

## **ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**18 October 2018 at 6.00pm at the Council House, Walsall**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillor I. Shires (Chair)  
Councillor B. Allen  
Councillor S. Coughlan  
Councillor S. Craddock  
Councillor C. Creaney  
Councillor L. Jeavons  
Councillor C. Jones  
Councillor W. Rasab  
Councillor L. Rattigan  
Councillor G. Singh Sohal

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Towe Education and Skills.

**Other Member Present** Councillor Worrall.

<b>Officers Present</b>	Simon Neilson	Executive Director – Economy and Environment
	Steve Pretty	Head of Planning, Engineering and Transportation
	Steve McAleavy	Director of Customer Experience at Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)
	Matt Crowton	Transportation Major Projects and Strategy Manager
	Matthew Powis	Democratic Services Officer

<b>Other Attendees Present</b>	Philip James	Lead Petitioner
	Carl Downes	Petitioner

### **22/18 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors B. Chattha and Hicken.

### **23/18 Substitution**

Councillor Rattigan attended on behalf of Councillor Chattha.

### **24/18 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

**25/18 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to consider in private session.

**26/18 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018 copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

**27/18 Areas of focus – 2018/19.**

The Committee considered its areas of focus and the forward plans of Walsall Council and the Black Country Joint Executive Committee.

The Executive Director – Economy and Environment highlighted to the Committee that the Black Country Executive Joint Committee would be considering the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Assurance Framework in December 2018 following updated guidance from Central Government on the future governance arrangements of LEP.

Members requested that the Committee receive a presentation from Chief Executive of the Black Country Consortium at a future meeting of the Committee.

**Resolved:**

- 1. The areas of focus 2018/19 and forward plans be noted;**
- 2. That the Committee receive a presentation from the Black Country Consortium on the Black Country LEP Assurance Framework at a future meeting of the Committee.**

**28/18 Petition: Weight Restriction on Barns Lane, Walsall.**

The Committee considered a petition asking for the implementation of a weight restriction on Barns Lane, Walsall which had received more than 500 signatures. The Chair outlined the format for the item and invited the petition organisers to introduce their petition.

Philip James (Lead Petitioner) introduced the petition which called for the implementation of a weight restriction at Barns Lane, Walsall as increased Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) traffic had been having an impact on the narrow roads whilst travelling through residential area. He highlighted that the following alternative routes were available to HGV drivers to avoid Barns Lane:-

To/From the A461: Westgate –Wharf Approach – Stubbers Green Road – Brickyard Road – Boatman’s Lane – A461.

To/From the A454 Walsall Road: Westgate –Dumblederry Lane, Middlemore Lane West – Bosty Lane – A454.

Councillor Worrall highlighted to the Committee that the area had seen an increase in HGV traffic for years and the Council needed to be proactive with traffic management due to local resident concerns.

A Member sought clarification on disruption to local residents. Philip James clarified that houses were close to the road and residents had faced vibrations and noise pollution from HGV traffic. He expressed concerns at the numbers of HGVs driving recklessly and causing damage to parked cars.

Carl Downes highlighted to the Committee that during an average day, Barns Lane receives over 150 HGVs and buses. He expressed concerns that the situation would worsen over time.

Following the presentation from the Lead Petitioners, a question and answer session took place as follows:-

- A Member expressed concern that enforcement of any weight restriction signage proposal would not be enforced by Police due to insufficient resources. Philip James highlighted that the road lacked an official restriction sign and the Police would be responsible for any enforcement once implemented;
- The Committee was informed of a scheme by Solihull MBC which closed local roads to traffic during school drop off and pick up times to improve safety and air quality. In response, Carl Downes highlighted that local children used Barns Lane to walk to a nearby School and would benefit from a similar scheme;
- The Council recognised that the area was mixed with industrial and residential development. However, the Council had a duty to ensure that there was fair traffic management and adequate road safety standards in all parts of the Borough;
- The Council had previously lobbied Government for traffic enforcement powers to ease pressure on the Police;
- A Member requested a general survey to be carried out in the area to identify problems faced by residents.

The Head of Planning, Engineering and Transportation highlighted that a consultation with local residents and assessment on the road would be required before any final decision by the Portfolio Holder. In addition, he clarified that the assessment would take into consideration all vehicular traffic and vibrations.

Following the debate it was moved by Councillor S. Coughlan and duly seconded by Councillor Jeavons that:-

*That, the Head of Planning, Engineering and Transportation commence a survey and consultation for the implementation of a weight restriction on Barns Lane, Walsall.*

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That, the report be noted;**
- 2. That, the Head of Planning, Engineering and Transportation commence a survey and consultation for the implementation a weight restriction on Barns Lane, Walsall.**

**29/18 Strategic Transport Policy and Delivery in Walsall and the West Midlands.**

The Committee considered a report on the Strategic Transport Policy and delivery of transportation in Walsall and the West Midlands.

The Transportation Major Projects and Strategy Manager updated the Committee on transportation matters in the Borough which included:-

- An overview of transport policy and travel data across Walsall and the West Midlands;
- How transport was contributing to regeneration investment across the Black Country;
- An update on SPRINT (Rapid Bus Transport) proposals between Walsall and Birmingham;
- How the Council was promoting sustainable transport and low-emissions vehicles;
- How the Council was tackling air quality issues around schools.

He informed the Committee that data from Transport for West Midlands (TfWM's) Travel Trends in 2017 confirmed that Walsall St. Paul's Bus Station was one of the busiest bus stations in the region accommodating 8.3 million passengers per annum. In addition, the Bradford Place Bus Interchange accommodated 4.5 million passengers and Walsall Rail Station accommodated 1.4 million passengers.

It was noted that regeneration work had commenced with neighbouring Black Country Authorities which focused on creating hubs with residential and employment opportunities linking with transportation. In addition, the Black Country Authorities recognised the importance of electric vehicles in future transportation and air quality strategies. The City of Wolverhampton Council had trailed Council owned electric vehicle fleets as a way of reducing air pollution in the City.

The Head of Planning, Engineering and Transportation informed the Committee that the Borough had air quality stations which monitored air quality around certain strategic points. He confirmed that there were no pollution exceedance

levels in the Borough and the Council continued to promote the use of sustainable transportation with businesses and residents.

The Director for Customer Experience at Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) presented an overview of the SPRINT project. It was noted that the consultation on SPRINT had concluded and results on the outcome would be finalised in November 2018. He highlighted that general feedback had been positive from Walsall residents on the proposals for the A34 route.

A Member requested that the results of the consultation be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

A question and answer session took place. The session is summarised as follows:

- Concerns were raised by the Committee regarding air pollution around schools in the Borough. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills confirmed that the Cabinet would be informed of concerns by the Committee and highlighted that the issue was a national problem not unique to Walsall. A Member requested that issues with air quality around schools be included within the remit of the Air Quality Working Group;
- A Member highlighted that schools should encourage other methods of transportation during drop off times such as biking and walking;
- A Member informed the Committee that the Council had been involved with 'Movement for Growth: The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan' which oversaw joined up working with transportation arrangements and the announcement of Willenhall and Darlaston Rail Stations;
- A Member congratulated the Economy and Environment teams in developing a regeneration strategy which focused on connectivity whilst promoting the Borough as a place to invest, live, work and play;
- The Chair highlighted that the Borough received a high footfall of people into the Town Centre which opened up advantages for investment and regeneration;
- The Chair highlighted that he would like to see an extension of SPRINT into Bloxwich and linking into Willenhall North, Wednesfield and Wolverhampton;
- A Member requested that the Committee be provided with the following background papers:-
  - a. Transport in Walsall: 2017 – 2022;
  - b. Movement for Growth: The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (West Midlands Combined Authority);
  - c. Movement for Growth: 2026 Delivery Plan for Transport (West Midlands Combined Authority);
  - d. Black Country Core Strategy.
- The Head of Planning, Engineering and Transportation informed the Committee that following submission of a targeted feasibility study (TFS) to investigate proposals on Nitrogen Dioxide reduction it was confirmed that the Council had received positive feedback from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). In addition, the Government confirmed that the Council had demonstrated a challenging study model and noted M6 Junction 10 upgrade proposals.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and requested that the Council ensure that the public be informed of regeneration activity and sustainable transportation options in the Borough.

**Resolved:-**

- 1. That, the report be noted;**
- 2. That, the outcome of the SPRINT Consultation be presented to a future meeting of the Committee;**
- 3. That the Committee be provided with the following background papers:-**
  - a. Transport in Walsall: 2017 – 2022;**
  - b. Movement for Growth: The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (West Midlands Combined Authority);**
  - c. Movement for Growth: 2026 Delivery Plan for Transport (West Midlands Combined Authority);**
  - d. Black Country Core Strategy.**
- 4. That, the Council publicise regeneration activity in Walsall including the promotion of sustainable transportation options in the Borough;**
- 5. That, air quality around Schools in the Borough be included within the remit of the Air Quality Working Group.**

**30/18 Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 22 November 2018.

**Termination of Meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.29p.m.

Signed: .....

Date: .....