



**MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM
CITY COUNCIL, TUESDAY,
6 FEBRUARY 2024**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 1400 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT:- Lord Mayor (Councillor Chaman Lal) in the Chair.

Councillors

Alex Aitken
Gurdial Singh Atwal
David Barrie
Jilly Bermingham
Sir Albert Bore
Marje Bridle
Zaker Choudhry
Maureen Cornish
Adrian Delaney
Jayne Francis
Rob Grant
Roger Harmer
Adam Higgs
Mumtaz Hussain
Mohammed Idrees
Ziaul Islam
Meirion Jenkins
Amar Khan
Izzy Knowles
Bruce Lines
Basharat Mahmood
Lee Marsham
Shehla Moledina
Richard Parkin
Rob Pocock
Lauren Rainbow
Rinkal Shergill
Saima Suleman
Lisa Trickett
Ken Wood

Deirdre Alden
Raqeeb Aziz
Baber Baz
Marcus Bernasconi
Nicky Brennan
Martin Brooks
Debbie Clancy
John Cotton
Diane Donaldson
Sam Forsyth
Colin Green
Deborah Harries
Des Hughes
Mahmood Hussain
Zafar Iqbal
Morriam Jan
Brigid Jones
Ayoub Khan
Narinder Kaur Kooner
Mary Locke
Majid Mahmood
Karen McCarthy
Gareth Moore
David Pears
Julien Pritchard
Darius Sandhu
Sybil Spence
Jamie Tennant
Penny Wagg
Alex Yip

Robert Alden
David Barker
Matt Bennett
Bushra Bi
Kerry Brewer
Mick Brown
Liz Clements
Phil Davis
Barbara Dring
Ray Goodwin
Fred Grindrod
Kath Hartley
Jon Hunt
Shabrana Hussain
Katherine Iroh
Kerry Jenkins
Jane Jones
Saqib Khan
Kirsten Kurt-Elli
Ewan Mackey
Rashad Mahmood
Saddak Miah
Yvonne Mosquito
Miranda Perks
Hendrina Quinnen
Kath Scott
Ron Storer
Paul Tilsley
Ian Ward
Waseem Zaffar

NOTICE OF RECORDING

229 The Lord Mayor advised that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcasting via the Council’s Public-I website and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

230 The Lord Mayor reminded Members that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests relating to any items of business to be discussed at the meeting.

Councillor Saima Suleman declared an interest in relation to agenda item 11 ‘Motions for Debate from Individual Members’. The interest was in relation to Motion B. Councillor Suleman would leave the Chamber for this Motion.

MINUTES

Councillor Deirdre Alden addressed the Council and referenced page 15 of the minutes, whereby Councillor Robert Alden was recorded as having voted twice and Councillor Deirdre Alden was not recorded as having voted. This was a typographical error and would be rectified to reflect that one vote was cast by Councillor Robert Alden and one vote was cast by Councillor Deirdre Alden.

Councillor Deirdre Alden referenced page 21 of the minutes which stated that the City Solicitor would consider the comments made by Councillor Alden in relation to the Motion and whether it should have been withdrawn. Councillor Deirdre Alden had not received a reply from the City Solicitor.

The City Solicitor would ensure that a written reply was provided to Councillor Deirdre Alden in relation to the comments made at the previous meeting.

Councillor Deirdre Alden queried if the Motion as recorded in the minutes should stand as it included the name of an unelected individual.

The City Solicitor addressed the Council and informed Members that the meeting needed to decide if the draft minutes were an accurate record of the previous meeting. The Motion in question in the draft minutes had been permitted as per the constitution. It had subsequently been agreed that future Motions should not name unelected individuals.

The City Solicitor advised that the proposed vote was to clarify if the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record. It had been moved and seconded that the minutes of the previous meeting were not an accurate record.

Via a show of hands, the amendment was lost and the minutes of the previous meeting were deemed to be an accurate record.

It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and –

231

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 9 January 2024 and of the meeting held on 9 January 2024 be taken as read and confirmed and signed.

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no amendments made by the Lord Mayor.

PETITIONS

Petitions Relating to City Council Functions Presented at the Meeting

The following petitions were presented:-

(See document No. 1, 'Additional Meeting Documents')

In accordance with the proposals by the Members presenting the petitions, it was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and:-

232

RESOLVED:-

That the petitions were received and referred to the relevant Chief Officer(s).

Petitions Update

A Petitions Update had been made available electronically:-

(See document No. 2, 'Additional Meeting Documents')

It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and

233

RESOLVED:-

That the Petitions Update be noted and those petitions for which a satisfactory response has been received, be discharged.

QUESTION TIME

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The Council proceeded to consider Oral Questions in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 F of the

Constitution).

Details of the questions asked are available for public inspection via the webcast.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE COUNCIL

There were no proposed changes to City Council appointments.

SCRUTINY BUSINESS REPORT

A report of Councillor Sir Albert Bore was submitted:-

(See document No. 3, agenda item 8)

Councillor Sir Albert Bore moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Lee Marsham.

A debate ensued.

Councillors Deirdre Alden, Paul Tilsley, Kerry Jenkins, Alex Yip, Marje Bridle, Gareth Moore, Katherine Iroh, Ewan Mackey, Shabrana Hussain, Mick Brown and Ziaul Islam spoke during the debate.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Sir Albert Bore to sum up.

It was therefore-

235 **RESOLVED:-**

That City Council agreed to note the report.

ADJOURNMENT

236 It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and-

RESOLVED:-

That the Council be adjourned until 1700 hours on this day.

The Council then adjourned at 1630 hours.

At 1700 hours the Council resumed at the point where the meeting had been adjourned.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

A report of the Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer was submitted:-

(See document No. 4, agenda item 9).

The Lord Mayor invited the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel to address the Council.

Councillor John Cotton moved the recommendations which were seconded from the floor. Councillor Cotton also moved an amended recommendation which had been agreed with all Groups in advance of the meeting. The amended recommendation was that City Council should not adopt all of the recommendations as outlined in the report at this stage.

A debate ensued.

Councillors Meirion Jenkins, Roger Harmer and Robert Alden spoke during the debate.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor John Cotton to sum up.

It was therefore-

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RESOLVED:-

1.) Following cross-party agreement, City Council agreed to not implement all of the recommendations as outlined in the report.

City Council:

2.) Noted the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, taking due regard of the recommendations.

3.) Rejected recommendations 1-5 as set out in the report relating to the years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26:

1. The Basic Allowance (BA) increases to £19,744.00 p.a.
2. The day rate increases from 3 days to 3.5 days.
3. The additional expenses element is removed from the calculation.
4. The Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) increases by 4.69%.
5. The co-optee allowances increases by 4.60% in line with the BA.

4.) Agreed to the proposed allowances to the levels proposed for the year 2026/27, commencing on 1 April 2026 as set out at page 26 of the report:

Appendix 9: Basic Allowance plus Special Responsibilities Allowances Spread Over 4 Years

| | <i>18.39 apportioned 1 yr1 @ 4.60%</i> | <i>18.39 apportioned 2 yr2 @ 4.60%</i> | <i>18.39 apportioned 3 yr3 @ 4.60%</i> | <i>18.39 apportioned 4 yr4 @ 4.60%</i> |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | BA+SRA | BA+SRA | BA+SRA | BA+SRA |
| Leader of the Council | £78,977.18 | £82,610.13 | £86,410.20 | £90,385.07 |
| Deputy Leader of the Council | £67,130.61 | £70,218.61 | £73,448.67 | £76,827.31 |
| Cabinet Member | £49,360.74 | £51,631.33 | £54,099.22 | £56,490.67 |
| Chairman of the Planning Committee | £37,514.16 | £39,239.81 | £41,137.69 | £42,932.91 |
| Chairman of the Licensing & Public Protection Committee | £37,514.16 | £39,239.81 | £41,137.69 | £42,932.91 |
| Leader of the Largest Qualifying Opposition Group | £37,514.16 | £39,239.81 | £41,137.69 | £42,932.91 |
| Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committees | £34,552.52 | £36,141.93 | £37,897.31 | £39,543.47 |
| Deputy Leader of the Largest Qualifying Opposition Group | £29,813.89 | £31,185.32 | £32,712.70 | £34,120.37 |
| Chairman of Licensing Sub-Committee | £25,667.58 | £26,848.29 | £28,176.16 | £29,375.15 |
| Chairman of the Audit Committee | £25,667.58 | £26,848.29 | £28,176.16 | £29,375.15 |
| Chairman of the Trust & Charities Committee | £25,667.58 | £26,848.29 | £28,176.16 | £29,375.15 |
| Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Groups | £28,036.90 | £29,326.59 | £30,768.47 | £32,086.70 |
| Deputy Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Groups | £23,890.60 | £24,989.56 | £26,231.93 | £27,341.49 |
| Lead Opposition Spokesperson (Shadow Cabinet Member) | £25,667.58 | £26,848.29 | £28,176.16 | £29,375.15 |
| Political Group Secretaries | £23,890.60 | £24,989.56 | £26,231.93 | £27,341.49 |
| Chief Whip | £22,705.94 | £23,750.41 | £24,935.78 | £25,985.71 |

5.) Agreed recommendations 6-10 at page 2 of the report:

1. The Independent Carers' Allowance (hourly rate) continues to be raised in line with the Living Wage currently £10.90 per hour, and that this allowance remains linked to the Living Wage in future years.
2. The Professional Care Allowance (hourly rate) continues to be raised in line with the Council's rate for a Care Assistant (Grade 2 post) taking in the mid-range spinal point, currently at £11.34.
3. Travel expenses and Subsistence Allowances continue to reflect the Council's Scheme for officers.

4. The Parental Leave policy, to remain unchanged.
5. Members who are eligible for shared parental leave will be receiving the statutory amount (which as of April 2023 is £172.48 per week for statutory maternity and paternity pay), or at 90% of the SRA, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate, for the 39 weeks statutory maternity leave available. The remaining 13 weeks of shared parental leave are unpaid.
- 6.) Agreed that the independent Remuneration Panel continued its review as set out at page 3 of the report:

The Panel has identified a number of issues that it feels require additional action, but which fall outside of its remit; these are noted below as suggestions for Full Council to consider:-

1. Panel to write to the LGA seeking support to open up a discussion with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) regarding the matters noted in section 1.3 and below:-
 - a) the removal in 2014 of Councillors from the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS),
 - b) no redundancy payments if Councillors lose their seat and
 - c) Councils struggle to reflect the demographics of their adult communities.
2. Birmingham Members' Allowances Scheme is revised to include wording to clarify that Councillors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct, as overseen by the Standards Committee.
3. The Panel to be advised on an annual basis of the training provided for Councillors and take up rates.
4. The wording set out in appendix 5 is adapted for inclusion in the Birmingham Remuneration Scheme.

DECISIONS NOT ON THE FORWARD PLAN AND THOSE AUTHORISED FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

A report of the Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer was submitted:-

(See document No. 5, agenda item 10).

Councillor John Cotton moved the recommendation which was seconded from the floor.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor John Cotton to sum up.

It was therefore-

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RESOLVED:-

1.) That City Council noted the report.

MOTIONS FOR DEBATE FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

The Council proceeded to consider the Motions of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 G of the Constitution).

A. Councillors Robert Alden and Ewan Mackey had given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

(See document No. 6, agenda item 11)

Councillor Robert Alden moved the Motion which was seconded by Councillor Ewan Mackey.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Roger Harmer and Morriam Jan gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 7, 'Amendments – City Council')

Councillor Roger Harmer moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Morriam Jan.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors John Cotton and Miranda Perks gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 8, 'Amendments – City Council')

Councillor John Cotton moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Miranda Perks.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Julien Pritchard and Rob Grant gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 9, 'Amendments – City Council')

Councillor Julien Pritchard moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Rob Grant.

Councillor Ray Goodwin proposed that the Motion be put. This was seconded by Councillor John Cotton.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Robert Alden to sum up.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Roger Harmer and Morriam Jan having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

Names were called and the Chamber doors were locked.

Here upon a poll being demanded the voting was as follows:-

For the amendment (30)

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Matt Bennett | Paul Tilsley | Robert Alden |
| Gareth Moore | Mumtaz Hussain | Alex Yip |
| Meirion Jenkins | Ken Wood | Ewan Mackey |
| Roger Harmer | Jon Hunt | Baber Baz |
| Adrian Delaney | Adam Higgs | Bruce Lines |
| Penny Wagg | Ron Storer | Julien Pritchard |
| Colin Green | Deborah Harries | Deirdre Alden |
| David Pears | Richard Parkin | Ayoub Khan |
| Morriam Jan | Izzy Knowles | Zaker Choudhry |
| Debbie Clancy | Darius Sandhu | Kerry Brewer |

Against the amendment (44)

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Ray Goodwin | Mary Locke | Diane Donaldson |
| Des Hughes | Miranda Perks | Karen McCarthy |
| Jamie Tennant | Brigid Jones | Nicky Brennan |
| Saqib Khan | Saddak Miah | Rob Pocock |
| Ziaul Islam | Kirsten Kurt-Elli | Jayne Francis |
| John Cotton | Lisa Trickett | Shabrana Hussain |
| Marje Bridle | Hendrina Quinnen | Mahmood Hussain |
| Lauren Rainbow | Mohammed Idrees | Waseem Zaffar |
| Phil Davis | Shehla Moledina | Majid Mahmood |
| Liz Clements | Rinkal Shergill | Zafar Iqbal |
| Kath Hartley | Narinder Kaur Kooner | Raqeeb Aziz |
| Sir Albert Bore | Kerry Jenkins | Amar Khan |
| Yvonne Mosquito | Sybil Spence | David Barker |
| Jilly Bermingham | Fred Grindrod | Lee Marsham |
| Mick Brown | Bushra Bi | |

Abstentions (0)

The amendment was lost.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors John Cotton and Miranda Perks having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be carried.

Names were called and the Chamber doors were locked.

Here upon a poll being demanded the voting was as follows:-

For the amendment (44)

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Ray Goodwin | Mary Locke | Diane Donaldson |
| Des Hughes | Miranda Perks | Karen McCarthy |
| Jamie Tennant | Brigid Jones | Nicky Brennan |
| Saqib Khan | Saddak Miah | Rob Pocock |
| Ziaul Islam | Kirsten Kurt-Elli | Jayne Francis |
| John Cotton | Lisa Trickett | Shabrana Hussain |
| Marje Bridle | Hendrina Quinnen | Mahmood Hussain |
| Lauren Rainbow | Mohammed Idrees | Waseem Zaffar |
| Phil Davis | Shehla Moledina | Majid Mahmood |
| Liz Clements | Rinkal Shergill | Zafar Iqbal |
| Kath Hartley | Narinder Kaur Kooner | Raqeeb Aziz |
| Sir Albert Bore | Kerry Jenkins | Amar Khan |
| Yvonne Mosquito | Sybil Spence | David Barker |
| Jilly Bermingham | Fred Grindrod | Lee Marsham |
| Mick Brown | Bushra Bi | |

Against the amendment (31)

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Matt Bennett | Paul Tilsley | Deirdre Alden |
| Gareth Moore | Mumtaz Hussain | Alex Yip |
| Meirion Jenkins | Ken Wood | Ewan Mackey |
| Roger Harmer | Jon Hunt | Baber Baz |
| Adrian Delaney | Adam Higgs | Bruce Lines |
| Penny Wagg | Ron Storer | Julien Pritchard |
| Colin Green | Deborah Harries | Robert Alden |
| David Pears | Richard Parkin | Ayoub Khan |
| Morriam Jan | Izzy Knowles | Zaker Choudhry |
| Debbie Clancy | Darius Sandhu | Kerry Brewer |
| Rob Grant | | |

Abstentions (0)

The amendment was carried.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Julien Pritchard and Rob Grant having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

The Motion as amended having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:-

“This Council believes that –

- Residents in Birmingham deserve answers on what has brought about a situation where they are not only seeing an increase in the taxes they pay

on their income but an increase in their council tax bills alongside cuts to their local public services.

- Learning why this has happened in Birmingham and all councils across England is essential for ensuring that Birmingham City Council has a sustainable future.”

This Council therefore resolves to:

Write to the Government to follow up on the request made by the Leader of the Council to begin the local inquiry as quickly as is practicable.

Work with the LGA and Core Cities to lobby the government to provide long-term, sustainable funding for local authorities in England to end the crisis in local government”.

B. Councillors Ayoub Khan and Zaker Choudhry had given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

(See document No. 10, agenda item 11)

Councillor Ayoub Khan moved the Motion which was seconded by Councillor Zaker Choudhry.

There were no amendments to be debated with the Motion.

A debate ensued.

Councillors Waseem Zaffar, Bruce Lines, Julien Pritchard, Liz Clements, Lisa Trickett and Phil Davis spoke during the debate.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Ayoub Khan to sum up.

The Motion, having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

RESOLVED:-

The Motion was lost.

The meeting ended at 1913 hours.



**CITY COUNCIL
6 FEBRUARY 2024**

**WRITTEN
QUESTIONS TO
CABINET MEMBERS
AND
COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

A To the Leader of the Council

1. Birchfield Harriers

From Councillor Jon Hunt

2. Birchfield Harriers

From Councillor Morriam Jan

3. Equal Pay Milestones

From Councillor Gareth Moore

4. Register of Professional Interests

From Councillor Rick Payne

5. All relevant considerations

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

6. Appointment of Special Advisor

From Councillor David Pears

7. Dispute Resolution

From Councillor Ron Storer

8. Perry Barr Village

From Councillor Robert Alden

9. Perry Barr Village

From Councillor Darius Sandhu

10. Birchfield Harriers – legal fees

From Councillor Roger Harmer

11. Birchfield Harriers & Alexander Stadium

From Councillor Julien Pritchard

B To the Deputy Leader of the Council

1. First aiders

From Councillor Morriam Jan

2. CCTV and Traffic Control Centre

From Councillor Ron Storer

3. CCTV and Traffic Control Centre testing period

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

C To the Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Families

1. Cost & Impact of Early Help Cuts

From Councillor Rob Grant

2. Cost & Impact of Youth Service Cuts

From Councillor Julien Pritchard

D To the Cabinet Member for Digital, Culture, Heritage & Tourism

1. MOVED TO A11

2. Library attendance

From Councillor David Pears

3. Library Community Groups

From Councillor Rob Grant

4. Library usage

From Councillor Roger Harmer

E To the Cabinet Member for Environment

1. Love my streets budget

From Councillor Morriam Jan

2. Sweepers

From Councillor Colin Green

3. **Land clearance**
From Councillor Mumtaz Hussain
4. **Perry Barr tip**
From Councillor Jon Hunt
5. **Absenteeism**
From Councillor Roger Harmer
6. **Overtime**
From Councillor Paul Tilsley
7. **Malcolm House**
From Councillor Izzy Knowles
8. **Bin Collections & Flytipping**
From Councillor Rob Grant

F To the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

1. **Perry Park**
From Councillor Jon Hunt
2. **MOVED TO A10**
3. **All relevant considerations**
From Councillor Debbie Clancy
4. **Community Chest**
From Councillor Robert Alden
5. **Tennis Courts**
From Councillor Darius Sandhu
6. **Bailiff actions**
From Councillor Adrian Delaney
7. **Roads Repairs and Maintenance Budget**
From Councillor Ewan Mackey
8. **Business ratepayers budget consultation**

From Councillor Adam Higgs

9. **Parking Income**

From Councillor Ken Wood

10. **Cost of Restarting Services**

From Councillor Rob Grant

G To the Interim Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Minimum Care Worker Costs

From Councillor Julien Pritchard

H To the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

1. **Council Properties Lost in Redevelopments**

From Councillor Julien Pritchard

2. **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman case 22 018 260**

From Councillor Roger Harmer

3. **Rental licensing**

From Councillor Jon Hunt

4. **Rental licensing inspections**

From Councillor Penny Wagg

5. **Major Repairs Reserve**

From Councillor Deirdre Alden

6. **Housing Complaints SLA**

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

7. **Housing electrical safety remedial work**

From Councillor Richard Parkin

8. **Pool Farm Demolition**

From Councillor Rob Grant

I To the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities

1. MOVED TO C2

2. Stabbing outside BCC

From Councillor Morriam Jan

3. MOVED TO D4

4. Income from City's cemeteries

From Councillor Richard Parkin

J To the Cabinet Member for Transport

1. FPN in Moseley

From Councillor Izzy Knowles

2. Meteor Ford

From Councillor Zaker Choudhry

3. CAZ Fines to EU residents

From Councillor Robert Alden

4. CAZ enforcement outside of UK

From Councillor David Barrie

5. Air Quality Monitoring Stations

From Councillor Adam Higgs

K To the Chair of Committee

1. SRA

From Councillor Jon Hunt

2. Informal meetings

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

3. Task and Finish Minutes

From Councillor Rick Payne

4. Informal meetings

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

5. Informal meetings

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

6. **Informal meetings**

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

7. **Informal meetings**

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

8. **Informal meetings**

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

9. **Informal meetings**

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

A1

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR
JON HUNT

“Birchfield Harriers”

Question:

“Will the council honour the agreement from 1975 with the Birchfield Harriers which saw the Birchfield Harriers transfer significant assets to the council?”

Answer:

The redevelopment of the Alexander Stadium into a state-of-the-art £72million world-class venue means there has been a need to review the licence arrangements that were originally agreed with Birchfield Harriers in 1975, which applied to a completely different stadium.

As a publicly funded body, the council has a duty to ensure value for money and that we maximise the use and community benefit of this new facility. As such we have been in discussions with the Club about how we best accommodate their needs and others wishing to utilise the venue.

These ongoing discussions are based on the existing peppercorn rent terms being maintained at the rates agreed back in 1975, so in reality the use of the new facilities will represent a better cost-benefit outcome for the Club.

We look forward to reaching an agreement that enables Birchfield Harriers to benefit from the new and enhanced facilities on offer within this context of achieving a wider community good.

A2

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MORRIAM JAN

“Birchfield Harriers”

Question:

“The ongoing legal battle with Birchfield Harriers is damaging the reputation of a highly reputable running club with a history that makes our city proud. What reassurances can you give me that the Commonwealth legacy will benefit, not damage, the Birchfield Harriers?”

Answer:

The negotiations with the Club are necessary to make sure the licence with Birchfield is fit for purpose and reflects a new Commonwealth Games Stadium. Birchfield remain at the heart of the Stadium’s future and the terms of the licence secure their occupation on the same financial terms with no change to their length of tenure.

The investment that continues to be put into the Stadium will provide a lasting Commonwealth Games legacy for the Club, and the City is committed to working with Birchfield to provide the Club with the very best of facilities and support for future generations of athletes to enjoy.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Equal Pay Milestones”

Question:

In response to my question (A8) at the January council meeting, you said that the programme overview and key milestones were shared with Unions at a joint working group on 22 November 2023. Please provide a copy of this overview and milestones in the same format as it was shared with the Unions on this date, along with any update to those documents since that point.

Answer:

A copy of the documents shared on 22 November is attached.

Since November a detailed plan has been developed along with updated milestones. This is currently being integrated into wider HR programme plans and a reporting pack developed. These will be shared when approved by April 2024.



A3 - 1. Introduction
and Process Review -

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR RICK PAYNE

“Register of Professional Interests”

Question:

In response to my question at January council (A12) you said that you had asked the city solicitor to publish the Officer Register of Professional Interests as a matter of priority (having been an outstanding action from Council since June 2017) Please confirm when this will be published by and where members of the public can access it?

Answer:

The City Solicitor is in the process of updating the Guidance to Chief Officers on Interests and a refresh of the existing Register of Chief Officer Interests. This will be available by the end of the financial year.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY**

“All relevant considerations ”

Question:

In response to my question at Full Council in January (A16) you said that all relevant advice was considered by cabinet in making their recommendations to council as part of their budget responsibilities. Clearly, advice given to you on the 3 February that there was a potential £820m equal pay liability was a ‘relevant’ consideration for that budget, and specifically to the section 25 statement that you personally, along with all other cabinet members present, explicitly *agreed* with at that cabinet meeting*. It can therefore not be the case, both that you considered all relevant information as stated, and that you were ‘surprised’ to learn of the size of the equal pay liability when you became Leader some weeks later. So which one is true?

*It is important to note the distinction here between cabinet and full council responsibilities. Full Council have a duty to consider the Section 25 statement as part of the relevant considerations to agreeing the budget. Cabinet have a duty to use all relevant considerations (which would include any knowledge they had of the equal pay risks) to agree the section 25 statement itself. When councillors vote on the budget at full council, they do so in the knowledge that the Cabinet (who are privy to advice and briefings beyond what is shared with other councillors) have agreed that they believe the section 25 statement to be an accurate reflection of all known risks and considerations.

Answer:

As you state it is important to note the distinction between Cabinet and Full Council’s responsibilities in agreeing a budget and setting the Council Tax each year. It is also important to note the responsibility of statutory officers.

Cabinet have a duty to use all relevant considerations when formulating budget proposals . This will include considering the section 25 statement. Cabinet do not prepare the section 25 Statement. The Local Government Act 2003 (Section 25) requires that when a local authority is agreeing its annual budget and council tax, the s151 Officer reports on the following matters: the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations; and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

Cabinet have to rely on the section 25 statement as an accurate reflection of all known risks and considerations at the time.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS

“Appointment of Special Advisor ”

Question:

In response to questions A5 and A12 at January Council you confirmed that Gerard Coyne had been appointed as special advisor using the BCC Hays Framework at a prorated annual cost of circa £100k and was in accordance with council procedures. Please confirm the job titles of all members and officers involved in that recruitment decision?

Answer:

The role titles of those involved in this decision were Chief Executive, Birmingham City Council and Head of Total Reward.

A7

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR RON STORER

“Dispute Resolution”

Question:

According to the timeline published on GMBs website, Unions met with council officials on 9 January 2023 as part of the dispute resolution process to discuss job evaluation and the settling of equal pay claims. Please state which cabinet members were present at that meeting and which cabinet members were briefing either before or after that meeting?

Answer:

There were no Cabinet Members present.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Perry Barr Village”

Question:

Of all the sales currently completed within the £560m perry barr village development, what has been the average selling price, broken down by housing size\type?

Answer:

The apartment blocks that have been built within the scheme, which comprise of 968 homes within plots 6, 7, 8 and 9, are currently all being marketed for sale to institutional investors. Apartments in Plot 9 are also available for individual sale with an open market price for one and two-bedroomed properties marketed from £160,000 to £230,000.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU**

“Perry Barr Village”

Question:

Of the 1400 homes that were due to be delivered as part of the development of Perry Barr Village, how many have now been completed and how many of these have had sales completed on them?

Answer:

A planning consent is in place for the development of 1,414 homes across 11 plots on the Perry Barr Residential Scheme, of which four plots, Plots 6, 7 8 & 9, form part of the first phase. Plots 8 and 9, consisting of 430 apartments, have been completed to ‘turn-key’ standard ready for occupation, with a number of sales being processed and awaiting to be completed over the coming weeks. Within Plot 7, final works on 270 apartments are due to be completed very shortly. Alongside this, all the built plots are being marketed for sale to institutional investors.

A10

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR
ROGER HARMER

“Birchfield Harriers – legal fees”

Question:

“Can you confirm if you have spent £89,000 or more now on legal fees?”

Answer

:

Yes, the legal costs have been incurred over a period of years and include elements funded directly through Commonwealth Games budgets as they relate to the negotiation of matters that were required in the run up to and during the Commonwealth Games.

The redevelopment of the Alexander Stadium into a state-of-the-art £72million world-class venue means there has been a need to review the licence arrangements that were originally agreed with Birchfield Harriers in 1975, which applied to a completely different stadium.

As a publicly funded body, the council has a duty to ensure value for money and that we maximise the use and community benefit of this new facility. As such we have been in discussions with the club about how we best accommodate their needs and others wishing to utilise the venue.

It is hoped these matters will be concluded following a meeting later this month.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR JULIEN PRITCHARD**

“Birchfield Harriers & Alexander Stadium”

Question:

Why has the Council gone back on suggested agreements made during initial negotiations with Birchfield Harriers around their access and use of the Alexander Stadium? And why is a financially struggling council using lawyers to defend its position against an athletics club?

Answer:

BCC has not gone back on its agreement with Birchfield Harriers.

In March 2022 the two parties entered legal mediation which resulted in a mutually agreed Heads of Terms document being signed by both parties. This non-legally binding document set out the facility arrangements at the stadium going forwards and was translated into a new licence that was presented to the Club Trustees for signature. Since that time the Trustees have failed to agree the licence or sign the draft and therefore the licence remains unsigned.

In the meantime, BCC has continued to honour the existing licence conditions, where it has been possible to translate these rights into the new Stadium facility. This includes regular twice weekly access to the main track, and exclusive use of the South Lounge on Club nights.

It is hoped that another meeting scheduled for later this month will conclude matters.

Legal costs have been incurred over a period of years and include the negotiation of matters that were required in the run up to and during the Commonwealth Games.

B1

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR MORRIAM JAN

“First aiders”

Question:

“Can you please supply a list of names and contact details of designated first aiders at each building that is used by council staff?”

Answer:

Lists of first-aiders are located on H&S notice boards in CAB Buildings; it would not be appropriate to list names.

Following the covid period there is now a high-level of flexible working and therefore we utilise the Customer Service officers as they are all emergency first aid trained and are located in all CAB buildings at all times when they are open.

In some buildings there are also additional first aider volunteers in the wider staff group.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR RON STORER**

“CCTV and Traffic Control Centre”

Question:

Ahead of the Stop:Go decision to go live with the new CCTV and traffic control centre, what assurances were received from the police and other partners that they were happy the system was working correctly and was fully accessible to meet their needs?

Answer:

The CCTV network is owned, operated, managed and monitored by the City Council which has remained fully operational throughout the current migration. The Council continues to deliver the 24/7/365 capability and has not yet exited from its current facility, which remains the primary centre and includes UTC.

The service works with a range of partners, including the police. The current upgrades and the city’s investment in a new facility will provide a significant improvement to our capability and deliver a high-quality service for citizens of Birmingham.

Whilst we value and seek to ensure we support all partners that rely on the service and control centre, this is a City Council capability. The service continues to deliver monitoring and support 24/7 including providing images for evidential purposes supporting the police and response services. The current facility has remained in constant operation and all delivery partners have complete access at all times to it should they need it.

We will continue to work with and provide support to all our partners, maintaining our legal compliance.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY**

“CCTV and Traffic Control Centre testing period”

Question:

How many days was the period of parallel running of operations at Lancaster Circus and Priestley Wharf before switch over of the CCTV system?

Answer:

The current facility remains fully operational and the primary centre for operations. There are extensive criteria for our transition to the new facility which will only occur when we are confident of its operational readiness.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR ROB GRANT

“Cost & Impact of Early Help Cuts”

Question:

What will the cost be the future cost of increased in need of statutory interventions later due to the potential reduction or removal of the early help service (as reported in the Birmingham Mail)? And if this hasn't been calculated why not?

Answer:

All partners involved in the delivery of work under the Children's Partnership are committed to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families in Birmingham.

This commitment will continue to be delivered in partnership between all parts of the system, including Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children's Trust, voluntary sector partners, communities, families, and children themselves.

However, the financial challenges faced by Birmingham City Council mean that over the coming years there must be an ongoing re-design process to develop the best possible approach to this. It is important to note that partners such as the NHS, schools and police play a vital role in providing early support and help for children, young people and families. Over the next two years, the council and Birmingham Children's Trust, partners and voluntary sector providers will work together to think about how early help will work in the city.

Early help comes in many forms and whilst there is a link between the provision of help and support for families to address their challenges and problems at an early stage, there is not a direct correlation. It's important to understand the nature of the issues that drive demand into children's social care.

Discussions are ongoing with early help providers to ensure that Birmingham Children's Partnership works together on the implications of any reduction in funding. The council and Birmingham Children's Trust wrote to all early help providers on 26th January to assure them of our commitment to working with them.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR JULIEN PRITCHARD

“Cost & Impact of Youth Service Cuts”

Question:

What will the increase cost be to the community safety partnership, the children’s trust and police time, as a result of the cuts to the youth service and youth clubs? And if this hasn’t been calculated why not?

Answer:

It is not possible to calculate these increased costs on statutory services for several reasons. Predicting the precise impact of reductions in services for young people is uncertain, as it depends on various factors such as local demographics, existing support networks, and the effectiveness of alternative interventions. The indirect costs, such as long-term societal implications of youth disenfranchisement, are also difficult to measure in monetary terms. Whilst there may be some impact to services, it’s important to understand that whilst there may be a causal relationship, there is not a correlation between ceasing youth clubs and services and increases in demand for these services.

We will continue to talk to partners and work together to deliver the best possible services within the funding available.

D1

PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION D1 – DIGITAL - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED TO A11 – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS

“Library attendance”

Question:

Please provide monthly attendance figures at each community library since between January 2022 and January 2024.

Answer:

Attendance can be broken down into three broad categories:

- 1) Estimated Footfall
- 2) Membership
- 3) Book issuance

Footfall

Typically, automatic counters are used at libraries (and other venues that attract footfall) to provide robust data on footfall. Unfortunately, these counters are not installed in Birmingham libraries we understand this is due to historic decisions. We therefore are unable to provide accurate data on overall footfall at this current moment in time. The proposed delivery model moving forward will include the installation of automatic counters.

However, libraries deploy a “5-bar gate tallying” approach to estimate footfall. This involves estimating the number of people in a library at any given point in the week and multiplying this number to represent an estimate for the month and year.

Evidently this is not accurate as it assumes a consistency of footfall each day and does not account for seasonal variations. However, for transparency this data is presented in the table below.

Membership

Membership data over a period is a more robust dataset and can be used in analysis. This data is collected when a resident signs up to any library. Membership trends can be seen in the chart below.

It must be noted that whilst membership data is a better proxy for attendance, library usage is not limited to members only. Libraries can be used for meeting areas and warm spaces, computer access for example thus membership is not required.

Book issuance

Book issuance data is collected digitally via kiosk scanning. This dataset is therefore more accurate and representative of a portion of library usage. Data for the requested time period is in the table below.

Data



| Data Type | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Kiosk & Desk | 2225744 | 1938079 | 2045444 | 1580929 | 1566863 | 1272892 | 386163 | 610760 | 998236 | 906091 |
| Membership Reserve | 3292934 | 2962083 | 2978067 | 2517250 | 2416924 | 2152907 | 1002338 | 1276979 | 1868700 | 1719255 |
| Net Loan Reservations | 0 | 346255 | 331850 | 324762 | 308543 | 296244 | | | 124550 | 142282 |

Historically there has been a decline in usage of kiosk and desk and memberships. During the covid period this decline was obviously more acute but the overall trend prior to covid was also downward.

| Attendance Figures at Community Library for the time period of January 2022 to January 2024 | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Name of the Library | Estimated Footfall | Membership | Issues (Physical Books Lent/ Re-lent) |
| Acocks Green Library | 112,675 | 40,112 | 49,481 |
| Aston Library | 8,717 | 12,528 | 6,222 |
| Balsall Heath Library | 46,267 | 19,776 | 36,690 |
| Bartley Green Library | 13,971 | 5,146 | 9,436 |
| Birchfield Library | 62,829 | 15,696 | 37,369 |
| Bloomsbury Library | 7,725 | 4,635 | 9,456 |
| Boldmere Library | 38,767 | 10,304 | 47,483 |
| Druids Heath Library | 21,921 | 6,418 | 23,382 |
| Erdington Library | 92,950 | 31,586 | 67,779 |
| Frankley Library | 13,758 | 4,600 | 10,814 |
| Glebe Farm Library | 24,396 | 6,634 | 13,769 |
| Hall Green Library | 107,700 | 21,511 | 87,431 |
| Handsworth Library | 95,096 | 31,325 | 29,601 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Harborne Library | 112,283 | 26,427 | 121,730 |
| Kings Heath Library | 114,725 | 30,618 | 109,380 |
| Kings Norton Library | 58,538 | 15,929 | 64,315 |
| Kingstanding Library | 25,117 | 12,567 | 23,190 |
| Mere Green Library | 120,187 | 25,810 | 128,365 |
| Northfield Library | 79,500 | 30,909 | 81,753 |
| Perry Common Library | 32,617 | 13,797 | 28,863 |
| Quinton Library | 97,875 | 19,083 | 68,749 |
| Selly Oak Library | 13,908 | 6,211 | 16,639 |
| Shard End Library | 61,354 | 15,497 | 26,311 |
| Sheldon Library | 18,304 | 11,181 | 19,326 |
| Small Heath Library | 90,592 | 35,426 | 51,200 |
| South Yardley Library | 168,738 | 25,641 | 83,286 |
| Spark hill Library | 92,367 | 30,403 | 55,738 |
| Spring Hill Library | 10,204 | 9,380 | 7,564 |
| Stourbridge Library | 37,096 | 11,448 | 68,490 |
| Suton Coldfield Library | 126,975 | 24,196 | 65,957 |
| Tower Hill Library | 53,196 | 11,856 | 41,471 |
| Walmley Library | 55,908 | 10,164 | 52,536 |
| Ward End Library | 69,000 | 38,504 | 54,003 |
| Weoley Castle Library | 68,392 | 16,473 | 43,348 |
| Yardley Wood Library | 83,179 | 16,163 | 81,026 |

D3

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR ROB GRANT

“Library Community Groups”

Question:

What work has been done to identify community groups that could take on the 25 community libraries which will be community run or closed? How many

Answer:

It must be noted that these are proposals at this stage subject to public consultation. It is not possible at this stage to specify which libraries will be community run or closed.

As part of the public consultation local organisations will be invited to express their interest in running community led provision. The intention is to work with Birmingham Voluntary Service Council and other infra structure support organisations to ensure that community groups and organisations putting themselves forward are supported with regards to business planning and delivery models.

Historically, there has been some interest from community organisations or ‘friends of groups’ and from organisations that already provide co located services to residents. We are keen to revisit those conversations to see how these can be progressed.

It must be noted that some Libraries identified by community groups which are held in Trust will require permissions from the Charity Commission. We are also aware that this may have held up opportunities to transfer buildings in the past. It is our intention to work with our legal services teams and the Department of Culture Media and Sport to progress.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FOR DIGITAL,
CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER

“Library usage”

Question:

“Please provide data on library usage in all libraries across Birmingham in 2023. Please break this data down by month and add a comment on the reliability and accuracy of the data at all facilities?”

Answer:

Attendance can be broken down into three broad categories:

- 1) Estimated Footfall
- 2) Membership
- 3) Book issuance

Footfall

Typically, automatic counters are used at libraries (and other venues that attract footfall) to provide robust data on footfall. Unfortunately, these counters are not installed in Birmingham libraries we understand this is due to historic decisions. We therefore are unable to provide accurate data on overall footfall at this current moment in time. The proposed delivery model moving forward will include the installation of automatic counters.

However, libraries deploy a “5-bar gate tallying” approach to estimate footfall. This involves estimating the number of people in a library at any given point in the week and multiplying this number to represent an estimate for the month and year.

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Membership

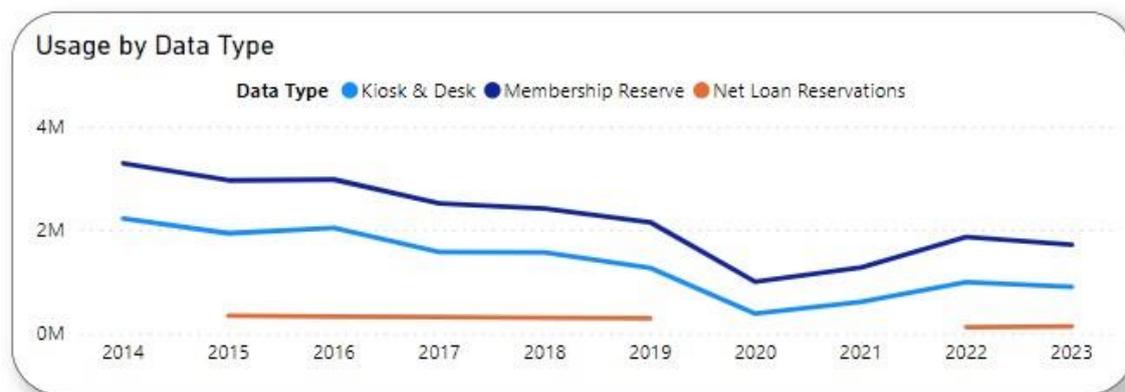
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| | | | |
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| Spark hill Library | 92,367 | 30,403 | 55,738 |
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CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR MORIAM JAN

“Love my streets budget”

Question:

“Please provide a breakdown of the 2023 budget that was awarded to Love my Streets and include spending for the clearing of gullies and alleyways?”

Answer:

Please note that the alleyway clearing programme is undertaken as part of the core service and budgeted as a street cleansing activity.

Meanwhile, the spend breakdown for the Love Your Street service is:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Salaries, NI, Pension contributions | 559,500 |
| Promotions & marketing | 70,000 |
| Supplies & equipment | 128,500 |
| Vehicle hire | 250,000 |

E2

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR COLIN GREEN

“Sweepers”

Question:

“Please provide a breakdown of sweepers by size, cost per week and how many we rent on a weekly basis. Please provide this data for 2023 broken down by week?”

Answer:

We contract hire 33 small mechanical sweepers for £550 a week each.

We also rent out 21 large mechanical sweepers for around £600 a week each.

In addition, we own 2 large mechanical sweepers as well.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR MUMTAZ HUSSAIN

“Land clearance”

Question:

“How much of the “Love my streets” budget is spent on land clearance for housing department owned land?”

Answer:

The Street Cleansing service collaborates with local housing teams to create a planned programme for Love Your Street (LYS).

We aim to work together with other parts of Birmingham City Council and deliver events that can help improve and sustain the area in a range of ways.

LYS is an initiative that addresses street scene issues and enhances the appearance and atmosphere of a certain area through joint action days with communities and partners.

We do not record costs relating to clearing solely from housing land and are therefore unable to provide this data.

As stated, where we deliver events that may involve other parts of Birmingham City Council, we aim to achieve positive and sustainable results for that area.

Since April 2022 we have carried out 7 LYS events in conjunction with housing colleagues.

E4

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

“Perry Barr tip”

Question:

“Perry Barr tip site is to open 31st January 2024 and residents can start booking online from 26th January 2024. Can a designated landline be set up too, as some residents do not have access to the internet or may struggle to book online such as people with poor sight, people with a lack of access to the internet and people who do not read English?”

Answer:

As discussed during my recent appearance at the Perry Barr Ward Forum, we do not have a designated landline but we are investigating if it is possible to find an easy solution for residents with limited digital access.

If a citizen does not have internet access or an e-mail address, we would encourage them to ask friends or family if they can help with the online system. We can also seek to help them if they get in touch via our contact centre.

E5

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER

“Absenteeism”

Question:

“What were the levels of absenteeism for the refuse collection service by day between 1 December – 8 January?”

Answer:

As of the time of this response, data was available for December 2023, as follows:

| | Dec 2023 |
|---|-------------------------------|
| | Fleet & Waste only |
| Total sickness days in period | 2058.73 |
| FTE | 828.84 |
| Average sick days per FTE in period days | 2.48 |

E6

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR PAUL TILSLEY

“Overtime”

Question:

“How much money was saved by not paying overtime to refuse collection staff on New Years Day?”

Answer:

Bank Holidays typically cost £57,594.60 in overtime.

E7

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR IZZY KNOWLES

“Malcolm House”

Question:

“In June and September, I asked questions about the maintenance, cleaning schedule and long-term intention of use of the land around Malcolm House that belongs to BCC.

The car park was deep cleaned on 13th September, and I was assured the land would be regularly monitored.

I am sad to say it is once again in a terrible state, with fly tipping and litter, as well as untaxed and unroadworthy vehicles parked there.

Please can you arrange another clean up.

Please confirm the long term intentions for this site?”

Answer:

The area in question is owned by Birmingham City Council Transportation and is also Highway Maintainable at Public Expense. As such, I am advised by officers that there is no intention to sell this land as to do this, we would need to extinguish the highway rights as well as sell off the land. Currently there is no planned change of use of this land but as the council moves forward, this position may change to maximise revenue from such sites.

Often vehicles are reported as abandoned because they have not moved for a period. However, despite vehicles looking as though they may be abandoned, often they are owned as motorists choose to discontinue using their vehicle for a variety of reasons.

Only the DVLA have the authority to remove an untaxed vehicle from the highway. The tax status of a vehicle can be checked with the DVLA on their website www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax and if it is not taxed, it can be reported at www.gov.uk/report-untaxed-vehicle. Alternatively, they can be contacted on 0300 790 6802.

As the land is HMPE, I will refer this to our Street Cleansing and Flytipping teams to arrange a clean-up of the site. This sort of issue can also be reported via our website by any citizen or elected member.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
FROM COUNCILLOR ROB GRANT**

“Bin Collections & Flytipping”

Question:

What work has been done to analyse the impact of any changes to bin collections on flytipping rates and flytipping costs?

Answer:

The current arrangements for refuse collection and recycling are being reviewed as part of the wider transformation programme for waste services.

This review will of course consider how any potential service changes would impact all aspects of service delivery.

An example of this is the recent announcement, as part of the Environment Act, relating to weekly food waste collections becoming a statutory service from April 2026.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND
RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

“Perry Park”

Question:

“Following on from my question in December’s full council, can you please provide an update on the funding for the children’s play park in Perry Park?”

Answer:

A capital allowance of £300K is currently within the legacy landscape works cost plan, which would represent an investment significantly greater than if a like-for-like facility was installed. This figure is under continual review in line with other items required for external areas. We appreciate the importance of the play area to the local community and will endeavour to ensure this is delivered to exceed expectations.

F2

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION F2 – CABINET MEMBER FOR
FINANCE AND RESOURCES - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED TO A10 –
LEADER**

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“All relevant considerations ”

Question:

In response to my question at Full Council in January (F14) you said that all relevant advice was considered by cabinet in making their recommendations to council as part of their budget responsibilities. Clearly, advice given to you on the 3 February that there was a potential £820m equal pay liability was a ‘relevant’ consideration for that budget, and specifically to the section 25 statement that you personally, along with all other cabinet members present, explicitly *agreed* with at that cabinet meeting*. Given you say you took all relevant considerations into account, why did you agree the section 25 statement given it clearly did not reflect the advice you were given on 3 February?

*It is important to note the distinction here between cabinet and full council responsibilities. Full Council have a duty to consider the Section 25 statement as part of the relevant considerations to agreeing the budget. Cabinet have a duty to use all relevant considerations (which would include any knowledge they had of the equal pay risks) to agree the section 25 statement itself. When councillors vote on the budget at full council, they do so in the knowledge that the Cabinet (who are privy to advice and briefings beyond what is shared with other councillors) have agreed that they believe the section 25 statement to be an accurate reflection of all known risks and considerations.

Answer:

Please refer to the response to A5.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND
RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Community Chest”

Question:

At the Full council meeting of 28 February 2023, which approved the budget, it was announced by the Leader that funding would be made available for Community Chest in each ward, this was subsequently promoted across Birmingham Labour social media channels. However, given this was a late announcement, it did not appear in the paperwork for the meeting and does not appear to be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. Can you confirm that community chest was built into the base budget for 23/24?

Answer:

A specific budget for Community chest was not built into the base budget for 23/24 for City Operations Directorate. A contingency budget is held corporately, from which an allocation for this funding was due to be provided.

However, the spending in this area was reviewed as part of spending controls and did not meet the criteria of essential spending.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU

“Tennis Courts”

Question:

Does the council plan to introduce any charges for the tennis courts being refurbished as part of the LTA funded programme referenced in the December 2023 procurement intentions report to cabinet? if so please provide details of charges by court.

Answer:

Yes, there will be charges introduced across some of the tennis courts being refurbished.

There will be a requirement for each site to provide a minimum of 5% free hours with some sites having 100% free access. Where there is a mixed charging model, there will be some free hours and some paid access at set times, but this is yet to be determined with the operator and through consultation with the local community.

The Council will procure a tennis operator to manage the courts and the booking system, and to run an affordable and inclusive tennis programme across the sites. In addition to increasing the offer of tennis activities across more sites and courts, it enables the Council to adopt an approach which allows an income to be generated from an operator, as well as a sinking fund to cover the future maintenance costs of all the facilities.

The price model and percentage of free access will be bespoke to each site based on the IMD and site-specific factors.

Indicative charges:

Cost per hour (non-floodlit) - £5

Cost per hour (floodlit) - £7 (Cannon Hill only)

Season ticket - £52/year

Bournville – Mix (% free TBC)

Brookvale - Free

Cannon Hill – Paid (5% free)

Gilbertstone - Free

Lickey Hills – Paid (5% free)

Mere Green – Paid (5% free)

Pype Hayes – Mix (% free TBC)

Rookery - Free

Summerfield – Free

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY

“Bailiff actions”

Question:

In each year since April 2018, including year to date, on how many occasions were private bailiffs/enforcement agents instructed to enforce debts to the local authority and what was the total value of this debt? Please break this down by debt type i.e. council tax, business rates, housing rent, housing benefit overpayment, commercial rents, and other debts including overpayments.

Answer:

The Council deals with many different types of debt. The way debt is dealt with varies depending on the legislative powers in place. The above question covers debts which fall under different legislation. Referrals to Enforcement Agents (previously known as Bailiffs) are made under the Taking Control of Goods (Fees) Regulations 2014 (TCOG).

The debts which fall under this legislation are Council Tax; Business Rates; Business Improvement District. Also, outstanding Penalty Charge Notice cases are passed to Enforcement Agents for recovery. The fee income for these is retained by the EAs. The number and value of these are shown below, **followed by those debts which don't fit under the TCOG regulations** – but are nonetheless often referred to debt collection agencies (DCAs) for recovery. DCAs receive commission on the money they recover from debtors.

Penalty Charge Notice cases passed to EAs for recovery:

| Financial Year | Cases sent | PCN Value £ |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 2018-19 | 33,358 | 870,556 |
| 2019-20 | 31,786 | 874,135 |
| 2020-21 | 42,955 | 892,994 |
| 2021-22 | 48,971 | 833,746 |

| | | |
|----------|---------|------------|
| 2022-23 | 412,997 | 75,384,166 |
| 2023 YTD | 314,496 | 54,072,187 |

The increase in cases being passed to EAs for recovery from 2022-23 is due to the introduction of the Clean Air Zone in June 2021 which resulted in 844,327 Penalty Charge Notices being issued during the first 12 months of operation.

Council Tax, Business Rates and Business Improvement District (BID) cases passed to EAs for recovery:

| Year | Council tax | Value £ |
|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 2018/19 | 50,547 | 41,695,898 |
| 2019/20 | 56,092 | 43,542,531 |
| 2020/21 | 11,917 | 8,302,753 |
| 2021/22 | 20,970 | 29,557,656 |
| 2022/23 | 13,501 | 16,380,486 |
| 2023/24 YTD | 54,671 | 76,247,357 |

| Year | Business Rates & BIDS | Value £ |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 2018/19 | 4504 | 28,014,937 |
| 2019/20 | 4891 | 29,031,881 |
| 2020/21 | 40 | 245,668 |
| 2021/22 | 2729 | 21,846,513 |
| 2022/23 | 234 | 946,209 |
| 2023/24 YTD | 5352 | 38,523,667 |

The 2023/24 value looks inflated for council tax given case numbers in 2018 to 2020. Some of these are the same cases with multiple year debts over the previous two/three years and hence higher debt value.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR EWAN MACKEY

“Roads Repairs and Maintenance Budget”

Question:

Since the introduction of the Highways PFI, the Council has received c£51m a year in PFI credits. Under the terms of the agreement, the council was required to maintain its own general fund contribution to the highways repairs and maintenance budget at existing levels, c£50m a year, indexed to inflation. In each year since 2012, please provide a breakdown of

- A) the total amount of PFI credits received**
- B) the total amount of the council’s general fund contribution to the highways repairs and maintenance budget**
- C) the total amount spend in year on repairs and maintenance of the highways network**
- D) the amount added to the highways PFI reserve**

Answer:

Answer A

| | PFI Grant Income |
|---------|------------------|
| 2012/13 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2013/14 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2014/15 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2015/16 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2016/17 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2017/18 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2018/19 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2019/20 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2020/21 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2021/22 | 50,311,300.00 |
| 2022/23 | 50,311,300.00 |

Answer B

| | Council Funding |
|---------|-----------------|
| 2012/13 | 32,926,720.29 |
| 2013/14 | 32,488,498.95 |
| 2014/15 | 32,410,781.50 |
| 2015/16 | 35,357,613.52 |
| 2016/17 | 36,053,517.58 |
| 2017/18 | 41,743,436.49 |
| 2018/19 | 43,962,724.36 |
| 2019/20 | 13,461,253.14 |
| 2020/21 | 30,043,906.89 |
| 2021/22 | 73,181,962.74 |
| 2022/23 | 67,710,080.00 |

Answer C

| | Amount spent on repairs and maintenance |
|---------|---|
| 2012/13 | 62,327,907.19 |
| 2013/14 | 70,943,112.79 |
| 2014/15 | 77,085,266.50 |
| 2015/16 | 68,030,297.07 |
| 2016/17 | 82,180,519.20 |
| 2017/18 | 70,715,186.63 |
| 2018/19 | 41,626,169.06 |
| 2019/20 | 55,890,982.12 |
| 2020/21 | 77,745,152.16 |
| 2021/22 | 118,050,639.61 |
| 2022/23 | 133,298,606.28 |

Answer D

| | Added to Reserves |
|---------|-------------------|
| 2012/13 | 21,999,848.29 |
| 2013/14 | 13,281,075.58 |
| 2014/15 | 7,315,063.97 |
| 2015/16 | 19,443,032.03 |
| 2016/17 | 4,068,171.91 |
| 2017/18 | 23,808,548.05 |
| 2018/19 | 52,487,873.61 |
| 2019/20 | 7,334,024.82 |
| 2020/21 | 1,990,995.37 |
| 2021/22 | 3,839,404.98 |
| 2022/23 | -10,538,451.00 |

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS

“Business ratepayers budget consultation”

Question:

How many different businesses attended the Teams event held on 24 January 2024 as part of the consultation on the budget, and what other events have taken place, or are planned to take place, to meet the statutory duty to consult with ratepayers?

Answer:

134 registered and we had 39 attend.

There are no further planned events, prior to the budget, to consult with ratepayers. The event on 24 January 2024 fulfilled the Council's statutory obligation to consult with ratepayers under s.65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. This requires the council to consult non domestic rate payer representatives on the authority's proposals for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in that financial year.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR KEN WOOD

“Parking Income”

Question:

In each of the last 4 years, and for the next 4 years, how much parking income has been/will be lost through reductions in off and on road parking spaces, broken down by site.

Answer:

Below shows the income position for car parks closed in the last four years including the income generated for the year in which they closed, as well as the last full year of operation where applicable. Information for on street bays is not held at this granular level.

Lawson Street – Income 2021/22 £16,485 – Part Year as closed January 22

Lawson Street – Income 2020/21 £8,298 – Last Full Year but impacted by Covid

Ludgate Hill Car Park - Income 2022/23 £380,878 – Part Year as closed February 23

Ludgate Hill Car Park - Income 2021/22 £343,092 – Last Full Year

Paradise Circus – Income 2023/24 £184,400 – Part Year as closed June 23

Paradise Circus – Income 2022/23 £774,491 – Last Full Year

Markets (Moat Lane) – Income 2020/21 £168,636 – Part Year as closed January 21 (Covid)

Markets (Moat Lane) – Income 2019/20 £481,897 – Last Full Year

Pershore Street – Income 2019/20 £448,309 – Full Year as closed April 20 and did not reopen following Covid

Victoria Road (Sutton) – Income 2019/20 £191,952 – Full Year as closed April 20 and did not reopen following Covid

Staniforth Street (Staff Parking for Lancaster Circus) – Income 2019/20 £84,869 – Full Year as closed April 20

With regard to the next four years, it is currently unclear what further loss of sites there may be and so an answer cannot be provided for this part of the question.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND
RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ROB GRANT**

“Cost of Restarting Services”

Question:

What analysis has been done of the costs of restarting services in the future that are being cut over the next two years, if the financial outlook improves, versus the cost of keeping the service going? Has any analysis of the restart cost of services been considered in what to cut in budget proposals?

Answer:

Savings plans have been developed based upon the need to deliver statutory services and meeting the Council's legal duties. The work done in preparing these plans includes careful consideration of the future use of assets and the impact of not delivering the service.

Any recommencement of services would be in response to changing regulation, demand, or funding, and likely to require a change in delivery approach and service requirements.

Resources have not yet been used to model possible future costs of recommencing a service which is non-statutory, given the number of unknowns behind accurately forecasting these (including the likelihood of the service being recommenced).



CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE INTERIM CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR JULIEN PRITCHARD**

“Minimum Care Worker Costs”

Question:

The Regulated Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy – Home Support And Quick Discharge Services Report to Cabinet of December 2023 acknowledged that Birmingham currently pays £17.79 an hour for home support services but only gave a figure of £21.83 as the actual median cost of care. The UK Homecare Association (UKHCA)’s latest homecare deficit report calculates that the minimum price of homecare in England, to cover care worker direct costs, is £25.95. While the use of grants (from the MS&IF, MS&IFW and ASCDF) to increase rates will help, as agreed at the October 2023 Cabinet meeting, it is not clear that this will be enough.

What will be the minimum price paid to care providers (for home support) in Birmingham this year? Could the Council confirm that in it is committed to paying care providers enough to fund the minimum wage and costs such as travel and training?

Answer:

The fee rates for 2024/25 have not yet been set and won't be until after the Council's budget has been approved. However financial provision has been made that is in line with the Council's legal and contractual obligations.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR JULIEN PRITCHARD

“Council Properties Lost in Redevelopments”

Question:

In the past 8 years how many council properties have been lost due to clearance as part of council regeneration and redevelopment projects? How many council properties have then been rebuilt in those locations (i.e. how many of them have been replaced/rebuilt)?

Answer:

In the last 8 years 847 council properties have been cleared as part of regeneration and redevelopment projects.

In the last 8 years 493 new council homes have been re-provided on those regeneration and redevelopment projects.

Firstly, there is a rationale for any demolition in terms of the type and quality of the housing.

When new homes are built there is consideration to housing need, planning policy and community feedback. This has resulted in less housing but often more family housing which is high quality and better meeting the needs of the city.

It is important to balance housing need, housing quality and placemaking.

In relation to the 847 BCC properties cleared:

407 were at Pool Farm, Kings Norton; 167 in blocks and 240 low-rise homes including a number of 3 storey walk-up maisonette blocks.

291 were at Druids Heath across 5 LPS tower blocks.

To note, this is a total of 698 homes cleared on two estates where redevelopment is yet to take place, and therefore this distorts the figures as the re-provision for BCC and/or affordable homes on the estates are not captured.

H2

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER

“Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman case 22 018 160”

Question:

“This question refers to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman case 22 018 160. The council’s response to this case is that service improvements will be made. Please advise what service improvements have been made and what has been done to improve the handling of applications following this judgement?”

Answer:

The Corporate Special Projects, Improvement and Delivery Unit (SPIDU) completed a full review of the housing applications assessment process in March 2023. The review resulted in the drafting of a robust Action Plan, comprising of over 130 actions, incorporating identified service improvements, which, when fully implemented should result in improved performance and outputs within the Applications and Allocations Team.

Progress on the Action Plan is overseen by SPIDU who conduct bi-weekly progress meetings with the Head of Service and Strategic Lead for Applications and Allocations. Progress is also jointly reported on by the Head of Service and SPIDU to the City Housing Director at DMT. An update was presented to DMT in November 2023, and it is intended for the next update to be delivered in July 2024.

In addition to the above review, engagement has taken place with the Robotics Automation Project Team in the hope that further areas of improvement can be identified where we have manual processes in place. This is currently a work in progress.

Several service improvements have been made in line with the recommended actions which should reduce demand on Officers’ time to enable them to concentrate on assessing outstanding applications, changes in circumstances and reviews.

Changes to the Birmingham Choice website have been made to provide applicants with more detailed information and user guides on how to complete an application, upload documentation to their application directly rather than having to email this to the service, and how to reset passwords. Going forward, we are currently exploring the use of video content to make this more interactive for customers.

More realistic information around waiting times, property availability and supply and demand has also been improved as well as more information on other housing options available such as registering with other Registered Providers and considering renting in the Private Rented Sector. This information should enable customers to make informed decisions on making a new application.

Customers are encouraged to upload supporting evidence and documentation to their applications themselves. This will ensure that all relevant information to assess their application has been made available. This will also reduce the time that officers spend chasing applicants for this information.

All procedures have been reviewed and updated and all officers have received training on these, the Allocations Policy and IT systems. It is acknowledged that training is an ongoing need; a training matrix identifying training needs has been developed and training plans are in place.

Improvements have been made in line management with the introduction of in office working days to enable officers to have access to management support and additional mentoring from their peers where needed.

Weekly stand-up meetings are held with Team Leaders at the beginning of the week to outline the key priorities for the week ahead. These meetings will be rolled out to all officers in the coming weeks.

Robust performance management and quality checks are currently being introduced. These will be completed by Line Managers and any identified areas of concern will be discussed in 1-2-1 meetings with Officers.

Improvements to the Council's Choice Based Lettings system, Abris, have been made to enable more automation where possible to reduce demand on officer time. The most recent change has seen the introduction of a chatbot facility on 23rd January 2024. This will enable customers to ask frequently asked questions and receive an answer from the chatbot instantly.

Partnership working has been initiated with other Local Authorities and Core Cities to share best practice and knowledge to identify further areas of improvement.

Going forward work with the Special Projects, Improvement and Delivery Unit will continue until all recommendations in the Action Plan have been implemented.

A further review of our systems, processes and procedures will be completed to identify waste in the system and minimise the scope for duplication of work.

H3

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT

“Rental licensing”

Question:

“What are the criteria for deciding which rental properties to inspect in the selective licensing areas?”

Answer:

A programme of compliance visits to properties with a selective licence started at the beginning of January 2024.

Licensed properties in the 25 Selective Licence Scheme wards are currently being visited by officers on a 3-4 wards per month cycle to increase efficiency.

For unlicensed properties we will be taking a similar ward-based approach, however the specific areas for focus will be identified through intelligence we receive / generate and the exploitation of data.

It is likely to include but will not be limited to the following:

- Concentrations of private rented properties
- Levels of anti-social behaviour, crime and deprivation
- Complaints about housing conditions
- Property ages / construction / size / type
- Energy performance rating of properties
- Referrals of unlicensed properties

H4

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR PENNY WAGG

“Rental licensing inspections”

Question:

“How many properties have been inspected by ward in the selective licensing area by new selective licensing team and what results did those inspections deliver?”

Answer:

A programme of compliance inspections in licensed properties in the 25 Selective Licence Scheme wards started in January 2024, and will continue until June 2028. To date we have undertaken 193 inspections with a further 30 awaiting completion.

The breakdown by ward is as follows:

| Ward | Completed | In Progress | Total |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Acocks Green | 80 | 11 | 91 |
| Bournbrook & Selly Park | | 3 | 3 |
| Edgbaston | 5 | | 5 |
| Gravelly Hill | 39 | 9 | 48 |
| Handsworth | 30 | 1 | 31 |
| Holyhead | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Ladywood | 15 | 2 | 17 |
| Lozells | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Tyseley & Hay Mills | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Yardley West & Stechford | 8 | | 8 |
| Total | 193 | 29 | 222 |

Of these completed inspections, against the selective licence conditions the officer was “satisfied - no concerns” with 82% of the properties, 12% they were “Satisfied with conditions” and 5% were “unsatisfactory”. For the latter two categories the Officer will be taking appropriate action to ensure compliance.

This does not include unlicensed premises, as we are currently in the process of developing a programme of intelligence led activities to identify premises and ensure compliance with the scheme.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR DEIRDRE ALDEN

“Major Repairs Reserve ”

Question:

In each year since 2012, what was the opening and closing balance of the Major Repairs Reserve within the HRA?

Answer:

| Major Repairs Reserve | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Financial Year £m | 1st April | 31st March |
| | | |
| 2012/13 | 15.0 | 52.0 |
| 2013/14 | 52.0 | 44.6 |
| 2014/15 | 44.6 | 15.8 |
| 2015/16 | 15.8 | 5.8 |
| 2016/17 | 5.8 | 39.0 |
| 2017/18 | 39.0 | 28.6 |
| 2018/19 | 28.6 | 24.8 |
| 2019/20 | 24.8 | 24.4 |
| 2020/21 | 24.4 | 24.4 |
| 2021/22 | 24.4 | 17.9 |
| 2022/23 | 17.9 | 17.9 |

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY

“Housing Complaints SLA”

Question:

In each month since April 2022, what percentage of housing complaints were completed within the SLA timescales, and what was the average number of days taken to resolve each complaint?

Answer:

City Housing within SLA April 2022 to December 2023

| 2022/2023 | Volume | Within SLA |
|----------------|--------|------------|
| April 2022 | 627 | 52% |
| May 2022 | 667 | 51% |
| June 2022 | 598 | 56% |
| July 2022 | 610 | 61% |
| August 2022 | 586 | 58% |
| September 2022 | 555 | 54% |
| October 2022 | 619 | 50% |
| November 2022 | 730 | 44% |
| December 2022 | 743 | 42% |
| January 2023 | 937 | 30% |
| February 2023 | 770 | 35% |
| March 2023 | 982 | 47% |
| April 2023 | 775 | 62% |
| May 2023 | 726 | 64% |
| June 2023 | 597 | 65% |
| July 2023 | 620 | 58% |

| | | |
|----------------|-----|-----|
| August 2023 | 635 | 62% |
| September 2023 | 512 | 68% |
| October 2023 | 570 | 49% |
| November 2023 | 643 | 58% |
| December 2023 | 469 | 60% |

Historic closure – years/months (number of days to close)

April 2022 to December 2023 Average days to close **34**

Last 3 months closure (number of days to close)

September to December 2023 Average days to close **17**

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD PARKIN

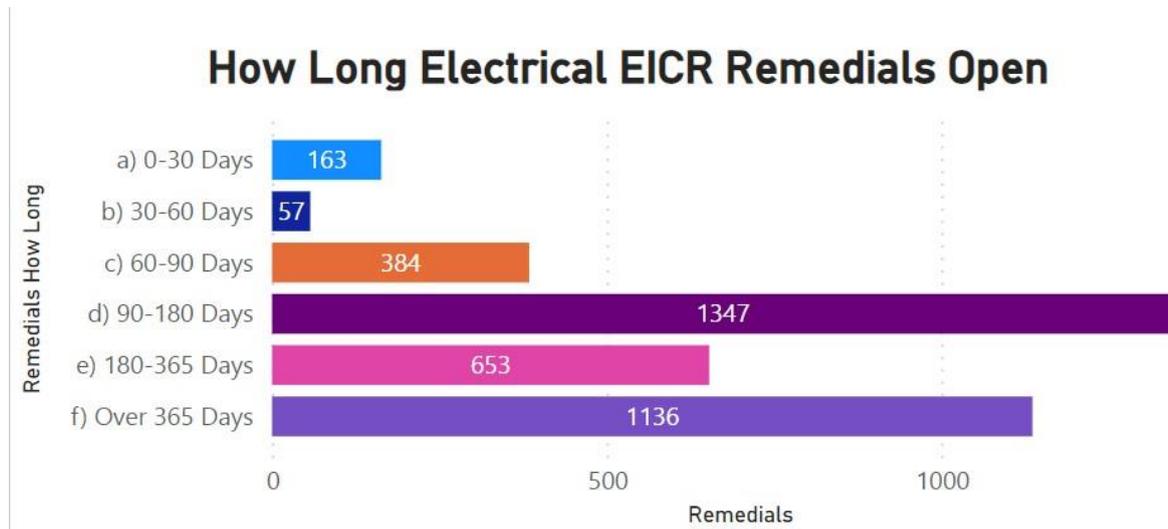
“Housing electrical safety remedial work ”

Question:

As of the latest available data, how many council properties have remedial work for electrical safety outstanding, and what is the average, and longest time these properties have been waiting for work to be completed?

Answer:

We report on this figure weekly. The latest dashboard shows the outstanding remedial action for electrical safety works, with the number of days outstanding below.



The total number is 3,740 as at 31st January 2024. This number fluctuates as we complete the outstanding programme. The more tests undertaken will create more remedial work.

We are continuing to cleanse the data reflecting historic capital investment programmes which isn't always reflected in the information we hold. All certification is now being checked and transferred to True Compliance, a new system holding all of our compliance information.

A challenge with the remedial works is where properties must be rewired after the test. Residents are refusing works due to the major disruption it will cause. We are

now providing a flexible approach to minimise disturbance to residents and remedying issues to enable us to complete works to the satisfaction of the resident.

There are a large number of properties where hoarding is an issue and the Hoarding Officer is working with Social Services to clear the properties to allow remedial works to be carried out.

We've started calling tenants to speak to them to emphasise that the inspection and works are for their safety and to persuade them to allow the contractors to carry out the works.

Initial results are encouraging, though there is still a reluctance to allow rewiring due to the disruption & damage to decorations etc. We are offering tenants alternatives and decoration allowances for example. We've also introduced a scheme where contractors can carry out works for up to five remedial works at the time of inspection rather than leave site and apply for a new order form the Council. This has resulted in more remedial woks been carried out at the time of inspections reducing inconvenience for residents.

Our target is to complete the outstanding electrical inspections along with remedial works by the end of June 2024. Progress is reviewed with the Social Housing Regulator monthly.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ROB GRANT

Pool Farm Demolition

Question:

What is the impact of the financial crisis or the budget proposals on the demolition plan for cleared properties in the Pool Farm area?

Answer:

A contractor has recently been appointed to undertake phase 3 demolition of empty properties on Hillmeads Road and Heathside Drive. Works to prepare the tower blocks on Shannon Road have been taking place, such as asbestos surveys, to enable these to be safely demolished.

We remain committed to demolishing these empty tower blocks as well as looking to demolish the blocks in phase 4 – Arrow Walk and Walkers Heath Road – but are exploring opportunities for this work to be included in the wider development options at Pool Farm.

We have been exploring opportunities to develop Pool Farm estate and will be engaging with local residents and Members on these proposals as they are developed. Where possible, we will ensure we deliver a mixed tenure, sustainable development that includes elements of affordable housing.

Pool Farm and Shannon Road were included in the Building Birmingham report to Cabinet on Tuesday 16 January 2024, (https://birmingham.cmis.uk.com/birmingham/Decisions/tabid/67/ctl/ViewCMIS_DecisionDetails/mid/391/Id/156c71e2-4b76-4bf6-8491-126f8581df30/Default.aspx) which recognises the financial challenges to the council but enables us to explore and seek delivery options through partnerships and other methods to deliver more housing.

PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION I1 – SOCIAL JUSTICE - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED TO C2 – CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMMUNITY, SAFETY AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR MORRIAM JAN

“Stabbing outside BCC”

Question:

“Muhammed Hassam Ali was stabbed outside BCC council house Saturday 20th January 2024, and was later pronounced dead at hospital. Our sincere and heartfelt condolences to out to his family at this sad time. Whilst we accept that due to the timing of this incident, a bleed kit at the council would not have saved him, can we please get one placed at the council house and provide adequate training?”

Answer:

Through ongoing work between Building Management and the Resilience team the potential risk mitigation benefits of holding one or more bleed kits in the Council House have already been established.

We are currently investigating the most appropriate locations along with suitable training requirements before deploying these alongside the existing first aid facilities in the near future.

PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION I3 – SOCIAL JUSTICE - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED TO D4 – CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, HERITAGE & TOURISM

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMMUNITY, SAFETY AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD PARKIN

“Income from City’s cemeteries”

Question:

Thank you for the information provided in response to my written question at December’s full council regarding income from cemeteries. However, I was hoping to have this information broken down by each individual cemetery. Can you please provide this information for the previous 3 financial years and also for the current year to date.

Answer:

Information is provided below in relation to income generated by the city’s cemeteries for the years: 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and part year 2023/2024 (up to December 2023).

We are unable to provide a specific breakdown for individual cemeteries due to some mapping code issues on the City’s financial system.

In 2020/21 and 2021/22 the impact of Covid resulted in elevated numbers of burials.

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 (Apr > Dec) |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Cemeteries Income | £ 7,600,499.46 | £ 6,709,160.35 | £5,543,153.59 | £ 4,559,099.71 |

J1

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR IZZY KNOWLES**

“FPN in Moseley”

Question:

“Please provide the numbers of fixed penalties issued for parking offences in bus lanes in Moseley Rd & Alcester Road in last 12 months?”

Answer:

The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued for parking contraventions during the operational times of the bus lanes is as follows:

1st February 2023 – 30th January 2024:

Alcester Road – 693

Moseley Road – 661

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR ZAKER CHOUDHRY

“Meteor Ford”

Question:

“FOI ref 8131830 refers to Meteor Ford development in St Mary's Row, Moseley. A S106 agreement was in place whereby two S106 contributions were received.

- **£74,071 for the purpose of funding highway studies and associated highway works relating to the use of the development.**
- **£27,232 for the purpose of public realm improvements, promotional and marketing campaigns and community safety measures within Moseley Village as are reasonably related to the Development.**

Correspondence from February/March 2022 suggests £74,071 was to be transferred to the Moseley Places for People scheme to be spent within the vicinity of the M&S development.

Please confirm:

What happened to the £27,232 and the £74,071?

Was any sum returned to the developers Marshalls? If so please include the amount.”

Answer:

With regard to the £27,232.

Funds were received on 12 October 2022 and were to be “applied towards public realm improvements, promotional and marketing campaigns and community safety initiatives within Moseley Village as are reasonably related to the development provided that the council covenants to consult with the owner in relation to the preparation and publication of any town centre promotional material”. The expiry date for the sum was 27 September 2022.

These funds were spent by the Moseley Community Development Trust on promotional materials.

There was a residual balance remaining of £1,322.66 which was returned to Marshalls Holdings in October 2022.

With regard to £74,915.

Funds were received on 12 October 2022 and were to be applied “towards highway studies and associated highway works relating to the use of the development”. The expiry date for this funding was 27 September 2022. Spend was originally delayed to allow for the design of a complementary scheme to take advantage of the new railway station in Moseley. However, delays to this project led to a decision to pursue alternative options. Whilst it was intended to spend this sum on the Places for People project in Moseley, there were significant delays during delivery as a result of the need to undertake further public consultation to clarify the final scheme delivery package.

Unfortunately, this delay meant that the S106 funding expired before a final scheme package was identified for delivery. As a result, the funding remained in the named S106 account when correspondence was received on 29 September 2022 requesting the repayment of any sums which were not expended or contractually committed by the relevant expiry date. £74,915 was returned to Marshalls Holdings in October 2022.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“CAZ Fines to EU residents”

Question:

Since its introduction, broken down by year, how many Clean Air Zone fines were issued to residents residing in a) the EU b) other non-EU countries outside of the UK?

Answer:

Birmingham’s Clean Air Zone is currently not pursuing enforcement against non-UK registered keepers of vehicles that do not meet the emission standards for the zone.

Based on the data from the Clean Air Zone ANPR cameras; vehicles with non-UK standard registration plates account for 0.16% of all unique vehicles entering the Zone (the average for October, November and December 2023).

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR DAVID BARRIE**

“CAZ enforcement outside of UK”

Question:

Which company does the council use to enforce CAZ fines to people residing outside the UK?

Answer:

Birmingham’s Clean Air Zone is currently not pursuing enforcement against non-UK registered keepers of vehicles that do not meet the emission standards for the zone.

Based on the data from the Clean Air Zone ANPR cameras; vehicles with non-UK standard registration plates account for 0.16% of all unique vehicles entering the Zone (the average for October, November and December 2023).

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS**

“Air Quality Monitoring Stations”

Question:

Please provide details of the cleaning and servicing schedule for each Air Quality Monitoring station, including the date each was last serviced and cleaned.

Answer:

The Council has in place a robust approach to the monitoring and evaluation of air quality, in line with the requirements of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995), as amended by the Environment Act (2021), and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents.

The Council monitors air quality at 170 locations across the city. These locations are a combination of automatic/continuous analysers (14 locations) and non-automatic monitoring (156 locations).

The automatic analysers are calibrated on a monthly basis with quality assurance/control and servicing undertaken every six months by an external company with the relevant certifications as required by TG16. This contract has been in place for a number of years and has been extended to cover 2024.

The data provided by these analysers and diffusion tubes is available through the following website: www.birminghamairquality.co.uk

K1

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF ECONOMY AND SKILLS OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

“SRA”

Question:

“Will he be handing back his special responsibility allowance given his six months absence - or passing it back to his deputy chair?”

Answer

:

I have recently been on a period of compassionate leave following the deaths of family members in the United Kingdom and abroad. I have not been absent for six months and have regularly attended meetings during this period.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Informal meetings”

Question:

There has been a worrying trend of late, of some Overview and Scrutiny Chairs agreeing to cancel formal committee meetings and replace them with 'informal' meetings that are not open to the public, not recorded, not minuted, and for which paperwork is not published. Law, regulation, and the council's constitution provide clear mechanisms for allowing discussion on confidential or exempt items (after due consideration of the public interest test) so where the council cannot be transparent, it can at least be transparent about the reason it cannot be transparent. The use of informal meetings as a way of circumventing rules and regulations undermines the principles of good scrutiny and the council's duty of openness and transparency. It is also poor governance, at a time when the council badly needs to strengthen its own governance, As such will you, for as long as you continue as Chair, commit to stopping the practice of using informal meetings in place of formal ones, so that the full quota of formal meetings takes place each year, and, where task and finish arrangements are used, to also ensuring that these are minuted and made publicly available.

Answer:

At the beginning of the municipal year, following cross party discussion, Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated the Scrutiny Framework to incorporate the principles of flexible and effective scrutiny (cmis.uk.com) The framework document sets out that:

“Scrutiny should be a transparent process and encourage open and honest discussion. Processes and reports should be clear and accessible to the public.... All formal Committee meetings are web-streamed, and the agendas published on the Council's website. Work programmes will be published on each O&S Committee's agenda. Committees may sometimes hold informal meetings or briefings, but any outcomes and recommendations will always be reported in public.”

Examples of informal meetings being used, but with outcomes and recommendations reported in public, includes in-depth scrutiny inquiries, which report to Full Council, the recent Scrutiny Task and Finish Group work in relation to Customer Services, Cleaner Streets, Homes for Ukraine, the Cost of Living, and

Budget (set out in more detail in response to question K3) where findings and recommendations from evidence gathering sessions were reported to the parent OSC. Other informal scrutiny activity, such as site visits, is highlighted via each Committee's standing work programme item and/or via the quarterly Scrutiny Business Report to Full Council.

In response to the financial situation faced by the Council, and in responding to the recommendations from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's Governance Review, set out via the Stabilisation Plan, there is a need for the Council to work in different ways. As a result, to ensure objectives for the scrutiny function are clearly linked to the Council's improvement needs, and resources are used effectively, Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also need to operate differently.

To support this, I look forward to working with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny who have recently put in place (at no additional cost to the Council) a package of support which will, in the context of the role of Commissioners and Council's improvements needs, aid the development of the scrutiny work programme. Importantly, this will include looking at different methods for carrying out scrutiny work, and how such methods might be best employed.

With this in mind, I am happy to commit to ensuring the issues raised by Councillor Debbie Clancy are discussed with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to ensure work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny is managed and administered effectively, is in line with the principles set out in the updated Scrutiny Framework, and contributes fully to the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR RICK PAYNE

“Task and Finish Minutes”

Question:

The LGA's councillor workbook on scrutiny states that in the interests of transparency and accountability, it is recommended that task and finish groups make minutes of their meetings and evidence-gathering sessions accessible to the public. When and where will minutes of task and finish sessions you set up on the budget be made available?

Answer:

At the beginning of the municipal year following cross party discussion, Co-ordinating Committee updated the Scrutiny Framework to incorporate the principles of flexible and effective Scrutiny [Title \(cmis.uk.com\)](http://cmis.uk.com) and this included the ability of O&S Committees to establish Task and Finish Groups. The framework document sets out that:

“Scrutiny should be a transparent process and encourage open and honest discussion. Processes and reports should be clear and accessible to the public. This framework and supporting documents will be published on the Scrutiny website. All formal Committee meetings are web-streamed, and the agendas published on the Council’s website. Work programmes will be published on each O&S Committee’s agenda. Committees may sometimes hold informal meetings or briefings, but any outcomes and recommendations will always be reported in public.”

It was agreed at the first meeting of the Budget Task and Finish Group that formal minutes of the meetings would not be taken and that the outcome of the Task and Finish Group work would be a public report. In line with the Scrutiny Framework the report and recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group were approved at the meeting of Finance and Resources OSC on 24 January. On the advice of the Interim City Solicitor and Section 151 Officer this report was considered in Exempt Session. The report will be publicly available when published with the papers for the Cabinet meeting on 27 February. The working notes from the meetings of the Task and Finish Group setting out the key issues that were used to inform the report and recommendations were shared with the members of the Task and Finish Group and, once the Cabinet report is publicly available, these notes can be requested from the Scrutiny Office.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Informal meetings”

Question:

There has been a worrying trend of late, of some Overview and Scrutiny Chairs agreeing to cancel formal committee meetings and replace them with 'informal' meetings that are not open to the public, not recorded, not minuted, and for which paperwork is not published. Law, regulation, and the council's constitution provide clear mechanisms for allowing discussion on confidential or exempt items (after due consideration of the public interest test) so where the council cannot be transparent, it can at least be transparent about the reason it cannot be transparent. The use of informal meetings as a way of circumventing rules and regulations undermines the principles of good scrutiny and the council's duty of openness and transparency. It is also poor governance, at a time when the council badly needs to strengthen its own governance, As such will you, for as long as you continue as Chair, commit to stopping the practice of using informal meetings in place of formal ones, so that the full quota of formal meetings takes place each year, and, where task and finish arrangements are used, to also ensuring that these are minuted and made publicly available.

Answer:

At the beginning of the municipal year, following cross party discussion, Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated the Scrutiny Framework to incorporate the principles of flexible and effective scrutiny (cmis.uk.com) The framework document sets out that:

“Scrutiny should be a transparent process and encourage open and honest discussion. Processes and reports should be clear and accessible to the public.... All formal Committee meetings are web-streamed, and the agendas published on the Council's website. Work programmes will be published on each O&S Committee's agenda. Committees may sometimes hold informal meetings or briefings, but any outcomes and recommendations will always be reported in public.”

Examples of informal meetings being used, but with outcomes and recommendations reported in public, includes in-depth scrutiny inquiries, which report to Full Council, the recent Scrutiny Task and Finish Group work in relation to Customer Services, Cleaner Streets, Homes for Ukraine, the Cost of Living, and

Budget (set out in more detail in response to question K3) where findings and recommendations from evidence gathering sessions were reported to the parent OSC. Other informal scrutiny activity, such as site visits, is highlighted via each Committee's standing work programme item and/or via the quarterly Scrutiny Business Report to Full Council.

In response to the financial situation faced by the Council, and in responding to the recommendations from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's Governance Review, set out via the Stabilisation Plan, there is a need for the Council to work in different ways. As a result, to ensure objectives for the scrutiny function are clearly linked to the Council's improvement needs, and resources are used effectively, Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also need to operate differently.

To support this, I look forward to working with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny who have recently put in place (at no additional cost to the Council) a package of support which will, in the context of the role of Commissioners and Council's improvements needs, aid the development of the scrutiny work programme. Importantly, this will include looking at different methods for carrying out scrutiny work, and how such methods might be best employed.

With this in mind, I am happy to commit to ensuring the issues raised by Councillor Debbie Clancy are discussed with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to ensure work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny is managed and administered effectively, is in line with the principles set out in the updated Scrutiny Framework, and contributes fully to the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.

CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Informal meetings”

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Answer:

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CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE
CLANCY**

“Informal meetings”

Question:

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CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Informal meetings”

Question:

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CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Informal meetings”

Question:

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CITY COUNCIL – 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF SUSTAINABILITY AND
TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM COUNCILLOR
DEBBIE CLANCY**

“Informal meetings”

Question:

There has been a worrying trend of late, of some Overview and Scrutiny Chairs agreeing to cancel formal committee meetings and replace them with 'informal' meetings that are not open to the public, not recorded, not minuted, and for which paperwork is not published. Law, regulation, and the council's constitution provide clear mechanisms for allowing discussion on confidential or exempt items (after due consideration of the public interest test) so where the council cannot be transparent, it can at least be transparent about the reason it cannot be transparent. The use of informal meetings as a way of circumventing rules and regulations undermines the principles of good scrutiny and the council's duty of openness and transparency. It is also poor governance, at a time when the council badly needs to strengthen its own governance, As such will you, for as long as you continue as Chair, commit to stopping the practice of using informal meetings in place of formal ones, so that the full quota of formal meetings takes place each year, and, where task and finish arrangements are used, to also ensuring that these are minuted and made publicly available.

Answer:

At the beginning of the municipal year, following cross party discussion, Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated the Scrutiny Framework to incorporate the principles of flexible and effective scrutiny (cmis.uk.com) The framework document sets out that:

“Scrutiny should be a transparent process and encourage open and honest discussion. Processes and reports should be clear and accessible to the public.... All formal Committee meetings are web-streamed, and the agendas published on the Council's website. Work programmes will be published on each O&S Committee's agenda. Committees may sometimes hold informal meetings or briefings, but any outcomes and recommendations will always be reported in public.”

Examples of informal meetings being used, but with outcomes and recommendations reported in public, includes in-depth scrutiny inquiries, which report to Full Council, the recent Scrutiny Task and Finish Group work in relation to Customer Services, Cleaner Streets, Homes for Ukraine, the Cost of Living, and

Budget (set out in more detail in response to question K3) where findings and recommendations from evidence gathering sessions were reported to the parent OSC. Other informal scrutiny activity, such as site visits, is highlighted via each Committee's standing work programme item and/or via the quarterly Scrutiny Business Report to Full Council.

In response to the financial situation faced by the Council, and in responding to the recommendations from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's Governance Review, set out via the Stabilisation Plan, there is a need for the Council to work in different ways. As a result, to ensure objectives for the scrutiny function are clearly linked to the Council's improvement needs, and resources are used effectively, Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also need to operate differently.

To support this, I look forward to working with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny who have recently put in place (at no additional cost to the Council) a package of support which will, in the context of the role of Commissioners and Council's improvements needs, aid the development of the scrutiny work programme. Importantly, this will include looking at different methods for carrying out scrutiny work, and how such methods might be best employed.

With this in mind, I am happy to commit to ensuring the issues raised by Councillor Debbie Clancy are discussed with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to ensure work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny is managed and administered effectively, is in line with the principles set out in the updated Scrutiny Framework, and contributes fully to the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.