

Health and Wellbeing Board
21 January 2020

Walsall Town Centre Masterplan



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

The Need For Action

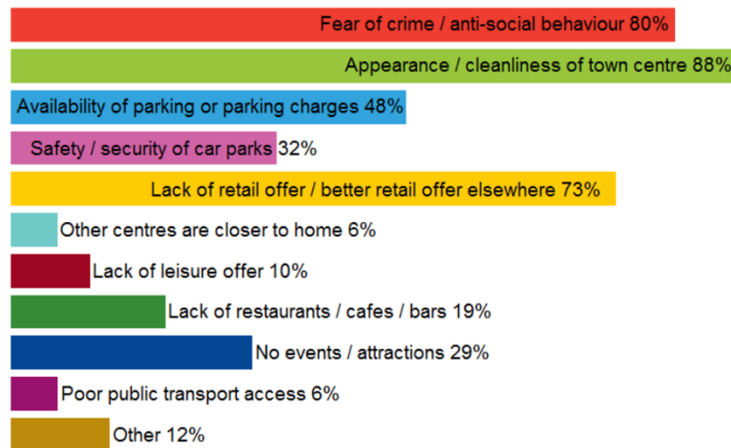


- High retail vacancy rate due to changing national retail habits and the absence of suitable attractions to bring people into the town.
- The town centre can feel unsafe and uninviting.
- No clear physical or visual connections linking the key destinations of the town centre creating poor legibility.
- Insufficient public/green spaces of quality and a lack of suitable leisure offer to attract people to spend time in the town centre.
- Excellent public transport assets but unattractive and confusing arrival point at the rail station and lack of connections between transport hubs.

Public Engagement

Over 2000 people have responded to a survey to give their views on the town centre:

What are the reasons why you choose not to visit Walsall Town Centre?
Please select all that apply.



What would motivate you to visit Walsall Town Centre more often in the future? Please select all that apply.



The Vision

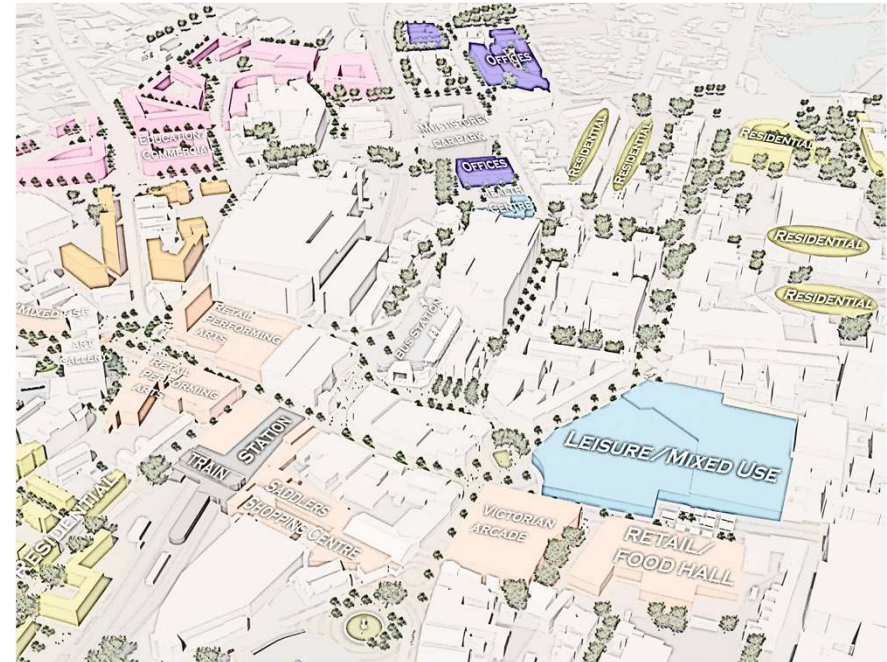
Walsall will have the **healthiest town centre** in the country where people are **proud** to live and work within a healthy environment and balanced economy. Centred on its historic high street and role as a regional market town Walsall will attract visitors based on its leisure and culture offers; including its internationally significant art gallery. The town centre environment will be easily navigable with healthy streets which encourage walking and cycling and maximise the value of significant public spaces through regular events and activities.

- The ambition to become the **healthiest town centre** considers and addresses all the elements which help to make a 'healthy town' such as environment, economy, heritage and community.
- It has been developed through discussions and workshops with the Council and key stakeholders.

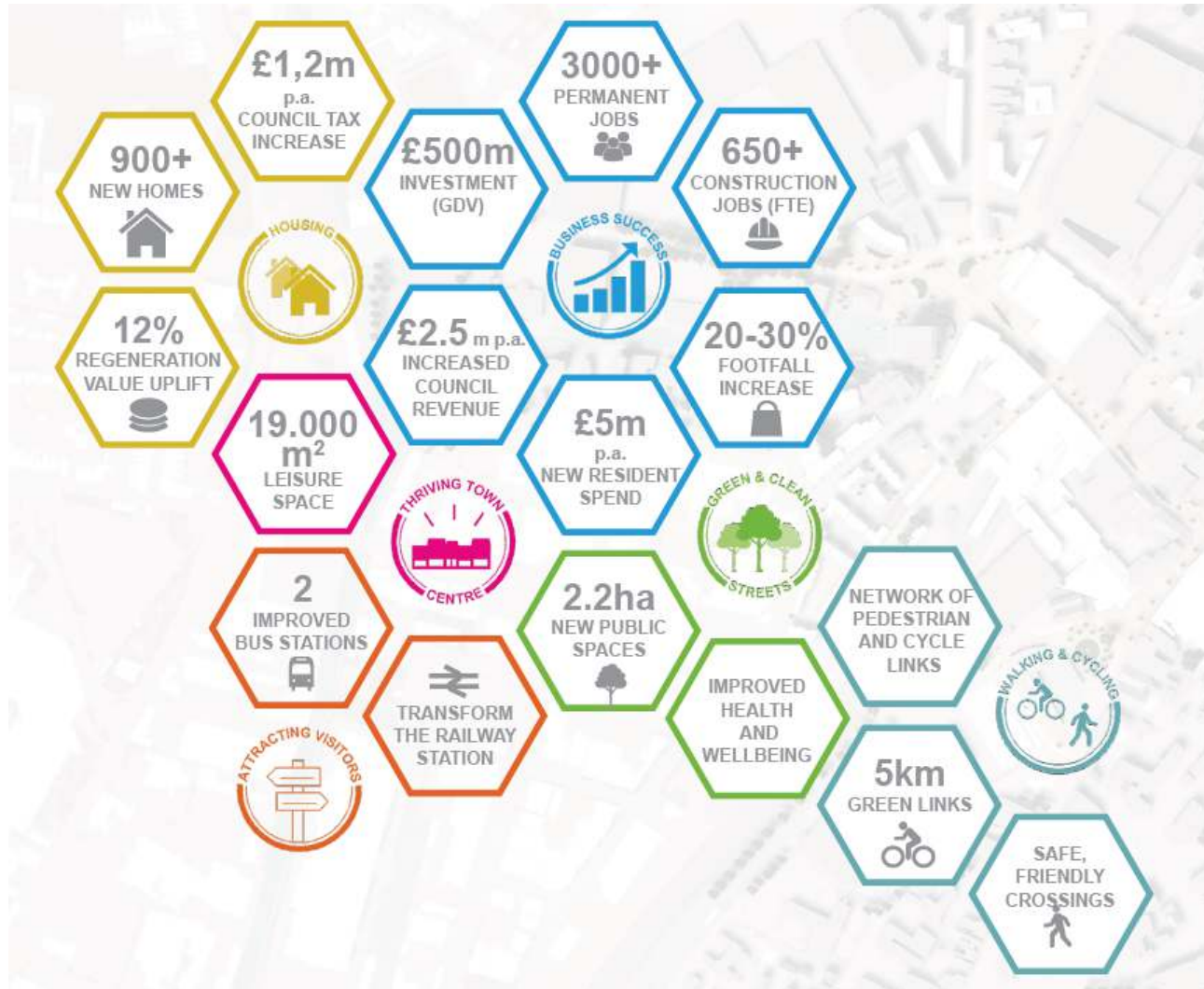


Walsall TC Masterplan

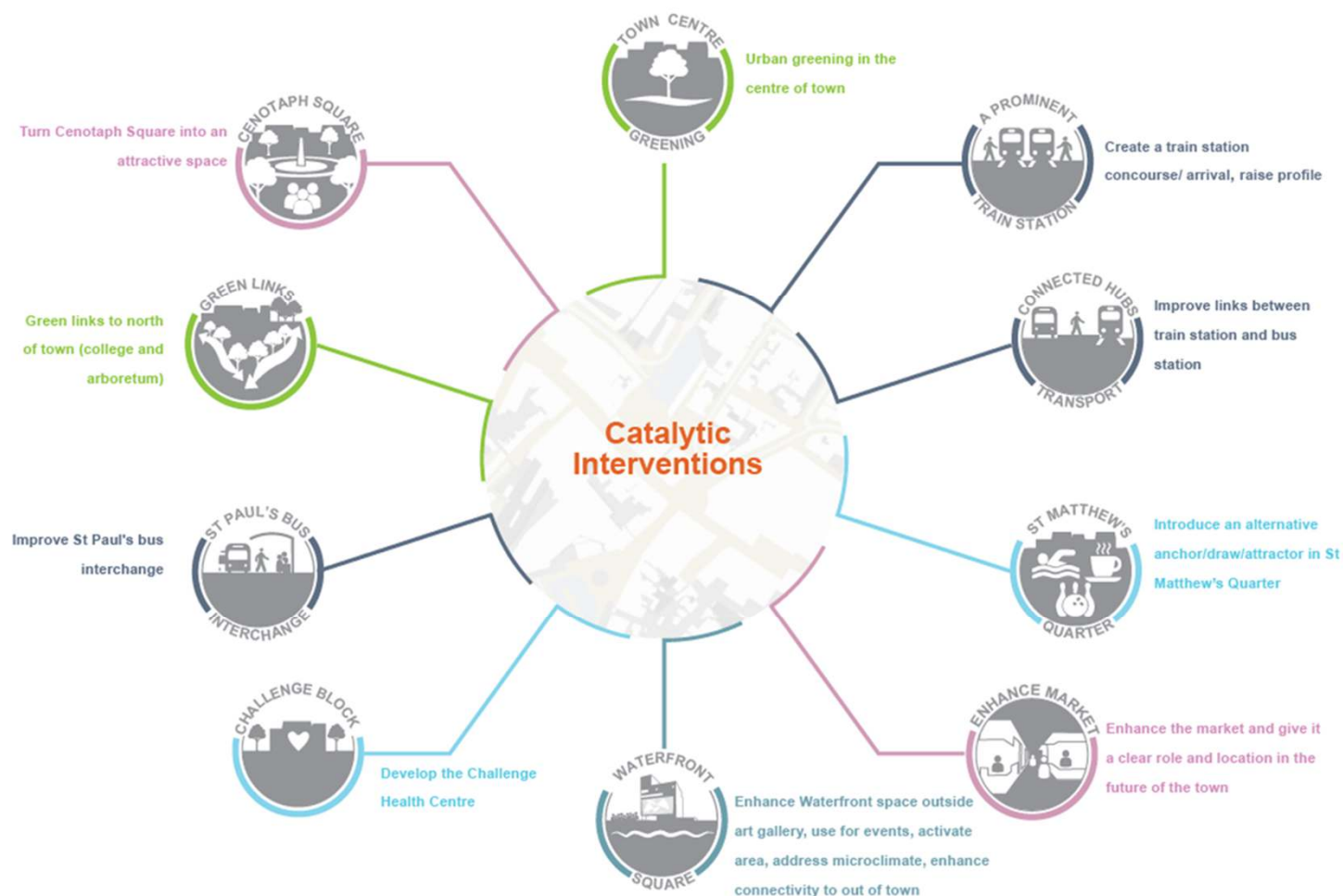
- Cabinet confirmed their support for the Walsall Town Centre Masterplan on 17 July 2019.
- The Masterplan sets the Vision and a series of catalytic interventions which will stimulate investor interest and confidence to bring about transformational physical change in Walsall Town Centre over the next 20 years.



Transforming the Town Centre – Outcomes



Catalytic Interventions



1 | A Greener Public Realm



We will create a green, vibrant and attractive public realm which provides opportunities for people to pause and enjoy the town centre experience. Greening the town centre will improve air quality, encourage social interaction, improve quality of life and directly impact upon the economic health of the town.

- Introduce a series of attractive, green public spaces across the town centre
- Enhance Park Street with well designed public realm that draws people through the town centre
- Create green streets which naturally link the key town centre locations including Walsall College
- Bring the Arboretum in to the town centre with the greening of Lichfield Street creating an attractive pedestrian route
- Introduce a new cycle network around the town centre



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2 | A Prominent Walsall Railway Station



Walsall Railway Station will maximise its prominent location in the town centre and the connectivity which Walsall has with Birmingham, Birmingham International, London and beyond.

- Create a spacious, welcoming station concourse in the Saddlers Centre
- Introduce convenience retail along with cafes which serve the needs of commuters and visitors
- Ensure the opening hours of the station concourse help to encourage a day and night economy
- Link platform 1 directly to the concourse with ramps and steps
- Drive footfall to the Saddlers Centre



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3 | Connected Hubs



Clear, legible links between the 3 key transport hubs will facilitate movement through the town centre and maximise the potential created through 15 million passenger journeys per year.

- Using quality public realm and intuitive wayfinding to guide people through the town centre
- Clear pedestrian links between the railway station and bus stations
- Opening key views to create a legible and connected town centre
- Create a space in which people dwell and enjoy their surroundings



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4 | St Matthew's Quarter



St Matthews Quarter will become a hub of activity focussed around retail experiences and leisure uses including the street market, a new food hub and further mixed use development that will act as an attraction drawing footfall through the town.

- Introduce leisure uses to transform the St Matthews Quarter
- Vacant and underused heritage assets brought back in to vibrant and long term use
- Encourage independent and creative uses to occupy Victorian Arcade and other historical buildings
- Introduce an indoor food court to Digbeth with a broad range of independent food and drink outlets



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5 | Enhance the Market



We will support the long term, sustainable future of the Walsall Market by locating it within a high quality public space where it benefits from increased footfall attracted by the surrounding experience retail and leisure uses. The market will further enhance the attraction created in St Matthews and will benefit from its location adjacent to the proposed indoor food hall.

- Create a quality public square in which the market sits
- Use the location to maximise the benefits to the market of the increased footfall created by leisure uses, retail experience and the new food court
- Encourage a broader market offer, regular specialist markets and events



6 | Waterfront Square



A new multi-functional public space which connects the edge of town retail to Park Street through physical and visual links which draw people in to the town centre. This high-quality space will put the Walsall New Art Gallery at its heart and create a strong relationship between the waterfront and the main retail core.

- Create a quality, green public square which provides areas to play, pause, meet and hold outdoor events
- Introduce a water feature which “extends” the canal into the square
- Encourage greater use of the canal for boats and other activities
- Address the micro-climate through strategic planting to create a pleasant and relaxing environment



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7 | Challenge Block



We will promote the Challenge Block for a range of uses commencing with the development of a modern, quality health facility and a multi-storey car park. Further development will be flexible and market led with the possibility for office space or residential.

- Develop a modern, fit for purpose health hub in the town centre which benefits from its location adjacent to the St Pauls bus station
- Develop an easily accessible multi-storey car park on the ring road
- Encourage private led development of office space or housing
- Connect the Challenge Block to the town centre through the green links intervention



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8 | St Paul's Square



We will reconfigure St Pauls Square into a pedestrian focussed public square which provides an attractive and welcoming point of arrival to the town. An improved, pedestrian friendly environment will make the space attractive, connected and green.

- Create quality public realm surrounding St Pauls Church and bus station
- Remove vehicular access to the front of St Pauls Church
- Create new seating and café areas to meet the needs of pedestrians and bus users
- Tree planting to improve air quality
- The Sprint Bus to terminate at Darwall Street before recommencing its journey to Birmingham City Centre



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9 | Crossing the Ring Road



We will maximise footfall into the town centre from Walsall College and the offices to the north of the town centre by improving the pedestrian connectivity across the ring road. The crossing from the Arboretum towards the town centre will also be enhanced.

- Enhance strategic crossing points across the ring road
- Connect the crossings to the green links into the town centre
- Improve pedestrian connections to and from the arboretum
- Increase the attractiveness of investment in this area to the north of the town centre



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10 | Cenotaph Square



We will re-create Bradford Place as a new public space that reflects the importance of the historic assets within and around it. By removing buses and prioritising people this new square will enhance connectivity to the railway station.

- Reconfigure Bradford Place creating a fit for purpose transport hub which meets the needs of the future
- Prioritise people and remove clutter to create an attractive open space centred on the Cenotaph
- Create clear, legible connections to the train station and into the town centre



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Final Vision



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Walsall TC Masterplan – Phase 1 Delivery

Work is progressing to deliver a **first phase** of transformational change in the heart of the town centre, delivering 3 of the masterplan's catalytic intervention as part of the Governments Future High Street Fund

- A Prominent Walsall Railway Station
- Connected Hubs
- Town centre living



WMCA Mayors Towns Programme

Walsall one of five pilot towns, two funding bids submitted to the WMCA Mayors Town Centre Programme (currently awaiting outcome):

Walsall Gallery Square – development of Public Realm design through the delivery of a series of public engagement events building on the role of the Canal, Art Gallery, pop up events, temporary greening:

£350,000

Enhancing Walsall's Markets - A series of specialist markets in Walsall town centre, over a 6 month period, to enliven the centre from Park Street to St Matthew's Quarter. Street food representing and celebrating the diverse cultures of Walsall and wares created by Walsall's growing Maker / Creative Community:

£150,000

Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)



Health on The High Street;

developing a strategic relationship with the RSPH and establishing a framework to realise Walsall's ambition to be the Healthiest High Street in the Country Consultancy, communications and engagement support for Walsall Town Centre including;

- Mapping of key assets (businesses people communities)
- RSPH support in establishing/facilitating the Towns Board
- Establishing thematic approach and framework
- Activities which may support key thematic areas (e.g. social prescribing, active travel, arts and health)



Town Centre 6 month Action Plan

Cabinet in July 2019 identified a series of pilot activities which began to address some of the concerns raised in the public engagement, including:

- Jointly tackling hotspots and key issues.
- Implementing quick wins such as events / activities in the town centre.
- Co-ordinated media campaign to highlight the good work the Council is already doing to tackle issues.

6 Month Action Plan



6 Month Action Plan – Successes

Community Protection Officers

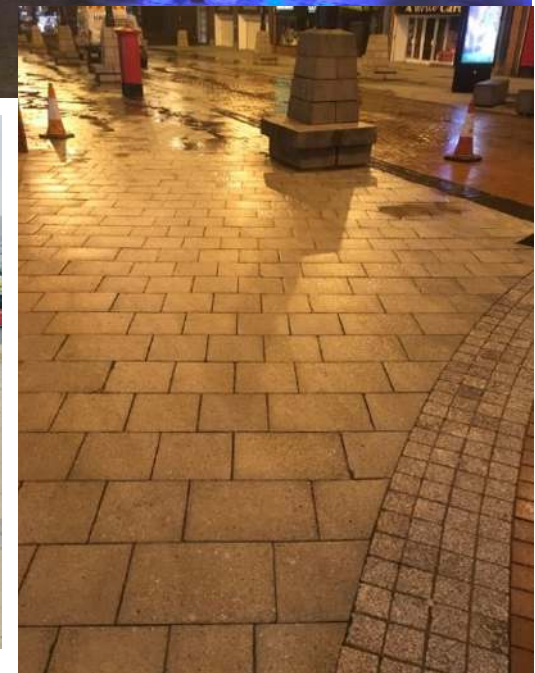
- 2 newly recruited Community Protection Officers have successfully targeted hotspots in the town centre clearing **graffiti**, dealing with **cleanliness** and providing **public reassurance**.
- Images show graffiti removal to rear of Sports Direct. Butlers Passage will be the next area of focus.



6 Month Action Plan – Successes

Clean & Green

- Additional resource successfully targeting town centre cleanliness.
- **Deep clean** of the town centre.
- **Boris the Hawk** humanly tackling the towns pigeon problem.
- Additional C&G resource tackling **general cleanliness**.



6 Month Action Plan – Successes

Supporting Independent Businesses

- The Development Team have procured award-winning company **'ShopAppy'**.
- Providing an online presence for the towns independent retailers / services.
- Showcasing everything Walsall has to offer.
- Providing an online presence click and collect service for independent businesses.



**Get more footfall and more spend
BRING MORE PEOPLE TO YOUR BUSINESS**

AS SEEN ON... **BBC NEWS**
the one show **itv NEWS**

Join multi award-winning
ShopAppy today...

- Make it easier for customers to **browse, book and buy** from local businesses
- Show people why they should come into your town or city
- Be part of one unified online website for your area
- Get an online presence at a fraction of the cost
- Attract people to your area to spend time and money
- No tech experience necessary
- Simple, flat subscription fee
- Out of shop hours collection points for busy commuters

Register today on **ShopAppy.com/vendor**
or email **info@shopappy.com**

 shopappy  shopappyuk  shopappyuk **ShopAppy.com**



6 Month Action Plan – Successes

Speciality Markets / Events

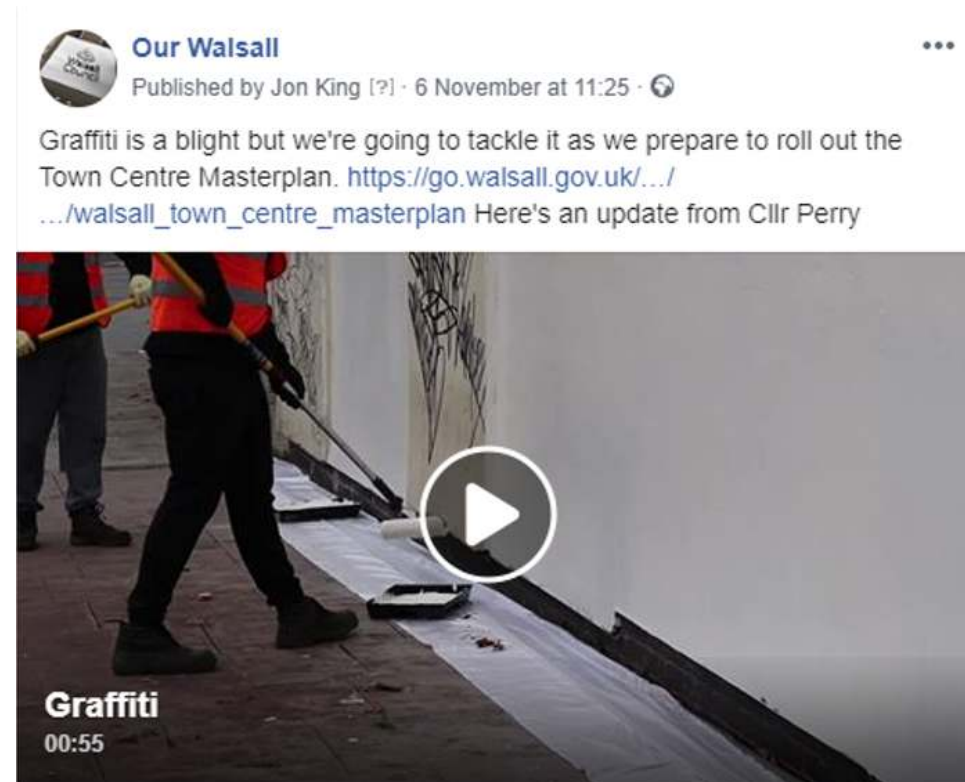
- Festive markets planned in the lead up Christmas with crafts, food and entertainment.
- Initiative to support small businesses on Small Business Saturday
- Promotion of town centre events and activity.



6 Month Action Plan – Successes

Promoting Our Positive Work

- Dedicated E&E Marketing Officer has enabled us to promote our efforts directly to our residents using videos posted on social media.
- We've reached 70,000 + residents and over 2,000 have liked, shared or commented in response.



Thank you



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