the publication of the West Midlands Transport Green Paper, be noted.*
- *That the planned approach for engaging with Leaders on key transport challenges through a transport 'summit' proposed to be held in September, be noted.*
- *That the high-level programme timescales for developing the core Local Transport Plan strategy through to Summer 2022, be noted.*

- *That the plan to publish a West Midlands Transport Plan Prospectus to tie into wider West Midlands representation at COP 26 in Glasgow in November, be noted.*
- *A briefing note on the work undertaken in relation to electric vehicle charging be provided by the Transport of West Midlands to the Committee for information.*
- *A further update report to be provided where appropriate. The Committee considered this report on 16th March, 2022.*

Outcomes of the meeting held on 16th March, 2022:

- *That the progress on development of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the publication of the West Midlands LTP Core Strategy, be noted.*
- *That the approach for developing the Local Transport Plan Big Moves and Area Strategies through to Summer 2022, be noted.*

Public Forum

The Committee heard representations from a member of the public in relation to the tram and railway network, in particular the concerns raised that the West Midlands Combined Authority had requested Transport for West Midlands conduct a review into the delivery of new extensions and operation of metro services. In responding, the Committee agreed to formulate the recommendation outlined below.

At the meeting on 2nd March, 2022, the Committee heard further representations from the member of the public in relation to the proposed tram track near the Merry Hill Shopping Centre alongside the canal which would be positioned through the grass embankment. In responding, the Committee supported the request for the relocation of the section mentioned to be placed on stilts above the canal waterway near to the embankment and formulated the recommendation outlined below.

Outcomes:

- *The Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee of the West Midlands Combined Authority be requested to consider recommending the appointment of an Independent expert to undertake the review into the delivery of new extensions and operation of metro services, and not representatives from the Transport for West Midlands, with suitable involvement of the general public.*
- *That a letter be written to Midlands Metro Alliance, on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, for considering the comments made in relation to the relocation of the section of the tram track near the Merry Hill Shopping Centre.*
- *That representatives of the Transport for West Midlands be requested to investigate whether an assessment had been undertaken in relation to the*

landscape and requested that consideration be given to the re-planting of the trees, if this had not already been reflected in the assessment.

Regenerating Dudley

The Committee received a presentation on the major regeneration projects in Dudley.

Outcomes:

- *That updates on the Portersfield Development be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for information prior to any final decision being made.*
- *The Head of Projects and Delivery be requested to circulate the briefing paper and any relevant information in relation to the appointment of the Property Consultant for the Portersfield Development for information.*

Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension Update

The Committee received a presentation on progress with the delivery of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension.

Outcomes:

- *The Head of Projects and Delivery was requested to provide a breakdown of the budget utilised to date and progress of the business case once available and the costs undertaken in the feasibility appraisal in relation to the Art Track: Metro Art Programme.*

Black Country Consortium Limited – Current Business Activity

Following a request by the Committee in June, 2021, the Chief Executive of the Black Country Consortium Limited attended the Committee to provide a detailed presentation on the business activity undertaken by the Consortium through partnership working across the economic development landscape operating an evidence-based approach to support the ambitions of Local Authorities.

Outcomes:

- *That the presentation on the business activity undertaken by the Black Country Consortium Ltd, and comments made at the meeting, be noted.*
- *The Chief Executive of the Black Country Consortium Ltd be requested to provide statistical information on the average duration of new start-ups in Dudley for circulation to Members of the Committee.*
- *The Chief Executive of the Black Country Consortium Ltd be requested to circulate the Action Plan in relation to the Black Country Economy of*

Together Policy and the dashboard outlining information on apprenticeships.

Three Year Council Plan 2022-25

The Committee received a report on the new three-year Council Plan setting out Dudley's direction of travel for the next three years to reflect the work that would be undertaken to support the seven aspirations of the Borough Vision 2030.

Outcomes:

- *That the new three-year Council Plan setting out Dudley's direction of travel for the next three years to reflect the work that would be undertaken to support the seven aspirations of the Borough Vision 2030, be noted.*
- *The Deputy Chief Executive be requested to consider the future reporting of achievements and progress made in relation to the existing Council Plan 2019-2022.*

West Midlands Combined Authority Investment – Black Country Review

The Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) attended the Committee to give a detailed presentation on the recommendations following a scrutiny review undertaken to understand whether the regional economic recovery proposals, which the West Midlands Combined Authority were supporting and enabling, were meeting the needs that had been identified within the Black Country sub-region.

Outcomes:

- *That the presentation and report submitted in relation to the West Midlands Combined Authority Investment – Black Country Review, together with comments made at the meeting, be noted.*
- *That the Chief Executive – West Midlands Combined Authority be requested to provide a breakdown of figures specifically relating to Dudley on the number of residents in employment required in order to reach the England-wide average rate of 75%, and to clarify whether the England-wide average employment rate of 75% involved all people of working age together with those in full-time education and training.*
- *That Democratic Services be requested to draft a letter on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities outlining Members comments in relation to the Levelling-Up Agenda and circulate to Members of the Committee for approval.*

West Midlands Combined Authority Investment – Housing and Regeneration Investments in Dudley

The Strategic Planning Manager was in attendance and provided an overview of the briefing paper submitted through presentation slides on the overview of the strong joint working and co-investment that has and is taking place between the West Midlands Combined Authority and Dudley MBC on housing and regeneration policy, business cases, investment and delivery matters.

Outcomes:

- *That the presentation on the overview of the strong joint working and co-investment that has and is taking place between the West Midlands Combined Authority and Dudley MBC on housing and regeneration policy, business cases, investment and delivery matters, be noted.*
- *That the Strategic Planning Manager be requested to provide further information on the number of affordable homes secured by the West Midlands Combined Authority; specific units on the Music Institute identified as an approved investment from the West Midlands Combined Authority Devolved Housing and Land Funds in Dudley and the proposed actions and timescales in relation to addressing the need for affordable housing within Dudley and the wider region.*

Other Items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2021/22 Municipal Year

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Future Council Programme Update
- Digital and Information Technology Services Update
- West Midlands Combined Authority – Housing and Regeneration Investments in Dudley

Briefing Notes considered by the Committee through e-mail

- Annual Town Centres Health Check Survey
- Customer Services Update
- Benefit Services Annual Report

Ongoing Scrutiny Items

Items that have been considered by the Committee but are incomplete requiring further scrutiny and inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2022/23 are listed below.

- Regenerating Dudley – Portersfield Development

Item suggested for inclusion in the work programme for 2022/23:-

- Review of Consultation Processes
- Equality and Diversity



**Chair -
Councillor
Matt Rogers**

Annual report of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

2021/22 Municipal Year



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Chris Neale**

Our role involves the scrutiny of local health and associated services, as a contribution to the Council's community leadership role and in line with our statutory duties. This includes the scrutiny of local NHS bodies and matters falling within the portfolio responsibility of appropriate Cabinet Members.

Local and National Covid-19 Developments and Local Outbreak Management Plan

Throughout the municipal year Members received verbal and written updates on the current and national position on the Covid-19 Pandemic and Local Outbreak Management Plan. The updates provided detailed information on infection rates within the Borough and regionally, and the impact of the pandemic on healthcare services, as well as outlining the steps being taken to contain the outbreaks and address inequalities impacted by Covid-19, particularly within the most vulnerable communities.

Outcomes:

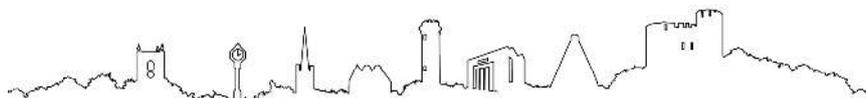
- *The Committee received and noted the information provided and supported the updates to the Local Outbreak Management Plan, based around the Covid-19 Contain Framework, incorporating local lessons learned and achievements.*

Update on emergency and urgent care activity in Dudley and in particular the demand on emergency services

The Committee received and noted the joint report of the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, West Midlands Ambulance Service University Foundation Trust and Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust on the increased activity, demand and pressures on urgent and emergency care and the collaborative partnership working established to ensure the provision of safe emergency care.

Mental Health in the Community and Call-in of the Cabinet Decision – Mental Health in the Community

A report on the future vision of the community outreach services pertaining to mental health social care interventions was considered by the Committee. The report was considered by the Cabinet and the decision was subsequently called-in at the request of five Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.



Outcomes:

- *The Cabinet was recommended to formally review the structure for adult mental health services in Dudley Council and the feedback from the consultation process at its December meeting.*
- *The Committee further recommended that no changes to mental health services in Dudley were made until further discussion by the Cabinet in the December meeting and the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee thereafter.*

(The report to Cabinet was subsequently deferred from the meeting in December 2021. The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, the Shadow Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care and the Leader of the Council, were all consulted and were of the view that further time to analyse the consultation responses was required before consideration by the Cabinet.)

- *The Director of Adult Social Care was also requested to arrange Mental Health First Aid training for all Elected Members.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Reporting

The Committee received the Corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the year. The Director of Adult Social Care and the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing attended meetings to provide a summary and respond to questions asked by the Committee.

Outcomes:

- *The Acting Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards circulated a breakdown of the hygiene ratings to Members of the Scrutiny Committee.*
- *That a report in respect of food standards and initiatives be submitted to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.*

Health and Wellbeing Board Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the Health and Wellbeing Board and the programme and timetable for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy review and refresh, together with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) refresh. The key focus for the Health and Wellbeing Board was outlined, namely inequalities, and the steps and measures being taken to understand the extent and address the issue across the Borough were discussed.

Outcomes:

- *That the update on the Health and Wellbeing Board and the direction of travel, be noted.*
- *That the timescales for the review and refresh of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, be noted.*
- *That the re-establishment of the Executive Board of the Health and Wellbeing Board, be noted.*
- *That the establishment of the Living Safely with Covid-19 Inequalities Steering Group, be noted.*

Annual Adult Safeguarding Report and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS)

The Committee received a report of the Director of Adult Social Care on the Annual Adult Safeguarding Report and the progress in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. The Committee challenged the data received and asked questions in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on Safeguarding in the Dudley Borough and the preparations for the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards. The Committee received regular updates from the Director of Adult Social Care on the status of Adult Social Care, including the impact to people who use care and support and Carers, as well as any impact to service operations during the pandemic in relation to capacity and the quality of the care market.

Children and Young People and Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee – Joint Working Group

During consideration of the Dudley Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2020/21, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee formulated a recommendation for a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to be established, to consider in more depth the issues raised concerning the demographic and health inequalities referred to in the report. Similar concerns and issues were raised during consideration of the Annual Adult Safeguarding Report and Deprivation of Liberty Standards. Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee were therefore invited to attend the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and received a presentation on children and young people inequalities, outlining the proportion of all children living in income deprived families, as well as mapping data detailing deprivation, child poverty, family income, education, training and health inequalities within the Borough.

Outcomes:

- *That the information contained in the Children and Young People Inequalities presentation, and as reported at the meeting, be noted.*
- *That subject to the reappointment of the Joint Working Group, the Consultant in Public Health, Head of Service for Healthy Communities, Places and Workforce be requested to present the highlights of the 0 to 19 Needs Assessment to a future meeting.*

- *That the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing be requested to submit two separate reports on obesity and child poverty to a future meeting of the Joint Working Group to include the actions proposed to deal with Borough wide child poverty; data in relation to the National Childhood Measurement Programme; details of the work conducted with partners and peers in order to reduce child poverty and obesity; data in terms of numbers of those suffering child poverty and obesity and definitions of those in poverty and apprenticeships; evidence of work conducted in other Authorities that had a positive impact on reducing child poverty and identifying partners to be interviewed by the Joint Working Group.*

Health and Wellbeing Board – Inequalities for 2022/23

The Committee considered a report on the key priorities for the Dudley Health and Wellbeing Board in regard to inequalities across the borough. The report included information on the direction of travel, a system wide approach to addressing the priorities, the national context and the need for a high-level inequalities ‘dashboard’ across the local system to be agreed with partners.

The Committee raised various concerns, including the lack of baseline data prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, monitoring and performance information and the need for clear, realistic and measurable targets. Reference was made to improving engagement with Councillors, the voluntary sector and other partners, whilst recognising ongoing budget constraints. The Committee asked that further urgent work be carried out to plan, structure and set timescales for the various complex projects together with the development of more detailed, specific and outcome focussed action plans.

Outcomes:

- *That a further report be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in three months’ time.*

High Oak Surgery

The Committee considered a report from Dudley Integrated Health and Care Trust concerning High Oak Surgery, Pensnett. This included details of engagement activities that had already taken place together with planned future engagement with the registered population, wider community and other stakeholders. The Committee undertook a detailed discussion concerning the potential options for High Oak Surgery, including views from all three Brockmoor and Pensnett Ward Councillors.

Outcomes:

- *That a dedicated scrutiny exercise be undertaken in respect of High Oak Surgery in the new municipal year.*

Other items considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2021/22 Municipal Year

- NHS Quality Accounts
- Safer Dudley – Strategy to prevent violence in Dudley
- Black Country and West Birmingham Community Diagnostic Hubs
- Update on Breast Screening Services for Dudley, Wolverhampton and South West Staffordshire.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Director of Public Health Annual Report on Inclusion – Circulated to Members of the Committee for information only

Future items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items to be considered at the Scrutiny Committee on 20th April 2022:-

- NHS Quality Accounts
- Dental Checks in Dudley
- Quarter 3 Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

Items to be rolled forward and included in the work programme for 2022/23:-

- Dudley Integrated Care Provider – Development, Regulatory Approval and Contract Transfer
- Impact on Telecare Digital Strategy
- Report in respect of food standards and initiatives (as requested at the meeting on 9th September, 2021)
- Healthcare Access and Integration in Dudley/Access to Primary Care (June/July 2022)
- Mental Health in the Community
- Health and Wellbeing Board – Inequalities for 2022/23
- High Oak Surgery (dedicated scrutiny exercise)



**Chair -
Councillor I Bevan**

Annual Report of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

2021/2022 Muncipal Year



**Vice-Chair –
Councillor
S Henley**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Directorates of Housing and Community Services and Public Realm and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Housing White Paper (Tenants Charter)

The Committee considered a report on the Housing White Paper bringing a change in the relationship between the Regulator of Social Housing, social landlords and tenants which would develop into important legislation to incorporate the learning from the Grenfell fire tragedy and the last five years of regulatory approach.

Outcome:

- *That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee once the White Paper moved through Parliament into legislation.*

Overview of Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) and focus on Community Cohesion Strategic Group

The Committee considered a report on 10th June, 2021 on the work carried out by the Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) and to provide details in respect of the work of the Community Cohesion Strategic Group.

Following the meeting on 10th June, 2021, the Committee also considered a report on the progress in delivering the key priorities to tackle the most challenging issues for maintaining and improving community safety in Dudley.

Outcome of the meeting held on 10th June, 2021:

- *That the Director of Housing and Community Services submit a further report to the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 27th January, 2022.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Community Services be requested to circulate the e-Learning package to all Members of the Council on Modern Slavery.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 27th January, 2022:

- *That the information contained in the report and the comments made at the meeting, be noted.*

Public Forum - Housing Board/Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association

The Committee heard representations from a member of the public concerning the Housing Board/Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA) and tenant participation.

Outcome:

- *That the Deputy Chief Executive provide a detailed report on the Housing Board/Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA) and tenant participation to a future meeting of the Committee.*

Use of Glyphosate for Weed Control

The Committee considered a report on the position regarding Dudley Council's use of Glyphosate and to outline alternative treatments and methods that could be considered to reduce and/or eradicate its application for managing weed control in the Borough.

Outcomes:

- *That the information contained in the report, presentation, and as presented verbally at the meeting on alternative methods of weed control, subject to the approval of funding, be noted.*
- *That the Acting Head of Street and Green Care be requested to circulate risk assessments to Members of the Committee on the use of Glyphosate.*
- *That the issues raised during the discussion be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Public Realm for consideration.*

West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) – Green Paper Engagement and LLP Programme

West Midlands Local Transport Plan – Engagement on the Draft West Midlands Local Transport Plan 5 Core Strategy

Representatives from Transport for West Midlands provided an overview on the development of a new West Midlands Local Transport Plan including the publication of the transport Green Paper, proposed West Midlands Leaders' summit and COP26 prospectus, together with the wider programme for developing and adopting a new Local Transport Plan.

In consultation with the Chair, it was agreed that a report be submitted to the Committee on 30th March, 2022 to provide an update on the development of a new West Midlands Local Transport Plan and in particular the engagement on the new Local Transport Plan Core Strategy, which commenced on 7th February 2022.

Outcome of the meeting held on 22nd September, 2021:

- *That the progress on development of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the publication of the West Midlands Transport Green Paper, be noted.*
- *That the planned approach for engaging with Leaders on key transport challenges through a transport 'summit' proposed to be held in September, be noted.*
- *That the high-level programme timescales for developing the core Local Transport Plan strategy through to Summer 2022, be noted.*
- *That the plan to publish a West Midlands Transport Plan Prospectus to tie into wider West Midlands representation at COP 26 in Glasgow in November, be noted.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 30th March, 2022:

- *That the progress on development of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the publication of the West Midlands Transport LTP Core Strategy, be noted.*
- *That the views of Members on the proposed vision and approach for the new West Midlands LTP and what it means for Dudley, be noted.*
- *That the approach for developing the Local Transport Plan Big Moves and Area Strategies through to Summer 2022, be noted.*

Future Council Programme – Directorates of Housing and Community Services and Public Realm

The Committee received a presentation by the Deputy Chief Executive updating Members on the Future Council Improvement Programme specifically relating to the Directorates of Housing and Community Services and Public Realm.

Outcome:

- *That the information presented be noted and that a progress report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.*

Highway Maintenance (to include information on potholes/defects and general condition of roads)

The Committee considered a report on the condition of Dudley Council's Highway Network and outlining the maintenance processes in place, including details about reported defects (potholes) across the Borough.

Outcomes:

- *That the Council's efforts to manage the Highway Network in line with the principles and policies required to comply with the new Code of Practice "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure" be supported.*
- *That the issues with regard to the condition of local roads be noted and the measures and resources currently allocated to further clear the backlog of repairs be supported.*
- *That the Acting Director of Public Realm be requested to circulate information on the number of claims that had been received in relation to personal injury/damage to vehicles to all Members of the Committee.*
- *That the Acting Director of Public Realm be requested to circulate information on the use of slurry seals on pavements to all Members of the Committee.*

Establishment of a Scrutiny Working Group

At its meeting on 18th November, 2021, the Committee approved the establishment of a Scrutiny Working Group comprising all Members of the Committee to consider items within the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committee.

Review of Housing Finance

The Committee considered a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive (in relation to Housing and Community Services) and the Director of Finance and Legal on the Review of Housing Finance.

Outcome:

- *That the proposals considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 28th October, 2021, relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022/23 onwards, be endorsed.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on Dudley's response to climate change and future plans.*

- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to provide a written response to all Members of the Committee on Dudley's response to tackling housing conditions in the Borough in line with the climate requirements.*
- *That the Finance Manager be requested to provide a written response to the Member of the Committee on specific information relating to the Beacon Rise development.*
- *That the Finance Manager be requested to circulate further information on other local authorities' debt levels to all Members of the Committee.*
- *That the Finance Manager be requested to arrange a site visit to allow Members of the Committee to view new housing opportunities and what the properties offered residents in the Borough.*
- *That the Finance Manager be requested to provide a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the impact of the restructure of Housing Services and the service improvements achieved.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to present the outcomes of ARK Consultancy exercise to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 27th January, 2022.*

Minutes

Councillor P Sahota commented on the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November, 2021. Additional comments were incorporated in the minutes of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee held on 27th January, 2022.

Outcome:

- *That the Acting Director of Public Realm be requested to provide information on the roads that had benefited from repairs over the last three years.*

Priorities for the Directorate of Housing and Community Services

The Committee considered information on the UK Government White Paper on Social Housing published in November, 2020, a report from ARK Consultancy on the outcomes from a tenants survey and the priority recommendations from an experienced housing consultant, Duncan Forbes, who was commissioned in October 2021 to carry out a review of the Directorate of Housing and Community Services and propose an improvement plan.

Outcome:

- *That the Deputy Chief Executive provide progress reports to future meetings of the Committee.*
- *That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on issues associated with anti-social behaviour.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Committee considered report on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2024/25, with emphasis on those proposals relating to the Committee's terms of reference. Items directly relevant to this Committee were those in relation to the Housing and Community Services and Public Realm Directorates.

Outcome:

- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to provide Members of the Committee with details of the proposed plans for Cornbow Hall detailing consultation plans for the existing users/stakeholders and the plans leading up to the new arrangements, outlining options to be considered.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to provide Members of the Committee with a written assurance that any planned investment in the Public Realm Directorate would be delivered across all 24 wards in the Borough fairly with new criteria being considered and regular updates be provided to the Committee on progress.*

Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22

The Committee considered the annual scrutiny report 2021/22.

Outcome:

- *That Members be requested to e-mail the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee identifying work areas for consideration for scrutiny for the 2022/23 annual scrutiny programme.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee received the Corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the financial year 2021/22. Specific officers attended meetings to provide a summary and respond to questions asked by the Committee. In view of the number of items that were considered by the Committee, the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report in relation to Quarters 1 and 2 was e-mailed to the Committee for comments.

Outcome:

- *That the Head of Housing Maintenance be requested to provide Members with a written response providing accurate Key Performance Indicator figures relating to PI2194, percentage of gas compliance.*
- *That the Interim Head for Neighbourhoods and Communities be requested to send an invitation to all Members of the Committee to attend an engagement event at Baylie and Kennedy Courts in relation to compliance in general.*
- *That additional Key Performance Indicators be considered for services within the Public Realm Directorate for the 2022/23 financial year and included in the Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports.*

Other Items Considered by the Committee in the 2021/22 Municipal Year

Briefing Notes considered by the Committee through e-mail

- *Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports – Quarters 1 and 2*

Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Working Group

- *Housing Board/Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA) and tenant participation*

Ongoing items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items requiring further scrutiny or to be included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2022/23 are listed below:-

- *Black Country Transport Hub Collaboration Agreement - (Deferred due to lack of information presented)*
- *Waste Strategy – (Deferred due to Strategy not being finalised)*
- *Housing White Paper (Tenants Charter)*
- *Progress report on the Future Council's Programme – Directorates of Housing and Community Services and Public Realm*
- *Dudley's response to Climate Change and Future Plans*
- *The Impact of the restructure of Housing Services and the service improvements achieved*
- *Review of Housing Finance*
- *Progress report on Priorities for the Directorate of Housing and Community Services*
- *Issues associated with anti-social behaviour*
- *Medium Term Financial Strategy*
- *Housing Board/Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA) and tenant participation.*