

Supplementary Question:

Asked by Councillor Ralph Muncer to Councillor Ian Albert (Executive Member for Finance and IT)

*“Does the Executive Member agree with the findings of the independent investigator in that the Leader of the Council breached the Code of Conduct?”*

Answer:

*“What I hope is that Cllr Muncer agrees with me is that the health and safety of Councillors and any members of the public attending in person must be a primary concern when arranging Council meetings.*

*What I hope is that Councillor Muncer agrees with me is that the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council sought at all times to actually deliver as safe an environment as possible for Members and the public attending meetings, in the face of the Omicron outbreak and Government intransigence.*

*What I hope is that Cllr Muncer shares my sadness that this Council has lost over the last 18 months four outstanding Councillors in Paul Clark, Gary Grindal, Judi Billing and, of course, more recently John Bishop who had been unwell over a long period before leaving office. All of these Councillors had serious worries about attending face to face meetings during the pandemic. Sadly, our colleague Paul Clark passed away directly as a result of Covid.*

*What I hope is that Cllr Muncer agrees with me is that we also have a number of other Councillors who have serious vulnerabilities, for whom attending a face to face meeting then was extremely challenging and could have excluded them. Councillors explained their experiences of the January 2021 Council meeting in the debate on 18th April.*

*Finally, what I hope is that Councillor Muncer agrees with me is that it is not the role of any Executive Member to comment on the outcomes and decisions of independent Standards investigations.”*