

# Report to Council

**30 January 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Written Questions
<b>Director:</b>	Brendan Arnold – Interim Director of Finance  Mike Jones – Assistant Director Legal and Assurance

The following written questions have been received: -

## **7(a) From Councillor Jag Singh to the Leader of the Council**

A recent article in the Express & Star newspaper highlighted that the Council's 'Welcoming Spaces' were open over the Christmas and new year holiday period to Sandwell's residents. Could I ask the Leader what the actual footfall of people was for each day?

## **7(b) From Councillor Keith Allcock to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways**

Despite the roll back on the ban on the sale of Petrol and Diesel motor vehicles by the current Government, it is clear that there is growing demand for electric vehicles and the infrastructure to support them. Newton Ward, that I am honoured to represent, contains a number of Low and High rise social housing properties with communal parking arrangements. Like many areas of Sandwell, there are streets where residential properties have no off road parking facility. Could the Cabinet Member please outline what are Sandwell's plans to provide and increase numbers of suitable charging points throughout the borough?



**7(c) From Councillor Nagi D Singh to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism**

Sandwell Valley is an amazing place to visit. Comments received about the events during the Christmas and new year holiday period have been very positive, and people are keen to complete the consultation of the masterplan. Can I ask the Cabinet Member what are the main proposed improvements for Sandwell Valley through the masterplan?

**7(d) From Councillor Nicky Hinchliff to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education**

I am really pleased to see that it has been agreed to begin the process to make Sandwell a Child Friendly Borough. Can you explain the process and what is involved, and what we as members of the Council can do to support this given we are all corporate parents?

**7(e) From Councillor Nicola Maycock to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA**

The Richard Nugent Centre in Wednesbury had its official launch/opening in December 2023. The centre is a benefit to the town and wider community, with a new Doctors surgery and health centre based here. Can I ask the Cabinet Member advise on what other health facilities are available within the building that will benefit the local community?

**7(f) From Councillor Ragih Muflihi to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities**

Can I congratulate the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities following the Council's recent success in its bid for a £88,000 grant for our neighbourhoods. Can I ask the Cabinet Member what this money will be used for?



**7(g) From Councillor Sukhbir Singh Gill to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA**

As well as residents who live in rented homes, residents who own their own home in Sandwell may also require help or assistance due to the cost of living and extremely high energy costs with the price cap rising from £1834 to £1928 this year. Can the Cabinet Member advise if there is any kind of help or support available from the Council, our partners, the voluntary sector or energy providers offered to contribute towards energy efficiency improvements for home owners in Sandwell?

**7(h) From Councillor Jill Tromans to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

This year sees us celebrate the 40th birthday of the Council's community alarms service, a great achievement for the service which provides lifeline to many residents in Sandwell and is a very well thought of service. Can I ask the Cabinet Member to advise whether an alarm for a vulnerable person can be fitted into privately owned or rented homes or in shared accommodation by the service? If not, does the Council signpost residents to other sources of support?

**7(i) From Councillor Rizwan Jalil to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways**

Over recent years, illegal street racing or 'cruising' has been a significant issue for Sandwell and the wider Black Country area. An injunction and enforcement action has proven effective and I would like to thank the cabinet member for his continued involvement in ensuring that Sandwell is part of the Black Country is a 'No cruise Area'.

However, we still have negligent drivers who speed on our roads and I am particularly concerned about neighbourhoods that are built up and have schools in the area. Can I ask the Cabinet Member for Highways if action could be taken to designate all school zones in the borough and in my ward Oldbury as 20mph zones please?



**7(j) From Councillor Kalebe-Nyamongo to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities**

New figures from the UK Health Security Agency show that there is a rising case of measles across the UK with higher levels seen in the West Midlands. At least 57 suspected cases were reported in the last four weeks of December. There are 167 lab confirmed cases in West Midlands with a further 88 percent likely. Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. It infects the respiratory tract and then spreads throughout the body. It can cause severe disease, complications, and even death. While measles can affect anyone, it is most common in children. Complications can include chest and ear infections, diarrhoea, encephalitis (infection of the brain) and in severe cases, potential brain damage. Complications are more likely to occur in certain groups including people with weakened immune systems, babies under one year old and pregnant women.

One of the challenges facing health professionals is also that of identifying signs (spots) in people from a minority ethnic background (especially Asians and Black people).

Can the Cabinet Member advise what measures have been put in place in Sandwell to ensure that people are aware of the symptoms/signs and what they can do to protect their children against the disease?

**7(k) From Councillor William Gill to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways**

Across Great Bridge and Tipton, residents have raised their concerns to me about parking over grass verges. This is making areas like the Newtown estate, and Glebefields Road look unsightly and more importantly, it is proving to be a hazard for local people. I've logged numerous cases through the portal and regrettably, it seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

Can the Cabinet Member please explain what steps are the Council taking to tackle the borough-wide issue of damaged grass verges due to parked vehicles?

