

Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2018/19 for Community, Leisure & Culture Portfolio, and Environment & Transport Portfolio

Ward(s) All

Portfolio: Councillor K Hussain – Community, Leisure & Culture
Councillor L Jeavons – Environment & Transport

Summary of report

This report outlines the portfolio plans for future service delivery for the Community, Leisure & Culture, and Environment & Transport portfolios. This includes Cabinet's draft revenue budget proposals and draft capital programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19 for consultation, for the panel to consider and make recommendations to Cabinet if they so choose.

Recommendation

The panel are recommended to:-

1. Consider the portfolio plans for future service delivery, and draft revenue proposals in this report, and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.
2. Review and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate, on the draft capital programme for services within the remit of this panel.

Background papers

Various financial working papers.

Reason for scrutiny

To enable consultation and scrutiny of the draft portfolio plans, draft revenue budget proposals, and draft capital programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19.

Resource and legal considerations

Cabinet on 29 October 2014 presented their draft portfolio plans on future service delivery, including the draft revenue budget and draft capital programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19 for consultation.

The full budget papers can be accessed with this link:
<http://cmis/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=2260>

The report includes the context in which the draft budget has been set, including the reference to council priorities and consultation arrangements.

Attached to this report are the portfolio plans applicable to the remit of this panel.

Citizen impact

The budget is aligned with council priorities. The report sets out the plans for future service delivery for the services within the remit of this panel.

Environmental impact

The impact on the environment is considered in all budget / capital programme proposals.

Performance management

Financial performance is considered alongside service performance. Managers are required to deliver their services within budget and there are comprehensive arrangements in place to monitor and manage this.

Equality Implications

Service managers have regard to equalities in setting budgets / capital programmes and delivering services. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken as required prior to final recommendations being made to Council on the budget.

Consultation

This is a specific meeting for scrutiny to consider the draft revenue budget and draft capital programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19.

Consultation is an integral part of the budget process and arrangements are in hand to consult with a wide range of stakeholders (i.e. councillors, residents, service users, business sector, voluntary and community organisations, etc.). This is outlined in the budget report, which includes the finding from phase 1 of public/staff information gathering.

An update on feedback from phase 2 – consultation - will include scrutiny feedback and will be presented to Cabinet on 17th December.

Any changes to these proposals, following public consultation, will be reported to a future meeting of the panel, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft budget proposals

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PORTFOLIO: COMMUNITY, LEISURE & CULTURE**Summary of services within the portfolio**

- Area Partnerships and Community Development
- Bereavement & Registration - Streetly Crematorium, 8 Cemeteries (Bentley, Bloxwich, James Bridge, North Walsall, Ryecroft, Streetly, Willenhall Lawn and Wood Street Cemetery), Registration service (Births, deaths and marriages), shared Black Country Coroner service (with Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton), Post Mortem service through Walsall Manor Hospital
- Sport & Leisure - Oak Park Leisure Centre, Bloxwich Leisure Centre, Gala Baths, Darlaston Swimming Pool, Sneyd Watersports Centre, Walsall (Aldridge) Airport Environmental & Outdoor Education Centre, Sports & Health Development, Town Hall Management (Walsall & Darlaston), Development and Box Office, Behavioural Improvement team
- Catering - Management and delivery of the schools' catering service to 39 schools across the Borough, corporate catering/committee room teas, the Town Hall Restaurant and the 2nd floor Civic Centre café
- Technical, Safety & Admin - Overall health and safety management within Leisure & Community Health, administrative and business support
- Green Spaces - Management and development of parks, open spaces and local nature reserves, play areas, urban forestry, allotments and community gardens.
- Grounds Maintenance: grounds, maintenance of parks, highways and public open spaces including tree planting and maintenance, cemetery maintenance and burials.
- Libraries - Operating through a network of 16 branch libraries, mobile library services and a school's library support service
- Museum services - Walsall Leather Museum and Walsall Museum
- Archive and local history services
- Arts services - The New Art Gallery, Forest Arts centre and music service & the Creative Development Team
- Adult and Community Learning - Apprenticeship Training and Training to support local Companies: through Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC)
- Regulatory Services - Trading Standards and Licensing, Environmental Health & Community Safety

Portfolio Objectives/Outcomes/Purpose

The objective for communities is for devolution through an area partnership model, and to create and sustain a vibrant voluntary and community sector. The outcomes we will achieve for communities and neighbourhoods are that:

- Communities will be more cohesive
- The voluntary sector will be further developed
- Residents will feel they can influence decisions locally

We will address anti-social behaviour through more integrated work with partners including the police, trade associations and the third sector.

The Leisure and Community Health Service seeks to maintain and improve the health and well-being of all Walsall's residents. This is delivered through the provision of a range of indoor and outdoor sports, leisure and recreation opportunities, the delivery of nutritional school meals, and ensuring the availability of sports and health development, outdoor education and behavioural improvement.

The objective is to get more people, more active, more often, becoming healthier, being happier whilst also achieving a variety of health improvements such as weight loss, smoking cessation, less stress and fewer days off sick.

To help deliver this objective we will pilot a free school meals service for 8-11 year old in areas where deprivation is highest.

We will continue to promote a green environment throughout the borough and green spaces, particularly parks, will be well maintained and clean.

We will work with the third sector on a Trust-based approach to ensure our parks, green spaces and leisure facilities have a bright future.

Libraries Heritage and Arts will offer residents of all ages a wide range of facilities and cultural experiences to use and experience and help to make Walsall a place that they can enjoy and be proud to live in. Services will also offer children and young people opportunities to learn, discover and develop to fulfil their full potential.

In line with the priority to support business, libraries will continue to offer access to up to date business information and encourage new business by offering small business start up packs. Through free access to computers and basic skills courses they will help people develop their learning and skills to help them into employment.

In line with the council's commitment to improve residents' prospects to secure and retain work, manage their own health and wellbeing and be active citizens, the College offers a range of courses that address skills for life, skills for employment, and skills for active citizenship as well as Apprenticeship training designed and delivered in collaboration with local employers.

Financial summary

Table 1 details the revenue cash limits for the Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio for the next four years. Full details of savings and efficiencies for 2015/16 and 2016/17 are shown in table 2.

Table 1: Community, Leisure & Culture Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	19.152	16.349	15.234	14.413
Base budget adjustment	(0.126)	(0.089)	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies - <i>see table 2 below</i>	(2.477)	(0.826)	(0.821)	(0.391)
Revised cash limit	16.549	15.434	14.413	14.022

Investment for pay, pensions and contractual inflation are made centrally, and will be allocated to services following confirmation of the final savings proposals.

Cash limits for 2017/18 and 2018/19 are based on indicative savings required, as government funding allocations are not yet available. High level service reviews are underway, the development of which will continue. Once the Spending Review 2015 is published, these will be reviewed.

Capital investment for the Community, Leisure & Culture Portfolio over the next four years is £27.722m. Full details of capital investment are shown in table 3.

2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Total
19.941	7.701	0.040	0.040	27.722

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

Table 2 details the revenue saving and efficiencies for the Community, Leisure & Culture Portfolio for both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
47	Area Partnerships – removal of communications budget	0.020	
48	Area Partnerships – removal of 4 Support Officer posts	0.107	
49	Area Partnerships – removal of Area Partnerships Project Officer post	0.047	
50	Community Development – deletion of manager post	0.050	
51	Community Development – reduction in support to Community Associations – removal of building management budgets which support 8 CA's in council owned buildings and a 50% reduction in community grants to voluntary and community sector organisations (Policy)	0.080	0.100
52	Regulatory Services – loss of 2 Trading Standards posts	0.061	
53	Regulatory Services – 65% reduction in administrative support	0.110	
54	Regulatory Services – restructure of Environmental Health, Enforcement and Community Safety Officer roles		0.120

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
55	Regulatory Services – deletion of posts in Environmental Health	0.030	0.030
56	Bereavement & Registration – increase fees and charges by 3%	0.090	0.091
57	Allotments – 50% reduction in grants to allotment associations and similar (Policy)	0.014	
58	Green spaces – Green Space Management, Countryside Management and Park Rangers Activities – reduction, including the deletion of posts, cessation of events such as bonfires, Easter egg hunts, fun days, loss of green flag parks status, reduction in parks repairs and maintenance, reduction in materials etc (Policy)	0.363	
59	Grounds Maintenance – reduce tractor mowing areas resulting in longer grass where there is no play provision, reduce staffing at Arboretum, cease bedding plants, reduce grass cutting, and reduction in posts (Policy)	0.524	
60	Tree Management / Urban Forestry – reduction in posts and deletion of new tree budget (Policy)	0.136	
61	Catering – remove subsidy to town hall restaurant	0.004	0.004
62	Sports & Leisure – cease outdoor adventure service (Policy)	0.097	
63	Sport & Leisure – increase leisure centre income by 3% from additional usage		0.017
64	Creative Development Team – restructure of team	0.086	
65	Libraries – closure of 5 libraries in 2015/16 (Beechdale, Pheasey, South Walsall, Streetly, Walsall Wood) and 3 in 2016/17 (Blakenall, New Invention, Rushall) (Policy)	0.385	0.181
66	Local History Centre – reduction of service to meet statutory requirements only (Policy)	0.069	
67	Museums – closure of Walsall Museum (Policy)	0.070	
68	New Art Gallery – deletion of Head of Collections post and replacing it with Collections Curator	0.015	
69	New Art Gallery – reduce winter closing hours by closing 1 hour earlier for 20 weeks between Tuesday and Friday (Policy)	0.005	
70	New Art Gallery – reduction in maintenance budget	0.005	
71	Forest Arts – reduce contracts for music teachers, reduce loan stock of musical instruments, increase ticket process, and reduce marketing	0.027	
72	Forest Arts – use of alternative funding for festive decorations	0.039	
73	Forest Arts – school music price increase	0.015	
74	Walsall Adult & Community College – reduce the training budget for Council staff (NVQ assessment centre)	0.028	0.017
75	Neighbourhood wide review of community activity		0.266
	Total	2.477	0.826

Where draft savings options are denoted as ‘policy’ changes in the above table, these will be supported by further details as shown on the following pages.

Proposed capital investment

Table 3 details the capital investment for the Community, Leisure & Culture Portfolio over the next four years.

Table 3: Community, Leisure & Culture Portfolio Capital Investment 2015/16 – 2018/19					
Capital Project	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Source of funding
Libraries Universal Digital Offer – to enhance technology	0.055	0.055			Council
Active Living – Oak Park & Bloxwich Leisure Centres	14.970	1.239			Council
Active Living – Oak Park & Bloxwich Leisure Centres	1.562	0.129			External
Pro-active Memorial Safety	0.060	0.050	0.040	0.040	Council
Leamore Park additional fencing	0.014				Council
A Single Library Management System	0.210				Council
Walsall Gala Baths refurbishment	1.000				Council
Heritage Centre for Walsall		6.228			External (with match funded element)
Aldridge Airport – resurfacing of access road & car park	2.000				External (with match funded element)
Beacon Lodge, Community Activity Centre	0.020				External (with match funded element)
Barr Beacon Event Arena	0.020				External (with match funded element)
Allotments & Community Gardens	0.005				External (with match funded element)
Outdoor fitness equipment	0.025				External (with match funded element)
Total	19.941	7.701	0.040	0.040	

In addition to the above, there is also the proposed strategic scheme for the Bentley Employability and Learning Hub, to be funded from earmarked capital receipts. This will be subject to a separate business case to be reported to Cabinet, and will be included in the latest update of the draft capital programme when confirmed.

A provision has also been set aside for match funding where there is a potential to gain external funding to contribute to a scheme. The following schemes are forecast, dependent on agreement from the external funding body:

- Heritage centre for Walsall
- New Art Gallery building maintenance
- Walsall Arboretum Extension resurfacing of footway link from car park
- Aldridge Airport resurfacing of access road and car park
- Beacon Lodge community activity centre
- Barr Beacon events arena
- Allotments and community gardens
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Forest Arts Centre hall conversion

A reserve list of schemes is also identified to start should funds become available in year. The following schemes are forecast –

- Willenhall Lawn Cemetery extension
- Local History Centre upgrade of computers and equipment
- Darlaston Swimming Pool refurbishment
- Walsall country park
- Security improvement programme

Draft Proposal – reference 51: Community Development - Reduction in Support to Community Associations

Estimated Net Saving		Implementation cost
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	
£80,000	£100,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Reduction in support to Community Associations. Eight of Walsall's Community Associations receive funding for building management, where they operate from council owned buildings. This funding ensures that the buildings are opened and closed to enable a range of activities to take place throughout the week/weekend.
- 1.2 The saving also involves a 50% reduction in Community Grants to Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

- *Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people*
 - Community Associations offer a range of opportunities for people to take part in healthy activities, such as yoga, zumba, aerobics
 - The centres provide activities/events for members of the community that can prevent social isolation
- *Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities*
 - Local groups use the centres as a place to meet, e.g. Friends of the Park
 - Area Partnerships use these local venues for meetings and events that involve local communities
- *Improving learning and life children for children and young people*
 - Activities for children and young people are provided through youth clubs and offer a base for Integrated Youth Services to provide activities

This saving would mean that the centres may not be open as often, or for the number of hours per day, that they currently operate. This will mean that less activities will be available and the centres will not generate or be able to generate existing levels of income. For 2016/17, proposals are being developed to identify how the saving will be made.

2.2 Customers

Encouragement will be provided to community organisations to pursue alternative funding to assist in the delivery of local services. Funding will be made available by the Council to assist groups to do this.

The potential impact on customers is that the buildings may not be able to be opened/closed as funding for the 'caretaking' element is withdrawn. There may be potential impact on the accessibility of the centres and security.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

There is no direct impact on employees of the council.

2.4 Partners

There is no direct impact on partners. However, it may be that partners fund activity that is delivered from the centres and this may be impacted upon by any accessibility issues.

2.5 Economic Implications

Some centres offer skills-based training which presents communities with opportunities to improve skills and job prospects.

2.6 Environmental Implications

None.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

If the centres are unable to open, then a signposting to other activities may be required.

2.8 Other Council Services

Some centres are used as elections bases, Councillor surgeries and other advice/support/information provision across a range of service areas.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 The risks are that if the centres do not open, there will be fewer activities available for communities which may impact on their health and well-being. Buildings may not be secure and become vandalised. Potential loss of a community asset.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

- 4.1 Consultation will be undertaken with the Community Associations, users of the centres, organisations who use the centres.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 None.

6. Equality Implications

- 6.1 An EQiA has been completed.

Draft Proposal – reference 57: Reduction in Grants to Allotment Associations

Estimated Net Saving	
2015 / 2016	Implementation cost
£13,790	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 The allotment associations' grants in 2014/15 were £27,580. The saving proposal is to reduce the grants by 50% to £13,790.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

- *Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people*
It is important that Walsall Council continues to support and invest in allotment provision, as allotments provide space for improving health and wellbeing in terms of improved diet, exercise and nutrition, and as a social space, enabling them to share skills and reduce isolation.

With reduced funding, allotment associations will still require guidance and support to help manage their allotments as community assets, and source any available funding.

A grant reduction would result in a reduction in financial support which means groups will have to a) utilise reserves b) increase rents only to a 'reasonable rate' under legislation, c) reduce subsidies/discount and d) reduce investment, until and unless suitable grant funding/external funding is sought.

Associations will still require guidance and support from the Council on governance, management, finance and grant funding. A proposal is being developed to ensure that the allocation of grants is equal and accessible to all (including Darlaston, Willenhall Bentley and Clayhanger).

- *Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities.*
Over time, reduced investment in infrastructure could have a negative effect as fencing and security requires replacement. It is important that allotments are safe and inclusive for communities to grow food.

Groups will increasingly have to build capacity to seek and source external funding. If groups do not engage in this process, the fabric and infrastructure of sites could decline which might have a direct impact on security for tenancies and may contribute to decline. Individuals are less likely to become tenants on sites where there is poor infrastructure and facilities.

2.2 **Customers**

Local authorities have a statutory requirement to provide allotments. Community groups work in partnership with Walsall Council to help administer, manage and provide governance on site. Without volunteer support allotments would be hard to sustain.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

None.

2.4 **Partners**

The council works in partnership with 6 Allotment Associations across 24 sites. There are no implications for other partners.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

Allotments provide a valuable contribution to household budget for those on limited income.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

Allotments which are neglected or those without community involvement can have a negative impact on the local environment through, for example, dereliction and rubbish.

If associations have grants withdrawn they will have to take immediate measures to ensure that revenue from rent covers expenditure, expenditure is reduced, or by using any reserves they may have. Council managed sites do not have a budget for skips or rubbish removal. If associations choose not to increase rent, they will have to be vigilant in management and monitoring of rubbish on tenants' plots.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

Allotments provide key outcomes for health and wellbeing. Their long term management, maintenance and governance depend on effective partnerships between the council and local communities. Long term reduction of grants could lead to an increase in rents, the need for more vigilance in site monitoring and support being sought from the Council to access outside funding. If there is a decline in allotment provision, those with poor health or disability may be less likely to take on plots which may be overgrown.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 Without support/funding, there is an element of risk of allotments deteriorating. Associations require ongoing guidance, support and assistance with management, governance and external funding applications to enable them to forward plan and reduce the risk of deterioration in the condition of infrastructure such as fencing, footpaths etc.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 All allotment and community garden groups have been provided with council postcards and a letter regarding the forthcoming budget, asking for their ideas and suggestions.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Legal Services has suggested that raising rents or removing subsidies (which would result in higher rents) can have legal implications. There have been some examples of successful legal challenges, where local authorities had only considered 'economic' implications when either setting allotment rent or reducing allotment subsidies. However the proposals being developed to guide grant allocation will seek to ensure that a centralised budget effectively manages the legal or financial impacts. This will allow all eligible groups, including Darlaston, Willenhall, Bentley and Clayhanger, to apply based on eligibility criteria.

Allotment legislation states that rent increases have to be 'reasonable' and there have been cases of this being successfully challenged.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Allotment sites are located in all areas, and are inclusive to all ages, genders and cultures. However, if groups are unable to access funding to maintain infrastructure, less investment could potentially, in the long term, have a negative effect on less physically able groups (e.g. good pathway maintenance, signage).

Draft Proposal – reference 58: Reduction in Green Space Management, Countryside Management and Park Rangers Activities

Estimated Net Saving	
2015 / 2016	Implementation cost
£362,708	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Green Spaces and Countryside Management currently cover 63 parks and play areas and 31 countryside sites over a seven day week period including public and bank holidays. The team consists of 18 employees.

1.2 The proposal is to remove five posts which would reduce the team by 28%. It will be delivered by removing a vacant senior post, voluntary or compulsory redundancies of the other four posts by April 2015. Other savings include a reduction in community events and activities to achieve a saving of £362,708 in 2015/16, as shown below, with the consequences being:

- Senior Manager – No impact; the post is vacant and the associated work has been incorporated within the remaining resource.
- Strategic Development Officer – Our ability to manage, develop and implement strategies, procedures and initiatives will be reduced. We will be less able to prepare maintenance and management plans, seek external funding and generate income, liaise with community groups, undertake public consultation and implement and monitor enhancement projects.
- Park Rangers/Community Liaison Officers – We will be less able to liaise and engage with members of the public, including reduced education to improve recycling and reduce contamination. There will be a reduced Park Ranger presence in parks during evening and weekend periods. We will be able to undertake less environmental enforcement, environmental education and fewer recycling initiatives resulting in less public awareness and appreciation of environmental issues. Our ability to carry out environmental and health education programmes and promote the use of outdoor classrooms and facilities will be also compromised. Liaison with Friends groups and local communities will only be possible on a reactive basis only.
- Senior Countryside Ranger - The landscape and nature conservation values of green spaces will diminish, with reduced opportunities to assist with voluntary conservation work and we could not offer work experience placements to students. The risk of failing to meet health and safety requirements in respect of, for example, site maintenance and repairing defects will increase but the Council will endeavour to ensure that it continues to meet its statutory obligations. Footpath maintenance and public access to sites may be compromised.
- Events – Events such as bonfires, Easter egg hunts, fun days, etc will cease.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be a negative impact on the council's priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "the Walsall Plan". The impact of this saving will be on the following:

- Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people
- Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities
- Improving learning and life children for children and young people

There will be a negative impact in terms of:

- Less attractive parks and community events for improving the health and wellbeing for older people.

- An increased risk of anti-social behaviour in parks especially at weekends and evenings.
- A decrease in the number of environmental and health education programmes. Reduced promotion and use of outdoor classrooms and facilities for children and young people.

2.2 **Customers**

This will have a direct impact on the Council's statutory duty to promote health and wellbeing to the general public of Walsall.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

The loss of posts would most likely be compulsory redundancies involving the following posts:

- 1 x Senior Manager – vacant
- 1 x Strategic Development Officer, 2 x Park Rangers/Community Liaison Officers, 1 x Senior Countryside Ranger – voluntary or compulsory redundancy situations.

2.4 **Partners**

Local Friends groups and other community organisations take a close interest in many of our parks and open spaces and will have the opportunity to offer their views in response to the planned public consultation on the Council's budget proposals. The Council will work with them in the meantime to encourage and facilitate an increased role in relation to the borough's green spaces.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

This saving may have a negative impact on Walsall's visitor economy due to the reduction in the number of community events to encourage visitors.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

Less attractive parks and reduced staffing levels over a weekend and evening periods increasing the risks of anti-social behaviour including vandalism.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

This saving may have an effect on the council's statutory duty to promote health and wellbeing because of the reduced staffing levels and a reduction in the number of environmental and health education programmes.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

The reduction in staffing levels within Green Spaces Management and Park Rangers team will have an impact on the services provided to Public Health for the promotion of health and wellbeing.

3. **Associated Risks**

3.1 Associated risks are as follows:

- There is an increased risk that the council will be unable to complete ongoing grant schemes. Agreements for such schemes include terms and conditions that allow funders to claim back grant aid paid over previous years. Not completing agreements might result in a failure to secure budgeted income of £23,871 so putting additional pressure on expenditure budgets. Furthermore, it might adversely affect the council's ability to secure further external funding.
- Antisocial behaviour, vandalism, litter, etc may increase, resulting in greater numbers of complaints against the council.
- The council could lose its current Green Flag awards.
- Our ability to contribute towards education and health and wellbeing priorities and to tackle obesity and waste will be affected.
- As a result of fewer Park Rangers/Community Liaison Officers there will be less community engagement and liaison on recycling initiatives and the level of contamination in recycling waste is likely to increase. This will reduce income/increase waste disposal costs. This has been calculated to be 1% increase in contamination which is equivalent to approximately £20,000.
- There will be an increase in complaints and possibly claims against the council (e.g. slips, trips and falls on green spaces) as a result of increased anti-social behaviour, litter and vandalism.
- The council will be less able to liaise and engage with members of the public, including reduced education to improve recycling and reduce contamination.
- There will be a reduced Park Ranger presence in parks during evenings and weekends. We will be able to undertake less environmental enforcement, environmental education programmes and the use of outdoor classrooms and facilities will be also compromised. Liaison with Friends groups and local communities will only be possible on a reactive basis only.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the council's overall consultation exercise in October 2014.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The council would be less able to meet various legal obligations relating to countryside and parks management e.g. Biodiversity Duty (all public bodies must consider how to conserve biodiversity in all their actions), management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and legal agreements covering management of certain sites. As such there will be an increased risk of having to defend legal actions against the council. There will be an increased risk of failing to meet Health and Safety obligations as referred to in 3 above.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been prepared.

Draft Proposal – reference 59: Reduction in Grounds Maintenance Related Services

Estimated Net Saving	
2015 / 2016	Implementation cost
£524,060	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

1.1 Clean & Green services undertake all grounds maintenance operations to parks, open spaces, highways and town/district centres across the borough. This includes a range of tasks such as grass maintenance, shrub borders, hedges, weed control, seasonal bedding, sports pitch maintenance, cemetery maintenance and burial. The service area deploys 90 FTE staff on grounds front line operations throughout the year plus seasonal labour during peaks in the summer season. It is a non-statutory service.

1.2 The proposal is to reduce grass cutting operations, cease all seasonal bedding, floral displays and barrier baskets. This will be achieved by:

- **Tractor Gang Mowing** - Reduction in grass cutting on large grass areas which are currently cut by tractor with a gang unit. The frequency of cutting large grass areas, currently mown on a fortnightly basis, will be significantly reduced except for popular pedestrian access routes including those used regularly by dog walkers etc.

Sites identified will be of a nature where by sports pitch provision and play areas are not in situ. E.g. Pouk Hill, Reedswood Park, Delves Common, Walstead Road, areas of Aldridge Airport, Glastonbury open space, Green lane open space, Kent Road reclamation ground, Ross Farm open space, Clayhanger Common, Brownhills Common, areas of Pelsall and Nest Common, Pelsall North Common, areas of Barr Beacon, areas of Pleck Park, areas of Palfrey Park, Rhys Thomas open space. This list is not exhaustive and other sites may be identified.

- **Walsall Arboretum** - Reduction in physical site presence within Walsall Arboretum, however this work load and hours will be supplemented by mobile operations such as grass cutting in recognition of the Heritage Lottery Fund's requirements. Impact will be to district operations provided by the Grange depot facility.
- **Seasonal Bedding** – cessation of all seasonal bedding funded by Clean and Green Services in parks, town and district centres including tower and barrier baskets. This service is predominantly provided by third party contractors. Sites include but not limited to:

Walsall town centre, Town Hall window boxes, Aldridge district centre, Brownhills district centre, Bloxwich district centre, Darlaston district centre, Willenhall district centre, Streetly Crematorium, Mellish Road / Lichfield Road islands, Walsall Arboretum, Kings Hill Park, St Lawrence Church, Pinson Road war memorial, Darlaston war memorial, George Rose Park, Bloxwich fountain garden, Aldridge cenotaph, Pelsall High Street, King George V playing fields, Rushall cenotaph, The Hollies home, Palfrey Park, Dilke island, Ryecroft cemetery, Bentley cemetery, James Bridge cemetery, Willenhall Lawn cemetery.

- **Grass cutting** - Reduction in district estate and parks grass cutting frequency during the summer season between April and October. Cessation in use of seasonal agency staff during this peak period. Workloads will be resourced with full time Environmental Operatives, resulting in re-alignment in works such as hedge cutting, deferring the operation to winter maintenance programme to free up resource to concentrate on core grass cutting services during this period. Fortnightly (14 day grass cutting cycle) likely to reduce to 17 to 20 day grass cutting frequency.

Overall impact – the Borough will be less floral and aesthetically pleasing than at present. The saving can be implemented with effect from 1 April 2015.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be a negative impact on the council's priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "the Walsall Plan" in particular the "Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities" part of the plan. There will be a negative impact on the appearance of local neighbourhoods and district centres and an increased risk of anti-social behaviour if areas show increased evidence of decline and lack of maintenance.

2.2 **Customers**

Potential increase in customer demands for service and complaints about service standards. This saving may encourage anti-social behaviour in relation to its impact on the appearance of neighbourhoods which could show signs of neglect if areas appear unkempt due to longer grass, littering, and, possibly, fly tipping.

It may impact on service awards for excellence in relation to In Bloom, Green Flag awards etc. which are supported and assisted by the community.

It may impact on the overall appearance and perceived cleanliness of neighbourhoods and pride in local communities.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

Assistant Manager– redundancy process, reduction in one managerial post.
Minimal impact to service delivery, when taking into account associated front
line service reductions.

Environmental operatives x 3 – 2 staff from parks teams and 1 employee from district teams. Staff reductions should be managed through vacancy management and therefore no redundancy applies at present.
Agency staff x 10 – reduction in utilisation of seasonal agency staff from April to October each year to meet peaks in work demands.

2.4 **Partners**

The Arboretum refurbishment has been assisted by a grant from HLF and the Council will ensure that the grounds maintenance saving does not result in a contravention of grant conditions.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

There may be a negative impact in relation to the attractiveness of town and district centres to potential investors.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

Likely to be a beneficial impact in relation to the encouragement of naturalised areas, flora and fauna, wildlife and insect pollination although this could be construed as negative by some residents.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

None identified.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

Reduced tractor mowing:

- Fires in long spells of dry weather during the summer season.
- Increase in the amount of litter through the creation of litter traps.
- Possible increase in fly tipping.
- Possible increase in anti-social behaviour.
- Residents living in proximity – complaints and contact with council

Arboretum:

- Potential conflict of work demands and pressures and deployment of resources as a result of the split management of Arboretum.
- Potential impact on maintenance standards.
- Adverse impact on the perceptions of the friends group and residents more generally.

Cease all bedding:

- Less attractive district and town centres. May have an indirect impact on footfall and visitors to the borough and therefore on levels of trade.
- Complaints from residents albeit that some of these may be short term

Reduce grass cutting:

- Increased complaints as a result of longer grass during peak periods and the later commencement of grass cutting.
 - Risk of highway hedges infringing sight lines at key junctions although the Council will address any such problems that may arise as a priority.
 - May generate complaints from residents e.g. unsightly hedges, litter

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 It is planned that consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the council's overall consultation exercise in October/November 2014 in order to seek views of residents.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Initial screening suggests there are no or minimal equalities implications and therefore a full EqIA is not required.

Draft Proposal – reference 60: Reduction in Tree Maintenance and Urban Forestry Services

Estimated Net Saving	
2015 / 2016	Implementation cost
£135,696	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Clean & Green services undertake all tree maintenance and management in parks, open spaces, highways and town/district centres across the borough. This includes a range of tasks such as tree planting, cyclical maintenance programme, re-active work e.g. storm damage and out of hours' services, sustainable timber management and income generation from log sales.
- 1.2 The tree service covers aspects such as tending to dead, diseased and dangerous trees, good housekeeping through routine pruning and maintenance of tree stock, increasing canopy cover by tree planting initiatives to provide sustainability, and environmental benefits.
- 1.3 The proposal is to reduce tree operations by 23% from 9 front line staff to 7 with effect from 1 April 2015. The overall impact:

- Reduction of the cyclical management programme from the current 4 year cycle to circa 6 year cycle.
- Potential (although managed) impact on reactive maintenance for storm damage e.g. severe winds, etc.
- Long term effects on tree management plans and delivery of the council's Urban Forestry Strategy.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

This saving may impact on the priority of creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities. The council has a statutory duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 updated in 1984 to ensure that members of the public and staff are not to be put at risk because of any failure by the council to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety. By reducing tree maintenance and management, risks will be increased.

Reduced inspections will mean less proactive and more reactive maintenance with the likelihood that there will be an increase of the frequency that trees become damaged, particularly in times of severe weather. This is likely to lead to an increase in the number of customer complaints due to longer response times and may increase the risk to public safety as a result.

All local authorities have a duty to protect the natural heritage and value the asset of their trees. Walsall is no exception to this in managing large numbers of trees both directly and indirectly to ensure their preservation for future generations and contribute to tackling wider implications of climate change and biodiversity loss.

2.2 **Customers**

This is a non-statutory service. However the council has a statutory duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 (updated in 1984) to ensure that members of the public and staff are not to be put at risk because of any failure by the council to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety. See also the 'Associated Risks' section. By reducing tree maintenance and management, risks will be increased although the Council will ensure that this is managed effectively.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

Assistant Manager – redundancy process, reduction in one managerial post.
Minimal impact to service delivery, when taking into account associated front line service reductions.
Operational Team Leader x 1 – potential redundancy process.

2.4 **Partners**

None.

2.5 Economic Implications

Trees can have a positive impact on the economy through:

- Potential increase in residential and commercial property values by as much as 15% by attracting people and businesses to leafier suburbs
- Training opportunities through tree planting, maintenance and woodland management

This saving may have a small adverse impact on these benefits.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Trees bring a range of environmental benefits which will not be affected by this saving. These benefits include:

- Reduces and helps regulate localised extremes in temperature
- Provides shade, making streets, green spaces and built up areas cooler in the summer
- Helps improve air quality and contributes to the reduction of atmospheric dust and particles
- Helps reduce traffic noise by absorbing and deflecting sound
- Helps reduce localised wind speeds
- Increases biodiversity and provides food, shelter and habitats for sustaining wildlife
- Assists in land remediation
- Helps reduce the impact and effects of flash flooding by rainfall interception
- Improvement to the environmental performance of buildings through reducing heat loss in the winter and cooling costs in the summer.
- Provide potential long term renewable energy resources
- Timber as a resource for heating, furniture manufacture & crafts

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

- By supporting our neighbourhoods and working with our communities there are a number of social benefits derived from the good management of trees:
- Improvement to the quality and public perception of the urban forest where communities live and work.
- Creating community focal points, landmark links and a sense of place and local identity
- Higher public esteem and pride in the area by breaking up building lines and the built environment.
- Positive impact on physical and mental health and well being, providing areas of recreation and aesthetically pleasing environments
- Positive impact on the reduction of crime
- Improving the health and well being of the urban population and as such reducing associated health care costs

These benefits may be reduced as a result of the anticipated decline in the condition of the council's tree stock.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

There may be implications for Planning in relation to the impact of this saving on conservation areas, tree preservation orders and planning consents.

3. **Associated Risks**

A reduced service will or could increase risks in the following ways:

- Reduced inspections will mean less proactive maintenance and more reactive maintenance with the likelihood that there will be an increase of the frequency that trees become damaged, particularly in times of severe weather. This is likely to lead to an increase in the number of customer complaints due to longer response times with less resource.
- The risk of unhealthy tree stock will increase, due to extended cyclical maintenance programme, resulting in increased risk of dead, diseased and dangerous trees which have not been identified and tended to in a routine maintenance regime.
- There could lead to an increase in insurance claims incurring additional costs.
- The Council has a statutory duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 updated in 1984 to ensure that members of the public and staff are not to be put at risk because of any failure by the council to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety. There is likely to be an increased risk to public safety although the Council will ensure that this is managed effectively.
- A Risk Assessment is required under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999. There is a need to inspect trees in or near public places, or adjacent to buildings or working areas to assess whether they represent a risk to life or property, and to take remedial action as appropriate. The cyclical management programme will be extended from 4 to 6 years and therefore increased risks through reduced inspections and maintenance could arise. However the Council will ensure that this is managed effectively.
- However low the risk, if there is a tree failure, the council must be able to demonstrate it has a system in place, from a legal and moral perspective, that shows risk is controlled as far as reasonably practicable. By reducing the service the council must demonstrate when challenged that it has acted reasonably. The reduced service is likely to result in increased risk but the Council will ensure that a reasonable system is put in place to ensure that this is managed effectively.
- The council's reputation may be negatively affected.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 It is planned that consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the council's overall consultation exercise in October/November 2014 in order to seek the views of residents.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Legislation exists to protect, preserve and enhance the benefits of trees and proactively manage for future generations, including planning, environmental protection, nuisance and health and safety. Trees are protected by a number of statutes which control felling licences, tree preservation orders and hedgerow regulations.

Trees can sometimes create problems when they overhang boundaries, block light or cause damage to property. Trees can then become the subject of disputes between neighbours, owners, members of the public or public authorities.

Legislation for trees and the duty expected is contained predominantly in the following:

- Occupiers Liability Act 1957 (amended in 1984)
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- H.S.W.A. 1974
- Management Safety At Work 1999
- Department of Environment Circular 36/78 Trees and Forestry
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Highways Act 1980
- Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976
- Wildlife and countryside act 1981
- Environmental Act 1990

The legal implications of this saving are addressed in the Associated Risks section above. In short the risk of successful claims against the council is likely to increase. It is likely that insurance claims will increase, incurring additional costs for the council.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Initial screening suggests there are no or minimal equalities implications and therefore a full EqIA is not required.

Draft Proposal – reference 62: Cease the Outdoor Adventure Service

Estimated Net Saving	
2015 / 2016	Implementation cost
£97,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 The Outdoor Adventure Service operates two centres: Sneyd Water Activities Centre and Aldridge Airport Outdoor Activities Centre. The service has a particular focus on delivering outdoor adventure for children and young people with disabilities for which it has received a number of regional and national awards. In 2013/14 the service had just under 5,000 attendances engaging with up to 300 disabled young people per month.
- 1.2 The proposal is to remove the operating subsidy from the service. Options for continued service delivery with higher income and lower expenditure levels are currently being explored. At this stage the likely outcome will be:
- The closure of Sneyd Watersports Centre.
 - Supporting schools (especially special schools) to access alternate out-of-borough provision – initial discussions have taken place with EnTrust the Staffordshire County Council/Capita joint-venture that manage Chasewater.
 - Relocating the Behaviour Improvement Service (already running at no cost to the Council) to the Aldridge Airport Centre.
 - A major reduction in the outdoor adventure activities taking place at Aldridge Airport – focusing solely on those activities that can be delivered on a full cost recovery basis.
 - The redundancy of 2 of the staff in the Outdoor Adventure team.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Our priorities are taken from The Walsall Plan signed up to by partners and support the vision to make Walsall a great place to live, learn, work and invest. They are:

- **Supporting Business to Thrive and Supporting Local People into Work**
The Outdoor Adventure team currently employs 5 staff – one post will be deleted as a 2014/15 budget saving measure that was deferred for 12 months. Of the remaining 4 it is anticipated that at least 2 will be at risk of redundancy through this proposal.
- **Improving Health and Wellbeing, including Independence for Older People**
The Outdoor Adventure Service offers a service for young people with disabilities, allowing them to achieve a degree of independence they could not otherwise experience.
- **Creating Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Communities – Reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in.**
- **Improving Safeguarding, Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young**

As outlined above, the service provides disabled young people the opportunity for independent activity and achievement they may otherwise never experience.

- People – Recognising that a person's early years crucially help determine what kind of future they will have

2.1 Customers

The provision of Outdoor Adventure is not a statutory function. The vast majority of the customers of the service are Walsall schools so closing the service will lead to schools having to find another provider. There are many alternative providers across the West Midlands; however securing the level of disability specialism provided by the current service will be difficult.

A particular issue will be the cost of replacement provision – the current service has evolved to principally service disabled young people, which requires significant investment in equipment and a far higher staff: pupil ratio than with mainstream schools. This has directly led to the current service becoming increasingly expensive. As such schools may find equivalent replacement provision challenging.

2.2 Employees/Staffing

The service currently has five full-time staff. The five includes the Senior Officer whose post was removed as part of the 2014/15 budget savings although other savings allowed this to be deferred to 31 March 2015.

Although options remain under investigation, of the four remaining staff (excluding the Senior Officer) it is likely that two will be placed at risk of redundancy.

2.3 Partners

Walsall schools are the principal users of the service and would need to be consulted on proposals for service reduction / reprovision.

The construction of the Aldridge Airport Centre was 100% funded by the National Lottery (New Opportunities Fund); it was completed in 2007 at a cost of £1m. The grant agreement suggests that refocusing the centre as a Behaviour Improvement Centre will not trigger any repayment of the grant (only disposal would).

2.4 Economic Implications

There are no factors that directly affect the economy, regeneration, or business sectors.

2.5 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications.

2.6 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The Outdoor Adventure Service offers a service for young people with disabilities, allowing them to achieve a degree of independence they could not otherwise experience.

2.7 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 Consideration has been given to the impact on current users. It is noted that users are clearly a vulnerable group and have a protected characteristic (disability) within the terms of the equalities legislation.

Discussions to redirect service provision to Staffordshire County Council's centres have been promising, i.e. through an alternative provider. The risk is that schools may choose to not continue this activity and, as a result, children's experience of sailing will cease. This risk rests with each Headteacher and the Council will encourage schools to continue to recognise the value of the current service to their pupils.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 It is planned that consultation on this proposal will have commenced as part of the Council's overall consultation exercise in October 2014. It is intended that direct consultation will take place with the 4 principal user groups (Mary Elliot and Old Hall special schools, Chase Community Homes and SENSE).

Informal consultation is already underway with one alternative provider.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Legal Services may need to advise on any implications this saving raises in the event that it is approved by Council.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and will be updated once consultation is completed.

Draft Proposal – reference 65: The Closure of Libraries

Estimated net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£385,092	£180,630	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This proposal to save £565,722 will mean the closure of 8 libraries from the current network of 16 - 5 in 2015/16 (Beechdale, Pheasey, South Walsall, Streetly and Walsall Wood) and a further 3 libraries in 2016/17 (Blakenall, New Invention and Rushall).

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

The Library Service makes a significant contribution to delivering the council's priorities:

- *Economic development, employment and improving employability*
Libraries play an important role in supporting people into employment by helping and supporting job searches, writing CVs, interview techniques, company information and re-training and up-skilling. By helping to improve literacy and numeracy, they also improve the life chances of young people.
- *Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people*
Libraries provide information on healthy lifestyles, coping with illness, where to find information and support on life changing conditions and access to books to reduce stress and enjoy leisure time. The "Books on Prescription" initiative is a self help reading scheme delivered by libraries working with local health partners. The Mobile and Housebound Library Services deliver books and other media to people who, though age, disability or caring responsibilities, are unable to access a branch library.
- *Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities*
Libraries are a focal point for many local communities, offering a free, safe and neutral environment which is open to, and accessible by, everyone regardless of age, disability, ethnic or social background.
- *Improving learning and life children for children and young people*
Libraries engage and motivate children and young people to read by giving free access to high quality books and reading promotions and activities, thereby helping the development of literacy and a love of reading. They provide a wide range of information books for homework and general interest and the opportunities to support learning and the development of information literacy
Libraries are physical spaces that capture children's imaginations and meet children's changing needs as they grow with stock for all ages and abilities that stimulates children's desire to read and that reflect the diverse community in which they grow up. They also provide a programme of reading activities for all ages; free and safeguarded access to the internet and IT applications and staff who have a knowledge of children's books and can help with children's enquiries

2.2 Customers

The closure of any library will impact on those least able to travel to their next nearest service point – children, older people and those with a disability. An Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken to assess the impact of the proposed closures.

The mobile library will visit those areas where services are lost more frequently to ensure local communities have access to the library service. Online and digital services will be increased and improved to widen access. Where practicable, the Library Service will work with local community groups to develop community run facilities (see paragraph 2.4).

There will be a Walsall library within 2 miles of every household in the Borough except in the far south east. This area will be supported by increasing the number of visits from the mobile library and the nearest library will be Kingstanding Library (part of Birmingham Libraries), which itself is within 2 miles of the current site of Pheasey Library. Each remaining library will offer access to books, learning and information, free access to computers and digital technology, have a programme of cultural events and activities for both adults and children, offer access to other council services and be a safe, neutral space which is also friendly and welcoming. Each will also reflect the local needs of the communities it serves, both in terms of the stock it has available and the services it offers.

2.3 Employees

The closure of 8 libraries will result in the deletion of up to 30 posts and the consequent redundancy of those staff.

Every effort will be made to mitigate compulsory redundancies by using vacant posts and a voluntary redundancy trawl at appropriate levels. Those staff affected will be put on the redeployment list in line with the relevant procedures.

2.4 Partners

Partners and stakeholders will be consulted on these proposals and additional partnerships will be actively sought with any group or organisation that expresses a wish to run a community-led book exchange facility where a local service point is lost. A comprehensive package of support for such organisations is being developed to help the viability of any proposals that emerge from this process. The Council will be keen to work closely with any organisation that wishes to establish such a facility in order to help safeguard facilities in local areas as far as practicable.

2.5 Economic Implications

Libraries are located in centres of local communities such as local shopping areas or with other services such as community associations and health centres. The closure of the library may impact on the number of visits to the locality and possibly on the economic viability of the centre. However it is likely that any such

impact will be reduced or even eliminated where community book exchanges are established.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Where libraries are lost the vacated buildings may remain empty for some time until a decision is made on their future use or demolition. This may attract vandalism, litter and have a generally detrimental impact on the environmental standards of the area.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Libraries play a large role in raising awareness and promoting well being and healthy lifestyles to people of all ages. This is done both through the information they provide and by events, promotions and activities. Where libraries are lost, this activity will cease.

2.8 Other Council Services

This proposal will not impact directly on other council services, although the possibility of using libraries as “touch-down” facilities for community based staff will be lost in those areas where libraries close. There will no longer be a need for cleaning and caretaking services for the libraries involved. The option will impact on the schools education programme and support to the curriculum.

3. Associated Risks

The closure of libraries may be challenged on the grounds that some people will lose their right of access to the service. The major impact of these proposals will be on children and young people, older people or people with a disability and those who find travelling difficult.

Any support given to a community organisation for a community run book exchange will impact on the level of proposed savings.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

- 4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken. This consultation will take the form of questionnaires, focus groups and public meetings.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The council has a statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act to provide a Library Service that is both “comprehensive and efficient” for all persons in the area that want to make use of it. The service must provide books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area. “Comprehensive and efficient” are not defined in the Act, but an authority should pay regard to:

- Securing that facilities are available for borrowing, or reference to, books and other materials sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general and any special requirements of both adults and children.
- Encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the service

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 A full equality impact assessment has been completed for this savings proposal and will be assessed by the Equalities Team. It is acknowledged that this option will impact primarily on children, older people and those who are disabled or unable to travel to their nearest service point. Every effort will be made to offer them a service through the mobile and housebound service or online.
- 6.2 There will still be a library service point available within 2 miles of those areas where libraries have closed. This will be supported by the mobile library, which will visit those communities more frequently to offer a service to those people who are unable to travel. The Housebound Service will deliver media to people, who, for reasons of age, disability or caring responsibilities, are unable to leave their homes. Any community groups or organisation expressing a wish to provide a book exchange facilities where libraries have closed will be supported by the service while they establish their centre and identify funding streams.
- 6.3 The reduction of staff will be effected according to the redundancy and redeployment policies of the council. Every effort will be made to mitigate compulsory redundancies by using vacant posts and a voluntary redundancy trawl.

Draft Proposal – reference 66: Reduction of Local History Centre and Archive service to Statutory Requirements

Estimated net Saving		Implementation cost
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	
£69,158	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 The Local History provides an archive service for the records of Walsall Council. It collects, manages, preserves and makes available the documentary, printed and audio visual evidence of the history of Walsall, its people and its communities. It maintains a research room and online information to enable people from Walsall and elsewhere to examine Walsall records with assistance from trained staff.
- 1.2 This proposal will reduce access to the Local History Centre and Archives to the levels required to fulfil the council's statutory duty. Opening hours to the public will be reduced and there will be an impact on the service's capacity to collect and preserve those documents and archives that are not covered by statute and to respond to requests for information and research. This will take effect from 1st April 2015.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

The proposal will have a detrimental impact on the service's ability to deliver the current level of service against the council's priorities:

- *Economic development, employment and improving employability*
The Local History Centre currently collects records from Council services, local businesses and organisations and without this activity many would be lost to future generations. This activity develops an understanding of the development of industry in the area and encourages a sense of pride in place. The Centre works with volunteers and provides work experience opportunities to help people into work.
- *Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people*
The collections demonstrate the development of health and wellbeing in Walsall from its earliest times and the volunteering programme encourages residents into healthy and stimulating activity. People researching their individual and family past develop an understanding of the past and a connection to their roots.
- *Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities*
The archives document the development of Walsall's diverse communities and promote an understanding of how the town has integrated, worked and developed.
- *Improving learning and life chances for children and young people*
The Local History Centre offers an education programme and works with local schools and colleges. It helps children and young people understand the place they live and the drivers for Walsall's development in the past. It also offers courses in family history research as a way of encouraging people to improve their computer skills.

2.2 **Customers**

The major impact of the proposal will be on those customers wishing to do research and use the resources at the Local History Centre as the reduced opening hours will inhibit their ability to do this.

The council is currently undertaking a feasibility study into the provision of an integrated Heritage Centre which, if delivered, would provide the opportunity to access at least some of the records currently held by the Local History Centre to be made available. This would offset the impacts described above.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

The proposal will require the reduction in staffing at the centre following a restructure. Some of this reduction will involve professional posts.

2.4 **Partners**

None.

2.5 Economic Implications

The proposal will impact on the capacity of the service to respond quickly to enquiries from local businesses.

2.6 Environmental Implications

None.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

None.

2.8 Other Council Services

The Local History Centre provides an archive service for the council and its services. It collects and preserves council records and provides access to these documents when requested e.g. to respond to Freedom of Information enquiries and Coroners' records.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 The council is required by statute to collect, preserve and make available its own records and will ensure that it continues to meet this requirement.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

- 4.1 The service will undertake customer consultation through November.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The collection, preservation and management of archival materials would continue and the Centre would continue to act as a Records Office and the repository of the Council's Archives, although the capacity for pro-active collecting other materials would be reduced. Public access would still be available within the reduced opening hours with professional support and advice for customers
- 5.2 There is a statutory obligation on local authorities under the Local Government Act 1972 to make provision for their own archives.
- 5.3 The Act also requires local authorities to provide access to certain classes of the records which they create. The Local History Centre is designated as a local repository for certain classes of public records (i.e. the records of central government and its local agencies) under the terms of the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967. This includes coroner's records for which the council has to make provision.
- 5.4 The service is also approved by the Master of the Rolls as a place of deposit for manorial and tithe records under the terms of the Law of Property Act 1922 and the Tithe Act 1936, as amended by the Local Government (Records) Act 1962.

- 5.5 The Local Government (Records) Act 1962 empowers local authorities to purchase records, to accept gifts or bequests of records or to accept records on deposit or loan and to make provision for the use of archives. On this basis the council has collected a wide range of records which were given to the council on the understanding that they would be held in trust in perpetuity for the people of Walsall, would be maintained to an agreed standard and would be made available as far as compatible with legislative requirements such as the Data Protection Act. This means that access would be provided to the records.

6. Equality Implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken to assess the impact of this proposal on Walsall residents, particularly those with protected characteristics.

Draft Proposal – reference 67: The Closure of Walsall Museum

2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£70,000	-	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 This proposal to save £70,000 will mean the closure of Walsall Museum to the public and the mothballing of its collections in storage. All access to the artefacts and informal learning opportunities offered from the museum will cease. The museum currently occupies space on the first and second floors of the Central Library and Museum building in Lichfield Street.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

Walsall Museum contributes to the council's priorities:

- To improve the well being of older people: by working with them to preserve their experiences living in Walsall and giving them access to artefacts to stimulate their memories and build pride in their past achievements.
- Improving learning and life chances for children and young people: through the education programme and by working with schools to build an understanding of the past and the development of Walsall
- Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities by collecting artefacts from the past to show how communities have grown and developed and their impact on Walsall as a place.

2.2 Customers

Walsall Museum offers access to the historical and material evidence of the development of Walsall as a borough and how the lives of people and communities have shaped that development. It also continues to collect memories

and artefacts showing the continued changes to communities and the emergence of new communities. This access and collecting of historical materials will cease if the Museum closes, meaning that the public will no longer have access to the museum or be able to view its collections. This will include several collections of specific interest: the Hodson Shop collection of working clothes, the Old Hall and Crabtree collections and the Bayards Colts.

The education programme will cease and school children and young people will be unable to view artefacts illustrating the development of Walsall, its people and communities or use them to support the curriculum. There is currently no other place in Walsall that offers this experience.

The Council is currently undertaking a feasibility study into the provision of an integrated Heritage Centre which, if delivered, could incorporate the Museum collection. In the meantime this collections will be placed into secure storage.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

The closure of Walsall Museum would result in the deletion of 3 posts and the redundancy of those staff who currently work in the museum. Every effort will be made to avoid compulsory redundancy and staff will be put on the redeployment list in line with relevant procedures.

2.4 Partners

The Heritage Lottery awarded £50,000 towards the refurbishment of the “Changing Face of Walsall” gallery in 2008.

2.5 Economic Implications

Walsall Museum encourages visitors to Walsall and has an impact on the economy of the town centre.

2.6 Health and wellbeing implications

Walsall Museum play a strong part in the health and wellbeing of people in the Borough by offering volunteering opportunities, creating an appreciation and understanding of the development of the area and by working with older people to preserve their experiences living in Walsall and giving them access to artefacts to stimulate their memories and build pride in their past achievements.

2.7 Other Council Services

This proposal will not impact on other council services, although it will impact on the schools education programme and support to the curriculum.

3. Associated Risks

- The collections evidencing the historical and social development of Walsall will remain in storage and be inaccessible to residents and students.
- Many items are “on loan” from residents who may ask for them to be returned.
- Collecting will cease and many items of historical importance will be lost or destroyed.

- The Heritage Lottery awarded £50,000 towards the refurbishment of the “Changing Face of Walsall” gallery in 2008. The Council will ensure that this saving does not result in some repayment of this grant.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Customer consultation on this proposal will form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November and feedback will be considered by Cabinet before the Budget for 2014/15 is finalised.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Access to the collections of Walsall Museum will no longer be available to any member of the public.
- 6.2 An equality impact assessment will be completed for this savings proposal and will be assessed by the Equalities Team.

Draft Proposal – reference 69: Reduce opening hours at the New Art Gallery in the winter

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£5,367	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 The proposal is to reduce the opening hours of the New Art Gallery for 20 weeks in the winter. This means closing at 16.00 Tuesday to Friday inclusive, rather than 17.00. This would be implemented from the end of October (when the clocks go back) to the end of March.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

The New Art Gallery makes a significant contribution to delivering the council's priorities. This proposal will reduce the time the collections are available to the public and students by 80 hours over the winter period:

- *Economic development, employment and improving employability*

There will be a slight reduction in the time available for development activities to encourage young people into the creative and to exhibit the work of young and new artists

- *Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people*
This proposal will reduce the time the collections are available to the public and students by 80 hours over the winter period:
- *Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities*
No impact
- *Improving learning and life children for children and young people*
There will be a slight reduction in the time available to plan and deliver educational visits although the loss of hours will not affect school classes, but will reduce the time available to students of further and higher education.

2.2 **Customers**

This proposal will reduce the hours people can view or work with collections in the New Art Gallery for 80 hours during the winter period. This should only be a relatively minor inconvenience to customers.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

There are no redundancies connected to this proposal. The hours of Gallery Visitor Assistants will be slightly reduced in winter.

2.4 **Partners**

There will be minimal impact on partners. Costa Coffee is able to remain open with access to the Gallery.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

None.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

None.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 There may be some adverse criticism of this proposal from customers to the New Art Gallery as it reduces access to the Gallery and its collections.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Consultation will be undertaken with those staff affected and with New Art Gallery customers during the month of November

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 A reduction in the opening hours would limit the gallery's availability when visitors and users could attend to view exhibitions and engage in its activities and use its facilities. This would affect all customers and particularly those who are unable to visit until late afternoon and after school.

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

Summary of services within the portfolio

- Waste management and cleansing: domestic waste collection including bulky collections, trade waste collections, kerbside garden waste collection, dry recycling collections, education initiatives, waste disposal, street cleansing including town centre gold standard and public conveniences' cleansing.
- Fleet Services: management of council vehicles, MOT/garage facilities
- Policy and Performance: management & administration, policy improvements and initiatives, performance review and customer consultation
- Engineering & Transportation provides a range of statutory and non-statutory services and is made up of several teams grouped within the two groups of Highways and Environment and Road Traffic Network.

Portfolio Objectives/Outcomes/Purpose

Transport services make a vital contribution to the local economy and serve as an important catalyst to aid its recovery. They are essential to enable efficient travel around the borough in a way that is both safe and convenient. Pollution control is vital to the quality of life of residents in general and to their health. Close coordination between this and traffic management is essential due to the impact of road traffic noise and air quality within the borough.

- We will continue to deal effectively with the poor condition of many of the Borough's roads and in so doing provide a durable solution which will help avoid more costly repairs in the longer term
- We will review town centre parking to balance the needs of visitors, traders and residents
- We will ensure the focus on road safety and, working with schools, ensure sustainable methods of travel assisting in meeting the health objectives
- We will continue the successful trials to provide more energy efficient street lighting without compromising on road safety.
- We will continue to manage traffic across the borough in an efficient manner to minimise congestion
- We will take enforcement action against double yellow parking outside schools and fine drivers who use bus lanes illegally
- We will continue the popular and successful household waste collection service and identify new ways to improve further our already impressive recycling rates.
- We will continue to promote a clean environment throughout the borough.

The outcomes we will achieve are that streets will be well maintained and clean, and residents will continue to receive an excellent residual waste collection service and be able to recycle waste in line with national expectations.

Financial summary

Table 1 details the revenue cash limits for the Environment & Transport Portfolio for the next four years. Full details of savings and efficiencies for 2015/16 and 2016/17 are shown in table 2.

Table 1: Environment & Transport Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	32.941	31.108	28.709	27.604
Base budget adjustment	(0.480)	(0.524)	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies - <i>see table 2 below</i>	(1.553)	(2.075)	(1.105)	(0.608)
Revised cash limit	30.908	28.509	27.604	26.996

Investment for pay, pensions and contractual inflation are made centrally, and will be allocated to services following confirmation of the final savings proposals.

Cash limits for 2017/18 and 2018/19 are based on indicative savings required, as government funding allocations are not yet available. High level service reviews are underway, the development of which will continue. Once the Spending Review 2015 is published, these will be reviewed.

Capital investment for Environment & Transport Portfolio over the next four years is £18.692m. Full details of capital investment are shown in table 3.

2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Total
5.088	4.768	4.418	4.418	18.692

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

Table 2 details the revenue saving and efficiencies for Environment & Transport Portfolio for both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
76	Willenhall Lane Depot - Reduction in property related costs	0.077	
77	Household Waste Recycling Centre – reduce opening hours to 9am – 5pm and close one additional day at each site per week (Policy)	0.098	
78	Waste Collection (Residual) – amend frequency of residual waste collections from weekly to fortnightly (Policy)		0.532

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
79	Waste Collection (Garden) – operate for 6 months only between April and September (currently 8 months) (Policy)	0.140	
80	Waste Collection (Garden) – introduce charges for garden waste collection service (Policy)		0.310
81	Waste Disposal – reduced costs from the anticipated reduction in waste arisings from proposed changes to waste collection services		0.290
82	Street Cleansing – reduction in 15 front line posts across the town centre and district areas. This would involve the ceasing of the Walsall town centre Gold Standard and moving to a mobile on demand service basis. The frequency of road sweeping will reduce from fortnightly to monthly, district centres changed from fortnightly to 3-4 weekly, barrow routes reduced, graffiti removal and hot washing reduced (Policy)	0.478	
83	Public Conveniences – closure of Pelsall toilets (Policy)	0.012	
84	Fleet Services – reduced vehicles based on service changes outlined above	0.146	0.248
85	Mgmt & Admin – reduction in administration staff	0.026	
86	Urban Traffic Control – shared service with Black Country boroughs	0.040	
87	Highways Maintenance – reduce highways maintenance budget through improved efficiencies (Policy)	0.050	
88	Highways Maintenance – reduce reactive maintenance (Policy)		0.180
89	Highways Maintenance – replacement of revenue funding with capital for some elements of highways maintenance	0.100	0.350
90	Street Nameplates – reduced replacement of road name plates (Policy)	0.010	
91	Minor Improvements – alternate funding for minor improvements e.g. junction improvements	0.040	
92	Parking enforcement – efficiency savings	0.040	
93	Lighting active management – reduce energy costs following Invest to Save invested in LED technology	0.010	
94	Road Safety – more effective use of various existing funding regimes to deliver the road safety service	0.035	
95	Parking Services – increase in charges for staff parking and town centre business (Policy)	0.030	
96	Parking Services – introduction of nominal car parking charge of £1 for 4 hours to assist with ongoing car park maintenance charges in District Centres (Policy)	0.100	
97	Car Parking – reduce maintenance of car parks	0.010	
98	Engineering & Transport – staffing reorganisation	0.025	

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
99	Highway Development Control – non filling of vacancy	0.045	
100	Drainage & Streams – reduced maintenance. Year 1 is a pilot scheme (Policy)	0.018	0.072
101	Road Markings – reduced maintenance. Year 1 is a pilot scheme (Policy)	0.007	0.029
102	Traffic Signs – reduced maintenance. Year 1 is a pilot scheme (Policy)	0.016	0.064
	Total	1.553	2.075

Where draft savings options are denoted as ‘policy’ changes in the above table, these will be supported by further details as shown on the following pages.

Proposed capital investment

Table 3 details the capital investment for Environment & Transport Portfolio over the next four years.

Table 3: Environment & Transport Portfolio Capital Investment 2015/16 – 2018/19					
Capital Project	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Source of funding
Public Lighting – invest to save	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	Council
Highway Maintenance Programme	1.900	2.100	2.100	2.100	Council
Additional highways maintenance – alternate funding from revenue	0.100	0.350			Council
LSVT Retained Housing Land	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	Council
Mayrise System – mobile working	0.138	0.018	0.018	0.018	Council
Traffic Signals – replacement of obsolete control equipment	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	Council
Traffic Signals – Conversion to LED signals	0.650				Council
LTP Highway Maintenance	1.800	1.800	1.800	1.800	External
Total	5.088	4.768	4.418	4.418	

In addition to the above, there is also the proposed strategic scheme for Street Lighting invest to save to replace all outstanding street lights to LED operation. This will be subject to a separate business case to be reported to Cabinet, and will be included in the latest update of the draft capital programme when confirmed. Where practical, a payback agreement should be implemented, whereby projects should, wherever possible be self funded over the life of the project and beyond.

A reserve list of schemes is also identified to start should funds become available in year. The following schemes are forecast –

- LSVT retained housing land (further provision)
- Construction of new residential parking facilities
- Promotion of Community Health & Safety
- Local Safety Schemes

Draft Proposal – reference 77: Reduction in HWRC Opening Times

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£98,000	-	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Walsall council provides two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) located at Fryers Road, Bloxwich and Merchants Way, Aldridge. Both sites are operated under contract by SITA UK Ltd. The contract started on 1/1/2014 and ends on 31/3/2021 with the option to extend for a further year subject to performance. The sites are currently open six days each week but opening times vary in summer and winter.

Summer hours - 1 April to 30 September		
	Fryers Road	Merchants Way
Monday	8am to 6pm	8am to 6pm
Tuesday	8am to 6pm	8am to 6pm
Wednesday	8am to 7pm	Closed all day
Thursday	Closed all day	8am to 6pm
Friday	8am to 6pm	8am to 6pm
Saturday	9am to 5pm	9am to 5pm
Sunday	9am to 5pm	9am to 5pm
Winter hours - 1 October to 31 March		
Monday	8am to 5pm	8am to 5pm
Tuesday	8am to 5pm	8am to 5pm
Wednesday	8am to 5pm	Closed all day
Thursday	Closed all day	8am to 5pm
Friday	8am to 5pm	8am to 5pm
Saturday	9am to 5pm	9am to 5pm
Sunday	9am to 5pm	9am to 5pm
Sites closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.		

- 1.2 Under the new proposal both sites will open 5 days each week 0900 to 1700 hours. There is no difference between summer and winter hours.

Day	Fryers Road	Merchants Way
	All Year	All Year
Monday	0900-1700	0900-1700
Tuesday		Closed
Wednesday		
Thursday/Friday	Closed	0900-1700
Saturday	0900-1700	0900-1700
Sunday	0900-1700	0900-1700
Sites closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day		

- 1.3 Although the opening hours and number of days are reduced, residents will still have access to a HWRC every day of the week and both sites will remain open at weekends. The change in contract hours will require negotiation with SITA.
- 1.4 This proposal affects only the HWRCs however this change needs to be considered in relation to other proposed savings in waste services as all the services are inter-related and changing one service will have a knock-on effect to another service.
- 1.5 A reduction in any of the service listed below is likely to lead to increased use of the HWRC:
- Alternate weekly collection of residual waste
 - Garden waste collections – shorter seasonal working
 - Garden waste collections – charged service.

This change is unlikely to deliver any savings on waste disposal cost; the saving will come from reduced contractor costs.

- 1.6 If the amount of waste that goes through the HWRC increases, then the onward haulage cost of transporting the waste to final disposal and recycling points will also increase. This is not reflected in the £98,000.
- 1.7 This proposal does not require a change to the council's waste policy. Subject to negotiation and public consultation this proposal can be implemented by 1.4.2015 or shortly after.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

There will be a negative impact on the council's priorities as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "the Walsall Plan". The impact of this saving will be on the "*Economic development, employment and improving employability*" part of the plan. In particular there will be a negative impact due to potential redundancies by the HWRC Contractor and an increased risk of fly tipping because of the reduced opening hours.

2.2 Customers

This service affects all residents in the borough. The council has a statutory duty to provide a HWRC for residents. Only the opening hours will change; the nature of the service will not change. Residents will be able to dispose and recycle the same type of materials as they do now. It is likely that queuing times at the site, particularly at weekends, will be longer.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

There is no impact on council staff but there will be an impact on SITA staff.

2.4 **Partners**

There is no impact on partners.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

No impact.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

Environmental implications will include a possible increase in fly tipping and increased queuing times and longer queues leading to more congestion around the sites.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

No impact.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

Legal Services will need to assist with contract negotiations with SITA. Public Protection may see increased enforcement activity as a result of a rise in fly tipping.

3. **Associated Risks**

Risk of challenge or counter offer from SITA.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

No consultation has taken place to date. Consultation is planned as part of the council budget consultation exercise which will take place in the autumn of 2014. No consultation has taken place with SITA.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on waste disposal authorities such as Walsall Council to arrange to provide locations for residents in their area to deposit household waste. These sites have to be reasonably accessible.

At the time of the Award of Contract, SITA was sent a side letter saying that the contract made no guarantee that the option agreed at the outset would be preserved for the duration of the contract and that any variation would observe the variation clauses provided within the contract. All changes, whether switching from one option to the other, or changes not envisaged by the contract, must be dealt with in accordance with clause 41 of the main agreement.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 It has been determined that an Equality Impact Assessment is required for this savings option and this sets out the equality implications of the saving.

Draft Proposal – reference 78: Alternate Weekly Residual Waste Collections

Estimated net Cost		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
-	£532,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Walsall currently operates a three bin system:
Grey bin 140 litre
Green bin 240 litres
Brown bin 240 litres
- 1.2 Under the Environmental Protection Act, the council can define the **capacity** of the bin, what **materials** should go in each bin, and the **frequency** of the collection. In principle, the 3 bins already in use can be re-configured to offer a variety of collection services.
- 1.3 This proposal affects only the rubbish bin collection; the recycling collection will remain unaltered. Other proposed changes to waste services are discussed in the following reports;
- HWRC – reduced opening times
 - Garden waste collections – shorter seasonal working
 - Garden waste collections – charged service.
- 1.4 This proposal needs to be considered in relation to other proposed savings listed above, as all the services are inter-related and changing one service will have a knock-on effect to another service.
- 1.5 While alternate weekly collections (AWC) of residual waste are not likely to deliver any savings in disposal costs, savings will come from a reduction in staffing levels and a reduction in the number of collection vehicles (and the associated running costs).
- 1.6 From 1 January 2015 any change to the waste and recycling collection service must be Technically Environmentally Economically and Practically (TEEP) compliant. Officers are currently in the process of undertaking a TEEP review of the current service; the outcome of this will be known mid/end October and reported to Cabinet in December 2014.
- 1.7 A change in the kerbside collection service will require a change in the council's Waste Policy. This proposal will require public consultation. The earliest implementation date is April 2016, subject to the outcome of public consultation.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

There will be a negative impact on the councils priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "the Walsall Plan" specifically the impact of this saving on the "Economic development, employment and improving employability" part of the plan because of the potential loss of 18 posts within waste operations.

2.2 Customers

The kerbside collection service affects all resident in the borough. The council has a statutory duty to provide a kerbside waste and recycling collection service. Any perceived cut in the kerbside collection service is initially likely to be unpopular with residents but, based on experience elsewhere, it is expected that residents will quickly adjust to the revised service and that there will be no long term issues with it.

Residents may have problem adjusting to a new service. A robust communications package will have to be in place to support of this service change.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

Environmental operatives x 18 – Staff reductions will be managed through vacancy management and therefore no redundancies are envisaged at present.

2.4 Partners

No impact on partners.

2.5 Economic Implications

None.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Risk of increased fly tipping.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The 2007 report *Health Impact Assessment of Alternate Week Waste Collections of Biodegradable Waste* sponsored by Defra's Waste Implementation Programme (WIP), concluded that fortnightly collections did not pose a threat to human health. The report, also states that problems with rats and flies could be wiped out if residents took a few common-sense precautions, including keeping their waste wrapped.

2.8 Other Council Services

Public Protection – any increase in fly tipping will result in more enforcement activity.

Legal and Procurement – procurement of consultancy support to assist with the refinement of the operational and financial models that underpin this proposal.

3. **Associated Risks**

- Risk of not being TEEP compliant leading to potential action by the Environment Agency.
- Risk of not meeting recycling targets.
- Increased contamination in co-mingled recycling bins leading to loss of income/increased costs.
- The contract for waste disposal and recycling expires on 31 March 2016, with no option to extend. The new contract prices will not be known until autumn/winter 2016 and this will influence the overall cost of the service. This means that future modelling will be based on estimates.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

It is planned that consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the council's overall consultation exercise in October/November 2014 in order to seek views of residents.

5. **Legal Implications**

The council has a statutory duty to provide a kerbside waste and recycling collection service. The council must collect a minimum of 4 items for recycling and from 1 January 2015 must be TEEP-compliant. The council has a recycling target of 50% by 2020 and the EU are currently discussing the option of increasing this to 70% by 2030. Fortnightly collections may impact on statutory recycling targets in terms of the quality and quantity of waste collected. The Council will ensure that its waste collection services are both TEEP-compliant and achieve any amended recycling targets.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 An EqlA has been prepared.

Draft savings proposal – reference 79: Garden Waste Collection

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£140,000	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Currently the garden waste collection service operates from April to the end of November and is suspended for four months during the winter period. Approximately 13,000 tonnes of garden waste are collected from the kerbside and it makes a significant contribution to the recycling rate.

- 1.2 This proposal is to operate a garden waste collection service for six months, from April to September. The saving would be generated from a reduction in staffing and reduced vehicle costs. Clean and Green services would look to promote home composting in tandem with introducing the charged service.
- 1.3 The garden waste service is not a statutory function. The council's policy states; 'The garden waste service operates during the growing season and is suspended for part of the year. The council reserves the right to suspend the compostable garden waste service at its discretion'. Therefore, no change to the waste policy is required.
- 1.4 This proposal affects only the garden waste collection service. Other proposed changes to waste services are discussed in the following papers:
- HWRC – reduced opening times
 - Garden waste collections – charged service
 - Alternate weekly residual rubbish collection

This proposal needs to be considered in relation to other proposed cuts in the kerbside recycling and rubbish collection service. A reduction in the kerbside service will mean that more residents will use the HWRC to dispose of waste that will not be collected at the kerbside.

- 1.5 This change can be implemented from April 2015. Public consultation is required.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be a negative impact on the council's priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "the Walsall Plan". The impact of this saving will be on the "Creating Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Communities" part of the plan in that there will be an increased risk of fly tipping with reduction in service.

2.2 **Customers**

This service affects 90% of households in the borough. It is popular with residents and has a high participation rate. The garden waste collection service is not a statutory function. Implications of the saving for customers include:

- A possible increase in fly tipping.
- Residents may be inclined to put garden waste in the rubbish bin or worse, in the recycling bin which would lead to increased contamination.
- Home composting will have limited appeal to residents.
- Likely to be unpopular with residents.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

The current service is mainly operated by agency workers so the proposed reduction in service will have no impact on council employees.

2.4 Partners

None.

2.5 Economic Implications

None.

2.6 Environmental Implications

- Increased fly tipping
- Increased queuing at the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

None.

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

- Failure to hit recycling targets risking fines from DEFRA.
- Increased fly tipping.
- Increased contamination in the co-mingled bin leading to loss of income.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

It is planned that consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the council's overall consultation exercise in October/November 2014 in order to seek views of residents.

5. Legal Implications

Garden waste collections are not a statutory service and there are no minimum tonnages guaranteed to contractors.

6. Equality Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for this savings option.

Draft Proposal – reference 80: Charging for Garden Waste Collections Policy

Estimated Net Saving		Implementation cost
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	
-	£310,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Unlike the recycling and rubbish collection service, the council does not have a statutory obligation to make a separate collection of garden waste. Over 100

councils have switched from a free to a charged garden waste collection service. Some of these councils have subsequently returned to free collections.

- 1.2 Switching to a charged garden waste service reduces both participation in the service and the amount of material collected for recycling. This will impact on the recycling rate and disposal costs.
- 1.3 The estimated annual charge for this service is £28 although this is subject to change depending on the circumstances at the time of its introduction. The savings would come from reduced staff numbers and reduced vehicle numbers. It may or may not lead to a fall in disposal costs as waste that is not collected at the kerbside is likely to be displaced to the HWRC.
- 1.4 A charged service will be demand-led and will change year on year. Currently, approximately 13000 tonnes of garden waste is collected from the kerbside each year. This makes a significant contribution to the recycling rate. It is envisaged that residents who wish to use the service will sign up to an annual service agreement. The council will incur costs to administer this process and this cost is reflected in the identified saving. Clean and Green Services would look to promote home composting in tandem with introducing the charged service.
- 1.5 This proposal affects only the garden waste service. Other proposed changes to waste services are discussed in the following papers;
 - HWRC – reduced opening times
 - Garden waste collections – shorter seasonal working
 - Alternate weekly collection of residual waste

This proposal needs to be considered in relation to other proposed savings listed above, as all the services are inter-related and changing one service will have a knock-on effect to another service.

- 1.6 A change in the council's waste policy is required. The free garden waste service would cease in Autumn 2015 (subject to a separate saving to reduce the seasonal operation hours). Promotion of the charged service would start in Spring 2016 in readiness to start the new charged service on 1st April 2016.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be a negative impact on the council's priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "the Walsall Plan". The impact of this saving will be on the "Creating Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Communities " part of the plan due to the increased risks of fly tipping from those residents who do not wish to pay for with reduction in service.

2.2 **Customers**

The garden waste collection service is not a statutory function.

This service affects 90% of households in the borough. It is popular with residents and has a high participation rate. The service changes are likely to:

- Be unpopular with residents.
- Push residents to put garden waste in the rubbish bin or, worse, in the recycling bin.
- Lead to increased fly tipping.
- Make some less affluent residents feel excluded from the scheme.

The Council will promote and encourage home composting as an alternative to the garden waste collection service although it is appreciated that it will have limited appeal to some residents.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

Currently the service employs 21 staff. A charged for service will be based on future demand which may change on a year on year basis. It is anticipated there will be a 30% participation rate so the staffing levels would reduce by approximately 9 posts operating a service of four collection vehicles (driver and two loaders per vehicle). All staff reductions would be Agency employees.

2.4 Partners

No implications.

2.5 Economic Implications

None.

2.6 Environmental Implications

- Increased fly tipping
- Reduced recycling with the possibility that the Council will not hit national targets.
- Higher recycling contamination leading to loss of income.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

None.

2.8 Other Council Services

Other council Services affected include:

Public Protection – increase enforcement activity

Legal – annual service level agreement with residents.

Finance - processing payments for annual agreements.

First Stop Shop/Contact Centre – accepting application forms and processing payments.

3. **Associated Risks**

- Increased fly tipping of garden waste and unwanted garden waste bins.
- Residents who do not use the charged service will still generate garden waste. Some residents will take waste to the HWRC but other residents are likely to put their garden waste into the rubbish bin, therefore increasing the cost of disposal.
- Some residents may put garden waste in the recycling bin leading to higher contamination rates, increased council costs and contractual issues with recycling contractors.
- Some councils who have introduced charged garden waste services have seen unprecedented queues at their Household Waste Recycling Centres. The queues have been difficult and costly to manage and subject to bad publicity.
- Failure to meet statutory recycling targets.
- Increased pressure on Household Waste Recycling Centres (see proposed reduction in HWRC opening hours)

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 It is planned that consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the Council's overall consultation exercise in October/November 2014 in order to seek views of residents.

5. **Legal Implications**

- The garden waste collection service is not a statutory function.
- The council doesn't guarantee minimum tonnages to recycling contractors.
- A new service level agreement will be required.

6. **Equality Implications**

An EqIA has been prepared.

Draft Proposal - Reference 82: Reduction in Street Cleansing Service

Estimated Net Saving		Implementation cost
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	
£477,732	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

1.1 Clean & Green Services undertake all street cleansing operations on Council land across the borough. This includes a range of tasks such as footway sweeping, channel sweeping, litter picking, emptying of litter bins, street washing and graffiti removal. The service area deploys 58 FTE staff. It is a non-statutory service.

1.2 The proposal is to reduce street cleansing frequencies and activities across the borough, including the removal of both dedicated resources from Walsall Town centre and agency cover for holidays and sickness. This will be achieved by:

- **A reduction of 15 Environmental Operatives**

A reduction of 15 front line posts undertaking street cleansing services across Walsall Town Centre and district areas will be required.

This will involve a cessation of Walsall town centre's 'Gold Standard' and a move to operating services on a mobile demand-led basis as opposed to having dedicated resources within the centre. Resources will be deployed across the wider street cleansing functions and areas to provide best value and focus/prioritise resources on areas of deterioration. There will be fewer walked barrow routes, less street washing and less responsive graffiti removal.

Resources will be focussed on prestige areas, and areas of high footfall and public profile such as:

- District & town centres
- Arterial routes
- Local shop fronts/schools and adjacent land

The Council will encourage a more responsible approach to littering and fly tipping throughout the borough to reduce demand.

- **Delete Agency Budget – cover for holidays/absence**

There will be no cover through the use of agency labour for annual leave and attendance. In peak holiday periods and times of higher than normal sickness absence, it may take longer to reach 'grade A' standards following periods of deterioration.

Large Mechanical Sweeper

The number of large mechanical sweepers will be reduced from 2 to 1 meaning that channel sweeping of main carriageways will reduce from fortnightly to monthly.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be a negative impact on the council's priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "the Walsall Plan", in particular the "Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities" element. There will be a negative impact on the appearance of local neighbourhoods and district centres and an increased risk of anti-social behaviour where areas exhibit signs of decline through reduced standards of cleanliness.

2.2 Customers

The saving may affect the overall appearance and perceived cleanliness of neighbourhoods and the level of pride in local communities. To counter this possibility the council will encourage local communities to take greater responsibility for the cleanliness of their respective neighbourhoods and support them in doing so where it can.

The saving may encourage anti-social behaviour in areas which show signs of neglect due to litter and fly tipping being left uncollected for longer periods.

There is a potential increase in customer service demands and complaints.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

The saving will affect the following posts:

- Environmental operatives x 14 – Covering Barrow Routes, Shop Fronts, District Cleansing, Town Centre Cleansing and Graffiti / street washing
- Environmental operatives x 1 – Covering mechanical channel sweeping
- Agency staff – reduction in the utilisation of agency staff covering sickness and holidays.

2.4 Partners

The council will work with partners and local communities as appropriate to reduce demand for cleansing services and support community clean-up initiatives.

2.5 Economic Implications

There may be a negative impact in relation to the attractiveness of town centre and district centres which could affect some businesses.

2.6 Environmental Implications

There could be a negative impact with more litter left on the street, taking longer to be removed.

There will be an impact on highway gulley/drains through the build up of detritus, resulting in blockages, in particular during periods of high rainfall. There will be slower response times in response to peak demands such as autumn leaf fall. Leaves will remain on the street longer again contributing to blocked drains.

Whilst there will be some reduction in service levels every effort will be made to prioritise these types of events when they occur.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

None identified.

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

The risks with this savings option will include:

- An increase in the number of complaints
- A reduced ability to respond in a timely manner to peaks in demand although the council will prioritise such events for action where they occur.
- An increased risk of localised flooding due to blocked highways gullies.
- An increase in the number and extent of unsightly areas showing signs of neglect. In response, the council will prioritise the treatment of such areas to ensure acceptable standards of cleansing in key locations.
- Risk of impact on local business especially in town and district centres.
- Increased risk of anti-social activity such as fly tipping
- Reduced ability to respond within 48 hours of reported fly tips.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 It is planned that consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the council's overall consultation exercise in October/November 2014 in order to seek views of residents.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An EqlA has been prepared for this saving.

Draft Proposal – reference 83: Public Conveniences – Closure of Pelsall toilets

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£12,000	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

Cease the provision of public toilet facilities in Pelsall. Current opening times are 7.30am to 3.00pm, Monday to Friday.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

Due to the opening of Pelsall Village Centre in close proximity to the current facilities there are little to no implications associated with this proposal.

2.1 Corporate Plan

Not applicable.

2.2 Customers

This is a non-statutory service. There will be minimal to no impact in light of availability of toilets at the Pelsall Village Centre which is open for longer than the old library, Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 6pm and on Saturday, 9am to 4pm. Unlike the old library it is also open at lunchtimes.

In previous years the council has closed public toilets with little to no impact at Rushall, Willenhall, Aldridge and Brownhills.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

Not applicable.

2.4 Partners

Not applicable.

2.5 Economic Implications

Not applicable.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Not applicable.

2.8 Other Council Services

Positive - encourages use and footfall of Pelsall Library facility. Reduced maintenance and repairs cost associated with this facility. Given the vacant premise next to this facility, the council has a property asset which offers potential for a capital receipt.

3. Associated Risks

None.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

It is planned that consultation on this proposal will be undertaken as part of the council's overall consultation exercise in October/November 2014 in order to seek views of residents.

5. Legal Implications

Not applicable.

6. **Equality Implications**

An EqIA has been prepared.

Draft Proposal – reference 88: Reduce Reactive Maintenance Budget

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
-	£180,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This savings proposal reduces the reactive highway maintenance budget by £180,000 which is 20% of the total budget. This money is used to pay for reactive and emergency repairs to the highway including damage to guardrails, potholes and trip hazards on footways.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Implementation of this proposal will have a detrimental effect on the council's ability to deliver the following priorities for the reasons set out in this paper:

- Economic development, employment and improving employability
- Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people

2.2 **Customers**

Maintaining the highway in a reasonably safe condition is an explicit statutory function placed on the council under the Highways Act 1980. Less maintenance will mean that pedestrians and road users are placed at greater risk of injury and damage.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

With less works orders placed with our term contractor Lafarge Tarmac there may be a need to reduce staff that have been transferred from the council to the contractor at the start of the contract in 2009.

2.4 **Partners**

This will mean that there are fewer works orders placed with our term contractor Lafarge Tarmac.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

It is recognised by central Government that the condition of the highway has a direct effect on the economic strength of an area. The ability to move goods and people around the transport network is an essential contributor to economic wellbeing.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

A reduced condition of highway and footways across the borough will place all users at greater risk of personal injury.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 Highway maintenance claims have the potential to place the council at significant financial risk. If the council is unable to carry out as many emergency repairs as it currently does it will inevitably be placed at greater risk of increased risk and insurance claims and the costs associated with dealing with claims matters.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken and form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November. This proposal does not require specific statutory consultation.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement for the council to maintain the highway in a reasonably safe condition. If the council is less able to do this there is an increased risk that it will be held to have failed to comply with its statutory duty.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An initial screening has taken place and whilst a reduced highway maintenance programme has the potential to affect all road users it may have a disproportionate effect on people with sight or mobility problems.

Draft Proposal – reference 90: Reduced Replacement of Road Name Plates

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£10,000	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This savings proposal reduces the street name plate budget by a total of £10,000 which equates to 50% of the total budget. This money is used to pay for repairing damaged and replacing worn out street name plates and providing new ones where they are missing.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Implementation of this proposal will have a detrimental effect on the council's ability to deliver the following priorities for the reasons set out in this paper

- Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people.

2.2 **Customers**

Maintaining the highway in a reasonably safe condition is an explicit statutory function placed on the council under the Highways Act 1980. This budget reduction will mean that the time taken to provide and replace street name plates will be significantly increased. The service receives frequent requests for street name plates from elderly and less mobile residents where they are disturbed by misdirected emergency services, deliveries and late night taxis.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

None.

2.4 **Partners**

This will mean that there are fewer works orders placed with our term contractor Lafarge Tarmac

2.5 **Economic Implications**

It is recognised by central Government that a free flowing and safe highway network has a direct effect on the economic strength of an area. The ability to move goods and people around the transport network is an essential contributor to economic wellbeing. This saving may have a small impact on the highway network's ability to achieve this.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The deterioration and or lack of street name plates has the potential to cause confusion for deliveries and when directing emergency services. The reduction of this budget will result in a gradual decline of name plates across the borough.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 Highway maintenance claims have the potential to place the council at significant financial risk. If the council is unable to provide as many street name plates as it currently does there is some potential for a greater risk of increased risk and insurance claims.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken and form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November. This proposal does not require specific statutory consultation.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement for the council to maintain the highway in a reasonably safe condition. If the council is less able to do this there is an increased risk that it will be held to have failed to comply with its statutory duty.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An initial screening has taken place and whilst a reduced highway maintenance programme has the potential to affect all road users it may have a disproportionate effect on people with sight or mobility problems.

Draft Proposal – reference 95: Increase in the Monthly Car Parking Fee for Staff and Business Parking Permits

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016/17	Implementation cost
£30,000	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This proposal will increase the monthly fee for staff, elected members, partner agency and town centre business parking permits. The permit fee will rise by £5 per month for full time employees and £2.50 per month for those working 18.5 hours or less.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

The discounted car parking permit scheme assists local businesses to reduce their operating costs and therefore creating more opportunity to employ local people.

By reducing the costs associated with travel to work, the scheme assists local people to take up, or remain in employment rather than being dependant on out of work benefits. The viability of the scheme is reliant on a regular review of the costs associated with the provision and maintenance of the car park used by the scheme and the linkage with income generated from monthly parking permits.

2.2 Customers

Car park users will continue to have the choice of parking payment either through the discounted car parking permit scheme or through day to day pay and display options.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

There is no requirement for council staff to participate in the discounted car parking permit scheme arrangements. However, this proposal will impact on all staff continuing to participate in the scheme. Currently this will impact on approximately 600 employees of the council.

2.4 Partners

This proposal will be applicable to WHG, Walsall CAB and Steps to Work who all participate in the discounted car parking permit scheme arrangements as partner agencies.

2.5 Economic Implications

Continuation of the car parking permit scheme has positive benefits for the local economy as it provides discounted car parking arrangement for local businesses, their employees and those of partner agencies providing key services to the wider community.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Income generated from the car parking permit scheme is used to contribute toward the cost of car park cleansing, reducing the impact on the environment associated with a build up of litter.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Income generated from the parking permit scheme is used to contribute toward the cost of maintaining the car parks in a safe condition, reducing the risks of personal injury associated with slips trips and falls.

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 Failure to secure suitable and sustainable budgets for maintenance of town centre car parks could result in an increase in risk and insurance claims against the Council.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken and form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November. This proposal does not require specific statutory consultation.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 To implement the change in the monthly parking permit fee, the council will be required to publish a notice of variation in accordance with the requirements of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 This proposal will have no impact on staff holding a parking permit issued under the national blue badge scheme. Such staff will be exempt from the proposed parking charges.
- 6.2 Given this proposal is for a fixed increase irrespective of the salary grade of staff, it may have a disproportionate impact on those employed at lower grades. However, even when accounting for the proposed increase in monthly fee, this will still provide significant savings when compared to normal pay and display parking charges that would otherwise apply.

Draft Proposal – reference 96: Introduction of District Centre Pay and Display Car Parking Charges

Estimated Net Saving		Implementation cost
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	
£100,000	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This proposal is for the introduction of pay and display car parking charges in council operated off street car parks located in the district centres of Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall. Charges will be set at £1 per 4 hours parking period. Income will be used to offset the costs of maintaining and operating the car parks, ensuring the users of those car parks contribute toward the cost of their ongoing provision.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Implementation of this proposal will assist with securing the longer term ongoing provision of car parking spaces in the district centres. Local businesses rely upon

these facilities to help them thrive and continue to provide employment for local people.

2.2 Customers

Following the introduction of pay and display parking charges, customers will no longer be provided with free parking in council car parks. This will be in line with many other town centres in the region with few now offering free parking facilities. The introduction of charges will bring the centres concerned into line with their equivalents in neighbouring boroughs and also with Walsall town centre.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

None.

2.4 Partners

Employees of any partner agency located in the district centres and currently using Council car parks for their parking provision will be required to pay the new parking charge should they wish to continue using council car parks. Station Street car park in Bloxwich is of particular note given its extensive use by employees of West Midlands Police.

2.5 Economic Implications

The introduction of car park charges may have an adverse impact on the local economies of the district centres if as a result customers visit on a less frequent basis. However, unless a sustainable funding stream is established to offset the ongoing cost of provision of the car parking facilities, their longer term viability may be in question. Any reduction in car parking provision would have a direct negative impact on local businesses as a consequence of reduced parking capacity for employees of local businesses and their customers.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Income generated from the introduction of parking charges will be used to contribute toward the cost of car park cleansing, reducing the impact on the environment associated with a build up of litter.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Income generated from the introduction of car parking charges will be used to contribute toward the cost of maintaining the car parks in a safe condition, reducing the risks of personal injury associated with slips trips and falls.

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

Introduction of car parking charges may encourage some motorists to seek alternative car parking arrangements in nearby residential streets.

Any failure to identify suitable and sustainable budgets for maintenance of the district centre car parks may result in an increase in risk and insurance claims against the council.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken and form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November. This proposal does not require specific statutory consultation.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, require the council to first publish the proposals, consider and determine any objections prior to making a final decision on making the necessary Legal Order required to introduce parking charges.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 This proposal will not impact on any motorist holding a parking permit issued under the national blue badge scheme. Such motorists will be exempt from the proposed parking charges.

Draft Proposal – reference 100: Reduced Maintenance of Road Drainage and Streams

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£18,000	£72,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This savings proposal reduces the maintenance of road drainage and streams budget by a total of £90,000 which equates to 50% of the total budget. The intention is to monitor the impact of the savings in the first year to inform the potential for making the additional savings in 2016/17. This money is used to clear highway drainage gullies and maintain streams and brooks to prevent the risk of flooding.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Implementation of this proposal will have a detrimental effect on the council's ability to deliver the following priorities for the reasons set out in this paper:

- Economic development, employment and improving employability
- Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people

2.2 **Customers**

Keeping streams and brooks free flowing and ensuring that highway drainage is in a reasonable condition reduces the risk of flooding during heavy rainfall. Less maintenance will mean that residents, businesses and road users are placed at greater risk of injury and damage to their property.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

None.

2.4 **Partners**

This will mean that there are fewer works orders placed with our term contractor Lafarge Tarmac.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

It is recognised by central Government that a free flowing and safe highway network has a direct effect on the economic strength of an area. The ability to move goods and people around the transport network is an essential contributor to economic wellbeing. Ineffective highway drainage has the potential to effect traffic movements. The increased incidence of flooding will also place businesses and homes at increased risk.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

An increased risk of flooding across the Borough will place all residents, businesses, sensitive infrastructure and highway users at greater risk of significant disruption and personal loss and injury.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 Recent Case Law has shown that a lack of resources is no defence for an authority to fail to comply with its statutory duty. The reduction of this budget means that the council will be placed at risk of this liability. The potential consequences of which include an increase in flooding incidents and an associated rise in risk and insurance claims.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken and form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November. This proposal does not require specific statutory consultation.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Under the Flood Risk Regulations Walsall Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority which means it has the lead role in ensuring that flood risk is managed across the borough. If the council is less able to do ensure that its own obligations are fulfilled in this respect there is an increased risk that it will be held to have failed to comply with its statutory duty.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An initial screening has taken place and whilst a reduced highway maintenance programme has the potential to affect all road users it may have a disproportionate effect on people with sight or mobility problems.

Draft Proposal – reference 101: Reduce the Highway Road Marking Budget

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£6,500	£28,500	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This savings proposal reduces the road marking budget by a total of £35,000 which equates to 53% of the total budget. The intention is to monitor the impact of the savings in the first year to inform the potential for making the additional savings in 2016/17.
- 1.2 This money is used to pay for refreshing worn out road markings including white lines, and give way markings.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Implementation of this proposal will have a detrimental effect on the council's ability to deliver the following priorities for the reasons set out in this paper:

- Economic development, employment and improving employability
- Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people

2.2 Customers

Maintaining the highway in a reasonably safe condition is an explicit statutory function placed on the council under the Highways Act 1980. Less maintenance will mean that road users are placed at greater risk of injury and damage.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

None.

2.4 Partners

This will mean that there are fewer works orders placed with our term contractor Lafarge Tarmac

2.5 Economic Implications

It is recognised by central Government that a free flowing and safe highway network has a direct effect on the economic strength of an area. The ability to move goods and people around the transport network is an essential contributor to economic wellbeing.

2.6 Environmental Implications

None.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

A reduced condition of road markings across the borough will place all users at greater risk of personal injury.

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

3.1 Potential for non compliance with Traffic Signs Road General Direction Regulations which specify the standard and requirements of all DfT approved road markings and signs on the highway.

3.2 For all potential fatalities and life threatening incidents on the highway the road safety team and police must formally investigate and, as part of the site inspection, must detail in the report the state of repair and compliance of all necessary conditions and signage in accordance with regulations.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken and form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November. This proposal does not require specific statutory consultation.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement for the council to maintain the highway in a reasonably safe condition. If the council is less able to do this there is an increased risk that it will be held to have failed to comply with its statutory duty.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An initial screening has taken place and whilst a reduced highway maintenance programme has the potential to affect all road users it may have a disproportionate effect on people with sight or mobility problems.

Draft Proposal – reference 102: Reduce the Highway Signs Maintenance Budget

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£16,000	£64,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This savings proposal reduces the highway signs maintenance budget by a total of £80,000 which equates to 50% of the total budget. The intention is to monitor the impact of the savings in the first year to inform the potential for making the additional savings in 2016/17. This money is used to pay for repairing damaged and refreshing worn out highway signs including bollards.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Implementation of this proposal will have a detrimental effect on the council's ability to deliver the following priorities for the reasons set out in this paper:

- Economic development, employment and improving employability
- Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people

2.2 **Customers**

Maintaining the highway in a reasonably safe condition is an explicit statutory function placed on the council under the Highways Act 1980. Less maintenance will mean that road users are placed at greater risk of injury and damage.

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

None.

2.4 **Partners**

This will mean that there are fewer works orders placed with our term contractor Lafarge Tarmac.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

It is recognised by central government that a free flowing and safe highway network has a direct effect on the economic strength of an area. The ability to move goods and people around the transport network is an essential contributor to economic wellbeing.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

A reduced condition of road signs across the borough will place all users at greater risk of personal injury.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

3.1 Potential for non compliance with Traffic Signs Road General Direction Regulations which specify the standard and requirements of all DfT approved road markings and signs on the highway.

3.2 For all potential fatalities and life threatening incidents on the highway the road safety team and police must formally investigate and, as part of the site inspection, must detail in the report the state of repair and compliance of all necessary conditions and signage in accordance with regulations.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

4.1 Significant customer consultation on this proposal will be undertaken and form part of the budget consultation process between the end of October and the end of November. This proposal does not require specific statutory consultation.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 It is a legal requirement for the council to maintain the highway in a reasonably safe condition. If the council is less able to do this there is an increased risk that it will be held to have failed to comply with its statutory duty.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 An initial screening has taken place and whilst a reduced highway maintenance programme has the potential to affect all road users it may have a disproportionate effect on people with sight or mobility problems.