

Report to Council

28 March 2023

Subject:	Written Questions
Director:	Surjit Tour – Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The following written questions have been received:-

7(a) From Councillor Millar to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

In the only budget proposed last month, you spoke about inflationary pressures and the amount of money that this council has lost over the years – I believe you said that this was over £700million. You also spoke about many other budgetary pressures and real-term cuts – can I ask you to explain what those are.

7(b) From Councillor John Giles to the Leader of the Council

Grant Thornton have been reviewing our systems and auditing us on behalf of the government for over a year now and I know that you have spoke many times about the improvements that have been made. Every time I see anything on social media it refers to the past or old reports – for clarity can I ask the Leader to let this council know what the reality and facts are now.

7(c) From Councillor Khatun to the Cabinet Member for Communities

I was pleased to read in a recent press release that Black Country Women’s Aid who help both men and women who are victims of domestic abuse received funding from us again, this time for a 5 year period. I would like to thank the cabinet member for this and ask him, what type of service will this funding provide to the residents of Sandwell?



7(d) From Councillor Liz Giles to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Can I congratulate the cabinet member for the excellent facility of Harvest View that has been provided for the residents of Sandwell. It is a credit to Sandwell and the wider West Midlands. I know my residents in Charlemont & Grove Vale will be happy knowing that this is where they can go for extra support after hospital or even before to prevent hospitalisation. What I want to ask is that I have been made aware that the top floor of the facility is not open yet – can I ask why that is?

7(e) From Councillor Hinchliff to the Cabinet Member for Children and Education

We have families in Sandwell Borough that are struggling at the moment through no fault of their own caused by spiralling energy bills, food prices, mortgages etc – some those families most affected are those with children. It is so important that NO CHILD SHOULD GO HUNGRY – it has been proven that children who eat a regular meal have better health and greater attainment in the classroom. Can I therefore ask the cabinet member for childrens what the take up is of the school voucher scheme in Sandwell?

7(f) From Councillor Randhawa to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism

This council did a fantastic job with the Queens Jubilee last year and so many people praised this council for the efforts it made that for the people. I have had residents and businesses contact me asking about the Kings Coronation and want to know what Sandwell is planning for this event. Can you let us know what is available to the public and where they go for the information?

7(g) From Councillor Smith to the Leader of the Council

Sewage seems to be hitting the headlines on a daily basis, whether this is by pumping raw sewage through an overflow system into the sea as we have seen over and over again or by pumping it into local rivers and streams. I would simply like to ask if any of the water-courses in Sandwell are polluted by untreated sewage through an overflow?



7(h) From Councillor William Gill to the Cabinet Member for Communities

“An accident waiting to happen” and “a death trap” were both phrases used to describe the parking issue along Whitehall Road, Tipton during my recent local residents survey in the area – I would therefore like to question the Cabinet Member for Communities if it would be possible to consider making the Council car-park on Whitehall Road free – all year round – to ensure that dangerous parking is reduced so both residents and businesses feel safer?

7(i) From Councillor Fisher to the Cabinet Member for Environment Services

We all know the importance of using litter and dog waste bins, this not only helps keep our streets clean and tidy, but helps the environment and wildlife. We should be encouraging Sandwell residents to use litter and dog bins as much as possible. With the Great British Spring Clean running from 17th March to 2nd April that's being organised by Keep Britain Tidy, seems a perfect time to act.

Before I was elected back in 2021 I was campaigning for new litter bins for Charlemont with Grove Vale ward, to replace the ones that were in poor condition or vandalised. And I also asked for new bins for several locations, that haven't got any bins at all. For the past 2 years I have been told new bins will be rolled out across the borough, including Charlemont with Grove Vale, and I'm still waiting. I think the residents of Charlemont with Grove Vale have been patient and waited long enough, so can the cabinet member please give me a date, when we will see the bins that were removed, replaced in Charlemont With Grove Vale.

7(j) From Councillor Trumpeter to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth

The former Mill Pub on Beaconview Road in Charlemont with Grove Vale was demolished circa 2016, and since then the site has been a hot spot for fly tipping. Vegetation has grown to an unacceptable level and we have received many complaints from residents about this particular piece of land being an 'eye sore'. There is also a small parcel of land on Stanway Gardens which is also blighted by the same problems. Since demolition and clearance no effort has been made by the landowners to develop either site.



Could the cabinet member advise on what the council can do to ensure landlords develop within a reasonable timescale and what can we do to ensure landlords make more sites attractive in the interim?

7(k) From Councillor Chapman to the Cabinet Member for Environment Services

In every ward in Sandwell there are some areas where bulky waste items such as fridges, sofas and mattresses are dumped in front and rear gardens, blighting the area.

I would therefore like to question the Cabinet Member for Environment Services if it would be possible to consider having an annual bulk waste collection amnesty which would be free of charge for residents, which would allow such items to be removed.

