

Cabinet

Wednesday, 10 February 2021 at 18:00

Meeting via Microsoft Teams: [Public access](#)

Portfolios

Councillor M.A. Bird,
Leader of the Council



Councillor G. Perry,
Deputy Leader and
Resilient Communities



Councillor A. Andrew
Deputy Leader and
Regeneration



Councillor C. Towe,
Education and skills



Councillor R. Martin,
Adult social care



Councillor S. Craddock,
Health and wellbeing



Councillor T. Wilson,
Children's



Councillor B. Chattha
Personnel and
business support



Councillor O. Butler,
Clean and green



The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and
its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other pers.

Agenda

Part I – Public session

1	Apologies for Absence	
2	Minutes 9-12-20	6 - 19
3	Declarations of Interest	
4	Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.	
5	Petitions (note: for advice on how to submit petitions please contact Democratic Services. Contact details on the front page of the agenda).	
6	Questions (Note: 30 minutes will be allowed for pre-submitted questions from non-executive members and the public. All questions will have been submitted at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Answers will be provided at the meeting - no supplementary questions will be allowed).	
7	Forward Plan	20 - 26
8	Crisis Support Provision for families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic	27 - 51
9	Corporate Plan delivery Q3 report	52 - 62
10	Corporate Financial Performance 2020.21 and Covid-19 update	63 - 95
11	Corporate Plan 2021-22	96 - 119
12	Corporate Budget Plan 2021.22 to 2023.24, Capital Strategy, Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021.22	120 - 324
13	A34 Walsall Birmingham SPRINT Scheme - Phase 1	325 - 440
14	WM Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme	441 - 573
15	Domestic Abuse Emergency Accommodation Support Service - extension of contract	574 - 590
16	Options for a Transit Site in Walsall	591 - 614
17	Supplier Relief Payments to Contracted and Non-contracted	615 - 630

suppliers

18	Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework	631 - 642
19	High needs funding	643 - 804
20	Determination of Admission Arrangements for the 2022.23 academic year	805 - 826

Part II – Private session

21	Strategic Acquisitions - High St, Brownhills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);	
22	Willenhall Masterplan - Strategic Land Acquisitions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);	
23	Black Country Enterprise Zone - Gasholders site - Next Steps. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);	

Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 6.00 p.m.

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020; and conducted according to the Council's Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution.

Present

Councillor Bird	Leader of the Council
Councillor Andrew	Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor Perry	Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor Martin	Adult Social Care
Councillor Wilson	Children's
Councillor Butler	Clean and green
Councillor Towe	Education and skills
Councillor Craddock	Health and wellbeing
Councillor Chattha	Personnel and business support

3639 Welcome

At this point, the Leader opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and explaining the rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage.

3640 Minutes

Councillor Bird moved approval of the minutes of the meeting on 21 October 2020 which was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members

The motion subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved (unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 copies having been sent to each member of the Cabinet be approved and signed as a correct record.

3641 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3642 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985

It was noted that a late item had been submitted seeking to participate in the Department for Work and Pension's Kickstart scheme and that the report would be taken at the end of the public session.

Resolved (by assent)

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the private part of the agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

3643 Petitions

Councillor Wilson advised that he had submitted the following on-line petition:
Leighswood Road – ban or restrict Heavy Goods Vehicles.

3644 Questions

No questions from the public had been received.

3645 Forward plan

The forward plan as at 2 November 2020 was submitted:

(see annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

That the forward plan be noted.

**3646 Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement –
Supplementary Deed of Variation**

Councillor Bird presented the report:

(see annexed)

Councillor Bird moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Andrew.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet authorises Walsall Council's entry into the Supplemental Deed of Variation Relating to the Collaboration Agreement in Relation to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee City Deal and Growth Deal dated the 7 May 2014, at **Appendix A** to this report and in doing so, that Cabinet approves the Governance Principles: Enterprise Zones (at **Appendix B**).
- (2) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to conduct any negotiations and to make any minor amendments and to subsequently authorise the sealing of the Supplemental Deed of Variation Relating to the Collaboration Agreement in Relation to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee City Deal and Growth Deal dated the 7 May 2014 and the sealing or signing of any related documents

3647 Contract for the supply of IT goods and services

Councillor Bird presented the report:

(see annexed)

Councillor Bird moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Craddock.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet award a contract to Specialist Computer Centres Plc for the Supply of IT Goods and Services. The initial contract shall be for 2 years and there will be two optional one year extension periods. The anticipated value of the contract over the 4 year period (05 March 2021 – 04 March 2025) could be up to £10,000,000.
- (2) That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation to sign the relevant agreements with the Framework Provider and Specialist Computer Centres Plc on behalf of the Council and to subsequently authorise signing of any associated contracts, deeds or other related documents.

3648 Draft Revenue Budget Feedback and Capital Programme 2020/21-2023/24

Councillor Bird presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Bird moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Perry.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Perry expanded on the proposals for the spend of the crisis fund monies which would also be informed by the outcome of the appraisal being undertaken into the Council's support for the vulnerable during the pandemic. He also clarified the position with regard to the provision of library services both during the pandemic to keep communities safe and the intention to continue to offer such services through the resilient communities model, including outreach, in conjunction with the voluntary and community sector.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the feedback from Overview Scrutiny Committees for consideration in preparation for final budget recommendations in February 2021.
- (2) Notes the main implications from the chancellors Spending Round announcement on 25 November 2020, and that any financial implications arising once the Provisional Settlement is received, will be included in the budget report to Cabinet on 10 February 2021.
- (3) Approves as a basis for consultation the current draft capital programme of £65.99m for 2021/22, and refers the draft capital programme to Overview Scrutiny Committees to enable comments to be considered by Cabinet on 10 February 2021.

3649 Corporate Financial Performance and Covid-19 update

Councillor Bird presented the report

(see annexed)

In presenting the report, Councillor Bird commended the work of officers to support businesses during this difficult period and helping them to access the grants available to them.

Councillor Bird moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Towe.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the additional funding allocated to Walsall as set out in sections 4.4 and **Appendix 1** of this report, and that this will be sufficient to cover the additional costs of supporting the council's Covid-19 response in the short term, assuming the current position does not continue beyond current levels and into 2021/22.
- (2) Notes the forecast impact of Covid-19 to October 2020 as set out in section 4.6 to 4.14 and approve c£2.49m of additional costs in relation to looked after children placements.
- (3) Notes the forecast non Covid-19 position is an underspend of £195k.
- (4) Approves the amendments to the 2020/21 capital programme as set out in section 4.17.
- (5) Notes financial health indicator performance as set out in **Appendix 3**.

3650 Treasury Management mid-year position statement 2020/21

Councillor Bird presented the report

(see annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

- (1) That Cabinet notes and forwards to Council, for consideration and noting (and in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017)), the mid-year position statement for treasury management activities 2020/21 including prudential and local indicators (Appendix A).
- (2) That Cabinet notes and forwards to Council, for consideration and approval to utilise Link Asset Services to provide a Treasury Management training session via Microsoft Teams for all Members (Appendix A).

3651 Corporate Plan Delivery: Quarter 2 update

Councillor Bird presented the report

(see annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

That Cabinet endorses the performance information provided in the appendix

3652 Town Deal Acceleration Programme

Councillor Andrew presented the report

(see annexed

Councillor Andrew moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet notes the success in gaining full approval of £750,000 for both Bloxwich and Walsall Towns Fund Acceleration programmes as set out in attachment 1, and grants approval to begin work as soon as possible to meet government funding requirements.
- (2) To ensure the submission of the Town Investment Plans for both Bloxwich and Walsall on or before the end of January; that Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for the Economy, Environment & Communities in consultation with the Deputy Leader & Regeneration Portfolio holder, to agree the final contents of these Town Investment Plans, and to make their submission.
- (3) To ensure that all costs incurred by the council are recovered, that all development, consultancy and on-going management and evaluation costs are calculated and included within the individual project submissions, as part of the Town Investment Plan submissions to government.

3653 York's Bridge replacement scheme – replacement of common land

Councillor Andrew presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Andrew moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the progression of an application to deregister the areas of common land at Pelsall North Common detailed in this report and, delegate to the Director of Governance to prepare and submit applications under the relevant sections of the Commons Act 2006 to deregister, and if necessary, to undertake restricted works, on those parts of Pelsall North Common as detailed in **Appendix A** as necessary to facilitate construction of a new bridge.
- (2) That Cabinet approve the proposal to offer part of the Council owned land detailed in **Appendix B** as replacement land for the common land to be deregistered and delegate authority to the Head of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to progress this exchange

3654 Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation

Councillor Andrew presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Andrew moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves a public consultation exercise in line with the prescribed process for the Additional Licensing of the Wards of Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck and St Matthew's areas shown on Map 1: Appendix 1. This consultation to include proposed licensing conditions (Appendix 2) and associated fee levels (Appendix 3).
- (2) That Cabinet receives a further report following the above consultation.

3655 Adult Social Care market uplifts 2021/22

Councillor Martin presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Martin moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves option one: 1% uplift against existing rates is applied in 2021-2022 (as detailed in section 4.7 table 1). This will require an investment of £803,679 for 2021/22.
- (2) That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Adult Social Care to enact these recommendations, including authorising any contract variations or other appropriate contractual arrangement to administer these uplifts, and to subsequently authorise the sealing or signing of any associated contracts, deeds or other related documentation.

3656 Adult Social Care providers during Covid-19 pandemic – extension to flexible arrangements

Councillor Martin presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Martin moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the continuation of the Adult Social Care recommended provider payment option of 'payment by plan' (except where there is no evidence of care having taken place) for domiciliary care services until the 31 March 2021 with an estimated total additional cost of £1,359,324 for 2020/21. This to be funded from the COVID-19 Response and Support Package funding provided by central government.
- (2) That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Adult Social Care to enact these recommendations and subsequently

authorise the sealing or signing of any associated contracts, deeds, variations and other related documents.

- (3) That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Adult Social Care and the S151 officer to extend the flexible arrangements subject to budget being available.

3657 **Walsall Allotments Boundary Review**

Councillor Butler presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Butler moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the £260k improvements to allotment boundaries, as identified in **Appendix A**.
- (2) That Cabinet recommends to Council an amendment to the capital programme of £260k to fund the allotment boundary improvement works.

3658 **Extension of Adult Social Care Public Health Contracts**

Councillor Craddock presented the report and gave his personal thanks to the team for their work

(see annexed)

Councillor Craddock moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements until 31st March 2023, and subsequently authorise the sealing or signing of any associated contracts, deeds or other related documents for

the following contracts:

- Healthy Eating in Schools (Food for Life)
- Lifestyle Services
- Smoking Cessation
- Sexual Health Services

- (2) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements for the services identified above, should this be required at any time during the term, in line with Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Contract Rules.

3659 New Apprenticeship Framework 2021

Councillor Chattha presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Chattha moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That following a procurement process, Cabinet approves the Council operating a Framework Agreement for apprenticeships with an estimated annual value of £800,000, for the period 1 February 2021 until 31 January 2024 and with the option to extend for 2 additional 12 month periods.
- (2) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation to approve the initial awards to the successful bidders for their appointment to the new Apprenticeship Framework and to authorise the subsequent signing of all necessary documents for such appointments.
- (3) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation to authorise all subsequent call offs from the new Apprenticeship Framework in accordance with the processes for doing so and terms and conditions of any such call offs that are set out in the new Apprenticeship Framework Agreement.

3660 Walsall Information Governance Policy

Councillor Chattha presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Chattha moved the approval of the recommendations which was duly seconded.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That the updated Information Governance Policy be approved
- (2) That cabinet approves the process for the creation, approval and implementation of supporting standards and or processes through FIGA.

3661 Revised Social Value Policy

Councillor Chattha presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Chattha moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the revised Social Value Policy attached as Appendix A to this Cabinet Report
- (2) That Cabinet approves the revised Social Value Charter attached as Appendix B to this Cabinet Report
- (3) That Cabinet approves the implementation of revised a Themes, Outcomes and Measures 'TOMs' Framework, aligned to Corporate Plan priorities, in accordance with the sample set out in Appendix C to this Cabinet Report
- (4) That Cabinet approves the Head of Procurement, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make minor, non-material changes to the Social Value Policy, Charter and/or TOMS Framework, in order to ensure alignment with changes in procurement regulation and the Councils Corporate Plan

3662 Access and Inclusion Working Group – portfolio holder report

Councillor Towe presented the report

(see annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

- (1) That the recommendations of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Access and Inclusion Working Group be approved.
- (2). That the actions taken to date to address the recommendations as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report be noted

3663 Youth Justice – report of Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Wilson introduced the item.

(see annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

- (1) That the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Working Group be thanked for its work.
- (2) That a report be submitted to the next Cabinet meeting responding to the recommendations of the Working Group.

3664 Petition – Road Safety on Doe Bank Lane

Councillor Andrew presented the report

(see annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

To approve the recommendations of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee: i.e.

1. To note the installation of additional repeater signage throughout the length of Doe Bank Lane and Bridle Lane to reinforce both the 20mph speed limit and the adjoining 30mph speed limit as part of the 2020/21 minor highway works programme.
2. That further engineering works on Doe Bank Lane be considered as part of the annual borough wide road safety review.

3665 **LATE ITEM Kickstart Scheme**

Reason for Lateness: Due to late confirmation by the DWP of some details of the scheme. Considered urgent as any delay would delay acceptance of the grant and impact on the delivery of the programme.

Councillor Andrew presented the report

(see annexed)

Councillor Andrew moved the approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Bird.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the Council's participation in the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme as a gateway organisation and approves acceptance of any grant from the Department for Work and Pensions for the purpose of creating paid work placements with private sector employers and within Walsall Council, if appropriate.
- (2) That Cabinet approves acceptance of the Kickstart Scheme grant from the Department for Work and Pensions, for the administration and set up, wrap around employability support and wage costs for young people whilst on work placement.
- (3) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for Economy Environment and Communities in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to sign, amend and enter into the appropriate grant agreements with the Department for Work and Pensions together with any subsequent discussions as required to receive the grant funding.

Private session

3666 **Exclusion of public**

Resolved (by assent)

That during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda, the Cabinet considers that the item for consideration is exempt information by virtue of the appropriate paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, and accordingly resolves to consider the item in private.

3667 **Walsall Allotments Boundary Review**

Councillor Andrew presented the report:

(see annexed)

Councillor Butler moved the approval of the recommendations which was duly seconded.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a roll-call of Cabinet members and subsequently declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the disposal of the Alexandra Road allotment site, subject to consultation and subject to Secretary of State approval.
- (2) That Cabinet note that any future capital receipt arising from the sale of the Alexandra Road site could be used to fund site improvement works, including boundaries and paths, and any remaining sum be used to provide additional plots to meet identified demand.

[Exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)]

The meeting terminated at 7.30 p.m.

Chair:

Date:



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW**
www.walsall.gov.uk

1 February 2021

FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW helen.owen@walsall.gov.uk and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at www.walsall.gov.uk. The Cabinet is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan, however, a notice will be included on the agenda for the relevant Cabinet meeting which explains the reasons why.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

Cabinet responsibilities are as follows

- Leader of the Council – Councillor Bird
- Deputy Leader, Regeneration – Councillor Andrew
- Deputy Leader, Resilient Communities – Councillor Perry
- Adult social care – Councillor Martin
- Children’s– Councillor Wilson
- Clean and green – Councillor Butler
- Education and skills – Councillor Towe
- Health and wellbeing – Councillor Craddock
- Personnel and business support – Councillor Chattha

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on the Council’s website. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Cabinet and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. The forward plan will show where this is intended and the reason why the reports are confidential. Enquiries regarding these reasons should be directed to Democratic Services (helen.owen@walsall.gov.uk).

“Key decisions” are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings. With regard to key decisions the Council’s Constitution states:

(1) A key decision is:

is, or the

- (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
- (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.

(2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £250,000.

(3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Dates of meetings

2020 28 October
9 December

2021 10 February
17 March
21 April

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

MARCH to JUNE2021(1.2.21)

1 7	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
8/20 (3.2.20)	Black Country Transport Team Collaboration Agreement: To approve the agreement to facilitate the delivery of a strategic transportation function across the four Black Country local authorities	Cabinet (Nonkey decision)	Matt Crowton 01922 654358 matt.crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	17 March2021
43/18 (8.10.18)	Lighting Invest to Save: To consider proposals for a major investment in the highway lighting infrastructure by replacing all existing lighting with energy efficient LED lighting	Cabinet (Key decision)	Paul Leighton 07831 120871 paul.leighton@walsall.gov.uk	Public, Walsall Public Lighting Ltd., industry companies, internal	Councillor Andrew	17 March2021
6/21 (4.1.21)	Black Country Tenancy Strategy: To approve the strategy to enable a uniform approach across the Black Country for Fixed Term Tenancies and Affordable Rents by registered providers of social housing	Cabinet (Key decision)	Neil Hollyhead Neil.hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	17 March 2021
7/21 (4.1.21)	Community Sponsorship: To approve a process to enable the community to	Cabinet	Neil Hollyhead Neil.hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	17 March 2021

	house and support refugees	(Key decision)	all.gov.uk			
9/21 (1.2.21)	West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2021/22: For approval	Cabinet (Key decision)	Matt Crowton Matt.crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	17 March 2021
8/21 (1.2.21)	Regional Materials Recycling Facility (MRF): To approve the revised Business Case and additional funding.	Cabinet (Key decision)	Cabinet Report dated 04 September 2019. Joint Working Agreements and Initial Business Case. Stephen Johnson Service Manager - Strategy Tel. 01922 654227	Internal	Councillor Butler	17 March 2021
62/20 (2.11.20)	Appointment of Major works technical advisor: To provide services such as architects, quantity surveyors, engineers, etc. for a period of 2 + 1 + 1 years for corporate landlord.	Cabinet (Key decision)	Derwyn Owen 01922 650747 derwyn.owen@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Chattha	17 March 2021
9/21 (2.1.21)	Adult Social Care Call Electronic Call Monitoring System: Approval of the extension to the Electronic Call Monitoring Contract for an additional year and delegate authority to make any variations as a result of statutory	Cabinet (Non-key decision)	HardeepKainth 01922 658387 Hardeep.kainth@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Martin	17 March 2021

	requirements					
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Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Crisis Support Provision for families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic

Portfolio: Councillor Perry – Deputy Leader, Resilient Communities

Related portfolios: Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader, Regeneration
Councillor Martin – Adult Social Care
Councillor Wilson – Children’s

Service: Resilient Communities

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

1.1 To consider to what extent the Council’s current support provision, and operating model, is meeting the needs of families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Summary

2.1 This report provides an update on the outcome of an appraisal carried out by Bryn Hamer from Hamer Consulting Limited, which explored the extent to which local Crisis Support provision is meeting the needs of Walsall residents. The final appraisal report(attached as Appendix 2) summarises, and reviews, the robust and flexible approach the Council and its key partners have developed in seeking to meet the needs of Walsall families in financial hardship, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council’s approach to delivering Crisis Support has been expanded significantly following:

- receipt of an additional £1.1M government funding in December 2020 and;
- the changing nature of the pandemic including:
 - the National Lockdown announced in January 2021
 - roll-out of vaccinations for Walsall residents.

2.2 It confirms that partners from across Walsall have rallied together to help support the Council to achieve a common goal, of supporting the most vulnerable within our society during the Covid-19 pandemic. It acknowledges a significant level of innovation in the services delivered during this period and the improved relationships that have developed as a result of working

differently. It recommends that best practice examples are shared so that more families can benefit from the lessons learnt.

- 2.3 It calls for an improvement in the way that the Council, and its partners, capture data about the profile of customers, so that in the future, there is greater assurance that all sections of the community are able to access the help they need when they need it.
- 2.4 It also highlights the risk, that once the crisis is over, collaboration and communication between organisations could diminish. It therefore recommends the establishment of a Covid Partners Strategy Steering Group that would:
- (i) review progress on each recommendation;
 - (ii) review emerging borough level data relating to Covid-19 to identify any additional actions to reduce the impact of covid 19 on families in financial hardship;
 - (iii) coordinate the resources for supporting families in financial hardship
- 2.5 The Council's approach is not static and this report seeks Cabinet's endorsement of a range of other related activities (listed in Appendix 1) to further help families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the outcome of the Independent Appraisal of the Crisis Support Provision for families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic and endorses the recommendations listed in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 That Cabinet request a further report on progress made (in 6 months time).

4. Report detail

Context

- 4.1 On 28 October 2020 the Leader of the Council committed to commission an appraisal of support provision for people who are financially vulnerable in Walsall. The appraisal was to be:
- independently led, and consider the crisis support provision provided by the Council, Key Partners, Children and Families and the Community and Voluntary Sector (including foodbanks and other community Groups)
 - reported back to Cabinet for further discussion of the outcomes.
- 4.2 On 8 November 2020, the government announced a new £170m Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme to support children, families and the most vulnerable over the winter period. The funding was to be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills, and will cover the period to the end of March 2021. Local Authorities were to receive the funding at the beginning of December 2020. Walsall Council was allocated £1,134,745.58 from this scheme.

- 4.3 Given the time pressures associated with delivering this work and the context in terms of the Covid-19 pandemic officers were asked to identify a suitable person to undertake the appraisal. In December 2020, officers commissioned Bryn Hamer, who is an Experienced Director and former Charity Trustee, with extensive knowledge of the Voluntary and Community Sector's in Walsall, to lead the appraisal. The research used a mixed methodology approach with two key components:
1. A review of background data and literature materials to establish the needs of local residents and services available to support them.
 2. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with stakeholders, including key staff and partner agencies involved in this type work to gain in-depth insight at a local level.
- 4.4 The tight timescales given to complete the work, rising levels of Covid-19 infections in Walsall, the announcement of the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme, Tier 3 restrictions and a subsequent National Lockdown, have all created a very challenging period in which to undertake the appraisal. Council officers, and partners from the Voluntary Sector and Community Sector, have understandably needed to prioritise issuing Winter Grant monies and supporting vulnerable people. In particular, additional government burdens placed on teachers in this period, have prevented them from engaging directly in this research via focus groups.
- 4.5 The report acknowledges the limited scope of this initial appraisal, and makes recommendations that will facilitate further review and development of services in the future. A copy of the full report and recommendations are attached as Appendix 2.
- 4.6 The report recognises the innovation in service delivery and communication methods that have developed during the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, Walsall's unique approach to awarding Winter Grant Funding using Council Tax Reduction data (as opposed to Free School Meals data) which has resulted in 44% more children benefiting from the scheme. The use of Facebook advertising to help promote that grant, which enabled 82% of cash payments to be issued within three weeks, is also seen as Best Practice that should be rolled out across the Council and its partners.
- 4.7 Weaknesses were identified around the quality and type of data currently being collected about service users accessing Crisis Support, which made it difficult to provide assurance that all protected groups are being supported adequately. There is a recommendation to improve this, which is of particular importance, given the national research which suggests that some BAME communities are being disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.8 The appraisal acknowledges the significant contribution made by the voluntary and community sector in the Covid-19 response. It highlights the enhanced collaboration and relationships that have developed during this period. It also

identifies that post Covid-19, there is risk that these networks could dwindle away. A number of the recommendations aim to prevent this, such as:

- Setting up a Steering Group to oversee Crisis Provision and Service Development;
- Giving the Voluntary and Community Sector a meaningful 'voice' at that table;
- Maintaining funding at a level sufficient to enable the sector to continue to function and provide essential services.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.9 The recommendations will help towards delivering the following corporate priorities:

- Children have the best possible start in life and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and leaning well – ensuring the right support packages are in place to support families on low incomes to be able to feed and provide essential utilities for their children.
- Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses – providing a strong voluntary sector that can help support people to manage during a crisis but also help them to become self-sufficient and more resilient afterwards.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities – preventing people from being impacted by Covid-19 or other health issues; promoting independence can help improve mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion – ensuring that vulnerable people are protected from the impact of fuel poverty, tenancies are sustained and they feel to be part of their community.

Risk management

4.10 The analysis has highlighted a range of inter-connected actions to maximise the help and support for Walsall families in financial hardship, during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has also highlighted the wider and sustained benefits for families and the borough that could be achieved in the future from the collaborative approach continuing. The key risk is resources not being available to continue this work.

Financial implications

- 4.11 To keep the cost of this review to a minimum, Council Officers initially supported the process by drawing together and summarising key data and relevant information (these documents are referenced in the background information). The author of the appraisal, Bryn Hamer, then independently led a series of meetings with Council officers, and held separate focus groups with representatives from Voluntary and Community Groups and other relevant stakeholders, to further explore the literature and consider how best to improve the crisis support provision in Walsall.
- 4.12 One of the recommendations in Appendix 1 is to provide ongoing funding for the Walsall Crisis Support Scheme in 2021/22 at the same rate as prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (£500,000). This will be necessary to help people when Covid-19 government measures such as benefits uplifts and furlough cease. The level of investment will need to be reviewed to take account of any increase in the impact of Covid-19 and any reduction in funding from central funding.
- 4.13 Council officers will continue to encourage, and support where possible, local charitable organisations to apply for relevant funding packages to increase external funding coming into the borough. The Council and One Walsall are already providing support to local organisations to help them to maximise their chances of gaining additional external funding to support local people.

Legal implications

- 4.14 The Council already has a Crisis Support Scheme, which was approved by Cabinet on 19 March 2015. The scheme assists the council and residents in a range of areas including preventing homelessness.
- 4.15 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.16 In accordance with the Council's procurement rules, the Council obtained a quotation from Bryn Hamer Consultancy Ltd, which due to its low value, allowed a direct contract award to be made.
- 4.17 The procurement of goods or food as part of the Walsall Crisis Support Scheme is undertaken in compliance with Public Contract Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) and the Council's Contract Rules. These arrangements may need to be reviewed if in the future the Council decides to deliver this scheme in a different way.
- 4.18 Walsall Council's Social Value Charter sets out clear principles for how the council will work with Partners to improve economic, social, and environmental well-being and maximise social value benefits for people and communities in Walsall. One of the recommendations in this report is for Council officers to seek to take greater advantage of the Social Value offers being made to the Council, to help benefit vulnerable people living in Walsall.

Property implications

4.19 There are no property implications for the Council.

Health and wellbeing implications

4.20 Continuing to take a proactive approach to support vulnerable and shielded individuals to safely:

- remain at home during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown
- continue to work, where possible
- access testing and vaccinations

will reduce the risk of harm experienced by community members and take the pressure off the NHS.

4.21 The recommendations contained within this report are in full accordance with the Marmot objectives. The Walsall Crisis Support Scheme, along with the voluntary and community network, already deliver services that help give children the best start in life and also help young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives. The proposals aim to maintain this positive work in the future.

Staffing implications

4.22 There are no direct staffing implications for the Council.

Reducing Inequalities

4.23 Quantitative and Qualitative evidence from reports, and discussions with key stakeholders, suggests that the crisis support schemes in Walsall are helping to reduce health inequalities and provide those in the greatest need with the help they need to remain healthy during the pandemic. There is however very limited data available and providing full assurance is not possible. Data about the ethnicity of children receiving Free School Meals, suggests that BAME children are under-represented in this cohort. One of the recommendations in the report is to increase recording and analysis of ethnicity to enable further analysis to be done.

4.24 The Public Health England Report 'Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19' (August 2020) highlighted range of key factors for England:

- Age: A survival analysis looked at people with a positive test, and those 80 or older, when compared with those under 40, were seventy times more likely to die. These are the largest disparities found in this analysis. Working age males diagnosed with COVID-19 were twice as likely to die as females.
- Deprivation: The mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas were more than double the least deprived areas, for both males and females. This is greater than the ratio for all-cause mortality between 2014 to 2018 indicating greater inequality in death rates from COVID-19 than all causes;

- **Ethnicity:** An analysis of survival among confirmed COVID-19 cases shows that, after accounting for the effect of sex, age, deprivation and region, people of Bangladeshi ethnicity had around twice the risk of death when compared to people of White British ethnicity. People of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Black Caribbean and Other Black ethnicity had between 10 and 50% higher risk of death when compared to White British. Death rates from COVID-19 were higher for Black and Asian ethnic groups when compared to White ethnic groups. This is the opposite of what is seen in previous years, when the all-cause mortality rates were lower in Asian and Black ethnic groups. Therefore, the inequality in COVID-19 mortality between ethnic groups is the opposite of that seen for all causes of death in previous years.

Consultation

- 4.25 During the appraisal consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders with additional input from Council officers.
- 4.26 The rising levels of Covid-19 infections in Walsall, the announcement of the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme, Tier 3 restrictions and a National Lockdown, have all created a very challenging (and unprecedented) period in which to undertake the consultation. Particularly, additional government requests placed on teachers in this period, have prevented them from engaging directly in this research via focus groups. Teachers are to be consulted in future reviews and to also be represented in the recommended Steering Group.

5. Decide

Cabinet is requested to consider the findings of the review into current Crisis Support Provision for families in hardship and the recommendations detailed in section 3 (with further information provided in Appendix 1).

6. Respond

If approved, then the Director of Resilient Communities and Director of Customer Engagement will jointly work together to lead the implementation of the recommendations in Appendix 1.

7. Review

Usage and outcomes of the Walsall Crisis Support Scheme will be monitored, and findings will be fed into the development of the new Customer Engagement Strategy. This report also recommends a progress report be presented to Cabinet in circa 6 months time.

Background papers

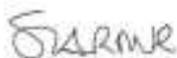
- Appendix 1: Draft proposed Recommendations
 Appendix 2: Appraisal Report and Focus Group Feedback from Bryn Hamer

Other Background Papers (Referenced in Appendix 2)

Appendix A:	Resilient Communities, Our Strength Based Model: Making Connections Hub Data (Walsall Council, 2020).
Appendix B:	Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme, Delivery and Impact (Walsall Council, January 2021)
Appendix C:	Covid-19 Impact and Support, National and Local Context (Walsall Council, 2020)
Appendix D:	Customer Case Analysis, Impact on Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (Walsall Council, 2020)
Appendix E:	Covid-19 Ethnicity Analysis, Making Connections (Walsall Council, 2021)
Appendix F:	Home Energy Conservation Act Action Plan (LEAP, 2020)
Appendix G:	Walsall Crisis Support Scheme Briefing Note (Walsall Council, 2020)

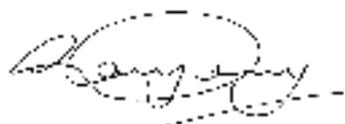
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Elise Hopkins
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Executive Director Children's Services

21 January 2021



Councillor Perry
Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder
Resilient Communities

21 January 2021



Councillor Andrew
Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for
Regeneration

21 January 2021

Appendix 1

Draft proposed Recommendations for Action to continue to help families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A. Establishing a Steering Group:

A Covid Partners Strategy Steering Group will be formed to oversee the delivery of these recommendations, which will form a Plan. The Group will meet every three months to

- (iv) review progress on each recommendation;
- (v) review emerging borough level data relating to Covid-19 to identify any additional actions to reduce the impact of covid 19 on families in financial hardship;
- (vi) coordinate the resources for supporting families in financial hardship

The Group will be responsible for quarterly updating the Plan, to ensure it remains relevant.

Membership will consist of chief or principle officers responsible for:

- Adult social care
- Children services
- Public health
- Housing benefit administration

The Group will be chaired by a Chief Officer from one of the above.

Membership will also be extended to representatives from local social housing providers, education and key voluntary and community groups, as well as One Walsall.

B. Action Plan Recommendations

Best Practice – To deliver maximum community benefits

1. Where the Council and its partners have been innovative and delivered best practice for example;
 - Use of CTR rather than eligibility to Free School Meals to 'passport' through for help;
 - including children who have not yet reached school age and those not currently in education in the Covid-19 Walsall Winter Grant Scheme.

Promote this to other local authorities, especially neighbouring ones in the West Midlands (so that there can be a more constituent 'offer' to vulnerable families).

Financial Support

2. Continue ongoing funding for the Walsall Crisis Support Scheme in 2021/22 at the same rate as prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (£500,000). The level of investment to be reviewed at a future date to take account of any increase in the impact of Covid-19 and any reduction in funding from central funding.

Monitoring

3. All services to be encouraged to use ethnicity monitoring especially when related to Covid-19 related support due to the identified higher risk factors for BAME individuals. Key areas for inclusion crisis support.
4. Data collection and analysis to become core to the rollout of the Council's new CRM system. This will help ensure the most effective deployment of services (eg type of help and channel of communication) for those most in need.

Maximising Value for Money and Social Value

5. Review by June 2021 whether closer working relationships with other national organisations such as Foodshare or Trussell Trust can deliver even greater value for money in food parcel and related work / support.
6. Identify specific staffing resource that can be used to actively investigate the potential for increased Social Value to help bolster the Crisis Support.
7. Review of both Home Energy Conservation Act (including Fuel Poverty) Action Plan and work with LEAP to maximise all opportunities for help for vulnerable families through advice, support and financial assistance.
8. Review procurement arrangements with local voluntary sector to ensure value for money and social value for expenditure with local suppliers

Broadening Scope

9. Improve offer to individuals and families with no recourse to public funds (as CTR data does not include anyone from this category).

Post Pandemic

10. Council commitment to seek to ensure that assistance and joint work with charity and voluntary sector is not ceased post Covid-19 pandemic and that the excellent partnership work is continued for the benefit of the borough
11. A six-month post Covid plan to be drafted with the voluntary sector and then communicated to ensure dealing with the aftermath of the crisis is as essential as dealing with the crisis itself
12. The Hub delivery model, which worked so well in the crisis, should be supported further; especially in terms of co-ordination, mitigating duplication and signposting best practise
13. Making Connections (or a similar forum) to be supported as a vehicle to promote Community Association's collaboration
14. Focus to accelerate on new ways of communicating with stakeholders and customers. This needs to develop new areas such as Facebook advertising alongside working with the voluntary sector to mitigate digital exclusion
15. With the financial implications of Covid on the voluntary sector extra effort is required to see if funding can be 'pooled' in the most effective way (eg help with consortium bids)

Appendix 2

Title: Appraisal into Walsall Council's Crisis Provision and Operating Model during Covid-19

Author: Bryn Hamer, Director at Hamer Consultancy Limited

Contents:

The report consists of six sections:

1. Aim (page 1)
2. Background and Methodology (page 1 –2)
3. Report Findings (page 3 – 8)
4. Conclusions (page 9)
5. Recommendations (page 10 to 12)
6. Focus Groups Feedback from Voluntary Sector Stakeholders (page 13 -14)

1. Aim

The aim of this review was to consider to what extent the Council's current support provision, and operating model, is meeting the needs of families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Background and Methodology

Background

On 28 October 2020 the Leader of the Council committed to commission an appraisal of support provision for people who are financially vulnerable in Walsall. The appraisal was to be:

- independently led, and consider the crisis support provision provided by the Council, Key Partners, Children and Families and the Community and Voluntary Sector (including foodbanks and other community Groups)
- reported back to Cabinet for further discussion of the outcomes.

On 8 November 2020, the government announced a new £170m Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme to support children, families and the most vulnerable over the winter period. The funding was to be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills, and will cover the period to the end of March 2021. Local Authorities were to receive the funding at the beginning of December 2020. Walsall Council was allocated £1,134,745.58 from this scheme.

Methodology

A mixed research methodology has been deployed to assess whether the Council's current support provision, and operating model, is adequate for meeting the needs of families in financial hardship during the Covid-19 pandemic. The appraisal consisted of two components:

1. A review of existing background data and literature materials to establish the needs of local residents, with particular focus on:
 - a) The cumulative impact of national and local welfare benefit policies on the financial wellbeing of Walsall residents (to include information about whether this has changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, taking account of relevant COVID-19 support offers);
 - b) Trends in the uptake of welfare benefits and local support schemes, against the regional and national picture (with particular focus on households with school aged children);
 - c) Impact of fuel poverty on households
 - d) The quality of current data and insight whether this could be improved;
 - e) The level of investment in support for local residents, taking account of the Walsall Crisis Support Scheme, Council Tax Reduction, Walsall Works and other relevant advice and assistance schemes;
 - f) How the Voluntary and Community Sector contribute to increasing local capacity and capability and further opportunities;
 - g) The type and frequency of the support required and how to best achieve this in a way that does not create long-term dependencies, and instead promotes community resilience;
 - h) The effectiveness of current levels of local assistance, identifying further opportunities to use support to help lessen disparities in infection and death rates of COVID-19. Factors to be considered, but not limited to, age and sex, occupation, obesity, comorbidities, geography, and ethnicity;
 - i) How the Council can strengthen and improve communications about support provision to ensure they are able to reach those in the greatest need.

2. Interviews with stakeholders, including key staff and partner agencies involved in this work to gain in-depth insight at a local level. This aimed to include dialogue with:
 - Schools and other relevant professionals
 - Representatives from Making Connections Walsall
 - Public Health
 - Local Foodbanks
 - Community led groups focusing on support for vulnerable people and families
 - Housing providers; and
 - Service Users

3. Report Findings

Resilient Communities Approach

A review of the relevant literature and information, has revealed that the Council has been working with a wide range of partner organisations, in an attempt to help to minimise the spread of COVID-19. A resilient communities approach has been applied, with the Council providing civic leadership, to help mobilise a public response through the voluntary and community sector.

Four Community Hubs have been operating across the following areas during the Covid-19 pandemic. The hubs receive referrals via email or via the Making Connections telephone line (which is answered by the West Midlands Fire Brigade). The main types of support offered by the four Community Hubs during the pandemic has been:

- a) Befriending (telephone calls to people who need support or are lonely);
- b) Shopping (which residents pay for)
- c) Collection of prescriptions
- d) Delivery of food parcels (only for individuals in significant financial hardship or isolating in line with Government guidance)
- e) Other types of support for individuals in crisis e.g. collecting and delivering of free school meals / vouchers for families self-isolating,
- f) arranging emergency boiler repairs, welfare benefits and financial advice are also offered (where appropriate).

In addition to the Community Hubs a large number of other organisations have also joined the Covid-19 response and made a positive contribution. Additional details about the Community and Voluntary Sector Response to the pandemic is included in Appendix C.

Feedback from focus group discussions have confirmed that by working with partners in this way, the Council's investment has gone further. Charitable donations, and external grant funding, has been pooled to deliver a better combined service for local residents. The Council has benefited from the detailed knowledge of local people that the voluntary and community sector have, which has helped:

- improve resident engagement,
- facilitated the recruitment of volunteers; and
- guarded against the misuse of local support schemes.

Voluntary Sector organisations and residents have in turn benefited from the bigger buying power of the Council (to help secure and distribute essential food stocks during periods of shortages). Although these same organisations recommended that procurement processes could be improved further, as shown in section 6. The sector have also been able to access Council training, support to become Covid-19 secure, and have also gained access to ICT equipment, insight and data-capture systems (which have helped improve their evidence base to enable them to apply for external grant funding opportunities).

Conversations also revealed that the voluntary and community sector have themselves built new and stronger relationships with each other during Covid-19, which has also led to success in attracting significant external investment for Walsall.

During the Covid-19 pandemic at points the Making Connections network struggled to 'scale up' fast enough initially to meet demand. When this happened, the Council stepped in to help e.g. procuring food and opening up a food distribution centre at Sneyd, with the support of local volunteers, to help pack and supply food parcels to the Making Connections network for distribution.

In the future, closer working relationships with other national organisations such as Foodshare or Trussell Trust should also be explored, to see whether this could deliver even greater value for money.

In general Community and Voluntary Sector organisations felt that they had been well supported by the Council during the Covid-19 pandemic. Partners are keen to see these relationships continue to flourish in a post Covid-19 world and feel that they are well positioned to potentially take on some of the work currently carried out by universal services, which they believe will also deliver better value for money.

Walsall Covid-19 Winter Grant Fund

Full details of the Walsall Covid-19 Winter Grant Fund and the outcomes are included in Appendix B.

This appraisal has confirmed that Council officers have taken a data led approach to identify low-income families in the greatest need to receive support through the grant.

There was evidence that lessons had been learned from feedback from residents in the first lockdown in 2020. For example, the decision to issue cash payments, as opposed to shopping vouchers to so many, was in direct response to parents' feedback, who stated that this approach would give them greater freedom to choose where they shopped, and in doing so help them to maximise what they got for their money.

The Council used eligibility for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) as a selection criteria, which was a different to that taken by most neighbouring authorities, who used eligibility for 'Free Schools Meals' (FSM) as the criteria for selecting families.

Initial indications from Phase 1 suggest this innovative approach, was a better one, as this has led to 44% more families with dependent children receiving grants than would otherwise have been the case.

The Walsall scheme has also included children who have not yet reached school age and those not currently in education. The approach was also well received by schools, who were not required to play a role in issuing the vouchers, which was positively received due to the increased pressure they were under (given that this coincided with additional guidance about Covid-19 testing being announced).

Whilst the majority of funding has been spent on cash payments, funding was also provided to the Making Connections network, to ensure that vulnerable adults, or families not in receipt of Council Tax Reduction could access additional support if needed. Interestingly, the Council's own Crisis Support Scheme has seen a 34% drop in applications since the Covid-19 pandemic commenced. This could be due to the closure of drop-in services at the Council's front-line offices or because other support measures have meant that the needs of vulnerable people are being met without needing direct intervention from the Council. Further details of the additional support measures now in place are included in the appendices to this report.

Data Informed & Communication

The Council used Mosaic data to 'profile' local residents, to help inform the communications strategy for the Winter Grant Support scheme. The tools used included:

- targeted press releases,
- newsletters,
- social media posts,
- direct email,
- text messaging,
- letters sent direct to homes and
- letters to parents via the schools network.

Facebook advertising was also used to help encourage uptake. This was a new approach for the Council and got great results. Facebook reaches a large part of the target audience and has real potential for further use. This advertisement post cost as little as £13.50 but reached 8.7k people with 359 of them clicking on the link to get more information.

Outcome

The overall approach has resulted in a large uptake in parents accessing the scheme. To date, 82% of cash payments have been made to claimants directly into their bank accounts. As the Council now holds the relevant bank account information, any future grant instalments can be paid more quickly and efficiently. Walsall Households in receipt of CTR who did not choose to apply to receive a cash payment directly into their own bank accounts, have also not lost out. Vouchers were issued to those who requested them.

The remaining households will still benefit from the financial support, which will now be credited to their Council Tax Account (reducing the amount they need to pay in Council Tax this year). The Council took an iterative approach, adjusting the scheme when new challenges arose. Evidence of this can be seen in the amendment to the scheme to include FSM children who attend local schools, but live out of borough, when it transpired that they would be disadvantaged as their own Local Authorities had not made this provision for them.

Benefits levels and support

On average the Council received 107 new Housing Benefit Applications per week in January to February 2020, but this had increased to 285 by April 2020, and this increased trend has continued subsequently.

Walsall applications for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) also increased by 12% (March 2020, compared to March 2019) with this trend also continuing. Despite the increase in demand, performance data confirms that the Council has managed to keep up, without customers experiencing backlogs.

In addition to the above, the Council has also issued a range of Business Grants to support local businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic and Covid-19 Support Grants to individuals required to self-isolate. The details of all this additional support is attached in Appendix C.

Officers have again used a range of communication methods to raise awareness of these forms of support and the increasing demand for these services, and expenditure levels, supports the view that there is a good level of public awareness of the various schemes.

Walsall had 13,386 more households on Universal Credit in August 2020 compared to August 2019 (a 54% increase during the year). This is considered a significant increase. In July to September 2020, the UK unemployment rate stood at 5.0%. Yet the unemployment rate was 4.5% for people from a White ethnic background however, compared to 8.5% for people from BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) (DWP, 2020).

National labour force analysis suggests that workers who are from a BAME background have been one of the groups most negatively impacted economically by the coronavirus outbreak (Foley, 2020). National reports suggest this is because BAME communities work in sectors most affected by the coronavirus pandemic and therefore are more likely to be in occupations categorised as vulnerable jobs. Many workers from BAME groups account for approximately 28% of the vulnerable jobs in the transport sector and 16% of the vulnerable jobs in the accommodation and food service sector nationally (DWP, Labour Force Survey, 2019). Covid-19 infection rates also suggest that locally some BAME ethnic groups have also been disproportionately impacted by the disease (Appendix E).

Given the high diversity of the Walsall population it is likely that many local residents have been impacted heavily and will be in need of additional help and support. Unfortunately, the data about the ethnicity of individuals who have accessed local support offers is very limited which has made it difficult to draw conclusions about whether the Council is meeting the needs of all (Appendix E and B). An improvement in this area is required and this is covered in the recommendations. Out-puts from group discussions, and individual interviews, did suggest that this area would benefit from some additional focus moving forward to help provide additional reassurance that all groups are being supported effectively.

Despite the limited data available, there is anecdotal evidence of some good practice within the sector with organisations working together for example:

- translation of key Covid-19 messages into a range of community languages;
- creation of bespoke food parcels to meet specific dietary requirements (Appendix D);
- and outreach support for individuals with no-recourse to funds (Appendix D).

Council Officers also talked openly about their decision to issue cash payments for Winter Grant being based partly on feedback from local schools, who had reported that some BAME parents had experienced discrimination when accessing mainstream supermarkets to spend vouchers during the first lockdown.

Housing and Covid-19

The government has provided a 'safety-net' to many financially vulnerable households during the pandemic in the form of not permitting evictions (except in limited circumstances) until at least 21 February 2021. The government has also issued a range of guidance on housing enforcement matters during the pandemic period and the Council has continued to provide support and guidance to landlords and tenants. Where landlords have breached legislation formal action has and will continue to be taken. For example, Improvement Notices and Civil Penalty Notices have been issued and in three cases, statutory Prohibition Orders have been warranted.

Tackling Fuel Poverty

The council has a published Fuel Poverty Action Plan (Appendix F, last updated June 2020) and this and the initiatives it supports has helped a range of households in Walsall during the pandemic. Services have continued during the pandemic in many areas including:

- 251 household supported to access EcoFlex investment estimated at £585,000
- 116 households helped to secure affordable warmth funding to secure new gas connections and gas central heating (estimated £313,000 investment)
- Collective fuel switches enabling residents to secure lower energy bills.

Another key area has been the continuation of the umbrella partnership called Walsall Local Energy and Advice Partnership (LEAP), which works collaboratively to help to tackle issues associated with Fuel Poverty in the borough. There has been notable success in this with over 1000 customers receiving assistance (as detailed in Appendix C and F). The scale of the issue is significant though with Accent Research for Ofgem/Citizens Advice, Consumer Perceptions of the Energy Market (Q3 2020) summarised by Citizens Advice indicating that nationally 24% of consumers - expect to struggle to pay their energy bills in winter 2020/21. Additional work to ensure the LEAP partnership brand is maximised to increase customer sign-up and greater collaboration including with the Making Connections network. Officers are in discussions with the national charity Foundations about securing financial support to link energy advice with Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) work.

Support for disabled households

The continued work of the council in helping families access DFGs, at a time of covid, secured wide recognition when requested to present on the topic to a national DFG forum for Foundations in December 2020.

For example between 1 April 2020 and 19 January 2021 a total of 430 DFG were approved by the Council.

An alliance between South Staffs Water and the Council, also offers vulnerable customers a 60% discount in the first year, and a 40% discount in the second year. This is available for all South Staffs Water customers who had a DFG approved in 2020/21 and also homeless families living in temporary accommodation. The Council and South Staffs water are now in

discussions about how to develop this relationship further, so that more help can be offered to low income families in the borough who are in receipt of benefits. Again, increasing awareness of different opportunities, and connecting partners within the wider Walsall network together, could reap additional benefits for vulnerable local people.

A joint Winter Communications Campaign has also been developed to try to get the message out, with key messages being released regularly via social media over the next few weeks.

Limitations of research

There were significant time restraints placed on completing this research, due to a desire for the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet in time to influence decision making about future delivery models and budget setting for next financial year.

Rising levels of Covid-19 infections in Walsall, the announcement of the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme, Tier 3 restrictions, and a further National Lockdown, have also created a very challenging period in which to undertake the appraisal, and prevented face to face contact with service users and limited availability some professionals.

Council officers, and partners from the Voluntary Sector and Community Sector, understandably said that they needed to prioritise issuing Winter Grant monies and supporting vulnerable people in this period. In particular, additional government burdens placed on teachers, prevented them from engaging directly in this research via focus groups. Listening to ongoing feedback from Key Stakeholders will be critical to future success and the report recommendations further engagement as a priority action.

4. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought partners together from across Walsall to help achieve a common goal, of supporting the most vulnerable within our society. This has resulted in increased innovation in service delivery and improved relationships. If and when the Covid-19 pandemic is over, there is a real risk that these relationships and networks will dwindle, with communication and collaboration slowly falling away. To avoid this, the Council will need to continue to provide strong leadership, taking a 'strength based' approach, but also bringing people together, to problem solve, and collaborate about future service delivery.

The Walsall economy, and job market, has been damaged significantly due to the pandemic, with worse predicted when the government furlough scheme ends. Key to our future economic success, will be harnessing the resources of all statutory, and voluntary sector partners to not only protect vulnerable people, but also to support them back to self-sufficiency. The Voluntary and Community Sector has played a lead role in the Covid-19 response, and in the future will expect to be treated with increased respect, and be offered a meaningful 'voice' at the table to design future models of delivery. It is critical that funding levels are sustained sufficiently to allow the sector to continue to function and provide the essential services they offer.

This appraisal has identified a lot of strengths in both the delivery model and also service delivery, but closer working relationships, and better information sharing and communications between all local partners, could drive further innovation and achieve greater value for money for Walsall Residents.

5. Recommendations

The recommendations are in two sections:

- A. Provides details about a proposal to establish a new Steering Group to oversee future service delivery.
- B. Provides specific actions that should feature in the first 'action plan' developed to be overseen by that new Steering Group

A. Establishing a Steering Group:

A Covid Partners Strategy Steering Group will be formed to oversee the delivery of these recommendations, which will form a Plan. The Group will meet every three months to

- (i) review progress on each recommendation;
- (ii) review emerging borough level data relating to Covid-19 to identify any additional actions to reduce the impact of covid 19 on families in financial hardship;
- (iii) coordinate the resources for supporting families in financial hardship

The Group will be responsible for quarterly updating the Plan, to ensure it remains relevant.

Membership will consist of chief or principle officers responsible for:

- Adult social care
- Children services
- Public health
- Housing benefit administration

The Group will be chaired by a Chief Officer from one of the above.

Membership will also be extended to representatives from local social housing providers, education and key voluntary and community groups, as well as One Walsall.

B Action Plan Recommendations

Best Practice – To deliver maximum community benefits

1. Where the Council and its partners have been innovative and delivered best practice for example;
 - Use of CTR rather than eligibility to Free School Meals to 'passport' through for help;
 - including children who have not yet reached school age and those not currently in education in the Covid-19 Walsall Winter Grant Scheme.Promote this to other local authorities, especially neighbouring ones in the West Midlands (so that there can be a more constituent 'offer' to vulnerable families).

Financial Support

2. Continue ongoing funding for the Walsall Crisis Support Scheme in 2021/22 at the same rate as prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (£500,000). The level of investment to be reviewed at a future date to take account of any increase in the impact of Covid-19 and any reduction in funding from central funding.

Monitoring

3. All services to be encouraged to use ethnicity monitoring especially when related to Covid-19 related support due to the identified higher risk factors for BAME individuals. Key areas for inclusion crisis support.
4. Data collection and analysis to become core to the rollout of the Council's new CRM system. This will help ensure the most effective deployment of services (eg type of help and channel of communication) for those most in need.

Maximising Value for Money and Social Value

5. Review by June 2021 whether closer working relationships with other national organisations such as Foodshare or Trussell Trust can deliver even greater value for money in food parcel and related work / support.
6. Identify specific staffing resource that can be used to actively investigate the potential for increased Social Value to help bolster the Crisis Support.
7. Review of both Home Energy Conservation Act (including Fuel Poverty) Action Plan and work with LEAP to maximise all opportunities for help for vulnerable families through advice, support and financial assistance.
8. Review procurement arrangements with local voluntary sector to ensure value for money and social value for expenditure with local suppliers

Broadening Scope

9. Improve offer to individuals and families with no recourse to public funds (as CTR data does not include anyone from this category).

Post Pandemic

10. Council commitment to seek to ensure that assistance and joint work with charity and voluntary sector is not ceased post Covid-19 pandemic and that the excellent partnership work is continued for the benefit of the borough
11. A six-month post Covid plan to be drafted with the voluntary sector and then communicated to ensure dealing with the aftermath of the crisis is as essential as dealing with the crisis itself
12. The Hub delivery model, which worked so well in the crisis, should be supported further; especially in terms of co-ordination, mitigating duplication and signposting best practise

13. Making Connections (or a similar forum) to be supported as a vehicle to promote Community Association's collaboration
14. Focus to accelerate on new ways of communicating with stakeholders and customers. This needs to develop new areas such as Facebook advertising alongside working with the voluntary sector to mitigate digital exclusion
15. With the financial implications of Covid on the voluntary sector extra effort is required to see if funding can be 'pooled' in the most effective way (eg help with consortium bids)

6. Focus Groups Feedback from Voluntary Sector Stakeholders

Focus Group Approach – Led by Bryn Hamer

1. Introduction&Explanation: Explain who I am, what the strategic review is and its purpose. Feedback will be anonymous and confidential if requested. The following questions were designed to stimulate an open and candid debate....
2. Can you briefly describe your role within supporting Families with Financial Hardship in Walsall?
3. What were the key impacts on Families with Financial Hardship pre Covid?
4. What are the current key impacts on Families with Financial Hardship during Covid and then after?
5. What are the major needs (ie questions to answer) to mitigate these impacts?
6. How would you describe the response from the Walsall community?
7. What role did the council have within this?
8. What worked well?
9. What could have worked better?
10. What is needed from the Council going forwards?

Schedule of Focus Groups / Interviews

Group one – Date 23.12.20
Sue Evans – Manor Farm Community Association
Allan Boot – Black Country Food Bank
Rebecca Dodd – Accord Age Matters
David Taylor – Ryecroft Community Hub
Group two – Date 13.01.21
Keely Gabriel – Ablewell Advice Services
Sanjay – Seva Kitchen
Diana Southall – Old Hall People’s Partnership – follow up call on 21.01.21

Voluntary Sector and Delivery Partner’s Feedback

Key Impacts Pre-Covid:

- Combined impact of austerity and changes to Universal Credit has seen increasing debt issues
- Increasing use of foodbanks and dependency on them
- Mental Health issues were seen to be on the increase even before Covid

Key Impacts of Covid:

- Everything is exacerbated by the financial pressure from insecure work (eg furlough) and the direct and indirect impacts of lockdown
- Mental Health with impact of social distancing
- Families who were ‘getting by’ are being brought into hardship and in need. They have not been ‘in the system’ before leaving them with a major knowledge gap

- Major redundancies and loss of work is yet to take place – building employment skills will be crucial
- Access to people and volunteers is a real issue in being able to help families in need
- Access to funding will become even harder
- New approach to delivering advice and support required. We need to bring a wider range of people with us eg different channels (social media) and simple communications (less jargon)

Response to Covid19 – from Community and Council:

- Overall the community came together well. It felt like a true multi-agency approach
- The Council did act like a catalyst to help and support wherever needed
- Council have been accessible and visible
- Making Connections was a helpful forum for a coordinated approach
- Realisation Council's funding is under major strain so under the circumstances their support and help was considered to be invaluable
- Council had a step change in listening to the agencies on the ground – it has felt like a change in mindset
- Hub approach has worked well in organising regionally and adapting to regional needs

Walsall Council – What could have gone better?

- Felt slow to start in March – understandable given the unprecedented times
- Procurement processes – are they getting Value For Money?
- Method and forms of communications could be improved – eg more/better use of digital
- Role of Making Connections Walsall has been crucial
- Procurement processes need improvement – Voluntary services can help get Value For Money
- Some frontline services were turned off, but volunteers were still expected to give these services
- Better intelligence, data collection and analysis to help the delivery on the ground

What is needed from the Council Going Forwards?

- Need a plan for the next 6 months – one that looks at immediate issues post Covid but also looks to address the causes not just the symptoms
- Joined up, multi-agency approach to continue and to be embedded
- Hub approach with existing eco system of support to be continued
- Making Connections to continue and be strengthened
- Delivery of services needs to be through the VCSE due to strong local knowledge and ability to deliver on the ground
- Efficient access to pooled funding
- New model of face to face and remote working and digital communication
- Procurement to be improved – faster, cheaper and more local
- Greater use of Council assets – eg buildings
- Help in regulation and governance to ensure the credibility of new services
- Provide data and analysis
- Ensure local projects are joined up and aligned for the greater good and impact

- Council needs to help joined up approach of the above and play a coordination role, signposting important work, ensuring best practise and mitigating unnecessary duplication

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Corporate Plan delivery – Q3 update

Portfolio: Councillor Bird, Leader of the Council

Related portfolios: All

Service: All

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with oversight of the current levels of performance in the delivery of services aligned to the council's corporate priorities and outcomes. Performance is reported against a set of key measures that were approved by Cabinet in June 2020.

2. Summary

The Corporate Plan 2018-21 sets out the council's purpose along with the priorities that it is believed will help to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. Routine monitoring of key measures aligned to the priorities and outcomes enables Cabinet to maintain oversight, celebrate successes and where necessary ensure action is taken to address underperformance. This is the third report for 2020/21 utilising measures approved by Cabinet in June 2020.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet review and note the performance information provided in the appendix.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Performance measures relating to corporate priorities and outcomes were refreshed in readiness for the current financial and municipal year and were approved by Cabinet in June 2020.

- 4.2 There are 49 performance measures that are used to track delivery of corporate priorities and outcomes. This report includes all 49 measures as at the end of December 2020 (end of quarter 3).
- 4.3 Highlight information for the 5 corporate priorities is presented in the Appendix along with some additional contextual information.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.4 Information relating to performance against corporate plan priorities is summarised above and included in the Appendix.

Risk management

- 4.5 There are no significant risks associated with regular performance reporting, however there is an increased risk of the council not delivering its corporate priorities if monitoring is not carried out regularly and does not receive ongoing oversight by senior managers. Effective risk management practice is incorporated into the planning of projects and initiatives that will support the delivery of the good performance.

Financial implications

- 4.6 There are no direct financial implications related to this report but the level of performance and whether we wish to sustain or improve performance is linked to the allocation of budgets and how services resource delivery. High level headline financial information is included in the Appendix.

Legal implications

- 4.7 There is no legal requirement to report progress against the corporate priorities, however doing so promotes good governance and transparency.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.8 N/A.

Property implications

- 4.9 N/A.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.10 Performance related to measures that deliver health and wellbeing are included in the Appendix. Cabinet should consider whether reported levels meet expectations or if additional action is required.

Staffing implications

- 4.11 There are implications for staff in that their individual and team performance will help in delivering the priorities in the Corporate Plan, as per the 'Golden Thread' approach to performance monitoring.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.12 Delivery of corporate priorities and outcomes underpins the delivery of the council's vision that "inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised". Monitoring the delivery of priorities and outcomes directly contributes to the vision.

Consultation

- 4.13 The progress report has been informed via submissions from lead officers in directorates and key performance individuals within services.

5. Decide

- 5.1 Recommendations for Cabinet have been included in section 3 of this report.

6. Respond

- 6.1 Portfolio holders will discuss with executive directors any action to be taken following their consideration of the information presented to ensure the expected level of service delivery is achieved.

7. Review

- 7.1 Cabinet will be provided with quarterly monitoring reports to main their oversight of the delivery of corporate priorities and outcomes.

Background papers

[Corporate Plan 2018-21 Refresh 12.02.2020](#)

[Corporate Plan – refresh of performance measures 17.06.2020](#)

[Corporate Plan delivery – Q1 update](#)

[Corporate Plan delivery - Q2 update](#)

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Deborah Hindson
Executive Director
10 February 2021



Councillor Bird
Leader
10 February 2021

Corporate Plan Delivery Monitoring 2020-21 Qtr 3



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Summary Qtr 3 performance information

Priority	Total number of measures	Red	Amber	Green	No RAG
Economic Growth	10	1	6	1	2
People	12	4	5	2	1
Internal Focus	9	0	2	7	0
Children	9	2	4	3	0
Communities	9	0	1	1	7
Total	49	7	18	14	10
	100%	14.3%	36.7%	28.6%	20.4%

1. Performance against the specific measures monitored in quarterly reports has been impacted by the ongoing pandemic. 19 of the 49 measures (38.8%) have identified being directly impacted by COVID-19 and this has impacted on the RAG ratings detailed in the table above.
2. Due to the pandemic it has not been possible to collect and collate data for just over a fifth of all measures, hence the 'No RAG' status.
3. At quarter 2 updates for 40 measures were available compared to the inclusion of all measures in this report. In Q2 70% of measures reported had a green or amber RAG compared to 65.3% in this report.

Economic Growth



for all people,
communities and
businesses.

1. The ongoing restrictions and second national lockdown have impacted on the way businesses are supported and focus has been on promoting grants and other support available to struggling businesses.
2. The ongoing pandemic has significantly impacted on the unemployment claimant count and young adults have been particularly impacted.
3. Employment rates data is collected nationally by ONS who have reported difficulties surveying during the pandemic, hence there is no update.
4. There is improvement in the % of care leavers in education, employment or training (NEETs) although levels are not back to pre-COVID19 rates.
5. Walsall Works and BC IMPACT continue to develop their hybrid delivery model to support residents in finding work or training opportunities and Q3 has delivered improvements in number of clients supported into employment and with additional employability skills.

Outcomes for 2020-21

1. Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one.

2. Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development

Measure No.	Measure	Q3	Q3 RAG
1	Number of Business assisted / supported	42	A
2	New business registrations and closures	n/a	n/a
3	Unemployed claimant count	8.6% (14,965)	R
4	Gap in the employment rate between those with a long-term health condition and the overall employment rate (PHOF)	12	G
5	Employment rates	n/a	n/a
6	Percentage of care leavers in education employment or training (NEETs)	52.30%	A
7	Total number of young adults in employment / education or training as a result of engagement with employment services (cumulative over year with breakdown of category if required)	27	A
8	People assisted by council programmes into education, training or employment (IMPACT & Walsall Works)	199	A
9	Percentage of young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	1.1%	A
10	Number of local apprentice starts	2,158	A



People



Have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

1. Safeguarding adults is an ongoing priority and performance is on track in terms of identification and delivery of desired outcomes, resulting in greater satisfaction.
2. Resolving support needs of clients at first contact has been impacted by increase in demand due to COVID-19, mental health referrals, domestic violence and isolation.
3. Active Living Centres continue to be affected by COVID-19 related restrictions and it has not been possible for Park Runs to be held throughout the pandemic. Footfall at parks is down on previous quarters which follows a seasonal trend.
4. Healthy weight data is based on fewer measurements so whilst showing a slight decline interpretation of data and comparison of the data should be done with caution.
5. Although the % of children walking or cycling to school has decreased fewer responses were received, linked to COVID-19 restrictions. Performance is still higher than the national rate of 46%.

Outcomes for 2020-21

3. People live a good quality of life and feel that they belong.

4. People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it

Measure No.	Measure	Q3	Q3 RAG
11 Revised	Access to service pathways, to support citizens in sustaining their independence and reducing need for ongoing statutory services (a- by hospital avoidance; b- by timely hospital discharge; c- targeted community support)	77.38%	A
12	Percentage of people subject to a safeguarding enquiry who expressed a desired outcome (Making Safeguarding Personal)	86.32%	G
13	Percentage of people subject to a safeguarding enquiry who achieved a desired outcome (Making Safeguarding Personal) - a) Fully b) Partially	92.35%	G
14 Revised	Citizens who are supported in a way that meets their need first time, so sustaining independency in their own community	26.86%	R
15	Proportion of care homes in Walsall that are rated Good or Outstanding by CQC	58.62%	A
16	Active Living Centres re-class numbers and membership (illustrates our facilitation of people getting support)	5031 members	R
17	Park Run Participation	0	
18	People Counter Analysis of Walsall Parks (footfall / trends, etc)	220,746	A
19	Self reported wellbeing (ONS annual population survey)	Life satisfaction: 7.62 out of 10 Worthwhile: 7.76 out of 10 Happiness: 7.48 out of 10 Anxiety: 3.17 out of 10	A
20	Proportion of children in reception that are a healthy weight (annual measure)	71.20%	R
21	Proportion of children in year 6 that are a healthy weight (annual measure)	54%	R
22	% children walking or cycling to school (A* Stars data) - connected communities	60.00%	A



Outcomes for 2020-21

5. Internal services delivery quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services.	6. Services are efficient and deliver value for money.
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1. The review and revision of support plans is on target, increased needs have been identified partly due to informal carers returning to work and new needs identified during lockdown.
2. Undertaking the voluntary users and carers surveys has been deferred but plans for October 2021 survey are underway.
3. Responses delivered within statutory timescales for FOI's/EIR's has improved 7% on previous quarter and activity to continue improvements is in hand.
4. Average time take to respond to statutory social care complaints for both Adult's and Children's has improved in comparison to previous quarter. This has been achieved as number of complaints is rising although still lower then pre-COVID19 levels.
5. Financial management continues to perform well and within expected target even with implementation of new system and an increase in demand due to payments relating to COVID-19.

Measure No.	Measure	Q3	Q3 RAG
23	Number of completed support plans, as a result of changing or newly emerging need following strength based approach	747	G
24a	The proportion of people who use council services (adult social care) and carers who find it easy to find information about support a) Users	Yearly	G
24b	b) Carers	Deferred	G
25	% FOIs / EIRs responded to in statutory timescale (of those due to be responded to in quarter)	85%	A
26	Average time taken to respond to Statutory Social Care complaints (Children's)	10.25	G
27	Average time taken to respond to Statutory Social Care complaints (Adults)	16.6	G
28	Total number of Social care service delivery reviews completed (this addresses effective and value for money services)	66%	A
29	Sundry Debtors Collection - Average number of days to collect debt	26 days	G
30	Average number of days to process creditor payments	15 days	G
31	The Council outturns on budget with general reserves intact		G



Children

Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

Outcomes for 2020-21

- 7. Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential.
- 8. Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere.

1. The backlog of EHCP plans has been cleared and whilst performance is still below expected levels it is improving.
2. Autumn term data shows exclusions rates are low compared to the same period the previous year (pre-COVID19).
3. It is known that COVID-19 is impacting on overall school attendance so this is being closely monitored.
4. The number of children subject to a child protection plan continues to decrease, as does the number of children in care, following increases earlier in the year. Delays in the court system due to COVID-19 have impacted on some reunifications with parents as well as some adoptions or special guardianship orders. A number of 18 year olds who would ordinarily have left care have also remained as part of additional support in response to COVID-19.
5. The number of first time offenders in 2020-21 has reduced, most likely due to more young people staying home during lockdown and changes to Police priorities in response to COVID-19. It should also be noted there have also been delays in court proceedings so current figures should be considered in this wider context.

Measure No.	Measure	Q3	Q3 RAG
32	The proportion of Education Health and Care Plans that are issued within 20 weeks	20.8%	R
33	Percentage of children excluded from school (Permanent and fixed exclusions for Primary and Secondary schools)	PE Pri - 0.01% (2) PE Sec - 0.10% (18) FIX Pri - 0.12% (31) FIX Sec - 1.34% (245) (2020-21 academic year to 18th Dec)	G
34	School Attendance (Total absence and persistent absence for Primary and Secondary schools)	PA Prim - 15.2% PA Sec - 19.0% TA Prim - 4.37% TA Sec - 7.24% (2020-21 academic year to 18th Dec 2020)	A
35	Average SDQ score for children in care	14.1	G
36	Number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan, number of Children in Care and number of children starting to be looked after (rate per 10,000 population age 0-17)	CP - 167 (24.2) CiC - 679 (98.4) Children starting to be looked after - 200 (29.0)	A
37	Percentage of children who have become subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time	28.5%	R
38	Percentage of children in care who are placed outside of the LA Boundary and more than 20 miles from home	16.2%	A
39	Percentage of Care Leavers aged 19 and 20 who remain with their Foster Carers (Staying Put)	34.1%	A
40	Number of first time offenders (youth justice)	14	G



Are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.

Outcomes for 2020-21

9. Housing meeting all people's needs, is affordable, safe and warm.	10. People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities.
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1. The number of households in temporary accommodation continues to perform at expected levels.
2. The data source for the energy performance measure (number 42) is national government. No data has been released since July 2020 so analysis at the local level is available for quarter 3.
3. Six of the nine measures for this priority were introduced for 2020/21. Data collection for five of these measures (numbers 43, 46, 47, 48, 49) has been negatively impacted by COVID-19. The remaining measure (number 45) is under review.
4. The latest version of data regarding vacancy rates is from 2018. With ongoing COVID-19 restrictions aim now is to capture baseline data at end of 2020/21 to provide baseline for 2021/22 reporting which could also help monitor the ongoing economic impact of COVID-19 on centres.

Measure No.	Measure	Q3	Q3 RAG
41	Total number of households in Temporary Accommodation per 1000 households	0.79	G
42	Percentage of dwellings with newly registered Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) that are in the lowest bandings of F and G (most energy inefficient)	No data	
43	Planned / approved / completed houses built across the borough and the proportion that are classed as 'affordable'		
44	Proportion of empty homes across the borough	1.90%	A
45	% of registered landlords		
46	Vacancy rates in centres	n/a	n/a
47	Number of community events and attendance (where collected) e.g. Bonfires	n/a	n/a
48	Satisfaction with community groups (new measure, data to be collected via a survey through the VCS network).	n/a	n/a
49	Visitors to NAG, Leather Museum	n/a	n/a

5. In terms of satisfaction with community groups, the focus of 2020/21 to date has been on responding to the pandemic and ensuring the most vulnerable are supported. For this reason the development and delivery of the survey has been deferred.

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Corporate Financial Performance 2020/21 and Covid-19 update

Portfolio: Councillor M Bird – Leader of the Council (Lead Portfolio)

Related Portfolios: All

Service: Finance – council wide

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide the budget monitoring position for 2020/21 including an updated assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on the council's financial performance and Covid-19 Government funding to address cost pressures and income losses.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The council continues to play an active role in the overall national response to Covid-19. Government has to date allocated £46.35m of funding (plus £115.15m of support to Walsall residents and businesses) to help support those costs in Walsall, as detailed in **Appendix 1**. As well as the initial costs of funding the council's response, the impact of Covid-19 includes significant loss of income following closure of services and facilities, a significant impact on the council's collection fund and delays to the delivery of approved budget savings as the council has refocused its resources on its response to Covid-19.
- 2.2 This report provides a summary position on the financial impact of known pressures, including Covid-19, on the revenue position for 2020/21, based on best available data, including:
- (i) Covid-19 - the financial impact of continued income losses and additional general Covid-19 costs, based on a prudent set of assumptions, is forecast to be c£27.7m, net of income loss grant. The Covid-19 unringfenced response fund of £27.06m is therefore considered at this point to be broadly sufficient to fund the impact of Covid-19. This excludes any further pressures as a result of the current lockdown. Further to these costs, there is further expected costs in relation to activity for which Government has provided ringfenced grants of £14.70m; A further £4.26m for support to residents, and £110.89m of support packages for businesses, which are currently expected to be fully covered by specific grants as set out in **Appendix 1**.

- (ii) Covid-19 funding requires careful management to ensure the council is not put under any financial strain, leading to uncertainty about future financial stability.
- (iii) A non Covid-19 service revenue underspend forecast of £0.26m based on the December position, after use of reserves and assuming successful delivery of corrective action plans identified to date.

- 2.3 In relation to the capital programme, the forecast for the council funded capital programme is currently expected to be a marginal underspend of £0.18m after re-phasing of £34.83m into 2021/22. This is expected to fund a further £250k required for Aids and Adaptations, resulting in a revised overspend of £70k to be managed in year. Cabinet are also requested to approve amendments to the Capital programme as summarised at 4.18.
- 2.4 This reports sets out a number of actions taking place to ensure the council outturns in line with budget in 2020/21 and to protect, as far as is possible, its general and earmarked reserves funds, which may be required to support the 2021/22 once the extent of any ongoing financial impact is known.
- 2.5 In summary, the council is able to manage the financial impact in 2020/21 providing Covid-19 cost pressures and income losses remain within the current forecast, however should cost pressures and income losses substantially exceed this, then additional actions will need to be taken.
- 2.6 Regular updates are being provided to Cabinet on the financial implications for Walsall Council, including any recommendations for additional actions to be taken to manage the evolving situation.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 3.1 Note the additional funding allocated to Walsall as set out in sections 4.4 and **Appendix 1** of this report, and that this will be sufficient to cover the additional costs of supporting the council's Covid-19 response in the short term, assuming the current position does not continue beyond current forecast levels.
- 3.2 Note the forecast impact of Covid-19 to November 2020 as set out in section 4.4 to 4.14, and that expenditure plans for all grants shown on Appendix 1 are completed to ensure spend is committed in accordance with respective grant conditions.
- 3.3 Approve £259k of additional costs in relation to vaccination centres to be funded from the Contain Outbreak Management grant, and £592k for the roll out of lateral flow testing in care homes, as set out in section 4.12.
- 3.4 Note the draft forecast non Covid-19 service position is an underspend of £0.26m.
- 3.5 Approve the write off of debt as detailed in section 4.17.

- 3.6 Approve the amendments to the 2020/21 capital programme as set out in section 4.18.
- 3.7 Note financial health indicator performance as set out in **Appendix 3**.

4. Know – Context

- 4.1 Councils have been operating in an emergency response situation which is unprecedented. The lockdowns and associated measures continue to have a significant impact on the services that the council provides to its residents and service users and how it provides them, and has required implementation of a number of new support measures.
- 4.2 A national Covid-19 Response Fund and further support packages have been made in year in relation to grant support for cost pressures and lost income, however there are still potentially substantial unknown / unconfirmed costs. Regular conversations are being held between Local Authority representative bodies and MHCLG officials to identify the issues facing council's and seeking continued Government support to fund the full cost of the current and any future response required.
- 4.3 In the meantime, the council is still legally required to operate within a balanced budget, to operate within financial controls and to deliver approved budget savings. Inevitably, in order to do this and if Government funding is not provided to fully cover Covid-19 shortfalls, then councils will need to consider other actions to address any shortfalls.

Revenue Forecast 2020/21 - Summary

Impact of Covid-19 on the Revenue Forecast 2020/21

- 4.4 At Budget March 2020 the Chancellor announced a Covid-19 Response grant to fund local authority actions to support social care services and vulnerable people; alongside the need for the NHS to treat Coronavirus patients including maintaining staffing levels; and funding to ensure other public services are prepared and protected. The evolving position regarding government support is regularly reported to Cabinet. The full list of funding sources is provided at **Appendix 1** (£46.35m of funding plus £115.15m of support to residents and businesses).
- 4.5 Council on 27 February 2020 approved a balanced budget. This is predicated on a number of assumptions that Covid-19 has put at significant risk, including;
- Collection of £127.5m of council tax income, with a council tax base of 71,550 households, and collection of business rates income of £74.6m;
 - Receipt of £41.89m of fees and charges to directly offset the gross cost of services and reduce the cost of services to the council tax payer;
 - Delivery of £8.77m of savings through the Proud Programme;
 - A minimum level of reserves required of £13.55m.

- 4.6 Of the £46.35m specific grant identified at **Appendix 1**, a number are ringfenced grants to fund specific activity, with £27.06m of this figure being unringfenced Covid Response funds. **Table 1** overleaf summarises the financial impact of continued income losses and additional Covid-19 costs for the rest of the financial year 2020/21 against the unringfenced grant.

Table 1: Covid-19 pressures	Forecast £
Loss of income due to service closures / changes - services covered by income grant	6,129,325
Loss of income - other service closures / changes	579,220
Loss of income - bad debt provision	1,632,000
Loss of income - investment returns	1,779,600
Cabinet, Gold and Silver approvals for additional cost pressures – see Appendix 2	8,482,833
Forecast additional costs - subject to Gold / Cabinet approval	5,657,316
Additional costs arising from Covid-19 delay in the achievement of 2020/21 approved savings	8,022,364
Total pressures to date	32,282,659
Government grant expected for loss of income	(4,585,250)
Total pressures to date net of expected grant for loss of income	27,697,409

- 4.7 The Covid-19 Response fund and other known ringfenced grant allocations are expected to be broadly sufficient to fund the impact of Covid-19 based on current and known assumptions, however there remains uncertainty about when we will exit the current lockdown and the full cost implications of this. Covid-19 funding therefore requires careful management to ensure the council is not put under any financial strain, leading to uncertainty about future financial stability.

Loss Of income

- 4.8 As reported previously to Cabinet, the council is facing significant reductions in sources of income, for example from currently closed services such as leisure and car parking and traded services income. Given councils' reliance on this income, the ability to balance the budget beyond the short term is challenging, as whilst Government has made a commitment to funding some of the income losses, it is not covering all of them.
- 4.9 The Government announced a new scheme on 2 July 2020 to reimburse lost income during the pandemic and boost cash flow. Where losses are more than 5% of a council's planned income from sales, fees and charges, the Government will cover 75p in every pound lost. The first return was submitted to MHCLG on 29 September 2020 for the period April to July 2020 – with a confirmed reimbursement of £1.27m, and the second on 21 December 2020 for £1.04m. A further claim is to be submitted for the remainder of the year. This grant has been

netted off the costs/income loss pressures to show the net pressure to be funded from the unringfenced Covid-19 Response fund grant.

Additional Cost Pressures

- 4.10 On the expenditure side, most costs will remain. For example, the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme enabling employees to be furloughed, does not apply to Walsall as we receive "public funds" which are expected to be used to continue to pay staff. Indeed, there are significant additional costs associated with our Covid-19, including staffing, support to residents and council tax payers and businesses and support to the elderly and vulnerable particularly in relation to adult social care and children's.
- 4.11 Total approvals to date of unbudgeted costs expected to be incurred are £9.08m of which £8.48m have been committed as set out in **Appendix 2**. Of the £8.48m committed, £5.88m has been spent as at November 2020. A further £5.66m of anticipated costs are currently expected, pending approval.
- 4.12 Cabinet are asked to approve the following cost pressures:
- £260k for the establishment of vaccination centres, to be funded from Contain Outbreak Management grant. The council has been in dialogue with representatives from the NHS with a view to establishing a network of vaccination centres across the borough. Following a number of on-site visits and meetings, three locations have been identified as suitable - Oak Park Active Living Centre, Bloxwich Active Living Centre, and TJ Hughes situated at The Saddlers Centre.
 - £592k for the roll out of lateral flow testing in care homes. This is Walsall's portion of the £149m Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund announced by the Department of Health and Social Care in January 2021. Local authorities will be required to pass on 80% of the funding to care homes on a per beds basis, with 20% used at the council's discretion to support the care sector in delivering additional lateral flow device testing.
 - to note that officers are required to complete expenditure plans for all grants shown on Appendix 1 to ensure spend is committed in accordance with the respective grant conditions.

Walsall Proud Programme (WPP) Savings

- 4.13 The 2020/21 budget was predicated on delivery of £8.77m from the Proud Programme to be delivered from adopting new ways of working across the council, significantly enhancing our enabling technology capabilities, and improving our service efficiency and performance. Planned activities within the Walsall Proud Programme (WPP) have been reviewed in order to determine those activities which can continue and those which will be delayed as the council has focused on responding to the Covid-19 situation.
- 4.14 As part of this review, an assessment of the financial impact has also been undertaken in relation to those work streams due to deliver savings in 2020/21. The current assumption is that up to £8.02m of savings will now be delivered in 2021/22 as a direct result of Covid-19. The impact arises in the main from: a

refocus of programme resource into managing the council's Covid-19 response: inability to generate fee and charge increases due to facility closures, and an inability to commence consultation on a number of organisational redesigns.

Revenue Forecast 2020/21 - Service Pressures

- 4.15 Walsall Council has a track record of managing financial pressures and action has been taken to mitigate current and future cost pressures, however demand pressures in an authority of this size will always arise. The current council wide forecast of non –Covid-19 pressures shows a forecast underspend of £0.26m to budget (as at end December 2020). Any on-going pressures identified and not addressed in year will have been included as part of the 2021/22 budget process. The forecast is summarised by directorate in **table 2** below:

Table 2: forecast revenue analysis 2020/21 by directorate – non covid-19			
Directorate	Net Budget £m	Year end forecast £m	Forecast Variance to Budget (Under) / Over £m
Adult Social Care	63.74	62.92	(0.82)
Children's Services	66.36	66.29	(0.07)
Economy, Environment & Communities	36.85	36.90	0.05
Resources & Transformation	27.41	26.96	(0.45)
Services Position	194.36	193.07	(1.29)
Capital Financing	17.70	17.70	0.00
Central budgets	(84.49)	(84.49)	0.00
Transfer to/from reserves (service carry forwards)	0	1.03	1.03
Total council tax requirement	127.57	127.31	(0.26)

- 4.16 A number of significant risks and pressures have emerged during 2020/21 that have required action to be taken to limit the council's exposure. These are being managed via a combination of one-off actions (use of earmarked reserves, use of one-off grant) and ongoing actions (review of existing budgets and realignments where feasible). The main pressures within services have been reported previously and an update of the main variances in each Directorate is detailed below. Work continues to mitigate these areas of pressure by year-end.

Adult Social Care - (£0.82m)

- £1.29m – total Procure to Pay saving carried forward from 2019/20 identified as currently undeliverable. Work to identify mitigating actions including a review of existing provider payments. This is currently offset by one-off funding and is expected to be achieved through the payment audit process in future years;

- (£1.38m) – change in projected costs for care packages;
- (£454k) - additional Walsall CCG income due to revised Section 117 charges;
- (£195k) - release of rapid response mainstream budget as a result of decreased demand within the service;
- (£151k) – mainly associated with an under spend on print and design supplies and services costs due to one-off savings from a reduction in service demand as an impact of Covid-19.

Children's Services – (£0.07m)

- £801k - home to school transport pressure, primarily resulting from out of borough demand;
- £217k - legal fees relating to children and young people in care;
- (£273k) - underspend within Children's Social Care, primarily relating to staffing following successful recruitment drives resulting in less agency staff being used;
- (£107k) - Early help underspend on staffing costs, due to vacant posts being unoccupied;
- (£250k) - use of alternative actions to mitigate overspends detailed above;
- (£501k) - Money, Home, Job – various underspends on salaries and supplies and services, and surplus income from housing benefits income and rents.

Economy, Environment and Communities - £0.05m

- (£191k) - Clean & Green - The major reason is an underspend in staffing related costs and supplies and services;
- £258k - ongoing pressure due to non-achievement of planning income (non Covid-19 related);
- £631k - the impact the senior management service redesign;
- (£70k) - NAG, Arts and Heritage staffing underspends;
- (£288k) - overachievement of income in Bereavement Services;
- (£122k) – Libraries vacant posts being held in service and the underspend from the book fund (£60k);
- (£136k) – salary underspends within Communities and Partnerships;
- (£50k) - Use of domestic abuse grant within Communities and Partnerships.

Resources and Transformation – (£0.45m)

- £83k Soft IFM - additional costs on Cleaning, Caretaking and Catering and under recovery of income. This is partially offset by holding vacancies within wider Soft IFM, reduced supplies and services costs within Catering;
- (£55k) Asset Management - over recovery of income;
- (£483k) – salary underspends across procurement, hard IFM, programme management, ICT and HR.

Write off of debt

4.17 The following write off (as it is above £10,000) requires the approval of Cabinet;

- £11,085.08 relating to residential care charges dated January 2020. This debt is recommended for write off following conclusion of the estate of the deceased prior to the invoice being raised.

Capital Programme 2020/21

4.18 The capital programme for 2020/21, as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020 was £208.64m. **Table 3** below summarises amendments made to date, resulting in a revised programme of £212.96m. Cabinet are requested to approve these amendments.

Table 3: Amendments to Capital Programme 2020/21	
Project	£m
Capital programme 2020/21 per Cabinet 09 December 2020	208.64
Council Funded	
Aid and Adaptions	0.25
MYCIMS - Paperless Meetings	0.03
Externally Funded	
Pothole funding	0.07
Warm Homes Fund Gas Scheme	0.73
Challenge Fund	3.24
Revised capital programme 2020/21	212.96

Table 4 summarises the 2020/21 capital programme and forecast outturn after the re-phasing of projects into 2021/22.

Table 4: Forecast capital analysis 2020/21					
Directorate	Budget £m	Predicted year end forecast £m	Variance before Carry forward £m	Carry Forward £m	Variance Over / (Under) £m
Council funded	60.28	25.27	(35.01)	34.83	(0.18)
Externally funded	152.68	87.47	(65.21)	65.21	0.00
Total	212.96	112.74	(100.22)	100.04	(0.18)

Table 5: (Underspends)/Overspend 2020/21	
Project	£m
Oak Park Car Park	0.08
Highways Challenge Fund Bid	(0.26)
Total	(0.18)

The underspend of £180k is to be used to fund additional Aids and Adaptations costs of £250k resulting in a revised overspend of £70k to be managed in year. The council funded element of the capital programme currently shows predicted re-phasing of £34.83m from 2020/21 to 2021/22. Re-phasing occurs for a number of reasons such as late confirmation of grant approvals, timing of projects that may fall over more than one financial year,

contract delays out of our control as awaiting funding or Government approval, etc. The scheme details relating to the re-phasing are contained with the Corporate Budget Plan 2020/21 – 2023/24 which is also on tonight's agenda.

Financial Health Indicators

- 4.19 **Appendix 3** contains financial health indicator performance as at quarter 3 as at 31 December 2020. The primary purpose of these is to advise Cabinet of the current financial health of the authority in order to provide assurance to them in their role. The indicators cover a number of areas as follows:

Treasury Management

- 4.20 The indicators show the actual borrowing and investment rates for 2019/20 and the forecast for 2020/21 against set targets. Proactive and robust management of the council's debt and investment portfolios is forecast to result in positive variances against the financial health indicator targets for 2020/21.

Balance Sheet

- 4.21 This details ratios for the last 4 financial years 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and post-audit figures for 2019/20 which show the liquidity of the authority.

Revenue performance

- 4.22 This section shows collection rates for council tax and business rates, the average number of days to collect sundry debt and the number of days to process creditor payments for 2019/20 and the performance against profile for 2020/21. Sundry debt collection is better than the target by 4 days with performance in relation to the processing of creditor payments below target by 1 day. This target has not been achieved due to additional demand on payments relating to Covid-19. Both council tax and business rates collection are just short of the target.

Management of Resources

- 4.23 This section details the outturn position for 2019/20 (post audit) and 2020/21 year-end forecast for revenue and capital, which is based on the financial position as at 31 December 2020. The revenue forecast for 2020/21 is an underspend of £0.26m after successful delivery of corrective action plans, as outlined in **table 2** above.
- 4.24 Mainstream capital (funded from the council's own resources) as at 31 December 2020 is forecast to underspend by £35.01m, with £34.83m to be carried over in to 2021/22. Capital receipts are currently forecast to under-achieve the target as set out, which is dependent on timing and market conditions.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities

4.25 The council's financial strategy and annual budget process is designed to ensure that resources follow council priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Covid-19 creates risk, in that resources may need to be redirected to support the council's response, if Government funding is insufficient to fully cover both the direct (additional costs pressures, loss of income) and indirect costs (cost of reset and costs arising from delays in savings delivery due to the need to refocus on our Covid-19 response). Regular dialogue is being held with MHCLG officials to seek full recovery of costs.

Risk Management

4.26 Managers are required to deliver service and improvement targets on time, to standard and within budget. The resource allocation process is governed by the overarching Medium Term Financial Strategy. Risk management is an integral part of this activity and is embedded in budget preparation, monitoring and forecasting to enable potential variances and risks to be identified early and addressed.

4.27 The council is, however, having to make decisions that have a significant financial impact without a guarantee that the costs will be fully compensated for by the Government. The short term risk of this is being managed through close management and reporting of costs, loss of income, and indirect impacts such as the delay in delivery of approved budget savings through Cabinet/Gold/Silver Control meetings as appropriate.

4.28 The 2020/21 budget and level of operating reserves were set following a robust financial risk assessment. The level of reserves can only be set based on a set of realistically foreseeable or predicted parameters, and was judged to be sufficient for all but the most unusual of events. Due regard is made to the strategic and operational risks facing the council. Some of these relate to the current economic condition, others to potential regulatory or national issues, which may have a local impact

4.29 As well as financial risk, the council maintains a register that highlights key themes of organisational risk (this is not risks to the community from Covid-19 or Reset) which is reported to Audit Committee as part of their annual work programme. The Strategic Risk Register (SRR) has been reviewed and amended to reflect the impact of Covid-19. The SRR is reported to CMT and Audit Committee. Risks to the organisation and forecast were set out in previous Cabinet reports.

Financial Implications

4.30 The financial implications are as set out in the main body of this report. The total final cost of Covid-19 is unknown at this stage. It is currently estimated that currently forecast costs for 2020/21 will be broadly accommodated within the

Covid-19 Response funds. Monthly returns are being provided to MHCLG on cost projections.

- 4.31 In addition to the implications for the 2020/21 budget, Covid-19 may still impact on the council's reserve levels, with knock-on implications on the council's ability to set future budgets and this remains under review. Elsewhere on tonight's agenda is a separate report on the corporate budget and the implications for reserves.
- 4.32 The council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget and to ensure it has an adequate level of reserves. The council takes a medium term policy led approach to all decisions on resource allocation.

Legal implications

- 4.33 The council is required to set and operate within a balanced budget. Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), in consultation with the council's Monitoring Officer, to make a report under this section if it appears to him or her that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure. In practice, this is most likely to be required in a situation in which reserves have become depleted and it is forecast that the council will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year. Walsall is not in this position.
- 4.34 This mechanism, however, is impractical and should be avoided, as issuing a S114 notice requires all non statutory spend to cease immediately, a situation which would just exacerbate the current situation. Assurance from Government that it will cover all direct and indirect costs of Covid-19 is therefore essential to allow council's to manage their legal obligations and maintain financial stability going forwards.
- 4.35 CIPFA's guidance to CFO's has been modified to allow councils under budgetary pressure due to Covid-19 the time and space to explore alternatives to freezing spending via a S114 notice. The temporary modifications to guidance proposed by CIPFA would mean that it should not normally be necessary for S.114 notices to be issued while informal discussions with government are in progress. There are two specific modifications:
- At the earliest possible stage a CFO should make informal confidential contact with MHCLG to advise of financial concerns and a possible forthcoming S114 requirement.
 - The CFO should communicate the potential unbalanced budget position due to Covid-19 to MHCLG at the same time as providing a potential S114 scenario report to the Council's Executive (Cabinet) and the External Auditor.

- 4.36 The council will have due regard to its statutory responsibilities in proposing any changes to service provision and its statutory responsibilities in relation to setting a balanced budget.

Procurement Implications / Social Value

- 4.37 A number of goods and services, such as PPE, are currently being procured and procurement colleagues are working closely with services to ensure this is done in an agile, but compliant manner.

Property implications

- 4.38 Many council premises are currently either closed or open with restricted access to essential workers.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.39 This report is prepared with consideration of health and wellbeing implications.

Staffing Implications

- 4.40 There have been significant implications for staff and how they support delivery of services. Many are having to adapt to new ways of working, particularly home working. There are opportunities to review our future ways of working as part of 'reset'.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.41 The 2010 Equality Act lays a requirement to have due regard to the equality impact when exercising its function. As a public body, the council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as set out in the Equality Act, 2010. The PSED requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.

Consultation

- 4.42 The report is prepared in consultation with the s151 Officer, relevant managers and directors. Comprehensive consultation will be undertaken during the budget process and feedback used to inform final decisions.

5. Decide

- 5.1 To approve the recommendations as set out in this report.

6. Respond

6.1 Following Cabinet's consideration and approval, the S151 Officer will ensure implementation of the recommendations.

7. Review

7.1 Regular monitoring reports will be presented to Cabinet to inform them of the impact of Covid-19 and the forecast for 2020/21, including an update on risks and impact on the budget for 2021/22 and beyond.

7.2 Budget proposals will be presented in a separate report on this agenda to Cabinet, to be implemented following approval of the budget by Full Council on 25 February 2021.

Background papers: Various financial working papers.

Author:

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Signed:



Deborah Hindson
Interim Executive Director of Resources
and Transformation (S151 Officer)

10 February 2021

Signed:



Councillor M Bird
Leader of the Council

10 February 2021

Appendices: -

- 1 Covid-19 Funding.
- 2 Cabinet, Gold and Silver control approvals.
- 3 Financial Health Indicators – Qtr 3

Appendix 1: Covid-19 funding

Unringfenced grant	Date announced	National share £bn	Walsall share £
COVID-19 Response Fund tranche 1	19/03/2020	1.600	9,609,338
COVID-19 Response Fund tranche 2	18/04/2020	1.600	7,871,766
COVID-19 Support Package tranche 3	02/07/2020	0.494	2,940,149
COVID-19 Support Package tranche 4	12/10/2020	0.919	6,643,519
Total Unringfenced Grant			27,064,772

Loss of income grant	Date announced	National share £bn	Walsall share £
Scheme to cover council's lost income <i>First claim (April – July) submitted Sept 2020, confirmed 19 Nov</i> <i>Second claim (August - November) submitted Dec 2020</i> <i>Forecast recoverable income for the remainder of the year - estimated</i>	02/07/2020		1,273,050 1,042,111 2,270,089
Total loss of income Grant			4,585,250

Ringfenced grant	Date announced	National share £bn	Walsall share £
Covid-19 Support Package - for Asylum seeking children	02/07/2020	0.006	10,000
Test and Trace support payments - grant for admin of scheme	30/09/2020	0.010	42,841
Extension of the scheme until 31 January 2021	11/01/2021	0.001	5,967
Local Authority Emergency Assistance for food & essential supplies	10/06/2020	0.063	420,523
Emergency fund for rough sleepers to self isolate (£3.2m)	01/04/2020	0.003	4,501
Infection Control Fund – care home support	15/05/2020	0.600	2,288,564
Infection Control Fund 2 – care home support	23/09/2020	0.546	2,342,514
Test and trace services	22/05/2020	0.300	1,650,559
Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	24/05/2020	0.050	253,601
New Burdens Funding (£0.45m) Business rates admin	29/05/2020	0.000	170,000
Further funding announced by MHCLG	14/12/2020	0.000	45,441
Emergency Action Travel Fund	29/05/2020	0.200	255,000
Next Steps Accommodation Programme (interim accommodation & support) - Rough sleepers - <i>Walsall has not submitted any bids due to additional homelessness funding</i>	24/06/2020	0.100	0
(long term accommodation) - Rough sleepers	20/05/2020	0.161	157,794
Home to school and other transport funding	08/08/2020	0.040	223,000
Wellbeing for Education funding	12/08/2020	0.008	40,416
Local authority compliance and enforcement grant	08/10/2020	0.030	184,093
Contain Outbreak Management Fund			
Local restriction tier 2 £3/head	12/10/2020		856,434
Local restriction tier 3 £5/head			1,427,390
Local restrictions tier 3 from 2 December (part of Winter Support Plan)	23/11/2020	0.900	
Local restrictions - 2 - 29 December 2020	06/01/2021		1,141,912
Local restrictions - January 2021			TBC
Council Leisure Centre Support	22/10/2020	0.100	0
Winter support package	08/11/2020	0.170	1,134,746
Administration of fixed penalty notices	10/11/2020		TBC
Community Testing	30/12/2020		302,400
Extra Covid protection for rough sleepers	08/01/2021	0.010	TBC
Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund	17/01/2021	0.149	592,364
Workforce Capacity Fund - Social Care Sector funding to boost staffing levels	17/01/2021	0.120	715,912
Community Champions	25/01/2021	0.024	432,500
Total Ringfenced Grant			14,698,472

Total unringfenced and ringfenced grants for Walsall (excluding support to businesses)			46,348,494
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Support for residents	Date announced	National share £bn	Walsall allocation £
Hardship Fund		0.500	3,879,239
Test and Trace support payments	30/09/2020		
National payments - cost of payments to applicants		0.025	153,500
Discretionary payments		0.015	92,107
Extension of the scheme until 31 January 2021 - National payments	11/01/2021	0.010	72,000
Extension of the scheme until 31 January 2021 - Discretionary payments	11/01/2021	0.010	58,393
Total Support for Residents			4,255,239

Support for businesses	Date announced	National share £bn	Walsall allocation £
Grants to Businesses			53,554,000
Expanded retail discount			26,824,481
Nursery discount			109,168
Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed) for businesses forced to close during lockdown 5 Nov - 2 Dec 2020	05/11/2020		3,952,404
Additional Restrictions Support Grants (Open) for businesses open but impacted on national restrictions			319,118
Additional Restrictions Support Grant for discretionary grants to businesses			5,709,560
Additional Restrictions grant – top up	14/01/2021		2,535,916
Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed) Addendum – tier 4 restrictions	22/12/2020		5,928,606
Christmas grant for 'wet led' pubs	01/12/2020		108,800
Further lockdown grants to support businesses	05/01/2021	4.600	11,853,000
Total Support for Businesses			110,895,053
Walsall Council Funds (including support to residents and businesses)			161,498,786

- **Covid-19 Response Fund / Support Package** (£27.06m) – a package of support to Local Government, announced over 4 tranches, to address Covid-19 related pressures for 2020/21. The total allocation for Walsall over 4 tranches is £27.06m.

In recognition of the acute cost pressures that a small number of local authorities are facing with regard to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, the Department for Education will use £6m of the £500m 3rd tranche to provide targeted support to a small number of councils. Children's Services have submitted a claim for £10k.

- **Grant for reimbursement of lost income** (£4.58m) - announced on 2 July 2020 to reimburse lost income during the pandemic and boost cash flow. Where losses are more than 5% of a council's planned income from sales, fees and charges, the Government will cover 75p in every pound lost. The first return was submitted to MHCLG on 29 September 2020 for the period April to July 2020 – with confirmed reimbursement of £1.27m, and the second on 21 December 2020 for £1.04m. The expectation is for a further claim to be submitted for the remainder of the year, estimated at £2.27m.
- **Local Authority Emergency Assistance for food and essential supplies** (£420k) - Funding for councils in England of £63m was announced on 10 June. This is to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to Covid-19. The funding is a one-off contribution for the

2020/21 financial year. This funding has been used to fund food parcels, essential supplies, shielding and help to those with no recourse to public funds.

- **Emergency fund for rough sleepers to self isolate** (£4k) - Rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping will be supported by £3.2m of initial emergency funding if they need to self-isolate to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The funding is available to all local authorities in England for the cost of providing accommodation and services to those sleeping on the streets to help them successfully self-isolate.
- **Infection Control Fund (ICF)** (£4.63m) – Funding announced by Department of Health and Social Care over 2 tranches. 75% of initial funding has been passed directly to care homes for use on infection control, the remaining 25% is also be used for infection control but LA's can allocate based on need. Local authorities should also publish on their websites their rate uplifts and other extra funding they are making available to care providers e.g. cash flow support etc.

ICF 1 allocation was £2.29m – 75% (£1.72m) to residential and nursing providers, and 25% (£573k) to share across domiciliary care providers based on their number of packages at a given point, in accordance with the relevant grant conditions.

The Health Secretary announced an extension to the ICF on 17 September. ICF 2 allocation was £2.34m. It is to be spent based on 'per bed' and 'per user' basis as registered with Care Quality Commission (CQC) as at September 2020. 80% is required to be passported to care homes within the LA area on a 'per bed' basis, and to CQC regulated community care providers within the LA area on a 'per user' basis, including to social care providers with whom the LA does not have existing contracts. 20% must be spent by the LA on the funding of support to the care sector on other Covid-19 infection control measures.

- **Test and trace services** (£1.65m) - On 22 May the Government announced £300m additional funding for local authorities to support them to develop and action their plans to reduce the spread of the virus in their area as part of the launch of the wider NHS Test and Trace Service. This funding is to enable local authorities to develop and implement tailored local Covid-19 outbreak plans through for example funding the recruitment of additional staff where required. Cabinet on 17 June delegated authority to the Director of Public Health to manage this as part of the Walsall Outbreak Plan.
- **Reopening High Streets Safely Fund** (£250k) - On 24 May the Government announced a Reopening High Streets Safely Fund to prepare for the reopening of non-essential retail. This funding is intended to support a range of practical safety measures including new signs, street markings and temporary barriers. Local authorities will also be able to use this money to

develop local marketing campaigns to explain the changes to the public and reassure them that their high streets and other commercial areas are safe.

- **New Burdens funding** (£170k) - MHCLG recognises that implementing new business rates measures will place some additional burden on billing authorities and confirms that it will provide New Burdens funding to cover matters such as IT costs, additional staff costs and rebilling.
- **Emergency Action Travel Fund** (£260k) - On 29 May the Government issued allocations for local authorities of the Emergency Active Travel Fund across England - £17.23m to be allocated to West Midlands Combined Authority (£3.45m in tranche 1 and £13.79m in tranche 2). TfWM announced on 26 June that the West Midlands were successful in their application for Tranche 1, with an allocation of £3.85m being granted from DfT for our ambitious emergency active travel programme. The funding is being used on a wide range of rapid schemes, including pop-up cycle lanes and pavement widening, as well as on activation and communication activities. Walsall's element was confirmed in a funding offer letter on 7 July 2020.
- **Next Steps Accommodation** (£160k) – in May, the Secretary of State announced £161m for 2020/21 (as part of an overall £433m for the lifetime of this parliament) to deliver 3,300 units of longer-term, move-on accommodation. The fund was open to bids from local authorities and on 20 October 2020 we received notification from MHCLG that following the assessment and moderation of our submission that the bid of £158k revenue (and £92k) capital is minded to be supported by MHCLG to progress to a further stage of due diligence.
- **Home to school and other transport funding** (£220k) - On 8 August, the Department for Education and the Department for Transport announced £40m funding for transport authorities (West Midlands Combined Authority for Walsall) to provide new dedicated school and college transport in the Autumn term. This will provide an alternative to public transport, supporting the Government's policy for children and young people to return to full time education in September 2020 whilst allowing for social distancing measures. Allocations are made on the basis of numbers of children and young people in the area and how far they have to travel. Local authorities will also be asked to work with providers to support 16-19 year olds.
- **Wellbeing for Education funding** (£40k) - On 12 August, the Department for Education announced £8m of grant to support the Wellbeing for Education Return project which seeks to better equip education settings to support pupils and students' wellbeing and psychosocial recovery as they return to full-time education this autumn. Walsall's allocation is £40k based on the number of state-funded education settings in the local authority area. The Department anticipates that local authorities will use the funding provided to:
 1. Adapt the Wellbeing for Education Return training package, which will be shared with local authorities in September, to include local context and information about local services.

2. Make accessible, and deliver, the adapted Wellbeing for Education Return training package to all state-funded education settings in their area in the first half of autumn term 2020.
 3. Provide ongoing support to all state-funded settings in their area, on promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing over the next 6 months.
- **Local authority compliance and enforcement** (£180k) - On 25 September, as part of the Winter Economy Plan, the Chancellor announced £60m funding for enforcement and compliance including Covid-19 marshals. This followed the latest regulations which require councils to enforce the requirements for businesses in respect of Test and Trace.

On 8 October, the equal split of this funding between police and local authorities, £30m each, was announced. The funding is ringfenced for the purpose of compliance and enforcement of measures to control the spread of Covid-19. Activities include support to encourage and aid compliance for the public and businesses, to aid awareness and understanding of the regulations, and other activities associated with enforcement (e.g. issuing prohibition notices, fixed penalty notices, or bringing legal proceedings).

- **Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)** (£3.42m) - Upper tier Local Authorities in England will receive a one-off payment of £8 per head, worth £465m overall (including a £20m supplementary fund), to support local test, trace and contain activities as well as wider measures to protect public health and local economies. Where councils have already received some funding from the COMF this is increased to the maximum of £8 per head of population. Walsall will receive £2.28m at £8/head based on ONS UK mid-year estimate population figures 2019 of 285,478.

In January 2021, MHCLG announced that Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLA) will receive £4/head per 28 days for the duration of the highest level restrictions (Tier 3, Tier 4 or National Lockdown). This will be calculated on a pro-rata basis, reflecting any time during a 28 day period that they were subject to Tier 3, 4 or National Lockdown measures. Any time during that period that a UTLA was subject to Tier 2 restrictions will be funded at £2 per population head per 28 days.

This funding can be used to fund local coronavirus response public health activities, such as additional contact tracing, testing for hard-to-reach groups, and public health communications.

The Department of Health, on 6 January 2021, confirmed that we will receive £1.14m from the COMF. This has been calculated based upon the time the authority has spent in each respective tier between 2 December 2020 and 29 December 2020 inclusive and paid early January. Funding will be subject to a review in January 2021.

- **Council Leisure Centre Support** (TBC) - Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport confirmed on 22 October 2020 that £100m will be used to introduce a new fund which will support council leisure centres most in need.

Funding excludes internally provided leisure services. Walsall will not be eligible for additional funding.

- **Winter Support Package** (£1.13m) - New winter package to provide further support for children and families – announced on 8 November by the Department for Work and Pensions.

£170m Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme to support children, families and the most vulnerable over winter. The indicative allocation is £1.13m for Walsall, subject to Treasury approval. The funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills, based on population, weighted for deprivation, and will cover the period to the end of March 2021. Local Authorities will receive the funding at the beginning of December 2020. It will allow councils to directly help the hardest-hit families and individuals, as well as provide food for children who need it over the holidays. Local councils understand which groups need support, and are best placed to ensure appropriate holiday support is provided – which is why they will distribute the funds, rather than schools, who will continue providing meals for disadvantaged children during term-time.

Holiday activities and the food programme is to be expanded, covering Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021. This has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018, and will be expanded across England next year, at a cost up to £220m. It will be available to children in every local authority in England, building on previous programmes – including this summers, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities.

Healthy Start payments are set to rise from £3.10 to £4.25 a week from April 2021. This scheme supports pregnant women or those with children under four who have a low income and are in receipt of benefits to buy fresh fruit and vegetables. This will help people boost the long-term health of their children.

The Government has also pledged additional funding of £16m for food distribution charities, with conversations with FareShare and others ongoing as to how this is allocated.

- **Administration of fixed penalty notices** (TBC) - (announced 10 November) - The ACRO Criminal Records Office have been designated by the Government to administer fixed penalty notices issued by police officers to members of the public under the stay-at-home measures intended to minimise the spread of infection. In line with the Regulations, ACRO will transfer the payments they receive to the respective, appropriate local authority where each fine is issued. Due to the way the Regulations have been drafted this will be to 'Tier one' authorities – unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, London boroughs and county councils.
- **Community Testing** (£300k) – announced by the Department of Health on 30 December 2020. The purpose of the grant is to provide support to the Local

Authority towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred in relation to community testing in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The grant shall be payable in 3 instalments from when the local authority commences its community testing programme. Allocations of £302k (£100k payment 1 and £202k payment 2) have been notified and will be paid in the form of a s31 ringfenced grant for the period to 31 March 2021.

- **Extra Covid-19 protection for rough sleepers and renters (TBC)** - announced on 8 January by MHCLG. Councils will work closely with local health partners to ensure those sleeping rough are able to access the Covid-19 vaccine in line with the priority groups outlined by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. No allocations have been published.
- **Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund (£592k)** - On 23 December 2020, the Government announced an extra £149m to support the rollout of lateral flow device testing in care homes. Guidance and allocation were published on 17 January 2021 by the Department of Health and Social Care – Walsall allocation of £592k.

The main purpose of this funding is to support additional rapid testing of staff in care homes, and to support visiting professionals and enable indoors, close contact visiting where possible. This includes adult social care providers with whom the local authority does not have a contract. Local authorities will be required to pass on 80% of the funding to care homes on a per beds basis, with 20% used at the local authority's discretion to support the care sector in delivering additional lateral flow device testing.

- **Workforce Capacity Fund - Social Care Sector funding to boost staffing levels (£716k)** – £120m announced on 17 January 2021 by the Department for Health and Social Care. Walsall's indicative allocation announced on 19 January is £716k. The funding can:
 - provide additional care staff where shortages arise;
 - support administrative tasks so experienced and skilled staff can focus on providing care;
 - help existing staff to take on additional hours if they wish with overtime payments or by covering childcare costs.
- **Community Champions (£433k)** - £23.75m announced by MHCLG on 25 January 2021. Walsall's allocation is £433k. Whilst all funding does need to be committed before 31 March 2021, delivery of projects and activities can extend beyond that date.

The Community Champions: Local Authority Fund aims to support a range of interventions to build upon, increase or improve existing activities to work with residents who are most at risk of Covid-19; helping to build trust and empower at-risk groups to protect themselves and their families. The broader aim is to reduce the impact of the virus on all communities, beyond just the target areas that we will work with through this scheme.

Funded projects are expected to:

- Build residents' confidence to integrate and engage more widely in their local communities and mix with people from different backgrounds;
 - Adopt approaches to engagement that supports social connection to the local area and builds confidence to use local amenities and services;
 - Provide practical solutions to overcome barriers, such as supporting those experiencing digital exclusion;
 - Be targeted using the best available national and local sources of evidence of need;
 - Exhibit good governance and the collection of robust evidence to enable measurement of progress in achieving the Funds aims;
 - Deliver genuine value for money with robust programme management.
- **Hardship Fund** (£3.88m) - £500m Hardship Fund for local authorities to support hardship in their local area. The guidelines state that the Government expects each local authority to reduce the council tax liability of each working age council tax claimant by £150, or to zero if the total liability is less than £150. Walsall has allocated this funding to reduce council tax liability for working age claimants.
 - **Test and Trace Support Payments** (£424k) – On 30 September 2020, the Government announced that people will be required by law to self-isolate from 28 September 2020, supported by a payment of £500 for those on low incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result, and who meet the criteria of the scheme. These payments are administered on top of any benefits and statutory sick pay (SSP) that they currently received. Walsall received an allocation of £288k.

On 11 January 2021, the Dept of Health confirmed a further allocation of £20.4m for the extension of the scheme until 31 January 2021, divided between the costs of main and discretionary payments and administrative costs as below:

- £9.5m for funding the £500 Test and Trace support payments, for people who meet the standard eligibility criteria. This is subject to reconciliation for the duration of the scheme; Walsall's allocation is £72k.
- £900k for funding administration costs. Reasonable costs of administration will be covered for the duration of the scheme; Walsall's allocation is £58k.
- £10m for funding the £500 discretionary payments, for people who do not meet the standard eligibility criteria, which is a fixed amount. Walsall's allocation is £6k.

The Government have also confirmed that the scheme will be extended further to 31 March, but are currently working on the eligibility criteria.

- **Business rates grants** (£53.55m) - a cash injection of £10k to businesses that are currently eligible for small business rates relief and grants of up to £25k to retail and leisure business operating in premises with a rateable value between £15k to £51k. The council has received a grant of £53.55m. The Government has also stated that it recognises that implementing this new measure will place some additional burden on billing authorities and confirms

that it will provide New Burdens funding for this, however the mechanism for this has not yet been published.

- **Expanded retail / nursery discount** (£26.93m) additional reliefs announced January and March 2020 as part of the Covid-19 support package to businesses.
 1. Expanded retail discount - provides a 100 per cent business rates discount for hereditaments occupied by all businesses that are classified as in retail, leisure and hospitality sectors, regardless of rateable value and which are subject to business rates in the year 2020/21.
 2. Nursery discount - a 100% business rates discount for hereditaments occupied by providers on Ofsted's Early Years Register and wholly or mainly used for the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which are subject to business rates in the year 2020/21. There will be no rateable value limit on the relief.
- **Local Restrictions Support Grants** (£18.45m) - Guidance was announced on 5 November 2020 by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for local authorities on paying grants to support businesses during the November to December 2020 national lockdown and periods of local restrictions.

Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed) Addendum. These schemes are to support local businesses during the 5 November to 2 December 2020 national lockdown and during periods of local restrictions. Walsall's allocation is £3.95m. For 5 November – 2 December, a 28-day payment cycle will be applied. Grant funding is issued to Local Authorities at the beginning of the 28-day payment cycle, which is the first day widespread restrictions come into force nationwide. This funding will be provided on a rolling 28-day basis for as long as national restrictions apply. If the allocation proves insufficient for all eligible businesses, top-up funding will be provided. Local Authorities who triggered the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) between 1 August and 4 November will still receive their payments for that period. Local Authorities are only eligible to receive funding once in the 2020/21 Financial Year, but the funding can be used in Financial Years 2020/21 and 2021/22. There is a further allocation of £319k for Walsall for those business that remained open but impacted by restrictions.

This funding allocations is 90% of the estimated grant funding requirement, that was calculated using Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data, based on the categories of business relevant to the closures imposed by Government. Businesses that are eligible are those that have been mandated to close by Government and include non-essential retail, leisure, personal care, sports facilities and hospitality businesses.

Thresholds:

- a) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £15k or under on the date of the commencement of the widespread national restrictions will receive a payment of £1,334 per 28-day qualifying restriction period;

- b) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value over £15k and less than £51k on the date of the commencement of the widespread national restrictions will receive a payment of £2,000 per 28-day qualifying restriction period;
- c) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £51k or above on the commencement date of the widespread national restrictions, will receive £3,000 per 28-day qualifying restriction period.

Backdated cash grants for businesses in Local Alert Level 2 (High) and 3 (Very High) areas.

Businesses in hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors that have been suffering from reduced demand for a while will receive backdated grants at 70% of the value of closed grants up to a maximum of £2,100 per month for this period. The funding will run from 1 August, to the start of the new national restrictions on 5 November.

This will allow councils to make grants to hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses worth the following amounts:

- a) For properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, grants to be £934 per four weeks;
- b) For properties with a rateable value of over £15k and below £51k, grants to be £1,400 per four weeks;
- c) For properties with a rateable value of £51k or over grants to be £2,100 per four weeks.

Additional Restrictions Support Grant. On 31 October 2020, the Government announced the introduction of additional support for Local Authorities under national and Local Covid Alert Level 3 restrictions. This is funding for local authorities to support businesses in their local economies. This support will take the form of a funding scheme in Financial Year 2020/2021 and can be used across Financial Years 2020/21 and 2021/22. The scheme is called the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) and is administered by business rate billing authorities in England.

Under the Additional Restrictions Grant, Local Authorities will receive a one-off lump sum payment amounting to £20 per head when LCAL 3 or widespread national restrictions are imposed. Walsall's allocation is £5.71m. Local authorities can use this funding for business support activities. We envisage this will primarily take the form of discretionary grants, but LAs could also use this funding for wider business support activities. A further top up of £2.54m was confirmed on 14 January 2021.

Additional Restrictions Support Grant. On the 19 December 2020 the Prime Minister announced that a number of Local Authority areas would be subject to Tier 4 restrictions.

In Tier 4, in addition to Tier 3 business closures covering hospitality, leisure, accommodation and tourism businesses, non-essential retail and beauty

services are required to close. This is the same set of businesses that were required to close during national lockdown between 5th November and 2nd December. During national lockdown, guidance and grant allocations with respect to Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed), Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) and Local Restrictions Support Grant (Sector) were suspended and replaced by Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum.

The same approach will be taken for Tier 4 areas: with Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum Tier 4 guidance and payments taking effect. The difference with national lockdown guidance is that Local Authorities will be paid in 14-day payment cycles rather than 28-day cycles. An allocation of £5.93m was confirmed on 14 January 2021.

- **Christmas grant for ‘wet-led’ pubs** (£109k) - Announced by the Prime Minister on 1 December 2020, a one-off £1,000 grant for pubs that predominantly serve alcohol rather than provide food (referred to as ‘wet-led pubs’) across tiers 2 and 3 in lieu of Christmas trade. The payment will be a one-off for December and will be paid on top on the existing £3,000 monthly cash grants for businesses. This will cover those in tiers 2 and 3 forced to reduce their operations as a result of the latest regional measures put in place to contain transmission of the virus. Eligible wet-led pubs across these tiers are invited to apply through their local authority who will be responsible for distributing the grants. The payment will be made once per business for the month of December only. Walsall’s allocation is £109k.
- **Further lockdown grants to support businesses** (£11.85m) - HM Treasury announced £4.6bn on 5 January 2021 in new lockdown grants to support businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors worth up to £9,000 per property (dependent on rateable value) to help businesses through to the Spring. This is to be provided in addition to the existing Local Restrictions Support Grant. An allocation of £11.85m was confirmed on 14 January 2021.

Appendix 2: Cabinet, Gold and Silver Control Approvals

Date	Approval	Additional Costs Approved £	Spend to Nov £	Forecast spend £
Cabinet approvals				
19/05/2020	Shielding and support to voluntary sector hubs to support vulnerable people and families at risk of harm of Covid-19. Total £1.033m approved, but £11k spent in 2019/20. Approved by Gold 11/05/20. £242k additional spend expected to be funded from the £420k grant for Emergency Assistance for food and essential supplies.	1,022,000	629,762	690,861
19/05/2020 & 09/12/2020	Adult Social Care provider payments, and additional supplier relief for contracted and non-contracted providers. Continuation of 'payment by plan' (except where there is no evidence of care having taken place) for domiciliary care services until the 31 March 2021, with delegated authority to the Executive Director of ASC approved 09 Dec. £1,359,324 - £318,900 approved by Cabinet on 19 May.	1,359,324	1,385,709	1,852,364
04/06/2020	Infection Control Fund – Urgent decision taken by Leader to delegate authority to the Interim Director of Adult Social Care for allocation of the full £2,288,564 – 75% (£1,715,930) to residential and nursing providers, and 25% (£572,634) to share across domiciliary care providers based on their number of packages at a given point, both in accordance with the relevant Grant conditions.	0	0	0
17/06/2020	Emergency Personal Protective Equipment. There are currently 164 different Care Providers that the local Hub at Goscote is supporting - 58 of those are Residential/Nursing homes in Walsall, and 107 are providers delivering a selection of extra care, supported living and domiciliary care provision. In addition to this the hub supports volunteers requiring PPE, internal workforce delivering a range of personal care and front facing work with vulnerable people, direct payment recipients and carers who may require PPE to support people at home. Following approved by Gold 22/04/20, and Cabinet report approved by the Leader 23/4/20, a rolling monthly sum of no more than £660k over 3 months (£1.98m) was agreed – <i>permission has been given by NHS England to charge PPE costs to Walsall CCG - this is assumed to be net nil cost to the councils as at despatch date. Cabinet approved for the continuous ordering of urgent local supplies of PPE via the Council's Adult Social Care Provider Hub, continuing to work with the Corporate Procurement team.</i>	0	0	0
17/06/2020	Walsall Local Outbreak Plan – Governance and Delivery Arrangements, established to provide political ownership and public-facing engagement and communications for outbreak response. It is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board (or subcommittee) act as the "Local Outbreak Engagement Board" and revised Health protection Forum act as the local operational oversight and is responsible for the production of the Outbreak Plan. Funding by £1,650,559 ringfenced Test and Trace allocation with delegated authority to the Director of Public Health	0	0	0
15/07/2020	ICT to enable business continuity - total cost £550,764 less £154,374 funded 2019/20, £184,975 approved by Gold on 22 April, £39,600 funded from track and trace grant, and £171,815 approved by Gold 3 July.	356,790	326,132	355,627
15/07/2020	Extension to community response by 3 months initiative to support shielded vulnerable residents who do not meet the criteria for support.	64,939	24,000	64,939
12/08/2020	Adult Social Care provider payments, and additional supplier relief for contracted and non-contracted providers – further allocation to that approved by Cabinet on 19 May 2020.	500,000	348,795	900,000
28/10/2020	Adult Social Care Infection Control fund ring-fenced Grant – Round 2 - £2,342,515 based on 'per bed' and 'per user' basis as registered with Care Quality Commission Sept '20. 80% (£1,874,011) is required to be passported to care homes within the LA area on a 'per bed' basis, and to CQC regulated community care providers within the LA area on a 'per user' basis, including to social care providers with whom the LA does not have existing contracts. 20%, £468,503 must be spent by the LA on the funding of support to the care sector on other COVID-19 infection control measures.	0	0	0
28/10/2020	To provide funding of £108,000 for 4 community hubs from the £420,523 grant for Local Authority Emergency Assistance for food & essential supplies. A support programme has been set up with Adult Social Care to provide telephone contact and support through the Making Connections Walsall Hubs for those that are vulnerable and shielded.	0	0	0

Date	Approval	Additional Costs Approved £	Spend to Nov £	Forecast spend £
04/12/2020	Co-mingled waste – additional costs to landfill following restrictions on number of caseloads that can be delivered from May 2020 – Revised allocation of £698,616 - £87,073 approved by Gold on 23/06/20 and £206,413 approved by Gold on 24/07/20. Leader approval granted due to timing within Committee cycle.	405,130	81,026	405,130
09/12/2020	Additional costs for looked after children placements	2,490,000	1,357,072	2,035,617
Total Cabinet approvals to date		6,198,183	4,152,496	6,304,538
Gold Control approvals >£50k				
06/04/2020	Use of Computerised Tomography (CT) equipment for digital autopsies – to be reviewed after initial 6 month period (April– Sept)	95,200	21,420	49,420
17/04/2020	Provision of a temporary site to accommodate people from Gypsy, Roma and Travelling communities (20 April–17 May)	30,000	30,000	30,000
24/04/2020	Temporary mortuary at Birmingham Airport.	1,200,000	566,838	566,838
04/05/2020	Support for rough sleepers, victims of domestic abuse and complex young people requiring rehousing (13 weeks)	136,485	102,222	136,484
22/05/2020	Extension of Family Safeguarding delay in implementation of the Social Care locality model to 31 August (further to Silver approval on 20/04/20 below)	61,619	47,698	47,698
29/05/2020	Delay in FDAC programme grant – funding of 6 months of contract April – September 2020.	77,119	77,119	77,119
23/06/2020	Co-mingled waste – additional costs to landfill following restrictions on number of caseloads that can be delivered from May 2020 – May only (further requests may be required from June onwards)	87,073	87,073	122,470
17/07/2020	Delayed closure of Birchills Children’s Centre by 4 months (Sept – Dec 2020). Further to the approval by Silver on 15/05/20. Cabinet on 15 July approved the closure by end of December 2020.	12,000	16,000	24,000
24/07/2020	Co-mingled waste – additional costs to landfill following restrictions on number of caseloads that can be delivered from May 2020 – Revised allocation of £293,486 - £87,073 approved by Gold on 23/06/20 above	206,413	206,413	206,413
16/10/2020	Local authority compliance and enforcement grant – specific ringfenced grant allocation of £184,093 – for appointment of Covid Marshalls, lead officer to deliver community champion initiative incl. 4 co-ordinators and admin, plus awareness project funding	0	0	0
16/10/2020	Environmental Health food safety resources – 3 additional officers to manage the councils statutory obligations as a result of high complaint and proactive interventions due to Covid-19	99,000	0	99,000
02/11/2020	Social distancing measures, signage etc	77,910	0	0
27/11/2020	Issue of penalty notices for non-school attendance – loss of income as a result of no charges being levied in 2020/21	70,000	38,997	70,000
04/12/2020	Rental concessions due to lockdown and reduction in footfall to trade for period March ‘20 – April ‘21	90,455	68,142	90,455
04/12/2020	Loss of income from closure of Walsall Market, Arboretum and Arboretum Visitor centre that cannot be claimed from income grant	144,931	218,723	277,531
Total Gold approvals to date		2,388,205	1,480,645	1,797,428

Silver Control approvals <£50k				
Date	Approval	Additional Costs Approved £	Spend to Nov £	Forecast spend £
15/04/2020	Cemeteries – increase in burial standby payments, additional diggers and call out payments – April to June 2020 (13 weeks)	27,143	8,208	8,208
20/04/2020	Family Safeguarding – delay in the implementation of the Social Care locality model over 2 months (04/05/20 – 01/07/20)	30,150	31,282	31,282
15/05/2020	Delayed closure of Birchills Children’s Centre by 4 months (Sept – Dec 2020). Further £53k funded within Children’s.	42,667	32,001	42,667
20/05/2020	Garden waste – resources required for first 2 weeks of resuming collections (15-26 June)	12,283	12,283	12,283
22/05/2020	Increased take up of free school meals as more meet low income eligibility criteria. Based on 100 eligible children for 10 wks from 18 May to 21 July.	15,000	0	15,000
22/05/2020	One Source Programme Management Support to support implementation as a result of home working – Sept-Dec ‘20	36,900	16,650	36,900
29/05/2020	Foster care – one off £200 to 189 fostering households for additional expenses for the period April – September 2020.	37,800	37,800	37,800
03/06/2020	Mental Health first aid training and support to 130 schools and 10 providers for the period 15 June – 31 August 2020	21,000	4,350	4,350
19/06/2020	Interpreter costs in Children’s Services to engage with vulnerable families – April to September 2020.	20,000	20,000	20,000
24/06/2020	Legal - One off costs for the provision of external legal support (specifically on safe reopening of schools including health and safety, risk assessments, liability – both civil and criminal, PPE requirements, business closure regulations and advice generally on the Covid Act 2020) March-June ‘20	8,875	8,875	8,875
10/07/2020	Environmental Depot – reset and service continuity in order to continue to provide key front line services, staff safety and welfare – April 2020 to March 2021.	30,400	30,400	30,400
10/07/2020	Opening of Walsall play areas and outdoor gyms – 2 agency staff for each of three sites operating 10am-6pm Monday to Sunday for 6 weeks of summer holiday.	26,500	0	0
07/08/2020	One off costs for the elongation of the implementation period for the council’s early payment scheme for council suppliers (entered into in January 2020) due to Cabinet Office PPN02/20 & PPN04/20 requirements.	12,000	0	12,000
07/08/2020	Support to Shop Happy Programme for Walsall Town (£12,000), and staff details and costs associated with supporting the Business Rates Grant Programme in assessing and processing the individual payments associated with applications (£11,673) – April / May 2020.	23,673	4,000	4,000
26/08/2020	Reopening of recycling centres – introduction of traffic management system until 21 June and live feed web cam	38,300	38,300	38,300
06/11/2020	Communication - radio and instream adverts. 2 new campaigns across the region over a 10 week period. 1 – Wear a mask, 2 – Pushing out messaging about lockdown.	12,066	0	0
20/11/2020	Short breaks – cost of sending 2 children to external providers due to closure of Bluebells (Apr – Dec)	16,582	0	0
27/11/2020	To provide the Education Health and Care assessment team the increased capacity to manage the increased statutory requests for EHC needs assessment. 3 Special Educational Needs Case Work Officers for period 23 Nov – 31 Jan 2021.	48,802	5,423	48,802
27/11/2020	Taking account of the current limitations of public transport and the desire to encourage the Boroughs residents and workers to “shop local”, free parking in Council owned car parks will be promoted throughout December, resulting in a loss of income.	30,000	0	30,000
Total Silver approvals to date		490,141	249,572	380,867
Total Cabinet / Gold / Silver approval for additional cost pressures		9,076,529	5,882,713	8,482,833

Appendix 3: Financial Health Indicators – Quarter 3

Treasury Management	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Target	2020/21 Actual
Average Interest Rate (Borrowing)	3.74%	3.35%	3.40%
- Excluding OLA	3.86%	3.53%	3.49%
- Including OLA			
Gearing Effect on Capital Financing Estimates	3.92%	5.00%	3.53%
Net Borrowing Costs / Council Tax Requirement and NNDR contribution	3.78%	12.50%	4.50%
Capital Financing Requirement (£m)	381.564	380.886	380.886
Authorised limit for external Debt (£m)	458.391	472.173	472.173
Investment Rate Average (excl Property fund)	1.20%	1.11%	0.6%

Balance Sheet Ratios	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Current Assets : Current Liabilities	1.77	1.86	1.03	1.68	2.39
Useable Reserves : General Revenue Expenditure	0.57	0.63	0.65	0.72	0.73
Long Term Borrowing : Tax Revenue (Using both council tax and NNDR for tax revenue)	1.45	1.41	1.20	1.36	1.43
Long Term Assets : Long Term Borrowing	2.29	2.29	2.34	2.05	1.86
Total School Reserves : Dedicated School Grant	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.05

Revenues Performance % collected for financial year	2018/19 Actual Collected in total @ 31.12.20	2019/20 Actual Collected in total @ 31.12.20	2020/21	
			Profiled 2020/21	Actual 2020/21
Council tax %	97.0%	95.6%	75.4%	75.1%
Total Council Tax collected (£m)	£127,668,649	£133,353,933	£106,400,000	£106,070,644
National Non Domestic Rate %	98.5%	97.6%	74.7%	72.9%
Total NNDR collected (£m)	£71,317,797	£72,254,925	£36,775,000	£35,895,185

Debtors and Creditors Performance	2019/20 Actual	2020/21	
		Target	Actual
Sundry Debtors Collection – Average number of days to collect debt	25 days	30 days	26 days
Average number of days to process creditor payments*	10 days	14 days	15 days

Management of Resources	2020/21		
Service Analysis	Target	Actual	Variance
Children's Services	66,362,433	66,294,656	(67,777)
Economy and Environment	36,848,760	36,899,347	50,587
Adult Social Care	63,741,499	62,921,264	(820,235)
Resources and Transformation	27,411,726	26,962,313	(449,413)
Council Wide	25,369,795	25,369,795	0
Transfer to / from reserves (service carry forwards)	0	1,031,000	1,031,000
NNDR/Top Up	(92,168,077)	(92,168,077)	0
Total Net Revenue Expenditure	127,566,136	127,310,298	(255,838)
General Reserves	Minimum £6.2m Maximum £15.5m	N/A	N/A
Council Funded Capital Expenditure	60,284,518	25,272,486	(35,012,032)
External Funded Capital Expenditure	152,679,827	87,470,025	(65,209,802)

Total Capital Expenditure	212,964,345	112,742,511	(100,221,834)
Capital Receipts	3,262,622	681,038	(2,581,584)

Management of Resources	2019/20		
Service Analysis	Target	Actual	Variance
Children's Services	74,413,853	75,564,514	1,150,661
Economy and Environment	59,391,898	59,513,597	121,699
Adult Social Care	63,323,488	63,500,820	177,332
Resources and Transformation	20,325,485	19,813,516	(511,969)
Council Wide	(6,188,857)	(7,417,927)	(1,229,070)
NNDR/Top Up	(89,892,422)	-89,892,422	0
Total Net Revenue Expenditure	121,373,443	121,082,098	(291,347)
General Reserves	Minimum £6.2m Maximum £15.5m	(14,410,205)	N/A
Council Funded Capital Expenditure	36,143,094	14,739,594	(21,403,500)
External Funded Capital Expenditure	96,525,661	53,174,730	(43,350,931)
Total Capital Expenditure	132,668,755	67,914,324	(64,754,431)
Capital Receipts	1,869,868	107,246	(1,762,622)

Notes to Management of Resources

The figures for 2019/20 represent the actual budget and spend for each area within the authority. This will include all internal recharges such as office accommodation, central support services, and accounting adjustments for pension liability in line with FRS17 and capital charges. Capital charges and pension liability year end transactions can change substantially at year end as this is when revaluations of assets and figures from the actuary are received and budgets updated to reflect any changes.

What this tells us

Treasury Management	
Average Interest Rate (Borrowing)	The average interest rate we are paying on the money we have borrowed compared to our target.
Gearing Effect on Capital Financing Estimates	Shows how a 1% increase in interest rates would affect the total interest cost to the council.
Net Borrowing Costs / Tax Requirement	Borrowing not financed by a grant from government, as a proportion of our Net Revenue Expenditure
Capital Financing Requirement (£m)	How much money we currently borrow to finance our capital programme.
Authorised limit for external Debt (£m)	The maximum amount of debt we should have at any one time
Investment Rate Average	The average interest rate we are receiving on the money we have invested.

Balance Sheet Ratios	
Current Assets : Current Liabilities	Our ability to meet our liabilities
Useable Reserves : General Revenue Expenditure	If our reserves are adequate to meet potential future variations.
Long Term Borrowing : Tax Revenue <small>Using only council tax for tax revenue</small>	The effect of long term borrowing on our budget.

Using both council tax and NNDR for tax revenue	
Long Term Borrowing : Long Term Assets	This allows us to understand the relationship between the money we borrow and the assets we have as they both change over time.
Total School Reserves : Dedicated School Grant	If schools reserves are at an appropriate level.

Revenues Performance	
% Collected for Financial Year	As a percentage the amount of council tax we collected during the financial year that runs from 1 April – 31 March. We collect council tax after the year that its related to, but this won't be included in this figure
Council Tax (%)	
National Non Domestic Rate (%)	As a percentage the amount of Business rates we collected during the financial year that runs from 1 April – 31 March. We collect council tax after the year that it related to.
Total Council Tax Collected (£m)	This tells us the amount of council tax we collected during the financial year that runs from 1 April – 31 March. We collect council tax after the year that it relates to, but this won't be included in this figure.
Total NNDR Collected (£m)	This tells us the amount of Business Rates we collected during the financial year that runs from 1 April – 31 March. We collect council tax after the year that it relates to, but this won't be included in this figure.
Sundry Debtors Collection Average number of days to collect debt	How long on average it takes us to collect money owed to us.
Average number of days to process creditors payments	How long on average it takes to pay our bills.

Management of Resources
Service Analysis

<p>Children's Services Economy and Environment Adult Social Care Resources and Transformation Council Wide</p>	<p>Shows our forecast for how much we will spend on these services compared to what we planned and compared to how much we spent in the previous year.</p>
<p>General Reserves</p>	<p>Our forecast year end position on reserves against our opening balance.</p>
<p>Contingency</p>	<p>How much we have set aside and for unplanned expenditure, and how much we have left to spend.</p>
<p>Capital Expenditure</p>	<p>Forecast of our spend on capital programmes against our target</p>
<p>Capital Receipts</p>	<p>Forecast of how much money we expect to receive from selling some of our assets, against our target.</p>

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Corporate Plan 2021-22

Portfolio:	Councillor Bird
Related portfolios:	All
Service:	Policy and Strategy Unit
Wards:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Aim

1.1 To present the Council's one-year Corporate Plan (2021/22) to Cabinet and then to Council seeking agreement on the content and format.

1.1.1 This one-year Plan will be a refreshed version of the 2018-21 Corporate Plan. A three-year Corporate Plan will be published for 2022-25, which will be a more comprehensive document, will outline medium term plans and align with the Council's Budget Outcomes.

2. Summary

2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 gave councils collective responsibility for approving its policy framework and budget. A Corporate Plan covers four years, articulating the strategic direction for the Council and how it intends to measure its success. The Council's most recent Corporate Plan covered the period 2018 – 2021, which was to be succeeded by the new Corporate Plan for 2021-25.

2.1.1 The new Corporate Plan (for 2021 – 2025) was to be informed by an updated:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment,
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (the Walsall Plan),
- Community Safety Needs Assessment and
- Local Economic Needs Assessment.

Substantial development of these (four) assessments has been delayed due to the Council's response to COVID-19.

2.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact in global, national and local communities - some of which have been noted and others can be

predicted. However, as this pandemic is ongoing, there is no way of knowing the many consequences, which will have an impact on the needs of the Borough of Walsall and a subsequent response from Walsall Council.

- 2.3 The proposal is to have a Corporate Plan running for 2021-22, which will build on the current Corporate Plan outlining areas of focus, outcomes with markers of success as well as highlight some responses received from the 2020 Residents' Survey.
- 2.4 This will enable the Council to undertake update the four assessments; carry out further research, analysis and to listen to our communities regarding lessons learned from 2018 and in particular during the pandemic which will inform the 2022-25 Corporate Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet supports the refreshed 2021-22 Corporate Plan, as appended to the report.
- 3.2 That the refreshed 2021-22 Corporate Plan be referred to Council for approval.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Every local authority has a requirement to have a Corporate Plan that articulates the strategic direction for the Council and how it measures its success.
- 4.2 The Council's current Corporate Plan ends in 2021 with a new 4-year plan to be developed in 2020. The new 4-year plan was to be informed by updated strategic assessments including the Joint Strategic Needs (and assets) Assessment; Community Safety and Economic assessments.
- 4.3 2020 encountered the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the Council needed to revert resources to manage the impact of the pandemic resulting in the response, engagement in development and completion of these assessments being significantly delayed.
 - 4.3.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and will continue to have, an impact on Walsall communities – some of which have been identified and/or understood. However, while it has been acknowledged that there are potentially many more impacts to be identified or to come, where the fallout has not been possible to project or not fully understood has placed councils in the vulnerable position of not knowing what will be required of councils and how they will need to act differently to mitigate these impacts.

- 4.4. The 2021-22 Plan (Appendix 1) builds on the previous (2018-21) Plan with the same vision of *Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised*.
- 4.4.1 The Plan sets out 5 areas of focus (EPICC), 10 outcomes and 20 markers of success to assess progress in delivery of the plan.
- 4.5 Our values (Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Transparency, Ethical - PLATE) continue to shape how we as a Council will work with our local communities and influence our choices and behaviours.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.6 The 2021-22 reaffirms the five areas of focus for the Council (EPICC):
1. Economic Growth for all people, communities and businesses
 2. People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities
 3. Internal focus. All council services are efficient and effective
 4. Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well
 5. Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places.

Risk management

- 4.7 There are no specific risks identified in the agreement of the Plan for 2021-22.
- 4.8 Any future large-scale response to COVID-19 may further delay any planned engagement and development that would inform the Plan for 2022-25:
- strategic needs and asset assessments,
 - community listening events, and
 - research.

Financial implications

- 4.9 The Plan provides the strategic direction of financial investments, informs such decisions in the future and aligns the Council's budget to agreed outcomes.
- 4.10 There are no specific financial implications of this report. It is expected that the one-year Plan will be delivered within the Council's 2021-22 Budget, as approved at Cabinet.

Legal implications

- 4.11 There are no direct legal implications from this report.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.12 There are no direct procurement implications from this report.

Property implications

- 4.13 There are no direct property implications from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.14 The successful implementation of the Corporate Plan will play a significant part in having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents. The Corporate Plan highlights the Council's intentions ensuring the reduction of inequalities and equipping Walsall residents with the foundations to lead good, independent lives.

Staffing implications

- 4.15 There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.16 The Aim of the Corporate Plan is to articulate the Council's plan to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. In the delivery of the Plan and by the assessment of the markers of success, we will monitor progress on this Aim. This will have implications for how the Council operates and makes its decisions, including the assessment of all impact and distribution of said impact/s.
- 4.17 In the development and delivery of this process, due regard to the EQIA and other duties placed upon the Council has been undertaken and considered.

Consultation

- 4.18 The updated Plan builds on the previous Corporate Plan with refinement of the narrative and markers of success. Community focus groups and community and staff surveys were undertaken in 2020, of which the highlights have been used to inform the 2021-22 Plan.

Other insights have been used to inform the framework of the Plan:

- an ethnographic study on what it is like to be a child in Walsall,
- participation in the *Beyond Us and Them Research* Project which explores how societal cohesion is affected by the COVID-19 crisis and
- feedback gleaned through the work of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board

- 4.19 Consultation has been carried out on the updated Plan with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet members, the Corporate Management Team and Directors group.
- 4.20 The Joint Strategic Needs (and assets) Assessment (JSNA); community safety and economic assessments will be updated in 2021/22. Other engagement and listening events are to be planned throughout the year to inform the 2022/25 Corporate Plan.

5. Decide

5.1 Options

5.1.1 Having a new 2021-25 Corporate Plan, as originally planned, which would ensure the Council's target for four-yearly Plans was met. However, it should be noted the high probability of this 2021-25 Plan becoming outdated before the end of 2021 as it would potentially miss the assessment of the full impact of COVID-19 on our local community; not include the four assessment updates and therefore could omit significant areas on how the Council will need to respond to meet the needs of local residents. This option will significantly undermine the Council's ability to meet its Aim.

- 5.1.2 Having a refreshed one-year Corporate Plan (2021-22) that would build on the current 2018-21 Plan, will allow time for the assessment, evaluation and consideration of the impact of COVID-19 on the Borough – residents, assets and Council.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made significant impacts in global, national and local communities, with some of these already known. However there will be many consequences that are currently unknown, national reviews and subsequent government policy decisions; which will have an impact on the needs of the borough of Walsall and the subsequent response from the Council.

During 2021-22 the Council will complete the planned strategic assessments and undertake further listening and engagement activities with local residents, businesses, providers and staff to inform the 2022-25 Plan. This option will maximise the Council's ability to meet its Aim.

- 5.2 It is recommended that Cabinet and Council approve the publication of a 2021-22 Corporate Plan and the development of a new Corporate Plan for the remaining three years (2022-25) over the coming year. This would allow for an improved, more informed understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on our local community and the actions the Council will need to take to mitigate these impacts.

6. Respond

- 6.1 The strategic assessments planned already have a governance through the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership and Town Deal Board and will be report to those boards over the coming year.

- 6.2 The Walsall Insight Group will oversee the operational development of these strategic assessments and involve all directorates across the Council, as well as other partners in the Borough.

6.3 The development of the 2022-25 plan will be the responsibility of the Policy and Strategy unit, with quantitative assessment in quarter 1, qualitative understanding and impact in quarter 2-3 and final agreement in quarter 4 of 2021-22. This is in line with, already agreed, strategic assessments i.e. JSNA.

6.4 These timelines are indicative and will work in parallel with the development of the medium-term financial plan and subsequent service transformation.

7. Review

7.1 Regular update reports will be given on the progress of the Plan to the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet members to ensure oversight and assurance of delivery for both the 2021/22 Plan and development of the 2022/25 Plan.

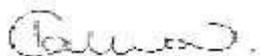
Background papers

Current (2018-2021) Corporate Plan: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan>

Appendix 1: Walsall Corporate Plan 2021/22

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Kerrie Allward
Executive Director ASC

01 February 2021



Councillor Bird
Leader of the Council

01 February 2021

Walsall Council
Corporate Plan
2021-22

Inequalities are reduced and potential is maximised

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Forward by the Leader of the Council

During the past year, I could not be more proud to represent the people of Walsall. The Borough's resilience and community spirit has been truly inspirational and also cements my previous statement of how privileged I feel to be working alongside committed elected members, partners and staff.

What has been wholeheartedly demonstrated during this period are our strong regional partnerships with all agencies who have worked together tirelessly to ensure that the changes needed to be implemented, in order to ensure that our residents are provided for, took place, which enabled the Borough to stay resilient.

While the challenges linked with reducing resources to drive the services we deliver remains areas to be continually addressed, I am pleased to report some significant successes such as:

- (a) Balanced budget;
- (b) Improved service developments
- (c) Continued support to our local communities while responding to COVID-19.

We will publish a further 3-year plan for 2022-25, after taking a year to better understand the impacts of the global Covid-19 pandemic to better inform how the Council can respond to the needs of our residents and in line with our 4-year budget plan.

In October 2020, the Council conducted "The Impact of COVID-19: Residents' experience and wellbeing" survey which was posted to a random sample of 10,000 households and a further 2,000 distributed via community organisations and networks. It was also available to complete online. Almost 2,400 people responded. The findings of this survey have given the Council a clearer understanding of how communities in Walsall have been, and continue to be impacted by COVID-19 as well as identify residents' concerns and priorities for the future. Findings from this key piece of research are now being used to inform the Council's COVID-19 reset and recovery plans and ongoing service transformation.

Survey findings linked to the Council's Areas of Focus -

Economic: A third of respondents said that the pandemic had had a negative impact on their household finances. 26% of respondents in employment report that they had been furloughed at some point during the pandemic, which is broadly comparable to the national rate of approximately 25% at the height of the first lockdown.

People: The toll the pandemic has taken on people's mental and physical health is evident, with more than half of all respondents saying that their mental / emotional health had deteriorated during the lockdown. Almost a third said their physical health had also deteriorated. More detailed analysis shows there is a clear correlation between mental / emotional health and levels of physical activity reaffirming the wider benefits of exercise.

Survey findings show that more than four fifths of respondents remain worried about the pandemic, with most saying they are concerned about the safety of immediate family and friends, staying safe, concerns about people not following guidance and job security.

Internal Focus: Within a very short space of time the majority of the Council's workforce were required to work from home and our investment in technology has enabled us to largely continue delivering services in a relatively seamless manner.

Survey results show that almost two thirds of respondents interacted with the Council in some way during the pandemic, with digital methods (the website and email) being the most popular. More than a quarter of respondents telephoned the Council. Looking to the future digital methods remain residents' preferred way to contact the Council along with telephone.

Encouragingly more than two thirds of respondents rated their experience of contacting the Council during the pandemic as very or quite good.

Children: The provision of facilities and activities for teenagers is identified as a top priority in terms of its importance and need for improvement. With education provision also featuring as a priority area.

Communities: Nearly half of all respondents agreed that people in their neighbourhood pull together to improve the local area. An example of this resilience and community spirit is that a quarter of respondents volunteered or helped out in some way during the pandemic, the most common reason being to support vulnerable people in the community.

In support of the Council's resilient communities' model, most respondents agree that residents should be encouraged to take more responsibility for tackling straightforward problems, and that communities should be encouraged to come up with solutions to problems in their local area.

These results confirm that we are a resilient people and I want you to be assured that I will continue to work with the Council to ensure that issues raised are addressed so that Walsall remains a place to be proud of.

Councillor Mike Bird
Leader of the Council

Introduction by the Chief Executive

Welcome to this refreshed edition of Walsall Council's Corporate Plan. Due to the unprecedented climate/situation that we are currently in - regionally, nationally and globally - with the demands on our resources, we decided to publish an edition for 2021-22, which builds on our previous plans and has a greater focus on outcomes.

COVID-19 has unexpectedly made the Council, as well as our partners in the Borough, quickly significantly transform the way we work. This has made us rethink how best we can meet our three PROUD promises:

1. Improved customer experience
2. Improved staff satisfaction
3. Financial benefit and service efficiency

Adaptations to the way that we work, including online council meetings, supporting Children through digital means and mobilising community hubs to support our most vulnerable has humbled me on how agile and responsive our staff and teams are.

While we continue to address the immediate implications of this pandemic, which have created many unknowns with regards to the medium and longer term impacts to the Borough, we now plan to spend time considering these issues in more depth and with greater focus on inequalities.

This edition will highlight the Council's continued commitment to reducing inequalities and maximising all potential through the provision of services and much needed support to some of our most vulnerable residents as well as how the Council intends to continue managing the uncertainty of 2021.

The Council will be taking this year (2021/22) to learn, listen and understand the changed needs of the Borough and rebuild the foundation for the longer term view, which the Cabinet will discuss during the year and publish in detail in the 2022-25 Corporate Plan.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Key Workers for their commitment in keeping all essential services – education and childcare, health and social care, food and necessary goods – accessible for all. It is also appreciated that, in spite of the hardship felt, our residents and businesses have worked with us to keep people safe. I was heartened to learn that over a quarter of respondents to our survey – “The Impact of COVID-19: Residents' experience and wellbeing” - have volunteered during the pandemic and that for 36% it was the first time they had done so, with the main reason for volunteering being to support vulnerable people. This has had a positive result in that 25% of our respondents stated that they now feel more connected to their community than before the pandemic. We will be looking into how this can continue after the pandemic as this will assist in creating a resilient Walsall community.

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive

Our Borough

This last year has tested the Borough's systems, infrastructure and partnerships to ensure that services are delivered and residents are fully supported throughout this most testing period. With Walsall's aim on reducing inequalities and maximising potential, the Council's survey - “The Impact of COVID-19: Residents' experience and wellbeing” – covered a wide range of themes, which will feed into future plans:

- **Resident health and wellbeing:** Around two-thirds of respondents feel that their general health is good, with just 9% feeling that it is poor. Older residents are significantly less likely to feel that their health is good, instead describing it as 'fair'.

Around a third of respondents are clinically vulnerable to the virus (moderate risk), and two in ten live with or care for someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable (high risk). Respondents aged 65+ and those with a pre-existing health condition are at significantly higher risk. Those from Asian backgrounds are significantly more likely to be living with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable (19% White vs 32% Asian).

- **Impact of the pandemic on employment and finances :** A third of respondents say that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their household finances. Younger respondents, those from BME backgrounds, and those furloughed, unemployed or self-employed are particularly likely to have suffered negative impacts.
- **Concerns about the virus :** Eight in ten respondents are worried about the Coronavirus pandemic, with three in ten feeling very worried. Worry is significantly higher where

respondents have particular health issues, or are living with someone clinically extremely vulnerable.

- **Resident priorities** : Residents think levels of crime, clean streets and health services can be identified as the top three priority areas in Walsall over the next three years.
- **Sense of community** : Around a quarter of respondents have volunteered or helped out in some way during the pandemic. Most of these respondents have volunteered before. By far the most common reason for wanting to volunteer throughout the pandemic is to support vulnerable people. Elderly respondents and those with a health condition or low mental wellbeing are significantly more likely than average to mention the social benefits of volunteering.
- **Satisfaction with the Council's response to the pandemic and communications** : 67% of respondents who have interacted with the Council in the past six months would rate their experience as good. Respondents who have particular vulnerabilities or who are dissatisfied with the Council in other ways give lower scores.

Walsall's Proud Journey

Walsall Council is PROUD of our past, present and for our future. The Council is committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring all potential is maximised and its employment policies, procedures and guidelines are designed to support this vision and deliver the Council's priorities through:

- Improved staff satisfaction
- Improved customer experience
- Financial benefit and service efficiency.

With the many changes that have occurred this past year and the new way that we are currently living, working and providing services, we would like to present to you the achievements to date that have occurred by the Council over since 2018 at the start of the previous Corporate Plan. These have contributed towards the continued delivery of services within the Borough before and throughout the pandemic – and these improvements and changes have assisted in the way that we all have had to adapt locally, nationally and globally in the way that we live, work and play in Walsall. The Council has;

- Carried out a thorough engagement programme with council employees to ensure that everyone working for Walsall Council know that they have a voice to be heard and for the Council to continue learning
- Signed off £10m of realisable Walsall Proud Programme benefits
- The successful implementation of the Cloud Navigator programme and One Source, which played a significant part in the swift transition and continuation of services to be delivered:
 - through remote working – rapid rollout of laptops and phones, transitioning to a remote workforce in response to COVID-19
 - Setting up response and reset groups to deal with the impact of the pandemic
- Continued service-led transformation in Adults and Children's services and the collaborative creation of plans for further integrated working with partners

- Created and appointed to new key senior positions in areas including Customer Services, Communications and Administration & Business Support.

Our Aim:

Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised.

Our Values

Our Values highlight how the Council works with local communities and influences choice and behaviours through Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Transparency and Ethical working (PLATE).

The Council's values and behaviours will be at the core of everything the Council delivers and, through a culture of continuous improvement, the Council strives to increase performance, efficiency and champion the design of services to meet the needs of the Borough.

The Council is committed to creating an environment that provides opportunities for all residents and communities to fulfil their potential.

Strategic Intent / key strategies and plans

The aim and values of the Corporate Plan will be used as a “golden thread” throughout our strategies and key documents. We will use what we know about our community to shape how we meet their needs to reduce inequality and maximise their potential. Our strategic assessments i.e. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Community Safety Needs Assessment, Local Economic Needs Assessment will be used to inform our decisions and updated versions feed into the 2022-25 Corporate Plan. Further research, analysis and consultations with communities will take place over 2021-22 to update this understanding.

Walsall's 5 Priorities, 10 Outcomes and 20 Markers of Success

EPICC continues to be our focus, which are underpinned by our 10 outcomes for our residents. To ensure progress is measurable towards our outcomes over the year each outcome has two markers of success. These 20 Markers of Success will be the tools to measure progress over the year on achievement to Outcomes and reported to cabinet on a quarterly basis.

Walsall Plan – HWBS

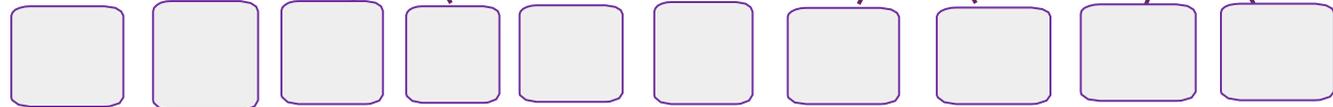


Walsall Corporate Plan

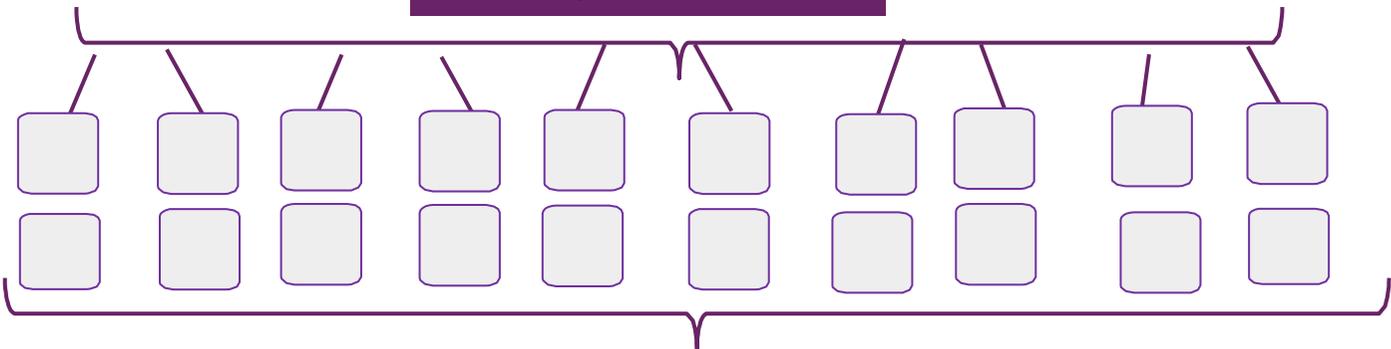
Aim: reduce inequalities and maximise potential



Budget alignment



10 Corporate Outcomes



20 markers of success to assess progress

PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES	MARKERS OF SUCCESS	
		Enablers	Outputs
Overall Aim: Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised			
ECONOMIC Growth for all people, communities and business	1. Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one	1. Transport networks free from defects and congestion.	1. Businesses accessible to staff, suppliers and customers.
		2. Levels of business investment can be measured however it tends to be retrospective by 12 months	2. A combination of low unemployment figures and high vacancy figures
	2. Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development	3. We have figures for available training and education place vs demand. However the work we do on impact helps to identify those who are not taking advantage of the offers	3. Numbers of folk from hard to reach groups helped into training
		4. Attractive public realm	4. Increased footfall in town centres.
PEOPLE have increased independences, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities	3. People live a good quality of life and feel that they belong	5. Opportunities to volunteer publicised widely.	5. Different communities working and living together
		6. Borough's diversity represented	6. Facilities / services available for all ages, non- & gender binaries and cultures to access
	4. People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it	7. Wide range of formal and informal leisure opportunities.	7. More people taking part in formal and informal sport and leisure activities.
		8. Safe and convenient cycleways and footways	8. More people using active travel modes
INTERNAL Focus – All council services are efficient and effective	5. Internal services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services	9. Role/responsibilities understood and owned	9. Required outputs are delivered to realise quality outcomes
		10. Internal Services have staff and processes able to adapt to meet the emerging needs of customers	10. Internal Services are regularly reviewed and delivered within budget
	6. Services are efficient and deliver value for money	11. Online portals that allow self-service, payments and order tracking.	11. Smarter commissioning of services
		12. Automation of processes.	12. Processes are automated where possible
CHILDREN have the best possible start, are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well	7. Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential	13. Our services are delivered in collaboration with children, young people and families – involved in service design and development, involved in developing and implementing their plans, feel more resilient, provide regular feedback	13. Children at risk of exclusions can access effective support – CYP feel supported to engage with education, root causes of exclusions are understood, schools are more inclusive, professionals and families find it easier to access the right support to ensure children remain in school
		14. Our response to vulnerable adolescents is local and proactive – more vulnerable YP are engaged in education, supported in their family home, fewer YP entering the criminal justice system	14. Vulnerable children are identified and supported effectively – receive a high quality, graduated response to needs, supported through a robust local offer of support and services to reach their full potential.
	8. Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere	15. Our services and support is responsive to the needs of different communities (locality model)	15. The needs of children and families are well understood in each locality.

		16. Partners are proactive in responding to these needs (graduated response)	16. Children and families are better connected with community resources to enable them to build resilience
COMMUNITIES are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion	9. Housing meeting all people's needs - is affordable, safe and warm	17. Council and partners review local assets	17. Reduction of families in temporary accommodation
		18. Council and partners maintain open communication with all communities	18. Community networks more accessible
	10. People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities	19. Council and partners engage in cultural awareness	19. Wide range and high quality cultural offers.
		20. Review and address local 'hotspots'	20. High quality, well maintained public realm and safe community spaces

How the Council will deliver

There are multiple ways in which the Council could 'Respond' to deliver its outcomes. The Council could deliver, coordinate, influence, signpost, regulate or do nothing. The Council will use this framework to set the strategic intent to deliver the 10 outcomes and will help inform key decisions. The 20 Markers of Success are the performance measures that will be used to track quality and delivery of progress towards achieving the outcomes of the plan and form the basis of regular reports to Cabinet. The monitoring of these measures provides Cabinet with oversight of progress being made against the plan, which will ensure customer satisfaction and financial overview.

Financial planning and management: matching resources to the vision and delivering outcomes

Walsall Council exists to serve the people and communities of Walsall, by representing and working with them to protect and improve the quality of life for all, particularly the most vulnerable. We do this with limited resources and so must always work to ensure that public money is targeted to where it is most needed and used in the most efficient way possible. We are led by the communities we serve who help shape the services we provide and we help those communities to make a positive difference to their own lives through active civic engagement and co-operation.

It is aligned to its priorities and objectives and specifically the Council's Corporate Plan and the Council's Proud Programme of transformational change. It aims to achieve this through the delivery of efficiencies, income reviews and service reviews and redesigns to redirect existing and reducing resources to areas of high council priority in order to deliver the Council's outcomes.

Partnerships

Walsall Council will provide strong, fair, open and honest leadership for the Borough and its people and will work with all organisations that are willing to work in the best interests of Walsall and work towards improving outcome delivery to ensure maximisation of all potential.

The Council has partnerships with organisations and agencies in the health, voluntary and private sectors. These partnerships are competitively procured where required and appropriate to do so and negotiated to ensure the best value for money and considered outcomes. All arrangements are outcomes focused – to improve the wellbeing for all residents and business in the Borough - in accordance with the Walsall Plan, Corporate Plan, with governance arrangements in place to deliver Walsall's vision.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Corporate Plan 2021-22		
Directorate	Adult Social Care		
Service	Policy and Strategy Unit		
Responsible Officer	Stephen Gunther		
Proposal planning start	April 2020	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	1 st April 2021

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Policy	yes	Revision
	Procedure	No	
	Guidance	No	
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	No	
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	No	
	Other - give details	No	
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>Every local authority has a requirement to have a corporate plan that articulates the strategic direction for the Council and how it measures its success.</p> <p>The Council's current Corporate Plan ends in 2021 with a new 4 year plan to be developed over 2020. Due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, strategic assessments and engagement with the local community that inform the plan have been delayed. Therefore the proposal is to have a plan that covers 2021-22, a year of further engagement and understanding of the impact of the pandemic and then a plan covering 2022-25.</p> <p>The 2021-22 plan builds on the previous plan with the same vision of <i>Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised</i>. The plan sets out 5 areas of focus (EPICC), 10 outcomes and 20 markers of success to assess progress in delivery of the plan.</p>		
3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All	Y	The plan sets out the strategic direction of the



	Specific group/s		council and will have an impact on all residents of the borough. The plan's aims, areas of focus and outcomes will inform Council decisions over 2021-22.
	Council employees		
	Other (identify)		
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		
	<p>The updated plan builds on the previous corporate plan with and markers of success. Impact of the plan will be monitored through the 20 Markers of success. These have been informed by directors across the Council and give an indication over the year on the achievement towards the 10 outcomes in the plan.</p> <p>Community focus groups and community and staff surveys undertaken in 2020 have been used to inform the plan. Additionally other insights including an ethnographic study on what it is like to be a child in Walsall, participation in the <i>Beyond Us and Them Research</i> Project which explores how societal cohesion is affected by the Covid-19 crisis and feedback gleaned through the work of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board have been used to inform the plan.</p>		
5	Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).		

Consultation has been carried out on the updated Plan with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet members and the Corporate Management Team and Directors group.

In 2021/22 the Joint Strategic Needs (and assets) Assessment (JSNA), community safety and economic assessments will be updated. Other engagement and listening events are to be planned throughout the year to inform the 2022/25 plan.

Consultation Activity			
Type of engagement/consultation	Presentation and discussion	Date	21/12/20
Who attended/participated?	Directors group Walsall Council		
Protected characteristics of participants	Individuals of the group cover a range of the protected characteristics outlined in the equality legislation. All specific characteristics were not collected.		
Feedback			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group understood and agreed with high level proposals • There was agreement of the aim, areas of focus and outcomes. • There were a range of questions on what were covered in the Markers of success and what they should cover with a range of suggestions given 			
Type of engagement/consultation	Presentation and Discussion	Date	07/01/21
Who attended/participated?	Corporate Management Team		
Protected characteristics of participants	Individuals of the group cover a range of the protected characteristics outlined in the equality legislation. All specific characteristics were not collected.		
Feedback			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general agreement of the aim, and outcomes and refinement of current plan • Agreed it would be sensible to have a years plan and further 3 years following a years engagement and further understanding of the impact of Covid-19. • There was a steer to align the budgets with outcomes in the presentation of the report • Agreement that the directors group should inform and develop the markers of success. 			
Type of engagement/consultation	Paper and Discussion	Date	Autumn 2020
Who attended/participated?	Cabinet members		
Protected characteristics of participants	Individuals of the group cover a range of the protected characteristics outlined in the equality legislation. All specific characteristics were not collected.		
Feedback			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general agreement of the aim, and outcomes and refinement of current plan and to have a years plan 			
6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation		

	<p>The general views of those consulted were that a refinement and a years plan while the impacts of the global pandemic was a sensible approach. There was agreement that the aim should stay <i>reducing inequalities and maximising potential</i> with the 5 areas of focus the same and 10 outcomes as there has previously been good engagement in the development of these.</p> <p>The proposal for the Markers of success was agreed and will capture the progress of the year towards delivering the agreed 10 outcomes.</p> <p>The plan's aim is reducing inequalities and maximising potential and all actions should be taken to meet this aim. Therefore they should have a positive effect on reducing inequalities. Any Cabinet decisions taken should continue to consider this aim in the decision making.</p> <p>There is no evidence gleaned that suggests the actions taken following agreement of the plan would have a detrimental impact on the protected characteristics as set out in the equality legislation, albeit they should have a positive impact.</p>																				
7	<p>How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Characteristic</th> <th>Affect</th> <th>Reason</th> <th>Action needed Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td rowspan="10"> Meeting the aim of the plan should have a positive impact on all of the protected characteristics and therefore it is important to have regular progress reports to Cabinet to ensure that action taken by the council and decisions taken by Cabinet meet the aim. </td> <td rowspan="10"> Quarterly reporting planned of progress made over the year would there is due consideration of the actions taken to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. Additionally they should consider any positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics. </td> <td rowspan="10"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender reassignment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marriage and civil partnership</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnancy and maternity</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion or belief</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sex</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual orientation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (give detail)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Further information</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes	Age	Meeting the aim of the plan should have a positive impact on all of the protected characteristics and therefore it is important to have regular progress reports to Cabinet to ensure that action taken by the council and decisions taken by Cabinet meet the aim.	Quarterly reporting planned of progress made over the year would there is due consideration of the actions taken to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. Additionally they should consider any positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics.		Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Other (give detail)	Further information
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8	<p>Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.</p> <p>The proposal sets out the strategic ambition for the Council for the next year and should inform all other plans, policies and strategies and have a positive effect.</p>	(Delete one) yes																			
9	<p>Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>No major change required</td> </tr> <tr> <td>✓</td> <td>When no potential for discrimination or adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.</td> </tr> </table>			A	No major change required	✓	When no potential for discrimination or adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.														
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	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified?
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact For important relevant proposals, compelling reasons will be needed. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact. Consultation may suggest a change of action, but some actions will be required regardless of consultation e.g. budget savings. Mitigating actions may be required to minimise impact identified through consultation.
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal Actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified; the proposal will need reviewing immediately. You may need to consult with appropriate officers including your executive director, finance or Equality, Safety and Wellbeing.

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
<p>Where the assessment indicates a potential negative impact (B, C or D in question 7), identify how you will reduce or mitigate this impact. The full impact of a proposal will only be known once it is introduced, so always set out arrangements for reviewing the actual impact of the proposals e.g. 6 month or 12 months after implementation.</p> <p>Identify who the monitoring will be reported to and what it is part of e.g. service monitoring or project monitoring. Then ensure the outcome of each action is added, this is just as important as identifying the potential impact.</p>				

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail

Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.

Contact us

Community, Equality and Cohesion
Resources and Transformation

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Inside Walsall: http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/Equality_and_diversity

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Corporate Budget Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24, incorporating the Capital Strategy; and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021/22

Portfolio: Councillor M. Bird – Leader of the Council (Lead Portfolio)

Related Portfolios: All

Service: Finance – council wide

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide the revenue and capital resource envelope for delivery of the Council's aims and objectives and ensure that the statutory framework is met by recommending the statutory determinations (gross expenditure and income) and council tax bands, and capital programme to Full Council.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report contains several sections as follows:

Section A for Cabinet approval - Findings from Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2021/22+ and Cabinet Responses. This section is for Cabinet's consideration and approval:

- **Part 1** - Report on findings from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- **Part 2** - Report on findings from budget consultation on policy proposals.
- **Part 3** - Budget proposals 2021/22 – assessing equality impact

Section B for Cabinet approval and recommendation to Council consists of:

- **Part 1** - The Revenue and Capital Corporate Budget Plan; comprising the final revenue and capital budget following consideration of consultation feedback and equality impact assessment by Cabinet. This also includes the Capital Strategy and the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.

- **Part 2A** - Treasury Management and Investment Strategy as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017). It includes details on the Prudential Code Indicators (PCIs) for the next three years and asks Cabinet to approve them and recommend adoption of these to full Council. The Strategy both complies with the Local Government Act 2003, and also provides an additional framework over and above the statutory minimum for monitoring performance.
- **Part 2B** - Treasury Management Policy Statement as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017).

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Cabinet note:

- a) That at the time of despatch of this report, the final local government settlement for 2021/22 has not been received. (The final local government settlement for 2021/22 has been confirmed as 10 February 2021, and any changes will be included within the final papers to Council).
- b) That at the time of despatch of this report, the precepting authorities (fire and police) had not formally notified the authority of their final council tax precept levels for 2021/22. (The council has been advised that they will be approved following meetings scheduled for early to mid-February, final figures may therefore be provided prior to or at the Council meeting of 25 February 2021).
- c) That at the time of despatch of this report, the levy authorities, (Environment Agency and West Midlands Combined Authority - Transport Levy) had not formally notified the authority of their final demand for 2021/22. Estimates have been used for the Transport Levy based on informal communication, but these are subject to formal approval. (The final Transport Levy is expected to be approved early February, and will be included within the final papers to Council).
- d) That the council tax base, set by the S151 Officer under officer delegations, is 70,809.41 for 2021/22.
- e) The feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft capital programme and revenue budget and responses to recommendations, as set out in **Section A - Part 1** of this report.
- f) The amendments to the budget arising from the Provisional Settlement, including additional savings identified since the October Cabinet report, as set out in section 4.25.

- g) That Members must have due regard to consultation feedback and the public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when making budget decisions.

3.2 That Cabinet approve:

- a) The attached report as set out in **Section A - Part 2 and Part 3**: The Findings from Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2021/22+ and Cabinet Responses and that Members have had regard to their duties in relation to consultation, and in relation to the public sector equality duty, in forming their budget recommendations.
- b) That delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer to make any necessary amendments, after consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), to take account of the final local government settlement, final levies and precepts; final grant allocations and final technical guidance or legislation on the budget, and to make any necessary amendments to the statutory determinations and council tax bands to take account of those changes and the resulting final analysis of the budget and for these amendments to be submitted and therefore recommended to Council at its meeting on 25 February 2021, after consultation with the portfolio holder for finance (Leader of the Council).
- c) Policy service changes as set out in Table 1 of this covering report, and instruct executive directors to implement these.
- d) That delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer, after consultation with Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, to agree the council's final contribution to the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- e) That members approve a commitment to Birmingham Airport Holdings Ltd (BAHL) to make a loan as set out within section 4.16, and sections 4.31 to 4.40 of this report, having due regard to the information provided in the Private Appendix, and that delegation is given to the S151 Officer after consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Leader of the Council to sign and enter into all legally binding agreements including any variations to the proposal that may arise during the shareholders governance process with BAHL.

3.3 Cabinet is asked to approve and recommend to Council, subject to receipt of the final local government settlement, final precepts and levies, receipt of final grant allocations, technical/legislative guidance and final specific grant allocations (*substitute figures and resolution to be provided to Council by the S151 Officer to take account of any changes arising from these*) the following:

3.3.1 Revenue

- a) The financial envelope of resources for 2021/22 as set out in **Section B - Part 1** “The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan”.
- b) A Walsall Council net council tax requirement for 2021/22 of £132.55m and a 4.99% increase in council tax (inclusive of 3% precept for Adult Social Care).
- c) That the recommendations of the S151 Officer in respect of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of reserves **be approved**, including the levels of central contingency and an opening general reserve of no less than £16.64m, as set out in the S151 Officer Section 25 statement in **Annex 12** of the Budget Plan.
- d) The (estimated) levies below for outside bodies and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** for these provisional ones once they are available at the Council meeting on 25 February 2021. (An estimate has been used within this report based on informal notification from the authorities).

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	11,183,812
Environment Agency	82,739

- e) The following statutory determinations (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 as amended), and subject to any final changes arising from receipt of final precepts and levies, receipt of final grant allocations, technical/legislative guidance and final specific grant allocations, **and Cabinet approve that these will be substituted** at the Council meeting on 25 February 2021 for the final figures once received:
 - I. **£657,732,870** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act.
 - II. **£525,187,089** being the aggregate income which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
 - III. **£132,545,781** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (e) (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (e) (II), calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year.
 - IV. **£1,871.87** being the amount at (e) (III) above, divided by the council tax base of 70,809.41, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average council tax at band D).

V. Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) (IV) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Local Government Act 1992, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
1,247.91	1,455.90	1,663.88	1,871.87
E	F	G	H
2,287.84	2,703.81	3,119.78	3,743.73

- f) The draft precept from the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** once they are available at the Council meeting on 25 February 2021.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
	A	B	C	D
Police And Crime Commissioner	118.37	138.09	157.82	177.55
	E	F	G	H
Fire & Rescue	217.01	256.46	295.92	355.10
	A	B	C	D
	42.03	49.03	56.03	63.04
	E	F	G	H
	77.05	91.06	105.07	126.08

- g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) (v) and (f) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** once the final precepts are available at the Council meeting on 25 February 2021.

A	B	C	D
1,408.31	1,643.02	1,877.73	2,112.46
E	F	G	H
2,581.90	3,051.33	3,520.77	4,224.91

- h) That notice **be given** of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the "Express and Star" newspaper circulating in the Authority's area.

- i) That the S151 Officer **be instructed** to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, billing, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.
- j) That the S151 Officer **be given delegated authority** to make transfers to and from reserves in order to ensure that reserves are maintained as necessary and in particular, adjusted when reserves are no longer required, or need to be replenished.
- k) That, pursuant to Section 52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the relevant basic amount of council tax for the Council is not excessive in relation to determining whether a referendum is required.

3.3.2 Capital

- a) The allocation of capital expenditure plans as set out in **Section B - Part 1** “The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan” and that the capital and leasing programme as set out in **Annex 9 be approved** bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place. Schemes funded from grant will commence when final allocations are published. Reserve list items will only commence should funding become available during the financial year.
- b) That the S151 Officer be **given delegated authority** to determine how each source of finance is used to fund the overall capital programme and to alter the overall mix of financing as necessary, to maximise the flexibility of capital resources used and minimise the ongoing costs of borrowing to the council.
- c) That the S151 Officer, after consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), be **given delegated authority** to release capital resources held back for any contingent items that may arise (earmarked capital receipts for essential or emergency spend), and also for any match funding requirements that may be required of the Council in order to secure additional external capital funding (e.g. bids for government or other funding).
- d) The Capital Strategy set out in **Annex 8** of the Budget Plan **be approved**.
- e) The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy set out in **Annex 11** of the Budget Plan be approved.

3.3.3 Treasury Management

1. **Section B – Part 2A** – The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021/22 onwards, including the council’s borrowing requirement, borrowing limits, and the adoption of the prudential indicators, **be**

approved.

2. That decisions to effect movements between conventional borrowing and other long term liabilities, such as leases, **be delegated** to the S151 Officer.
3. That decisions to use capital receipts or borrowing within the framework of approved prudential indicators **be delegated** to the S151 Officer.
4. **Section B – Part 2B** – Treasury Management Policies, **be approved**.

4. Report detail - Know

- 4.1 The council's budget is a financial representation of the organisation's plans. It is constructed as an integral part of the council's planning processes and aligned to its priorities and objectives. The attached budget plan at **Section B Part 1** sets out the revenue and capital plans for service delivery for 2021/22 and beyond.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.2 The budget is the financial plan supporting delivery of the organisations key objectives and priorities. The budget process is a three yearly cycle, updated annually, aiming to support delivery of council priorities and outcomes within the available resources. It aims to achieve this through the delivery of efficiencies, income reviews and service reviews and redesign to redirect existing and reducing resources to areas of high council priority in order to deliver the Council outcomes. This budget has been prepared using the council's high level purpose and priorities as outlined in the Council's currently approved Corporate Plan.

Risk management

- 4.3 Budget Plan: The council reviews corporate financial planning and budget principles in accordance with the medium term financial strategy (MTFS). The budget setting process includes a comprehensive financial risk assessment to determine key risks and their impact on the budget. Services undertake risk assessments of their services and budgets by identifying risk factors, potential changes to service delivery and funding streams. This ensures that adequate budgetary provision is available to cover unforeseen future events. This successful approach is now embedded and is used to inform the level of earmarked and general reserves.
- 4.4 The identification of risks, and level of reserves, is referred to in the S151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) Section 25 statement at **Annex 12** of the Budget Plan. It is unlikely that all risks identified will arise, however new risks

may also emerge. Managers are required to deliver services within their approved budget. Any known changes in service demand or costs arising from legislative or government demands are identified and dealt with within the overall revenue budget. The level of reserves should be sufficient to cover all but the most unusual of events. Any in-year use of general reserves may require replenishment to ensure the opening level of reserves is as recommended by the MTFs.

Financial implications

- 4.5 The council must set a balanced budget to meet its legal requirements as set out under legal implications. This report proposes cash limits for services to deliver the council's key priorities.

Legal implications

- 4.6 The legal duty for a council's finances falls within S151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Arrangements for the proper administration of the council's affairs are secured by the S151 Officer.
- 4.7 Cabinet recommend the revenue budget and capital programme envelope to Council. Councils are responsible for making a calculation in accordance with sections 31A to 37 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). This includes the statutory determinations (aggregate gross expenditure, gross income, council tax requirement for the year and setting the council tax for a financial year).
- 4.8 Under the Local Government Act 2003 (s25), an authority must set a council tax and balanced budget, giving 14 days' notice of the council tax level prior to the date of billing. The Council must set a budget before 11 March of each year. This will include the S151 Officer's Section 25 statement that deals with the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides, together with an assessment of risk. This is provided at **Annex 12** of the Budget Plan.
- 4.9 The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting Regulations require the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set prudential indicators for the next three years to ensure that the council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an annual investment strategy (as required by investment guidance issued subsequent to the Act); this sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. This is provided at **Part 2** of the Budget Plan.
- 4.10 In recent years Central Government has capped the level of council tax rises. For 2021/22, the Government have announced that local authorities will again need to seek approval of their electorate via a local referendum if they propose to increase council tax levels by 5% or above as confirmed as part of the

provisional local government settlement on 18 December 2020, inclusive of the 3% ring-fenced for Adult Social Care.

- 4.11 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed a general duty on every local authority in England to take such steps as it considers appropriate to secure that representatives of local persons (or of local persons of a particular description) are involved in the exercise of any of its functions, among other things by being consulted about the exercise of the function. The duty to consult that is imposed on Councils comes from two other sources:
- Specific legislation, such as the education act duties to consult on certain services etc., and,
 - The common law duty, which is well established in law.
- 4.12 Our approach to consultation was reported to Cabinet in October 2020 and feedback is provided in **Section A - Part 2** of this report.
- 4.13 The 2010 Equality Act, whilst not imposing a specific duty to consult, lays a requirement to have due regard to the equality impact when exercising its function. As a public body, the Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as set out in the Equality Act, 2010. The PSED requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.
- 4.14 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the chosen procedure, by the Council, for checking the lawfulness of decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Equality Impact Assessment analysis is contained in **Section A - Part 3** of this report.
- 4.15 Saving plans, prior to implementation, will include consideration of equality impact, legislative and other requirements, duties or obligations imposed by statute, secondary legislation or guidance upon the council, specifically in the context of proposals which involve changes to service provision.
- 4.16 In relation to paragraphs 4.31 to 4.40 of this report, Section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003 sets out that the council has a specific power to invest. The power states "a local authority may invest for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs". This provides the council with a power to invest in BAH, for any purpose relevant to its functions (this function would have to be identified) or if the council can show it is for the prudent management of its financial affairs. Under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the council also has a power "to do anything that individuals generally may do" (the "General Power of Competence"). "Individual" means an individual with full capacity. The General Power of Competence gives the council:

- power to do a thing anywhere in the United Kingdom or elsewhere,
- power to do it for a commercial purpose or otherwise for a charge, or without charge, and
- power to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.

The council will be compliant with the requirements of both the General Power of Competence and the Power to Invest. This report serves as a business case for the proposed investment in BAHL and the basis on which the Investment powers can be utilised.

Procurement Implications / Social Value

- 4.17 There are no direct implications arising from this report. Any procurement implications as a result of the development of Proud Programme benefits will be set out within the relevant redesign proposals as they are developed.

Property implications

- 4.18 There are no direct implications arising from this report. Any direct property implications as a result of service redesign will be set out within the relevant redesign proposals as they are developed.

Health and Wellbeing implications

- 4.19 There are no direct implications arising from this report. Any direct health and wellbeing implications as a result of service redesign will be set out within the service redesign proposal as they are developed.

Staffing implications

- 4.20 There will be some staffing implications arising from this report. The contribution of the trade unions will be important in the council achieving its key aims and objectives particularly in these challenging times. Officers and members will consult widely with them on the employee implications of service redesign and delivery.
- 4.21 Staff affected by proposals arising from the Proud Programme will be supported as appropriate throughout the process and the number of redundancies will be minimised wherever possible.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.22 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAs) are undertaken on proposals as they are developed and reported to Cabinet to allow them to consider any revisions required to the final budget for recommendation to Council.

Assessing the impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures, services and organisational change is not just something the law requires; it is a positive opportunity for the council to ensure it makes better decisions, based

on robust evidence.

Failure to meet the requirements in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges. Equality Impact Assessment analysis is contained in **Section - A Part 3** of this report.

Consultation

- 4.23 For our services to meet the needs of local residents, and of the community at large, it is essential that our plans and policies take into account the views of local people and others who use our services. We use a broad range of consultation methods to ensure as far as possible that people have sufficient information to comment, as well as the time and any necessary support they require to enable them to have their say. All feedback gathered is collated and carefully considered, along with other information, as part of the decision making process.
- 4.24 Consultation has been undertaken with councillors via Overview Scrutiny Committees on the budget plan and process, and with national non domestic ratepayers and voluntary and community organisations on the budget and draft council tax increases. Consultation has also been undertaken with residents and other stakeholders. Further consultation will be undertaken, as appropriate, with all stakeholders as detailed proposals are developed as part of the Walsall Proud Programme. Full details of the consultation process and findings is presented in **Section A - Part 2** of this report.

Amendments to the Revenue Budget

- 4.25 Since the draft revenue budget was presented to Cabinet in October 2020, there have been a number of funding announcements and technical changes to the budget; these can be summarised as follows:
- The provisional 2021/22 Settlement was received on 18 December 2020. This confirmed permission for social care authorities to raise additional funding through a 3% adult social care precept in 2021/22, which has now been included within the final budget proposals, raising £3.79m for adult social care services.
 - The Settlement also confirmed an additional £300m social care grant to be made available – Walsall element confirmed as £2.42m; and a new Lower Tier Services Grant of £111m – Walsall confirmed as £439k;
 - A further share of £1.55bn to meet Covid pressures as outlined in the Spending Review 2020 (SR20) – Walsall element confirmed as £9.23m;
 - Additional investment in services, including; additional investment to support demand within adult social care and children's following a review of existing and future forecasts; and investment to fund shortfalls in income projections and borrowing costs to fund capital projects.
 - Approval by the S151 Officer, under delegations, of the council tax base and NNDR1 return in January 2021.

- Release of detail concerning a Local Tax Income Guarantee to compensate local authorities for 75% of irrecoverable losses in council tax and business rates income in respect of 2020/21 and to smooth the impact on council tax and NNDR funds (estimated at c£3.91m).
- A number of transfers to/from reserves to smooth financing of one-off costs.

4.26 The impact of the overall changes since October 2020 on the MTFO and savings requirement is shown below, resulting in a revised saving requirement for 2021/22 of £28.90m (reduced from £33.66m).

Movement in Saving requirement / Gap				
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Savings required per Cabinet on 28 October 2020	33.66	19.43	13.62	66.71
Revised savings requirement	28.90	22.01	14.52	65.43
Variance – increase (decrease)	(4.76)	2.58	0.90	(1.28)

Movement in savings requirement - detail				
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Savings required per Cabinet on 28 October 2020	33.66	19.43	13.62	66.71
Grant changes	(10.92)	9.51	1.43	0.02
Investment changes	3.03	0.51	(1.99)	1.55
Adult Social Care precept	(3.80)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(4.00)
Technical changes	2.88	(3.29)	1.56	1.15
Transfer to / from reserves	4.05	(4.05)	0.00	0.00
Revised savings requirement	28.90	22.01	14.52	65.43

4.27 The draft revenue budget presented to Cabinet in October 2020 identified £24.37m (£21.34m net of investment required to deliver the savings), resulting in a shortfall against the £33.66m required at that point. This report sets out a revised saving requirement of £28.90m as a result of changes set out above, and the three year budget includes a number of further operational savings, and which results in a balanced budget being able to be set for 2021/22, summarised below:

- £2.55m additional saving over 3 years from the review of capital financing – minimum revenue provision;
- £88k in 2021/22 for biodiversity (rewilding of urban grass) within Clean and Green;
- £62k in 2021/22 for external marketing and promotion within Active Living Centres;

- Rephasing of £94k from 2022/23 to 2021/22 for the Black Country Women's' Aid contract;
- Rephasing of £13k from 2021/22 to 2022/23 for the review of ways of working in the post room;
- £500k new saving for Children's Service - Independent Living over 2 years;
- £60k review of mobile phone contracts over 2 years;
- £2.4m over 2 years for cross council efficiencies relating to administration and business support provision;
- £8k in 2021/22 for increased charges for dropped kerbs;
- £9k in 2021/22 for MOT service full cost recovery;
- £1.27m over 2 years for Public Health savings;
- £6k in 2021/22 for extended burial hours 24/7 and out of hours service full cost recovery;
- £20k in 2021/22 for taxi licensing process improvement;
- £8m over 3 years for council wide efficiencies relating to Customer Access Management;
- Further savings of £2.9m in 2022/23 and £10m in 2023/24 from Proud Programme change activity for which delivery plans are in development.

4.28 The draft revenue budget contains 12 new policy proposals in respect of 2021/22, and 105 new operational savings. Feedback from consultation and equality impact assessment results were received by Cabinet and are set out within this report (Section A - Parts 1, 2 and 3). A small number of policy savings for 2021/22 were subject to further review and Cabinet are now asked to approve the policy decision as set out in **Table 1** overleaf (under the heading Executive (Cabinet) Decision) and instruct executive directors to implement the resulting decision. Changes arising from Cabinet's review of the developing proposals, consultation feedback, and equality impact assessment reviews are set out below, all of which are reflected in the list of savings proposals at **Annex 7** of the Budget Plan.

- **Policy proposal Ref P10:** Charge self-funders to arrange care via adult social care commissioners (brokerage service) – feedback was divided on this proposal from the general consultation. It has been determined that more specific consultation and equality impact assessment is required on this proposal prior to considering implementing and as such, that consultation will be undertaken as part of a wider piece of work relating to Adult Social Care charging within the Proud programme. This proposal is therefore not included within the final revenue budget proposal for 2021/22. The net impact is a reduction in savings of c£2k.
- **Operational proposal Ref OP54:** Facilities management – review of structures and ways of working in the post room. This proposal has been amended following impact assessment to allow for consideration of changes in working methods and for consultation to take place – saving amended from £26k to £13k to account for a part year effect.
- **Operational Proposals OP52** (Facilities management - school catering and caretaking traded services review) / **OP53** (Facilities management - review of cleaning service standards and specifications across all traded units) – following review, a single price increase will be implemented, with

service specification changes being deferred in light of the continuing pandemic. The impact is a reduction in the saving for 2021/22 of £171k.

- 4.29 The budget for 2021/22 is balanced, including the need to implement savings of £28.90m as outlined in **Annex 7**. The draft budget for 2022/23 to 2023/24 is also balanced. The Walsall Proud Programme proposes an organisational wide programme of change activity of sufficient breadth to deliver the required savings from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Table 1: Summary of revised policy savings and the Executive (Cabinet) decision

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2021/22 £	Decision required	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
<i>Children's & Customer Services</i>				
P1	Change, Grow, Live (CGL) Contract - bring service back in house	(122,714)	Y	Approve bringing CGL service back in house
P11	Introduce council tax penalty charges for failing to notify a change of circumstance	(150,000)	Y	Approve introduction of council tax penalty charges for failing to notify a change of circumstance
<i>Economy, Environment and Communities</i>				
P6	Re-profile the highway maintenance mainstream budget for 2021/22	(300,000)	Y	Approve reprofiling of £300k of highways maintenance mainstream budget for 2021/22
P7	Increased capitalisation of staff costs	(46,000)	Y	Approve £46k of capitalisation of staff costs
P8	Increased capitalisation of highway works	(300,000)	Y	Approve £300k capitalisation of highways works
P13	Consider ceasing pest and animal control service	(87,606)	Y	Approve ceasing of pest and animal control service
P14	Bereavement services – the sale of keepsake memorials and a range of personal memorabilia	(1,000)	Y	Approve the sale of keepsake memorials and a range of personal memorabilia
P16	Biodiversity – Rewilding of urban grass	(88,249)	Y	Approve Biodiversity proposal and rewilding of urban grass
P17	Active Living Centres - External marketing & promotion partnership development	(62,000)	Y	Approve development of an external marketing & promotion partnership
<i>Resources and Transformation</i>				
P4	Organisational redesign to deliver Intelligent Client Model across Asset Management, Capital Projects and Facilities Management	(195,921)	Y	Approve organisational redesign to deliver Intelligent Client Model across Asset Management, Capital Projects and Facilities Management
P5	Redesign of Occupational Health contract	(7,500)	Y	Approve redesign of occupational health contract

Notes:

The following are year 2 (2022/23 proposals and will be considered further during the 2022/23 budget setting cycle):

- P2 - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charge for appointeeship management / support
- P3 - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charging for administration of deaths for appointees
- P9 - Charge developers for travel plans
- P12 - Reduction to voluntary organisation

P10 - Charge self-funders to arrange care via adult social care commissioners (brokerage service) has been removed from the final budget

P15 - Change to minimum revenue provision is reserved to Council as part of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

Amendments to the Capital Programme

- 4.30 The draft capital programme was set out in the report to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, totalling £65.99m. The programme has increased by £37.77m to £103.76m in 2021/22 with the following amendments:
- Allotment boundary improvement works of £260k as approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2020;
 - Provision of webcasting and hybrid council meetings of £20k;
 - One Source payroll infrastructure £500k;
 - Pipeline investment opportunities of £28.00m to fund emerging and pipeline regeneration and major capital schemes;
 - High Streets Fund – external funding offer of £8.89m and council contribution of £100k. A further £2.55m of external funding is available in 2022/23, as notified by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 26 December 2020.

Birmingham Airport

- 4.31 Together, the 7 West Midland Authorities (“Authorities”) own 49% of BAHL, and vote in one block at meetings. The council holds 4.88% of BAHL’s total ordinary shares, holding 5% of BAHL’s “A” and “C” ordinary shares in addition to preference shares which pay a fixed dividend of 6.31%.
- 4.32 Birmingham Airport plays a very significant role in the regional economy, providing the air connectivity vital for international trade, investment and employment, the growth of inbound tourism, and access to outbound leisure destinations. Prior to Covid-19, 7,000 people were directly employed by companies located within the Airport boundary and a further 9,900 people were employed indirectly to supply goods and services to the Airport. The Airport’s net economic impact including catalytic effects in the West Midlands region was estimated as £1.5billion GVA (Gross Value Added), and 30,900 jobs.
- 4.33 The Covid-19 pandemic has led to the worst decline in traffic and income in BAHL’s history. In response, BAHL has reduced costs where possible, without impacting the ability to resume normal operations when travel restrictions are lifted. This includes a two-phase restructure which has resulted in a c.43% reduction in roles throughout the workforce.
- 4.34 BAHL has external debt facilities in the form of a £105m corporate bond, £371m private placement loan notes, and a bank loan of £25m. The terms of the debt agreements require compliance each year with various covenant tests at 30 September and 31 March. Due to the impact of Covid-19 on the covenant requirements, the tests at 30 September 2020 and 31 March 2021 were waived, and an additional testing date at 30 June 2021 was introduced along with a six-month forward liquidity covenant. BAHL’s proactive reduction in cashflows means that it forecasts to retain a satisfactory cash balance, but will not comply with the June 2021 covenant ratios unless passenger volumes and revenues recover quickly. A combination of a further waiver and shareholder support may therefore be required to avoid a covenant breach.

- 4.35 In recent months various UK Airports have raised capital in response to Covid-19, including Heathrow raising £1.4bn of debt in October 2020, and Manchester Airport Group raised £300m from its shareholders in July 2020.
- 4.36 Given that Birmingham Airport is a critical asset for the region it is recommended that the Council enters into a legally binding agreement with BAML to commit to provide a loan if cash were required up to a maximum of £4.9m.
- 4.37 The Treasury Management Policy Statement (**Section B - Part 2B**) sets out the council's investment criteria, risk management process, procedures and delegations. The Treasury Management Policy Statement set out the principles by which the council can enter into non-specified investments such as the loan being requested by BAML. Should the loan be required then this proposal is compliant with the Treasury Management Policy and can be approved by the S151 officer.
- 4.38 In terms of the key requirements of the Treasury Management Policy Statement – security, liquidity and yield then Members should note that the loan is underpinned by the income stream from the airport business plan and actions taken by the airport to manage their operations. It is not a secured loan against a specific asset as the West Midlands Authorities already own 49% of the assets. Members should note that there is a risk that the loan would not be repaid – in which case the loan would become an impairment charge to the revenue budget. However this is considered a low risk given that the priority has been to maintain sufficient liquidity levels to support BAML into the future, whilst ensuring that it is ready to return to full capacity as soon as travel restrictions are lifted. In terms of liquidity the council currently has sufficient cash to provide the loan should it be called. There will be an investment yield through interest paid on the loan and it helps to protect our existing investment in a critical asset for the Region.
- 4.39 In the preparation of this report, independent aviation, accounting and corporate finance advice has been considered. The accounting advice has confirmed the financial analysis within this report. The council's auditor's Grant Thornton have also been consulted, and they have not raised any concerns regarding the proposed accounting treatment.
- 4.40 A separate Private Appendix is provided which sets out further detail which Members should refer to in making their decision.

5. Decide

- 5.1 As set out in the legal section, Councils are required to set a legal budget. This report is the final stage in that process and Cabinet are asked to approve the recommendations as set out, and recommend the budget to Council on 25

February 2021 for formal approval of the 2021/22 budget and council tax levels.

6. Respond

- 6.1 Following recommendation by Cabinet, this budget report and plan will be forwarded on for formal approval by Council on 25 February 2021.

7. Review

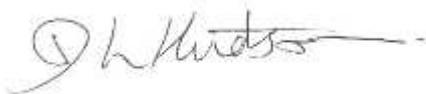
- 7.1 Following approval by Council on 25 February 2021, the 2021/22 budget will be formally set and monitored throughout the year. Council tax bandings will be set and bills formally produced and distributed in accordance with approved guidance.

Background papers

- Corporate Budget Plan 2019/20 - 2022/23 as approved by Council on 27 February 2020.
- Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 – 2023/24 and in year position 2020/21 - Cabinet 28 October 2020.
- Draft Revenue Budget Feedback and Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 - Cabinet 9 December 2020.
- Equality Impact Assessments.

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Deborah Hindson
Interim Executive Director (s151 Officer)
10 February 2021



Councillor M. Bird
Leader of the Council
10 February 2021

Section A - Part 1 – Feedback from Overview Scrutiny Committees

1. Overview Scrutiny Committees received the draft revenue proposals in November 2020, and Cabinet received feedback in December 2020. The capital proposals reported to Cabinet in December 2020 were referred on to Overview Scrutiny Committees in January.

1.1 This section summarises the comments and recommendations from each Committee and, where applicable, Cabinet’s consideration of these.

2. Scrutiny Overview Committee

2.1 1 December 2020

The Committee sought to understand the potential impact on the in-year budget of Covid-19 and how this may impact future years. The loss of income and additional spending were discussed along with the potential best and worst case scenarios.

2.2 Members considered the budget proposals for services within the remit of the Committee. This covered proposals from the following portfolios:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader (Regeneration)
- Deputy Leader (Resilient Communities)
- Personnel and Business Support

2.3 As part of the presentation from Cabinet Members clarity was provided on the allocation and use of funding for the Towns Fund.

2.4 Council-wide proposals

- The Committee heard from the Leader on the overall financial position and noted that further savings proposals were required to present a balanced budget to Council.
- The Committee received feedback on the budget scrutiny that had taken place at the remaining Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- It was reported the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had discussed changes to the allocation of the adult social care budget.
- The Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered proposals to make changes to the Home to School Transport Service.
- The Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee sought to understand the ambitions transformation programme and new models of working that were proposed.
- An overview of the budget discussions from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided.

2.5 The Committee resolved -
The draft revenue budget 2021/22 – 2023/24 be noted.

2.6 2 February 2021

Scrutiny Overview Committee were asked to consider the draft Capital Programme as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, specifically in relation

to capital schemes that fall within services under the remit of this Committee, and for feedback to be taken into account in the finalisation of the budget by Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for recommendation to Council on 25 February 2021.

As the meeting is held on the day of despatch of this report, any recommendations will be verbally provided to Cabinet on 10th February.

3. Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.1 3 November 2020

The Committee sought clarification on how the saving for Home to School Transport would be made from 2020/21 to 2023/24.

The Committee resolved -

- The Committee considered the draft revenue budget proposals relating to the remit of the Committee in order to formally report to the Cabinet.
- The Committee noted that consultation would be undertaken on all new 2021/22 policy proposals and that feedback would be presented to Cabinet on 9 December 2020.
- The Committee noted that further savings proposals would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020 in order for a balanced budget to be delivered by February 2021, and that these would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consultation.

3.2 5 January 2021

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider the draft Capital Programme as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, specifically in relation to capital schemes that fall within services under the remit of this Committee, and for feedback to be taken into account in the finalisation of the budget by Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for recommendation to Council on 25 February 2021.

The Committee resolved -

- The Committee are recommended to consider the draft capital budget proposals attached that relate to the remit of this committee.
- The Committee are asked to note that consultation continues on all revenue policy proposals previously reported, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 10 February 2021, along with further revenue options to close the gap to ensure we set a balanced budget for 2021/22.

4. Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1 10 November 2020

Following challenge from Members, the Committee were provided with reassurance that the financial modelling used within the transformation plans for Children's Services would provide financial savings by achieving improved outcomes for young people and their families. For example, through new models of working, young people could be prevented from coming into care and foster care placement disruption could be avoided.

The Committee resolved -

- The Committee considered the draft revenue budget proposals relating to the remit of the Committee in order to formally report to the Cabinet on the policy proposals.
- The Committee noted that consultation would be undertaken on all new 2021/22 policy proposals and that feedback would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020.
- The Committee noted that further savings proposals would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020 in order for a balanced budget to be delivered by February 2021, and that these would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consultation.

4.2 **14 January 2021**

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider the draft Capital Programme as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, specifically in relation to capital schemes that fall with services under the remit of this Committee, and for feedback to be taken into account in the finalisation of the budget by Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for recommendation to Council on 25 February 2021.

The Committee resolved –

- The Committee fully support the draft capital budget proposal that relates to the remit of this committee, that being the completion of works to the 4 designated locality buildings.
- The Committee note that consultation continues on all revenue policy proposals previously reported and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 10 February 2021, along with further revenue options to close the gap to ensure a balanced budget was set for 2021/22.

5. **Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

5.1 **19 November 2020**

Savings P6: Re-profile the highway maintenance mainstream budget for 2021/22 - A Member sought clarification regarding the re-profile of the highway maintenance budget for 2021/22. In response, the Executive Director confirmed that the re-profile would allow the Council to manage cash flow and revenue expenditure. This was confirmed as a temporary 1 year only saving due to the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic.

5.2 *Saving P8: Increased capitalisation of highway works* - A Member sought clarification regarding the increased capitalisation of highway works. In response, the Interim Director of Place confirmed that this increase capitalisation was created as a result of classification changes for highway works from revenue to capital expenditure. Due to the saving, there needed to be a long-term focus and monitoring on the condition of highways especially if the condition of highways deteriorated.

5.3 *Saving OP22 - Unauthorised Encampment Works* - A Member welcomed the increased expenditure with Unauthorised Encampments. However, there were concerns about the one-off investment as there was still a high number of vulnerable sites across the Borough. The Executive Director confirmed that whilst it was confirmed as a £100k cost pressure in 2021/22, the base budget would be adjusted in future years too.

- 5.4 *Saving P14: Bereavement Services – The sale of keepsake memorials and a range of personal memorabilia* - The Executive Director confirmed that the sale of memorials and memorabilia would enable the council to offer the service for individuals and families suffering bereavements.
- 5.5 *Saving OP102: Restructure and efficiencies within Regulatory Services and Community Protection* - A Member sought clarification regarding the restructure and efficiencies with Regulatory Services and Community Protection. The Executive Director responded that the council was developing a resilient communities model under the Economy, Environment & Communities directorate. As a result, the model would encompass a number of services from across the council including Regulatory Services and Libraries to make greater efficiencies and savings overall.
- 5.6 *Saving OP103: Review of existing fees and charges within resilient communities* - Member sought clarification in regard to review of existing fees and charges. The Executive Director informed that a detailed plan of the changes with fees and charges would be circulated to the Committee in writing.
- 5.7 The Committee resolved -
- The Committee considered the draft revenue budget proposals relating to the remit of the Committee in order to formally report to the Cabinet on the policy proposals.
 - The Committee noted that consultation would be undertaken on all new 2021/22 policy proposals and that feedback would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020.
 - The Committee noted that further savings proposals would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020 in order for a balanced budget to be delivered by February 2021, and that these would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consultation.
- 5.8 **21 January 2021**
Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider the draft Capital Programme as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, specifically in relation to capital schemes that fall with services under the remit of this Committee, and for feedback to be taken into account in the finalisation of the budget by Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for recommendation to Council on 25 February 2021.
This report was simply noted by the Committee.

6. **Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

6.1 **26 November 2020**

The Committee were provided with further detail on the key proposals within the Adult Social Care budget. Members acknowledged that the announcement in relation to the Better Care Fund, was historically late and this made planning difficult. It was also noted that the proposal '*P10 Charge self funders to arrange care via adult social care*' would now be progressed in the financial year 2022/23.

6.2 Following challenge in relation to – ‘*OP91 Reduction of day care funded by direct payments*’ - the Committee were informed that the pandemic had provided opportunities for individuals to explore alternative options to the traditional day care centres. In response to concern that, whilst individuals had adapted to alternative options during the pandemic, people may be keen to return to their ‘normal activities’, the Committee were provided with reassurance that individual need and preferences would be assessed through support plans.

6.3 Members also sought clarification on ‘*OP97 Review of all resources including Goscote and shared lives*’. The Committee were provided with clarification that resources would be reviewed to ensure a focus on re-ablement activity; however, it was acknowledged that more traditional support would be needed by some individuals.

6.4 The Committee resolved -

- The Committee considered the draft revenue budget proposals relating to the remit of the Committee in order to formally report to the Cabinet on the policy proposals.
- The Committee noted that consultation would be undertaken on all new 2021/22 policy proposals and that feedback would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020.
- The Committee noted that further savings proposals would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020 in order for a balanced budget to be delivered by February 2021, and that these would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consultation.

6.5 **28 January 2021**

For Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the draft Capital Programme as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, specifically in relation to capital schemes that fall with services under the remit of this Committee, and for feedback to be taken into account in the finalisation of the budget by Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for recommendation to Council on 25 February 2021.

This report was simply noted by the Committee.

Section A - Part 2 – Findings from Budget Consultation

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Budget consultation took place between 29 October and 30 November, with some consultation extending into early January 2021.
- 1.2. Anyone who lives, works, studies, and visits or does business in the borough was encouraged to have their say on specific draft policy and operational proposals via an online survey, in writing / email or by phone. In light of Covid-19 restrictions no face to face consultation was conducted. Whilst anyone could comment on all draft policy and operational proposals, the focus for consultation was on proposals that have an impact on the public.
- 1.3. Information presented in this report should be considered alongside equality impact assessments and other supporting information. Table 1 and 2 on the following pages provide a quick reference list of the policy and operational proposals consulted on, the overall opinion following consultation; and the outcomes from EqlAs, where completed.
- 1.4. Single statements indicate the general overall opinion on each proposal whether: 'Support', 'Against' or 'Inconclusive / opinion divided'. Note that low numbers of people responded.
- 1.5. Following consultation and impact assessment, and consideration by Cabinet, the following changes are proposed to the final budget in relation to policy proposals:

Policy proposal Ref P10: Charge self-funders to arrange care via adult social care commissioners (brokerage service) – feedback was divided on this proposal from the general consultation. It has been determined that more specific consultation and equality impact assessment is required on this proposal prior to considering implementing and as such, that consultation will be undertaken as part of a wider piece of work relating to Adult Social Care charging within the Proud programme. This proposal is therefore withdrawn at this point.

Policy Proposal Ref P2: Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charge for appointeeship management / support (consultation feedback divided) and **Policy Proposal Ref P3:** Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charging for administration of deaths for appointees (consultation feedback against). An initial equality impact assessment has indicated a *“B - Adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality”*. These are both year 2 proposals (2022/23) and specific consultation and equality impact assessment will be undertaken during 2021 and fed back to Cabinet as part of the 2022/23 budget setting cycle, at which point a decision will be made as to their inclusion or otherwise.

- 1.6. The remaining policy proposals are to be approved as originally set out. In relation to Policy Proposal Ref P13: Consider ceasing pest and animal control

service – there is considered a thriving private sector market which can provide a more effective and efficient service, therefore it is proposed to continue with ceasing this service.

- 1.7 All operational proposals set out in table 2 are proposed to be included in the final budget report, with mitigating actions where equality impact assessment identified the need for this.

Table 1. Quick reference list of policy proposals specifically consulted on

Policy ref number	Saving Proposal	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £	EqIA decision A-D or not required (N/A)	Number of responses	Overall opinion following consultation
P1	Change, Grow, Live Contract - bring service back in house (general consultation)	122,714	467,714	590,428	C	37	Support
P1	Change, Grow, Live Contract - bring service back in house* (Service specific consultation)					29	Support
P2	Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charge for appointeeship management / support	0	72,800	72,800	B	30	Divided
P3	Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charging for administration of deaths for appointees	0	6,000	6,000	B	28	Against
P9	Charge developers for travel plans	0	30,000	30,000	NA	23	Support
P10	Charge self-funders to arrange care via adult social care commissioners (brokerage service)	15,000	15,000	30,000	NA	33	Divided
P11	Introduce council tax penalty charges for failing to notify a change of circumstance	150,000	0	150,000	NA	38	Support
P13	Consider ceasing pest and animal control service	87,606	0	87,606	B	39	Against
P14	Bereavement services – the sale of keepsake memorials and a range of personal memorabilia	1,000	0	1,000	NA	27	Support

**Service specific consultation (16 November to 7 December) in addition to the generic budget survey. 384 service users sent a questionnaire.*

Table 2. Quick reference list of operational proposals specifically consulted on

Policy ref number	Saving Proposal	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £	EqIA decision A-D or not required (N/A)	Number of responses	Overall opinion following consultation
OP19	Building Control - Increase in fee paying services planning development and building control	37,000	0	37,000	NA	23	Support
OP63	Increase MOT charges	19,975	0	19,975	NA	26	Support
OP70	Review of permit scheme charges within statutory cap - permit costs to utilities companies for works on highways	40,000	0	40,000	NA	24	Support
OP71	Section 38 fees increase	45,806	0	45,806	NA	18	Support
OP74	Heritage and culture / Arts and events - increase fees and charges	9,351	9,351	18,702	B	26	Support
OP81	Concessionary "Move It" leisure scheme annual fee increase	63,000	0	63,000	C	39	Divided
OP103	Review of existing fees and charges within resilient communities	115,522	44,315	159,837	EqIA being finalised	23	Support
OP104	Provide pre license surgeries to individuals and businesses to support license applications	7,350	7,350	14,700	EqIA being finalised	18	Support
OP106	Charging for change of name deeds (registrars)	0	10,890	10,890	NA	24	Support

2.0 **Background**

- 2.1 Each year Walsall Council undertakes public consultation in preparation for the budget setting process. Residents, partners and other key stakeholders were invited to have their say on draft budget policy proposals for 2021/22 to 2022/23 where applicable.
- 2.2 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed a general duty on every local authority in England to take such steps as it considers appropriate to secure that representatives of local persons (or of local persons of a particular description) are involved in the exercise of any of its functions, among other things by being consulted about the exercise of the function. The 2010 Equality Act whilst not imposing a specific duty to consult, lays a requirement to have due regard to the equality impact when exercising its function.

Approach to consultation

- 2.3 Consultation is an integral part of the budget setting process and a programme of consultation has taken place to consult and engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including service users and potential service users, residents, Non-Domestic Rate Payers, voluntary and community organisations, councillors and other key stakeholders.
- 2.4 Consultation took place between 29 October and early January 2021. Information on the draft proposals was made available in the 28 October 2020 Cabinet report and on the council's website www.walsall.gov.uk/budgethaveyoursay. Information was also included in the consultation document (questionnaire).

Communications and promotion

- 2.5 The consultation was announced in a news item on the council's website. This news item was viewed 130 times. Links to the budget consultation pages were posted on relevant service webpages and staff used budget consultation e-signatures.
- 2.6 Promotion of the consultation on social media was undertaken throughout the consultation period; in total 11 posts were published on the corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts to raise awareness of the consultation and direct people to the council's website. These were shared widely across Walsall Council service area accounts including Walsall4All, Public Health, Environmental Health, Clean & Green and the four localities' accounts.
- 2.7 Three local community Facebook groups with significant reach (3,000, 10,000 and 20,000 followers) were also engaged to promote the consultation to their networks on our behalf.
- 2.8 Information about budget consultation was also included in edition 13 of the COVID News from Walsall Council residents' newsletter, distributed to

60,000+ people on 5 November. The link to the consultation from the newsletter attracted 60 unique clicks.

- 2.9 Adverts were placed in the Walsall edition of the Express & Star newspaper on 7, 12, 14 and 17 November, with a daily average readership of 3,000.
- 2.10 Posters and postcards were printed with the intention of distributing them via the library ring and read service and at leisure centres, NAG and the Leather Museum, however Covid-19 local lockdown restrictions meant that these venues were forced to close and therefore the printed material could not be distributed in this way. Posters and postcards were, however, sent to Community Associations and to the MOT bay at Brownhills depot.
- 2.11 Information about the proposals was provided and further information could be sought on request. A budget phone line was made available for people to ring for further information or to make a comment.

Methodology

- 2.12 Consultation approaches have, as far as possible, been designed to be appropriate to the audience and to facilitate informed comment. In doing so particular groups and communities have been targeted and supported where necessary to understand the proposal(s) and have their say.
- 2.13 Of the 17 policy proposals, eight for 2021/22 impact directly on the public and were therefore specifically covered in this general consultation. Those relating to 2022/23 will be subject to further consultation.
- 2.14 Most operational proposals do not impact directly on the public as the changes are 'behind the scenes' however there are nine operational proposals involving changes to fees and charges. While operational proposals are savings that do not require Cabinet approval or formal consultation, public comments and feedback are sought as part of consultation on the wider budget and used in decision making / EqIAs.
- 2.15 Central to the consultation is to understand how the draft proposals, if approved, may impact on people / communities and to seek alternative suggestions for how the savings could be made. Feedback on all proposals was gathered via a short generic online questionnaire. Each proposal was listed allowing respondents to select which proposal(s) they wished to comment on. The survey asked 3 key questions:
 - What is your overall opinion on this operational proposal? (support, support but with concerns / amendments, do not support)
 - How if at all, might this proposal affect you?
 - Do you have any alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated?
- 2.16 In addition to the generic survey, Children's Services conducted service specific consultation in relation to proposal P1 Change, Grow, Live contract –

bring service back in house. A separate, more detailed questionnaire was distributed to users of the service and results have been analysed and reported separately in this report (see section 3.7).

- 2.17 In line with our statutory duty, Non Domestic Rate Payers (NDRP) were invited to have their say on the budget. 3,199 businesses and 734 voluntary organisations were emailed on 17 December giving them information about the budget / council tax and the opportunity to comment. This information was also made available on the council's website. The deadline for responses was 7 January 2021.
- 2.18 All feedback received has been collated, analysed and considered as part of the consultation process and used to inform equality impact assessments with findings being used to inform the decision making on the budget.

Petitions

- 2.19 No petitions have been received.

3. Summary of feedback

Generic survey results – policy proposals

- 3.1. The generic online survey was made available on the council's website from 29 October 2019 until 30 November 2020.
- 3.2. Responses to the consultation are particularly low this year, this is partly due to the Covid-19 crisis and the restrictions in place, but also due to the fairly non contentious nature of the proposals and the relatively low number of people potentially impacted by them.
- 3.3. The survey was opened and started a total of 302 times, of these 70 completed the questionnaire in full and 232 partially; meaning they started the questionnaire but did not complete it in its entirety – all responses have been captured and included in the analysis.
- 3.4. Not all questions in the survey were mandatory therefore some figures may not appear to tally. Likewise demographic questions were voluntary. The number of people answering a question is quoted throughout and should be borne in mind when interpreting the results (%s). %s are based on the number of people answering the question.
- 3.5. Of those starting the generic survey, 255 were residents of Walsall, 14 council employees, 1 community / voluntary organisation, 2 public sector organisations, 1 education sector, 2 other local authorities and 8 'other'. Note that not all questions were mandatory, nor did everyone go on to complete the questionnaire. Results are reported on the basis of the number of people who answered the specific question.

Policy Proposals

3.6 **P1: Change, Grow, Live Contract - bring service back in house**
(note a separate service specific consultation was also undertaken – closed 7 December. See section 3.7).

3.6.1 37 people commented on this proposal. Of those that answered the questions about them, most respondents (23) were aged over 35 and slightly more males than females commented on this proposal.

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Support.***

3.6.2 Overall 73% (27) people supported this proposal, with 6 people supporting it but with concerns / amendments. 4 people (11%) did not support it.

3.6.3 *How might this proposal affect you?*

Comments do not highlight any serious concerns and mostly welcome the proposal and the cost saving it would bring.

“This won’t affect me directly, but as a tax payer I support any proposal that can be shown to be more cost effective.”

Maintaining high quality services is for important for some.

“I am a user of the service at Palfrey and have been for almost 3 years. I have seen the quality of provision drop since CGL took over. They have reduced the offering. I would like to see the early years’ service back in house.”

“I am concerned that to achieve such high savings, the level of service provision will have to be reduced.”

“The delivery of these services is something that can’t be reduced therefore any saving to keep the service running is essential.”

One person felt that the service should remain in Palfrey as other community venues have recently closed.

“The venue needs to stay in Palfrey, you’ve taken away our library, the Palfrey CA has gone there is nothing left for the community. I do support the council running the service instead of CGL but the location NEEDS to stay in palfrey, can the old South Walsall Library building not be used or even the My Place youth centre or the Seed Hut at Palfrey Park.”

3.6.4 *Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated.*

An alternative suggestion included finding a council owned building in Palfrey from where the service could be delivered. One person was concerned about

the impact the move would have on current users.

“By moving the location to a council owned building but WITHIN PALFREY.”

“Relocating to Birchills would not allow the service adequate access to those in the central and south area, and limit ability of those in need to engage with the service. Early years/help has already been scaled back as far as it can go in Walsall.”

3.7 Service Specific Consultation on P1: Change, Grow, Live Contract - bring service back in house

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Support.***

- 3.7.1 In addition to the generic questionnaire, which was available for anyone to complete, those who had used the service during 2019/20 were sent a more detailed questionnaire to complete and return. Key stakeholders were also contacted by email and invited to comment.
- 3.7.2 384 householders had used the service in 2019/20 and were sent a letter explaining the proposal and a paper questionnaire to complete and return in a freepost envelope. Alternative formats and support was offered including; completing the questionnaire online, completing it over the phone with support from multi-lingual Early Help Officers / translation service, as well as other formats on request.
- 3.7.3 Consultation on the re-location of the Family Hub commenced 9 November 2020, closing on 7 December 2020. CGL were asked and encouraged to share and promote the consultation with parents on our behalf. By the closing date 24 households and 5 stakeholders had responded.

Feedback from CGL service users

- 3.7.4 Demographic questions were voluntary and a full break down of demographics is available separately. Results show that of the parents/carers that responded, most respondents were female (22), many were of Asian ethnicity (11), a small cohort were single parents (4), were aged between 27 and 50. The majority (14) lived within the WS1 postcode area with (7) living in WS2 and between them had 16 children with the highest proportion being of preschool age (8).
- 3.7.5 With regards to disability, households were asked to state if they, their partner or child had any disability/additional needs. Four parents/carers identified themselves as having a disability/illness, seven identified their children as having a disability/illness and 4 identified their partner as having a disability/illness.
- 3.7.6 Most reported their child having a learning disability (5) and / or a behaviour / development issues (5). 3 had a mental health condition.

3.7.7 Of the 24 households that responded, there was an equal split of those using the Family Hub, with 11 (50%) utilising more than one service available;

- Early Years Support (7)
- Parenting Support/Programmes (7)
- Health Services, key stakeholder partners including Midwifery Support, Health Visitor Sessions, School Nursing and Speech & Language services (7) (key stakeholder partners)
- Early Help One to One Support (7)

3.7.8 When asked what is most important to them, the majority (15) said the location, followed closely by the staff (13) and the support provided by the staff (10).

3.7.9 Respondents were specifically asked what impact, if any, the relocation of the service might have on them / their children. Comments highlighted some concerns about the distance of the proposed location from the existing Family Hub, a few raised concerns about free local parking and one alternative suggestion made.

No concerns personally -

“Not a great deal as I would have to use either a bus or car to attend and continue using the service”

“No impact on me personally but I know a lot of my friends will not be able to make Birchills as they walk to the current location”

Distance a concern -

“A bus to Bradford Street and then walking to the wharf. Not convenient”

“It will be difficult to get to - no available transport”

“Unfortunately, I would not be able to attend in Birchills as it is too far to walk, I have 3 kids and it would not be worth it to get a bus just for a session that will be one hour & half”

“It is way too far to attend. The price of the bus fare time restrictions to get there and back for other school runs. Been on the door step, they are always there to support straight away. I could not afford the travel there & back to Birchills”

“The location, will be far”

“I don't have transport so wouldn't be able to attend sessions elsewhere. It would mean myself & my children have fewer socialisation opportunities but ultimately I'm concerned it would hinder my children's development (i.e. weight checks , no play groups)”

3.7.10 Alternative suggestion / general observation -

“Devastating, you have the old Palfrey nursery site available for use.”

“The community will lose a great service as located building which currently (prior to COVID) is easy to access”

“I think it’s a shame to move this service from Palfrey”

3.7.11 In terms of adverse impact, 10 parents/carers said they did not feel this proposal would adversely affect them, however, some went on to comment;

“There is very limited provision in Walsall for pre-school aged children and believe closing this centre will be detrimental for children in the community”

“No, but too far to travel”.

“I think by taking away South Street, you will effect a wide community of people. Everyone, of any race, ethnicity or gender is truly welcome. Everyone is treated the same, regardless of social status. A move the centre you will be isolating a lot of community who are pressured into not being sociable. The centre has done wonders to breakdown OUTDATED beliefs”

“Not having a car, I feel it’s unfair these services will not be accessible to me if moved to Birchills”.

3.7.12 Overall half of all parents/carers said that they would carry on using the service at the proposed location (12 parents/carers). 7 said they would find similar services within the local area and 5 said they would stop attending. Of the 5 who stated they would stop attending, all said they utilised the Early Years Support and Parenting Workshops available.

3.7.13 Whilst some parents / carers have reservations about the proposed relocation of the service, none raise any major concerns or adverse impacts.

Feedback from key stakeholders

3.7.14 The following stakeholders responded to the consultation;

- Kids an organisation that delivers the Cygnet programme, stay and play groups for children with SEND and holiday activities families.
- The Black Country Telford and Wrekin Independent Visitor Service support looked after children and young people through the recruitment of volunteers who are then trained to go on to become an Independent Visitor.
- The Speech and Language Service
- School Nursing Service and

- Black Country Impact project who offer support and advice to help young people find work.

3.7.15 The majority of the stakeholders who responded were pleased that the services will be continuing and that a potential relocation would not affect their service delivery or service users.

The Kids Organisation

3.7.16 The Kids organisation raised a concern around the accessibility of a potential new venue/building and the need for parking facilities close by in particular for families with disabled children.

“In terms of location of the building itself the KIDS staff do not feel this would be an issue in terms of them being able to access it for work. There is a concern as to how families will be able to access this building, particularly those with disabled children who require parking facilities close to the building.”

The Speech and Language service

3.7.17 The Speech and Language service were supportive of the service overall but did have reservations about the service relocating.

“We have always recognised the importance of being part of the services provided to the communities across Walsall through the children centre settings. It is a great privilege to be part of such a valuable service to the community and to work alongside the multi-disciplinary teams to be able to access all the diverse needs of our families”

3.7.18 They did share some reservations about losing a community base in the Palfrey area and access to services that are close to where families in need live.

“Lots of our families find it very difficult to access services that are not close to where they live and struggle to meet their children’s needs if they are not able to attend their appointments.”

“The staff at the Central and South Family Hub are very effective at building strong relationships with the families and support them to attend appointments, overcoming personal circumstances that prevent them from doing this.”

3.7.19 The Speech and Language service appreciate that a relocation would potentially provide greater opportunities for joint working as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

“...the Birchills premises will provide greater opportunities for co-location of services and joint working.”

The Independent Visitor Service

3.7.20 The Independent Visitor Service was disappointed to hear about the potential relocation, as they felt the current central location is easily accessible by public transport allowing them to operate within 4 Local Authority areas, the building is well resourced, equipped and provides a pleasant learning environment for new volunteers.

“We were surprised and disappointed to hear the news about the relocation proposal. As a service we are facing the ongoing challenges this year has brought and we are working very hard to maintain the level of support our young people require.”

3.7.21 They felt that a potential move may affect the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers, specifically that they may have to spend additional time and funds sourcing alternative venues with facilities for training and interviewing. They have been reassured that the potential new locality hub is closer to the town centre and will still be available for their use.

“Our volunteers are facing home and work challenges of their own and so we are equally keen to ensure we offer them a very positive and supportive volunteering experience with us.”

“Loss of facilities that enable the recruitment of volunteers to take place effectively – interview rooms, printer / scanners, parking, ease with which centre rooms can be booked.”

“Additional time to travel to other venues, sourcing other venues e.g. training and interviews, facilities, booking appropriate rooms for training.”

“Losing the facility would be an impact on our budget as its very tight”.

“Changes to the literative, postal address, alternative training venue, costs attached to that.”

School Nurse Service

3.7.22 The School Nurse Service advised they were;

“Happy for relocation to be considered and south to be taken in house. Our relationship with CGL has never been as straight forward or productive as with rest of localities”.

Impact Service

3.7.23 Impact Service advised;

“There are some changes coming up for us also, however for the time being we are still very much receiving referrals from CGL staff and will continue to do so. From my point of view, the change in location will not affect the work that we do”.

3.7.24 Overall stakeholders are supportive of the proposed relocation of the service and although note that for some it will be further to travel, none raise any major concerns.

3.8 P2: Finance – Adult Social Care Client Care Team – introduce charge for appointeeship management / support

3.8.1 As a 2022/23 saving full and detailed consultation will take place at a later date. Initial feedback has been collected. 30 people commented on this proposal. Of those that answered the questions about them, most respondents (21) were aged over 35 and slightly more females than males commented on this proposal (54% female responses).

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Divided.***

3.8.2 Overall 53% (16) people did not support this proposal and a further 10% (3) supporting but with concerns / amendments. 11 people (37%) supported the proposal.

How might this proposal affect you?

3.8.3 No respondents indicated an impact to them directly but two referenced it having an impact on family members.

3.8.4 Although it is not clear if respondents use the service or know someone who does, some comments raised concerns regarding the ability to pay.

“This has to be means tested for those on benefits. Many vulnerable people living in supported living or care who are on benefits will struggle to pay £7 a week.”

“My disabled daughter who will be on benefits would struggle to pay £7 a week.”

Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated

3.8.5 No service related alternative suggestions were made.

3.9 P3: Finance – Adult Social Care Client Care Team – introduce charging for administration of deaths of appointees

- 3.9.1 As a 2022/23 saving, full and detailed consultation will take place at a later date. Initial feedback has been collected. 28 people commented on this proposal. Of those that answered the questions about them most respondents (20) were aged over 35 and slightly more females than males commented on this proposal (52% female responses).

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Against.***

- 3.9.2 Overall 61% (17) people did not support this proposal and a further 11% (3) supporting but with concerns / amendments. 8 people (29%) supported the proposal.

How might this proposal affect you?

- 3.9.3 Comments highlight concern regarding ability to pay and how the fee is calculated / applied.

“Is this a means tested charge? Unfair if hardworking people who pay council tax, have to pay for leisure use, and any other payment where means testing stops non-working persons from being charged or paying. Further information required.”

“The estates of some people who have appointees might be very small and family members may struggle to pay funeral costs.”

“Absolutely disgusting how about people that can’t afford to lose that money.”

Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated.

- 3.9.4 Alternative suggestions relate to the cost.

“Lower the charge to £150. Only apply to families that cannot do this themselves.”

“Again I feel this must be means tested for those on benefits as with the rising costs of funeral charges they would struggle to pay.”

“Don’t see why direct payments use the middle man (DPSS). Day services fees are far cheaper than a PA.”

3.10 **P9: Charge developers for travel plans**

- 3.10.1 23 people commented on this proposal. Of those that provided demographic information most respondents were aged over 35 and the majority of respondents (61%) that commented on this proposal were male.

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Support.***

3.10.2 Overall 83% (19) people supported this proposal and a further 4% (1) supporting but with concerns / amendments. 3 people did not support the proposal.

How might this proposal affect you?

3.10.3 Comments made reflected that respondents did not feel personally impacted by the proposal but present different perspectives.

“Again, doesn’t affect me directly but large profits made from planning and construction projects should directly pay a cost for any help provided by the local authority.”

“By charging for this it would mean that developers are less likely to take travel plans into account and thus have a negative impact on Walsall residents.”

Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated.

3.10.4 No alternative suggestions were made.

3.11 P10: Charge self-funders to arrange care via adult social care commissioners (brokerage service)

3.11.1 33 people commented on this proposal. Of those that provided demographic information most respondents were aged over 35 (24 respondents) and the majority of respondents (52%) that commented on this proposal were female.

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Divided.***

3.11.2 Overall 52% (19) people did not support this proposal. Whilst 36% (12) respondents indicated they fully supported the proposal a further 12% (4) supported but with concerns / amendments.

How might this proposal affect you?

3.11.3 Comments made were generally negative about the proposal and the impact it may have on those affected.

“Appalling idea, unfair bias towards hardworking people who have paid into a system whereas others haven’t tried or wanted to.”

“Charging for a request to change a care provider may mean that some people will be stuck with unsuitable care. They may be reluctant to change provide due to the cost.”

3.11.4 There were also comments relating to the proposed cost.

“These costs must be reasonable.”

“Lower the fees. I agree in principle but it seems too high.”

“There are enough costs involved and I feel that these are not reasonable costs especially as what little they are saving.”

Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated

3.11.5 A variety of alternative proposals were suggested.

“Reduce or remove free use of leisure services to unemployed. There must be a processing cost and wear and tear cost.”

“Look at cutting the packages of people who are claiming too many hours that are paid for by local authorities.”

“Charge individual and care provided equally.”

“Look elsewhere for savings such as the heating in the civic centre or the Enabling Technology as I’m sure costs could be saved here instead.”

3.12 P11: Introduce council tax penalty charges for falling to notify a change of circumstance

3.12.1 Although this is listed as a policy proposal, under Council Tax legislation there is no legal requirement to consult on this issue, however as a policy proposal it has been included as part of budget consultation.

3.12.2 38 people commented on this proposal. Of those that provided demographic information most respondents were aged over 35 and the majority of respondents (59%) that commented on this proposal were male.

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Support.***

3.12.3 Overall 68% (26) people supported this proposal and a further 13% (5) supporting but with concerns / amendments. 7 people (18%) do not support it.

How might this proposal affect you?

3.12.4 Comments made reflected the opinions of respondents rather than any actual impact on them personally.

“This does not affect me directly but I support this because residents should ensure that the council has full information as it affects their council tax liabilities.”

“Might annoy me less with people getting away with it.”

“If the current situation has impacted the council budget it has certainly effected households much more! Increase in council tax and introducing penalties is being absolutely inconsiderate of circumstances.”

Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated.

3.12.5 Alternative suggestions made were connected to council tax.

“Examine other areas around the collection of council tax that could raise more revenue and deter late or non-payment, in addition to this proposal.”

“Follow up none payment of Council Tax and stop letting the same people off.”

“This is a good idea but must be well advertised as a policy change and not apply to vulnerable groups,”

3.13 P13: Consider ceasing pest and animal control service

3.13.1 39 people commented on this proposal. Of those that provided demographic information most respondents (28) were aged over 35 and the majority of respondents (63%) that commented on this proposal were male.

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Against.***

3.13.2 Overall 51% (20) people do not support this proposal whilst 31% (12) indicated they fully supported the proposal. A further 18% (7) supporting but with concerns / amendments.

How might this proposal affect you?

3.13.3 Comments made highlight concerns about cost and impact on cleanliness in the borough.

“Ceasing this service could bring a surge in prices of alternative providers as there would be less competition. This could mean that people choose not to deal with the pest problems which would create a greater problem.”

“Animal and pest control assists in the cleanliness of the town. I believe the borough will suffer if this service is removed.”

“A service we have used before but would not be able to afford services provide by a private company. In times of increasing poverty this problem is going to get worse.”

3.13.4 Some comments focused on the council’s reputation and responsibilities.

“Alternative providers charge an arm and a leg for their services. The council has a responsibility to ensure people can live safe and without worrying about pests in their houses. If families are struggling with everyday expenses, they cannot afford to pay for such services, especially when they have children who can be affected.”

“The council has more accountability to the public and is therefore trusted by Walsall residents and won’t overcharge unnecessarily and other private companies may not provide the same level of service or have the same accountability if things go wrong. Private companies may also overcharge residents and rip them off.”

“Most people know that they go to the council for these services. If they are no longer available, people might not want to use a private provider and the pest situations will escalate.”

Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated.

3.13.5 Alternative suggestions made were connected to costs and charges.

“If the council ensure the local housing providers, i.e. Whg etc. provide deep cleans in between changes of tenancy the other services can then become a cost to the tenant or property owner.”

“Increase the charges to be in-line with alternative providers. Keeping it in house at the council provides resident with the knowledge that they are paying a fair price and are not overcharged.”

“Sell the service correctly, ensure that people know it exists – people I have suggested it to thought it had ceased a long time ago!”

“The service for rat infestations should be free. It is going to get worse. This should be supported by an increase in council tax. It should also be supported by all households not just working families.”

3.14 **P14: Bereavement services – the sale of keepsake memorials and a range of personal memorabilia.**

3.14.1 27 people commented on this proposal. Of those that provided demographic information most respondents were aged over 35 and the majority of respondents (73%) that commented on this proposal were male.

*Overall opinion following consultation: **Support.***

3.14.2 Overall 59% (16) support this proposal whilst 33% (9) indicated they did not support the proposal. A further 7% (2) supporting but with concerns / amendments.

How might this proposal affect you?

3.14.3 Although 59% of respondents indicated support for the proposal, comments made highlighted concerns about quality and competition from existing providers.

“There are already companies that provide this service, it does not generate enough income to make it worth it.”

“This will bring in even less income than the pest control service you wish to scrap. People won’t buy these from the council as it’s normally done from the funeral providers.”

“Just no.”

“The idea seems plausible but the way it is described makes it sound really tacky and inappropriate.”

“Promote it a bit, if done in a tasteful way I believe it could be quite popular.”

Alternative suggestions for how this saving could be made or income generated.

3.14.4 No alternative suggestions were made.

3.15 Thoughts on paying more council tax

3.15.1 As well as specific questions about draft policy and operational proposals, the generic survey sought feedback on paying a bit more council tax. Consultation was conducted before the Autumn Spending Review 2020 (25 November) when the Chancellor announced that local authorities will be able to levy a three per cent adult social care precept. The consultation referenced a potential 1.99% increase in council tax, the maximum allowed before triggering a referendum.

3.15.2 Results show that of the 79 people who responded 40 (51%) feel that paying more council tax would have a big impact on them and 26 (33%) some impact. 11 (14%) felt it would have no impact and 2 people did not know.

3.15.3 Many comments from those who say it would have a big impact on them related to the lack of wage increases in line with increases in council tax.

“My pension doesn’t increase in line with all the bills I have to pay.”

“My wage hasn’t gone up in 5 years yet all my bills have.”

"You call it "a bit more" but wages are not increasing at the same way in which household bills are."

"We're a one income family and the rise in council tax is a big strain on our monthly outgoing's."

"Council Tax has constantly risen much higher than my wages. Because I have a large family and earn average wage I have to pay in full. It is already my largest bill other than food."

3.15.4 Some comments reflect the negative impact Covid-19 has had on their household finances.

"Since COVID we have lost our income through redundancy and it would put us to the bread line if not over it with another increase."

"10% reduction in wages, then have been on 80% of this reduced rate for months then council wants to up bills..."

3.15.5 Amongst respondents who feel an increase would have some impact on them some say that increasing council tax appears to be the easy way to find money and say that more should be done to find savings from within the council.

"At this time, losing more money is never going to be good. This is the easy route though, rather than charge us more why don't you take a good long look at yourselves and what you're doing and make the savings there instead?"

"It appears this is the easiest way to obtain funds, should we not be concentrating on other ways...?"

3.15.6 Some question what they are getting in return.

"I don't feel we are getting value for money. There is no improvement in council services so what are we paying for?"

"As a long-time resident of Walsall I have seen the standard of service drop as the council tax increases. We are all under pressure in a day to day activities to get the maximum value and increase efficiency. Many of us now expect little of WMBC and this low expectation appears to have been validated by many, many years of experience.....It's quite simple really, we pay you to provide services, if you are unable to achieve these services then say so and give a valid reason why."

3.15.7 Others feel a small increase would have no impact on them and are more open to an increase.

"45p a week is not a massive increase and if it results in better service provision then I am for it."

“The increase would be minimal and would be no different than the large increase in the WMP precept levied this year. If charging more can secure services, or perhaps even increase some, then it is a price worth paying. It's no good residents complaining about reduction in services without being willing to pay more - either in Council Tax or other taxes.”

“Even for band C it's only just over £2.50 per month, the price of a coffee (that we're not allowed to buy)”.

3.16 Statutory consultation on the draft budget and council tax

3.16.1 As part of the council's statutory duty to consult^[2] with representatives of local non-domestic ratepayers (NDRP), businesses and community and voluntary organisations were consulted on the current and preceding years' expenditure proposals, as well as the proposed council tax increase for 2021/22.

3.16.2 On 17 December, emails outlining the draft budget and explaining the adult social care precept were distributed electronically to 3,199 businesses and 734 community and voluntary organisations (One Walsall CVS network). As well as providing a link where further information could be found the email invited people to have their say via an online form.

3.16.3 This information was also made available on the council's budget consultation pages: www.walsall.gov.uk/budgethaveyorusay

3.16.4 By the final closing date of 7 January 2021, 4 responses had been received. 3 responses were from residents and 1 from a housing association. 2 residents fully supported a 1.99% increase and 1 did not support it. One suggested that the increase should be used to help support the vulnerable.

“We need to support those elderly/disabled more.”

3.16.5 The resident who did not support a 1.99% increase in council tax said;

“The current premium is already higher than other local authorities in the same bandings.” And that “Any increase is hard to take in the current economic climate.”

3.16.6 One resident supported a 4.99% increase (inclusive of 3% precept for adult social care), whilst 2 did not support it.

“Massive increase on top of other essential utility bills. A lot more than inflation and the increase in the average salary.”

3.16.7 Whg (housing association) supported a 1.99% increase but with concerns / amendments and made the following comment;

^[2] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/section/65>

“Our community is already financially deprived with many families struggling to feed themselves or heat their homes. We have seen record rises in the number of people using the food bank and new claimants of Universal Credit. The economic situation is still very difficult and it is expected to remain so for a long time. The government’s furlough scheme is due to end and we should expect further economic deprivation and hardship as a result. Any increase in council tax is only going to add to the pressure felt by our communities and will push some families into further hardship.”

Section A - Part 3 – Budget proposals 2021/22 – assessing equality impact

1.0 Cabinet, on 28 October 2020 (*Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22-2023/24 and in-year Position 2020/21*) agreed a summary of new revenue policy savings for consultation. All managers responsible for policy proposals, and operational proposals with the confirmed requirement for EqIA, were requested to carry out an assessment.

1.1 An EqIA is the Walsall Council chosen procedure for checking lawfulness of decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Information required in the EqIA

1.2 An EqIA must contain relevant data and sufficient analysis to enable members to understand the equality implications of a proposal and any alternative options. It must have satisfactory and appropriate information and be presented to decision makers in time for them to understand the effects of the proposal on people with protected characteristics. It must also;

- Consider whether action can be taken to mitigate any identified potential adverse impacts. Some proposals will affect everyone, but others will affect people from different equality groups;
- Consider whether action can be taken to enable the policy or decision to advance equality of opportunity for people who share a relevant protected characteristic;
- Request further research, consultation, or action is necessary.

What course of action does the EqIA suggest?

1.3 An EqIA should clearly identify the option(s) chosen and their potential impacts as well as document the reasons for this decision. There are four possible outcomes:

A - No major change required

1.4 When no adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. To make this judgement, concrete evidence must be provided that people with protected equality characteristics (all groups) will not be affected adversely.

B - Adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality

- 1.5 A plan is required which must include specific deadlines for actions to be completed in order for the decision to be implemented, e.g. alternative ways of providing the service, signposting to other providers and ongoing monitoring of the impact. If there are further concerns following adjustments, the decision must be reviewed and action taken.

C - Continue despite possible adverse impact

- 1.6 Compelling reasons will be needed and mitigating actions are required to minimise adverse impact. An action plan is required which must include specific deadlines by which mitigating actions need to be completed in order for the decision to be implemented, e.g. alternative ways of providing the service, signposting to other providers and ongoing monitoring of the impact. If there are further concerns following adjustments, the decision must be reviewed and action taken.

D - Stop and rethink the proposal

- 1.7 When an EqlA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination and needs to be reviewed immediately.
- 1.8 17 policy proposals for 2021/22 were considered for their impact on protected characteristic groups. Following consultation and feedback analysis, policy proposals had an equality screening resulting in a number not requiring further assessment as there was no perceived impact on protected characteristics. However, 6 policy proposals were required to undergo in-depth Policies, Procedures and Services (PPS) EqlA.
- 1.9 In addition, operational proposals were considered for equality impact and 48 will require an assessment prior to implementation, however, these largely do not impact on residents or members of public and are concerned with internal efficiencies. A summary of this work is briefly referred to in the sections Emerging Technology and Proud Programme.
- 1.10 The table below shows the emerging outcomes for the assessed policy proposals.

Ref	Decision	Number of EqlAs
A	No major change required – implement	0
B	Adjustments needed to mitigate adverse impact	5 - 3 relate to

	and to better promote equality – adjustments implemented	2022/23 and will be subject to further review
C	Continue despite possible adverse impact – action plan in place and monitoring undertaken	1
D	Stop and rethink the proposal	0

1.11 The EqlAs that resulted in B or C outcomes are further reviewed by the Equality and Diversity team and considered by Cabinet members, giving opportunity to comment and, where applicable, amend the budget in terms of its fairness, equality duties and objectives, as well as future shaping of the services.

In-depth Analysis of the 2021/22 Policy Proposals

1.12 The policy proposals for implementation in 2021/22 were reviewed as follows:

Ref Number	Proposal	EqlA Decision	Update/ Comments
P1	Change, Grow, Live Contract – bring service back in house.	C	EqlA identified negative impact on a group of children and young people with either a disability or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). As a mitigation it was agreed that the children will continue to receive support within their home, school or new location. In addition a proportion of parents/carers currently using the service have a disability or illness. As a mitigation the parents will be receiving Early Help one to one dedicated support. This support will be offered within their own home and where internet access is available all parenting courses will be also online.
P2	Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charge for appointeeship management / support	B 2022/23 proposal	Initial assessment undertaken suggesting adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality - adjustments will be identified and implemented and the EqlA updated in 2021 in advance of the 2022/23 budget setting cycle.
P3	Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charging for administration of deaths for appointees	B 2022/23 proposal	Initial assessment undertaken suggesting adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality - adjustments will be identified and implemented and the EqlA updated in 2021 in advance of the 2022/23 budget setting cycle.
P4	Organisational redesign to deliver Intelligent Client Model across Asset Management, Capital Projects and Facilities Management	Not Required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.

P5	Redesign of Occupational Health contract	B	EqIA identified potential negative impact for employees with disability related conditions, pregnant women and older employees seeking specialist advice on reasonable adjustments. Mitigation includes better communication and training for managers about OH referral thresholds and providing more detailed HR advice on reasonable adjustments. Consultation with Trade Unions is currently ongoing.
P6	Re-profile the highway maintenance mainstream budget for 2021/22	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.
Ref Number	Proposal	EqIA Decision	Update/ Comments
P7	Increased capitalisation of staff costs	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.
P8	Increased capitalisation of highway works	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.
P9	Charge developers for travel plans	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.
P10	Charge self-funders to arrange care via adult social care commissioners (brokerage service)	N/A	An Eqia will now be undertaken as part of the ASC Charging model review.
P11	Introduce council tax penalty charges for failing to notify a change of circumstance	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.
P12	Reduction to voluntary organisation	B 2022/23 proposal	Initial assessment undertaken suggesting adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality - adjustments will be identified and implemented and the EqIA updated in 2021 in advance of the 2022/23 budget setting cycle.
P13	Consider ceasing pest and animal control service	B	Whilst there is no clear impact on protected characteristics, the project will continue to review any possible adverse impacts as the council approaches implementation. This will include a review of low income pockets in Walsall to determine any possible link between low income and any protected characteristic. The Equality team will monitor this action.
P14	Bereavement services – the sale of keepsake memorials and a range of personal memorabilia	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.
P15	Finance - change to	Not	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.

	minimum revenue provision	required	
P16	Biodiversity	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.
P17	Active Living Centres - External marketing & promotion partnership development	Not required	No perceived impact on protected characteristics.

2.0 Summary of findings from the Cumulative EqIA (including organisational change)

2.1 As well as policy proposals there are 104 operational proposals in relation to 2021/22 and 2022/23 relating to operational changes such as staffing restructures, the use of new technology and new ways of working. Most operational proposals do not impact directly on the public as the changes are 'behind the scenes' however they may introduce new way of working or change current systems and processes.

2.2 While the operational proposals are savings that the service can decide to implement and they do not require Cabinet approval or formal consultation, the proposal owners were required to consider equality impact of these changes in 91 of the proposals. Some of the emerging trends have been summarised as follows:

Emerging Technology

2.3 Equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce leads to more innovation, more opportunities for all, better access to talent, and better business performance. Therefore, emerging technology offers opportunities to train people to harness new ways of working, promote equality, diversity and inclusion, and learn new skills for the digital age. We carried out several organisational change EqIAs linked to organisational change budget proposals 2021/22. These assessments relate to technological advances within services. Digital transformation can support equality and diversity by designing in these requirements right at the start of any new process or service design.

2.4 The tech industry is arguably one of the biggest drivers of social innovation, so championing change around the perception of women in the workplace should probably come as second nature. However, globally, the tech industry has a long way to go in closing the skills gap, as well as the perception gap around women in technical and leadership roles.

2.5 People with disabilities should also benefit from emerging technology. Inclusive approaches will ensure that such technology makes a difference in the lives of all potential users. Technology can lower barriers that people with disabilities encounter in their daily and working lives, such as speaking, travelling, reading, and writing. It can allow them to participate and enjoy the benefits of the digital society, with the same access to information as everyone else. And, perhaps most importantly, new technology can allow people with disabilities to act more independently from others if they wish.

2.6 We will also see new technology being utilised for Members, as paperless meetings will become the norm, in due course. This will be monitored for impact on anyone with a disability.

3.0 Proud Programme

3.1 The work of the Walsall Proud Programme can be seen in a number of proposals, particularly around efficiencies arising from the reviews and consolidation of administration and business support functions across the council into a single hub and with the customer access management (CAM) programme. The latter will see a link into emerging technology. Both of these areas are subject to consultation, but it is clear that we will be seeing redesign in the services we provide, internally and externally, that will impact on people with protected characteristics. Improving customer experience is at the heart of the Proud Programme and, as such, the council is developing ways of working that meet customer expectations and reflect changing demands for the future. Through CAM, the council has embarked on a programme of work in relation to how customers contact us and access the council's services. This will deliver significant improvements to customer experience, outcomes and efficiencies across the whole council, whilst increasing accessibility and convenience for customers, including through the use of digital channels.

4.0 Impact of those with disabilities and mental health conditions

4.1 OP 81 - Concessionary "Move It" leisure scheme annual fee increase - The eligibility criteria for accessing the Move It scheme is:

- Over 60 years old;
- Household income of under £18,500;
- Having a medical condition that a GP has advised would benefit from increased physical activity;
- Have been advised by a health professional that future health is at significant risk due to excess weight;
- Full time student;
- Being a parent of a junior who meets any of the above criteria.

4.2 The increase in fees, whilst not exorbitant, could have a direct impact on people with health conditions, those overweight, as well as Students and Carers. This is notwithstanding the potential to impact on people over 65 and those with disabilities. Consultation demonstrated a general acceptance that fees may need to be increased, whilst acknowledging possible adverse effect. Subsequently, the Service will be continuing to review the impact of these

change upon implementation and will also be monitoring the uptake on subscriptions.

5.0 Parents and carers of children and youth with disabilities

- 5.1 Efficiencies within the Parenting Team - Over the past 12 months Early Help has been reviewing the parenting programme, methods of delivery and impact, with the recent Covid-19 situation the adaptive ways of delivery has also encouraged the overall reflection, taking on board 'self-help tools' virtual delivery, on line courses and 121 direct intervention. Parents/carers with disabilities or who have children with disabilities or additional SEND needs will be offered a range of interventions and ways to attend the parenting/information and training awareness sessions to suit individual needs.
- 5.2 Review of Black Country Women's Aid contract - The Proud programme plans set out a number of key developments which will need to be considered to inform the future commissioning of Domestic Abuse services, as well as a number of wider partnership developments to inform the future commissioning of a Children's Services funded DV provision. Currently going through consultation, this may have an implication on sex and will be monitored to ensure any negative impact is mitigated.

6.0 Children and young people with disabilities or SEND (0-19)

- 6.1 Policy Proposal (P1) Change, Grow, Live Contract - bring service back in house. Change, Grow, Live (CGL) is commissioned to deliver a 0-19 years Early Help whole family service to those families most in need in the Central and South locality. In order to make part year savings in 2021/2022, it is proposed that the council take on the delivery of these services with staff transferring. Whilst there would be no change to service provision, the service will need to re-locate. 15 of the children and young people have either a disability or SEND. These children will continue to receive support within their home, school or new location. 17 of the parents/carers have a disability or illness, so all parents receiving Early Help one to one dedicated support are offered support within their own home and, if internet access is available, within their home. All parenting courses are available on line.
- 6.2 After careful consideration of engagement and consultation data, together with service user feedback and statistics, the outcome for this proposal was 'C' - continue despite possible adverse impact.
- 6.3 The proposal also identified adverse impact on a substantial group of parents with disabilities or illness which would make it harder for them to access the services after the relocation of the locality teams into one central hub. A number of other issues have been highlighted in relation to transport and distance from different communities.

- 6.4 The EqIA resulted in extensive action plan and monitoring schedule. The plan includes exploring alternative community venues, more extensive outreach and home visits and more research into demographic data on changing communities.
- 6.5 The affected children will continue to receive support within their home, school or new location. 17 of the parents/carers have a disability or illness. All parents receiving Early Help one to one dedicated support are offered support within their own home and if internet access is available within their home all parenting courses are available on line.
- 7.0 **Workforce impact – older age, pregnancy and disabled employees**
- 7.1 Another policy proposal that identified potential adverse impact in relation to workforce was the Occupational health contract (P5), proposing some changes to the criteria for occupational health referrals.
- 7.2 The initial EqIA showed a negative effect in relation several protected characteristics, including:
- older employees to be adversely impacted by inability to access OH service (i.e. for conditions more likely to affect older employees) or fore reasonable adjustments where these may relate to an age-related condition;
 - Impact on employees who require specialist support or advice regarding reasonable adjustments as a result of a disability-related condition;
 - Potential impact on employees who are pregnant and who may require assessment of reasonable adjustments required as part of a pregnancy-related condition.
- 7.3 The mitigation action plan includes guidance for managers/employees and HR confirming the criteria to be used for OH referral threshold. Managers should ensure that they give full consideration as to whether the case meets OH threshold criteria and to discuss with Senior HR Advisor if any questions or concerns. The communication regarding the changes will be made available in other languages on request for employees whose first language is not English.
- 7.4 Alternative formats (audio and Easy Read) for disabled employees will be made available on request. Liaison will also be as required with the appropriate Council procured services; audio formats from Walsall Society for the Blind and Easy Read from the Community, Equality and Cohesion team, via the ITTE service.
- 7.5 P2 - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charge for appointeeship management / support and P3 - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charging for administration of deaths for appointees; are 2022/23 proposals and further consultation and equality impact assessment will be carried out prior to consideration for implementation as part of the 2022/23 budget setting cycle.
- 7.6 P12 (Reduction to voluntary organisation) has submitted an initial EqIA as a year 2 (2022/23) proposal. Initial suggestions are that the proposal will provide a neutral impact, as the focus of savings will be on non-added value activities or

activities delivered through other sources. However, this will be confirmed following further consultation, particularly with One Walsall.

- 7.7 P13 (Consider ceasing pest and animal control service) - Whilst there is no clear impact on protected characteristics, the project will continue to review any possible adverse impacts as the Council approaches implementation. From the consultation, this will include a review of low income pockets in Walsall to determine any possible link between low income and any protected characteristic. The Equality team will monitor this action.

8.0 Ongoing EqlAs and implementation

- 8.1 EqlAs are live processes that continue to be updated and monitored during the budget considerations as well as during the implementation. Some will not have completed full consultation and engagement. The Equalities team has engaged with proposal holders and are working with them and their proposals to ensure that equality is being considered throughout the process. An update will be provided for the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Corporate Equality Group (CEG) quarterly.

9.0 Equalities Monitoring Process

- 9.1 Findings from the cumulative impact assessments and corrective actions are monitored quarterly by Equality Champions, Departmental management teams, CMT and CEG where updates will be provided as appropriate.
- 9.2 The Equality team will carefully consider the full impact of all EqlAs, particularly those linked to the Proud Programme and Technological changes introduced, with the support of CMT and CEG. Emphasis will be placed on managing and mitigating any adverse impact to the services, within available budgets, and in consultation with their service users with protected characteristics. Managers implementing the service changes where potential impact has been identified will be responsible for any mitigating actions outlined. Progress will continue to be tracked quarterly by CEG and reports provided to Cabinet/CMT as required.

SECTION B – Part 1

**For Approval by Cabinet and
Recommendation to Council:**

**Corporate Budget Plan,
incorporating the Capital
Strategy, and Treasury
Management and Investment
Strategy**

2021/22 to 2023/24

February 2021

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Part 1 – Revenue and Capital Budget Plan

1. Financial planning and management: matching resources to the vision and delivering outcomes

Walsall Council exists to serve the people and communities of Walsall, by representing and working with them to protect and improve the quality of life for all, particularly the most vulnerable. Walsall Council will provide strong, fair, open and honest leadership for the borough and its people and work with any organisation willing to work in the best interests of Walsall. We do this with limited resources and so must always work to ensure that public money is targeted to where it is most needed and used in the most efficient way possible. We are led by the communities we serve who help shape the services we provide and we help those communities to make a positive difference to their own lives through active civic engagement and co-operation.

The council's budget is a financial representation of the organisation's plans for the forthcoming financial year and beyond. In times of economic uncertainty, it is imperative that the council plans over the medium term. This budget looks over the spending round for 2021/22 and the following 2 years to 2023/24, and is constructed as an integral part of the council's planning processes.

It is aligned to its priorities and objectives and specifically the council's corporate plan and the council's Proud Programme of transformational change. It aims to achieve this through the delivery of efficiencies, income reviews and service reviews and redesigns to redirect existing and reducing resources to areas of high council priority in order to deliver the council's outcomes.

This budget has been prepared using the council's high level purpose and priorities as outlined in the council's Corporate Plan. A one year Corporate Plan running for 2021/22 is proposed, building on the current corporate plan, agreed areas of focus, outcomes and markers of success. This will allow for the council to undertake further research, analysis and to listen to our communities to inform the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2025. The council's financial plan and budget will therefore be reviewed and aligned to the new Corporate Plan in the next budget cycle. The 2021/22 Plan has the vision of *Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised*. The plan sets out 5 areas of focus (EPICC), 10 outcomes and 20 markers of success to assess progress in delivery of the plan. This budget plan, cash limits, savings and investments are aligned to EPICC and specifically the 10 outcomes which are as follows:

Economic Growth

- Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one
- Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development

People

- People live a good quality of life and feel they belong
- People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it

Internal Focus

- Internal services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services

- Services are efficient and deliver value for money

Children

- Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential
- Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere

Communities

- Housing meets all people’s needs, is affordable, safe and warm
- People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities

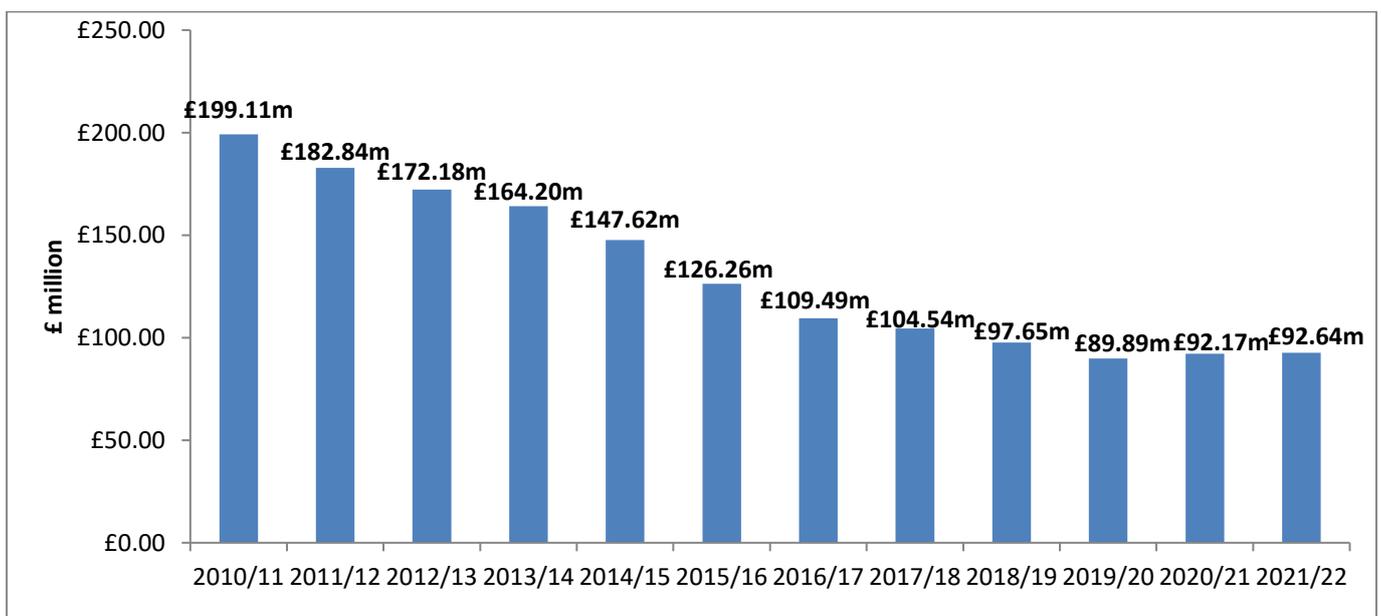
The council will be a key enabler of improvements to Walsall and its’ Districts as a place to live, learn and work; working innovatively and collaboratively with strong and resilient communities, public sector partners, schools and businesses to shape services that deliver real and sustainable improvements to people’s lives. The council will by necessity be smaller, doing fewer things, and those services that we continue to provide will be delivered in a very different way to how they are now. Our efforts will be focussed on reducing health, social and economic inequalities and creating an environment where the potential of the area, local businesses, communities and people can be maximised.

1.1 Our Challenges

1. Core Government Funding

Around half of Walsall’s funding comes from Government grant (55.87% - top up, schools DSG and some specific service grants). In 2010, Walsall received £199.11m of Government core funding support to deliver services, alongside income generated from council tax. Between 2010/11 and 2021/22, Government has cut funding by c£106.47m. Alongside cost pressures over the same period, savings totalling over £230m have had to be identified and implemented.

Government Funding 2010/11 to 2021/22



Total forecasts for core funding are shown below, which compares the baseline funding for 2021/22 (as advised in the draft local government settlement received on 18 December 2020) with comparative data for 2020/21, and forecast assumptions for future years. This includes the spreading of the predicted business rates deficit for 2020/21 over the following three years. The impact of Covid-19, including the issuing of business rates reliefs are expected to be covered by specific government grants, which will impact on the distribution of funds identified below. We are expecting the Spending Round during 2021 for 2022/23 onwards to confirm impact on core funding for the next review period.

This shows an expected increase of c£220k in core funding over the period to 2023/24.

	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	Total (Reduction) / Increase £m
Business Rate Retention (BRR)	74.61	74.61	74.61	74.61	0.00
Top Up Grant	17.99	18.09	18.45	18.83	0.84
Baseline Funding *	92.60	92.70	93.06	93.44	0.84
Adjustment against baseline	(0.43)	(1.16)	(0.05)	(1.05)	(0.62)
Total adjusted baseline	92.17	91.54	93.01	92.39	0.22
2021/22 Decrease		(0.63)			
2022/23 Increase **			1.47		
2023/24 Decrease **				(0.62)	
Total Increase					0.22

* Government set Walsall a baseline figure under the business rates retention scheme (Settlement Funding Assessment – SFA as referred to in table 4). The ‘adjustment against baseline’ takes into account our estimate of what Walsall will collect.

** We await confirmation of the Government Spending Round to confirm core funding allocations for 2022/23 onwards. Current assumptions are that ongoing increases will be in line with inflation.

The Government replaced the way it funds councils with a new scheme known as Business Rate Retention (BRR) from April 2013. A review of the scheme by government to amend the % of retained business rates from 49% to 75% was due to be finalised by 2020/21 but due to delays this has not been fully undertaken and introduced. The review is still on-going with changes expected in 2022/23.

From 2017/18, Walsall has been part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) 100% business rate retention (BRR) pilot. Government agreed that this would be at ‘no detriment’ to participating authorities; however, there remains some uncertainty as to the future final impact of national policy in respect of BRR.

The council’s second largest source of funding is council tax (20.15% of the council’s gross spend is funded from council tax), which continues to be subject to Government restrictions on the amount that can be raised from this income stream, previously through ‘capping’, and now through the referendum principles. The budget currently assumes council tax increases of 1.99% over the next three years, with an additional 3% in 2021/22 for Adult Social Care activity, in line with current referendum principles.

The provisional settlement for 2021/22 was announced on 18 December 2020. The future financial environment therefore continues to be challenging for councils for 2022/23 and beyond, with significant uncertainties in future grant, including public health, better care fund,

etc. One of the major thrusts has been that local authorities can now keep a share of the business rates generated within their area rather than pooling for national redistribution, however this benefit is limited by other parts of the funding mechanism, such as Government top slicing of funds to meet new burdens, safety net authorities, national capitalisation targets, etc.

Additionally, as part of BRR, the Government is consulting on transferring additional responsibilities to local authorities. This could lead to further pressures if these are not fully funded.

2. Impact of Covid-19

2020/21 has been a particularly challenging year, with the global pandemic impacting greatly on service delivery and financially. Emerging service pressures and Covid-19 have required action to be taken to limit the council's financial exposure. These actions continue to ensure that the budget is balanced at year-end, with a sufficient level of reserves to manage existing liabilities and emerging risks which may arise in 2021/22, including the unknown ongoing impact of Covid-19.

The council continues to respond to the unprecedented financial challenges imposed by Covid-19. Government committed to fully compensating councils for the costs of authorities' responses to Covid-19 and has to date allocated £46.35m of funding (plus £115.15m of support to Walsall residents and businesses) in 2020/21 to help support those costs in Walsall. As well as the initial costs of funding the council's response, the impact of Covid-19 includes significant loss of income following closure of services and facilities; a considerable impact on the council tax and business rates income; and delays to the delivery of approved budget savings as the council has refocused its resources on its response to Covid-19.

The council is able to manage the financial impact of Covid-19 in 2020/21 within allocated funds, *providing* Covid-19 cost pressures and income losses remain within the predicted scenario as reported to Cabinet, however should cost pressures and income losses substantially exceed this, then additional further action will need to be taken. Given the current nation-wide position, the risk of further impact increases, not only for the remainder of 2020/21, but also into 2021/22.

The 2020/21 budget was predicated on delivery of £8.77m from the Proud Programme from the adoption of new ways of working across the council, significantly enhancing our enabling technology capabilities, and improving our service efficiency and performance. Planned activities within the Walsall Proud Programme (WPP) were reviewed in order to determine those activities which can continue and those which should be delayed as the council responded to the Covid-19 situation. As part of this review, an assessment of the financial impact has also been undertaken in relation to those work streams due to deliver savings in 2020/21 alone. The current assessment is that up to £8.02m of savings will now be delivered in 2021/22. This is in the main due to: a refocus of programme resource into managing the council's Covid-19 response; an inability to generate fee and charge increases due to facility closures and a reduced client base on reopening some services; and an inability to commence consultation on a number of organisational redesigns. This is factored into the financial plan for 2021/22.

Government, in the Spending Round published on 25 November 2020, announced a further £3bn of funding to be made available in 2021/22 to include support for the first quarter of the year for income losses, and for support for tax revenue losses;

- £1.55bn to meet additional Covid-19 pressures. The provisional Settlement on 17 December 2020 confirmed Walsall's allocation as £9.23m. This is aimed at covering Covid-19 costs and loss of income not recoverable from the sales, fee and charges grant (which is only payable for the first three months of the financial year).
- £0.67bn additional grant funding to help local authorities support the continuing cost of helping households that are least able to afford council tax payments. Walsall's allocation is £4.52m.
- £0.76bn to compensate local authorities for 75 per cent of irrecoverable loss of council tax and business rates revenues in 2020/21 that would otherwise need to be funded through local authority budgets in 2021/22 and later years i.e. collection fund deficits being dispersed (the impact is dependent on submission of final council tax and business rates returns for 2020/21, with current estimates being £3.99m).
- £0.02bn for extending the existing Covid-19 sales, fees and charges reimbursement scheme for a further three months until the end of June 2021 (the financial grant figure will be subject to actual losses incurred in 2021/22 as they arise).
- At this point, further impacts of the pandemic are unclear, as such whilst the above is welcome, an assurance from Government that they will fund all pressures and income losses in relation to Covid-19 would be welcome.

3. Demand and other cost pressures

Alongside reductions in funding, the council also faces increasing cost pressures due to both increasing demand (for example, as a result of welfare reforms reducing individuals disposable incomes further, the numbers of older people requiring support to remain independent, etc), new burdens imposed by Government, but without the corresponding full funding given, and the continuing impact of Covid-19. The following summarises initiatives, demand and other pressures that have and will continue to have financial implications for the council over the coming years:

- Increases in demand:
 - From an ageing population putting strain on local authority systems both in financial and operational terms. For example, adult social care packages and placements costs have risen by £15.87m from £56.21m in 2010/11 to £72.08m in 2020/21;
 - For looked after children (LAC), and the associated impact on numbers of social workers, and costs required to support these children. There were 629 LAC in March 2016, compared to 683 by December 2020;
- Increased demand for support from our most vulnerable community members from the impact of Covid-19;
- Increased costs to support the response to Covid-19 such as personal protective equipment, maintaining social distancing requirements, etc;
- The potential impact of the UK leaving the EU on costs, including labour costs and inflationary pressures on good and services;
- Welfare reform, including universal credit;
- Increased corporate costs, including costs in relation to pay and pension inflation and reforms.

- Continued reductions in core funding, for example:
 - Impact of full business rate retention (BRR) as part of the West Midlands pilot, and changes to the Government's intention to move to 75% retention for all non-pilots;
 - Impact of the Government's next Spending Review/Round during 2021, and the impending 'Fair funding' review of council services, to include the setting of new baseline funding allocations;
 - Government reliance on individual council's ability to raise income through council tax increases, rather than providing national ongoing funding to support social care pressures, which will become unsustainable in the longer term;
 - Public Health grant – this was expected to be transferred fully into BRR from 2020/21, and become un-ringfenced, but no further guidance has been issued as to when this may occur. There is limited intelligence as to how this will impact, and we expect that this will be addressed as part of the next spending review. Once subsumed into BRR, a significant chunk of this could be lost in future funding reviews;
 - Continuation or otherwise of other specific grants e.g. improved better care fund, social care, troubled families, etc;
 - Uncertainty as to how much the Government will reimburse us for actual income losses/cost pressures in relation to Covid-19 in 2021/22 and potentially beyond.

Further information on cost pressures and how these are being managed within the medium term financial outlook are outlined in section 2 and summarised in **Annex 5**.

1.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The MTFS is a strategic framework and policy document within which the council's finances are constructed and managed. It is part of a suite of policy documents that together comprise the council's approach to effective sound governance and good practice. It is the translation of our vision, aims and objectives into a financial plan, which thereby facilitates delivery of these through the portfolio planning process.

The MTFS is a key document in bringing together the level of available resources with the demands for service delivery and investment, facilitating sound financial and service risk and opportunity management. It also links to the impact on the council's capital resources and external funding opportunities.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the various components of the financial framework. The MTFS is the overarching corporate financial policy sitting below the Corporate Plan and above the other elements of the financial cycle. It is the driver for all other financial activity. Below the MTFS sit the other financial strategies; the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

Figure 1: Financial Framework

THE FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK					
CATEGORY	OVERALL	REVENUE	CAPITAL	TREASURY MANAGEMENT	RISK MANAGEMENT
Strategies	Medium Term Financial Strategy				
		Tax Strategy	Capital Strategy	Treasury Management (TM) Strategy	Risk Management Strategy
Guidance	CIPFA and technical guidance	Budget Guidelines	Capital Guidelines	CIPFA Code of Practice for TM	Risk Management Toolkit
Plans	MTFO	Annual Budget	Capital Programme and Asset Management Plan	Treasury Policy Statements	Risk Management Action Plans
Governance	Constitution	Budget Management and Control Manual and the Annual Governance Statement		Prudential Indicators & Annual Report	Risk Register reporting and regular review
	Contract and Finance Rules				Audit Committee Reports and Annual Report
	Internal and External Audit Plans and our response to inspection and audit				

The council adopts a policy-led, medium term approach to financial planning, seeking to ensure our budgets are clearly linked to our vision, aims and objectives. We are committed to maintaining financial stability and delivering value for money through effective and efficient services.

The main objective for the council is to maintain good long-term financial health. Achieving this allows us to deliver good quality, value for money services, shaped by our customer demand. Services that are modern, efficient, effective, and fit for purpose. This requires a framework that delivers both continuous, adaptive improvement and core strength.

How we will achieve this is through:

- Financial Governance and Leadership
- Financial Planning
- Finance for Decision making
- Financial Forecasting and Monitoring
- Financial Reporting

Financial governance and leadership

1. Our senior management will be financially literate and able to understand fully the financial environment in which the council operates.

Financial planning

1. Our financial planning will be inextricably linked to the council’s strategic and corporate planning process. Our financial plans will reflect the councils key strategic priorities.
2. An annual medium term financial outlook, covering a four year time horizon, will integrate current expenditure plans and investment programmes, with cash-flow and

balance sheet projections, developed in the context of a longer-term strategy, which supports the council's strategic plan.

Finance for decision making

1. In developing our strategic and corporate plan we will consider the value for money achieved by allocating resources to different activities.
2. We will understand the financial implications of current and potential alternative policies, programmes, and activities.
3. We will analyse our cost profiles and cost drivers and how they will behave under different circumstances.
4. We will understand the whole-life costs associated with capital investment.
5. We will consider all tax related implications, as outlined in the council's tax strategy, in all decisions made.

Financial monitoring and forecasting

1. Management will assure itself that financial performance to date and forecast financial outturns are in line with the plan, including cash-flow and balance sheet projections.
2. Variances will be identified as soon as possible, so that management can either take corrective action to manage unfavourable variances or apply any favourable variances to corporate priorities.
3. The underlying costs of the organisation's key activities and how these are profiled over time will be monitored and reviewed.
4. Financial information will be integrated with non-financial performance and activity information. Together, such information forms the basis for financial forecasts and enables value for money to be monitored.
5. The financial information used both for setting the budget and internal accountability, monitoring and forecasting throughout the year is derived from the same systems that are used to generate the results reported externally in the organisation's statutory financial statements.

Financial reporting

1. To run the organisation effectively, management will have up-to-date financial and non-financial performance information on a timely basis.
2. Reports will be presented in a form that is tailored to user needs, are easy to understand and highlight the key financial issues that they need to be aware of.
3. For its part, management needs to provide timely, accurate and balanced information about its stewardship and use of resources and its non-financial performance to the organisation's different stakeholders. Such information will be presented in a form tailored to meet their needs.

2. Summary of the 2021/22 Revenue Budget

The budget has been prepared for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 to extend beyond the current Parliament. The 2020/21 position is reported regularly to Members. The current position is a forecast underspend of c£260k, excluding the impact of Covid-19. Covid-19 cost pressures / income losses are expected to be funded from Covid-19 grants made available by the Government, subject to the unknown impact for the remainder of 2020/21, the risks of which are being monitored on a regular basis.

The focus in this plan is 2021/22, as this is the year for which Full Council are required to set the forthcoming financial envelope (the 'statutory determinations' or gross expenditure and gross income), the council tax requirement and the band D council tax level. Section 4 provides further detail on 2022/23 and beyond.

2.1 2021/22 Revenue Budget Headlines

The revenue budget is constructed in accordance with the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Corporate Plan, and all relevant corporate financial protocols and presents a draft balanced budget, with:

- A focus on a policy-led, medium term, risk assessed budget setting approach using priorities established by Cabinet;
- A total net council tax requirement of **£132.55m**;
- A 4.99% council tax increase, equivalent to a Band D Council Tax of **£1,871.87** (excluding precepts) and **£2,112.46** (including precepts) subject to confirmation of final precepts;
- Investment of **£3.28m** for Adult Social Care cost pressures primarily to cover demographic changes;
- Investment of **£5.95m** for Children's Services cost pressures primarily to cover Looked after Children, management of caseloads, demographic changes and contractual inflation;
- Provision for other known budget pressures, including cost pressures, reduced levels of income or grant, and pay changes of **£19.46m**;
- Bringing total investment to **£28.69m**;
- Savings of **£28.90m**;
- Appropriate use of prudential borrowing to support capital investment where affordable and sustainable with revenue costs being reflected in this report;
- Opening general reserves of **c£16.64m** as assessed and recommended by the S151 Officer.

The financial implications arising from the financing of the capital programme for 2021/22 are contained within this revenue budget.

2.2 Net Council Tax Requirement

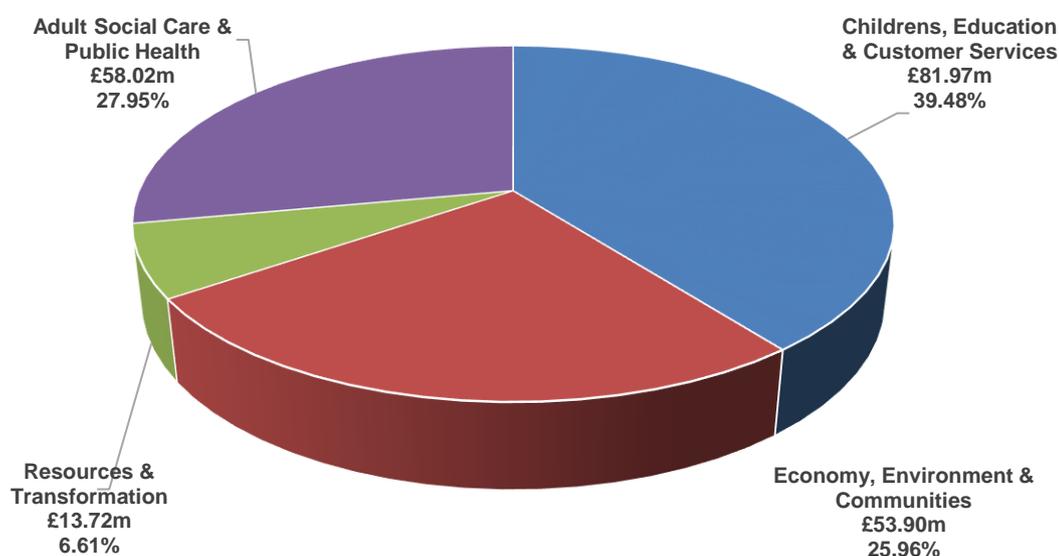
The gross revenue expenditure budget for 2021/22 will be **£657.73m**, and gross income will be **£525.18m**, resulting in a net council tax requirement of **£132.55m**.

It has been possible to commit to **£28.69m** of investment to address key priorities in 2021/22, funding of essential cost pressures, provision to fund inflationary pressures (i.e. pay and contractual) and corporate cost pressures to fund for example, pension costs. Income targets have also been realigned where ongoing shortfalls have arisen.

The change in council tax requirement from 2020/21 to 2023/24 is shown in **Table 1**.

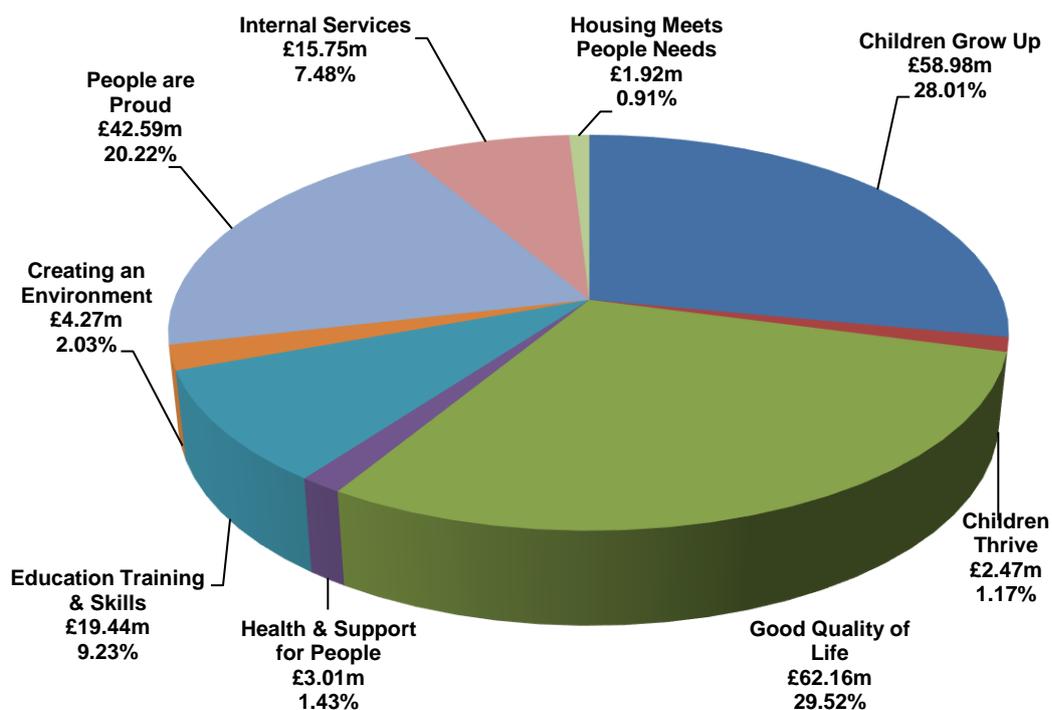
Table 1: Council Tax requirement (Movements)			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m	£m
Council tax Requirement	127.57	132.55	136.14
Cost Pressures:			
Growth / Investment (Annex 5)	28.69	18.55	12.34
Savings plans identified (Annex 7)	(28.90)	(19.10)	(4.47)
Proud savings for which delivery plans are being identified		(2.91)	(10.05)
Other movements / funding changes:			
Other changes including grants / income	4.26	6.98	0.16
Core Funding changes	(1.07)	(1.47)	4.12
Collection fund (surplus) / deficit	(0.47)	1.93	
Transfer to / (from) reserves	2.47	(0.39)	1.58
Revised Council Tax Requirement	132.55	136.14	139.82
Council Tax Increase	4.99%	1.99%	1.99%

Figure 2a – Net council tax requirement by directorate



Note: Figure 2a excludes centrally held and capital financing budgets

Figure 2b – Net council tax requirement by outcomes



Note: Figure 2b excludes centrally held and capital financing budgets

This results in a band D council tax for the Walsall Council element only of £1,871.87, representing an increase of 4.99% from 2020/21 levels. Most properties in Walsall (67.54%) are in bands A or B (**Annex 3**).

2.3 Levies and Precepts

Table 2 shows the levy to be made on Walsall Council by the West Midlands Combined Authority for transport, and the levy by the Environment Agency.

Levy	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	Increase / (Decrease) £	Increase / (Decrease) %
West Midlands Combined Authority Levy (Transport)	11,146,812	11,183,812	37,000	0.33
Environment Agency	82,739	82,739	0	0.00

Walsall's precepting authorities are the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authorities, as shown in **Table 3** below.

Precepting Authority	2021/22 Amount £	Band D 2021/22 £	Band D 2020/21 £	Band D Increase %
WM Police and Crime Commissioner	12,572,211	177.55	162.55	9.23
WM Fire and Rescue	4,463,825	63.04	61.81	1.99

Table 4 shows the Council Tax calculation at Band D.

Table 4: Net Council Tax Requirement and Council Tax Levels 2021/22		
Element of budget	2021/22 budget £	Council Tax Band D £
WMBC element - required from council tax	132,545,781	1,871.87
Police & Crime Commissioner precept	12,572,211	177.55
Fire & Rescue precept	4,463,825	63.04
Total from council tax	149,581,817	2,112.46

NB: based on an approved council tax base of 70,809.41 band D equivalents.

2.4 Council Tax – Referendum principles

In recent years Central Government has capped the level of council tax rises. Capping principles are determined on a year by year basis. Since 2012/13, each authority is required to determine whether their council tax increase requires a referendum, which would require the seeking of support from the local electorate. Schedule 5 of the Localism Act introduced a new chapter into the Local Government Finance Act 1992, making provision for council tax referendums to be held if an authority increases its council tax by an amount exceeding a set of principles determined by the Secretary of State and agreed by the House of Commons.

The local government finance settlement announced on 15 December 2016 outlined plans for local authorities to relax the referendum rules on the social care precept element of the council tax (2% introduced in 2016/17) to allow local authorities to increase the precept element to 3% in 2017/18 (increase of 1%), as long as the increase over the three year period to 2019/20 was no more than 6%. Walsall increased its Social Care precept by 3% in 2017/18, 2% in 2018/19, and 1% in 2019/20.

The provisional local government settlement for 2020/21, as announced on 20 December 2019, confirmed the council tax referendum limit of up to 4%, inclusive of 2% continuation of the social care precept. Walsall increased its council tax by 3.99% in 2020/21.

The provisional local government settlement for 2021/22, as announced on 17 December 2020, confirmed a council tax referendum limit of up to 5% (4.99% maximum), inclusive of 3% for a social care precept. This would mean if a local authority seeks to raise its relevant basic amount of council tax by 5% or more for 2021/22, local people would have the right to vote to keep council tax bills down through a binding referendum veto.

Walsall proposes to increase council tax by 4.99% (1.99% general increase and 3% precept for Adult Social Care), within the referendum limits set by Government.

The Government's advertised 4.5% increase in spending power for local government in 2021/22 is heavily reliant on councils making the maximum council tax increase as well as the number of properties eligible to pay council tax continuing to grow at pre-pandemic levels. Overall, £1.9bn of the £2.2bn spending power increase first announced at the spending review comes from council tax. Given the scale of the challenge in 2021/22, with an initial funding gap of £33.6m, Walsall has opted to increase the council tax by the maximum permitted, as this secures ongoing funding to support essential service delivery.

This equates to a council tax increase of £1.71 per week or 24p a day for a band D property or a £1.14 increase per week (16p per day) for a band A. 67.5% of residents are in band A and B increasing to 83.5% including band C. It is recognised that the above may have an impact on residents' income. Where residents are on low incomes, they may be entitled to council tax reduction, may be offered welfare benefits and/or money management advice. The council also has a discretionary scheme in place to help those who need support. The council will continue to monitor impact.

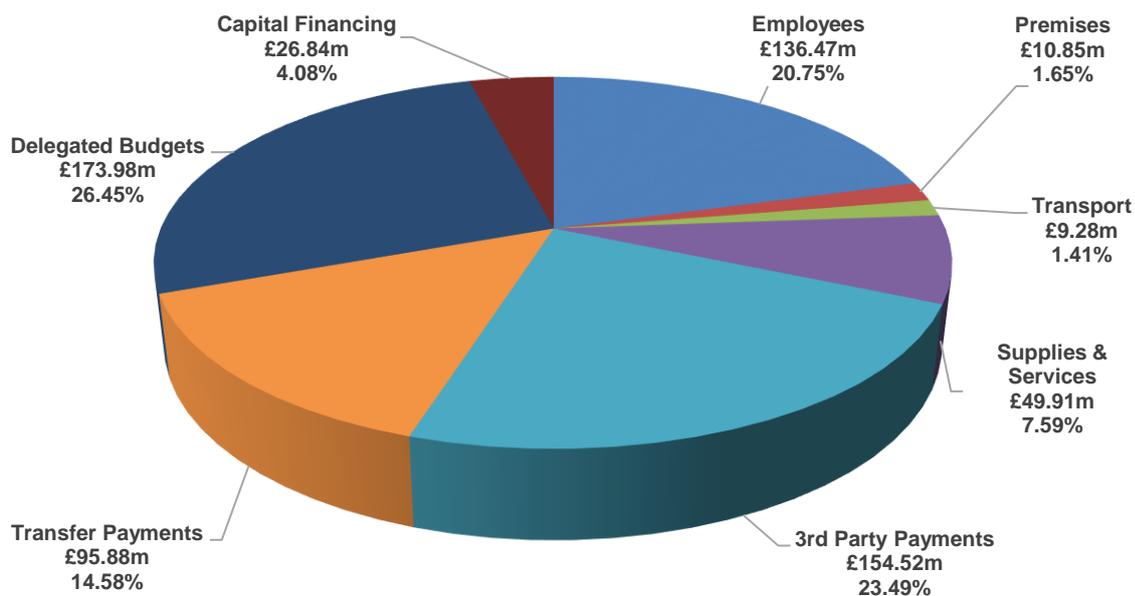
2.5 Expenditure and Income

Expenditure analysis

The council analyses its expenditure by category, as referred to in **Table 5**, and illustrated in **figure 3**.

Table 5: Expenditure by Category of Spend	
Type of Expenditure	£ million
Employees	136.47
Premises and Transport	20.13
Supplies and Services	49.91
Third Party Payments	154.52
Delegated Budgets	173.98
Leasing and Capital Financing	26.84
Transfer Payments	95.88
Total Expenditure (excluding Internal Recharges)	657.73

Figure 3 – Spend by Type of Expenditure

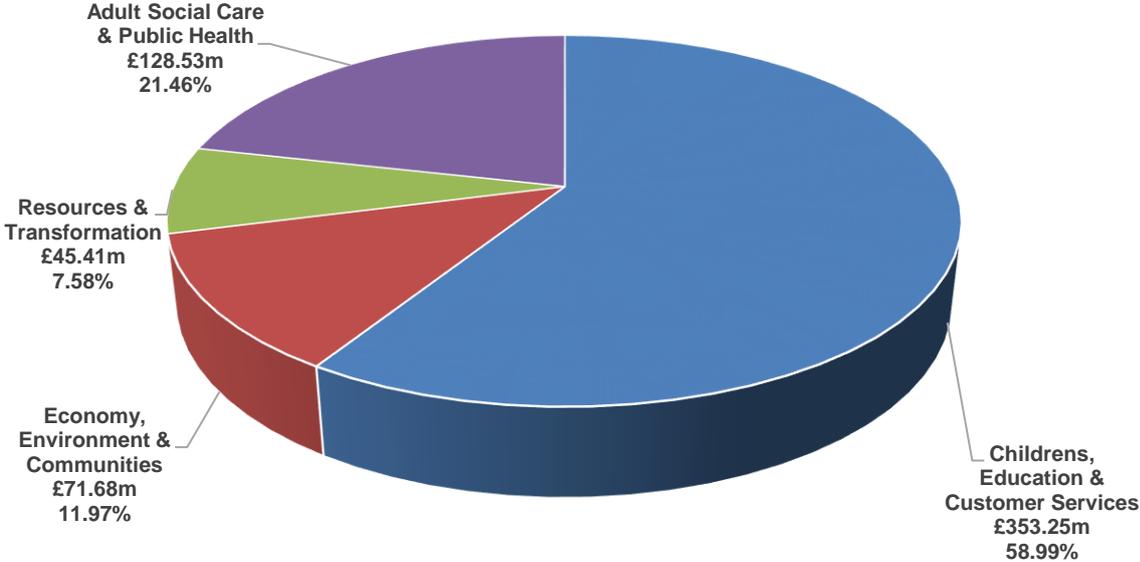


Notes

- *Transfer payments include expenditure such as housing benefits, rent allowances and social services direct payments – for example payments for which no goods or services are received in return by the local authority.*
- *Delegated budgets include budgets for schools, community associations and allotments.*
- *Third Party Payments include payments to external contractors.*

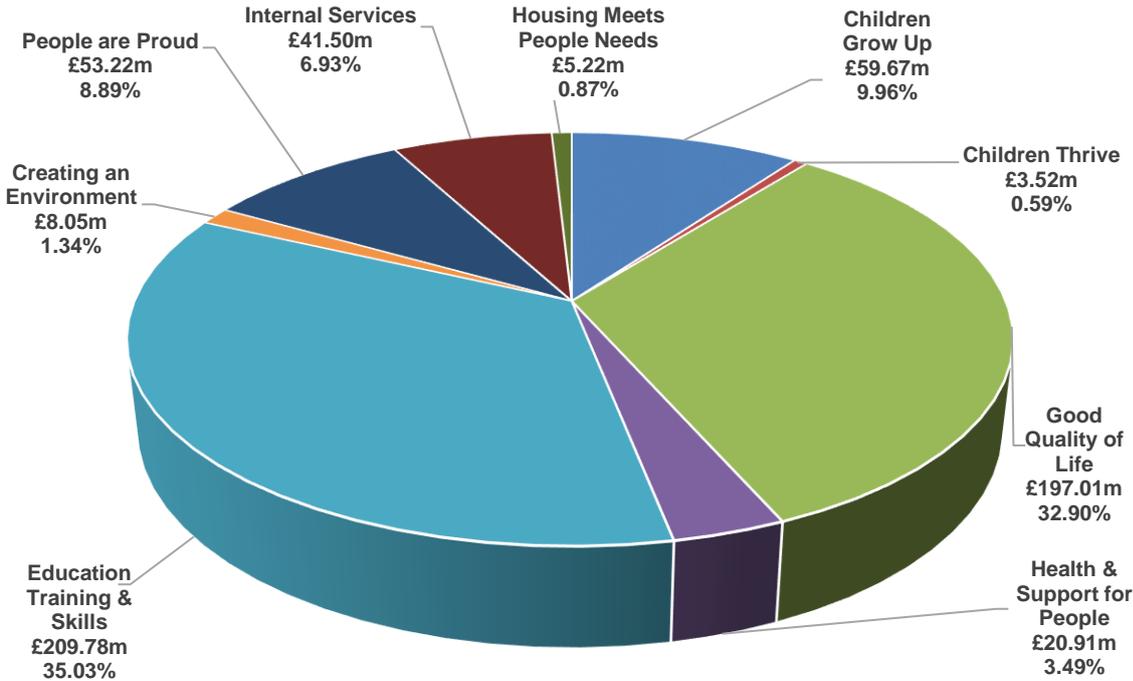
The total council expenditure is analysed by directorate in **figure 4a** and outcome in **figure 4b**. For Children’s Services, 20.45% of the £353.25m relates to Housing Benefit payments and 49.25% relates to Schools.

Figure 4a – Gross expenditure by directorate



Note: Figure 4a excludes centrally held and capital financing gross expenditure budgets

Figure 4b – Gross expenditure by outcome



Note: Figure 4b excludes centrally held and capital financing gross expenditure budgets

Income analysis

The council receives income from a number of sources including council tax, Central Government grant and specific grants to help pay for certain services including schools and social care. The council also charges for some services, such as parking, use of leisure facilities, etc. In 2021/22 the council tax will account for 20.15% of total income. **Figure 5** shows all the main sources of income, which is analysed by directorate at **Figure 5a** and by outcome at **Figure 5b**.

Figure 5 – Sources of income

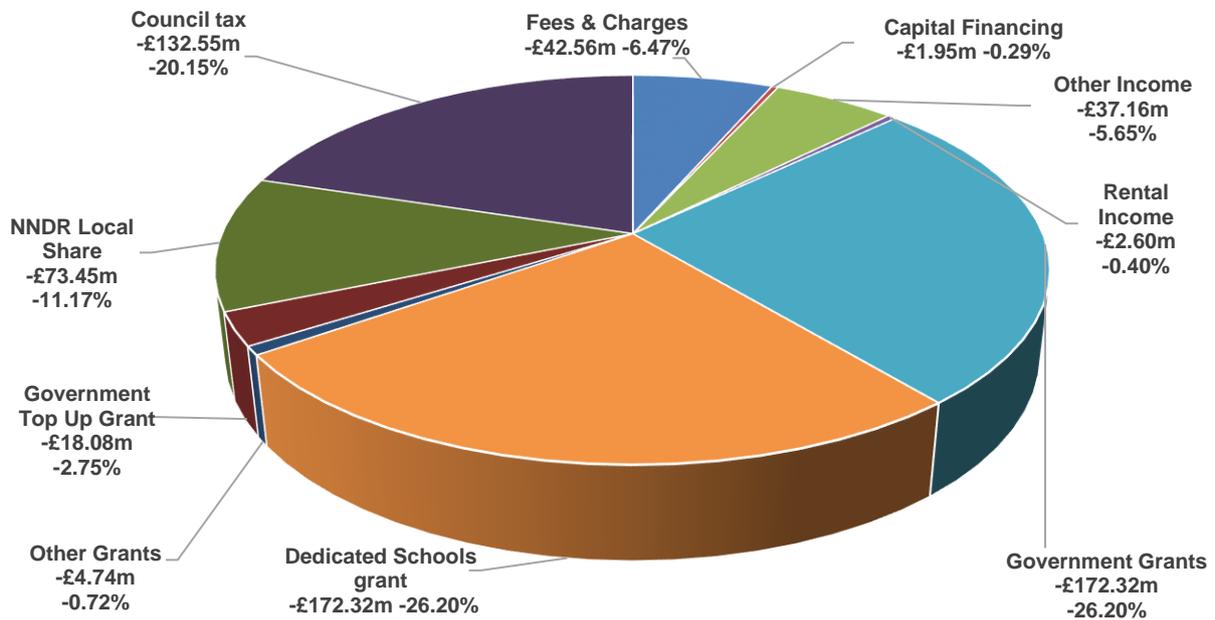
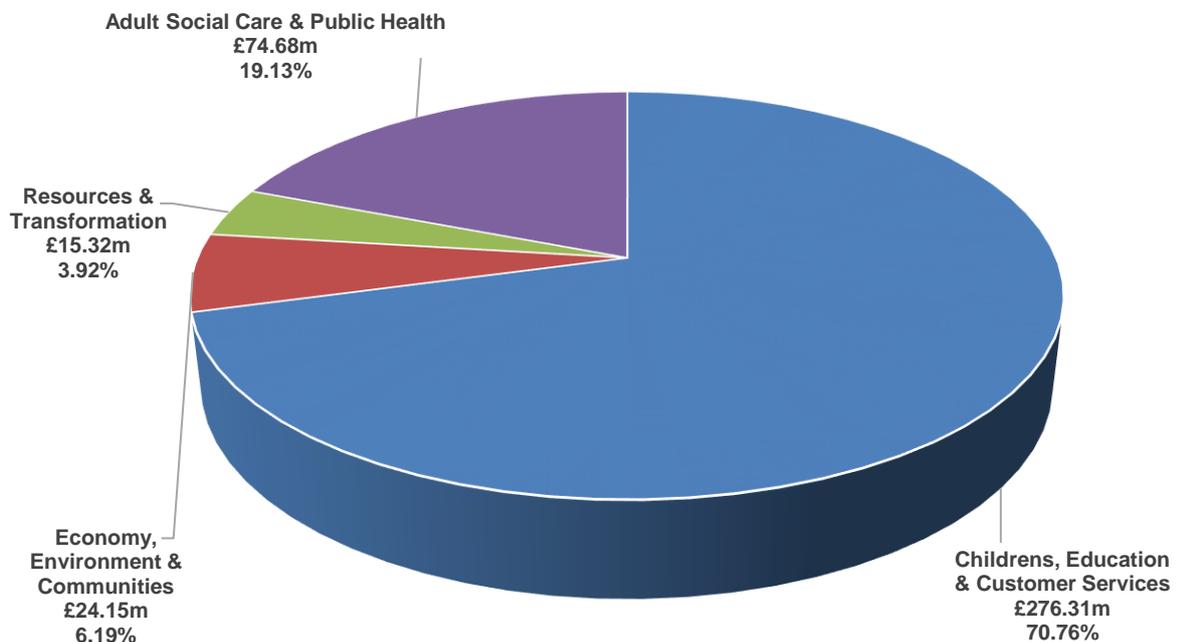
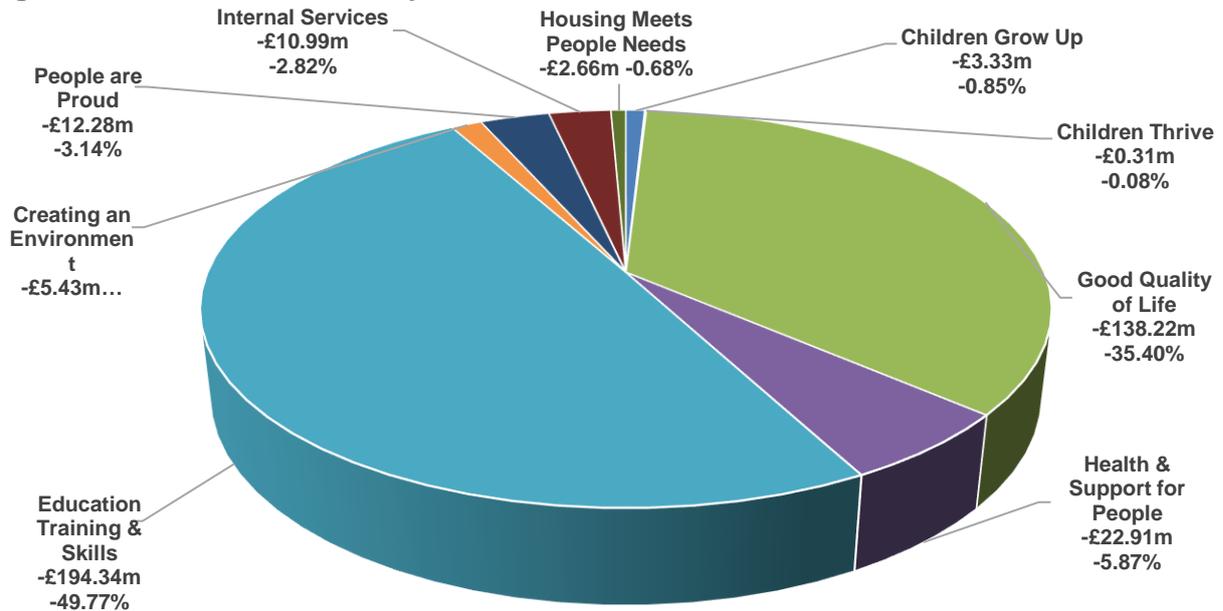


Figure 5a – Gross income by directorate



Note: Figure 5a excludes centrally held and capital financing gross income budgets

Figure 5b – Gross income by outcome



Note: Figure 5b excludes centrally held and capital financing gross income budgets

2.6 Government central funding and business rate retention

The Government provides funding to councils through a grant redistribution system (previously referred to as formula grant) which includes the redistribution of business rates collected and revenue support grant.

The Government replaced the way it funds councils with a new scheme known as Business Rate Retention (BRR) from April 2013. A review of the scheme by government to amend the % of retained business rates from 49% to 75% was due to be finalised by 2020/21 but due to delays this has not been fully undertaken and introduced. The review is still on-going with changes expected in 2022/23.

Areas that have agreed a Devolution Deal had the opportunity to be involved in a 100% business rates retention pilot, which began from 1 April 2017. This provides the opportunity to shape national thinking about the eventual scheme, and to take forward further devolution. Walsall, along with the other six West Midlands Authorities, has been piloting the scheme from 1 April 2017. This means that Walsall retains 99% of business rates collected with the other 1% being paid over to the Fire Authority.

There is a change in funding under the 100% business rates scheme in that revenue support grant (RSG) is no longer paid to the authority. Funding will continue to be paid to the authority through a top up grant and retained business rates into 2021/22.

The Spending Round (SR20), announced on 25 November 2020, confirmed that the Government will not proceed with the implementation of the Review of Relative Needs and Resources (formerly the Fair Funding Review) and 75% Business Rates Retention in 2021/22. The reset of accumulated business rates growth will also not take place in 2021/22. These decisions were reported as allowing both the Government and councils to focus on meeting the immediate public health challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. There therefore remains considerable uncertainty in respect of the amount of income we will receive in Government funding from 2022/23 onwards.

The 2021/22 provisional finance settlement announced on 17 December 2020 represents the ninth year in which the BRR scheme is the principal form of local government funding, summarised as follows:-

- Business rates local share - £74.61m in 2021/22 – this is an estimate of what Walsall will bill in business rates. This local share is guaranteed and is based on the council retaining 99% of what is expected to be billed in 2021/22, as part of the pilot scheme, including the local share amount of approximately £28m of the Extended Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Reliefs provided by the Government in response to Covid-19. Government set Walsall a baseline figure under the business rates retention scheme of £92.70m for 2021/22 which is made up of the business rates local share and top up grant. They also set a safety net threshold of £89.92m for 2021/22. If the safety net threshold is triggered, then any income loss below the threshold is funded by government. Any shortfall between £92.70m and £89.92m has to be borne by the council (99%), and fire authority (1%). Walsall is currently estimating the baseline to be £91.54m, slightly below the government baseline and so no safety net would be payable. Volatility in business rates will therefore need careful monitoring throughout the year.
- Top up grant – **£18.08m** in 2021/22. Some authorities collect more business rates than their calculated baseline funding level, and are therefore required to pay a tariff to Government in excess of their allocated share. Councils like Walsall have a greater baseline funding level than the business rates they can collect and will be paid a top up grant from Government to meet the shortfall.

The West Midlands Combined Authority has been piloting 100% business rates retention since 2017/18. This will be without detriment to the resources that would have been available to individual authorities under the current local government finance regime (with any “detriment” payments funded from outside the Settlement).

Government measure local authority expenditure by “*core spending power*”. Spending power is based on each local authority’s power to influence and not control local spending levels. This will include income raised through council, business rates retention, specific grants and NHS funding for social care (the latter being spend which the council may have an influence over but does not control).

Walsall’s direct funding, as determined by government, represents an increase of 0.1% from 2020/21 to 2021/22. This is the second real increase in government core funding since 2010/11. Direct funding under the pilot scheme, compared to funding received in previous years, is set out in **Table 6**.

Table 6 : Government Settlement funding Assessment			
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	£m	£m	£m
Revenue Support Grant	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business Rates Baseline (99% retained from 2017/18 including effect of revaluation)	73.4	74.6	74.6
Top Up Grant	17.7	18.0	18.1
Total Government Settlement	91.1	92.6	92.7
Adjusted Settlement Funding Assessment	97.6	91.1	92.6
Grant increase/-decrease (adjusted) - £m	(6.5)	1.5	0.1
Grant increase/-decrease (adjusted) - %	-6.6%	1.6%	0.1%

2.7 Collection Fund

The collection fund is accounted for separately to the revenue general fund and accounts for income collected from council tax and business rates. In January of each financial year, an in-depth appraisal is undertaken to assess the estimated level of collection (as aggregated to include that relating to the current and previous years), the likely balance of the fund and to advise the precepting authorities (Fire and Police) of their share of the council tax surplus/deficit to enable them to take this into account in their own budget calculations.

The assessment undertaken in January 2021, which incorporated the impact of Covid-19 on lost council tax and business rate, calculated the following:

- Council Tax - an estimated in year deficit of £1.82m for Walsall (total estimated deficit for 2020/21 of £2.05m including preceptors) which in accordance with regulations put in place due to Covid-19 can be spread over the next three years. This is partly offset by a brought forward surplus of £1.93m from 2019/20 (total actual surplus of £2.17m including preceptors) meaning there is a net surplus of £108k for Walsall (total actual net surplus for 2020/21 of £122k, less the required contribution of £14k to the West Midlands Police and Fire & Rescue);
- Business Rates – an estimated in year deficit of £3.91m for Walsall (total estimated deficit for 2020/21 of £3.95m), which, in accordance with regulations put in place due to Covid-19 can be spread over the next three years. In addition there is a brought forward deficit of £239k for Walsall (total actual deficit of £242k), meaning there is a net deficit of £4.15m (total actual net deficit for 2020/21 of £4.19m, less the required contribution towards the deficit of £42k from the West Midlands Fire & Rescue).

Changes to council tax base

Council tax base is to be set at 70,809.41 Band D equivalents (71,549.80 in 2020/21). Although the overall number of households in the borough has not reduced, the decline in the council tax base (which measures the number of Band D equivalent properties) is mainly due to a large increase in residents applying to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) throughout 2020/21 as a result of Covid-19.

Changes to collection rates

In year collection for council tax is expected to reduce to 92.4% in 2020/21, down from 94.0% in 2019/20, mainly as a result of Covid-19 and the short term impact on people's ability to pay. However over the longer period 97.8% of debt is still expected to be collected, in line with budgeted expectations.

Collection rates for business rates are expected to be significantly down on budgeted expectations as a result of the ongoing pressures businesses are seeing due to Covid-19. Uncollected debt for the 2020/21 billing year as at 31 March 2021 is expected to be approximately £4m compared to £2m in 2019/20. Collection rates performance for business rates in 2020/21 are not comparable to prior years due to a number of rates reliefs being made available by Government to support businesses during the pandemic, with approximately £27m of the £74m billed for business rates during 2020/21 being covered by Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants.

Smoothing of collection fund losses

The Local Authorities (Collection Fund: Surplus and Deficit) (Coronavirus) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 1 December 2020 allowing the repayment of collection fund deficits arising in 2020/21 to be spread over the next three years rather than the usual period of one year, and these Regulations apply separately to each of the council tax and non-domestic rates collection fund balances.

2.8 Other specific grants / pooled funding

The council receives a large number of external grants which make up 55.87% of the councils total funding. The main grants are summarised below:

- Dedicated Schools Grant – this is passported directly to schools under a specified formulae – the council is expecting to receive c£172.32m in 2021/22 with future allocations dependent on final pupil numbers.
- Public Health Grant - Local Authorities in England took responsibility for the commissioning of some Public Health services from the National Health Service (NHS) on April 1st 2013. The grant is £18.04m, and is expected to continue at this level for future years, although the final allocation is still subject to confirmation.
- Additional Social Care grant - on 29 October 2018 an additional £410m was announced to council's for adults and children's social care, and the SR19 confirmed the continuation of funding into 2020/21, along with a further £1bn to be distributed using the existing Adult Social Care Relative needs Formula for 2020/21. The local allocation for Walsall is £8.8m in 2020/21. SR20 on 25 November 2020 confirmed that this will continue into 2021/22, along with an extra £1bn to fund adult and children's social care. This new £1bn is primarily made up of local council tax revenues (via the ability to raise a precept of 3% on council tax) and £300 million of new grant funding for adult and children's social care – the provisional settlement on 17 December 2020 confirmed Walsall's allocation as £2.4m.
- Better Care Fund (BCF) – The authority is the lead for the BCF pooled budget which involves partnership working between adult social care and Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group (WCCG), with both parties making a contribution into the fund. BCF (formerly the Integration Transformation Fund) was announced by the Government in the June 2013 spending round, at a national value of £5.3bn, to ensure a transformation in integrated health and social care. It creates a local single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together around people, placing their well-being as the focus of health and care services. The 2015/16 financial year was the first year of the BCF, with the Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) introduced in 2017/18. For 2021/22, £9.38m will be received for BCF and £13.76m for iBCF.
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) - £1.15m is held centrally to support the budget, a reduction of £883k for 2021/22, with predicted ongoing reductions included in the MTFO for future years. NHB is currently under review, with future allocations to be confirmed.
- Troubled Families Grant has been confirmed as being extended into 2021/22, with an indicative allocation of £1.08m.
- Housing Benefit grant of £72m, expected to reduce annually as we continue to move to Universal Credit.
- Grants of £3bn to support councils in 2021/22 for the continued impact of Covid-19, as announced in SR20 on 25 November 2020, as follows:

- £1.55bn to meet additional Covid-19 pressures. The provisional Settlement on 17 December 2020 confirmed Walsall's allocation as £9.23m. This aims to cover Covid-19 costs and loss of income not recoverable from the sales, fee and charges grant (which is only payable for the first three months of the financial year).
- £0.67bn additional grant funding to help local authorities support the continuing cost of helping households that are least able to afford council tax payments. Walsall's allocation is £4.52m.
- £0.76bn to compensate local authorities for 75 per cent of irrecoverable loss of council tax and business rates revenues in 2020/21 that would otherwise need to be funded through local authority budgets in 2021/22 and later years i.e. collection fund deficits being dispersed (the impact is dependent on submission of final council tax and business rates returns for 2020/21, with current estimates being £3.99m).
- £0.02bn for extending the existing Covid-19 sales, fees and charges reimbursement scheme for a further three months until the end of June 2021 (the financial grant figure will be subject to actual losses incurred in 2021/22 as they arise).
- At this point, further impacts of the pandemic are unclear, as such whilst the above is welcome, an assurance from Government that they will pay for all pressures and income losses in relation to Covid-19 would be welcome.
- A new Lower Tier Services Grant of £111m has been made available for 2021/22 as announced at provisional settlement on 17 December 2020 – Walsall allocation confirmed as £439k;
- Other grants are expected to continue at current levels – these include specific grants for schools (Pupil Premium, 6th Form, Teachers' pay/pensions), Street Lighting, and Leisure related funding.

2.9 Growth and Investment

The following key financial planning assumptions are included and are based on best professional estimates. The draft budget 2021/22 – 2023/24 includes provision for investment and cost pressures of c£47.38m, as shown in **Annex 5**, which are proposed to address service demand pressures linked to council priorities in the council's Corporate Plan, and the prioritisation of key services.

Primarily, investment covers:

1. *Provision for pay and pensions (corporate cost pressures held centrally, which will be allocated to services in year) and inflation:*
 - Provision for pay and increments;
 - Impact of pension auto-enrolment and tri-annual employer pensions contributions based on the latest valuation information. Work is currently being undertaken by the pension fund to provide details for the next 3 years, therefore best estimate have been used;
 - Provision for contractual increases;
 - No provision for general inflation – services are required to manage this within existing budgets.

2. *Demand and demographic changes within services (demand led cost pressures):*
 - Increases in placements/costs for looked after children;
 - Increased care packages/costs within adult social care arising from an increased ageing population;
 - Management and inclusion of ongoing service pressures and income shortfalls from the current year.

3. *Changes in Government funding:*
 - Core funding has reduced by c£106.47m between 2010/11 and 2021/22. There remains considerable uncertainty in respect of the amount of income we will receive in Government funding from 2022/23 onwards. The local government provisional settlement announced on 17 December 2020 outlined government spending plans for 2021/22 – an increase of £0.1m in our core funding;
 - Core funding via top up grant has halved, from c£32m in 2017/18 to £18m in 2021/22;
 - Comparison of actual business rates income compared with what the Government anticipated the council to collect, along with provision for appeals against rate valuations, means that actual income is roughly in line with Government estimates;
 - Changes in the value of business rates retained by local authorities (currently 100% for Walsall as part of the pilot for 2021/22, although under review by Government in the longer term with an assumption of a minimum 75% retention), the risk to the council increases, as the council will be required to fund more of the cost of appeals, which have proved a significant cost to councils' to date;
 - Impact of Covid-19 on the collection fund.

2.10 Savings requirement

In order to set a balanced budget, and after a review of available resources from central Government grant and local resources, and taking into account additional known and likely pressures, total revenue reductions of just over £8.76m were approved by Council in February 2020 for 2020/21. Due to the impact of Covid-19, there has been a delay in the full implementation of approved savings into 2021/22 as set out in previous sections.

For 2021/22 and future years, the council's medium term financial outlook has been updated to reflect the predicted changes to direct government funding, the collection fund and other known cost pressures set out in the previous sections of this report, resulting in a revised requirement to make changes to service delivery to meet a three year funding shortfall of c£65.43m as follows:

2021/22 - £28.90m
2022/23 - £22.01m
2023/24 - £14.52m

2.11 Walsall Proud Programme

Our approach to setting the budget from 2020/21 was different to previous years. The new approach set the overall financial savings expected to be delivered via Proud Programme work stream activity.

The Walsall Proud Programme (WPP) is an extensive and ambitious programme of change designed to modernise the way the council works and deliver improved services to customers. The launch of the programme in April 2019 marked the beginning of a period of intensive activity designed to deliver sustainable improvements to both the council's existing ways of working and as a consequence, its long term budget position. As such, these improvements are set to last well beyond the term of the programme putting the council in a sustainable position for the future, able to attract great employees, balance competing demands for scarce resource, provide easy access to council services and play a vital role in the future of our communities.

The Proud Promise is a key feature of the Programme and guides the decisions of the Walsall Proud Programme Board. The Proud promise is:

- Improve outcomes and customer experience
- Improve employee satisfaction and engagement
- Improve service efficiency and performance

To deliver this ambitious programme of change, the council contracted with PricewaterhouseCooper as a Strategic Transformation Partner. The aim of this arrangement is to bring much needed critical capability and capacity to the council to work in partnership with the council to design and drive change.

The WPP will deliver the enabling capabilities for Directors' to deliver the required savings for 2021/22 and beyond – the extent of savings being dependent on the pace of change and the level of ambition. The Proud Programme covers all council services and consists of nine key work streams. The high level financial opportunity (£) attached to each of the work streams is as follows, totalling £70.26m:

1. Outcomes, Service Levels and Delivery Models (work stream currently under review) - £5.69m;
2. Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management (Third Party Spend) - £19.41m;
3. Communication, Change and Culture & Behaviours – £ is nil as this is an enabler for other services and work streams;
4. Customer Access and Management - £17.44m;
5. Designing the Ways of Working – Hubs and Enabling Support Services - £9.94m;
6. Enabling Technology - £ is nil as this is an enabler for other services and work streams;
7. Income Generation & Cost Recovery - £15.45m;
8. Connected Working (Perform+) - £2.33m;
9. Corporate Landlord - £ is nil as this is an enabler for other services and work streams.

Further details of the work streams and activity are shown in **Annex 6**. Cabinet approved a total investment cost to benefit ratio of 1:2.5 for Proud (for every one-off £1 invested, this will deliver £2.50 of recurring additional benefit which can be used to support the council's financial position or be reinvested into services).

The programme is developed around the following ten key outcomes, aligned to council Corporate Plan priorities:

Economic Growth;

- Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one
- Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development

People;

- People live a good quality of life and feel they belong
- People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it

Internal Focus;

- Internal services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services
- Services are efficient and deliver value for money

Children;

- Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential
- Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere

Communities;

- Housing meets all people's needs, is affordable, safe and warm
- People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities

Proud savings of £28.90m are required in 2021/22 to balance the budget and these have been identified. These are summarised at **Annex 7**, split into two categories;

A. Policy Proposals - with a direct impact on services, and which require an Executive (Cabinet) decision to proceed, these are referred for stakeholder consultation and equality impact assessment prior to decisions being made to include these in Cabinet's final budget proposals.

B. Operational Proposals – savings which officers have delegations to implement; examples include restructures, back office savings, operational efficiencies.

These savings are summarised by Proud Programme Outcomes in **Table 7:**

Table 7: 2021/22 Indicative Savings by WPP Outcome			
Outcome	Policy savings Annex 7A £m	Operational savings Annex 7B £m	Total savings £m
Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one	0.00	(0.25)	(0.25)
Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development	0.00	(0.56)	(0.56)
People live a good quality of life and feel they belong	(0.24)	(14.68)	(14.92)
People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it	(0.06)	(0.88)	(0.94)
Internal services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services / Services are efficient and deliver value for money	(3.09)	(2.77)	(5.86)
Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential	0.00	(0.08)	(0.08)
Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere	(0.12)	(4.46)	(4.58)
Housing meets all people's needs, is affordable, safe and warm	0.00	(0.26)	(0.26)
People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities	(0.73)	(0.72)	(1.45)
Total Savings / efficiencies	(4.25)	(24.65)	(28.90)

The impact of Covid-19

In March 2020, the council along with the communities it serves and its partners, faced the Covid-19 crisis. As a provider of public services and in its civic leadership role, the council quickly responded by re-prioritising services, responding to Government announcements, working in partnership and immediately redirecting resources to achieve the necessary crisis response.

As part of this response, the council conducted a review of the WPP in order to determine those activities which could continue and those which should be delayed whilst the council responded to the Covid-19 situation. The following criteria was used:

- **Care** - Employees and residents are already experiencing disruption to their lives and significant amounts of uncertainty. Therefore, we will not conduct activities which may add to this;
- **Manage disruption** - We will identify those activities which can continue over the coming months so that we can continue to progress towards delivering the Programme benefits where possible;
- **Working remotely** - Our teams will work remotely and use the technology available to collaborate on projects and deliver outputs. Exceptions to this will be managed and the impact on progress monitored.

Throughout the Covid-19 period, work continued on the Programme where possible. It was also possible to identify examples of changes in working practices which having taken place in response to Covid-19 were in line with the aspirations of the Proud Programme. These included introducing new ways of working, making the best use of technology, challenging existing processes and procedures, working in partnership and demonstrating the best of what our teams can achieve.

Over recent months, activity within the Programme has restarted. This includes preparing for employee consultations; completing outstanding design work within the Enabling Support Services work stream; continuing with procurement activities within the Enabling Technology work stream; commencing work on the council's Asset Management Strategy and providing Connected Working tools and techniques to support teams. In parallel and complementary to the Resilient Communities service transformation plan (STP); public consultation has begun on the Resilient Communities proposals, in conjunction with the resident's survey, and engagement activities have commenced with partners. Both activities had been delayed due to lockdown restrictions and council priorities as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Consultation with employees also re-commenced in autumn 2020. There remains a risk that any significant further waves of Covid-19 will impact on the deliverability of the Programme at a most critical time.

Service Transformation Planning process (STP)

The council identified an opportunity to bring together the work of the Proud Programme and the work taking place in each directorate in response to Covid-19. As part of the Outcomes, Service Levels and Delivery Models work stream, the Proud Programme has worked with services to establish a desired direction of travel for service delivery. Drawing on good practice and applying Walsall context, a number of common themes have been identified which will support the future delivery of council services:

- Using effective marketing and communications to change behavior;
- Using local assets and empowering communities to deliver outcomes;
- Partnering in an effective way where a council-only response is not enough;
- Providing one, clear, unified offer for council-only delivered services

These themes will help transformation planning for the council as a whole in order to best deliver the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes. In line with this, the Programme has been supporting Directors to develop Service Transformation Plans (STPs) to deliver both financial and non-financial benefits. Each Director was asked to prepare an STP identifying:

- The strategic direction of travel for their service(s);
- How the service(s) would deliver against the 3 KPIs of the Proud Programme;
- How each service would use the new ways of working and capabilities delivered by the Programme to deliver the 3 KPIs;
- Savings to be delivered over 2021/22 to 2022/23.

Directors worked within a compressed timeframe to deliver their STPs, including the undertaking of Directors test and challenge sessions. This process has enabled Directors to consider the practical application of the original Proud Programme business case within their individual area and as a result generate the budget proposals set out within this report.

Analysis is continuing to ensure that:

- The council's Corporate Plan objectives and proposed direction of travel for each area has been considered;
- All future options for the application of new ways of working has been considered within each service transformation plan; and,
- Further options for service transformation in future are clearly identified including opportunities to bring that activity forward, where applicable.

This analysis is required as the council seeks to address the budget position for the years' beyond 2021/22. It also ensures that the Proud Programme business case (agreed in 2018) which sets out the benefit opportunities (including financial) to be delivered through investment in the programme can be delivered. The Programme is now entering a critical period as it moves broadly from design and into implementation. For a period, the council will be required to manage the implementation of STP's whilst continuing to deliver new ways of working through the work streams, for example, implementation of the Customer Access and Management capability is underway at the same time as Director's will be seeking to use that capability as part of delivering their plans. This will put additional strain on resourcing throughout the organisation and will require a joined up approach to change management both internally and externally.

Annex 1 outlines the indicative cash limit for 2021/22 by directorate, and **Annex 2** by outcome. **Annex 4** outlines indicative cash limits by directorate.

2.12 General / Earmarked Reserves and Contingencies

The council's MTFS sets out how the council will structure and manage its finances now and in the future to ensure it continues to demonstrate financial stability and to ensure this facilitates delivery of the council's corporate plan objectives.

The council's statutory S151 Officer produces the strategy, and advises on the level of reserves, in accordance with statute, best practice, professional opinion and the council's MTFS. In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to comply with CIPFA guidance on local authority reserves and balances, the S151 Officer is required to formally consider and report to members upon the adequacy of reserves in respect of the 2021/22 budget, as outlined in **Annex 12**.

Additionally, this requirement covers reporting on the robustness of the estimates used for the purpose of calculating the budget.

The Government is fundamentally changing the way in which local government is funded, which increases the financial risk to the council. As such, and in accordance with statute and best practice, the level and nature of reserves have been reviewed as part of the budget process.

3. Summary of the 2021/22 Capital Programme

Following the publication of the revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017, there is a requirement for councils to produce a Capital Strategy. This should “*set out the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made and gives due consideration to both risk, reward and impact on the achievement of priority outcomes.*” The revised Capital Strategy is set out at **Annex 8**.

The council has an asset portfolio of around £515m. Therefore managing and maintaining these assets is a key issue for the council to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose and their value is maintained. The capital programme is key to delivering the council’s vision and priorities.

Due to the diverse nature of capital expenditure, each capital scheme impacts on residents in different ways according to their use of council facilities and services. The capital programme has been constructed within the principles outlined in our Capital Strategy. This document drives the construction and management of the capital programme. The Strategy reflects and enables delivery of the council’s vision and priorities and approved schemes must deliver that aim. It also requires the council to optimise successful partnership working for example through the Walsall Partnership, NHS Walsall, registered social landlords and regionally with other councils.

The 2021/22 capital programme totals £103.76m, detailed in **Annex 9**, and is presented in two parts:

- A. Council funded programme (£57.05m) - funded through borrowing and capital receipts (**Table 8/9**). Of this £1.33m is identified for council wide schemes, funding to support essential works including health and safety and other projects that cannot be guaranteed at the start of the year.

A further £28.00m provision is made for council pipeline investment opportunities, including emerging regeneration schemes, where funding or match funding is required, and major capital projects. To access these funds, an outline business case will need to be approved by the council’s Strategic Investment Board, (which is currently being set up), followed by a full business case which will require Cabinet approval.

- B. Non-council funded programme (£46.71m) - funded from capital grants (**Table 10**).

In addition, the council’s leasing programme for 2021/22 is £4.6m, the revenue costs of which are funded from services own budgets (**Table 11**).

Capital resources will continue to be limited in the future, inevitably placing more pressure on our ability to make future capital investment decisions. Funding will be more reliant on the council’s ability to secure capital receipts from sale of land and buildings or affordable additional borrowing. A strategic review of assets will be undertaken as part of the Corporate Landlord work stream of the Proud Programme, which will inform the revision of the Capital Strategy and formulation of future years capital programmes.

Following consultation during 2020, HM Treasury have now revised access requirements for local authorities seeking to access borrowing from the Public Works and Loans Board (PWLB). These revisions mean that Local Authorities will not be able to access PWLB borrowing to buy investment property with the primary aim of 'generating yield', and specifically to access PWLB funding authorities will need to submit three year capital plans to PWLB, with the S151 officer confirming that there is no intention to buy investment properties primarily for yield at any point within those three years.

If there are any intentions by the authority to buy investment properties primarily for yield within the three year capital programme then PWLB will not be able to lend to the authority for the period of that programme. HM Treasury have also confirmed that where local authorities do seek to pursue debt-for-yield projects which they finance in other ways, such as through the use of internal cash balances or borrowing from other financial institutions, they would then not be able to access PWLB borrowing to refinance this element of debt going forwards.

As interest rates on PWLB borrowing are normally more favourable than other forms of borrowing, being unable to access PWLB and having to seek borrowing from other financial institutions is therefore likely to increase the overall revenue costs required to fund the elements of the councils capital programme which are funded from borrowing – for example every 1% increase in interest costs on a three year capital programme including circa £120.00m of capital spending funded from borrowing (similar to the level included within this report) would add £1.20m of additional ongoing revenue costs per year by the end of the three year period.

Council Funded Programme: Funded from Walsall's own resources

Funding

The council funded element of the capital programme is normally financed from borrowing, capital receipts and the carry forward of unspent allocations from previous years.

Borrowing is required to be funded from the council's own resources – generated through savings, and/or paid for via council tax. (This is also commonly known as unsupported or Prudential borrowing). Councils are allowed to borrow in accordance with the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The current capital financing / services cash limit is forecast to be able to support £54.53m of additional borrowing to fund high priority items in 2021/22.

An allocation of £1.50m is assumed from capital receipts each year, which is monitored in year by property colleagues. Any additional receipts received in year (excluding those earmarked for specific schemes) will be considered to fund projects identified on the reserve list of schemes. Additionally, **Annex 11** sets out the council's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, which will utilise eligible new receipts to fund elements of the council's Proud Programme. **Table 8** shows planned resources to fund the mainstream capital programme for the three years from 2021/22.

Category	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m
Capital receipts projected	1.50	1.50	1.50
Earmarked capital receipts	0.00	0.00	0.00
General borrowing	9.84	10.32	6.70
Revenue contribution to capital	0.02	0.02	0.02
Prior year underspends	1.00	0.00	0.00
Borrowing for Regional Materials Recycling Facility	4.76	2.72	0.00
Borrowing / Capital Receipts for Proud investment	0.00	0.00	0.00
Borrowing for Waste Strategy	8.89	3.00	0.00
Borrowing – Enterprise Zones*	2.94	13.94	4.07
Borrowing – Pipeline investments	28.00	8.00	4.00
Borrowing – High Streets Fund	0.10	4.24	14.68
Total Mainstream resources	57.05	43.74	30.97

*Requirement to cash flow prior to generation of business rates.

Further £4m provision for Flexible use of Capital Receipts carried forward from 2020/21.

Capital Schemes

For 2021/22 services were asked to review current and future schemes included in the capital programme approved by Council in February 2020. Requests for new allocations were considered in line with council priorities and the work of the Proud Programme. Details can be found in **Annex 9A** and are summarised by directorate in **Table 9** below.

Directorate	Rolling Programme £m	Prior / Current Year Approval £m	New Allocations £m	Total Mainstream £m
Adult Social Care and Public Health	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Children's, Education and Customer Services	0.48	0.33	0.00	0.81
Economy, Environment and Communities	2.82	18.87	0.17	21.86
Resources and Transformation	0.00	4.18	0.87	5.05
Centrally held budgets *	1.00	0.00	28.33	29.33
Total Council Funded Capital	4.30	23.38	29.37	57.05

*Centrally held relates to £1.00m funding to support essential works, including health and safety e.g. retained housing land, asbestos removal, statutory testing, legionella, fire risk, demolition of redundant buildings, planned maintenance, risk management and self-insured property damage, along with £0.33m of additional funding to support new health and safety requirements such as social distancing and security measures as a result of Covid-19. A further £28.00m is set aside for pipeline investment opportunities, which will be allocated in year subject to a full business case being approved by Cabinet.

Schemes are recommended to go ahead for a number of reasons:

- Address policy including;
 - Support with cost of living
 - Creating jobs and helping people get new skills
 - Improving educational achievements
 - Helping local high streets and communities

- Help create more affordable housing
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Ensuring a modern effective council (including ICT infrastructure)
- Return on investment / Asset management - schemes that unlock external investment in the borough; drive out long term revenue savings; support the strengthening of the borough's economy; deliver an efficient and effective operational estate; and invests in assets to grow future income streams for the council;
- Supports the delivery of ongoing benefits identified through the Proud Programme;
- Capital insurance reserves: to protect the council's position, for which funding is available should the need arise to draw it down;
- Priority schemes for which external funding can be drawn down and which may or may not require a contribution from the council's own resources.

All capital schemes were reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and Asset Strategy Group, prior to formal consideration by Cabinet for recommendation to Council. The draft capital programme was scrutinised by Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Whilst the overall demand for resources usually exceeds those available, schemes deemed to be a high priority in terms of reflecting the council's priorities can be funded, representing a balanced programme for 2021/22 with indicative allocations which are subject to further review for 2022/23 onwards.

A number of 2020/21 schemes (**Annex 10**) are expected to be carried forward into 2021/22, totalling £34.84m. This will be reported to Cabinet for approval.

Externally Funded Programme

Full details of externally funded schemes are found in the draft capital programme at **Annex 9B** and are summarised in **Table 10** below. Many of these are indicative allocations pending formal notification from the respective funding bodies, and the capital programme will be adjusted in year to reflect final allocations. Certain schemes can go ahead as these are either fully funded by grant or have the necessary mainstream match funding already approved. If grant or mainstream funding is unavailable then the scheme will not go ahead.

Table 10: Externally Funded Capital Programme 2021/22 by Directorate			
Directorate	Government Funding £m	Third Party / External* £m	Total Funding £m
Adult Social Care and Public Health	0.00	0.00	0.00
Children's, Education and Customer Services	8.44	0.00	8.44
Economy, Environment and Communities	3.48	8.55	12.03
Resources and Transformation	26.24	0.00	26.24
Centrally held budgets	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Externally Funded Capital	38.16	8.55	46.71

**Walsall is Accountable Body for Growth Deal and Land & Property Investment Fund.*

Leasing Programme

The 2021/22 leasing programme totals £4.60m and is summarised in **Table 11** below. Leasing minimises the call on capital resources by spreading the acquisition cost over a number of years. Revenue funds are required to finance operating leases, and are included in the revenue budget.

Table 11: Leasing Programme 2021/22		
Directorate	Asset cost	Revenue Leasing
	£m	£m
Economy, Environment and Communities		
Refuse Vehicles	1.86	0.65
Light Commercial Vehicles	1.93	0.36
Tractors & Agricultural Machinery	0.29	0.23
Welfare Vehicles	0.52	0.06
Equipment	0.00	0.12
Total draft leasing programme	4.60	1.42

4. Medium term financial outlook – 2022/23 onwards

Revenue

Key sources of funding, in particular fees and charges, Government grant and specific grant are assessed on a regular basis, along with emerging cost pressures. The focus is on forward planning to ensure financial risk is managed and mitigated and all known liabilities are funded, including the cost of capital investment decisions.

As referred to in section 2, Walsall Council, via the West Midlands Combined Authority, has been designated a pilot for the 100% business rates retention scheme, which has been confirmed will continue into 2021/22.

A review of the scheme by government to amend the % of retained business rates from 49% to 75% was due to be finalised by 2020/21 but due to delays this has not been fully undertaken and introduced. The review is still on-going with changes expected in 2022/23.

The Government expects national increases in growth in rate yields to fully offset the reduction in core funding. The reality is that Walsall, due to its relative need and business rate yield, will be unable to fully cover this further significant funding shortfall. This is exacerbated further by the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Assumptions have been made in our medium term financial outlook around overall changes to Government spending for this period, along with known cost reductions and pressures.

Beyond 2021/22, funding allocations still remain uncertain. A further Spending Review is expected in 2021 to cover the period from 2022/23, along with the outcome of the Fair Funding review of local authority finance, both of which are expected to impact on our medium term financial outlook.

A balanced budget is reported for 2021/22, with savings of £28.90m to be delivered through the Proud Programme. Draft balanced budgets are presented for 2022/23 and 2023/24, with £22.01m of savings required in 2022/23 and £14.52m in 2023/24. The majority of 2022/23 savings have been identified (£19.10m), with a further £2.91m for which delivery plans are currently being worked up. The position for 2022/23 and 2023/24 is summarised in **table 12**.

Table 12 : Indicative savings		
Work stream / STP activity	Savings 2022/23 £m	Savings 2023/24 £m
Savings as shown on Annex 7	(19.10)	(4.47)
<i>Indicative savings:</i>		
Customer Access & Management	(0.81)	(3.13)
Designing Ways of Working - Hubs	(0.12)	(0.46)
Designing Ways of Working - Enabling Support Services	(0.17)	(0.66)
Enabling Technology	0.00	0.00
Income Generation & Cost Recovery	(0.95)	(3.67)
Third Party Spend	(0.86)	(2.13)
Total savings	(22.01)	(14.52)

This provides the council with a sound opportunity to plan ahead and seek to rebalance the budget to deliver its corporate plan priorities, and allows it flexibility to adapt to an ever changing climate.

As referred to in Section 2, further details on the work streams and current activity are shown in **Annex 6**.

Annex 4 outlines indicative cash limits by directorate and the required phasing of implementation of the Proud Programme to deliver a balanced budget over the period to 2023/24, summarised in **Table 13**.

Table 13 : Revenue Cash Limits by Directorate			
Directorate	Indicative 2021/22 £m	Indicative 2022/23 £m	Indicative 2023/24 £m
Adult Social Care and Public Health	58.02	57.18	41.26
Children's, Education and Customer Services	81.97	76.99	64.01
Economy, Environment and Communities	53.90	52.85	49.83
Resources and Transformation	13.72	11.63	5.87
Net Portfolio Cash Limits	207.61	198.65	160.97
Levies	11.27	11.27	11.27
Central budgets *	(86.33)	(73.78)	(32.42)
Council Tax Requirement	132.55	136.14	139.82

**Central budgets includes direct Government funding and business rates.*

Capital

Capital programme resources are limited. The financing for capital expenditure on new investments is heavily reliant on grants and other funding received from the Government. The Government is clearly, in the medium term, planning to significantly reduce government financed capital spending.

The remaining flexibility is currently through capital receipts and borrowing. Capital receipts projections however are limited, and fully dependent on when council assets are sold. Earmarking of capital receipts beyond what we are statutorily obliged to do is not recommended without overall strategic consideration of the entire capital programme. Use of unsupported borrowing incurs ongoing revenue debt charges and impacts on council tax payers.

Capital allocations and grants from Government and other sources have not yet been published, therefore best estimates have been used, based on published information to date. Any further reduction in funding will require amendments to the draft programme.

Despite the above difficulties, significant investment is planned and funded over the three years 2021/22 to 2023/24 and the capital programme is balanced for each year, subject to annual review. The council is able to fund all existing commitments and has, through prioritisation of bids and resources and sound treasury management, been able to support new investment into key services, and areas of capital investment need.

The list of capital schemes included in the capital programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 are shown in **Annex 9. Table 14** shows the capital programme against predicted available resources. **Table 15** summarises the capital programme by directorate.

Table 14 : Capital Programme			
	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
<u>Anticipated Capital Resources</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
Council resources as shown in table 8	57.05	43.74	30.97
External Funding	46.71	18.82	10.83
Total capital resources	103.76	62.56	41.80
<u>Capital Bids</u>			
Rolling Programme Schemes	4.30	4.30	4.30
Prior Year Approvals	14.23	23.93	7.99
Current Year Approvals (2020/21)	9.15	3.00	0.00
Proud Investment	0.02	0.17	0.00
New capital allocations	29.35	12.34	18.68
Total council funded schemes	57.05	43.74	30.97
Externally funded schemes	46.71	18.82	10.83
Total draft capital programme	103.76	62.56	41.80
Funding shortfall (surplus)	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 15 : Capital Programme by directorate			
Directorate	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care and Public Health	0.00	0.00	0.00
Children's, Education and Customer Services	9.25	8.43	8.43
Economy, Environment and Communities	33.89	38.83	18.34
Resources and Transformation	31.29	6.30	10.03
Centrally held budgets *	29.33	9.00	5.00
Draft Capital Programme	103.76	62.56	41.80

*Centrally held relates to an annual allocation of £1.00m funding to support essential works, including health and safety e.g. LSVT retained housing land, asbestos removal, statutory testing, legionella, fire risk, demolition of redundant buildings, planned maintenance, risk management and self-insured property damage, along with £0.33m of additional funding to support new health and safety requirements such as social distancing and security measures as a result of Covid-19. A further £42.00m over the three years is set aside for pipeline investment opportunities, which will be allocated in year subject to a full business case being approved by Cabinet.

Part 1 Annex 1: Summary of Corporate Revenue Budget 2021/22 by Directorate

DIRECTORATE	2020/21 REVISED FORECAST £	BASE BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS £	INVESTMENT AND PRESSURES (Annex 5) £	INDICATIVE SAVINGS * (Annex 7) £	2021/22 FORECAST BUDGET £
Adult Social Care	66,136,706	2,158,590	3,275,208	-13,550,981	58,019,523
Children's Services	82,134,249	842,774	5,954,319	-6,962,523	81,968,819
Economy, Environment & Communities	53,729,238	493,566	2,216,451	-2,537,333	53,901,922
Resources & Transformation *	16,321,235	-1,281,926	1,637,375	-2,958,411	13,718,273
TOTAL SERVICES	218,321,428	2,213,004	13,083,353	-26,009,248	207,608,537
Non-service specific prudence/central items/capital financing	-102,670,618	4,349,370	14,748,535	-2,889,000	-86,461,713
Levies:					
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	11,146,812	37,000	0	0	11,183,812
Environment Agency	82,739	0	0	0	82,739
NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE	126,880,361	6,599,374	27,831,888	-28,898,248	132,413,375
(Use of)/contribution to reserves	685,777	-553,371	0	0	132,406
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	127,566,138	6,046,003	27,831,888	-28,898,248	132,545,781

*There is further investment of £860k in 2021/22, £4.52m in 202/23 and £6.82m in 2023/24 relating to pay and pensions to be allocated to services.

Part 1 Annex 2: Summary of Corporate Revenue Budget 2021/22 by Outcome

OUTCOME	2020/21 REVISED FORECAST £	BASE BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS £	INVESTMENT AND PRESSURES * (Annex 5) £	SAVINGS (Annex 7) £	2021/22 FORECAST BUDGET £
Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one	5,312,624	-1,132,096	336,447	-250,981	4,265,994
Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development	18,412,025	-151,172	1,738,168	-557,390	19,441,631
People live a good quality of life and feel they belong	71,174,954	1,997,990	3,907,467	-14,917,195	62,163,216
People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it	2,933,638	763,553	249,655	-937,143	3,009,703
Internal services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services / Services are efficient and deliver value for money	-77,394,172	4,680,184	16,283,861	-5,860,860	-62,290,987
Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential	2,672,494	-20,795	-100,000	-84,352	2,467,347
Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere	59,055,130	304,291	4,204,923	-4,582,347	58,981,997
Housing meets all people's needs, is affordable, safe and warm	2,132,999	43,289	0	-256,751	1,919,537
People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities	43,266,446	-439,241	1,211,367	-1,451,229	42,587,343
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	127,566,138	6,046,003	27,831,888	-28,898,248	132,545,781

*There is further investment of £860k in 2021/22, £4.52m in 2022/23 and £6.82m in 2023/24 relating to pay and pensions to be allocated to services.

Part 1 Annex 3: Council Tax Data 2021/22

1. COUNCIL TAX EXCLUDING PRECEPTS (WALSALL COUNCIL ONLY)

A. LEVELS FOR PROPERTIES WITH TWO OR MORE RESIDENTS (67% of Properties)

BAND	WEIGHT	2020/21 C.TAX	2021/22 C.TAX	ANNUAL CHANGE	OF WHICH ASC RELATED	ANNUAL INCREASE	WEEKLY INCREASE	DAILY INCREASE
		£	£	£	£	%	£	£
A	6/9	1,188.60	1,247.91	59.31	35.66	4.99%	1.14	0.16
B	7/9	1,386.70	1,455.90	69.20	41.60	4.99%	1.33	0.19
C	8/9	1,584.80	1,663.88	79.08	47.54	4.99%	1.52	0.22
D	9/9	1,782.90	1,871.87	88.97	53.49	4.99%	1.71	0.24
E	11/9	2,179.10	2,287.84	108.74	65.37	4.99%	2.09	0.30
F	13/9	2,575.30	2,703.81	128.51	77.26	4.99%	2.46	0.35
G	15/9	2,971.50	3,119.78	148.28	89.15	4.99%	2.84	0.41
H	18/9	3,565.80	3,743.73	177.93	106.97	4.99%	3.41	0.49

2. OVERALL COUNCIL TAX INCLUSIVE OF PRECEPTS

A. LEVELS FOR PROPERTIES WITH TWO OR MORE RESIDENTS (67% of Properties)

BAND	WEIGHT	2020/21 TOTAL C.TAX	2021/22 WMBC C.TAX	ESTIMATE - ACTUAL T.B.A		OVERALL (INC PRECEPTS)
				2021/22 FIRE PRECEPT	2021/22 POLICE PRECEPT	2021/22 TOTAL C.TAX
		£	£	£	£	£
A	6/9	1,338.17	1,247.91	42.03	118.37	1,408.31
B	7/9	1,561.20	1,455.90	49.03	138.09	1,643.02
C	8/9	1,784.22	1,663.88	56.03	157.82	1,877.73
D	9/9	2,007.26	1,871.87	63.04	177.55	2,112.46
E	11/9	2,453.31	2,287.84	77.05	217.01	2,581.90
F	13/9	2,899.36	2,703.81	91.06	256.46	3,051.33
G	15/9	3,345.43	3,119.78	105.07	295.92	3,520.77
H	18/9	4,014.51	3,743.73	126.08	355.10	4,224.91

B. LEVELS FOR PROPERTIES WITH ONE RESIDENT (25% DISCOUNT) (33% of Properties)

BAND	WEIGHT	2020/21 TOTAL C.TAX	2021/22 WMBC C.TAX	ESTIMATE - ACTUAL T.B.A		OVERALL (INC PRECEPTS)
				2021/22 FIRE PRECEPT	2021/22 POLICE PRECEPT	2021/22 TOTAL C.TAX
		£		£	£	£
A	6/9	1,003.63	935.94	31.52	88.78	1,056.23
B	7/9	1,170.90	1,091.92	36.77	103.57	1,232.27
C	8/9	1,338.17	1,247.91	42.03	118.37	1,408.31
D	9/9	1,505.44	1,403.90	47.28	133.16	1,584.34
E	11/9	1,840.00	1,715.89	57.79	162.75	1,936.43
F	13/9	2,174.52	2,027.86	68.29	192.35	2,288.49
G	15/9	2,509.08	2,339.84	78.80	221.94	2,640.58
H	18/9	3,010.89	2,807.81	94.56	266.33	3,168.69

3. SPREAD OF PROPERTIES

The proportion of properties within Walsall MBC within each Council Tax band at 1st December 2020 is as follows:

BAND	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL
PROPERTIES (No)	50,804	27,126	18,417	10,335	5,567	2,381	828	51	115,509
PROPERTIES (%)	44.08	23.46	15.95	8.89	4.82	2.05	0.71	0.04	100
CUMULATIVE TOTALS	67.54								
	83.49								
	92.38								

Part 1 Annex 4 : Revenue Cash Limit 2021/22 to 2023/24 by Directorate

This annex outlines the indicative cash limits by directorate, including portfolio responsibilities. These will be updated in year to reflect any movement in directorate/portfolio responsibilities. Savings plans for 2023/24 will be realigned to services when agreed.

1. Adult Social Care and Public Health Directorate

- **Adult Social Care Portfolio**

Care services for older people and people with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities and people with mental health needs, health partnership, commissioning and CCG/health interface lead supporting people, protection for vulnerable adults, transition arrangements between Children's and Adult Social Care.

- **Health and Wellbeing Portfolio**

Public Health and member of Health and Wellbeing Board.

- **Leader of the Council Portfolio**

Overall responsibility for Council strategy, the corporate plan, communications and public relations, government relations and liaison with local MPs and West Midlands leaders.

- **Personnel and Business Support Portfolio**

Procurement, print and design.

- **Resilient Communities Portfolio**

Engagement and consultation.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£	£
Opening cash limit	66,136,706	58,019,523	57,177,259
Base budget adjustments			
- Falls prevention	(36,875)	0	0
- Other pay changes / service realignments	2,195,465	0	0
Investment / Pressures – see Annex 5	3,275,208	5,176,727	3,652,586
Less Proposed Savings Plans – see Annex 7	(13,550,981)	(6,018,991)	(19,569,972)
Adult Social Care draft cash limit	58,019,523	57,177,259	41,259,873

2. Children's, Education and Customer Services Directorate

- **Children's Portfolio**

Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, early help, schools meals commissioning, involvement of children and young people, transition arrangements between Children's and Adult Social Care, Walsall Children's Safeguarding Board and Chair of Corporate Parenting Board.

- **Education and Skills Portfolio**

Schools and education services, interagency cooperation, involvement of children and young people, special educational needs, disabilities and inclusion. Adult learning.

- **Personnel and Business Support Portfolio**

Complaints.

- **Regeneration Portfolio**

Money Home Job.

	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening cash limit	82,134,249	81,968,819	76,987,804
Base budget adjustments			
- Home to school transport	(250,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)
- Social workers invest to save	(100,000)	0	0
- Other pay changes / service realignments	1,192,774	0	0
Investment / Pressures – see Annex 5	5,954,319	4,672,386	3,640,602
Less Proposed Savings Plans – see Annex 7	(6,962,523)	(9,403,401)	(16,365,924)
Children’s Services draft cash limit	81,968,819	76,987,804	64,012,482

3. Economy, Environment and Communities Directorate

- **Leader of the Council Portfolio**
Emergency planning, West Midlands Combined Authority, Association of Black Country Authorities and Black Country Joint Committee.
- **Clean and Green Portfolio**
Gateways and corridors, pollution control, waste strategy, refuse collection, recycling, street cleaning, parks (maintenance) and the council’s vehicle fleet.
- **Health and Wellbeing Portfolio**
Healthy Spaces (Green Spaces Strategy and Development).
- **Regeneration Portfolio**
Economic development, physical development, markets, town and district centres, planning policy. Strategic housing role. Traffic and transportation, car parks, strategic transport and highways.
- **Resilient Communities Portfolio**
Locality co-ordination, community development, community associations, voluntary and community sectors, Community Safety, community cohesion, Safer Walsall Partnership. Leisure and culture services including the New Art Gallery, libraries, sports and museums, Cemeteries and crematoria, public protection.

	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening cash limit	53,729,238	53,901,922	52,852,061
Base budget adjustments			
- Street Lighting one off funded from reserves	450,000	(450,000)	0
- Other pay changes / service realignments	43,566	0	0
Investment / Pressures – see Annex 5	2,216,451	126,813	240,000
Less Proposed Savings Plans – see Annex 7	(2,537,333)	(726,674)	(3,264,007)
Economy, Environment and Communities draft cash limit	53,901,922	52,852,061	49,828,054

4. Resources and Transformation Directorate

- **Leader of the Council Portfolio**
Transformation and digital. Finance including payroll and pensions, insurance, risk management, policy led budgeting. Financial Regulations, Audit, Legal and Democratic Services, Performance. Member Development.
- **Personnel and Business Support Portfolio**
HR, equalities, hard facilities management, catering, cleaning, caretaking and Town Hall events, information governance, administration and business support.
- **Regeneration Portfolio**
Property and asset management, Black Country Consortium, sub regional regeneration issues, local development framework, business liaison and skills.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£	£
Opening cash limit	16,321,235	13,718,273	11,632,283
Base budget adjustments			
- Elections	(250,000)	250,000	0
- Economic Growth Programme	(1,000,000)	0	0
- Other pay changes / service realignments	(31,926)	0	0
Investment / Pressures – see Annex 5	1,637,375	766,045	300,000
Less Proposed Savings Plans – see Annex 7	(2,958,411)	(3,102,035)	(6,060,446)
Resources and Transformation draft cash limit *	13,718,273	11,632,283	5,871,837

* Includes the review of administration across the council, so will be achieved from the realignment of services in year.

Part 1 Annex 5 : Summary of New Growth and Investment 2021/22 – 2023/24 aligned to Proud Programme Outcomes

Directorate	Ref No	Details of Growth by outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
People live a good quality of life and feel they belong					
Adult Social Care	1	Additional Social Care demand / cost pressures	3,185,050	3,153,075	3,652,586
	2	Better Care Funding iBCF2 fall out of grant	0	2,023,652	0
	31	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration. Customer Access Management/ Resilient Communities – linked to saving OP89	50,000	0	0
	32	Benefit maximisation project – linked to saving OP96	40,158	0	0
Children's Services	3	Reduction in Council Tax administration grant	39,038	0	0
	4	Reduction in Housing Benefit administration grant	57,190	0	0
	33	Restructure within Money Home Job - Process Improvement – linked to saving OP98	15,000	0	0
Economy, Environment & Communities	6	Taxi licensing – shortfall in income	52,000	0	0
	7	Licensing – shortfall in income	51,000	0	0
	8	Bereavement Services – shortfall in income	114,000	0	0
	34A	Resilient communities management posts	104,031		
	35	Regulatory Services new Community Protection Enforcement team	200,000	0	0
Total People live a good quality of life and feel they belong			3,907,467	5,176,727	3,652,586
Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one					
Economy, Environment & Communities	5A	Organisational redesign – Development Management	234,398	0	0
Resources & Transformation	5B	Organisational redesign – Programme Management	102,049	0	0
Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one			336,447	0	0
People know what makes them healthy and are encouraged to get support when they need it					
Economy, Environment & Communities	9	Active Living - shortfall in income	188,155	0	0
	36	Increase membership retention by utilising new customer experience centre provision – linked to saving OP82	31,500	-12,500	0
	37	External Marketing & Promotion Partnership Development – linked to saving P17	30,000	0	0
Total People know what makes them healthy and are encouraged to get support when they need it			249,655	(12,500)	0
Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere					
Children's Services	10	Additional Looked after Children demand / cost pressures	2,948,000	3,454,000	2,559,000
	11	Troubled Families	0	542,000	0
	12	Ongoing staffing resource for Children's Commissioning and Placements function to support Looked After Children controls/savings/placement	67,500	0	
	13	Taxis for children in care	100,000	0	0
	15	Foster care inflation	65,311	66,441	66,602
	16	Regional Adoption Agency	194,455	0	0
	38	Crisis support	0	0	500,000

Directorate	Ref No	Details of Growth by outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Children's Services	39	Development of locality partnership offer in Early Help – linked to saving OP3	199,587	-158,587	0
	40	Mother & Baby - Daisy Project – linked to saving OP7	222,338	0	0
	41	Family drugs and alcohol court – linked to saving OP10	0	94,910	0
	42	Foster carer support - placement disruption – linked to saving OP11	193,580	0	0
	43	Mocking Bird – Increase in number of social workers	79,004	20,790	0
	44	Placement sufficiency - recruitment & retention – linked to saving OP12	85,148	0	0
	45	Grandparents plus - build in for future years – linked to saving OP13	50,000	50,000	0
Total Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere			4,204,923	4,069,554	3,125,602
Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential					
Children's Services	18	Educational psychologists	(100,000)	0	0
Total Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential			(100,000)	0	0
Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development					
Children's Services	17	Home to school transport	1,422,000	648,000	515,000
	19	Removal of revenue target for attendance fines	77,000	0	0
	46	Home to school transport - route optimisation – linked to saving OP5	159,168	(45,168)	0
	47	Reduction in use of agency and temporary staff – linked to saving OP17	80,000	0	0
Total Education, training & skills enable people to fulfil their personal development			1,738,168	602,832	515,000
People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities					
Economy, Environment & Communities	5C	Organisational redesign – Engineering / Clean & Green	186,553	0	0
	34B	Resilient communities management posts	104,031	0	0
	20	Economy and Environment contractual inflation	339,313	239,313	240,000
	21	Fall out of leasing for extended vehicles	35,019	0	0
	22	Unauthorised encampment works	100,000	0	0
	23	Engineering / rights of way – shortfall in income	10,000	0	0
	24	Emergency Planning – shortfall in income	30,000	0	0
Economy, Environment & Communities	48	Communities and Partnerships – new prevent role	56,451		
	49	Planning enforcement	100,000	(100,000)	0
	50	Communities and Partnerships – new Community Safety team	250,000	0	0

Total People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities			1,211,367	139,313	240,000
Internal Services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services					
Resources & Transformation	14	Legal costs	250,000	0	0
	25	Human Resources – licences due to extension of One Source	(56,000)	0	0
	26	Integrated Facilities Management – shortfall in traded services income	250,000	0	0
	51	Integrated Facilities Management – centralised maintenance	0	250,000	0
	52	Webcasting and hybrid council meetings	15,000	15,000	0
Directorate	Ref No	Details of Growth by outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Resources & Transformation	53	Organisational redesign to deliver Intelligent Client Model across Asset Mgt, Capital Projects and Facilities Management - linked to saving P4	477,326	0	0
	54	Additional staffing for IT operating model	379,000	94,000	0
	55	Finance - Phased review and restructure of accountancy team management posts – linked to saving OP39	120,000	0	0
	56	Finance - review and reduction in transactional activity within finance following implementation of One Source – linked to saving OP44	0	207,045	0
	57	Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charge for appointeeship management / support – additional advocacy support linked to saving P2	100,000	(100,000)	0
	58	Cloud / Microsoft licences	0	300,000	300,000
Central / Capital Financing	27	Capital financing - review of debt portfolio	7,986,493	437,000	600,000
	28	Revenue implications of capital programme	500,000	500,000	500,000
	29	Covid-19 cost pressures / loss of income	5,761,042	353,558	(5,414,600)
	30	Proud Investment Programme	0	2,000,000	2,000,000
	59	Hub investment linked to work stream activity	501,000	0	0
Total Internal Services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services			16,283,861	4,056,603	(2,014,600)
Total Growth and investment			27,831,888	14,032,529	5,518,588

Additionally, there is £860k of pay (increments) and pension related investment to be allocated to services in 2021/22, £4.52m in 2022/23 and £6.82m in 2023/24.

Part 1 Annex 6: Proud Programme Work Streams and Activity

1. Outcome, Service Levels and Delivery Models

Cabinet in September 2019 agreed to the ten refreshed corporate outcomes; the cross cutting themes (components) that the Proud Programme will focus on;

Economic Growth

- Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one
- Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development

People

- People live a good quality of life and feel they belong
- People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it

Internal Focus

- Internal services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services
- Services are efficient and deliver value for money

Children

- Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential
- Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere

Communities

- Housing meets all people's needs, is affordable, safe and warm
- People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities

The indicative three year timetable for the roll out of the component elements and transformation projects was also outlined. Service redesign of planning has commenced and the new Resilient Communities model is also being established.

2. Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management (Third Party Spend)

To identify opportunities that will enable us to financially support our current and future services, especially those developed by the Walsall Proud Programme. It will do this by reviewing and reducing third party spend and improving the 'Procure to Pay' process and systems. We are implementing two Strategic Sourcing Plans - 1) Efficient Council (printing, energy, post, cleaning, fleet and fuel) and 2) Procurement Control; Contract Oversight Committee.

3. Communication, Change, Culture and Behaviours

All organisations, services and staff have cultures and behaviours, good and bad. This work stream looks at how individuals make decisions, initially in the context of staff undertaking and supporting the Walsall Proud Programme. It will then implement approaches and processes that will encourage and boost the good, and challenge and change the bad.

Activity includes accelerating ambition, creativity and innovation; support to establish the 'creativity' function; workforce development/training to embed the innovation mind set; specific suppliers to implement new innovations or projects. Leadership coaching and training; workforce development and training; cultural and behavioural analysis and custom-design support.

4. Customer Assessment and Management

This will address the mechanisms available to us to manage a single view of the customer, improve their experience and introduce efficiencies in our ways of interacting with them. This work stream is currently developing a blueprint for the new customer operations centre and prioritising phasing of processes to go live within the centre.

Activity includes customer journey mapping; redesign of end to end processes; functional and technical support for implementing the new customer management model; staff training.

5. Designing the Ways of Working – Hubs and Enabling Support Services

This will consider how our 'hubs', including 'communications, marketing and engagement', 'Business Intelligence' and 'Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management', work to support service providers. The detailed design it will produce will change these hubs' 'Ways of Working' to make them more effective. Blueprints have been developed and preparation for transition and implementation has begun.

Activity includes implementing new ways of working design; options analysis for back office; Also for Hubs: business intelligence - Support to implement new insight/strategy/policy model; staff training to embed new ways of working; setup bespoke dashboards/visualisations; communications and marketing support.

6. Enabling Technology

This will underpin and enable technology benefits envisaged throughout the Walsall Proud Programme, as well as the overall technology and digital offer for our customers. We are producing a roadmap for our future technology, translating our business strategy into a technological strategy. We are building and testing, and will roll out the initial processes for the customer relationship management platform. The telephony platform specification has been produced. The dashboard is being built in the business intelligence platform.

Activity includes tech support for possible configuration of online procurement processing; adoption and innovation of emerging technology i.e. Artificial intelligence, drones etc; Support to define the CAM technology architecture, define and procure core platform; Implement the digital first technology platform to support triage and customer query workflow, and single customer record fully integrated with back office systems; configuration of the platform; delivery of an environment that allows for continued service and application build out via capacity building; Support to pilot and deliver robotic processes automation in back office and support services; Hubs - configuration and integration of technology stack to pull data from multiple sources and make accessible dash-boarding visualisations; Support to put in place platforms/workflow that supports performance improvement.

7. Income generation and Cost Recovery

This is focusing on finding ways of boosting our income through the recovery of expenditure across services. Doing this will lead to a greater and more sustainable income for these services and the organisation. Cabinet in September approved the council's income and commercial policy and corporate debt policy; and approved consultation on a number of new income generating proposals. A revised fees and charges register has been implemented, and a number of business cases are being implemented to support future sustainability of services, such as traded services, adult social care benefits maximisation and charging.

Activity includes review of income generation and cost recovery options, options analysis, commercialisation.

8. *Connected Working (Perform+)*

This is looking at how we work, as teams and as individuals. 'Perform+' has been rolled out in Money, Home, Job, and in Adult Social Care. Diagnostics for wave2 have commenced in a number of services and the council is setting up the Perform Academy for sustainable future roll out. This people-centred approach uses one-on-one coaching of managers and team leaders and the introduction of new workplace tools and techniques to make sure employees have the skills, support and resources needed to deliver against aspirations.

Activity includes performance improvement support; implementing service delivery models to improve quality and reduce failure demand.

9. *Corporate Landlord*

Activity included optimising assets based on new ways of working practices. Cleanse and enhance property data and dash boarding; develop and implement estates strategy.

Part 1 Annex 7 : Benefits Realisation (Savings) for Proud Programme activity by Outcome

A : Summary of Policy Proposals

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Policy Proposals by Outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £
Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere					
Children's Services	P1	Change, Grow, Live Contract - bring service back in house	(122,714)	(467,714)	(590,428)
Total Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere			(122,714)	(467,714)	(590,428)
Internal Services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services					
Resources & Transformation	P2	Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charge for appointeeship management / support	0	(72,800)	(72,800)
	P3	Finance - Adult Social Care Client Care Team - introduce charging for administration of deaths for appointees	0	(6,000)	(6,000)
	P4	Organisational redesign to deliver Intelligent Client Model across Asset Management, Capital Projects and Facilities Management.	(195,921)	(42,726)	(238,647)
	P5	Redesign of Occupational Health contract	(7,500)	(7,500)	(15,000)
Central / Capital Financing	P15	Finance - change to minimum revenue provision	(2,889,000)	148,000	(2,741,000)
Total Internal Services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services			(3,092,421)	18,974	(3,073,447)
People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities					
Economy, Environment & Communities	P6	Re-profile the highway maintenance mainstream budget for 2021/22	(300,000)	300,000	0
	P7	Increased capitalisation of staff costs	(46,000)	0	(46,000)
	P8	Increased capitalisation of highway works	(300,000)	0	(300,000)
	P9	Charge developers for travel plans	0	(30,000)	(30,000)
	P16	Biodiversity – rewilding of urban grass	(88,249)	0	(88,249)
Total People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities			(734,249)	270,000	(464,249)
People live a good quality of life and feel they belong					
Children's Services	P11	Introduce council tax penalty charges for failing to notify a change of circumstance	(150,000)	0	(150,000)
Economy, Environment & Communities	P12	Reduction to voluntary organisation	0	(51,300)	(51,300)
	P13	Cease pest and animal control service	(87,606)	0	(87,606)
	P14	Bereavement services – the sale of keepsake memorials and a range of personal memorabilia	(1,000)	0	(1,000)
Total People live a good quality of life and feel they belong			(238,606)	(51,300)	(289,906)
People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it					
Economy, Environment & Communities	P17	Active Living Centres - External marketing & promotion partnership development	(62,000)	0	(62,000)
Total People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it			(62,000)	0	(62,000)
Total Policy Proposals			(4,249,990)	(230,040)	(4,480,030)

B: Summary of Operational Proposals by Outcome 2021/22 – 2022/23

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £
Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere					
Children's Services	OP1	Efficiencies within the parenting team	(25,000)	0	(25,000)
	OP3	Development of locality partnership offer in Early Help	0	(643,156)	(643,156)
	OP6	Review of current establishment and reduction in the use of agency staff, following recruitment of permanent staff	(395,763)	(747,820)	(1,143,583)
	OP7	Mother & Baby - Daisy Project	(739,980)	(443,988)	(1,183,968)
	OP8	Strengthening families, protecting children	(189,783)	(338,711)	(528,494)
	OP9	Adolescent service - Turning Point - reduce number of adolescents coming into care	(835,205)	(759,933)	(1,595,138)
	OP10	Family drugs and alcohol court	(88,183)	(136,916)	(225,099)
	OP11	Foster carer support - placement disruption	(1,717,687)	(1,554,022)	(3,271,709)
	OP12	Placement sufficiency - recruitment & retention	(150,797)	(107,712)	(258,509)
	OP13	Grandparents plus - build in for future years	(67,235)	(67,236)	(134,471)
OP107	Independent Living	(250,000)	(250,000)	(500,000)	
Total Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere			(4,459,633)	(5,049,494)	(9,509,127)
Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential					
Children's Services	OP5	Home to school transport - route optimisation	0	(216,204)	(216,204)
	OP15A	Review of structure - access and achievement	(41,352)	0	(41,352)
	OP17	Reduction in use of agency and temporary staff	0	(120,000)	(120,000)
	OP24	Seek contribution from Walsall CCG towards the provision of a Special Education Needs and/or Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)	(43,000)	0	(43,000)
Total Children thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential			(84,352)	(336,204)	(420,556)
Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one					
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP19	Increase in fee paying services planning development and building control	(37,000)	0	(37,000)
	OP20A	Restructure within planning development and strategic planning	(85,000)	0	(85,000)
	OP21	Capitalisation of posts - maximise external funding	(120,000)	(25,000)	(145,000)
	OP30	Removal of expenses and training budgets - regeneration	(8,981)	0	(8,981)
Creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one			(250,981)	(25,000)	(275,981)

Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development					
Children's Services	OP15B	Review of structure - access and achievement	(87,390)	0	(87,390)
	OP16	Re-negotiation and joint procurement of moderation and school improvement contract	(40,000)	0	(40,000)
	OP25	Increase traded services to schools	(20,000)	(55,000)	(75,000)
	OP26	High needs funding review and provide specialist support to children with additional needs via use of DSG grant	(250,000)	(250,000)	(500,000)
	OP27	Review of structure and functions and provide in-house support to 2, 3 and 4 year olds	(50,000)	0	(50,000)
	OP28	Review and streamline the provision of specialist inclusion services and support	0	(41,283)	(41,283)
Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP20B	Restructure within planning development and strategic planning	(50,000)	0	(50,000)
	OP73	Efficiency savings within the libraries service	(60,000)	0	(60,000)
Total Education, training and skills enable people to fulfil their personal development			(557,390)	(346,283)	(903,673)
Internal Services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services					
Adult Social Care	OP32	Paperless council meetings - savings to be made from eliminating paper agendas completely	(13,449)	(9,276)	(22,725)
Children's Services	OP29	Children's - To develop Power BI reports to create efficiencies	0	(119,961)	(119,961)
Resources & Transformation	OP4	Efficiencies arising from the review and consolidation of admin & business support functions into a single hub (children's wide)	(163,181)	0	(163,181)
	OP18	Implementation of education health and care plan hub	(2,474)	0	(2,474)
	OP22	Efficiencies arising from the review and consolidation of admin & business support functions into a single hub (EE&C directorate support)	(125,611)	0	(125,611)
	OP31	Efficiencies arising from the review and consolidation of admin & business support functions into a single hub (communications, finance, legal and ICT)	(143,101)	0	(143,101)
	OP33	Review charges in relation to school admission appeals	(20,000)	0	(20,000)
	OP34	The modernisation of an electronic enrolment and canvassing system	(5,000)	(5,000)	(10,000)
	OP35	Efficiencies savings with legal services	(66,666)	(33,334)	(100,000)
	OP36	Become member of the Barristers Framework	(35,000)	0	(35,000)
	OP37	Increase income from School SLA's for legal advice	(7,000)	0	(7,000)
	OP38	Efficiencies in relation to the purchase of law library books	(15,000)	(10,000)	(25,000)
	OP39	Restructure of Finance Function to strengthen strategic financial planning, financial system teams and phased review of accountancy team management posts and review of external funding opportunities; and general efficiencies	(240,657)	(20,000)	(260,657)
	OP40	Review of treasury / debt management costs recharge against investment returns delivered	(60,172)	(1,203)	(61,375)

	OP41	Accounts Payable - Use of automated invoice validation process within One Source	(52,148)	(48,311)	(100,459)
	OP42	Finance - Adult Social Care Charging & Payments and Client Care Teams - Impact of connected working on financial transactions council wide work stream	0	(21,667)	(21,667)
	OP43	Insurance Team - Review of insurance team to deliver focus on reducing claim costs and reduction in insurance fund charges	(99,319)	(1,287)	(100,606)
	OP44	Finance - review and reduction in transactional activity within finance following implementation of One Source	(172,792)	(123,423)	(296,215)
	OP45	Finance - Schools Traded Service team cost recovery review	(19,449)	(19,449)	(38,898)
Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £
Resources & Transformation	OP46	Finance - Implementation of Walsall Supplier Early Payment Scheme	(92,000)	(92,000)	(184,000)
	OP47	ICT - Reduced photocopier usages and print reduction	(65,000)	0	(65,000)
	OP48	Infrastructure & Technology Changes - Cloud Navigation / Fibre	(155,000)	0	(155,000)
	OP49	Centralise all IT related expenditure across the council in order to identify and generate efficiencies and consolidate shadow IT capability and general programme efficiencies	(64,000)	(271,000)	(335,000)
	OP50	Sell some IT services to other councils and organisations	0	(21,000)	(21,000)
	OP51	Efficiencies arising from the review and consolidation of admin & business support functions into a single hub (facilities management)	(2,894)	0	(2,894)
	OP52	Facilities management - school catering and caretaking traded services review	(140,395)	(15,200)	(155,595)
	OP53	Facilities management - review of prices and service standards across all internal and traded units and review ways of working for relief caretakers	(191,476)	(58,344)	(249,820)
	OP54	Facilities management - review of structure and ways of working in the post room and centralisation and rationalisation of postage costs	(95,903)	(13,000)	(108,903)
	OP55	Facilities management - review administration structure and ways of working	(22,000)	0	(22,000)
	OP56	Facilities management - Improved value for money on repairs and maintenance contracts	(90,000)	0	(90,000)
	OP57	CPM - review structure and ways of working	(52,951)	(25,791)	(78,742)
	OP58	Efficiencies arising from the review and consolidation of admin & business support functions into a single hub (HR)	(16,002)	0	(16,002)
	OP59	HR restructure	(100,000)	(50,000)	(150,000)
	OP60	Consider ceasing of physio contract	(12,000)	(12,000)	(24,000)
OP75	Efficiencies arising from the review and consolidation of admin & business support functions into a single hub (communities & partnerships)	(6,720)	0	(6,720)	
OP85	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration. Admin Hub and Enabling support services	(92,079)	0	(92,079)	
OP108	Review of mobile phones contract	(29,000)	(31,000)	(60,000)	

	OP109	Cross council efficiencies relating to administration and business support	(300,000)	(2,100,000)	(2,400,000)
Total Internal Services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services			(2,768,439)	(3,102,246)	(5,870,685)
People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities					
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP61	Increasing the number of fixed penalty notices issued	(50,000)	0	(50,000)
	OP62	Abandonment of current 'silo' roles within waste service	0	(363,682)	(363,682)
	OP63	Increase MOT charges	(19,975)	0	(19,975)
	OP64	Events income generation	(10,000)	0	(10,000)
	OP65	Management restructure	0	(320,000)	(320,000)
	OP66	Covid-19 reset of the street cleansing service	0	(49,320)	(49,320)
Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP67	Private sector or sponsorship funding of Christmas lights	(5,000)	0	(5,000)
	OP70	Review of permit scheme charges within statutory cap - permit costs to utilities companies for works on highways	(40,000)	0	(40,000)
	OP71	Section 38 fees increase	(45,806)	0	(45,806)
	OP72	Restructure of Resilient Communities to include community safety, area partnerships and cohesion service	(406,558)	0	(406,558)
	OP74	Heritage and culture / Arts and events - increase fees and charges	(9,351)	(9,351)	(18,702)
	OP101	Restructure in Voluntary & Community Sector Service	(63,682)	0	(63,682)
	OP102A	Restructure and efficiencies within regulatory services & community protection	(7,026)	0	(7,026)
	OP105	Review of CCTV contract	(42,772)	0	(42,772)
	OP110	Increased charges for dropped kerbs	(8,000)	0	(8,000)
	OP111	MOT service full cost recovery	(8,810)	0	(8,810)
Total People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities			(716,980)	(742,353)	(1,459,333)
People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it					
Adult Social Care	OP2	Review of Black Country Women's Aid contract	(188,886)	0	(188,886)
	OP77	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration - Public Health Operating Model	(74,495)	0	(74,495)
	OP112	Public Health	(475,000)	(800,000)	(1,275,000)
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP78	Cost effective procurement of new fitness equipment	0	(34,646)	(34,646)
	OP79	Bloxwich Active Living Centre landing development	0	(80,820)	(80,820)
	OP80	Management restructure across Active Living Centres	(28,762)	0	(28,762)
	OP81	Concessionary "Move It" leisure scheme annual fee increase	(63,000)	0	(63,000)
	OP82	Increase membership retention by utilising new customer experience centre provision	(45,000)	0	(45,000)
Total People know what makes them healthy and they are encouraged to get support when they need it			(875,143)	(915,466)	(1,790,609)

People live a good quality of life and feel they belong					
Adult Social Care	OP83	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration. Resilient Communities	(112,988)	(112,988)	(225,976)
	OP84	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration. Customer Access Management	(37,663)	(37,663)	(75,326)
	OP86	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration. IT Operating Model	(16,475)	0	(16,475)
	OP87	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration. Commissioning Hub	(149,394)	0	(149,394)
	OP88	General efficiencies	(187,668)	0	(187,668)
	OP89	New Ways of Working/Staff Reconfiguration. Customer Access Management/ Resilient Communities	(1,139,894)	(1,178,407)	(2,318,301)
	OP90	Review of Older People existing long term and new residential nursing & domiciliary placement costs support packages for learning disabilities including supported living and mental health	(2,424,243)	(4,400,928)	(6,825,171)
	OP91	Reduction of day care funded by direct payments	(690,893)	(356,471)	(1,047,364)

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £
Adult Social Care	OP92	All Age Disability	(156,000)	(156,000)	(312,000)
	OP93	Transfer of direct payment clients back to a commissioned service so reduction in direct payment standing order fees	(25,000)	0	(25,000)
	OP94	Controlling cost and maximising income generation. Clear joint funding arrangements (with CCG) and recharge processes and review and re-profiling of better care fund/ winter pressures	(5,575,933)	1,532,742	(4,043,191)
	OP95	Review for learning disabilities joint funding	(1,500,000)	0	(1,500,000)
	OP96	Benefit maximisation project	(783,000)	0	(783,000)
	OP97	Review of resources including Goscote and shared lives	0	(500,000)	(500,000)
	Children's Services	OP14	Customer Access Management System (CAMS)	(9,063)	0
OP23		Efficiencies arising from the creation of an integrated customer contact centre	(80,441)	0	(80,441)
OP68		Efficiencies arising from the creation of an integrated customer contact centre	(1,739)	0	(1,739)
OP69		Transfer of all non-technical contact with customers to the customer contact centre - Planning, Engineering & Transport	(9,630)	0	(9,630)
OP76		Efficiencies arising from the creation of an integrated customer contact centre (communities & partnerships)	(22,293)	0	(22,293)
OP98A		Restructure within Money Home Job	(668,517)	(166,745)	(835,262)
OP99		Accuracy for checking claims income	(150,000)	0	(150,000)
OP100		Bespoke webpage and web data entry form	0	(18,000)	(18,000)
OP113		Council wide efficiencies relating to Customer Access Management	(500,000)	(2,899,000)	(3,399,000)
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP102B	Restructure and efficiencies within regulatory services & community protection	(288,537)	0	(288,537)
	OP103	Review of existing fees and charges within resilient communities	(115,522)	(44,315)	(159,837)
	OP104	Provide pre license surgeries to individuals and businesses to support license applications	(7,350)	(7,350)	(14,700)
	OP106	Charging for change of name deeds (registrars)	0	(10,890)	(10,890)
	OP114	Out of hours burial service full cost recovery	(3,575)	0	(3,575)
	OP115	Extended burial hours 24/7	(2,771)	0	(2,771)
	OP116	Taxi licensing process improvement	(20,000)	0	(20,000)
Total People live a good quality of life and feel they belong			(14,678,589)	(8,356,015)	(23,034,604)
Housing meets all people's needs, is affordable, safe and warm					
Children's Services	OP98B	Restructure within Money Home Job – Supported Housing	(256,751)	0	(256,751)
Total Housing meets people's needs, is affordable, safe and warm			(256,751)	0	(256,751)
Total Operational Proposals			(24,648,258)	(18,873,061)	(43,521,319)

Total Savings	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	Total £
Policy Savings	(4,249,990)	(230,040)	(4,480,030)
Operational Savings	(24,648,258)	(18,873,061)	(43,521,319)
Total Savings	(28,898,248)	(19,103,101)	(48,001,349)

A further £4.47m has been identified for 2023/24 which relates to the Customer Access Management work stream of the Proud Programme. There is also a further £2.91m of savings in 2022/23 and £10.05m in 2023/24 for which delivery plans are being developed – as set out in Section 4 - Medium term financial outlook – 2022/23 plus.

Part 1 Annex 8 – Capital Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code requires local authorities to produce a Capital Strategy to demonstrate how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of desired outcomes and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.
- 1.2 The Strategy forms part of the framework for financial planning and is integral to both the Medium Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) and the Treasury Management Strategy and considers the funding implications of the capital programme and where borrowing is required. It sets out how capital investment will play its part in delivering the ambitious long term strategic objectives of the council, how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The Strategy is also in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) 2018 statutory guidance on local government investments.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Capital Strategy forms a key part of the council's overall corporate planning framework by which capital and investment decisions will be made with a focus on protecting the council's assets and delivering the council's corporate objectives. The overarching aim of the 2021/22 to 2023/24 Capital Strategy is to provide a framework within which the council's capital investment and financing decisions can be aligned with the council's corporate priorities and objectives over the medium term. The Strategy recognises uncertainties, especially in relation to funding in later years.
- 2.2 In order to reflect the council's corporate priorities the Capital Strategy is driven by the Corporate Plan 2018-2021 which sets out the councils Vision, Purpose, Guiding Principles and Strategic Priorities.

The main sections of the Capital Strategy link to the Corporate Plan in the following key areas:

- **Asset Management Planning** – is aligned to the Corporate Plan by reviewing service needs to ensure that quality services are delivered, and to further protect the Council's assets.
- **School Estate Planning** – is aligned to the Corporate Plan by investing in Schools to providing the best start in life for the boroughs children.
- **Investment in Regeneration** – is aligned to the Corporate Plan by a focus on economic growth by supporting key strategic projects that will deliver business growth and jobs across the borough.
- **Investment in ICT and digital services** - is aligned to the Corporate Plan by enabling services to meet the needs of the customer, to be efficient and deliver value for money.

3. Capital Expenditure

3.1 Setting the Capital Programme

3.1.1 The council's capital programme covering the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 is set out within **Annex 9** of this Corporate Budget Plan.

3.1.2 The basis of the Capital Programme is driven by the budget and service planning process. This process begins early in each financial year, usually around June. The size of the Capital Programme is determined by:

- The need to incur capital expenditure
- Capital resources available
- The revenue implications flowing from the expenditure.

3.1.3 As part of the budget and service planning process, services are required to review capital needs locally, and to align with service priorities. Where directorate capital and asset groups agree these requirements, then a formal 'capital mandate' form is required to be completed for each proposal. These mandates are required to be completed in line with the published budget process timelines, and will include the following information:

- Project background, including context, key dates and requirements
- Project objectives and outputs
- Scope of the project
- Justification of the project, draft profile of spend by financial year, source of funding, and revenue implications
- References to background papers and key documentation
- Anticipated project sponsor and project manager
- Interested parties, including users and stakeholders

3.1.4 All project mandates are collated for reporting to Corporate Management Team (CMT) for initial scrutiny prior to reporting to the Asset Strategy Group (ASG), who prioritise projects according to council priorities and against available resources, and subject to a detailed business case being completed for larger Strategic capital investment proposals. Supported projects are summarised for initial review and prioritisation by Asset Strategy Group against available resources, who then recommend a draft Capital Programme for consideration by Cabinet. For 2021/22 onwards, large scale Strategic capital projects will be required to complete an outline business case to report to the (newly created) Strategic Investment Board, followed by a full business case to Cabinet to release investment funds.

3.1.5 Business cases, where requested to be completed, will be subject to formal review and assessment. A business case will include more detailed information on the proposed scheme, along with options where applicable, and would expect to include the following:

- Why the project is proposed?
- Options appraisal
- Preferred option and financial information
- Assumptions and dependencies
- Review of risks
- Key milestones
- Outcomes – savings and benefits
- Governance and project management

3.1.6 Cabinet determine the projects to be included within the Capital Programme in the light of the relative priorities and the overall impact on the revenue budget. Schemes that require use of the council's own capital resources (such as prudential borrowing or capital receipts), are categorised according to the following, in order to assist the decision making process:

- Level One Priority – relates to schemes that are unavoidable to meet statutory and legislative requirements in the provision of services. It includes items such as health and safety, new legislation etc. By their nature, these schemes are a first call on available resources. It also includes supported borrowing allocations which are ring fenced to a specific programme of activity.
- Level Two Priority – relates to schemes that unlock external investment in the borough; drives out long-term revenue savings; support the strengthening of the borough's economy; delivers an efficient and effective operational estate linked to the Asset Management programme; and invests in assets to grow future income streams for the council.

3.1.7 The council's policy is to agree the Capital Programme on an annual basis at the Council meeting in February. Once approved, the budget report is made available on the council's website, and published on the finance pages of the council's intranet.

3.2 Managing the Capital Programme

3.2.1 The council's contract/financial procedure rules and constitution provide a clear framework on how all capital projects are to be managed.

3.2.2 Regular monthly monitoring reports are submitted to directorate management teams and then to Corporate Management Team, and to ASG, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees, showing actual expenditure compared with budget. This enables high-level scrutiny of the delivery of capital objectives against the plan and for action to be taken to ensure the longer term programme reflects emerging priorities.

3.2.3 To support in year opportunities and commitments the authority will hold a central contingency/project reserve, which is administered by corporate finance. Projects that were deemed worthwhile through the bidding process may be held on a reserve list and commenced if sufficient funding becomes available in year. The protocol around

funding unforeseen and pipeline projects and use of contingency is outlined in section 6 (L) of the MTFs.

3.2.4 The potential use of contingency and reserves for specific projects will be reported to Asset strategy Group. This will also include the request to use council funds as match funding towards external funded schemes, and the funding to support essential works including health and safety schemes that cannot be programmed at the start of the financial year.

3.3 Restriction on Borrowing and Use of Capital Receipts

The council funded element of the Capital Programme is normally financed from borrowing, capital receipts and the carry forward of unspent allocations from previous years.

There is no restriction on the level of borrowing that the council can undertake, subject to compliance with the Treasury Management Code of Practice. However subject to this compliance, borrowing is required to be funded from council's own resources - generated through savings, and/or paid for via council tax (this is also commonly known as unsupported or Prudential borrowing).

Capital receipt projections for 2021/22 are £1.5m and are based on professional estimates of property colleagues. Any additional receipts received in year (excluding those earmarked for specific schemes) will be considered to fund projects identified on the reserve list of schemes or transformation projects in line with the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.

3.4 Asset Management Planning

The council has a typical local authority property portfolio consisting of operational property, investment property and property held for specific community or regeneration purposes. The council currently manages its portfolio under the guidance of its Corporate Asset Management Plan (currently under review). In this same period, the council has adopted the current MTFO and embarked on a transformation agenda (Walsall Proud Programme) to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Both of these may have an impact on the way services are delivered or upon the strategic priorities of the organisation that in turn may require the Council to re-consider how it manages and operates the corporate property portfolio to meet these changing needs. In recognition of this, the council has sought to understand how fit for purpose its current asset management planning and function is and has identified improvements that may be needed to meet the emerging corporate agenda.

An external and independent review was undertaken in mid 2017/18 under the previous Transformation Programme theme of "Our Assets". A high level review of the asset management operating model was undertaken concentrating upon;

- A review of operational assets
- A review of existing property portfolio and service needs linked to four year medium term financial plan
- A review of the council's investment portfolio.

In October 2017 Cabinet / CMT received a presentation of the findings from the Stage 1 Asset Management Review; this review of the council's current asset management practices and capabilities resulted in a series of recommendations for improvement and provided a Draft Improvement Plan containing key activity to bring about the transformation of the Council's corporate asset management function. The review made recommendations that would reaffirm a Strategic Corporate Asset Management Approach (Now known as the Corporate Landlord work stream under the Proud Programme) to the way in which the council manages its operational and non-operational land and property portfolio, and provide the governance, capacity, systems, and skills to ensure our asset management strategy is aligned to corporate plans and objectives.

Since this time, and to prepare for the emerging Case for Change arising from the corporate Stocktake, the asset management governance have been refreshed to provide a platform for overseeing the implementation of any improvement plan and to put into place the right forums for the Strategic Corporate Landlord approach to flourish. The adoption of a Strategic Corporate Landlord model will enable the council to make more informed and joined-up decisions regarding the use of its land and property, and enable strategic decisions such as the adoption of a planned preventative maintenance programmes or land assembly to support regeneration activity, or the purchase of investment property (subject to the new regulations in respect of investing for yield and an appropriate return on investment) to be made in consideration of wider corporate objectives.

The above work is now being progressed as part of the Corporate Landlord work stream of the Walsall Proud Programme.

Additionally the Highway Asset Management Plan 2015-2021 sets out how the Corporate Plan links to the way the council develops and maintains the highways which are the single most valuable asset the council is responsible for. The way the highways are maintained and managed has a direct impact on the borough's residents, businesses and visitors and further investment will sustain and encourage economic growth.

3.5 School Estate Planning

The council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for resident children who require a school place. Basic Need Capital funding is therefore allocated by the Department for Education to local authorities, based on pupil place number forecasts, to deliver the additional places in schools to meet expected demand. Since 2016/17 the Authority has identified a significant increase in demand and has, inclusive of Basic Need carry forwards and confirmed allocations until 2021/22, a funding envelope of circa £44m in order to deliver the required anticipated places. Further allocations will be announced on a rolling annual bases via the ESFA.

The council has also as a result of previous expansion schemes been highlighted into the top decile of costs per place when compared against national benchmarks for school expansions. As a result, the council is working with the ESFA to identify where improvements can be made so that greater efficiencies and improved value for money can be achieved.

In order to support the challenges highlighted above the authority has identified the

need to appoint a strategic partner who will work with the authority to develop and deliver proposals relating to any new and emerging need for pupil places responding to the changing trends in demand for pupil places as well as support the development of a longer term plan for delivery of places and our wider Education Capital Programme. The appointment of a strategic partner will also help the Authority deliver school places more efficiently and effectively and improve value for money, responding to the points raised via the ESFA.

The anticipated expansion programme is likely to have a significant impact on the council's educational estate, providing enhancements to the operational benefit of schools. The programme will entail extensive works to extend, alter and remodel the portfolio, and could in some instances see the construction of new buildings. In accordance with any well-planned construction programme it will be important to undertake pre-construction feasibility activity and site surveys to inform all necessary consents, as well as construction costs, and future maintenance responsibilities. Such consents will need to include planning and building regulations in addition to any specific requirements of other statutory bodies/ undertakers.

3.6 Investment in Regeneration

In support of the objectives set out within the Corporate Plan 2018-2021, to achieve 'Economic Growth for all people, communities and businesses', the Council continues to plan for and deliver its regeneration plans and proposals in line with local, sub regional and regional strategies. This activity becomes even more important as part of the council's 'Reset' agenda following Covid-19, and can underpin the overall borough's economic recovery approach.

Additionally the authority, like many other council's, continues to explore alternative models for intervening in the market to aid our regeneration opportunities, and in ways that may also secure longer term revenue income as well as create additional business rate and council tax income. These opportunities will be modelled to provide assurance that sufficient investment returns over the life of the project are consistent with long term treasury investment returns adjusted for risk.

Building upon the economic growth aspirations of key documents including the West Midlands and Black Country Strategic Economic Plans, local planning policy including the Walsall Site Allocation Document and Town Centre Area Action Plan, and the Walsall Town Centre Masterplan, the Council recognises its role in enabling public and private sector investment to be secured to continue / facilitate the delivery of key development opportunities, and has used capital resources to acquire land interests in key regeneration locations, including within the Black Country Enterprise Zone (BCEZ). Consideration is being given to future acquisitions to support the delivery of other projects.

Walsall has an extensive prioritised development pipeline which comprises schemes that can support the delivery of:

- 115 hectares of land remediated/ redeveloped
- 5,350 new jobs,
- 2,400 new homes
- 280,000 square meters of employment / commercial floors space

Successful delivery of these projects will only be achieved through collaborative working between the council, public sector partners and private developers/ investors, with the potential utilisation of public sources of finance.

The council has a strong track record of working in partnership to secure investment; in recent years the council has supported £350m of investment into the borough and further interventions are planned.

The council is currently working with the West Midlands Combined Authority, Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, and private sector investors to prepare funding propositions for the delivery of development and infrastructure projects. In July 2019 the council completed the Walsall Town Centre Masterplan to build upon the Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan to understand the interventions that may need to be undertaken to 're-think' the Town Centre and unlock development opportunities; such opportunities have identified the need for public funding in the region of £116m with some of this achieved through investment propositions and co funding mechanism. The council has been successful in its bid to the Government's Future High Street Fund for a multi-million pound project to transform the connectivity of the town centre's rail and bus stations. In addition the council has been invited to submit bids to the government's Town's Fund, with £25m available for each of the eligible Bloxwich and Walsall town areas.

Looking ahead, and recognising the continued changing market conditions and development viability issues, the council has prioritised its regeneration activity to focus upon key strategic locations in the borough including Walsall and Willenhall Town Centres, the BCEZ, and significant brownfield housing development sites.

Delivery of the BCEZ can utilise Public Works Loan Board funding for upfront enabling works where this will be repaid in full through future business rate uplift. The delivery of new homes in the W2W Corridor can be assisted by the West Midlands Land Fund, but other sources of financing will also be required to unlock the 8500 new homes envisaged across Walsall and Wolverhampton. In this context it should be noted that Government has recently made announcements in relation to additional funding being provided to WMCA which may be able to support project delivery in the borough.

4. DEBT & BORROWING AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 A projection of external debt and use of internal borrowing to support capital expenditure, the council's authorised borrowing limit and operational boundary along with the Capital Financing Requirement are set out within the Treasury Management & Investment Strategy.
- 4.2 The Treasury Management & Investment Strategy also sets out the council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which identifies the financial provision that the authority is required to set aside each year for the provision of the repayment of borrowing over the life of the underlying debt.

Risk Appetite Statement

- 4.3 The Prudential Code (2017) requires authorities to disclose their risk appetite with regard to its treasury management activity. This is set out within our Treasury Management Policy Statement and within TMP1.
- 4.4 For the purpose of this statement, the authority has adopted the Orange Book (UK government publication on the strategic management of risk within government) definition of Risk Appetite, namely "the amount of risk that an organisation is prepared to accept, tolerate, or be exposed to at any point in time."
- 4.5 It is important to note that risk will always exist in some measure and cannot be removed in its entirety. Additionally, in order to realise investment and commercial gains, an organisation has to take some measure of risk. Therefore, risks need to be considered both in terms of threats to the council as well as positive opportunities.
- 4.6 It is worth noting that the Public Accounts Committee supports well-managed risk taking across government, recognising that innovation and opportunities to improve public services requires risk taking, providing that the ability, skills, knowledge and training to manage those risks well exist within the organisation or can be brought to bear.
- 4.7 The authorities risk appetite statement sets out how it balances risk and return in pursuit of achieving its objectives. It is intended to aid careful decision-making, such that the council takes well thought through risks to aid successful delivery of its services and obligations, while also understanding the adverse aspects of risk undertaken and taking appropriate measures to mitigate these in line with its stated goals. Thereby, the council's risk judgements are more explicit, transparent and consistent over time.
- 4.8 The risk appetite statement forms a key element of the council's governance and reporting framework and is set by full Council as part of the Capital Strategy. In addition, the risk appetite will be considered annually and monitored on an ongoing basis by senior management and external advisors.

Relationship to Other Aspects of Risk Management

4.9 It is important to note that the risk appetite is a high level view on the key areas of risk and the qualitative quantum therein that the council is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives. In this, it is different to other key aspects of risk management, primarily:

- The Strategic Risk Register – a detailed list of the potential significant risks the council is exposed to;
- The budget risk assessment – the assessed level of risk at which the council can operate, given its reserves, revenues, and access to funding, liquidity, regulatory and legal constraints, and any other restrictions.

4.10 The risk appetite is also supported by the following:

- The council's risk management framework;
- The governance structure and responsibilities;
- Risk reporting;
- Monitoring and escalation procedures.

Treasury Management Risk Appetite

4.11 In general, the council's treasury management risk appetite is expressed through its tolerance to risk in respect of capital preservation, meaningful liquidity and income volatility. The council seeks to minimise its exposure to risks that are unwanted and unrewarded. Capital is managed centrally on an ongoing basis to ensure that there is sufficient liquidity in the short and medium term to meet costs and support front line services, as well as meeting long-term solvency and funding requirements.

4.12 The council's treasury management operations are exposed to a broad range of risks. These, along with the council's approach to managing them, are set out in detail within the authorities Treasury Management Policies (TMP 1 – Treasury Risk management).

4.13 Managing the council's treasury management risks is an area of significant focus for senior management and members, and the council adopts an integrated view to the management and qualitative assessment of risk.

4.14 The council aims to minimise its exposure to unwanted risks – those risks that are not actively sought and which carry no commensurate reward for the council.

5. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

5.1 If commercial opportunities do arise the council will review these to understand if there is a potential for a financial or community based (regeneration / creating or securing jobs etc) contribution from the scheme.

5.2 In support of these reviewing these options and informing decision making the council has a strong governance framework that goes beyond the regulatory codes. This includes a Treasury Management Panel (TMP) in addition to the Audit Committee and reporting to Cabinet and Council. The TMP is made up of senior council finance officers who meet to discuss treasury management performance, development of

policy and identification of potential new investment products and the detail relating to them.

- 5.2 Due diligence is of paramount importance. All of the council's commercial investments will be supported by individual business cases that are subject to thorough risk assessment. Where appropriate to the size and scale of the project independent technical and legal reviews will also be considered.
- 5.3 Ongoing performance monitoring for all commercial schemes that have been entered in to is also undertaken and reported to relevant members and senior officers on a regular basis.
- 5.4 The council also seeks to ensure that all commercial schemes it considers and undertakes are fully aligned with priority outcomes set out within the Corporate Plan and are in line with the guidance local authorities are no longer allowed to borrow to invest purely for commercial yield.
- 5.5 The council's approach to non-financial investments, including their contribution, benchmarking indicators, risk assessment process and proportionality of the income derived from them in comparison to net service expenditure is set out within the Treasury Management & Investment Strategy.
- 5.6 Following consultation during 2020, HM Treasury have now revised access requirements for local authorities seeking to access borrowing from the Public Works and Loans Board (PWLB). These revisions mean that local authorities will not be able to access PWLB borrowing to buy investment property with the primary aim of generating yield, and specifically to access PWLB funding authorities will need to submit three year capital plans to PWLB, with the S151 officer confirming that there is no intention to buy investment properties primarily for yield at any point within those three years.
- 5.7 If there are any intentions by the authority to buy investment properties primarily for yield within the three year capital programme then PWLB will not be able to lend to the authority for the period of that programme. HM Treasury have also confirmed that where local authorities do seek to pursue debt-for-yield projects which they finance in other ways, such as through the use of internal cash balances or borrowing from other financial institutions, they would then not be able to access PWLB borrowing to refinance this element of debt going forwards.
- 5.8 As interest rates on PWLB borrowing are normally more favourable than other forms of borrowing, being unable to access PWLB and having to seek borrowing from other financial institutions is therefore likely to increase the overall revenue costs required to fund the elements of the council's capital programme which are funded from borrowing – for example every 1% increase in interest costs on a three year capital programme including circa £120.00m of capital spending funded from borrowing (similar to the level included within this report) would add £1.20m of additional ongoing revenue costs per year by the end of the three year period.

6. OTHER LONG TERM LIABILITIES

Pension Guarantees

- 6.1 The council has entered into a number of long-term contracts for services that have been outsourced to service providers. These often involve the transfer of council employees to the new service provider. Employee's rights are protected under the provision in Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). However, pension rights are not fully covered within TUPE regulations. The council have thus given pension guarantees to a number of organisations. This guarantee means that if an admitted body fails to pay its pension obligations then the council will be responsible for taking on those obligations.
- 6.2 All guarantees entered into need the approval of Cabinet. The guarantees are reviewed annually as part of the closure of accounts process. The pension balance is assessed on an annual basis by the Pension Fund and is subject to change due to the underlying assets. This is rebalanced on a three year basis, known as a triennial review.

Public Finance Initiative (PFI) & Other Long Term Liabilities

- 6.3 The council operates two PFI's and one Public Private Partnership PPP as follows:
- St Thomas More School PFI - contract for the construction, maintenance and operation of a secondary school in Willenhall.
 - Public Street Lighting PFI - contract for the replacement and maintenance of the council's lighting stock across the borough. The objective of this contract is to ensure that the borough is lit in a uniform manner complying with British and European standards.
 - Housing & Care 21 PPP – contract to provide 285 extra care units (including 70 shared ownership and 5 respite care) across the borough, a 40 bed dementia care unit at Goscote and increased day care across the borough (including weekend access to services).
- 6.4 The financial liabilities are disclosed annually in the council's Statement of Accounts and whilst PFI and PPP contracts are long term liabilities the agreements include financing and as such are excluded from the capital financing requirement.

7. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- 7.1 The Capital Programme and Treasury Management & Investment Strategy are managed by teams of professionally qualified accountants, who actively undertake Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on an ongoing basis to keep abreast of new developments and develop additional skills. They also have extensive Local Government finance experience between them.
- 7.2 The council's Section 151 Officer is the officer with overall responsibility for capital and treasury activities. They too are a professionally qualified accountant undertaking an ongoing CPD programme.

- 7.3 Any commercial projects that the council seek to enter into will also be supported by teams from all required professional disciplines from across the council, and external professional advice will also be sought if needed.
- 7.4 Internal and external training is offered to members on an ongoing basis to ensure they have up to date skills to make capital and treasury decisions.
- 7.5 The council's Treasury Management Panel meet regularly to discuss treasury management performance, development of policy and identification of potential new investment products and the detail relating to them.
- 7.6 The knowledge and skills of officers and members are commensurate with the council's risk appetite.

Part 1 Annex 9 : Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24

A. Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 – Council Funded Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Rolling Programme Schemes					
Economy, Environment & Communities	Memorial Safety Management in Cemeteries	The continued inspection and making safe of memorials in Walsall cemeteries and to discharge the council's duty of care within the cemeteries. Increased safety of memorials benefits the residents of Walsall by delivering a safer environment within Walsall cemeteries.	20,000	20,000	20,000
	Highways Maintenance Programme	As Highway Authority the Council has a legal responsibility to maintain the highway network. Failure to do so inevitably leads to a deterioration of our roads, increasing the likelihood of accidents and would ultimately expose the council to increased risk of third party claims.	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000
Children's Services	Aids and Adaptations / Preventative Adaptations/ Supporting Independence	This project directly supports the council's: 1. Statutory requirement to provide disabled facility grants (DFGs) this includes enabling the council to provide a continuous service rather than as some councils do in terms of stock-piling enquiries till new grant allocations are made to them. 2. Provision of maintenance of lifts and hoists. 3. Minor adaptation works.	400,000	400,000	400,000
	Health Through Warmth - Tackling Fuel Poverty	To help provide a safety net for those who cannot access other funding sources and is available as a loan charged on the individuals' property that is repaid upon sale or relevant transfer of their home. For this sum per year, it could offer 28 new boiler systems and 25 boiler repairs. The fund also helps secure continued investment from external agencies in tackling fuel poverty and excess winter deaths in the borough.	75,000	75,000	75,000
Council Wide	Health & Safety	Provision for urgent schemes to meet health and safety regulations.	250,000	250,000	250,000
	Funding to support essential works including health and safety, and other projects that cannot be programmed at start of year	1: Asbestos removal - the authority is required by legislation to manage asbestos within its properties and to remove to comply with health & safety legislation. 2: Statutory testing of gas and electrical systems in buildings. 3: Control of Legionella - statutory requirement to test all water systems and undertake upgrades and improvements as required. 4: Fire Risk Assessment - statutory requirement to ensure compliance with health & safety. 5: Demolition of redundant buildings to provide saleable assets and increase market value of sites. 6: General repair & maintenance of buildings, historic buildings, aiding relocations. 7: Self-insured property damage – insurance excess. 8: Risk Management - unforeseeable events.	750,000	750,000	750,000

Total Rolling Programme Schemes			4,295,000	4,295,000	4,295,000
Prior Year Approvals					
Economy, Environment & Communities	Traffic Signals Infrastructure	The council has a statutory duty to maintain all its traffic signal infrastructure. This programme of planned pedestrian crossing replacements will ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians across the borough (Traffic Mgt Act 2004). Also supports delivery of the council's CO2 reduction targets.	200,000	200,000	200,000
Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Economy, Environment & Communities	Provision of Community Dropped Crossings	These are dropped kerbs at strategic points along footways which permit access for wheelchairs, pushchairs, mobility scooters etc. to cross roads. The investment will allow the council to provide a rolling programme of community crossing points.	20,000	20,000	20,000
	Promotion of Community Health and Road Safety	To fund road safety schemes, to address local community concerns, which fail to achieve the strategic priorities associated with the Local Transport Plan funding in terms of casualty reduction. In supporting the delivery of these local schemes it is possible to improve local quality of life and safety creating safer communities. Year 4 of 4.	120,000	0	0
	Open Water Safety Schemes - Signage etc.	Health and safety upgrades to council owned open water sites per the council's proposed open water policy. Year 4 of 4.	2,000	0	0
	M6 Junction 10 - Widening of Bridges	Walsall Council is working in partnership with Highways England to improve Junction 10 of the M6 motorway. The scheme will include the widening of the existing bridges over the motorway to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. In addition improvements will be made to the junction of A454 Wolverhampton Road/Bloxwich Lane/Tempus Drive and the A454 Black Country Route.	0	650,000	0
	Walsall Arboretum Extension and County Park	Infrastructure Improvements - to widen and resurface the main footpath running from the Grange Car Park to the children's play area and historic core of the park, to replace the currently used wheelie bins and to improve access into and around the country park area.	190,000	0	0
	New Rail Stations at Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge – highways package	The new rail stations at Darlaston and Willenhall are promoted by WMCA/TfWM and WMRE at an estimated total package cost of £56m based on the end of GRIP Stage 4 design. This cost is for the rail infrastructure only – track, signalling, overhead line equipment, platforms, car park and ancillary infrastructure. A package of complementary highway works is required to be developed in 2021/22 and delivered in 2022/23 by the council ahead of the stations opening in 2023. This highways investment represents the council contribution to these stations. Aldridge Station is entering GRIP Stage 3 and an ongoing Council commitment to scheme development is required.	1,500,000	1,500,000	0
	Yorks Bridge (Top Up)	Yorks Bridge has suffered over recent decades and the bridge is currently the subject of a 7.5 tonne weight limit. The replacement scheme will be funded using a combination of WMBC capital funding and the Department for Transport Maintenance Block.	0	750,000	750,000

	Regional Materials Recycling Facility Project	Cabinet on 4 September 2019 approved for the council to enter into a Joint Working Arrangement with 5 partner councils in order to facilitate the delivery stage of a local authority owned Materials Recycling Facility.	4,758,000	2,722,000	0
	Enterprise Zones	Required for the council to manage borrowing costs associated with capital investment into the Enterprise Zone. Financial modelling forecasts that these costs are expected to be recovered from future business rates generated from within the zone, although the Black Country LEP are the decision making body in relation to where business rates within the zone are invested. Therefore on the basis that the BCLEP approve that costs on Walsall sites can be recovered through the business rates mechanism, then the council will only be required to cash-flow these costs.	2,937,001	13,938,273	4,072,473

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Resources & Transformation	Town Centre Strategic Acquisition for Third Sector Hub	Purchase of accommodation in Walsall Town Centre to support the formation of a third sector co-located hub and provide additional office accommodation for the Council to support its ongoing rationalisation of its operational estate. Year 3 of 3. As approved by Cabinet March 2019.	219,373	0	0
	Council House windows	Replace aged windows within the council house.	1,307,025	0	0
	Civic Centre Plumbing	Non – heating related - essential works of planned / programme maintenance given age of existing supply / parts.	66,600	0	0
	Council House general heating	Upgrading of council house heating systems.	1,085,000	0	0
	Upgrade of CCTV Cameras	Upgrade of cameras in Bloxwich, Leamore, Willenhall, Darlaston, Palfrey, and Caldmore. 10 x new re-deployable cameras plus costs for 5 years.	200,000	0	0
	Council House Roof Repairs	Replace roof as it is at the end of its life, plus timber repairs.	750,000	750,000	0
	Replacement of 'tablet' technology	A 'tablet rollout' programme was completed during 2019 enabling agile working and the adoption of Office 365, with replacement starting in 2022.	0	2,250,000	2,250,000
	Smartphones	Current mobile phone devices will require replacement beginning in 2021/22. Out of life devices will not receive security patches nor upgrades to the android operating system - will result in 'apps' not being updated, including 'outlook app' used to receive email.	200,000	200,000	0
	Card payments, digital website etc)	To ensure the council remains PCI compliant and allows for citizens to pay for services on line.	250,000	250,000	0
	Maintaining a safe and secure environment	Hardware & software upgrades to maintain compliance for current standards e.g. BACS software & open banking compliance.	100,000	200,000	200,000
Children's Services	School Estate Condition Survey	Ongoing provision to cover school conditions. Part allocation from 2020/21 proposed to be carried forward to 2021/22.	79,300	250,000	250,000
	School Temporary Classrooms	Ongoing provision for improving / replacing permanent mobile classrooms when they reach a state of disrepair. This has been held corporately to fund emergency costs arising.	250,000	250,000	250,000
Total Prior Year Approvals			14,234,299	23,930,273	7,992,473
Current Year Approvals (2020/21)					
Economy, Environment & Communities	Waste Management Strategy	Strategic acquisition of property to support the future delivery of the council's waste management strategies.	8,890,338	3,004,788	0
	Allotment boundary improvement works	21 sites requiring boundary improvement works as approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2020.	260,000	0	0

Total Current Year Approvals			9,150,338	3,004,788	0
Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Proud investment					
Economy, Environment & Communities	Bloxwich Active Living Centre landing development	Development of landing and office space to extend fitness suite, create bespoke indoor cycle studio, and install virtual instructor will deliver c£90k per annum additional income.	0	170,000	0
Resources & Transformation	Webcasting and hybrid council meetings	To make the Council Chamber and Conference Room 2 functional for hybrid meetings.	20,000	0	0
Total Proud investment			20,000	170,000	0
New Capital Schemes – Health and Safety					
Economy, Environment & Communities	Walsall Gala pool filters	Filters clean the pool water, with all of the 1.4 million litres of water passing through them every 6 hours. Project proposal is to replace current failing system with ceramic filters (new technology) which offer efficiency savings, energy savings, and are fully portable.	104,000	0	0
	Brine pool air handling	The air handling system supplying the brine pool has been recommended for replacement.	65,000	0	0
Council Wide	Health and Safety	Additional funding to support new health and safety works / security measures / social distancing measures during Covid-19.	332,000	0	0
Total Capital Schemes – Health and Safety			501,000	0	0

New Capital Schemes – Council Infrastructure					
Council Wide	Pipeline investment	Funding for pipeline investment opportunities. This to include additional match funding costs if required to support the Future High Streets Fund; Willenhall Garden City; Walsall Town Centre Masterplan; Regional Materials Recycling Facility Project; and major capital schemes as they arise, subject to approval of a full business case by Cabinet to access these funds.	28,000,000	8,000,000	4,000,000
Resources & Transformation	Computer Aided Facilities management system	To provide a comprehensive computer based integrated system to manage repairs, minor and major works, stock condition, financial modelling, asset and new build evaluation, contract management, DLO module for staff allocation such as direct labour and soft FM caretaking and cleaning, asset management property records, valuation toll, gis integration, finance loading of invoicing, statutory compliance, asbestos etc.	250,000	100,000	0
	One Source	Additional infrastructure requirements for the implementation of integrated Oracle payroll system.	500,000	0	0
	High Streets Fund	To invest in Walsall to deliver a much-needed boost to our high street at this challenging time, match funding to external funding announced by MHCLG on 26 December 2020,	100,000	4,240,000	18,682,252
Total Capital Schemes – Council Infrastructure			28,850,000	12,340,000	14,682,252
Total Draft Capital Programme – Council Funded Schemes			57,050,637	43,740,061	30,969,726

B: Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 – Externally Funded Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Economy, Environment & Communities	Growth Deal	The Black Country Growth Deal, 'Made in the Black Country, Sold around the World', was agreed with Government in July 2014. The Growth Deal will create the skills, connections and locations for further high value manufacturing success and support growth in the Black Country's automotive, aerospace and construction sectors. To date the programme has committed c£148m and received claims c£77m. It has contracted 3,532 jobs excluding apprenticeships and over 6,000 including them (Dep't of Communities & Local Gov). In January 2019 the Black Country Joint Committee appointed Walsall Council as its Single Accountable Body, as a result the balance of the Growing Places Fund (£5.4m) was transferred from Sandwell Council, with the funds to be used to over-programme Growth Deal.	0	5,439,498	0
	LTP Highway Maintenance Programme	This capital funding, known as the maintenance block, is distributed by the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA).As the Highway Authority we have an extremely high profile duty to maintain our highway network. This money is provided, by DfT as a capital grant via the ITA with the condition that it should be spent on the classified road network. (Department for Transport via ITA).	1,943,000	1,943,000	1,943,000
	Pothole Fund	This capital funding, known as Pothole Action fund, is distributed by the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA), specifically to repair pothole or to prevent them forming in the first place. Funding is based upon a formula using road length data.	154,600	154,600	154,600
	West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (STP) 'Movement for Growth'	The Government provides each locality with grant funding to help implement the Local Transport Plan in their area. The grant is used for the implementation of small scale capital schemes; development of major capital schemes and to part fund major schemes implementation costs. The programme is designed to address road safety issues, progress the Council's major scheme aspirations; and resource the required 'local contributions' to approved major schemes. (Department for Transport / West Midlands ITA).	1,276,300	1,276,300	1,276,300
	Land and Property Investment Fund	In January 2019 the Black Country Joint Committee appointed Walsall Council as its Single Accountable Body, as a result the Land and Property Investment Fund transferred from Wolverhampton Council. This is a grant which is part of the Investment Programme of the West Midlands Combined Authority for Black Country brownfield sites, and is drawn down in arrears. The Black Country LEP has agreed to deliver 1,860 new jobs, 1,600 new houses and 126,000 sqm of commercial floor space through deployment of the first tranche (£53m) of the total fund allocated to the Black Country LEP (£150m in total).	8,548,000	0	0

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Resources & Transformation	Get Britain Building Fund	Funding of £66m was awarded to the WMCA by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, from what is now known as the 'Get Britain Building Fund'. This fund is seen as one of many platforms to enable the Covid-19 recovery plan across the country and boost local economies. Projects submitted must be deemed Value for Money (VfM) with a strong Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), 'Shovel Ready' with planning permission approved and able to deliver within an 18-month timescale. Two of these projects were Black Country projects, and the WMCA are passporting the funds for these two projects (NBI and VLR) to Walsall Council as the Single Accountable Body for the BCLEP. £13m in 2020/21.	17,447,800	0	0
	High Streets Fund	To invest in Walsall to deliver a much-needed boost to our high street at this challenging time, as announced by MHCLG on 26 December 2020,	8,894,325	2,550,642	0
Children's Services	Disabled Facilities Grant	This project directly supports the council's statutory requirement to provide disabled facility grants (DFGs). It is based on the delivery of the ring fenced award of grant money from government. The project has a direct positive impact on the number and subsequent varied costs to the council from the increasing level of demand for home adaptations.	2,894,013	2,894,013	2,894,013
	Integrated Community Equipment Store (ICES)	Supplies equipment to people with both a social care and a health need on an assessed needs basis. This is a pooled budget between the CCG and the council, this capital funding will be used to purchase this equipment which will enable people to return home or continue to remain at home. This now forms part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) for which the council is host. (Department of Health).	810,000	810,000	810,000
	Basic Need	Paid to LAs to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies, and establishing new schools.	1,319,871	1,319,871	1,319,871
	Devolved Formula Capital	Received by the LA then allocated out to individual schools as per allocations defined by the DfE. It is intended to provide schools with capital funding for improvement to buildings and other facilities, including ICT, or capital repairs / refurbishments and minor works. (Department for Education).	514,854	514,854	514,854
	Capital Maintenance	Allocated to the LA on an annual basis to improve and maintain the condition of the school estate (buildings and grounds). Investment is prioritised on keeping school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, and health and safety issues. (Dept for Education).	1,917,799	1,917,799	1,917,799
	School Nursery Capital Fund – Goldsmith	The Project: A new build, Option 2 creating 16 additional full time nursery places and holiday provision on the Goldsmith Primary Academy site, Goldsmith Road, Walsall WS3 1DI. Approved by Cabinet 20/03/2019 and 18/03/2020.	991,550	0	0
Total Draft Capital Programme - Externally Funded Schemes			46,712,112	18,820,577	10,830,437

Part 1 Annex 10 : Forecast Capital Carry Forwards from 2020/21 to 2021/22 (Council funded schemes only)

Capital project	2020/21 Budget £	Estimated Outturn £	Forecast Variance to carry forward to 2021/22 £
Children's, Education and Customer Services			
School estate condition survey	250,000	79,300	170,700
Children's, Education and Customer Services	250,000	79,300	170,700
Economy, Environment and Communities			
New homes bonus	76,999	10,000	66,999
Regenerating Walsall	230,006	20,000	210,006
Town and district centres public realm	770,500	0	770,500
Walsall market	40,516	0	40,516
Town centre masterplan	250,000	0	250,000
Broadway west playing fields	92,000	0	92,000
St Peter church repairs to surrounding wall	32,784	0	32,784
District town centre's public realm improvements	736,580	354,424	382,156
Hatherton Road car park	225,187	13,731	211,456
Promotion of community health & safety	360,000	60,000	300,000
Replacement of obsolete analogue weather stations	30,000	0	30,000
Replacement of obsolete traffic signal control equipment	200,000	50,000	150,000
Replacement of speed enforcement camera	145,316	4,593	140,723
Hatherton road multi-story car park structural maintenance	200,000	0	200,000
Enterprise zones	4,185,088	300,000	3,885,088
CCTV	432,000	265,000	167,000
Open plus in libraries	205,542	78,542	127,000
Single library management system	39,757	0	39,757
Strategic acquisition of property to support the waste management strategy	8,545,500	0	8,545,500
Workshop breakdown van.	65,442	0	65,442
Regional materials recycling facility	2,782,381	782,381	2,000,000
Total Economy, Environment and Communities	19,645,598	1,938,671	17,706,927
Resources and Transformation			
Planned property maintenance	250,000	125,000	125,000
Civic centre heating	1,146,646	3,500	1,143,146
Council house rewiring	972,794	872,794	100,000
Council house smoke & heat detection fire alarm	326,920	0	326,920
Council house general heating	1,091,360	0	1,091,360
Schools projects	159,419	12,446	146,973
Council house internal decoration	55,500	16,000	39,500
Willenhall lane travellers site pumping station	44,400	0	44,400
Council chamber refurbishment	187,002	27,110	159,892
Data backup system replacement	50,000	0	50,000
Essential Microsoft upgrades & foundation for office 365	145,830	87,488	58,342
ICT-safe and secure environment	3,402,645	1,166,437	2,236,208
Single mobile devices for use within the new in-tune platform	34,820	0	34,820
Proud - ICT	200,000	132,000	68,000
Enabling technology	11,700,000	1,385,000	10,315,000
Telephony cloud based system	500,000	75,000	425,000
Proud card payments digital website	500,000	50,000	450,000
Security arrangements to Corporate Buildings	125,000	0	125,000
MYCIMS - Paperless Meetings	29,500	11,000	18,500
Total Resources and Transformation	20,921,836	3,963,775	16,958,061
Total draft capital carry forward from 2020/21 to 2021/22 (council funded schemes only)	40,817,434	5,981,746	34,835,688

Part 1 Annex 11 – Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy

Background

The 2015 Autumn Statement announced a new flexibility for local authorities to use new capital receipts to fund expenditure on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs or demand for services in future years. The flexibility was initially made available until March 2019, but in December 2017, the Secretary of State announced, alongside the provisional local government finance settlement, the continuation of the capital receipts flexibility programme for a further 3 years to March 2022.

Councils can only use sale proceeds realised over that period (1 April 2016 to 31 March 2022), but not existing receipts. Local authorities are required to publish their plans for the flexible use of capital receipts in a Strategy which must be approved by Full Council.

The Strategy should be approved before the beginning of each financial year. If changes are proposed to the Strategy during the course of the financial year, for example if a project is identified which can be funded using this flexibility, then the revised Strategy will require the approval of Full Council. Any revisions to the Strategy in-year must also be reported to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Qualifying Expenditure

Qualifying expenditure is that which is forecast to generate on-going savings to an authority's and/or to another public sector body's net service expenditure, or to transform service delivery.

Capital receipts can only be applied to fund set up and implementation costs and not on-going revenue costs. Examples include:

- Funding the cost of service restructuring or rationalisation where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation;
- Digital investment;
- Improving systems to tackle fraud and corruption;
- Setting up commercial or alternative delivery models;
- Investment in service reform – setting up pilot schemes;
- Sharing back-office and administrative functions with other councils/public sector bodies;
- Integrating public facing services across two or more public sector bodies.

Summary of planned receipts

Capital receipts performance across the qualifying period has now been reviewed. This has confirmed that up to £4m of Capital receipts which have been realised during this period have not yet been utilised within the capital programme undertaken over that time and are therefore currently available.

The council's Capital programme for 2020/21 anticipated that new capital receipts of £1.5m would be generated to support the capital programme. This therefore meant that £4m of existing capital receipts that have been realised during the qualifying period were available

to fund qualifying expenditure as detailed in the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, without any increase to existing assumptions regarding borrowing required to support the capital programme. This £4m was approved to be included in 2020/21 however as it has not been utilised approval is being sought to roll this use forward to 2021/22.

Summary of Planned Use

The Strategy is required to list each project that plans to make use of the capital receipts flexibility.

It is intended that the available capital receipts balance of up to £4m will be utilised to fund investment in the Proud Programme (including the Enabling Technology work stream where the capital programme highlights that this expenditure will be funded through a mixture of borrowing and/or capital receipts), and that authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader, to allocate capital receipts of up to £4m to support the revenue costs of these transformation projects.

This utilisation will release revenue costs currently set aside to fund these projects. Additionally the Proud Programme is expected to deliver a benefit ratio of 1:2.5 (for every one off £1 invested, this will deliver £2.50 recurring benefit which can be used to support the council's financial position or be reinvested into services).

Impact on Prudential Indicators

The Strategy is also required to identify the prudential indicators that will be impacted by this investment. This impact is set out below:

- Pr11a. - Capital expenditure – Council Resources – increased by £4m

No other prudential indicators are impacted, as these capital receipts were not already assumed to support schemes within the existing capital programme that would now need to be financed through an increase in borrowing.

The above impact on prudential indicators shows that this Strategy is affordable and will not impact on the Council's operational and authorised borrowing limits. Further details on the council's Prudential Indicators can be found within the Treasury Management & Investment Strategy.

Monitoring

The Strategy will be monitored throughout the financial year and may be updated and replaced as proposals are developed and expenditure incurred.

Part 1 Annex 12 – Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) Section 25 Report on the Adequacy of Proposed Reserves and Robustness of the Budget Estimates

Context

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 (“the Act”) and to comply with CIPFA guidance on local authority reserves and balances, the Chief Finance Officer is required to formally report to members on the robustness of the estimates used for the purpose of calculating the budget and the adequacy of proposed reserves needed for meeting future expenditure requirements. The Chief Finance Officer (Under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972) is appropriately qualified under the terms of Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. In signing off this overall revenue budget report, the signature of the Interim Executive Director for Resources and Transformation who holds the position of Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer, constitutes the formal declaration required under the Act that these conditions are met (based on the available information at the time of signing).

Reserves

It is prudent for councils to maintain an adequate level of general reserves (or working balance). They provide a buffer and mitigate against risks, such as unavoidable and unknown demand and other service cost pressures which may arise in the year; cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing; and support the management of the impact of any unexpected events or emergencies. Earmarked reserves are also set to meet known or predicted requirements, for example, self-insured liabilities, grant reserves, contingent and potential liabilities. Reserves allow the council to manage the impact of these and to manage change without the need for immediate reductions in services. In the current financial climate arising primarily from a global pandemic, but also in the context of the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union, the importance of good financial management, including maintaining a prudent level of reserves and contingencies, cannot be over-estimated.

There is no overall formula for calculating what an appropriate level of reserves should be. Whilst the medium term financial strategy (MTFS) sets out a guide as to what should be a minimum level, the actual level is based on best practice guidance, best professional judgement, the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the council, including an assessment of known and potential risks and an understanding of national and local factors.

A minimum level of reserves is specified in the Budget. The Council’s (MTFS) sets a range of between 1% of gross revenue expenditure for the year in question (£6.58m) and 2.5% (£16.45m). However, Section 25 of the Act requires the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to report on the adequacy of proposed reserves and to determine the minimum level which the Council is required to have regard to in setting the overall budget envelope.

The MTFS also sets out the authority's financial framework including, as the first of ten themes of operational principles, calls on reserves and contingencies. A key principle is that reserves should not be considered to be or used as a budget and any in-year calls on the working balance should be replenished. Services cannot approve unbudgeted

expenditure on the assumption that it will be met from the working balance. This matter is reserved to the CFO, in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance.

Adequacy of reserves

The CFO assesses and determines the appropriate level of reserves (including school's reserves), provisions and contingencies using a variety of mechanisms, including;

- Being significantly involved in the budget setting process, the annual financial cycle, and engaged in the strategic leadership of the organisation (through regular meetings with the Chief Executive and corporate management team);
- The annual refresh of the medium term financial strategy (MTFS) and outlook;
- Challenging the budget at various stages of construction, including the reasonableness of the key budget assumptions, such as estimates of financial pressures, realism of income targets, robustness of plans to deliver savings, and the extent to which known trends and liabilities are provided for;
- Review of financial risk assessments, including in relation to Covid-19 and Brexit;
- Review of the movements, trends and availability of contingency, provisions and earmarked reserves to meet unforeseen cost pressures in the context of future pressures and issues;
- The use of professional experience and best professional judgement;
- The use of appropriate professional, technical guidance and local frameworks (CIPFA guidance, LAAP99, Local Government Act 73, Localism Act 2011);
- Knowledge and involvement of colleagues involved in the process, including Directors and budget holders, along with finance business partners;
- Consultation with Members as appropriate, including the Portfolio Holder for Finance;
- Review of the strength of financial management and reporting arrangements, including internal control and governance arrangements;
- Review of the current year's financial performance in services, actions to address areas of pressure, known future service delivery changes, the level of schools reserves and the financial performance of schools;
- Review of national and local economic, market, legislative and financial conditions.

A risk assessed approach is used to determine the required level of reserves and contingencies. This includes external risks; including Covid-19, Brexit, national policy changes, legislation, national funding arrangements and levels of support available, changes in market and economic conditions, service user behaviours (e.g. impact on income projections); and internal risks such as the ability to deliver planned savings. The MTFS is annually updated and approved by Cabinet to reflect the changing environment in which we work – the latest being approved by Cabinet on 15 July 2020. Reserves and contingencies are addressed within the Strategy.

In the current climate, there continues to be significant uncertainties around funding, particularly in light of the global pandemic, the impact of lockdown arrangements on our communities and finances, impact of Brexit, proposed changes to central funding (Fair Funding), including in relation to business rates retention, treatment of public health budget, and funding of adults and children's social care.

The continued need to make savings whilst driving improvements in customer and employee satisfaction over the medium term through the Proud transformation programme, and maintaining the organisational capacity to deliver this at the required scale and pace also creates risk. It is therefore prudent to consider contingency plans

should in year reporting arrangements identify that planned savings may be delayed. Alongside the national Fair Funding policy changes being considered and any 'unknown' demographic and demand cost pressures, this increases organisational risk and therefore the need for adequate levels of reserves to be maintained in current and future years.

The level of opening balances for 2021/22 is partially dependent on the level of closing balances for 2020/21. The following details general reserves as at 31 March 2020, together with the proposed use of and transfer to reserves, and the resulting balance as at 1 April 2021, to secure the opening level of reserves recommended by the Chief Finance Officer.

Opening General Reserves	£m
Balance as at 1 April 2020	(14.41)
Falls prevention	0.04
Street Cleansing activities – Cabinet 18.03.20	0.71
Transfer of in year forecast underspends (as at December 2020)	(0.26)
Estimated closing balance as at 31 March 2021	(13.92)
Transfers from earmarked reserves to meet forecast risks	(2.72)
Opening Balance as at 1 April 2021	(16.64)

This level of balances is considered prudent for a number of reasons:

- Uncertainty over the level of funding going forward, particularly in light of Covid-19 , Brexit and the fundamental changes being undertaken in relation to central funding and business rate retention.
- Operational, strategic and financial risks facing the authority, as set out in this statement.
- The council is not permitted to budget for a level of general reserves below that determined by the MTFS and the S151 officer.
- Balances are predicated on total savings of c£28.90m being achieved in 2021/22. Whilst an assessment of plans has been undertaken, it is prudent to hold a contingency to manage any delay in delivery of savings, particularly in the light of Covid-19 and uncertainty as to the timing and extent of lifting of lockdown arrangements.
- Uncertainty around future demand led services, specifically within Adult and Children's Services.

The CFO has assessed the current year's financial performance and actions taken to address underlying pressures. In considering this, alongside the financial risk assessment, the previous financial year's financial performance, and the potential risks and pressures facing the organisation, the CFO recommends that opening reserves are set at a minimum of £16.64m. This is based on the following assessed categories of financial risk:

Financial Risk Assessment	£m
Funding risks – fall out of grant, council tax changes, etc	1.79
Cost / Demand Pressures	6.30
Delivery of Proud Savings - continuing impact of Covid-19 on delivery plans	5.06
Covid-19 - additional cost risk over confirmed funds	1.46
National and legislative impact i.e. Brexit	0.82
Loss of Income / Investments	1.21
Assessed General Reserve Requirement	16.64

Earmarked Reserves

The council maintains a number of reserves, earmarked for specific purposes, all of which are set at the levels required to meet future commitments. These cover:

- Council liabilities - These reserves cover expenditure where the council has a legal obligation to pay costs, however the timing of which is not yet known, such as redundancies, legal costs, business rate appeals, insurance claims, pension costs. Once the timing and liability is known, the liability becomes a provision within the financial statements;
- Grants received in advance (where the council has received money in advance of the next accounting period or money that covers more than one accounting period), which will be spent in line with the grant conditions;
- Covid-19 reserves such as the Local Tax Income Guarantee to be used to support the impact of Covid-19 on the collection fund;
- Treasury reserves - These reserves are to minimise the impact of interest rate changes and finance early redemption of loans to reduce the council's future exposure to interest rates;
- Demand - These reserves are primarily to provide short term additional funding for Children's and Adult Social Care where a spike in demand may create overspends, but the likelihood is still uncertain. Additionally, an amount is provided for Housing Benefits;
- Projects - These reserves are to finance service transformation, major capital projects, and regeneration of the borough;
- Schools reserves held by but not controlled by the council.

An annual review of earmarked reserves is undertaken and funds adjusted as required or released where liability is assessed as ceased.

The expected level of earmarked reserves as at 1 April 2021 is as follows and is considered reasonable and prudent.

Earmarked Reserves	£m
Balance as at 1 April 2020	(148.52)
Created in year – including Covid-19 collection fund reliefs and grants	(34.34)
Expected to be used in year	48.79
Replenishment in year	(33.20)
Released in year	5.03
Estimated closing balance as at 31 March 2021	(162.24)

Central Contingency

As well as general and earmarked reserves, the council holds a small revenue contingency to manage unforeseen but recurring expenditure. The contingency is held centrally and is calculated between 0.1% and 0.15% of the year's gross revenue budget. For 2021/22 this is to be set at the higher level at £987k.

A prudent central capital contingency is also held, not exceeding 10% of the annual council funded element of the capital programme requirement, to accommodate unforeseen / unbudgeted expenditure (i.e. where, due to the level of uncertainty, the financial impact is not certain at the time of setting the programme). The exact level is set by the CFO. The

contingency will be funded either from drawing down the earmarked capital reserve or from an annual revenue contribution to capital outlay from the project reserve (subject to there being sufficient funds to replenish this at year end). For 2021/22 this is to be set at £500k, which is considered adequate based on past requirements.

Schools Reserves

The CFO, as part of this statement, is required to confirm that school's balances are adequate. In 2006/07, DfES introduced expectations on local authorities with regard to their schemes of financial management. Part of this legislation required schools to agree a balance control mechanism. This mandatory requirement was subsequently removed. The council and Walsall Schools Forum considered the options around balance control and given the authority powers to investigate and claw back balances in excess of a specified percentage of the school budget share. The council notes that the latest Academies handbook has removed the need for balance control for many academies.

Schools Forum is mindful of value for money in all that schools do, looks for medium term financial planning and encourages an adequate working balance as part of that process. This is supported by regular reports to the Schools Forum on medium term funding and more recently linking value for money and performance.

The adequacy of balances is reviewed annually by the CFO. For the current financial year, 3 schools are operating licenced deficits. However, the first of these schools has requested a licenced deficit for 2020/21 only, the second has already implemented actions required to return to a surplus from 2022/23. The remaining school is being provided with support by the authority to help it manage its financial pressures and return to surplus within the timescales required within the scheme for financing schools.

The overall levels of schools reserves is kept under regular review, along with any exceptional balances, and based on school budget plans for 2020/21 the level of schools reserves are forecast to move from an opening balance of £8.00m to a closing balance of £4.20m, a planned reduction of £3.80m which is mainly linked to the three schools with licenced deficits detailed above along with investment plans within individual schools. The council and Schools Forum has identified that the implementation of a new National Fair Funding Formula continues to pose a financial risk to individual schools, and options to manage this risk continue to be identified as part of the process to set the local schools funding formula each year.

Overall Assessment of Reserves

An opening level of general reserves of £16.64m is considered to be sufficient for most possible events, over the short-term i.e. for 2021/22. The council will continue to face real and present financial challenges beyond this. In the context of this funding environment, wherever possible reserves will be at least maintained during 2021/22 and beyond.

In recommending an adequate level of reserves, the CFO considers and monitors the opportunity costs of maintaining particular levels of reserves and balances and compares these to the benefits accrued from having such reserves. The opportunity cost of maintaining a specific level of reserves is the 'lost' opportunity for example, of investing elsewhere to generate additional investment income, or using the funds to invest in service improvements. In assessing this it is important to consider that reserves can only be used once. Therefore, any use of general reserves above the lower minimum threshold is only

ever used on one-off items of expenditure. The level of reserves is also determined by use of a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure they represent an appropriately robust "safety net" which adequately protects the council (a complex and multi-disciplinary metropolitan district local authority) against potential unforeseen and therefore unbudgeted costs.

In this context, it is considered that a level of reserves set at £16.64m presents an optimum balance between risk management and opportunity cost. The CFO is satisfied that the benefits accrued in maintaining these at the recommended level outweigh the potential lost opportunity from investing these reserves in other ways. This maintains a suitable and sustainable level of reserves, which include ensuring sound governance and financial stability in the short and longer term.

The above assessment concludes that general reserves, if set at £16.64m, will be at an appropriate level; as determined in accordance with the MTFs and the CFO's Officer's professional advice. The budget is predicated on delivery of £28.90m of cashable benefit. A savings tracker in relation to delivery of 2021/22 savings has been instigated and at this point, whilst uncertainty remains about the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on savings, our current assessment is that the combination of known Covid-19 grants and our financial risk assessment of potential impact, which has resulted in the CFO Officer recommending a higher level of general reserves than that currently set out within the MTFs (as a direct result of Covid-19) should be sufficient, *based on our current knowledge*, to manage further short term impact. Any longer term impact is likely to require further actions, including identification of alternative actions to address any shortfalls and replenish any in year use of general reserves.

Robustness of the Estimates included within the Budget

The CFO has been involved throughout the entire budget process, including input to the drafting of the budget, the ongoing financial monitoring and reporting process, evaluation of investments and savings, engagement with Members of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny, advising colleagues, challenge and evaluation activities, and the scrutiny and approval of various reports.

As stated, the budget is risk assessed to ensure adequate funding for all known liabilities and to provide sufficient resources to enable service change and transformation. It covers an assessment of current year's performance, an assessment of income targets, estimates of future cost and potential unavoidable demand pressures.

Key assumptions

The cost assumptions and prices used in the budget are derived from current intelligence and are considered appropriate. Demand changes have been identified and are reflected in budget increases identified in the appendices where appropriate, on a risk assessed basis. Areas of identified pressure within 2021/22 are planned to be covered by a combination of base budget alignments to recognise the agreed ongoing management of corrective action undertaken during 2020/21 or base budget adjustments, where growth/investment is included within the 2021/22 budget to cover the cost pressure (or income/grant shortfall). Fees and charges have been reviewed and changes are reflected in the overall budget. Contingency has been built in (inflationary / contractual) for uncertainty concerning the impact of Brexit on supply and prices.

Capital receipts and the borrowing requirement to be used for the capital programme are

based on professional estimates both of timing and value. Assumptions on funding, including government funding, business rate and council tax levels, inflation, income assumptions, increases in costs arising from demographics and demand, borrowing requirements, balances and contingencies, are set out within the main budget report and are considered appropriate.

Significant investment has been included to cover those areas of most demand and volatility, particularly in adult and children's social care.

Proud Savings

The Proud Programme has been created to change how we do things, as well as what we do, to improve customer and employee satisfaction, whilst achieving financial benefits in a more considered and sustainable way. The programme is organised as work streams and benefits are aligned to these – for example, Customer Access and Management improvement, Commissioning (third party spend), income generation and cost recovery, etc rather than on a more traditional (Directorate/Service) basis. Given this and the size and scale of the programme, this inevitably creates uncertainty. Work, however, has developed in 2020/21 to translate the work stream benefits into services via service transformation plans (STP's), allowing c£66m of savings to be incorporated into the 2021/22 to 2023/24 budget report. Whilst Covid-19 has impacted on delivery of approx. £8.02m of the approved £8.77m of savings for 2020/21, traction is now taking place in relation to delivery.

Finance, the joint programme management team, and Proud work stream leads, have reviewed the Proud work stream plans, benefits realisation and the anticipated level of cashable savings in relation to 2021/22. Actions to address gaps between planned activity and realisation of benefit have been discussed and agreed as appropriate with CMT. Work is progressing on a revised programme implementation plan covering a 3 year delivery horizon aligned to the budget.

These include;

- Resource requirements being identified and funding aligned (within the overall funding envelope approved by Cabinet), including; organisational (i.e. work stream and implementation leads) and specialist capacity and capability where required (i.e. IT, commercial, support services and change management) to deliver the change required to realise the benefits;
- A re-scoped Programme Implementation Plan is in development to support clarity of dependencies and sequencing of activity between work streams to deliver benefits identified and actions identified to support delivery.
- There is an agreed governance structure applied to the programme to ensure accountability and for assurance to be provided to the overall Walsall Proud Programme Board
- Programme risks will be managed through the governance arrangements and escalated appropriately.

A benefits based change approach has been agreed, such that benefits milestones will be fixed in time; planned changes must adapt to meet the benefits not the other way around and benefits will be realised by being taken from budgets (or agreed by Cabinet for reinvestment. Provided all actions are taken within the agreed timescales then cashable savings of c£28.90m for 2021/22 as required by the MTFO are deemed achievable. The financial risk assessment which has informed the CFO's recommendation on an adequate level of opening general reserves, does contain a contingency, included in the table above, to

manage any ongoing impact of the current lockdown or any new restrictions.

Responsibility and accountability for delivery of Proud savings rests with the relevant CMT sponsor and work stream implementation leads for delivery of work stream capabilities and with Directors for delivery of STP's, and progress will be monitored and reported throughout the forthcoming year.

Activity in relation to the overall plan for the full life of the programme is currently being developed, and a regular assessment of the plan of activity will be undertaken and reported throughout 2021/22 to ensure assurance can be provided in relation to benefits realisation and that delivery of savings over the MTFO period is in line with that required.

Risks, including Strategic, Operational and Financial

In the budget, due regard is made to the strategic and operational risks facing the council. Some of these relate to the current economic condition, others to potential regulatory or national issues (Brexit related and none), which may have a local impact. Estimates and forecasts include all known significant financial risks over the next year and medium term to inform spending decisions. The council continues to use an embedded good practice risk assessment approach both when setting the budget and in validating estimated outturns. This continues for the 2020/21 outturn and the 2021/22 to 2023/24 budget.

The risk assessment has highlighted the following areas of financial risk:

- Current impact of Covid-19 and uncertainty around future impact;
- Potential economic impact of Brexit, now we have left the EU;
- Demand – the risk of further demand, specifically in children's' and adult social care, above the levels incorporated into the budget;
- New Burdens / national policy implications on local budgets – the risk that Government changes in policy will lead to a transfer of responsibility / new burdens, without the transfer of funding to support those activities; or potential costs arising from inspections arising after the budget was set;
- Fair Funding and uncertainty around central funding of local authority services beyond 2021/22;
- Grant reductions not published or known about at the time the budget is set;
- Unbudgeted further income shortfalls during the financial year;
- Unknown liabilities that may arise after the budget is set, for example from changes in legislation or statutory guidance;
- Cost pressures – i.e. inflationary pressures, pressures arising from a severe winter (i.e. gritting, road maintenance, gully cleaning), pressures from economic changes;
- Delays in delivery of Proud savings, for example, arising from implementing organisational change, renegotiating or tendering for third party contracts, Covid-19, etc;

These have been assessed, and a risk value assigned. Professional and best estimates have been made of the scope of the financial risk. Sensitivity analysis has been used where appropriate, to determine an appropriate risk value. The assessment confirms that a reserve value at the higher end of the MTFS guidelines is appropriate.

The Budget in Context

The budget includes the allocation of financial resources to different services and projects, proposed reserves and contingency funds, setting the council tax and council tax base, and decisions relating to the control of the councils borrowing requirement, the control of its capital expenditure and the setting of virement limits. The budget has been constructed in accordance with the principles and direction set out in the MTFS.

All cost pressures, efficiencies and savings have been appraised to ensure accuracy of costings and deliverability. Individual officers are identified as accountable for their implementation. The council is working to improve performance outcomes on a range of activities which are monitored throughout the year. Budget provision has been identified for the priorities outlined in the council's Corporate Plan.

Summary

Best endeavours have been made to ensure that the budget and reserves are adequate using the information available at this date. The budget has been constructed within a professional policy-led medium term strategic framework, using appropriate assumptions, linking investment and spending to key priorities and having undertaken a comprehensive assessment of risk.

In summary, I can confirm that, taking into account the information known at this time;

(a) the estimates made for the purposes of the calculation of the Council's budget requirement under Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, contained in the budget report, are robust;

(b) the financial reserves available to the Council as a result of agreeing the proposals contained within the Budget report are adequate to enable the setting of a lawful budget for 2021/22.

Deborah Hindson
Interim Executive Director, Resources and Transformation,
Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer)

Section B - Part 2 – Treasury Management

A: Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2021/22 Onwards

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in counterparties or instruments with an appropriate level of risk (as defined within the council's Treasury Management Policies), providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The other main function of the treasury management service is to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to fund the council's approved capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. On occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet council risk or cost objectives.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

“The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

Reporting requirements

Full Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, four main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy - This covers:

- the capital plans (including prudential indicators);
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure i.e. that funded from borrowing, is charged to revenue over time);
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters that set out how investments are to be made and managed).

A Mid-Year Treasury Management report – This will update members on the progress of the capital plans, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and identify whether any policies require revision.

An Annual Treasury report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates included within the strategy.

A Capital Strategy report – This is intended to provide the following: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed
- the implications for future financial sustainability

The aim of this report is to ensure that all elected members on the Full Council fully understand the overall strategy, governance procedures and risk appetite entailed by this Strategy.

Scrutiny

The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to Full Council. For Walsall Council the Cabinet undertakes this role.

1.2 Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22

The Strategy for 2021/22 covers two main areas:

Capital issues

- capital plans and the prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy.

Treasury management issues

- the current treasury position;
- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the council;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy;
- policy on borrowing in advance of need;
- debt rescheduling;
- the investment strategy;
- creditworthiness policy;
- policy on use of external service providers

These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and MHCLG Investment Guidance.

1.3 Training

The CIPFA Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. This especially applies to members responsible for scrutiny. A treasury management e-learning course is available to all members and further specific training is then arranged as when required.

1.4 Treasury management consultants

The council uses Link Asset Services, Treasury Solutions as its external treasury management advisors.

The council recognises that the responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers.

1.5 Treasury management Monitoring

Local and Prudential indicators are used to monitor treasury management activities which are produced monthly and reported at least quarterly to the treasury management panel. The indicators monitored during the year are detailed in **Annex 1**.

2 THE CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021/22 – 2023/24

The council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of these plans is reflected in the prudential indicators, designed to assist Members' overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

2.1 Capital Expenditure - Prudential Indicator 1

This prudential indicator is a summary of the council's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. Members are recommended to approve the capital expenditure forecasts. The financing need below excludes other long term liabilities, such as Private Finance Initiative and leasing arrangements which already include borrowing instruments within them. The current capital plans which this strategy supports are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 : Current Capital Programme					
	2019/20 Actual £m	2020/21 Forecast £m	2021/22 Estimated £m	2022/23 Estimated £m	2023/24 Estimated £m
Total Capital Expenditure	69.78	98.36	103.76	62.56	41.80
Resourced by:					
Capital receipts	2.78	5.65	1.50	1.50	1.50
Capital grants	53.06	67.04	46.71	18.82	10.83
Capital reserves	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Revenue	1.59	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.02
Borrowing	12.35	25.63	55.53	42.22	29.45
Total resources available	69.78	98.36	103.76	62.56	41.80

2.2 Affordability Indicators

The previous prudential code required the authority to prepare indicators (prudential indicator 2 and 3) so that the council could assess the affordability of its capital investment plans. Although these are no longer required under the Code, the authority still prepares these former prudential indicators as they provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the council's overall finances. Council is recommended to approve the following indicators:

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – Former Prudential Indicator 2

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital financing (borrowing and other long-term obligation costs net of investment income) against the council's net revenue stream.

Table 2 : Former Prudential Indicator 2					
	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Estimated	2022/23 Estimated	2023/24 Estimated
Ratio	4.31%	3.78%	8.71%	9.03%	7.74%

2.3 The council's borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement) – Prudential Indicator 4

Prudential indicator 4 is the council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure not immediately paid will increase the CFR. The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge, which broadly reduces the borrowing need in line with each assets estimated life.

The CFR does include other long-term liabilities (e.g. PFI schemes, finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the council's borrowing requirement, these types of schemes include a borrowing facility within them and so the council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The council currently has £5.44m of such schemes within the CFR. Council is asked to approve the CFR projections in Table 3 which shows that the council's net borrowing need for the period 2020/21 to 2022/24 is estimated to see an increase of £120.81m. The council's borrowing strategy is set out in section 4.

Table 3 : Analysis of CFR				
	2020/21 Forecast £m	2021/22 Estimated £m	2022/23 Estimated £m	2023/24 Estimated £m
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	357.16	377.65	417.36	459.44
<i>Net financing need for the year</i>				
Less MRP and other financing movements	-8.04	-11.73	-13.34	-15.26
Additional borrowing	28.53	51.44	55.42	33.79
Movement in CFR	20.49	39.71	42.08	18.53
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	377.65	417.36	459.44	477.97

The council has maintained an under-borrowed position, which means that the capital borrowing need (the CFR), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy has been prudent whilst investment returns have remained low and counterparty risk is relatively high compared to the historical position.

3. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) POLICY STATEMENT

The MRP policy (see **Annex 2**) details the council's policies for calculating the annual amount charged to revenue for the repayment of debt.

3.1 Background to Annual MRP Policy Review

A local authority shall determine each financial year an amount, it considers to be prudent, to be set aside for the repayment of accumulated borrowing relating to capital expenditure. This is known as the minimum revenue provision (MRP). There are four ready-made options available for calculating MRP, however authorities do also have discretion to determine their own MRP, other approaches are not ruled out, as long as the authority is properly reasoned and justified utilising them.

3.2 MRP Policy Objectives

- The council shall determine for each financial year an amount of revenue provision for the future repayment of debt that it considers prudent.
- To set aside funds at a rate such that future generations who benefit from the assets are contributing to the associated debt and avoiding the situation of future generations paying for the debt on assets that are no longer useable.

3.3 MRP Policy Review 2020/21

Full Council is required to approve an MRP Statement each year. A review of MRP has been undertaken during 2020/21 in conjunction with Link Asset Services to ensure the Council is continuing to charge an appropriate and prudent MRP following its last review in 2015/16. This review identified that using an annuity basis for calculation from 1 April 2020 is considered an appropriate and prudent approach for the council.

The Policy Statement for 2020/21 is detailed in **Annex 2** containing these revisions.

The MRP policy is regularly monitored, and because the MRP policy has to be approved by Council each year there is an opportunity to revisit the policy, and the prudent approach utilised to set the policy, as required.

4 BORROWING

The resourcing of the capital expenditure plans set out in **Section 2** provides details of the proposed capital expenditure that will be incurred in support of the service activity of the council. The treasury management function ensures that the council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes so that sufficient cash is available to meet this service activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.

4.1 Current portfolio position

The council is expected to end 2020/21 with borrowing of over 1 year length of approximately £355m against an asset base of approximately £513m, and short term investments of approximately £185m. These will be proactively managed to minimise

borrowing costs and maximise investment returns within a robust risk management environment. In 2021/22 estimated annual interest payments are £11.86m (£11.39m budget for 2020/21), with the increase due to planned borrowing included within the budget to take account of capital expenditure. Net investment interest income for 2021/22 is estimated to be £1.82m (£2.74m budget for 2020/21), with the decrease mainly as a result of historically low interest rates. The net budget for capital financing in 2021/22 is £23.67m (£17.70m in 2020/21). By having a proactive approach to managing cash flows and investments it is estimated that investment income of £435k above the bank base rate will be generated.

The council's treasury portfolio position at 31st December 2020 is shown in Table 4; year end forward projections are summarised in Table 5. This shows that the actual external borrowing (the treasury management operations), against the capital borrowing need and operational debt, and highlights any over or under borrowing. It shows that the council's underborrowing position is expected to continue for the medium term.

Table 4 : Borrowing and Investments			
	Borrowing £m	Investments £m	Net Borrowing £m
31 March 2020	361.61	(214.49)	147.12
31 December 2020	356.61	(254.60)	102.01
Change in year	(5.00)	(40.11)	(45.11)

Table 5 : Borrowing Forward Projections			
Borrowing profile	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m
Under 12 Months	42.91	31.74	4.75
12 Months to within 24 Months	31.74	4.75	6.11
24 Months to within 5 Years	10.86	8.00	1.89
5 Years to within 10 Years	1.89	0.00	0.46
10 Years and Above	299.27	358.44	400.20
Total Borrowing	386.67	402.93	413.41
Operational Debt - Prudential Indicator 6	453.00	478.84	477.96
(Under) / Over Borrowed	(66.33)	(75.91)	(64.55)

Within the prudential indicators, there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the council operates its activities within defined limits. **Prudential Indicator 7** relates to the councils need to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2020/21 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

The S151 Officer reports that the council complied with **Prudential Indicator 7** in the current year and does not envisage this indicator being breached in the future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in this budget report. In accordance with **Prudential Indicator 8**, the council has adopted and complies with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management.

4.2 Treasury Indicators: Limits to Borrowing Activity

The Authorised Limit for External Debt - Prudential Indicator 5

This prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by Full Council. It reflects the level of external debt, which, whilst not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

This is based on the requirement to set a statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

Full Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Table 6 : Authorised Limit £m - Prudential Indicator 5				
	2020/21 Forecast £m	2021/22 Estimated £m	2022/23 Estimated £m	2023/24 Estimated £m
Total	458.39	498.30	526.72	525.75

The Operational Boundary - Prudential Indicator 6

This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. It has been calculated by deducting other local authority debt (totalling £8.78m in 2020/21) from the capital financing requirement (CFR) and then adding any expected in year cash-flow borrowing requirements.

Table 7 : Operational Boundary £m - Prudential Indicator 6				
	2020/21 Forecast £m	2021/22 Estimated £m	2022/23 Estimated £m	2023/24 Estimated £m
Total	425.50	453.00	478.84	477.96

4.3 Prospects for interest rates

The council has appointed Link Asset Services as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the council to formulate a view on interest rates. The following table gives their central view.

Link Group Interest Rate View		9.11.20													
These Link forecasts have been amended for the reduction in PWLB margins by 1.0% from 26.11.20															
	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	
5 yr PWLB	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	
10 yr PWLB	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	
25 yr PWLB	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	
50 yr PWLB	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	

Commentary from Link Asset Services as at December 2020

The coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March to cut Bank Rate to first 0.25%, and then to 0.10%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its subsequent meetings to 16th December, although some forecasters had suggested that a cut into negative territory could happen. However, the Governor of the Bank of England has made it clear that he currently thinks that such a move would do more damage than good and that more quantitative easing is the favoured tool if further action becomes necessary. As shown in the forecast table above, no increase in Bank Rate is expected in the near-term as economic recovery is expected to be only gradual and, therefore, prolonged. These forecasts were based on an assumption that a Brexit trade deal would be agreed by 31 December 2020: as this has now occurred, these forecasts do not need to be revised.

Gilt yields / PWLB rates

There was much speculation during the second half of 2019 that bond markets were in a bubble which was driving bond prices up and yields down to historically very low levels. The context for that was a heightened expectation that the US could have been heading for a recession in 2020. In addition, there were growing expectations of a downturn in world economic growth, especially due to fears around the impact of the trade war between the US and China, together with inflation generally at low levels in most countries and expected to remain subdued. Combined, these conditions were conducive to very low bond yields.

While inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last thirty years in lowering inflation expectations, the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers. This means that central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. The consequence of this has been the gradual lowering of the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets over the last 30 years.

Over the year prior to the coronavirus crisis, this has seen many bond yields up to 10 years turn negative in the Eurozone. In addition, there has, at times, been an inversion of bond yields in the US whereby 10 year yields have fallen below shorter term yields. In the past, this has been a precursor of a recession. The other side of this coin is that bond prices are elevated as investors would be expected to be moving out of riskier assets i.e. shares, in anticipation of a downturn in corporate earnings and so selling out of equities.

Gilt yields had therefore already been on a generally falling trend up until the coronavirus crisis hit western economies during March 2020. After gilt yields spiked up during the

financial crisis in March, we have seen these yields fall sharply to unprecedented lows as investors panicked during March in selling shares in anticipation of impending recessions in western economies, and moved cash into safe haven assets i.e. government bonds. However, major western central banks took rapid action to deal with excessive stress in financial markets during March, and started massive quantitative easing purchases of government bonds: this also acted to put downward pressure on government bond yields at a time when there has been a huge and quick expansion of government expenditure financed by issuing government bonds. Such unprecedented levels of issuance in “normal” times would have caused bond yields to rise sharply. Gilt yields and PWLB rates have been at remarkably low rates so far during 2020/21.

As the interest forecast table for PWLB certainty rates above shows, there is expected to be little upward movement in PWLB rates over the next two years as it will take economies, including the UK, a prolonged period to recover all the momentum they have lost in the sharp recession caused during the coronavirus shut down period. From time to time, gilt yields, and therefore PWLB rates, can be subject to exceptional levels of volatility due to geo-political, sovereign debt crisis, emerging market developments and sharp changes in investor sentiment, (as shown on 9th November when the first results of a successful COVID-19 vaccine trial were announced). Such volatility could occur at any time during the forecast period.

Investment and borrowing rates

- Investment returns are likely to remain exceptionally low during 2021/22 with little increase in the following two years.
- Borrowing interest rates fell to historically very low rates as a result of the COVID crisis and the quantitative easing operations of the Bank of England: indeed, gilt yields up to 6 years were negative during most of the first half of 20/21. The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served local authorities well over the last few years. The unexpected increase of 100 bps in PWLB rates on top of the then current margin over gilt yields of 80 bps in October 2019, required an initial major rethink of local authority treasury management strategy and risk management. However, in March 2020, the Government started a consultation process for reviewing the margins over gilt rates for PWLB borrowing for different types of local authority capital expenditure. It also introduced the following rates for borrowing for different types of capital expenditure: -
 - PWLB Standard Rate is gilt plus 200 basis points (G+200bps)
 - PWLB Certainty Rate is gilt plus 180 basis points (G+180bps)
 - Local Infrastructure Rate is gilt plus 60bps (G+60bps)
- As a consequence of these increases in margins, many local authorities decided to refrain from PWLB borrowing unless it was for local infrastructure financing, until such time as the review of margins was concluded.
- On 25.11.20, the Chancellor announced the conclusion to the review of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates; the standard and certainty margins were reduced by 1% but a prohibition was introduced to deny access to borrowing from the PWLB for any local authority which had purchase of assets for yield in its three year capital programme. The new margins over gilt yields are as follows: -

- PWLB Standard Rate is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
 - PWLB Certainty Rate is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)
 - Local Infrastructure Rate is gilt plus 60bps (G+60bps)
- **Borrowing for capital expenditure.** As Link's long-term forecast for Bank Rate is 2.00%, and all PWLB rates are under 2.00%, there is now value in borrowing from the PWLB for all types of capital expenditure for all maturity periods, especially as current rates are at historic lows. However, greater value can be obtained in borrowing for shorter maturity periods so the Council will assess its risk appetite in conjunction with budgetary pressures to reduce total interest costs. Longer-term borrowing could also be undertaken for the purpose of certainty, where that is desirable, or for flattening the profile of a heavily unbalanced maturity profile.
 - While this authority will not be able to avoid borrowing to finance new capital expenditure, there will be a cost of carry, (the difference between higher borrowing costs and lower investment returns), to any new borrowing that causes a temporary increase in cash balances as this position will, most likely, incur a revenue cost.

4.4 Borrowing Strategy

Our borrowing objectives are:

- To minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining an appropriate level of cash and a balanced loan portfolio;
- To manage the council's debt maturity profile, ensuring no single future year has a disproportionate level of repayments;
- To maintain a view on current and possible future interest rate movements and borrow accordingly;
- To monitor and review the balance between fixed and variable rate loans against the background of interest rate levels and prudential indicators.

Specific Borrowing Objectives

- L1. Full compliance with the Prudential Code - **No Change.**
- L2. Average maturity date between 15 and 25 years - **No Change.**
- L3a. Financing costs as % of council tax requirement 20% – **No Change.**
- L3b. Financing costs as % of tax revenues 12.5% - **No Change.**
- L4. Actual debt as a proportion of operational debt range is maintained in the range 65% - 85% - **No Change.**
- L5. Average interest rate for internally managed debt will reduce to **3.30%** - **Changed from 3.69% in view of planned borrowing.**
- L6. Average interest rate for total debt (including other local authority debt) will be equal to or less than **3.46%** - **Changed from 3.93% in view of planned Borrowing re-profiling.**
- L7. The gearing effect on capital financing estimates of 1% increase in interest rates must not be greater than 5% - **No Change.**

The capital borrowing need (CFR) has not been fully funded with loan debt and instead the council's cash which would normally be utilised to support the council's reserves, balances

and cash flow has been used to fund the borrowing need as a temporary measure. This strategy has proved prudent as investment returns have been low and current levels of counterparty risk are higher than those seen historically and as such this is still an issue that needs to be considered.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2021/22 treasury operations. The Interim Head of Finance – Corporate, responsible for Treasury Management will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances. For example:

- if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp fall in long and short term rates (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered.
- if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper rise in long and short term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.

Any changes that are required will be reported to the treasury management panel at the next available opportunity.

4.5 Treasury Management Limits on Activity

There are three debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these is to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. These limits have been reviewed. The indicators the Council is asked to approve are in Table 8 below (please note there are no changes proposed to the targets approved for 2020/21):

Table 8: Borrowing Limits	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Prudential Code Indicator 10	95%	95%	95%
Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposures.			
Lower limits on fixed interest rate exposures	40%	40%	40%
Prudential Code Indicator 11	45%	45%	45%
Upper limits on variable interest rate exposures			
Lower limits on variable interest rate exposures	0%	0%	0%
Prudential Code Indicator 12			
Lower limits for the maturity structure of borrowings:			
Under 12 Months	0%	0%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	0%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	5%	5%	5%
10 years and above	30%	30%	30%

Table 8 continued: Borrowing Limits	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Upper limits for the maturity structure of borrowings:			
Under 12 Months	25%	25%	25%
12 months and within 24 months	25%	25%	25%
24 months and within 5 years	40%	40%	40%
5 years and within 10 years	50%	50%	50%
10 years and above	85%	85%	85%

The council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved CFR estimates and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the council can ensure the security of such funds.

4.6 Debt rescheduling

As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, there may be potential opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the current treasury position and the size of the cost of debt repayment (premiums incurred). The reasons for any rescheduling include:

- the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings.
- helping to fulfil the treasury strategy.
- enhancing the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

Consideration will also be given to identify if there is any residual potential for making savings by running down investment balances to repay debt prematurely as short term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on current debt. All potential rescheduling would require the approval of the treasury management panel.

5. ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

5.1 Investment Policy

The council's Investment Policy has regard to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance"), last updated in February 2018, and the revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes ("the CIPFA TM Code"). The council's investment priorities will be security first, liquidity second, then return.

In accordance with the above guidance from the MHCLG and CIPFA and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the council applies minimum acceptable credit criteria in order to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which also enables diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the short term and long term ratings.

Ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution; it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and

in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To this end the council will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as “credit default swaps” and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.

Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties. Counterparty limits are set through the council's treasury management practices – schedules. This year the TM policies have been reviewed to ensure that any Banking Regulation changes are appropriately reflected to make certain that the security of the council's deposits remain the highest priority whilst the council seeks a fair return for its investment. See TMP 1 section on Credit and Counterparty Risk Management paragraph h. TMP 1 also allows the undertaking of non-specified investments on the approval of the S151 Officer e.g. loans to housing associations, property funds and bond issues by other public sector projects etc. The use of property funds can be deemed to be capital expenditure, and as such in some instances will be an application (spending) of capital resources. This Authority will undertake due diligence and appropriate checks, and if required seek guidance, on the status of any fund it may consider using.

5.2 Creditworthiness Policy

Approved Organisations for Investments

Only organisations that are eligible to receive investments from local authorities may be used. The council's credit worthiness policy forms part of this document for review and approval.

5.3 The Monitoring of Investment Counterparties

The credit rating and financial resilience of counter parties are monitored regularly. The council receives credit rating information from Link Asset Services as and when ratings change and counterparties are checked promptly. On occasion ratings may be downgraded when an investment has already been made. The criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list by the Interim Head of Finance - Corporate and / or Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury management, and if required new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

5.4 Investment strategy

The general policy objective for this council is for the prudent investment of its treasury balances. The council's investment priorities are:

- The security of capital;
- Liquidity of its investments;
- All investments will be in sterling;
- The council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

In-house funds. Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for interest rates.

Investment returns expectations.

Bank Rate is unlikely to rise from 0.10% for a considerable period. It is very difficult to say when it may start rising so it may be best to assume that investment earnings from money market-related instruments will be sub 0.50% for the foreseeable future.

The suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to about three months during each financial year are as follows (the long term forecast is for periods over 10 years in the future):

Average earnings in each year	
2020/21	0.10%
2021/22	0.10%
2022/23	0.10%
2023/24	0.10%
2024/25	0.25%
Long term later years	2.00%

- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is probably now skewed to the upside, but is subject to major uncertainty due to the virus and how quickly successful vaccines may become available and widely administered to the population. It may also be affected by what, if any, deal the UK agrees as part of Brexit.
- There is relatively little UK domestic risk of increases or decreases in Bank Rate and significant changes in shorter term PWLB rates. The Bank of England has effectively ruled out the use of negative interest rates in the near term and increases in Bank Rate are likely to be some years away given the underlying economic expectations. However, it is always possible that safe haven flows, due to unexpected domestic developments and those in other major economies, or a return of investor confidence in equities, could impact gilt yields, (and so PWLB rates), in the UK.

Negative investment rates

While the Bank of England said in August / September 2020 that it is unlikely to introduce a negative Bank Rate, at least in the next 6 -12 months, and in November omitted any mention of negative rates in the minutes of the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee, some deposit accounts are already offering negative rates for shorter periods. As part of the response to the pandemic and lockdown, the Bank and the Government have provided financial markets and businesses with plentiful access to credit, either directly or through commercial banks. In addition, the Government has provided large sums of grants to local authorities to help deal with the COVID crisis; this has caused some local authorities to have sudden large increases in cash balances searching for an investment home, some of which was only very short term until those sums were able to be passed on.

As for money market funds (MMFs), yields have continued to drift lower. Some managers have already resorted to trimming fee levels to ensure that net yields for investors remain in positive territory where possible and practical. Investor cash flow uncertainty, and the need to maintain liquidity in these unprecedented times, has meant there is a surfeit of money swilling around at the very short end of the market. This has

seen a number of market operators, now including the DMADF, offer nil or negative rates for very short term maturities. This is not universal, and MMFs are still offering a marginally positive return, as are a number of financial institutions for investments at the very short end of the yield curve.

Inter-local authority lending and borrowing rates have also declined due to the surge in the levels of cash seeking a short-term home at a time when many local authorities are probably having difficulties over accurately forecasting when disbursements of funds received will occur or when further large receipts will be received from the Government.

5.5 Specific Investment Objectives

Specific investment objectives are set out below.

- L8.** Difference between average interest rate received on short-term interest (STI) versus at call interest rate on main bank account – comparing investment performance of proactively managing cash balances against doing nothing – 50% - **no change**
- L9.** Average interest rate received on:
 - At call investments – 0.05% - **a change from 0.60%**
 - Short-term investments – 0.25% - **a change from 1.10%**
 - Long-term investments – 0.80%% - **a change from 1.65%**
 - Property Funds – 3.82% - **a change from 3.90%**
- L10** Average rate on at call and short-term investments will be equal to or greater than 0.24% - **a change from 1.04%**
- L11** Average interest rate received on all investments:
 - Including Property Funds – 0.68% - **a change from 1.59%**
 - Excluding Property Funds – 0.27% - **a change from 1.11%**
- L12** % daily bank balances within a target range of 99% - **no change.**

Should the pace of growth quicken and / or forecasts for increases in inflation rise, there could be an upside risk i.e. Bank Rate increases occur earlier and / or at a quicker pace.

Investment treasury indicator and limit - total principal funds invested for greater than 365 days. These limits are set with regard to the council's liquidity requirements and to reduce the need for early sale of an investment and are based on the availability of funds after each year end.

The Council is asked to approve Prudential Indicator 13. Treasury indicator and limit:

Prudential Indicator 13 Maximum principal sums invested > 365 days			
£m	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Principal sums invested > 365 days	£55m	£55m	£55m

5.6 Additional disclosures required within the statutory guidance on local government investments

The updated statutory guidance on local government investments, which was issued in February 2018, identifies specific disclosures that the authority should identify

within its Investment Strategy for all investments that it holds. The required disclosures for investments held by the authority are set out at Annex 3.

5.7 End of year investment report

At the end of the financial year, the council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Report.

IN YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS TO BE MONITORED

No.	Indicator	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Estimated	2022/23 Estimated	2023/24 Estimated
PRL 1	a. Capital expenditure - Council Resources - £m	67.04	59.51	26.82	14.83
	b. Capital expenditure - External Resources - £m	31.32	44.25	35.74	26.97
Former PRL 2	Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream	3.78%	8.71%	9.03%	7.74%
Former PRL 3	Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on council tax	£ 0.28	£ 52.43	£ 39.86	£ 27.80
L. 3	a. Financing costs as % of Council Tax Requirement	7%	20%	20%	20%
	b. Financing costs as % of Tax Revenues	4.50%	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%
L. 4	Actual debt v operational debt within the following range	83.08%	85.00%	85.00%	85.00%
L. 5	Average interest rate of debt excluding other local authority debt	3.40%	3.30%	3.37%	3.40%
L. 6	Average interest rate of debt including other local authority debt	3.49%	3.46%	3.50%	3.50%
L. 9	Average interest rate received on:				
	a. At Call Investments	0.12%	0.05%	0.05%	0.05%
	b. Short Term Investments	0.79%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%
	c. Long Term Investments	1.71%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%
	d. Property Fund	3.82%	3.82%	3.82%	3.82%
L. 10	Average interest rate on all ST investments (ST and At Call)	0.51%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%
L. 11	a. Average interest rate on all investments (excluding property fund)	0.65%	0.27%	0.27%	0.27%
	b. Average interest rate on all investments (including property fund)	1.03%	0.68%	0.66%	0.67%
L. 12	% daily bank balances within target range	100%	99%	99%	99%

The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy applied from 2015/16 until 2019/20 was as follows:

Under the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2010, local authorities have a duty to produce an annual statement on its policy for making a minimum revenue provision (MRP).

For the financial years **2008/09** onwards the authority will be adopting the following policies in determining the MRP:

1. For any capital expenditure carried out prior to 31 March 2008 or financed by supported borrowing capital expenditure, the authority will be charging MRP at 2% of the balance at 31 March 2013 (which has been adjusted as per the 2003 regulations, i.e. net of Adjustment A), fixed at the same cash value so that the whole debt is repaid after 50 years.
2. For any capital expenditure carried out after 1 April 2008 being financed by borrowing the authority will be adopting the asset life method (option 3). This is where MRP will be based on the capital expenditure divided by a determined asset life or profile of benefits to give annual instalments. The annual instalment may be calculated by the equal instalment method, annuity method or other methods as justified by the circumstances of the case at the discretion of the S151 Officer.
3. The authority will treat the asset life as commencing in the year in which the asset first becomes operationally available. Noting that in accordance with the regulations the authority may postpone the beginning of the associated MRP until the financial year following the one in which the asset becomes operational, there will be an annual adjustment for Assets Under Construction.
4. In all years, the CFR for the purposes of the MRP calculation will be adjusted for other local authority transferred debt.
5. The Section 151 officer shall on an annual basis review the level of MRP to be charged, as calculated as per paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 above to determine if this is at a level, which is considered prudent. Dependant on this review the Section 151 officer shall be able to adjust the MRP charge (the total cumulative adjustment will never exceed the calculated CFR variance of £24.6m identified when reviewing the current MRP policy during 2015/16). The amount of MRP charged shall not be less than zero in any financial year.

It is proposed that the Minimum Revenue Provision from 2020/21 onwards will be:

Under the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2018, local authorities have a duty to produce an annual statement on its policy for making a minimum revenue provision (MRP).

For the financial years **2020/21** onwards the authority will be adopting the following policies in determining the MRP:

1. For all existing capital expenditure balances within the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) held as at 1 April 2020 MRP will be applied on an annuity basis with the write

down period determined by asset lives up to the maximum allowable by the regulations set out above.

2. For all capital expenditure incurred from 1 April 2020 MRP will be applied on an annuity basis with the write down period determined by asset lives up to the maximum allowable by the regulations set out above.
3. The authority will treat the asset life as commencing in the year in which the asset first becomes operationally available. Noting that in accordance with the regulations the authority may postpone the beginning of the associated MRP until the financial year following the one in which the asset becomes operational, there will be an annual adjustment for Assets Under Construction.
4. If determined by the S151 Officer the annual instalment may be calculated by the equal instalment method or other appropriate methods dependant up on the nature of the capital expenditure.
5. In all years, the CFR for the purposes of the MRP calculation will be adjusted for other local authority transferred debt, finance lease and Private Finance Initiative (PFI).
6. The S151 officer shall on an annual basis review the level of MRP to be charged, as calculated as per paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 above to determine if this is at a level, which is considered prudent. The amount of MRP charged shall not be less than zero in any financial year.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES REQUIRED WITHIN STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

The updated statutory guidance on local government investments, which was issued in February 2018, identifies specific disclosures that the authority should identify within its Investment Strategy for all investments that it holds.

The required disclosures for investments held by the authority are set out below.

1. Types of Investment

1.1 Investments made by local authorities can be classified into one of two main categories:

- Investments held for treasury management purposes;
- Other investments.

2. Contribution of investments toward the service delivery objectives and / or the place making role of the local authority

2.1 For each type of investment the disclosure guidelines require the authority to identify the contribution that the investments make. For Walsall's investments details of this contribution are set out below.

Investments held for treasury management purposes

The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the local authority is to support effective treasury management activities, with the requirement to prioritise Security, Liquidity and Yield in that order of importance.

Other Investments

Details of all Other Investments that the authority holds, and the contribution that each makes to the service delivery objectives and / or the place making role of the local authority is set out below:

i. Investment Properties

The acquisition of the Saddlers Shopping Centre provided the council with an opportunity to add to an existing but small investment portfolio. It is intended that further investment opportunities will be considered in the future following the completion of the review of the investment portfolio as part of the asset management improvement plan (asset management planning).

The potential income generation from The Saddlers Centre will provide additional revenue (after the capital is repaid) to the council. However the acquisition of the Saddlers Centre was not undertaken solely for the purposes of supporting the council's revenue position. The opportunity for the council to purchase a significant land interest in the middle of Walsall Town Centre and adjacent to Walsall Rail Station was of importance as the council

recognises that regeneration activity in the Town Centre and beyond may well have to be public sector led.

Likewise the redevelopment of the Old Square Shopping Centre represented significant movement towards the delivery of the Council's aspirations for the regeneration of St Matthew's Quarter. In particularly difficult market conditions for the retail sector, the redevelopment of the shopping centre improved Walsall's retail offer and helped to cement the town centre's position as an important sub-regional centre. The new retail floor space delivered through the first phase of the scheme provided over 4,100 sq metres/44,000 sq ft of floorspace for a new Primark store and over 900 sq metres/9,800 sq ft of floorspace for a new Co-op food store. These two new stores provided around 150 new jobs in the town centre, resulted annual business rate and rental income, and increased footfall and expenditure in the town centre, making it a more attractive destination for shoppers, retailers and other investors.

3. Use of Indicators

- 3.1 The disclosure guidelines require the authority to produce relevant indicators for investments to support the ability of the public to assess the level of risk exposure. These are provided below for Walsall's investments.

Investments held for treasury management purposes

These investments are funded through the council's cash balances. The authorities published Treasury Management and Investment Strategy already includes a range of Prudential and Local indicators that support the assessment of performance management and risk exposure in this area.

Additionally the disclosure guidelines recommend that the authority to also publish the following two indicators.

Indicator	Description	Ratio (2020/21 Forecast)	Ratio (2021/22 Estimate)
Debt to Net Service Expenditure (NSE) Ratio	Gross debt as a percentage of net service expenditure (where net service expenditure is a proxy for the size and financial strength of a local authority).	1.60:1	1.80:1
Commercial income to NSE Ratio	A measure of the authority's dependence on non-fees and charges income to deliver core services (where fees and charges are netted off gross expenditure to calculate NSE).	0.004:1	0.004:1

Other Investments

For Other Investments, the disclosure guidelines also require the authority to provide relevant indicators only where these investments are funded by borrowing – again to allow for assessment against the associated additional debt servicing costs taken on. As such, for any 'Other Investments' held by Walsall that are funded in this way, relevant indicators are provided below.

Investment Property – Saddlers Centre

Indicator	Description	Ratio (2019/20 Actual)	Ratio (2020/21 Forecast)
Operating costs	The trend in operating costs of the non-financial investment portfolio over time, as the portfolio of non-financial investments expands.	£1.214m	£1.274m
Vacancy levels and Tenant exposures for non-financial investments	Monitoring vacancy levels (voids) ensure the property portfolio is being managed (including marketing and tenant relations) to ensure the portfolio is productive as possible.	10 Units	9 Units

4. Security, Liquidity and Yield

4.1 Prudent investments will consider security, liquidity and yield in that order with the underlying objectives being:

- **Security** – protecting the capital sum invested from loss
- **Liquidity** – ensuring the funds invested are available when needed
- **Yield** – once security and liquidity are determined it is then reasonable to consider what yield can be obtained

4.2 When entering into '**Investments held for treasury management purposes**' local authorities always consider security, liquidity and yield (in that order) and the authorities Treasury Management Policies clearly set out and support this requirement.

4.3 When entering into '**Other Investments**' local authorities should consider the balance between security, liquidity and yield based on their risk appetite and the contribution that the investment will make toward service delivery objectives and / or the place making role of the local authority.

4.4 Security

Investments held for treasury management purposes

All investments that the authority currently holds for treasury management purposes are defined as financial investments, and the authorities Treasury Management policies clearly define how credit worthiness and high credit quality will be determined. The policies also set out procedures for determining which categories of investment may be used, those which have already been defined as suitable for use, and the upper limits for investment with each counterparty / investment area.

Other Investments

All 'Other Investments' that the authority currently holds are defined as non-financial investments, which are non-financial assets that the authority holds primarily or partially to generate a profit.

Where a local authority holds a non-financial investment, it will normally have a physical asset that can be realised to recoup the capital invested. As such the disclosure guidelines require authorities to consider whether the asset retains sufficient value to provide security of investment.

Therefore details for each of the 'Other Investments' held by the authority are set out below:

- i. Investment Property – Saddlers Centre
A fair value assessment has been obtained within the past twelve months. Whilst this shows a reduction in valuation the authorities original investment decision anticipated a minimum investment period of 5 years, therefore the valuation will continue to be reviewed over the remainder of this period to inform a decision regarding any need for elongation of the investment period.
- ii. Investment Property – Primark / Co-Op Shopping Units Development
A fair value assessment has been obtained within the past twelve months. This shows that the underlying assets provide security for capital investment.

Risk Assessment of Investments

Investments held for treasury management purposes

The authorities Treasury Management policies clearly define how risk for these types of investment will be assessed, including details of external advisors that may be used, the use of credit ratings and how often these are reviewed and additional sources of information that will support the underlying assessment of risk that may be attributable to the investment.

Other Investments

Normally where the council enters into Other Investments it is using capital to invest in an asset to primarily or partially to generate a return / profit. This is normally in the form of an investment in an Investment Property that has a tenant / tenants who pay rents to the authority as owner of the property (the landlord).

As such the risk assessment for investments of this type need to ensure that the tenant is of good financial standing and the property and lease meet certain standards such as being in a commercially popular location and having a number of years remaining on the lease providing a certain and contractually secure rental income into the future.

Where the council funds the purchase of the property by borrowing money, to deliver a profit the rental income paid by the tenant must exceed the cost of repaying the borrowed money each year.

The annual surplus then supports the council's budget position, and enables the council to continue to provide services for local people.

Historically, property has proved to be one of, if not the best, investment in terms of capital growth over the last 50 years. If the council retains the ownership of the property for long term (20 years plus), and the property is managed and maintained

appropriately, it would normally expect to see an increase in the value of the property as well as a net annual surplus of revenue.

Acquisition of investment properties to generate an income stream can also support the council in delivering its other priorities, such as in its place making role or in the support of regeneration activities.

The reasons for buying and owning property investments are therefore primarily (and in this order):

- Economic development, place making and regeneration activity in Walsall;
- Market and economic opportunity – the right asset at the right time;
- Financial gain to fund / support wider council services to local people.

Operating in the Property Investment Market

Investment property will usually have a commercial occupier, paying a rent to the landlord. The better the covenant of the occupier, the more secure the rental income, the better the investment value and the yield obtainable in the open market. A tenant with a strong covenant and a long lease (10 years plus) with no break clause and with responsibility for repairing and maintaining the property, is the best type of investment.

The UK commercial property investment market is very well established, attracts global investors and is defined as a 'mature asset class'. It has a wide range of new and established investors including institutions, pension funds, specialist property companies, charities, family trusts and individuals.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) defines investment property as "...used solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation or both...". Returns from property ownership can be both income driven (through the receipt of rent) and by way of appreciation of the underlying asset value (capital growth). The combination of these is a consideration in assessing the attractiveness of a property for acquisition.

Property prices and returns are a function of the property type, condition, use and location, together with the lease structure and covenant strength of the tenant (in the case of a let property). Lease contracts will reflect all liability and outgoings being the responsibility of the tenant.

What should be sought by the council are property investments which produce the best returns possible, whilst carrying an acceptable level of risk. The main mitigation measure in managing risk is to target investments which are let to 'blue chip' tenants, on relatively long leases with little or no landlord management involvement – typically the tenant is responsible for all property costs such as repair, maintenance and outgoings. In this way, the council will be primarily buying a secure income stream and the buildings themselves become almost secondary considerations.

Any property asset coming onto the market could be for a number of reasons. Investors seek to buy and sell in many different circumstances - rebalancing their portfolio, seeking cash to influence balance sheet or share price, requirement for a more "liquid" asset, short term investment taking advantage of small capital growth,

moving into different property classes, etc.

Following consultation during 2020, HM Treasury have now revised access requirements for local authorities seeking to access borrowing from the Public Works and Loans Board (PWLB). These revisions mean that Local Authorities will not be able to access PWLB borrowing to buy investment property with the primary aim of generating yield, and specifically to access PWLB funding authorities will need to submit three year capital plans to PWLB, with the S151 officer confirming that there is no intention to buy investment properties primarily for yield at any point within those three years.

If there are any intentions by the authority to buy investment properties primarily for yield within the three year capital programme then PWLB will not be able to lend to the authority for the period of that programme. HM Treasury have also confirmed that where local authorities do seek to pursue debt-for-yield projects which they finance in other ways, such as through the use of internal cash balances or borrowing from other financial institutions, they would then not be able to access PWLB borrowing to refinance this element of debt going forwards.

As interest rates on PWLB borrowing are normally more favourable than other forms of borrowing, being unable to access PWLB and having to seek borrowing from other financial institutions is therefore likely to increase the overall revenue costs required to fund the elements of the councils capital programme which are funded from borrowing – for example every 1% increase in interest costs on a three year capital programme including circa £120.00m of capital spending funded from borrowing (similar to the level included within this report) would add £1.20m of additional ongoing revenue costs per year by the end of the three year period.

Priorities and Risk Assessment in Property Investment

The priorities for the council when acquiring property interests for investment purposes are (in order of importance):

- **Covenant Strength** - in the case of a let property, the quality of the tenant and, more importantly, their ability to pay the rent on time and in full. The council's primary reason and objective for this strategy is financial gain;
- **Lease length** - in the case of a let property, the unexpired length of the term of the lease or a tenant's break clause is of key importance in ensuring that the landlord's revenue stream is uninterrupted. The council will take into consideration the risks associated with a tenant vacating and the potential to attract good quality replacements tenants at acceptable rental levels. Generally occupiers are moving away from 25 year leases which were more common back in the late twentieth century with 10 to 15 years now becoming more acceptable unless some form of lease break provisions are included in favour of the tenant;
- **Rate of return** - the rate of return from the property (for example through annual rental incomes) will normally need to be equivalent or better to the returns that could be earned from alternate investments, such as placing monies on deposit, following adjustment for risks and potential growth. The property will also normally

need to produce an annual return in excess of the cost of PWLB borrowing (interest only);

- **Risk** – rate of return is one side of the coin; risk is the other. In general, the higher the sought level of return from an investment, the higher level of risk that it carries. For example, if a property is let at an attractive rent which would create a good return, it could still be risky if the tenant does not possess good covenant strength and could default at any time;
- **Lease Terms** – The terms of leases vary and even those held on an “Institutionally acceptable basis” can be very different in nature particularly as such leases have developed over time. The council is seeking to invest in modern leases with full repairing and insuring obligations on the Tenant and a full Service Charge recovery to include any management fees where applicable. This will ensure a certain income / return to the council;
- **Growth** - property has the potential for both revenue and capital growth. The council will consider that potential when assessing the strength of the investment opportunity. Property values can fall as well as rise and mechanisms to minimise revenue reductions should be identified. Generally the nature of standard, institutional leases is that rent review clauses are upward only which protects landlords from any downward pressure on rental income giving some security as to the level of income;
- **Location** - should a tenant default or vacate, the location of the property is the key factor in influencing the ability to re-let and find another tenant. Location is also important when considering future redevelopment or regeneration opportunities. Ideally the council will be able to undertake inspections and to deal with any management issues without the need to employ specialists or agents. Preference should be given to properties located within Walsall, then to the wider west midlands geographic location. This does not prevent investment outside of Walsall, subject to the appropriate justification and business case and correct governance procedure;
- **Sector** - information as to the sector of use of the property (e.g. office, retail, industrial, leisure) will assist in deciding on the risks associated with specific properties and the mix of sectors within the portfolio. Additionally the council, as a public body, may take the view that it does not wish to invest in properties where the occupiers are generally seen to be undertaking a business which is contrary to its corporate values;
- **Building Age and Specification** - in the case of a let property, whilst the council, as an investor, may be principally concerned with the characteristics of the tenant and lease, the age and specification of the property will also affect the ability of the council to let or sell the property in the future. It must also be taken into consideration in respect of the cost of protecting the investment. An example of this would be the undertaking of repairs and refurbishment if the cost cannot be fully recovered from the tenant;

- **Use of external advisors** – where required the Council will utilise appropriately qualified and experienced external advisors to support decisions regarding property investments.

In summary, the strategy for acquiring investment property assets is therefore to:

- Seek property let to tenants who are of strong covenant strength and sound financial standing with at least more than five years remaining on an FRI lease;
- Minimise risk;
- Maximise rental income and minimise management costs to ensure the best return is generated;
- Identify opportunities for future growth, redevelopment or regeneration via property in commercially popular or development areas;
- Prioritise Walsall and then the wider west Midlands geographic location;
- Pursue opportunities to increase returns and improve the investment value of commercial assets.

4.5 Liquidity

Investments held for treasury management purposes

For the treasury management investments held by the authority, the Treasury Management Policies set out how the authority will determine the periods for which funds may be prudently committed and the maximum periods that will be utilised.

Other Investments

For the Other Investments held by the authority, these are all currently investment properties. The council recognises that if it requires access to its investment these assets can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. Therefore these investments are all considered to be medium to long term, with a fair value assessment undertaken on an annual basis which is used to inform the point at which it may be prudent for the authority to consider selling assets and repaying any associated borrowing.

5. Proportionality

- 5.1 The scale of the 'Other Investments' currently, or planned to be, held by the authority, and any assumed associated profit to be generated by these investments does not place the authority in a position where it is dependent on this activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget.

6. Borrowing In Advance of Need

- 6.1 The councils Treasury Management Strategy clearly sets out that it will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved CFR estimates and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the council can ensure the security of such funds.

7. Capacity, Skills and Culture

Knowledge & Skills

- 7.1 The authority's treasury management activity is managed by a team of professionally qualified accountants, who actively undertake Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on an ongoing basis to keep abreast of new developments and develop additional skills. They also have extensive Local Government finance experience between them.
- 7.2 The council's S151 Officer is the officer with overall responsibility for treasury activities. They too are a professionally qualified accountant undertaking an ongoing CPD programme.
- 7.3 Any commercial projects that the council seek to enter into will also be supported by teams from all required professional disciplines from across the council, and external professional advice will also be sought if needed.
- 7.4 Internal and external training is offered to members on an ongoing basis to ensure they have up to date skills to make commercial investment and treasury decisions.
- 7.5 The council's Treasury Management Panel meet regularly to discuss treasury management performance, development of policy and identification of potential new investment products and the detail relating to them.
- 7.6 The knowledge and skills of officers and members are commensurate with the council's risk appetite.

Commercial Activity and Governance

- 7.7 The council has a strong governance framework that goes beyond the regulatory codes. This includes a Treasury Management Panel (TMP) in addition to the Audit Committee and reporting to Cabinet and Council. The TMP is made up of senior council finance officers who meet to discuss treasury management performance, development of policy and identification of potential new investment products and the detail relating to them.
- 7.8 Due diligence is of paramount importance. All of the council's commercial investments have individual business cases that are subject to thorough risk assessment. Where appropriate to the size and scale of the project independent technical and legal reviews will also be considered.
- 7.9 Ongoing performance monitoring for all commercial schemes is also undertaken and reported to relevant members and senior officers on a regular basis.
- 7.10 The Council also seeks to ensure that all commercial schemes are fully aligned with priority outcomes set out within the Corporate Plan.
- 7.11 Any decisions taken on commercial investments are supported by the approach to non-financial investments and risk assessment process set out within this Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, with any individuals involved in negotiation of

commercial deals being made aware of these principles and the prudential and regulatory regime within which local authorities operate.

Other Useful Information

8. Links to other documents that provide useful information in relation to the disclosures set out within this annex are set out below:

Walsall Council 2019/20 Statement of Accounts

Walsall Council 2021/22 Capital Strategy

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

This Economic Commentary is based upon information provided by our Treasury Management Advisors – Link Asset Services.

- **UK.** The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept Bank Rate unchanged on 5th November. However, it revised its economic forecasts to take account of a second national lockdown from 5th November to 2nd December which is obviously going to put back economic recovery and do further damage to the economy. It therefore decided to do a further tranche of quantitative easing (QE) of £150bn, to start in January when the current programme of £300bn of QE announced in March to June, runs out. It did this so that “announcing further asset purchases now should support the economy and help to ensure the unavoidable near-term slowdown in activity was not amplified by a tightening in monetary conditions that could slow the return of inflation to the target”.
- Its forecasts appeared, at the time, to be rather optimistic in terms of three areas:
 - The economy would recover to reach its pre-pandemic level in Q1 2022
 - The Bank also expects there to be excess demand in the economy by Q4 2022.
 - CPI inflation is therefore projected to be a bit above its 2% target by the start of 2023 and the “inflation risks were judged to be balanced”.
- Significantly, there was no mention of negative interest rates in the minutes or Monetary Policy Report, suggesting that the MPC remains some way from being persuaded of the case for such a policy, at least for the next 6 -12 months. However, rather than saying that it “stands ready to adjust monetary policy”, the MPC this time said that it will take “whatever additional action was necessary to achieve its remit”. The latter seems stronger and wider and may indicate the Bank’s willingness to embrace new tools.
- One key addition to the Bank’s forward guidance in August was a new phrase in the policy statement, namely that “it does not intend to tighten monetary policy until there is clear evidence that significant progress is being made in eliminating spare capacity and achieving the 2% target sustainably”. That seems designed to say, in effect, that even if inflation rises to 2% in a couple of years’ time, do not expect any action from the MPC to raise Bank Rate – until they can clearly see that level of inflation is going to be persistently above target if it takes no action to raise Bank Rate. Our Bank Rate forecast currently shows no increase, (or decrease), through to quarter 1 2024 but there could well be no increase during the next five years as it will take some years to eliminate spare capacity in the economy, and therefore for inflationary pressures to rise to cause the MPC concern. Inflation is expected to briefly peak at just over 2% towards the end of 2021, but this is a temporary short lived factor and so not a concern.
- However, the minutes did contain several references to downside risks. The MPC reiterated that the “recovery would take time, and the risks around the GDP projection were judged to be skewed to the downside”. It also said “the risk of a more persistent period of elevated unemployment remained material”. Downside risks could well include severe restrictions remaining in place in some form during the rest of

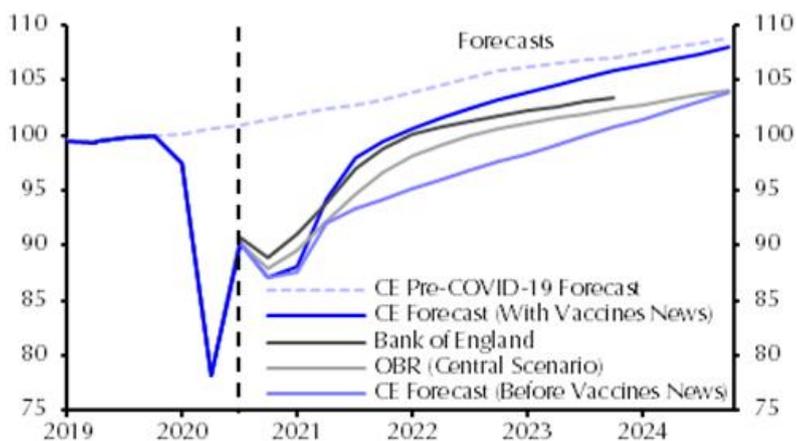
December and most of January too. Upside risks included the early roll out of effective vaccines.

- We had been waiting expectantly for news that various COVID-19 vaccines would be cleared as being safe and effective for administering to the general public. The Pfizer announcement on 9th November was very encouraging as its 90% effectiveness was much higher than the 50-60% rate of effectiveness of flu vaccines which might otherwise have been expected. However, this vaccine has demanding cold storage requirements of minus 70c that impairs the speed of application to the general population. It has therefore been particularly welcome that the Oxford University/AstraZeneca vaccine has now also been approved which is much cheaper and only requires fridge temperatures for storage. The Government has 60m doses on order and is aiming to vaccinate at a rate of 2m people per week starting in January, though this rate is currently restricted by a bottleneck on vaccine production; (a new UK production facility is due to be completed in June).
- These announcements, plus expected further announcements that other vaccines could be approved soon, have enormously boosted confidence that life could largely return to normal during the second half of 2021, with activity in the still-depressed sectors like restaurants, travel and hotels returning to their pre-pandemic levels; this would help to bring the unemployment rate down. With the household saving rate having been exceptionally high since the first lockdown in March, there is plenty of pent-up demand and purchasing power stored up for these services. A comprehensive roll-out of vaccines might take into late 2021 to fully complete; but if these vaccines prove to be highly effective, then there is a possibility that restrictions could start to be eased, beginning possibly in Q2 2021 once vulnerable people and front-line workers have been vaccinated. At that point, there would be less reason to fear that hospitals could become overwhelmed any more. Effective vaccines would radically improve the economic outlook once they have been widely administered; it may allow GDP to rise to its pre-virus level a year earlier than otherwise and mean that the unemployment rate peaks at 7% in 2021 instead of 9%.
- Public borrowing is now forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility (the OBR) to reach £394bn in the current financial year, the highest ever peace time deficit and equivalent to 19% of GDP. In normal times, such an increase in total gilt issuance would lead to a rise in gilt yields, and so PwLB rates. However, the QE done by the Bank of England has depressed gilt yields to historic low levels, (as has similarly occurred with QE and debt issued in the US, the EU and Japan). This means that new UK debt being issued, and this is being done across the whole yield curve in all maturities, is locking in those historic low levels through until maturity. In addition, the UK has one of the longest average maturities for its entire debt portfolio, of any country in the world. Overall, this means that the total interest bill paid by the Government is manageable despite the huge increase in the total amount of debt. The OBR was also forecasting that the government will still be running a budget deficit of £102bn (3.9% of GDP) by 2025/26. However, initial impressions are that they have taken a pessimistic view of the impact that vaccines could make in the speed of economic recovery.
- Overall, the pace of recovery was not expected to be in the form of a rapid V shape, but a more elongated and prolonged one. The initial recovery was sharp after quarter 1 saw growth at -3.0% followed by -18.8% in quarter 2 and then an upswing of

+16.0% in quarter 3; this still left the economy 8.6% smaller than in Q4 2019. It is likely that the one month national lockdown that started on 5th November, will have caused a further contraction of 8% m/m in November so the economy may have then been 14% below its pre-crisis level.

- December 2020 / January 2021. Since then, there has been rapid back-tracking on easing restrictions due to the spread of a new mutation of the virus, and severe restrictions were imposed across all four nations. These restrictions were changed on 5 January 2021 to national lockdowns of various initial lengths in each of the four nations as the NHS was under extreme pressure. It is now likely that wide swathes of the UK will remain under these new restrictions for some months; this means that the near-term outlook for the economy is grim. However, the distribution of vaccines and the expected consequent removal of COVID-19 restrictions, should allow GDP to rebound rapidly in the second half of 2021 so that the economy could climb back to its pre-pandemic peak as soon as late in 2022. Provided that both monetary and fiscal policy are kept loose for a few years yet, then it is still possible that in the second half of this decade, the economy may be no smaller than it would have been if COVID-19 never happened. The significant caveat is if another mutation of COVID-19 appears that defeats the current batch of vaccines. However, now that science and technology have caught up with understanding this virus, new vaccines ought to be able to be developed more quickly to counter such a development and vaccine production facilities are being ramped up around the world.

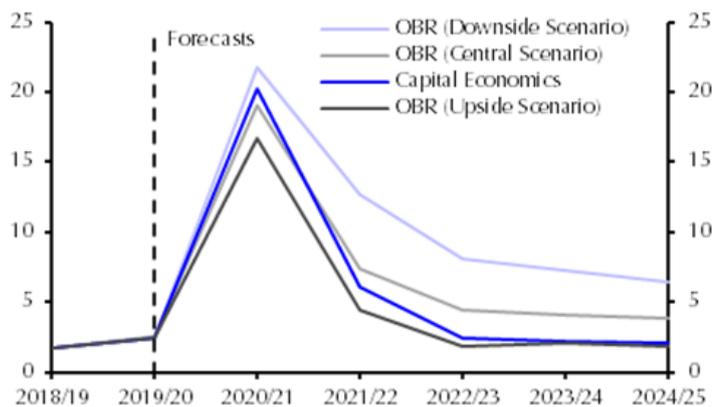
- Chart: Level of real GDP (Q4 2019 = 100)



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- This recovery of growth which eliminates the effects of the pandemic by about the middle of the decade would have major repercussions for public finances as it would be consistent with the government deficit falling to 2.5% of GDP without any tax increases. This would be in line with the OBR's most optimistic forecast in the graph below, rather than their current central scenario which predicts a 4% deficit due to assuming much slower growth. However, Capital Economics forecasts assume that there is a reasonable Brexit deal and also that politicians do not raise taxes or embark on major austerity measures and so, (perversely!), depress economic growth and recovery.

- Chart: Public Sector Net Borrowing (As a % of GDP)



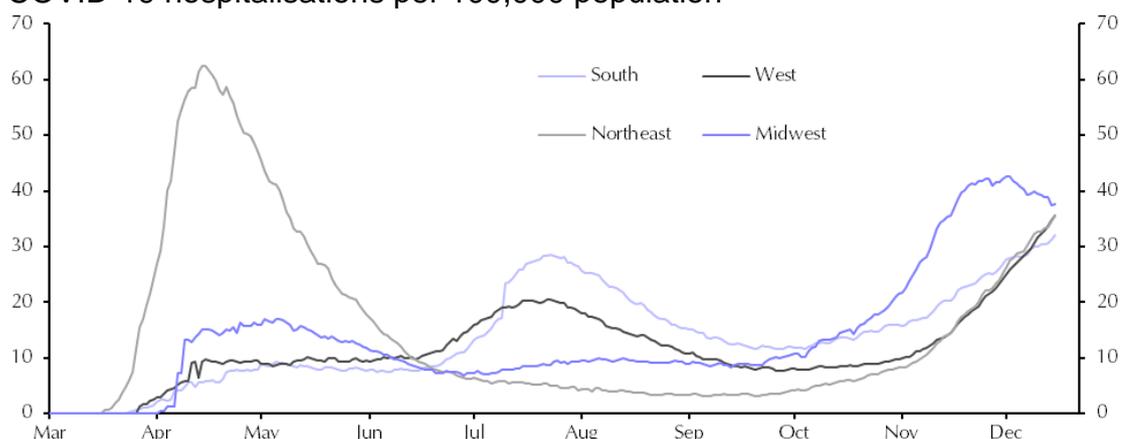
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- There will still be some painful longer term adjustments as e.g. office space and travel by planes, trains and buses may not recover to their previous level of use for several years, or possibly ever, even if vaccines are fully successful in overcoming the current virus. There is also likely to be a reversal of globalisation as this crisis has exposed how vulnerable long-distance supply chains are. On the other hand, digital services are one area that has already seen huge growth.
- Brexit. While the UK has been gripped by the long running saga of whether or not a deal would be made by 31 December 2020, the final agreement on 24 December 2020, followed by ratification by Parliament and all 27 EU countries in the following week, has eliminated a significant downside risk for the UK economy. The initial agreement only covers trade so there is further work to be done on the services sector where temporary equivalence has been granted in both directions between the UK and EU; that now needs to be formalised on a permanent basis. As the forecasts in this report were based on an assumption of a Brexit agreement being reached, there is no need to amend these forecasts.
- Monetary Policy Committee meeting of 17 December 2020. All nine Committee members voted to keep interest rates on hold at +0.10% and the Quantitative Easing (QE) target at £895bn. The MPC commented that the successful rollout of vaccines had reduced the downsides risks to the economy that it had highlighted in November. But this was caveated by it saying, “Although all members agreed that this would reduce downside risks, they placed different weights on the degree to which this was also expected to lead to stronger GDP growth in the central case.” So, while the vaccine is a positive development, in the eyes of the MPC at least, the economy is far from out of the woods. As a result of these continued concerns, the MPC voted to extend the availability of the Term Funding Scheme, (cheap borrowing), with additional incentives for small and medium size enterprises for six months from 30 April 2021 until 31 October 2021. (The MPC had assumed that a Brexit deal would be agreed.)

Fiscal policy. In the same week as the MPC meeting, the Chancellor made a series of announcements to provide further support to the economy: -

- An extension of the COVID-19 loan schemes from the end of January 2021 to the end of March.
 - The furlough scheme was lengthened from the end of March to the end of April.
 - The Budget on 3 March 2021 will lay out the “next phase of the plan to tackle the virus and protect jobs”. This does not sound like tax rises are imminent, (which could hold back the speed of economic recovery).
- The Financial Policy Committee (FPC) report on 6 August 2020 revised down their expected credit losses for the banking sector to “somewhat less than £80bn”. It stated that in its assessment “banks have buffers of capital more than sufficient to absorb the losses that are likely to arise under the MPC’s central projection”. The FPC stated that for real stress in the sector, the economic output would need to be twice as bad as the MPC’s projection, with unemployment rising to above 15%.
- US. The result of the November elections meant that while the Democrats gained the presidency and a majority in the House of Representatives, it looks as if the Republicans could retain their slim majority in the Senate provided they keep hold of two key seats in Georgia in elections in early January. If those two seats do swing to the Democrats, they will then control both Houses and President Biden will consequently have a free hand to determine policy and to implement his election manifesto.
- The economy had been recovering quite strongly from its contraction in 2020 of 10.2% due to the pandemic with GDP only 3.5% below its pre-pandemic level and the unemployment rate dropping below 7%. However, the rise in new cases during quarter 4, to the highest level since mid-August, suggests that the US could be in the early stages of a fourth wave. While the first wave in March and April was concentrated in the Northeast, and the second wave in the South and West, the third wave in the Midwest looks as if it now abating. However, it also looks as if the virus is rising again in the rest of the country. The latest upturn poses a threat that the recovery in the economy could stall. This is the single biggest downside risk to the shorter term outlook – a more widespread and severe wave of infections over the winter months, which is compounded by the impact of the regular flu season and, as a consequence, threatens to overwhelm health care facilities. Under those circumstances, states might feel it necessary to return to more draconian lockdowns.

- COVID-19 hospitalisations per 100,000 population



- The restrictions imposed to control the spread of the virus are once again weighing on the economy with employment growth slowing sharply in November and retail sales dropping back. The economy is set for further weakness in December and into the spring. However, a \$900bn fiscal stimulus deal passed by Congress in late December will limit the downside through measures which included a second round of direct payments to households worth \$600 per person and a three-month extension of enhanced unemployment insurance (including a \$300 weekly top-up payment for all claimants). GDP growth is expected to rebound markedly from the second quarter of 2021 onwards as vaccines are rolled out on a widespread basis and restrictions are loosened.
- After Chair Jerome Powell unveiled the Fed's adoption of a flexible average inflation target in his Jackson Hole speech in late August 2020, the mid-September meeting of the Fed agreed by a majority to a toned down version of the new inflation target in his speech - that *"it would likely be appropriate to maintain the current target range until labour market conditions were judged to be consistent with the Committee's assessments of maximum employment and inflation had risen to 2% and was on track to moderately exceed 2% for some time."* This change was aimed to provide more stimulus for economic growth and higher levels of employment and to avoid the danger of getting caught in a deflationary "trap" like Japan. It is to be noted that inflation has actually been under-shooting the 2% target significantly for most of the last decade, (and this year), so financial markets took note that higher levels of inflation are likely to be in the pipeline; long-term bond yields duly rose after the meeting. The FOMC's updated economic and rate projections in mid-September showed that officials expect to leave the fed funds rate at near-zero until at least end-2023 and probably for another year or two beyond that. There is now some expectation that where the Fed has led in changing its inflation target, other major central banks will follow. The increase in tension over the last year between the US and China is likely to lead to a lack of momentum in progressing the initial positive moves to agree a phase one trade deal.
- The Fed's meeting on 5 November 2020 was unremarkable - but at a politically sensitive time around the elections. At its 16 December 2020 meeting the Fed tweaked the guidance for its monthly asset quantitative easing purchases with the new language implying those purchases could continue for longer than previously believed. Nevertheless, with officials still projecting that inflation will only get back to 2.0% in 2023, the vast majority expect the fed funds rate to be still at near-zero until 2024 or later. Furthermore, officials think the balance of risks surrounding that median inflation forecast are firmly skewed to the downside. The key message is still that policy will remain unusually accommodative – with near-zero rates and asset purchases – continuing for several more years. This is likely to result in keeping Treasury yields low – which will also have an influence on gilt yields in this country.
- EU. In early December, the figures for Q3 GDP confirmed that the economy staged a rapid rebound from the first lockdowns. This provides grounds for optimism about growth prospects for next year. In Q2, GDP was 15% below its pre-pandemic level. But in Q3 the economy grew by 12.5% q/q leaving GDP down by "only" 4.4%. That was much better than had been expected earlier in the year. However, growth is likely to stagnate during Q4 and in Q1 of 2021, as a second wave of the virus has affected many countries: it is likely to hit hardest those countries more dependent on tourism. The €750bn fiscal support package eventually agreed by the EU after prolonged

disagreement between various countries, is unlikely to provide significant support, and quickly enough, to make an appreciable difference in the countries most affected by the first wave.

- With inflation expected to be unlikely to get much above 1% over the next two years, the ECB has been struggling to get inflation up to its 2% target. It is currently unlikely that it will cut its central rate even further into negative territory from -0.5%, although the ECB has stated that it retains this as a possible tool to use. The ECB's December meeting added a further €500bn to the PEPP scheme, (purchase of government and other bonds), and extended the duration of the programme to March 2022 and re-investing maturities for an additional year until December 2023. Three additional tranches of TLTRO, (cheap loans to banks), were approved, indicating that support will last beyond the impact of the pandemic, implying indirect yield curve control for government bonds for some time ahead. The Bank's forecast for a return to pre-virus activity levels was pushed back to the end of 2021, but stronger growth is projected in 2022. The total PEPP scheme of €1,850bn of QE which started in March 2020 is providing protection to the sovereign bond yields of weaker countries like Italy. There is therefore unlikely to be a euro crisis while the ECB is able to maintain this level of support. However, as in the UK and the US, the advent of highly effective vaccines will be a game changer, although growth will struggle before later in quarter 2 of 2021.
- China. After a concerted effort to get on top of the virus outbreak in Q1, economic recovery was strong in Q2 and then into Q3 and Q4; this has enabled China to recover all of the contraction in Q1. Policy makers have both quashed the virus and implemented a programme of monetary and fiscal support that has been particularly effective at stimulating short-term growth. At the same time, China's economy has benefited from the shift towards online spending by consumers in developed markets. These factors help to explain its comparative outperformance compared to western economies. However, this was achieved by major central government funding of yet more infrastructure spending. After years of growth having been focused on this same area, any further spending in this area is likely to lead to increasingly weaker economic returns in the longer term. This could, therefore, lead to a further misallocation of resources which will weigh on growth in future years.
- Japan. A third round of fiscal stimulus in early December took total fresh fiscal spending this year in response to the virus close to 12% of pre-virus GDP. That's huge by past standards, and one of the largest national fiscal responses. The budget deficit is now likely to reach 16% of GDP this year. Coupled with Japan's relative success in containing the virus without draconian measures so far, and the likelihood of effective vaccines being available in the coming months, the government's latest fiscal effort should help ensure a strong recovery and to get back to pre-virus levels by Q3 2021 – around the same time as the US and much sooner than the Eurozone.
- World growth. World growth will have been in recession in 2020. Inflation is unlikely to be a problem for some years due to the creation of excess production capacity and depressed demand caused by the coronavirus crisis.
- Until recent years, world growth has been boosted by increasing globalisation i.e. countries specialising in producing goods and commodities in which they have an economic advantage and which they then trade with the rest of the world. This has boosted worldwide productivity and growth, and, by lowering costs, has also

depressed inflation. However, the rise of China as an economic superpower over the last thirty years, which now accounts for nearly 20% of total world GDP, has unbalanced the world economy. The Chinese government has targeted achieving major world positions in specific key sectors and products, especially high tech areas and production of rare earth minerals used in high tech products. It is achieving this by massive financial support, (i.e. subsidies), to state owned firms, government directions to other firms, technology theft, restrictions on market access by foreign firms and informal targets for the domestic market share of Chinese producers in the selected sectors. This is regarded as being unfair competition that is putting western firms at an unfair disadvantage or even putting some out of business. It is also regarded with suspicion on the political front as China is an authoritarian country that is not averse to using economic and military power for political advantage. The current trade war between the US and China therefore needs to be seen against that backdrop. It is, therefore, likely that we are heading into a period where there will be a reversal of world globalisation and a decoupling of western countries from dependence on China to supply products. This is likely to produce a backdrop in the coming years of weak global growth and so weak inflation.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Authorised Limit	Level of debt set by the council that must not be exceeded.
Bond	A government or public company's document undertaking to repay borrowed money usually with a fixed rate of interest.
Borrowing	Obtaining money for temporary use that has to be repaid.
Capital expenditure	Expenditure on major items e.g. land and buildings, which adds to and not merely maintains the value of existing fixed assets.
Capital grants	Specific targeted grants to cover capital expenditure.
Capital receipts	The proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets. Capital receipts can be used to fund new capital expenditure but cannot be used to finance revenue expenditure
Cash flow Management	The management of the authority's receipts and payments to ensure the authority can meet its financial obligations.
CIPFA	The chartered institute of public finance and accountancy
Counter party limits	Maximum amount that the council may lend to other institutions will vary according to size and credit rating of other intuitions.
Dividends	Sum to be payable as interest on loan.
ECB	European Central Bank
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product – the total market value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a given year, equal to total consumer investment and government spending, plus the value of exports minus the value of imports.
Investments	The employment of money with the aim of receiving a return.
Liquidity	How easily an asset including investments may be converted to cash.
Long Term Borrowing	Borrowing of money for a term greater than one year.
Long Term Liabilities	Amounts owed by the council greater than 12 months old.
Market convention	The rules and regulations by which all brokers and dealers should abide by. It includes standards of practice and calculation conventions for interest. They are defined in the London Code of Conduct ("The London Code") published by the Bank of England.

TERM	DEFINITION
MHCLG	The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
MPC	Monetary Policy Committee – group that sets the bank base rate for the Bank of England
OLA	Other Local Authorities
Temporary borrowing	Borrowing of money for a term of up to 365 days.
Treasury management	The management of the local authority’s cash flows, its borrowings and its investments, the management of associated risks, and the pursuit of the optimum performance or return consistent with those risks.
Treasury Policy Statement	A statement of key policies that an organisation follows in pursuit of effective treasury management, including borrowing limits and strategy.
Variable debt	This is money that has been borrowed at a variable interest rate, and as such is subject to interest rate changes.
Unsupported borrowing	Borrowing taken through the remit of the Prudential Code for which the council will not receive any government funding and will fund from own resources.

Section B - Part 2 – Treasury Management

B: Treasury Management Policy Statement

The CIPFA Code recommends that authorities should:

- i. Put in place formal and comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of their treasury management activities.
- ii. Policies and practices should make clear that the effective management of risk, having regard to return, is a prime objective of the treasury management activities.
- iii. Acknowledge that the pursuit of best value in treasury management, and the use of suitable performance measures, are valid and important tools for responsible organisations to employ in support of their business and service objectives; and that within the context of effective risk management, the treasury management policies and practices should reflect this.

In order to do this, the council should once again adopt a Treasury Management Policy Statement as shown below and create and adopt Treasury Management Practices (TMPs):

- A Treasury Management Policy Statement, stating policies and objectives of its treasury management activities.
- Suitable TMPs, setting out the manner in which the council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, prescribing how the council will manage and control those activities.
- The contents of the Policy Statement and TMPs will follow the recommendations contained in section 6 and 7 of the Code, subject only to amendment where necessary to reflect this council's particular circumstances.

There are amendments to the responsible posts under delegated powers which reflect changes to the staffing structure of the finance service.

THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES 2020/21 & 2021/22 ONWARDS

Treasury Management Policy

Walsall Council defines its treasury management activities as:
“The management of the organisation’s cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

Walsall Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation.

Walsall Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principle of achieving best value in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

The approved activities of the treasury management function are as follows:

Activities:

- Borrowing;
- Investment of temporary surplus funds and other balances;
- Setting and reviewing the Treasury Management Strategy;
- Cash flow management;
- Management of school investments;
- Management of debt and investments, including rescheduling, management of interest rate exposure and maturity profile management.

High Level Policies for Borrowing and Investment

The Treasury Management Strategy sets out the detailed policies that the organisation will follow in operating its treasury management function. The high level policies set out within the Strategy that relate to borrowing (section 4.4 of the strategy) and investments (section 5.5 of the Strategy) are as follows:

Borrowing Strategy

Walsall Councils borrowing objectives are:

- To minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a balanced loan portfolio;
- To manage the council’s debt maturity profile, ensuring no single future year has a disproportionate level of repayments;

- To maintain a view on current and possible future interest rate movements and borrow accordingly;
- To monitor and review the balance between fixed and variable rate loans against the background of interest rate levels and prudential indicators.

Investment Strategy

The underlying policy objective for Walsall Council is for the prudent investment of its treasury balances. The council's investment priorities are:

- The security of capital;
- Liquidity of its investments;
- All investments will be in sterling;
- The council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

Treasury Management Practices

TMP 1 – TREASURY RISK MANAGEMENT
<p>The S151 Officer shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the design; implementation and monitoring of all arrangements related to the identification, management and control of treasury management risk. • Report at least annually on the adequacy/suitability thereof, and report as a matter of urgency, the circumstances of any actual or likely difficulty in achieving the council's objectives in this respect. • In respect of each of the following risks, the arrangements which seek to ensure compliance with these objectives will be set out in schedules.
<p>Liquidity <u>Objective:</u> Adequate but not excessive cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft or standby facilities to enable the council at all times to have the level of funds available which are necessary for the achievement of its service objectives.</p>
<p>Interest Rates <u>Objective:</u> Management of the council's exposure to fluctuations in interest rates with a view to containment of its net interest costs.</p>
<p>Exchange Rates <u>Objective:</u> Management of the council's exposure to fluctuations in exchange rates so as to minimise any detrimental impact on its budgeted income/expenditure levels.</p>
<p>Inflation <u>Objective:</u> Control of exposure to the effects of inflation, in so far as they can be identified as impacting on treasury management activities.</p>
<p>Credit and Counterparties <u>Objective:</u> To secure the principal sums invested over the period of the investment. A counterparty list will be maintained and the named organisations and limits will reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with whom funds may be deposited.</p>

Rescheduling and Refinancing of Debt

Objective: All borrowing, private financing and partnership arrangements will be negotiated, structured and documented. The maturity profile of debt will be managed with a view to obtaining terms for renewal or refinancing, if required, which are competitive and as favourable to the organisation as can reasonably be achieved in the light of market conditions prevailing at the time.

Relationships with counterparties in these transactions will be managed in such a manner as to secure this objective, and will avoid over reliance on any one source of funding if this might jeopardise achievement of the above.

Legal and Regulatory

Objective: Compliance with statutory powers and regulatory requirements for all treasury management activities. The council will demonstrate such compliance, if required to do so, to all parties with whom it deals in such activities.

In framing its credit and counterparty policy under TMP1 - *Credit and Counterparty risk management*, the council will ensure that there is evidence of counterparties powers, authority and compliance in respect of the transactions they may affect with the organisation, particularly with regard to duty of care and fees charged.

The council will seek to minimise the impact of future legislative or regulatory changes on its treasury management activities so far as it is reasonably able to do so.

Fraud, Error and Corruption, and Contingency Management

Objective: Identification of circumstances which may expose the council to the risk of loss through fraud, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings. Employ suitable systems and procedures and maintain effective contingency management arrangements.

Market Risk

Objective: Protection from adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums invested over the period of the investment.

Additional Level Risk / Reward

Objective: - to ensure that the risk/ reward balance is appropriate and consistent with the risk appetite of the council the following aims are managed:-

- to have a large proportion of debt on fixed rates to provide stability;
- to have investments over a range of period lengths;
- to use UK highly rated banks or strong building societies;
- to obtain a fair return without any undue risk.

Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

The Interim Head of Finance - Corporate will design, implement and monitor all arrangements for the identification, management and control of treasury management risk, will report at least annually on the adequacy/suitability thereof, and will report, as a matter of urgency, the circumstances of any actual or likely difficulty in achieving the organisation's objectives in this respect, all in accordance with the procedures set out in TMP6 - Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements.

Credit and counter-party risk is the risk of failure by a counterparty to meet its contractual obligations to the organisation under an investment, borrowing, capital project or partnership

financing, particularly as a result of the counterparty's diminished creditworthiness, and the resulting detrimental effect on the organisation's capital or current (revenue) resources.

This organisation regards a key objective of its treasury management activities to be the security of the principal sums it invests over the period of the investment. Accordingly, it will ensure that its counterparty lists and limits reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with whom funds may be deposited, and will limit its investment activities to the instruments, methods and techniques referred to in TMP4 - Approved Instruments Methods And Techniques. It also recognises the need to have, and will therefore maintain, a formal counterparty policy in respect of those organisations from which it may borrow, or with whom it may enter into other financing arrangements.

Policy on the use of credit risk analysis techniques.

- a. The council will use credit criteria in order to select creditworthy counterparties for placing investments with.
- b. Credit ratings will be used as supplied from rating agencies – Fitch, Moody's and S&P.
- c. Treasury management advisors will provide regular updates of changes to all ratings relevant to the council.
- d. The Interim Head of Finance - Corporate and Finance manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management, as responsible officers, will formulate suitable criteria for assessing and monitoring the credit risk of investment counterparties and shall construct a lending list comprising maturity periods, type, group, sector, country and counterparty limits.

The primary credit rating agencies Primary Credit Rating Scales, which are used, are shown below.

Primary Credit Rating Agencies Credit Rating Scales

	Moody's			S&P			Fitch		
	Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term	
Investment Grade	Aaa	P1		AAA	A-1+		AAA	F1+	
	Aa1			AA+			AA+		
	Aa2			AA			AA		
	Aa3			AA-			AA-		
	A1			A+			A+		
	A2	P2		A	A-1		A	F1	
	A3			A-		A-			
	Baa1			BBB+	A-2		BBB+		
	Baa2		P3		BBB			BBB	F2
	Baa3				BBB-	A-3		BBB-	F3
Non-Investment Grade	Ba1	Not Prime		BB+	B		BB+	B	
	Ba2			BB			BB		
	Ba3			BB-			BB-		
	B1			B+	C		B+		
	B2			B			B		
	B3			B-			B-		
	Caa			CCC			CCC		
	Ca			CC		CC		C	
	C			C		C		C	
					D		D		D

The minimum credit ratings within these scales that the authority would expect for individual counterparties are set out below.

Minimum ratings	Moody's	S&P	Fitch
Short term	P3	A-3	F2
Long term	A3	A-	A-

Credit ratings for individual counterparties can change at any time. The Interim Head of Finance - Corporate and the Finance manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management are responsible for applying approved credit rating criteria for selecting approved counterparties. Treasury management staff will add or delete counterparties to/from the approved counterparty list in line with the policy on the criteria for selection of counterparties, and with the approval of either the Interim Head of Finance - Corporate or Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management .

e. This organisation will not rely solely on credit ratings in order to select and monitor the creditworthiness of counterparties. In addition to credit ratings it will therefore use other sources of information including: -

- The quality financial press;
- Market data;
- Information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that government support;
- The maximum maturity periods and investment amounts relating to Approved Investment Counterparties are set out below:

Organisation	Criteria	Max Amount	Max Period
Banks and Nationwide Building Society	Minimum Ratings as defined above in paragraph d above.	£25m in total with fixed term not exceeding £15m	3 years
Building Societies	Must be in Peer Group 1 of KPMG Building society Dashboard (based on total assets) and have a minimum Free Capital Ratio no lower than that set out by Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1).	£10m	3 years
	Other Building Societies must be in Peer Group 2 of KPMG Building Society Dashboard (based on total assets) and have a minimum Free Capital Ratio no lower than that set out by Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1).	£7m	3 years

Challenger Banks	Following an assessment must have a minimum Free Capital Ratio no lower than that set out by Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1), and must be a retail bank.	£15m	3 years
Money Market Funds	AAA long-term rating backed	£15m	3 years
Property Funds	Subject to individual financial assessment of each fund to identify the underlying financial strength	£30m	Review every 5 years
Multi-Asset Investment Funds	Subject to individual financial assessment of each fund to identify the underlying financial strength	£20m	5 years
Non UK Banks	Minimum Ratings as defined above in paragraph d.	£10m	1 year
Local Authorities	Subject to individual financial assessment of each fund to identify the underlying financial strength	£15m	3 years
Housing Associations	Subject to individual financial assessment of each fund to identify the underlying financial strength and credit ratings where available	£15m	3 years
Other	Subject to appropriate case by case review	£10m	N/A

- g. In defining the level and term of deposits significant regard is given to the proportion of the institution in government ownership;
- h. Following the changes to the Banking Regulation the council will consider when assessing the financial resilience of an institution key ratios e.g. common equity tier 1, leverage capital / exposure, liquidity coverage, net stable funding.

Notes:

- The definition of 'high credit quality' is also used to determine what are specified investments as opposed to non specified investments. Specified investments are those that require minimum procedural formalities in terms of the placing of the investment by the treasury management team. Minimal procedural formalities means that the team is well experienced and knowledgeable in using these types of instruments and they pose minimal risk in their use.
- Other i.e. non-specified investments may be undertaken on the approval of the S151 Officer e.g. loans to other organisations and bond issues by other public sector projects and will be supported with appropriate rationale and due diligence to support investment security considerations. These may be for a duration longer than 3 years.

- For a credit rated bank to be on the council's counter party list the criteria must be passed for at least 2 of the credit ratings agencies.
- Full Individual Listings of Counterparties and Counterparty Limits are available on request and reported regularly to the Treasury Management Panel.

Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS)

Cabinet agreed to adopt the LAMS scheme on 24 October 2012. It involved the council placing a matching five year deposit to the life of the indemnity. As of 31 July 2016 the LAMS scheme was closed to new applications following a slowdown in national activity, partly due to the introduction of the Help to Buy Guarantee scheme.

The LAMS deposit was repaid in February 2018, however there remains a residual risk of liability for the authority for a period of up to 5 years from the point of the last mortgage being taken out.

Authorisation of Payments

In order to support and maintain strong controls for the release of payments. A payment releasers register is maintained. It includes the names and post titles of officers authorised to sign financial documents releasing payments including cheques requiring manual signature and bank mandates. The payments releasers register is reviewed regularly and is approved by the S151 Officer or Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord.

The Invoice / Payments Authorisation process is regulated by the financial and contract rules. Limits and authorised officers are maintained in the authorised signatory's data base.

TMP 2 – BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

The council actively works to promote value for money and best value in its treasury management activities. The treasury management function will be the subject of regular reviews to identify scope for improvement. In addition annual benchmarking is undertaken to measure performance and to ensure that relative to other councils the council is achieving a fair investment return without any undue risk.

TMP 3 – DECISION- MAKING AND ANALYSIS

Full records will be maintained of treasury management decisions, and of the processes and practices applied in reaching those decisions, to demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that all issues relevant to those decisions were taken into account.

TMP 4 – APPROVED INSTRUMENTS, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Only approved instruments, methods and techniques will be used, within the limits defined in TMP1 - Risk Management.

Sources of Borrowing

There shall be no restriction in principle on sources or methods of borrowing other than those imposed by law. The sources or methods of borrowing at any time will be determined by the current approved treasury management strategy.

Other Sources of Finance

The S151 Officer shall arrange operating leases and similar arrangements for items of equipment, vehicles, etc. where the acquisition or use of such items has been approved in line with the council's contract and rules.

Approved Organisations for Investments

The S151 Officer shall approve and revise from time to time, a list of organisations within the statutory definitions of approved investments, which would be eligible to receive investments from the council. Apart from the Government, and, in any emergency, the council's own bank, the maximum limit for investment with any single organisation shall be £25 million and the maximum period for investment shall be 3 years in accordance with each individual institution's credibility. The only exceptions to this are the approved investment in the LAMS scheme where the planned period of the investment was 7 years, and any investment in a Property Fund maximum limit shall be £30 million and will be reviewed on 5 year intervals. This should be reviewed at least monthly and incorporate any changes in ratings of counter parties.

Interest Rate Exposure

The limits on temporary borrowing and the proportion of interest at variable rates are set by Council, in accordance with Section 45 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.

TMP 5 – ORGANISATION, CLARITY AND SEGREGATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND DEALING ARRANGEMENTS

Treasury management activities will be properly structured in a clear and open fashion and a rigorous discipline of segregation of duties will be enforced to ensure effective control and monitoring of its treasury management activities, for the reduction of the risk of fraud or error, and for the pursuit of optimum performance.

The principle on which this will be based is a clear distinction between those charged with setting treasury management policies and those charged with implementing and controlling these policies, particularly with regard to the execution and transmission of funds, the recording and administering of treasury management decisions and audit of the treasury management function.

If and when the council intends, due to a lack of resources or other circumstance, to depart from these principles, the S151 Officer will ensure that the reasons are properly reported in accordance with **TMP6** - Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements and the implications properly considered and evaluated.

- The S151 Officer will ensure that there are clear written statements of the responsibilities for each post engaged in treasury management and the arrangements for absence cover.
- The S151 Officer will ensure that there is proper documentation for all deals and transactions, and that procedures exist for the effective transmission of funds.

The delegations to the S151 Officer in respect of treasury management are set out in the Constitution. The S151 Officer will fulfil all such responsibilities in accordance with the Policy Statement and TMP's and the Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management. This includes, but not exclusively, the following activity.

Activity	Prepared By	Delegation / Accountability
Approval of Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.	Head of Finance / S151 Officer	Cabinet Council
Approval of Treasury Management Policies	Head of Finance / S151 Officer	Cabinet Council
Amendments to authorised officers and officer limits set out within the treasury management practices	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate / Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management	S151 Officer
Review the debt portfolio and reschedule loans when considered appropriate	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management	S151 Officer
Updates to TM Practices	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate / Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management	S151 Officer
Undertake budget monitoring and initiate actions when necessary	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management	Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord
Authorisation of loan interest payments	Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
Approval of overnight investments	Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
Preparation of borrowings documentation	Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
To arrange borrowing from time to time for the council's purposes. Sources of funds will comprise temporary loans, loans from PWLB, other mortgages and bonds, money bills, bank overdraft and internal funds of the council, subject to any restrictions which may be made by statute, Council or Cabinet	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management	S151 Officer or Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord
Maintain Payment Releasers Register	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	S151 Officer or Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord
To arrange finance and operating leases as required in accordance with council's capital programme	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management	S151 Officer or Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord

To invest council funds temporarily not required in accordance with the statutory provisions regulating approved investments as defined in Section 66 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, subject to any restrictions which may be made by statute, by Council or by Cabinet	Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
To maintain a counter party list of approved organisations eligible to receive council investments, this involves; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ongoing monitoring of ratings on investment products and institutions. - Investigation and appraisal of free capital ratio measures - signing off by the treasury manager as evidence of a monthly review and mid month changes if necessary. - if ratings change for an investment product or institution currently held then actions for a possible exit of that strategy are undertaken as approved by the Treasury Management Panel 	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate / Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management or S151 Officer dependent on limits set by TMP on exit strategy
Daily cash flow forecast	Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
Update loan records	Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
Operational Cash Flow	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate / Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management / Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
Audit and control review and improvements Recommendations implementations	Internal Audit / All	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
Annual MRP Policy review	Senior Accountancy Officer – Financial Reporting	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate / Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and

		Treasury Management / Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury
Maintain accurate up to date information on Treasury Management	Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury

TMP 6 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION ARRANGEMENTS

Regular reports will be prepared for consideration by Council on:

- Annual report on treasury management activities for the preceding year;
- Treasury management strategy for the year, reviewed at least once during the year.

Regular monitoring reports on prudential and local indicators are prepared for the Treasury Management Panel.

Report	Frequency	When	Prepared By	To
Review of Treasury Management Strategy (TMS)	Annual	February/ March	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate	Cabinet and Council
TMS - material changes	Immediately	As required	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate / Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management	Cabinet and Council
Treasury Management Annual Report	Annual	September	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate	Cabinet and Council
Review of Treasury Management Policy	Annual	November	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate	Cabinet and Council
Mid-year report	Annual	October	Interim Head of Finance - Corporate	Cabinet and Council
TM budget monitoring	Quarterly Monthly	July, Oct, Jan, April	Senior Accountancy Officer – Treasury (reviewed by Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management)	S151 Officer Treasury Management Panel Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord for

				inclusion in overall corporate financial monitoring reports to CMT and Cabinet which are first reviewed by the S151 Officer
TM performance indicators	Quarterly Monthly	July, Oct, Jan, April	Senior Accountancy Officer – Treasury (reviewed by Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management)	S151 Officer Treasury Management Panel Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord
Cash flow summary	Monthly		Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management
Borrowing transactions	Monthly		Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management
Payment Releasers Register	Quarterly		Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	S151 Officer Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord
Operational Investment strategy	Quarterly		Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management
12 monthly Cash Flow	Quarterly		Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	Finance Manager – Technical Accounting and Treasury Management
Government statistical returns	Monthly		Finance Manager – Technical	Department for Communities and

			Accounting and Treasury Management / Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury	Local Government
Daily cash balance forecast	Daily		Treasury Management Accountancy Assistant	Senior Accountancy Officer - Treasury

TMP 7 – BUDGETING, ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

The S151 Officer will prepare an annual treasury management budget which will bring together all costs involved in running the treasury management function and associated income. This will be presented to Cabinet and Council and is approved as part of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

The council will account for its treasury management activities in accordance with appropriate accounting practices, standards and statutory and regulatory requirements.

The council will ensure that its auditors, and those charged with regulatory review, have access to all information and papers supporting the activities of the treasury management function as are necessary for the proper fulfilment of their roles, and that such information and papers demonstrate compliance with external and internal policies and approved practices.

In line with market convention loans office staff, when dealing, are required to commit the council to terms of borrowing and investment transactions by telephone. Although these transactions are not legally binding until confirmed in writing, if subsequently dishonoured, this may damage the council's reputation. Electronic funds transfer requires the involvement of three officers, at least one of whom shall be on the payment releasers register.

TMP 8 – CASH AND CASH FLOW MANAGEMENT

All council monies will be under the control of the S151 Officer. Funds that are available within all council monies to support treasury management purposes are identified and Cash flow projections in relation to these funds are prepared on a regular and timely basis and the S151 Officer will ensure that these are adequate for the purposes of monitoring compliance with **TMP1** Liquidity risk management.

TMP 9 – MONEY LAUNDERING

Procedures will be enforced for verifying and recording the identity of counterparties and reporting suspicions and will ensure that staffs involved in this area are properly trained.

As a responsible public body, they should employ policies and procedures which reflect the essence of the UK's anti-terrorist financing, and anti-money laundering, regimes. Accordingly the council undertakes a number of safeguards including the following: -

- a) evaluates the prospect of laundered monies being handled by them;

- b) determine the appropriate safeguards to be put in place;
- c) require every person engaged in treasury management to make themselves aware of their personal and legal responsibilities for money laundering awareness;
- d) make all its staff aware of their responsibilities under Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002

In respect of treasury management transactions, there is a need for due diligence. The Council will only invest with those counterparties that are on its approved lending list. These will be local authorities, the PWLB, Bank of England and authorised deposit takers under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. The register can be accessed through the Financial Conduct Authority website.

All transactions will be carried out by BACS or Chaps for making deposits or repaying loans.

The council does continue to manage a local bonds scheme, although it is no longer taking any new loans. When repaying these loans procedures would be followed to check the bank details of the recipient and the council will confirm the identity of the lender.

All loans are obtained from the PWLB, other local authorities or from authorised institutions under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

TMP 10 – STAFF TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

The council recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff involved in the treasury management function are fully equipped to undertake the duties and responsibilities allocated to them. It will therefore seek to appoint individuals who are both capable and experienced and will provide training for staff to enable them to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of expertise, knowledge and skills. An annual review of treasury staff capacity, training needs and experience will be undertaken and reported to the Treasury Management Panel. Specific training for councillors will be provided and undertaken as required.

TMP 11 – USE OF EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

When external service providers are employed, the S151 Officer will ensure it does so for reasons which have been subjected to a full evaluation of the costs and benefits. The terms of appointment and the methods by which service providers' value will be assessed will be properly agreed and documented.

The council does not currently require external investment managers, but recognises it may do so in the future for general or specific advice on a range of matters. These future services would be procured using the council's prevailing regulations relating to obtaining supplies and services. The council employs external treasury advisors to provide economic outlooks and information relevant to making robust investment and borrowing decisions.

TMP 12 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

This authority is committed to the pursuit and achievement of proper corporate governance throughout its business and services and to establish principles and practices by which this can be achieved. Accordingly the treasury management function and its activities will be undertaken with openness and transparency, honesty, integrity and accountability.

The council has adopted and has implemented the key recommendations of the CIPFA Code. The S151 Officer will monitor and when necessary, report upon the effectiveness of these arrangements to Cabinet.

A forum for the monitoring of Governance arrangements is the Treasury Management Panel. The Treasury Management Panel meets quarterly chaired by the S151 Officer or (in the absence of the S151 Officer) the Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord (deputy S151 Officer). It will receive reports on the monitoring of Prudential and Local Indicators and approve drafts of strategy and policy cabinet/council reports. It will also initiate work and projects to further ensure strong compliance of internal controls and effective treasury performance.

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

A34 Walsall to Birmingham SPRINT (Bus Rapid Transit) Scheme – Phase 1

Portfolio: Councillor Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Related portfolios: None

Service: Highways & Transport

Wards: St Matthews and Paddock

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 A transformational improvement in bus services on the A34 corridor between Walsall town centre and Birmingham city centre through the phased delivery of a bus rapid transit scheme (known as 'SPRINT'). These services are key to connecting Walsall people to a range of opportunities in the wider-West Midlands, and are central to the regeneration of Walsall town centre.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report provides details of the proposed Walsall to Birmingham Phase 1 SPRINT scheme on the A34 corridor (see route plan at **Appendix A**), to be delivered by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) on behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in line with the programme for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022. The report seeks authority for the Council to approve Phase 1 highway measures within Walsall in its capacity as Highway Authority. The intention is that the Council and WMCA will enter into a Highways Act 1980 Section 8 / Section 278 agreement to allow WMCA's contractor to implement the scheme on Walsall Council maintained highway. The necessary Traffic Regulation Orders to support the delivery of the scheme will be subject to the statutory consultation and approval process for such orders.
- 2.2 WMCA approved a revised phasing plan (over two phases) for the A34 and A45 SPRINT routes at the WMCA Board meeting on 14 February 2020, and approved the funding for A34 Phase 1 (£32.4m) and A45 Phase 1 (£55.4m). Phase 1 works are to be delivered by June 2022 (just ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in July and August 2022), and Phase 2 works are intended to be delivered by December 2024. Phase 2 is currently

unfunded and will subject to a separate funding approval (and any associated highway approvals).

- 2.3 A proposed 'Park and Ride' (P&R) site between Walsall town centre and Junction 7 of the M6 is also proposed by WMCA/TfWM as part of Phase 2 SPRINT delivery in line with aWest Midlands P&R Strategy, which is currently unfunded. This report only deals with SPRINT Phase 1, and a P&R site is therefore outside the scope of this report. Any P&R site proposal will be treated as a separate (but complementary) scheme which will require planning permission and will be subject to a separate funding approval. TfWM have asserted that SPRINT Phase 1 is a viable project in its own right and does not require SPRINT Phase 2 and/or the P&R project to justify its implementation – the SPRINT Phase 1 scheme achieves a 'high' value-for-money assessment, and no amendments are required to Phase 1 infrastructure if SPRINT Phase 2 and/or the P&R site do not go ahead in the future.
- 2.4 The total estimated capital cost of the A34 Phase 1 works is £32.4m, all to be funded by WMCA as per the February 2020 approval. No capital funding is sought from Walsall Council to implement the scheme. Further, the risk of cost and time overruns on Phase 1 works is the responsibility of WMCA/TfWM to manage with its appointed contractor i.e. no cost and time risks are allocated to Walsall Council.
- 2.5 At the time of writing, the exact mix of future strategic and local bus services along the A34 corridor cannot be fully articulated by TfWM and the commercial operator, but Walsall Council endorsement is provided with the expectation that there is no loss of service frequency, capacity or passenger accessibility on or to bus services operating between Walsall town centre and Birmingham city centre along the A34 corridor following the implementation of Phase 1, or any subsequent phase of the scheme. If any bus service proposal (commercial and/or subsidised) should result in a reduced service i.e. lower frequency; reduced capacity (seats and standing room); increased distance to/from bus stops; later start times; earlier finish times, the Council will expect mitigation to be agreed between bus operators, TfWM and the Council in advance of these proposals being implemented.
- 2.6 The Portfolio Holder set out a pre-condition for Walsall Council Cabinet approval of SPRINT Phase 1 highway works that the commercial operator of the SPRINT service and the mix of vehicle types that will operate the SPRINT services in the corridor is publicly announced in advance of Cabinet consideration. This public announcement was made in a press statement by TfWM on 27 January 2021.
- 2.7 In light of the recommendation below, Cabinet is asked to note that this report should be read alongside a separate but related Cabinet report on the Bus Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme, which sets out a West Midlands-wide Plan to improve bus services and establishes a corridor-specific Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 that requires WMCA/TfWM, local authorities and bus operating companies to undertake specific responsibilities to achieve such an improvement in bus services. This is dealt with as a separate item on

the Cabinet agenda. It should be noted that the SPRINT Phase 1 proposed investment will deliver the infrastructure within Walsall that will allow the Council to fulfil the infrastructure component of its Enhanced Partnership Scheme obligations.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet: -

3.1.1 Agrees the designs for A34 SPRINT Phase 1 within Walsall Borough as described in Section 4 of the report and incorporating the highway works as set out in Table 2 in this report and as shown in the scheme drawings for the infrastructure works at **Appendix C**;

3.1.2 Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Local Highway Authority, to agree any changes to the detail of the SPRINT Phase 1 scheme designs with West Midlands Combined Authority who are acting in their capacity as project funder.

4. Report detail – know

Context

4.1 SPRINT is a bus rapid transit service that will deliver a reliable and high-frequency service along the A34 between Walsall town centre and Birmingham city centre via Perry Barr. The intention is that these services will ultimately be operated by the next generation of fully electric or hybrid buses (including single-deck articulated vehicles) with multiple doors to aid swift loading/unloading and wheelchair access.

4.2 Data from TfWM demonstrates that annually 4.9 million passengers travelled along the A34 pre-COVID on the existing bus routes, making it one of the most important public transport corridors in the West Midlands. SPRINT will be a transformational high-quality public transport service that builds on this pre-COVID patronage, supported by other conventional bus services that will feed into the route. It is expected that of these 4.9 million passengers per annum, the SPRINT service will ultimately carry some 4.4 million passengers per year, and is key to connecting Walsall to the wider West Midlands.

4.3 SPRINT will help the Council realise its ambition for a regenerated Walsall economy, that will see the town centre redeveloped in line with the adopted Town Centre Area Action Plan and associated Town Centre Masterplan, driving better social, health and economic outcomes for Walsall residents by providing strategic transport connections to and from Walsall town centre and other destinations along the A34, especially for residents of St Matthews ward and Paddock ward.

- 4.4 SPRINT will give local people access to the employment, training, education, healthcare, shopping and leisure opportunities, being created in Birmingham city centre and at HS2 Interchange / NEC / Airport ('UK Central') in Solihull. This will be achieved by SPRINT operating as a genuine cross-conurbation service (Walsall – Birmingham city centre – Solihull / Airport) by linking operation of the A34 and A45 SPRINT schemes. This will apply in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 operation of the SPRINT service, although this report only deals with SPRINT Phase 1.
- 4.5 TfWM have asserted that SPRINT Phase 1 is a viable project in its own right and does not require SPRINT Phase 2 and/or a separate Park & Ride (P&R) project to justify its implementation. The A34 SPRINT Phase 1 scheme achieves a 'high' value-for-money assessment (in line with standard government appraisal of transport schemes) with a benefit to cost ratio in excess of 2.5:1 (in other words the scheme creates over £2.50 of economic benefits over the appraisal period for every £1 invested). No amendments are required to Phase 1 infrastructure if SPRINT Phase 2 and/or a P&R facility do not go ahead in the future.
- 4.6 The SPRINT programme is promoted by WMCA through the HS2 Connectivity Package as part of the West Midlands Devolution Deal. The West Midlands Devolution Deal (published November 2015) saw the subsequent creation of the West Midlands Combined Authority in June 2016. The deal includes devolved responsibility for a consolidated transport budget with a multi-year settlement. Also established was the West Midlands Investment Fund (of which the HS2 Connectivity Package is a part) bringing together resources for economic growth, skills and employability, regeneration, transport and housing, to which central government will allocate funding over a 30-year period. A second devolution deal with the West Midlands was also agreed at the Autumn Budget 2017.
- 4.7 The SPRINT programme focuses on delivering journey time reliability through highway interventions and signal priority, improving boarding times through multiple vehicle entrances and off-board ticketing, and is a corridor-focussed public transport solution. SPRINT performance and service standards were endorsed by the Integrated Transport Authority in March 2016, following approval from Transport Delivery Committee and Bus Alliance Board in January 2016. The standards include minimum and target requirements for vehicles, shelters, fares, priority, intelligent transport systems, branding and environmental credentials.
- 4.8 SPRINT forms part of the West Midlands integrated transport system as promoted in the region's Strategic Transport Plan 'Movement for Growth'. The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan sits alongside the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) Strategic Economic Plan as a complementary critical set of policies and plans – providing the overarching approach to the development of a transport system into one which is fit for the challenges of economic and housing growth, social inclusion and environment change.

- 4.9 The A34 SPRINT scheme supports the delivery of the Walsall Transport Strategy 2017-2022 and its objectives to: support economic growth, with a focus on improving access to new and existing employment sites; promote public transport, including the development of rapid transit routes to other parts of the Black Country and Birmingham City Centre; and enhance health and wellbeing within local communities by increasing active travel (walking and cycling to/from stops) and improving air quality.
- 4.10 The SPRINT A34 Walsall to Birmingham Strategic Outline Case was approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority Board in July 2017. This outlined the scheme and established the strategic case for change, as well as providing initial detail on key commercial, management, financial and economic considerations. The scheme is one of two SPRINT schemes proposed for accelerated delivery as part of the transport strategy for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.
- 4.11 WMCA completed preliminary design and public consultation on SPRINT Phases 1 and 2 in autumn 2018 and obtained Outline Business Case (OBC) approval from the WMCA Investment Board on 14 February 2019, allowing progression to the detailed design stage of the project. Full Business Case (FBC) approval was secured from the WMCA Board on 14 February 2020, covering both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of delivery. All funding for A34 Phase 1 was approved at this meeting. The WMCA element of funding for A45 Phase 1 was also approved and a FBC subsequently submitted to the Department for Transport for the remaining A45 Phase 1 funding. The WMCA Board report approving the FBC is available on the WMCA website and the Phase 1 costs and funding are summarized in Table 3 of this report. The A34 full scheme delivers a Benefit Cost Ratio of 3.23:1, and the A45 full scheme delivers a Benefit Cost Ratio of 2.42:1. The overall level of economic benefit of Phase 1 is £201.3m, and TfWM assert that Phase 1 is a viable standalone transport scheme.
- 4.12 WMCA led a public consultation exercise with support from Birmingham, Walsall and Sandwell Councils between 22 August and 5 October 2018. Consultation results were published in December 2018 and a consultation response was issued in March 2019, which informed the scope of detail design. Further to this, another consultation exercise was carried out in July 2019, focused on areas where concerns had been raised in the previous consultation. Details of the main consultation outcomes are provided in **Appendix B**. Additional information events were also held in November 2019 to update stakeholders as to how the scheme had been updated following earlier consultation exercises.

SPRINT Scheme Details

- 4.13 The A34 Walsall to Birmingham SPRINT scheme follows the corridor from Walsall to Birmingham via Scott Arms and Perry Barr – see **Appendix A** for the whole route. The total length of the A34 route (across the Walsall, Sandwell and Birmingham sections) is approximately 14.5km.

- 4.14 Within Walsall, it is proposed, that the route travels along Birmingham Road, Springhill Road and Ablewell Street to Bridge Street where it will terminate (see Scheme Plans / Drawings at **Appendix C**).
- 4.15 The total estimated cost of A34 Phase 1 is £32.4m, with £22.1m from WMCA funding and £10.3m from other central government contributions. (A45 Phase 1 has a cost of £55.4m with £20.2m of WMCA funding and £35.2m of other central government funding.) Phase 2 costs for the combined (A34 and A45) scheme are estimated at £50.3m. Of the £50.3m total, WMCA/TfWM have stated that some £12.6m will be invested in the elements of the Phase 2 scheme that are within Walsall.
- 4.16 Phase 1 works will deliver 70% of the infrastructure, including the delivery of the shelters throughout the whole route. As detailed above, the Phase 1 works are a viable transport scheme in their own right, demonstrating good value for money as assessed by the Department for Transport, and require no modification should Phase 2 works not be implemented.
- 4.17 It is TfWM's clear intention that single-deck articulated vehicles that will ultimately operate the SPRINT service and will be fully electric- or hybrid-powered. Consideration of rapid charging locations and infrastructure in Walsall town centre is being undertaken, with infrastructure expected to be located on the highway. However, the Phase 1 works detailed in this report exclude any rapid charging infrastructure, which will be subject to separate funding and associated approvals, and are required by January 2023 (after Phase 1 is due to complete in June 2022). Also, the necessary charging infrastructure will clearly be determined by the future selection of vehicles by the SPRINT operator.
- 4.18 Key deliverables on the highway include: carriageway widening to provide new bus lanes; junction improvements including SPRINT priority at traffic signals; parking and loading restrictions; and bus lane enforcement. Other deliverables being led by TfWM include new high-quality SPRINT vehicles and improved bus stop shelters, off-board ticketing facilities and real-time information systems.

Table 1: Overall A34 SPRINT Project Benefits

Measure	Impact
Carriageway widening to provide bus lanes, including bus lane enforcement.	Bus lanes will assist in giving priority to SPRINT and other bus services, reducing delay and improving journey time reliability, and so building public confidence in public transport.
Carriageway resurfacing.	Provides a smoother and more comfortable journey for passengers.
Junction improvements and priority at traffic signals.	This will allow SPRINT vehicles pass through junction with minimal delays.

Measure	Impact
New parking and loading restrictions.	Ensures that bus lanes are kept clear, particularly at peak times, to minimise delays and ensure that the multi-door vehicles can 'dock' correctly at bus stops.
Modern, environment-friendly vehicle fleet including level boarding.	This will increase comfort during journeys, particularly benefit elderly and disabled people, and parents with pushchairs. Using modern vehicles will reduce noise and emissions.
New and improved bus stops including modern shelters with lighting, ticketing facilities and real-time information.	This will allow easier boarding, and increase the perception of safety, security and convenience when using the new stops. Off-board ticketing will reduce boarding times compared with conventional buses. The stops will distinguish the SPRINT corridors and give a more positive experience of public transport.

Table 2: A34 SPRINT Phase 1 Works – Walsall Section

Measure	Location	Direction	Description	Scheme Benefits
Bus Lane	Merrions Wood (Skip Lane) to Merrions Close	To Birmingham	Extension of the existing bus lanes towards M6 Junction 7 to provide an additional 380m of priority (260m of bus lane in Walsall and 120m in Sandwell). These lanes will be created by reallocating roadspace for general traffic. There will be no loss of parking.	50 seconds peak journey time saving for buses.
Bus Lane	Beacon Road to Walstead Road (Bell Inn Junction)	To Walsall	Extension of the existing bus lane towards Walsall to provide an additional 200m of priority. There will be no loss in general traffic capacity, and no loss of parking.	1 minute and 16 seconds (average) journey time saving for buses.
Junction Improvement	Bell Inn Junction (B'ham Rd / Walstead Rd)	To Walsall	Signal improvements at the junction that will make the junction operate more efficiently.	Greater junction resilience for general traffic and buses.
Contra-flow Bus Lane	Ablewell St	To Walsall	Contra-flow bus lane from Town Hill to Upper Rushall Street, with loss of one lane for southbound general traffic (offset by the improvement for general traffic in the next row of this table). Parking outside businesses to be retained in line with consultation outcome. Bus gate introduced at entrance to contraflow bus lane at junction of Town Hill/Ablewell Street.	Direct route for SPRINT buses into Walsall town centre providing journey time reliability. 1 minute and 1 second (average) journey time saving for buses.

Measure	Location	Direction	Description	Scheme Benefits
Junction and Link Improvement	Upper Rushall Street	All	Reconfiguration of the junction of Upper Rushall Street/Ablewell Street/Bridge Street/Lower Rushall Street and upgrade of traffic signals. Upper Rushall Street between the junction of Upper Rushall Street/ Ablewell Street/Bridge Street/Lower Rushall Street and the junction of Town Hill/Upper Rushall Street to be made two-way. Upgrade of traffic signals at Town Hill/Upper Rushall Street junction.	Facilitates direct route for SPRINT buses into Walsall town centre providing journey time reliability. Facilitates direct route for general traffic from Lower Rushall Street to Upper Rushall Street.
Speed Cushion	Bridge Street	To Walsall	Reconstruction of speed cushion on Bridge Street near to junction with Freer Street.	Regulates all vehicle speeds.
Bus Terminus	Bridge Street	Terminus	New Sprint Bus Terminus. Necessitates the reorganisation of loading, taxi rank and Ring & Ride facilities.	High-profile Sprint Terminus supporting town centre regeneration.

- 4.19 There are 56 stop/shelter amendments between Walsall and Birmingham (excluding Birmingham Moor Street Bus Interchange). The stops within Walsall are: Bridge St (x1), Walsall Lichfield St (x1), Ablewell Street (x2), Walsall Six Ways (x2), Jesson Road (x2), Broadway (x2), Queens Road (x2), Bell Inn (x2) and Skip Lane (x2). All stops are to be improved in Phase 1, except Lichfield Street and Skip Lane.
- 4.20 Some conventional bus stops, which will not be served by SPRINT, will be moved into lay-bys to avoid SPRINT being delayed by other bus services.
- 4.21 To facilitate the SPRINT terminus in Bridge Street, the proposal is to move the Ring & Ride stop to another accessible location in the town centre. TfWM have been liaising with the Ring & Ride operator and have proposed Station Street, which is being assessed by officers. Taxi rank changes are also necessary and were discussed with the Taxi Liaison Group in December 2020, which involved representatives of the taxi trade. Engagement is ongoing to finalise these plans and statutory consultation will be undertaken to support the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).
- 4.22 Like most existing bus services, those which currently operate along the route (namely the 51 and X51 services) are run commercially by a private bus operating company, and at present it is not possible to state the exact configuration of services that will operate alongside SPRINT. However, the overall number of services operating between Birmingham city centre and

Walsall town centre is not expected to change i.e. there is not expected to be any reduction in the overall frequency of bus services to/from Walsall along the A34.

- 4.23 TfWM have been working with the SPRINT operator, National Express West Midlands, to offer an integrated network of bus services in Phase 1. SPRINT bus priority infrastructure will improve journey times for all bus services in the A34 corridor, so it is important a holistic approach is adopted. It is likely that both the current 51 and X51 bus services will have changes to their stopping patterns to make best use of the bus priority measures and cross-city opportunities. For example, direct services will operate from Walsall to Solihull and the Airport/NEC.
- 4.24 The SPRINT Phase 1 works have minimal impacts on trees, with only four trees affected in total: -
- One tree affected on the Birmingham Road (in the highway adjacent to Park Hall Road);
 - Three trees affected on the Birmingham Road in the highway central reserve (adjacent to the junction with Lodge Road and Beacon Road).
- 4.25 None of the four Phase 1 affected trees are subject to a Tree Protection Order.
- 4.26 To support the overall delivery of the scheme a Tree Mitigation Strategy (**Appendix D**) has been developed that will apply for Phase 1 and any subsequent phases of the project that may be approved (Phase 2 works are currently unfunded and outside the scope of this report) to ensure that sufficient trees are ultimately planted to replace those that unfortunately need to be removed plus the planting of additional trees, which is in line with the SPRINT consultation outcomes from 2018 and 2019. Three trees will be planted for each one that has to be removed.
- 4.27 In the medium-term, a P&R site between Walsall town centre and Junction 7 of the M6 is proposed by TfWM. It is the intention that the P&R site would be delivered in line with the second phase of the SPRINT works, with completion by December 2024. Any P&R scheme will be required to obtain planning permission from the relevant local authority, and will require separate funding. SPRINT Phase 2 works also require separate approvals and funding. The details of the P&R site are not covered in this report.
- 4.28 The SPRINT design is being developed by TfWM in conjunction with other schemes, which are along the route in Birmingham, particularly the proposals around Perry Barr for the Commonwealth Games and in the city centre for HS2 and Birmingham Eastside Metro Extension.
- 4.29 It should be noted that this Cabinet report is for SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works only. A separate Cabinet report on the Bus Enhanced

Partnership Plan and Scheme, which sets out the detailed plans for the bus service provision and maintenance and management of the infrastructure has been presented to Cabinet in conjunction with this report as a separate agenda item. Existing bus services in the corridor will complement the proposed SPRINT service and will also benefit from the proposed infrastructure improvements, making journey times more consistent and predictable. Walsall residents rely on good public transport for access to jobs, education, training, shopping, healthcare and leisure across the West Midlands.

SPRINT Delivery Strategy

- 4.30 SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works on the A34 will be delivered by WMCA as a result of legal agreements with Walsall Council, Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Council under the Highways Act 1980. These agreements will allow WMCA and their contractors to work on the relevant sections of the local authority highway network.
- 4.31 WMCA will have sole responsibility for the procurement of bus shelters; bus stops; bus lane enforcement equipment; traffic signal equipment; ticketing; and passenger information systems; as well as the procurement of an operator for the SPRINT network; and all associated project risk.
- 4.32 WMCA have confirmed that, following a market sounding exercise in 2018, the SPRINT service is capable of being operated commercially i.e. primarily funded from commercial ticket sales. The option for the WMCA to part-purchase the vehicles in a grant scheme arrangement (and take on the commercial risk of contracting the service) was therefore discounted in order to reduce the financial risk to the WMCA and remove £12m of cost to the WMCA.
- 4.33 A private bus operating company, National Express West Midlands, confirmed in February 2020 that they are willing to purchase the vehicles with no funding contribution required from the WMCA, Walsall Council, Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Council. The purchase of the vehicles will however be phased. Whilst there is a full commitment to zero-emission vehicles (which could be single-deck or double-deck), there is no absolute guarantee that the desired fully electric- or hybrid-powered, single-deck articulated tram-style vehicles will be purchased and operated on this route following the infrastructure works in Phase 1 or Phase 2, although this remains the clear intention of WMCA and National Express West Midlands. From May 2022 the services will be operated by a fleet of zero emission double-decker Platinum buses, including 20 environmentally friendly hydrogen-fuelled buses. The earliest that any zero emission, low floor tram-style vehicles could operate is from 2023, although their introduction is expected to be phased over a two-year period.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.34 SPRINT Phase 1 supports the Council's vision that '*Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised*' as set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-2021. SPRINT Phase 1 will bring better public transport services on the A34, which will help delivery against the Council's priorities, including: -

- Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses;
- People have increased independence, improved health, and can positively contribute to their communities;
- Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.

Risk management

4.35 All project risk, including financial risk and opportunity, is to be held by WMCA.

4.36 Despite project risk being held by WMCA, there are risks that remain the responsibility of Walsall Council and will require appropriate management and mitigation. These include: -

- Reputational Risk (SPRINT Vehicles) – if the Council facilitates the delivery of the SPRINT Phase 1 works but the commercial operation of SPRINT services with fully electric- or hybrid-powered, single-deck articulated vehicles cannot be realised post these works, the Council may attract negative criticism alongside WMCA/TfWM, Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Council. This risk is being actively managed and mitigated through ongoing officer involvement in the SPRINT A34 Project Board, SPRINT Programme Board and the West Midlands Bus Alliance alongside other project stakeholders.
- Reputational Risk (Bus Services) – there remains the risk that the commercial operation of the SPRINT service results in a reduced overall bus service in the A34 corridor between Walsall town centre and Birmingham city centre. Whilst this risk is unlikely to be realised (i.e. lower frequency; reduced capacity (seats and standing room); increased distance to/from bus stops; later start times; and earlier finish times), until such time as the overall bus service pattern is publicly confirmed there can be no absolute guarantee that some element of this risk could be realised with reputational impacts for the Council and its partners. This risk is again being actively managed and mitigated through ongoing officer involvement in the SPRINT A34 Project Board, SPRINT Programme Board and the West Midlands Bus Alliance alongside other project stakeholders, including bus operators.

4.37 Despite these residual risks, as detailed above, the SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works are a viable transport scheme in their own right, demonstrating good value for money as assessed by the Department for

Transport by offering tangible transport benefits, and require no modification should Phase 2 works not be implemented.

Financial implications

- 4.38 There are no direct financial (capital) implications for Walsall Council as a result of this report. The delivery and capital funding of the scheme is the responsibility of the WMCA.
- 4.39 There is no land acquisition in the SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works within Walsall (all Phase 1 works are within the existing highway network).
- 4.40 The estimated total capital cost of A34 SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works (Walsall, Sandwell and Birmingham sections) is £32.4m (including land, development, fees and contingency). Details of the funding can be found in the financial table below. All third-party contributions have been secured by WMCA; there will be no call on Walsall Council funding for this element.
- 4.41 For equipment assets delivered as part of the scheme (e.g. bus lane enforcement cameras, traffic signal equipment), equipment is being purchased by WMCA/TfWM with a maintenance package which will also be paid for by WMCA/TfWM for the upkeep of such assets for a period aligned to the Enhanced Partnership Scheme agreed as part of the Section 8 / Section 278 agreement (see paragraphs 4.44 to 4.54). Any risk to Walsall for the maintenance of this equipment would only arise after the period specified in the agreement has elapsed.

Table 3: Approved Funding – A34 and A45 SPRINT Phase 1

Funding	A34 (£m)	A45 (£m)	Total (£m)
WMCA – SOC Approved	0.3	0	0.3
WMCA – OBC Approved	7.9	8.1	16
WMCA–FBC Approved	13.9	12.1	26
Sub-total – WMCA Funding	22.1	20.2	42.3
MHCLG – external source	3.1	0	3.1
DfT – Integrated Transport Block	0	0.2	0.2
DfT – external source	0	35	35
Transforming Cities Fund (RTCC work stream)	2	0	2
City Centre Bus Fund	5.2	0	5.2
Sub-total – Other Funding	10.3	35.2	45.5
Total Funding	32.4	55.4	87.8

- 4.42 Beyond the provision negotiated in the equipment maintenance package, the annual cost of maintenance of the SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works will be as follows: -

- Maintenance of highways will be in line with the Council's current reactive and planning maintenance procedures and will be managed within existing budgets;
- Maintenance of bus lane enforcement cameras post the initial maintenance period will be between £2,500 and £3,500 per year per site for four sites, which has no committed budget at present;
- Maintenance cost of bus priority equipment at traffic signals post the initial maintenance period will be up to £750 per year per site for seven sites, which has no committed budget at present.

4.43 Any rapid electric vehicle re-charging infrastructure subsequently installed as part of the SPRINT scheme will be owned and maintained by WMCA/TfWM, at nil cost (both capital and revenue) to the Council.

Legal implications

4.44 In order to deliver the West Midlands Devolution Deal, the WMCA through powers devolved to the Mayor of the West Midlands, were appointed to take on responsibility for a devolved and consolidated transport budget, and for a Key Route Network of roads.

4.45 Under Phase 1 of SPRINT, West Midland Combined Authority ("WMCA") will carry out the infrastructure works required to deliver the Scheme. The Council will then adopt the highway works.

4.46 The WMCA has agreed with the Council to enter into an agreement under section 8 and 278 of the Highways Act 1980 ("the HA 1980") to enable the WMCA to construct the relevant highway works necessary for the SPRINT Scheme. The Council will remain responsible for all associated traffic regulation orders under the terms of the Section 8/278 Highway Agreement.

4.47 The West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 conferred certain powers on the Combined Authority in respect of highways. In particular, it introduced the concept of "Combined Authority roads". The Combined Authority roads are those listed in Schedule 1 to the 2017 Order, which includes the majority, but importantly not all, of the highways making up the A34 SPRINT scheme.

4.48 Article 4(2) of the 2017 Order provides that:

"The functions of the constituent councils as local highway authorities specified in section 8 of the 1980 Act (power to enter into agreements with local highway authorities and strategic highways companies for the doing of certain works) are exercisable by the Combined Authority in relation to Combined Authority roads."

These powers are exercisable concurrently by both WMCA and the relevant highway authority.

4.49 Section 8 of the Highways Act 1980 provides as follows:

“(1)local highway authorities...may enter into agreements with other authorities and companies for or in relation to the construction, reconstruction, alteration, improvement or maintenance of a highway for which any party to the agreement are highway authority.

(2) An agreement...may provide, in relation to a highway specified in the agreement, being a highway for which one of the parties to the agreement are the highway authority, that any functions specified in the agreement, being functions exercisable as respects that highway by the highway authority therefor, shall be exercisable by some other party to the agreement and on such terms and conditions and subject so such conditions (if any) as may be so specified.

(3) Where under an agreement...any function of the highway authority for a highway is exercisable by another highway authority, then, for the purpose of exercising that function, that other highway authority shall have the same powers under this Act (including highway land acquisition powers) as the highway authority for the highway have for that purpose....

(4) The council of a county... may not enter into an agreement under this section with the council of another county or county borough unless their areas adjoin each other; and the council of a metropolitan district may not enter into an agreement...with another metropolitan district or of a county or county borough unless the districts are in the same county or in counties which adjoin each other or, as the case may be, the county in which the district is situated and the other county or, as the case may be, county borough adjoin each other.

(5) Expenses incurred in pursuance of an agreement made under this section shall be borne by the parties to the agreement in such proportions as may be determined by the agreement.”

4.50 The purpose of Section 8 of the HA 1980 is to allow highway authorities to enter into agreements with their neighbouring councils for the doing a wide range of works to any highway for which a party to the agreement is the highway authority. The effect of article 4(2) of the 2017 Order is to empower the WMCA to enter into agreements with the Council, under Section 8 of the HA1980, that enable the WMCA to carry out highway works for which it would otherwise have no powers **but only** in relation to Combined Authority roads.

4.51 As stated above, the functions of the Council under Section 8 of the HA 1980 are only exercisable by the WMCA in relation to Combined Authority Roads. In relation to highway which is not a CA Road the highway works are to be undertaken by the CA under Section 278 of the Highway Act 1980. In addition, the Council will need to agree WMCA which of its highway improvement xxx it will exercise under the terms of the highway agreement.

- 4.52 Section 278 (agreements as to execution of works) is a funding mechanism that enables a highway authority to enter into agreements with any person, in circumstances where they consider it will be of benefit to the public, for highway works to be carried out at that person's expense. Section 278 of the Highway Act 1980 enables the WMCA to appoint contractors to undertake the highway works.
- 4.53 WMCA will enter into Section 8 Agreements with the Council (as well as Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Council) under Section 8 of the Highways Act.
- 4.54 Under the Council's Constitution the Head of Highways and Transport has delegated authority to enter into highway agreements under Section 8 and Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 and to agree to their terms.
- 4.55 The proposed electric vehicle charging infrastructure (which is being progressed separately by WMCA) will require relevant planning consents, which will be sought separately as required. The consideration of the electric vehicle charging infrastructure does not form part of this Cabinet report.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.56 Procurement of contractors for the highway works is being carried out by WMCA. The tender for the Walsall and Sandwell work package (Package A), is due to be issued on 14th January 2021, with the Tender closing on 18th February 2021. The contract is scheduled to be awarded on 23rd March 2021. WMCA are waiting for Walsall Cabinet and Sandwell Cabinet approvals before the contract will be awarded.
- 4.57 The intention is that construction works commence in May 2021, with substantial completion in February 2022, and overall Phase 1 completion no later than June 2022.
- 4.58 WMCA are also responsible for the appointment of an operator; procurement of the vehicles; bus shelters; bus stops; bus lane enforcement equipment; traffic signal equipment; ticketing; and passenger information systems.

Property implications

- 4.59 There are no direct property implications arising from this report, which are not covered through the legislation and permits operated by the Local Highway Authority.

Health and wellbeing implications

4.60 The A34 SPRINT scheme has been tested against the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are:-

- Giving every child the best start in life – *the SPRINT schemes will support travel to school by sustainable modes. The service will also positively improve air quality throughout the borough.*
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – *the SPRINT scheme encourages sustainable travel to stops and interchanges, which helps promote healthy and independent travel choices;*
- Creating fair employment and good work for all – *improved public transport networks help people access employment and training opportunities;*
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all – *access to paid employment is facilitated by improved public transport networks;*
- Creating and developing sustainable places and communities – *the SPRINT scheme will promote and assist with active travel and travel by public transport, which support sustainable places and communities;*
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention – *healthy travel choices, such as walking or cycling to and from the SPRINT route, can help prevent ill health, as well as positively impacting on improving air quality.*

Staffing implications

4.61 There are no direct staffing implications. As part of the review and approval of the SPRINT designs and oversight of scheme delivery, officer time will be required.

Reducing Inequalities

4.62 Access to a wide range of opportunities (such as employment, education, training, healthcare and leisure) are important to all residents. High-quality public transport, such as SPRINT, can help ensure that young people, elderly people, disabled people and non-car drivers/owners, have access to the full range of services available in the Borough and wider West Midlands. SPRINT is part of a wider network of public transport (bus, rail and Metro) across the metropolitan area developed and promoted by TfWM. Whilst this specific scheme is focused on the Walsall to Birmingham corridor along the A34 and will inevitably have the most impact for residents of St Matthews ward and Paddock ward, the importance of good connectivity to the regional centre, Birmingham Airport and the wider West Midlands is important to all residents.

4.63 All vehicles operating SPRINT services will be low-floor and fully accessible for wheelchair users and parents with buggies. Engine standards and the

ambition articulated for 'zero emissions at the point of use' will help promote improved air quality in the corridor.

- 4.64 WMCA have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment and this has demonstrated that there are no current concerns that the proposal affect, or could affect, people with protected characteristics. WMCA has kept this under review as the detailed design has been undertaken and finalised. The Equality Impact Assessment can be found in **Appendix E**.

Consultation

- 4.65 WMCA led a public consultation exercise with support from Birmingham, Walsall and Sandwell Councils between 22 August and 5 October 2018. This was advertised via social media channels, letter-drops on the route, local authority websites, bus stop posters, and in local media articles. Consultation information was communicated to older / disabled people and other equality groups, as well as through the Talking News. There were also exhibitions at key locations on the route – these were attended by over 600 people.
- 4.66 Five hundred and sixty-nine responses were received on the A34 scheme during the consultation, with 73% fully supporting or partially supporting the scheme and 24% not in support of the proposal. The consultation showed that 81% of responders agreed with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on the route. Details of the outcomes are provided in WMCA's consultation report published in December 2018, which is included at **Appendix B**.
- 4.67 A further update was provided by WMCA in March 2019 to public and stakeholders, informing them of design changes made as a result of feedback from the earlier consultation. This involved further engagement with the public, MPs, local councilors and other key stakeholders along the route who asked to be kept informed. In addition to leaflet drops and on-line publication, additional public meetings were also carried out where required, including some meetings in July 2019.
- 4.68 Additional information events were held in November 2019 to update stakeholders as to how the scheme has been updated following earlier consultation exercises.
- 4.69 Statutory consultation on the initial Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) necessary for the implementation of the scheme commenced on 28 January 2021 and closes on 25 February 2021. The remaining TROs will have their period of statutory consultation commence later this month. The TRO process will be concluded in full by the end of March 2021.

5. Decide

- 5.1 Walsall Council officers have worked with WMCA/TfWM to develop the scheme proposals for SPRINT Phase 1 works and have contributed to the development of the scheme business case.
- 5.2 Public consultation was undertaken for the whole route as detailed in paragraphs 4.65 to 4.68. Statutory consultation on the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders to implement the Phase 1 works is now underway.
- 5.3 The SPRINT Phase 1 works within Walsall Borough will be implemented via a Highways Act 1980 agreement with West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 5.4 Cabinet is asked to agree the designs for A34 SPRINT Phase 1 within Walsall Borough; and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to agree any changes to the detail of the SPRINT Phase 1 scheme with West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 5.5 Should any Phase 1 design revisions be proposed that impact directly on residents and businesses along the route, further consultation and engagement will take place with the affected parties.

6. Respond

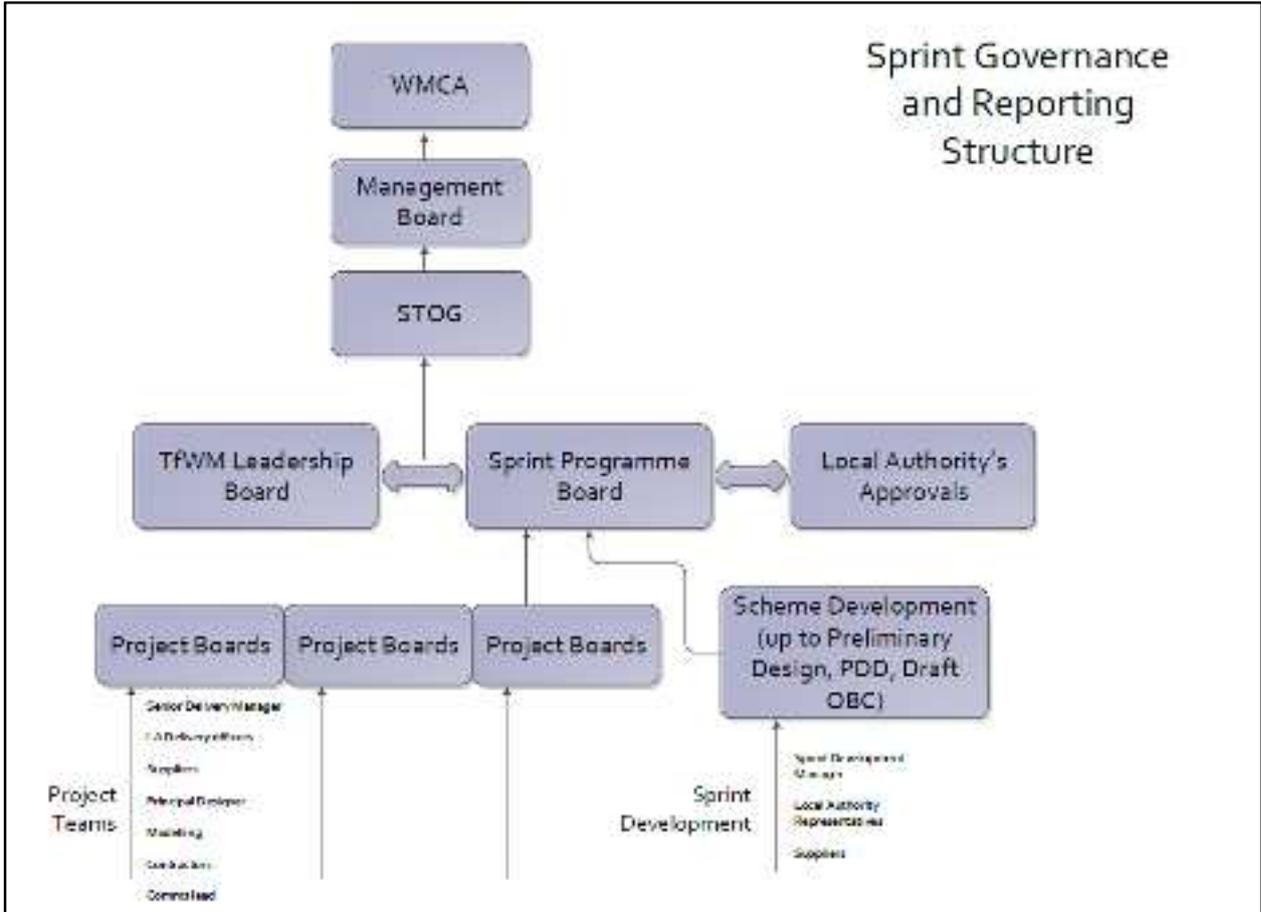
- 6.1 The WMCA Board approved the scheme full business case in February 2020. Workshave already commenced in the Birmingham section and are proposed to commence in the Walsall section in May 2021. Phase 1 will be complete (all the way from Walsall town centre to Birmingham city centre) by June 2022.
- 6.2 **Appendix F** presents the WMCA programme of works for the Walsall element of the scheme.

7. Review

- 7.1 WMCA will continuously monitor the performance and operation of the SPRINT service once in operation. The Enhanced Partnership will provide an agreement between the operator of the SPRINT service, WMCA and the local authorities and sets out standards and service levels, which will be required to be adhered to. Details of the Enhanced Partnership are within a separate Cabinet report being considered at this meeting. All SPRINT schemes are part of the SPRINT governance and reporting structure shown below; ensuring schemes are governed appropriately and proportionately.

7.2 Walsall Council is represented at the A34 Project Board (officers); SPRINT Programme Board (senior officers); Strategic Transport Officers Group (senior officers); and the WMCA (Elected Members) – see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: SPRINT Scheme Governance and Reporting Structure



Appendices

Appendix A – A34 SPRINT Route Plan with Phasing

Appendix B – A34 SPRINT Consultation Summary Report
Appendix C – A34 SPRINT Phase 1 Scheme Drawings
Appendix D – A34 SPRINT Tree Mitigation Strategy
Appendix E – A34 SPRINT Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix F – A34 SPRINT Programme

Background papers

- The West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017
- SPRINT – A34 Walsall to Birmingham and A45 Birmingham to Airport & Solihull Full Business Case Submission, WMCA Board, 14 February 2020

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Executive Director

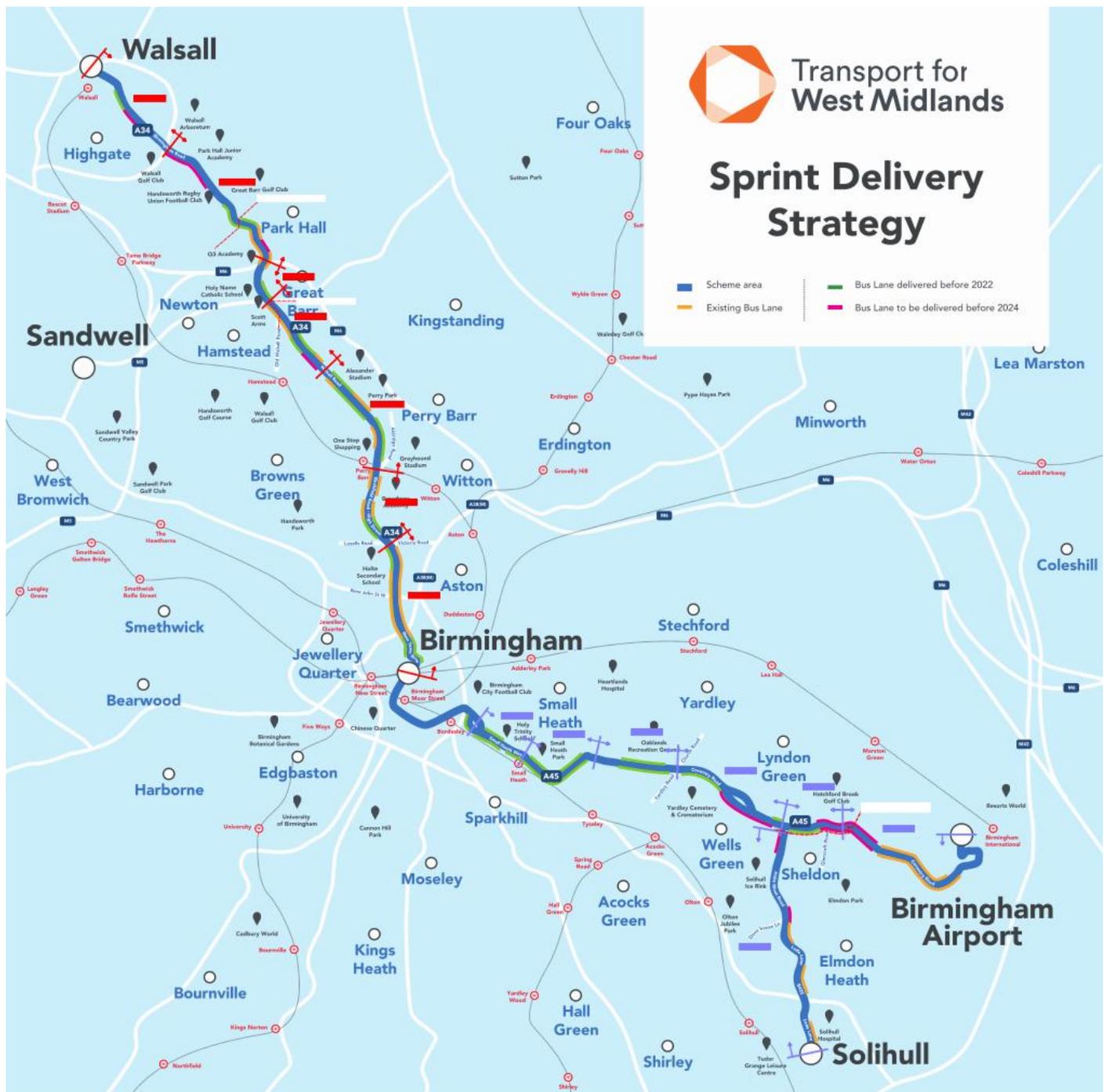
1 February 2021



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio Holder – Regeneration

1 February 2021

Appendix A – A34 & A45 SPRINT Route Plan with Phasing



The full cross-city Sprint route

Sprint Route Public Consultation

August - October 2018



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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide the output from the sprint consultation.

We want to thank the many people who took the time to participate, and we have captured views in the consultation results, which follow.

The consultation lasted 6 weeks and engaged with residents, businesses and community groups through a variety of channels which are summarised as follows:

- 652 responses to the online questionnaire
- 527 on-street interviews
- 13 public consultation events attended by 1,030 people
- 48 comments recorded by letter and email

- 60 enquires via telephone and;
- 146,911 people reached via social media and 113 comments.

We have undertaken early consultation on the proposed Sprint routes in order to better understand how to shape the schemes in a way in which they deliver the best outcomes for the maximum number of people.

On a scheme by scheme basis we have initially identified the following areas for further review:

A34

Issues Identified	We Commit To:
Parking and property access for residents and businesses.	Review parking and access issues for businesses and residents along the route, and where possible make alternative parking provision available. Consider alternative designs that may not require some or all of the parking to be removed.
Safety concerns for residents whose driveways are adjacent to the route.	Undertake a Road Safety Audit as part of the detailed design phase and use the findings to review the design. This would happen as a standard practice.
Environmental impact of changes to the use of highway space as a result of creating a dedicated BRT lane alongside properties.	Undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment as part of the detailed design. This would happen as a standard practice.
Potential congestion at pinch-points such as the Scott Arms.	Investigate options to provide enhanced bus reliability at all junctions. At Scott Arms we will look for a solution that does not adversely impact traffic north to south or east to west.
Need for Park and Ride facilities for Sprint users to park at.	Identify possible sites for Park and Ride facilities along the Sprint route and develop business cases for these sites.

A38

Issues Identified	We Commit To:
Concerns have been raised about the section of the route between the Tyburn Road and Langley and Peddimore areas and the route between Langley and Peddimore and Sutton Coldfield Town Centre.	Develop new options for the scheme from Tyburn Road junction to Langley and Peddimore areas, and from Langley and Peddimore to Sutton Coldfield.

A45

Issues Identified	We Commit To:
Potential impact of the scheme on green spaces specifically the loss of trees in the central reservation on the approach to the Wheatsheaf from Birmingham Airport.	Consider ways in which to minimise the impact of the scheme and consider options to mitigate the loss of green space.

All routes

Issues Identified	We Commit To:
Need for cycle lanes and other cycling infrastructure alongside Sprint schemes.	Including the integration of cycling infrastructure and facilities on all routes and along the corridors as part of the detailed design subject to business case appraisal, deliverability and necessary road safety audits.
Disruption to residents and businesses during the construction period.	Develop comprehensive construction management plans for each route with councils and construction companies, and develop travel alternatives to make sure people who use this route will still be able to travel during the construction.

Next Steps

The feedback from the consultation will allow us to further refine the design of the schemes and look at alternate solutions where appropriate.

We will provide updates on the schemes in March 2019.

Sprint is a bus rapid transit system (BRT) offering a tram like experience using dedicated lanes and with signal prioritisation. Low floor high capacity vehicles with multiple doors are used meaning quick boarding and alighting and providing predictable journey times and reliable timetables.

We are at the start of our journey to introduce Sprint to the West Midlands as part of plans

to create an integrated transport system. We are committed to keeping you informed and engaged as the plans develop.

If you would like to view this report in an alternative format or receive a printed copy, please get in touch:

Transport for West Midlands
16 Summer Lane
Birmingham
B19 3SD
0121 214 7321

Executive Summary

A34 Walsall to Birmingham Consultation:

- 56% lived on the route, 37% travelled along the route regularly, 21% worked on or near the route.
- 50% travelled along the route for work, 16% for leisure and 12% for shopping.
- 63% travelled along the route by bus, 27% as a car/van driver.
- 81% agreed with the need to provide reliable bus journeys along the route.
- 73% fully supported/partially supported the Sprint proposal, 24% did not support.
- 63% were very likely/likely to use Sprint; 24% were very unlikely/unlikely.

Birmingham to Sutton Coldfield via Langley Consultation:

- 54% lived on or near the proposed Sprint route, 39% regularly travelled along it and 22% worked on or near it.
- 43% travelled along the route for work purposes, 20% for leisure.
- 50% travelled along the route by bus and 33% as a car/van driver.
- 83% agreed with the need to provide reliable bus journey times along the planned route.
- 77% fully/partially supported the planned Sprint route between either Sutton Coldfield to Langley or between Birmingham to Langley. 19% did not support.
- 59% were very likely/likely to use the Sprint route, 26% were very unlikely/unlikely.

A45 Solihull and Birmingham Airport to Birmingham Consultation:

- 40% lived on or near the proposed route, 38% travelled regularly along the route, 35% worked on or near the route.
- 49% travelled along the route for work purposes, 24% for leisure.
- 50% travelled along the route by bus, 28% by car/van as a driver and 10% by train.
- 86% agreed with the need to provide reliable bus journey times along the planned route.
- 82% fully/partially supported the Sprint proposal for the A45, 14% did not support.
- 70% thought they were very likely/likely to use Sprint in the future, 15% were very unlikely/unlikely.



1.1 Consultation Overview

1.1.1:

Sprint is a brand new, modern, high quality public transport service. Sprint runs on the road, with dedicated bus lanes and priority through areas of congestion, making journey times much more reliable. By 2026, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) expects the Sprint network to be made up of seven routes, which will provide essential links to the two HS2 stations serving the region in Birmingham City Centre and Solihull.

1.1.2:

Public consultation on the first three planned Sprint routes ran from 22rd August to 5th October 2018. Following a request to extend the deadline, the deadline was extended until 15th October. The three routes consulted on were:

- A34 Walsall to Birmingham city centre via Sandwell, with a journey time of 40 minutes or less.
- Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham via the planned neighbourhood at Langley, with a journey time of 12 minutes or less between Sutton Coldfield and Langley, and 30 minutes or less between Langley and Birmingham city centre.
- A45 Solihull and Birmingham Airport to Birmingham, with a journey time of 45 minutes or less between Birmingham Airport and Birmingham city centre, and 45 minutes or less between Solihull and Birmingham city centre.

1.1.3:

Members of the public were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals via:

- An online survey hosted on www.birminghambeheard.org.uk
- On-street interviews led by TfWM Customer Intelligence Team.
- Self-completion paper surveys, made available at public consultation events, local libraries and on request.
- Comments by letter, email, telephone helpline and social media.

1.2 Consultation Results

1.2.1: Response Types

- There were 1501 responses in total to the public consultation.
- 43% of responses came via the online survey, with an additional 35% coming from on street interviews.
- 8% came from comments on social media and 3% from letters/emails.
- In addition, the A34 Safety Action Group organised a petition signed by 586 respondents. The group also provided 37 paper questionnaires and sent in 31 letters.

Table 1: Summary of Responses

	Frequency	%
Online responses	652	43
On-street interviews	527	35
Paper based	77	5
Social Media	113	8
Letters/emails	48	3
Comments from exhibition bus	15	1
Petition from A34 Safety Action Group	1	0
Letters from A34 Safety Action Group	31	2
Paper questionnaires from A34 Safety Action Group	37	2
Base	1501	100

Comments concerning Sprint were also gathered as part of a Birmingham City Council led consultation on the Peddimore and Langley Sustainable Urban Extension SPD (Supplementary Planning Documents). Although these comments were not collected as part of the official consultation, they have been reviewed by the Sprint team.

1.2.2: Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or organisation?

97% of responses came from individual members of the public, 3% from groups/organisations.

Table 2: Response to 1.2.2

(Base 710 respondents: Online and paper survey only)

	Frequency	%
An individual	703	97
A business, organisation or group	21	3
Don't know	2	0
Base	726	100

1.2.3: What is the name of your business, organisation or group?

The identifiable data for each organisation has been removed from this section under GDPR guidance. Twenty two organisations responded to the consultation, either through the official web/paper survey and 10 organisations responded via letter, petition or email.

1.2.4: Do you have any comments on the new Sprint service?

- 567 participants gave general comments on the new Sprint service. Comments were grouped under key themes.
- 129 respondents supported the development, citing reasons such as that it is new and modern.
- However, 71 participants thought bus lanes will cause traffic congestion that will be detrimental to car users or the economy.
- 58 respondents wanted Sprint routes extended or to have more of them.
- 50 participants thought there was already sufficient public transport in the area.
- 43 respondents wanted improved or dedicated cycle lanes along Sprint routes.
- 42 respondents said that more investment in existing bus services is needed, as opposed to Sprint.
- 41 participants thought that Sprint will cost too much money or will be a waste of it.
- 40 participants would prefer investment in trams/trains, as they avoid traffic congestion.
- 37 participants commented on the need to get bus priority right.
- 32 participants had concerns over the amount of available space for Sprint infrastructure on the proposed routes
- 31 respondents were worried about the effects of Sprint on local parking.
- 28 participants worried about the size of Sprint vehicles and potential dangers to other road users.
- 23 participants were concerned that similar schemes had failed in other areas.

Table 3: General Comments On Sprint

(Base 568 respondents: Paper, online survey and comments from social media)

	Frequency
Support development/great idea/modern/new/like idea/improves connectivity	129
Bus lanes will cause traffic congestion/detrimental to car users/economy	71
Extend to my area/further Sprint routes/suggestion for alterations to Sprint routes	58
Already sufficient public transport in area/X routes already provide quick service	50
Need dedicated cycle lanes/better cycle routes alongside Sprint	43
Invest more in existing bus services/spend more on improving what have currently instead of Sprint	42
Will cost too much money/waste of money/no different to normal bus	41
Prefer investment in tram/trains as avoid traffic congestion	40
Need to get bus priority right/ensure buses have priority to avoid congestion/buses need to be fully segregated	37
Concerns over amount of available space for Sprint infrastructure on proposed routes/concerns existing infrastructure cannot be adequately altered to accommodate	32
Worried about effect on local residential parking	31
Buses are too big/will take up too much space/danger for other road users	28
Similar ideas have failed in other areas	23
Need to be electric vehicles/clean/no emissions/not diesel	20
Concerned fares will be expensive/needs to be cheap to encourage use	20
Easy to use payment options at stop needed/reliable ticket machines at stops/fully integrated payment system	19
Just been done for Commonwealth Games/no real need outside this/vanity project for games	17
High quality shelters needed/fully enclosed/well lit	16
Wider consultation needed	16
Needs clear information reliable/easy to understand at stop information	15
Concerns about other non-Sprint services on routes/how it will work with non-Sprint services/worried about effects of competition with other operators	14
Need to be able to take bikes on/or have cycle storage provided	13
Needs adequate seating on board/capacity	13
Concern over damage to local environment/trees/green spaces	12

	Frequency
Journey time is not that quick/stops are too close together/too many stops will make Sprint slow	12
Too far to travel to access routes/have to drive to access routes/park and ride sites needed	11
Safe/secure vehicles/system needed	9
Concern over house prices/disruption to local property	8
Congestion will increase pollution	8
Remove highway space from car users to encourage modal shift/needed to reduce congestion	7
Service needs to run 24hours a day/longer operating hours than existing services	7
Not for me/who will use it?	7
Concerns about access to property caused by having to cross Sprint Lane	6
Vandal proof buses/shelters to keep costs down	5
Audio/visual info needed/disability compliant	4
Safe pedestrian crossings needed/walkability	4
Seating at stop needed/adequate seating needed at stop	3
Live tracking info needed	3
Cycle lanes are pointless	2
Concerns over interchanging in city centre between services	2
Noise pollution concerns	2
Three-sectioned buses needed	2
On board device charging needed	1
Concerns over when motorcycles can enter bus lanes	1
Base	568

1.2.5: Thinking about travelling to a Sprint stop, how likely or unlikely are you to:

- Cycle to a Sprint stop regardless of cycle facilities?
- Cycle to a Sprint stop if improved cycle routes to the stop?
- Cycle to a Sprint route if secure cycle parking next to stop?
- Cycle to a Sprint route if you could take a pedal cycle onto the Sprint bus?
- Use a cycle route if one ran alongside Sprint?

Table 4: Response to 1.2.5

(Base respondents: Online, interviewer led and paper survey, excludes no replies)

	% Cycle to Sprint stop regardless of facilities	% Improved cycle routes to the stop	% Secure cycle parking next to the stop	% Take a pedal cycle onto the Sprint bus	% Cycle route to run alongside Sprint
Very likely	5	13	18	18	14
Likely	7	15	12	14	10
Neither	6	5	5	5	5
Unlikely	18	10	11	9	9
Very unlikely	60	53	52	51	59
Don't know	3	3	2	2	3
Base	718	729	718	719	1248

- 12% of participants felt they were likely/very likely to cycle to a Sprint stop regardless of facilities available.
- 28% thought they were very likely/likely to cycle to a Sprint stop if there were improved cycle routes.
- 32% of respondents were most likely to cycle to a Sprint stop if they could take their bicycle on board.
- 24% thought they were very likely/likely to use a cycle route alongside Sprint.
- 30% felt they were very likely/likely to cycle to Sprint if there was secure cycle parking next to the stop.

1.3 Responses to A34 Consultation

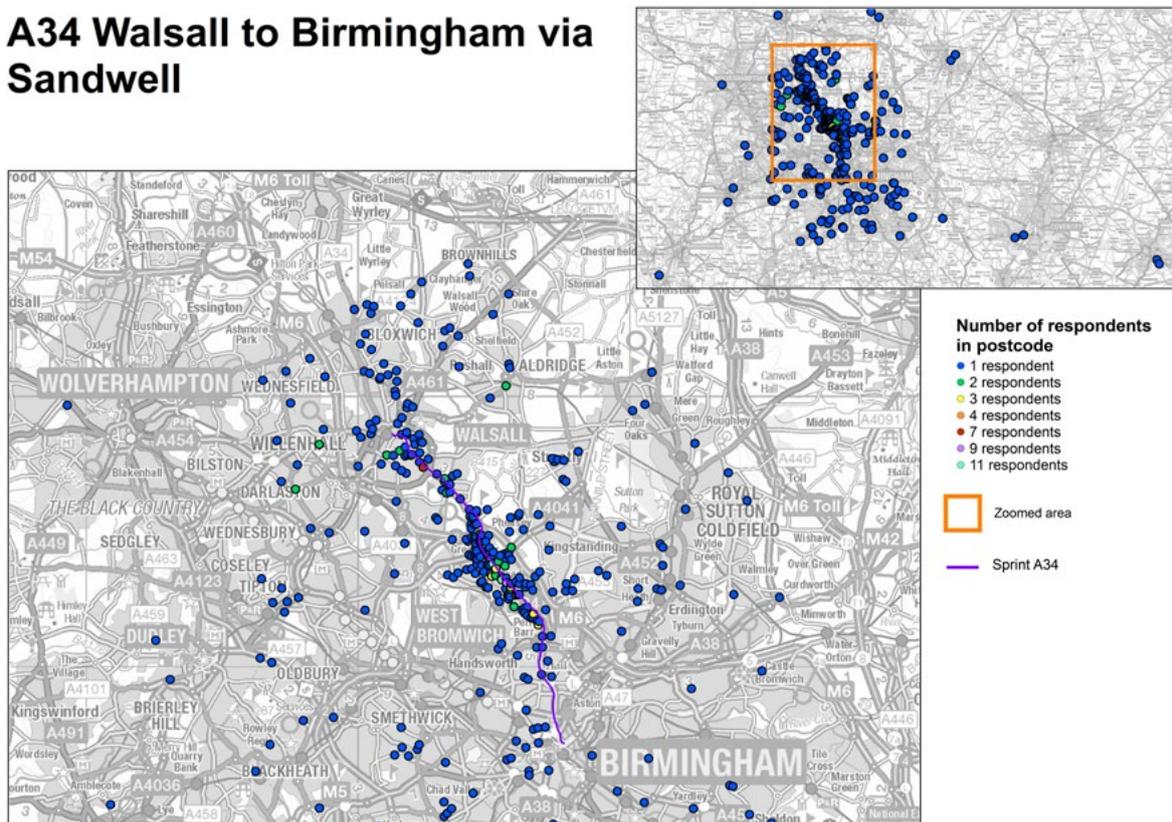
Table 5: Response to 1.3

Summary of response type for A34	Summary
Online survey	276
Interviewer led surveys	235
Paper survey	64
Emails/letters	30
Exhibition comments	8
A34 Safety Action Group	
Paper survey from A34 Safety Action Group	37
Letters from A34 Safety Action Group member	29
Signed petition against proposal	586 signatures

As Figure 1 illustrates, the majority of respondents to the A34 consultation lived on or near the proposed route.

Figure 1: Home postcode of respondents to A34 consultation

A34 Walsall to Birmingham via Sandwell



1.3.1: Do you live or travel on or near the A34 Walsall to Birmingham via Sandwell route?

- 56% of respondents lived on or near the proposed A34 Sprint route.
- 37% regularly travelled along the route, while 21% worked on or near the proposed Sprint route. 6% studied on the A34 route.
- 11% did none of the above.

Table 6: Response to 1.3.1

(Base 572 respondents: online, on-street survey and paper surveys, no replies excluded from base, percentage exceeds 100 due to multiple responses)

	Frequency	%
Live on or near the proposed Sprint route	319	56
Regularly travel along this route (by any mode of transport, including walking)	210	37
Work on or near the proposed Sprint route	121	21
Study on or near the proposed Sprint route	37	6
None of the above	63	11
Base	572	131

1.3.2: How often do you travel in the area of the proposed A34 route?

- Over half of respondents (53%) travelled along the route 5 days per week or more, with a further 25% travelling 1-4 days per week.
- 10% travelled once or twice a month, while 8% travelled less often.
- Only 3% never travelled along the route.

Table 7: Response to 1.3.2

(Base 572 respondents: online, on-street and paper survey, no replies excluded from base)

	Frequency	%
Five or more days per week	304	53
Three or four days per week	88	15
One or two days per week	59	10
One or two days per month	57	10
Less often than one day per month	48	8
Never	16	3
Base	572	100

1.3.3: What is the main purpose of your journey when travelling along the proposed A34 route?

- 50% used the A34 for work purposes.
- Outside of work purposes, 16% travelled for leisure/recreation, 12% for shopping and 11% to meet friends/relatives. 8% each were travelling for personal business or education.

Table 8: Response to 1.3.3

(Base 566 respondents: online, on-street and paper survey, no replies excluded from base, percentage exceeds 100 due to multiple responses)

	Frequency	%
Work	284	50
Education	45	8
Shopping	70	12
Leisure/recreation	88	16
Meeting friends and relatives	62	11
Personal business	43	8
Medical	26	5
Other	10	2
Base	566	111

1.3.4: What is your main mode of travel when travelling along the proposed A34 route?

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents travelled along the route by bus (63%), 27% travelled by car/van as a driver, with a further 4% travelling as a car/van passenger.
- 4% cycled, while 3% each walked or travelled by train.

Table 9: Response to 1.3.4

(Base 571 respondents: Online, on-street and paper survey; no replies excluded from base, percentage exceeds 100 due to multiple responses)

	Frequency	%
Bus	357	63
Car/van as driver	153	27
Bicycle	23	4
Car/van as passenger	20	4
Train	18	3
Walking	15	3
I rarely/never travel in this area	6	1
Taxi	3	1
Motorcycle or moped	1	0
Base	571	104

1.3.5: Do you agree with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on the A34 route?

- 81% agreed with the need to provide reliable bus journeys along the A34 route.
- 14% disagreed while 4% were unsure.

Table 10: Response to 1.3.5

(Base 571 respondents: online, on-street and paper survey, no replies excluded from base)

	Frequency	%
Yes – I agree	464	81
No – I disagree	82	14
Unsure	25	4
Base	571	100

1.3.6: Why do you agree or disagree with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on the A34 route?

- 241 participants gave a reason for agreeing or disagreeing with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on the A34.
- 72 participants thought the route was already well/adequately/excellently served by public transport.
- 42 people commented that more reliable bus journeys would improve journey planning.
- 34 participants thought that buses would turn up on time/run to timetable.
- 28 participants thought more reliable buses would reduce volume of traffic.
- 25 participants thought more reliable buses would lead to quicker/faster journey times.
- 13 people thought buses need to be segregated to avoid congestion/traffic.

Table 11: Response to 1.3.6

(Base 241 respondents: online and paper survey, valid responses only)

Positive comments	Frequency
Will improve journey planning/help me plan where I need to be and at what time	42
Will improve bus reliability/turn up on time	34
Reduce volume of traffic/traffic at peak-school times/less congestion on A34	28
Quicker/faster journey times	25
Buses need to be in Segregated Lanes/needs to be fully segregated to avoid congestion/traffic	13
Need a more/improved frequent timetable	10
Will make buses appealing/attractive so will get people out of their cars	10
Will improve safety/won't have to wait at stop too long	9
Agree with the suggestions/transport changes/good idea/improved transport offer	8
It will improve transport links/links between Walsall, Birmingham and Sandwell/local rail stations	5
It will promote a good image of Birmingham to visitors	4
Will improve air quality/environment/pollution	4
I should be able to get a seat on bus/train/get a seat at peak times	3
Improve accessibility/will help me get to more areas/places	2
Concerned how Sprint will affect other local services	1
Negative comments	Frequency
Route is already well/adequately/excellently served by public transport	72
Need to improve other routes services before Sprint/Sprint is not a priority	9

Negative comments	Frequency
Disagree with removal of on-street parking	8
Sprint is not needed/not required/vanity project/against idea	8
Loss of road space will create congestion (Scott Arms)/already a busy road/ bendy buses cause more congestion	7
Waste of money/not value for money	5
Other methods of transport will be poorly affected whilst it is being built/ disadvantage to road users during construction	5
Just put on more buses instead/more 'x' buses	5
Will increase fares/concern over fare prices	5
Do not knock down the flyover/will cause bottlenecks	3
Just being done for the Commonwealth Games/put a special services purely for the Commonwealth Games	3
Concern over the lack of cycle routes	3
Need to improve interchange at Perry Barr Station/Perry Barr Station Interchange is needed for the Commonwealth Games	2
A tram would be a better option/should be a tram/train	2
Other comments	Frequency
Future Sprint route suggestions/serve other areas	2
Park and Ride sites needed/need improving	2
PTWs (Powered Two Wheelers) should be able use the bus lanes	1
A night service would be more beneficial/run 24 hours	1
Base	241

1.3.7: Do you support the Sprint proposal for the A34 Walsall to Birmingham via Sandwell route?

- Overall 73% fully supported/partially supported the Sprint proposal for the A34.
- 24% did not support the proposals.
- Support peaked amongst bus users (84%, fully/partially support), dipping significantly amongst car drivers (49% fully/partially support).
- The small group of cyclists also had a high level of support for the proposals (87% fully/partially support).

Table 12: Percentage of support, by respondents mode of travel, for A34 proposals

(Base 574 respondents: Online survey, on-street surveys and paper, excludes no replies)

	% Base	% Bicycle	% Bus	% Car/van as a driver	% Car/van as a passenger	% Train	% Walking	% Other
Yes- Fully support	47	52	56	29	25	61	20	36
Yes – Partially support	26	35	28	20	25	28	33	21
No – Do not support	24	13	14	46	50	11	47	36
Don't know	3	0	2	5	0	0	0	7
Total	574	23	351	149	20	18	15	14

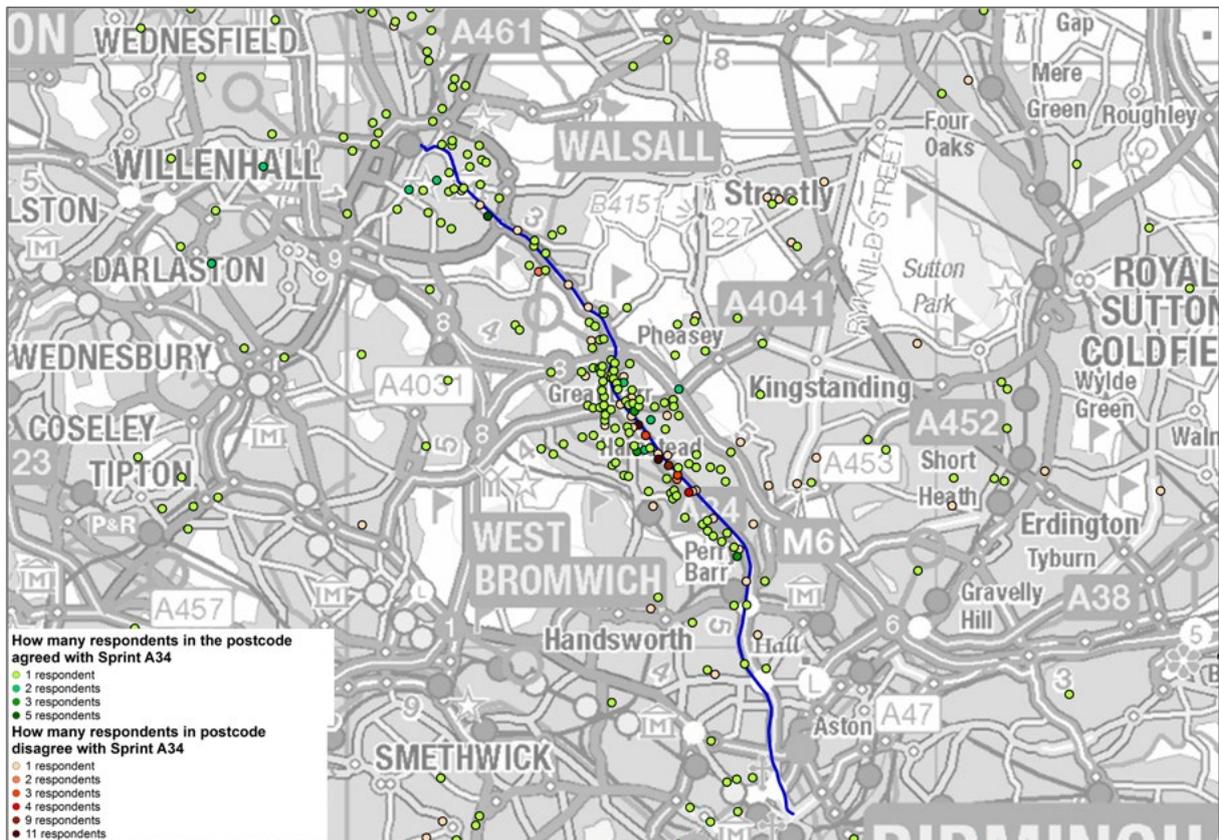
- Support for the proposal also varied by whether the respondent travelled or lived along the route.
- Support was highest amongst those who travelled along the route for work (82% fully/partially support) or education purposes (92%, fully partially support).
- It dipped amongst those who lived on or near the route (68%, fully/partially support) with the share of respondents who do not support Sprint rising to 30%.

Table 13: Percentage of support, by respondents use of route, for A34 proposals

(Base 574 respondents: online and interviewer led and paper surveys only)

	% Total	% Live /near proposed Sprint route	% Study on / near proposed Sprint route	% Work on / near proposed Sprint route	% Regularly travel along this route	% None of the above
Yes - fully support	47	47	59	48	40	53
Yes - partially support	26	21	32	33	27	21
No - do not support	24	30	8	17	30	16
Don't know	3	2	0	2	4	10
Base	574	319	37	120	210	62

Figure 2: Support for Sprint proposal along A34 by home postcode



1.3.8: Why do you support or not support the A34 proposals?

- 380 participants gave reasons for supporting or not supporting the proposals. Comments were again grouped under key themes. **See Table 14.**
- The top comments from 106 participants was that the A34 already had an express route or that it was already well-served (X51).
- 93 participants were concerned over a loss of parking either for residents or businesses.
- 57 participants supported the idea/approved of the investment in public transport.
- 42 respondents thought it would lead to an increase in traffic congestion in the area around the Walsall Road/Scott Arms/Aldridge Road.
- 40 residents had specific concerns about access to their driveways across the Sprint route; access to their home by car or having to reverse cars across the Sprint route.
- 39 participants thought it was a waste of money.
- 34 participants were concerned about increases in noise/air pollution.
- 24 respondents thought it would lead to quicker/faster journey times.
- 23 participants thought it would lead to a decrease in road safety.

Table 14: Response to 1.3.8

(Base 380 respondents: Online, paper, interviewer led, email, letters and social media)

Positive comments about proposals	Frequency
Agree/fully support/support Public Transport Investment/good idea/supportive	57
Will provide quicker/faster journey times	24
Newer/modern/better/comfortable buses	22
Will encourage use/alternative to car/makes public transport look a more attractive	10
Will prevent heavy traffic/congestion/help ease traffic at the Scott Arms	10
Will prevent overcrowding of buses/trains/will get a seat	8
Better travel option from Walsall to Birmingham	6
Will help with journey planning/make journey planning easier	5
Will reduce pollution/more sustainable	4
Public transport is a necessity/necessity for events at the Alexandra stadium	3
Will improve transport connections/HS2 connections	3
Will feel safer/will not have to cross the dual carriageway to board buses	2
Negative comments about proposals	Frequency
Already an express route/already well served (X51)/'will it be improvement on X51?'	106
Concerned over loss of parking for residents/local businesses/belief in need to build driveways over gardens to park cars/park on grass verge	93

Negative comments about proposals	Frequency
Will increase traffic/congestion (Walsall Road/Scott Arms/A34 near Aldridge Road/Church Road/College Road)	42
Concern over residents having to reverse off/access their drive directly onto Sprint lane/3 lane motorway 15 feet from my home and I have to get on and off my drive	40
Waste of money/unnecessary expenditure	39
Concerned over increase noise/air/diesel pollution for residents	34
Will encourage speeding vehicles/motorbikes/decrease road safety/accidents/speed cameras/enforcement needed	23
Concerned over current bus services (X51)/do not take off other buses	21
Not enough on cycle lanes/cycling improvements needed on A34	20
Not enough information/where the stops will be/maps incorrect/hard to understand	20
Ineffective consultation process/didn't get chance to express concerns/views	19
Will decrease the value of house/properties	19
Narrow pavements will increase risks to Pedestrians/disabled/elderly/raking away the grass verges is a danger to pedestrians	18
Can't guarantee reliability/quicker journey times /sprint will still get stuck in traffic	17
Concerned over impact on Scott Arms/ Scott Arms traffic lights needs attention first/Scott Arms junction needs looking at before Sprint	16
Bigger buses not appropriate/unsafe for Cyclists/already been unsuccessful/failed in London	15
Concerned over the price of tickets/fares/want to use existing passes/fares should be cheap to encourage use	14
It will cause disruption to residents/businesses during construction	14
Spend money on improving current services/roads/Infrastructure	14
It is just for the Commonwealth Games/shuttle buses for the Commonwealth Games	14
Extension to route needed/serve more places/doesn't go where I live	10
Needs to be fully segregated/will need fully dedicated and enforced bus lanes	9
More stops on the route are needed/stop near Tower Hill Medical Centre/ long walk Tower Hill Medical Centre stop for elderly patients.	9
Park and ride sites should be extended/park and ride needed to avoid local parking problems	9
Concerns about traffic around JNC 7/ bus lanes near the M6 motorway junction/current bus lanes have sufficient capacity already	7
Too many stops/more stops than the X51/will be slower than the X51	7

Negative comments about proposals	Frequency
Prefer investment in tram/train lines (Chase Line)	6
Concerned over loss of trees/ancient oak trees on the centre reservation.	5
Concern over the location of stop(s)/bus will stop at the bottom of my drive	2
Disagree with blocking the right turn into Bescot Croft due to it being a U-turn facility	1
Issue with closed Side road on Birmingham side of Walsall Road	1
Other comments	Frequency
Put an extra lane in the central reservation to save parking	2
Agree if bikes are allowed on Sprint	1
Base respondents	380

In addition to the above comments, a petition was submitted to TfWM 4th October 2018 in opposition of the A34 route. The petition has been signed by 586 people and opposes the A34 route overall, with the main concerns being around safety of residents reversing onto a live bus lane and the removal of parking for residents, both along the Walsall Road.

1.3.9: If Sprint was implemented along the A34 Walsall to Birmingham via Sandwell route, how likely would you be to travel on the service?

- 63% thought they were very likely/likely to use Sprint. 24% were unlikely, while 10% were neither likely nor unlikely.
- Likely use increased to 80% amongst bus users and to 72% amongst train users. It dipped to 32% amongst car drivers and to 40% amongst car passengers.

Table 15: Response to potential use of route along A34

(Base 564 respondents: Online, on-street and paper surveys; excludes no replies)

	% Total	% car/van, as a driver	% car/ van as a passenger	% Bus	% Walking	% Cycling	% Train	% Other	% rarely/never travel
Very likely/ likely	63	32	40	80	33	48	72	25	40
Neither likely nor unlikely	10	11	15	9	20	22	11	0	0
Unlikely/very unlikely	24	53	40	9	47	30	17	75	40
Don't know	3	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	20
Base	564	149	20	352	15	23	18	8	5

1.3.10: Further comments on the detailed maps and proposals for the A34 Walsall to Birmingham via Sandwell Sprint route.

- 110 consultees made further comments on the detailed maps and proposals for A34. There were a number of general non-map specific comments, while a number of respondents made comments relating to specific maps.
- Map 05 generated the most comments with concerns around increased traffic congestion at the Scott Arms junction (14 respondents).
- Map 11, 12 and 16 generated comments around the lack of parking/removal of parking for residents/businesses.
- In terms of more general comments, 8 respondents re-emphasised the route would duplicate the existing X51 (12 participants), while 8 participants thought there were too many stops/more stops than on the current X51.

Table 16: Response to 1.3.10

(Base 110 respondents: Online and paper survey only; valid comments only)

	Frequency
A34-05 Will cause more traffic/congestion/improvements for Scott Arms traffic/motorway junction at Scott Arms	14
A34-12 - Against removal of parking	12
A34-11 - Concerned over removal of parking/lack of parking	10
A34-16 - Major problem with removing parking for residents/doctor's surgery/dentist/pharmacy	5
A34-17 and A34-18 lack information/lacks information	5
A34 -11 - Increase in noise pollution for residents/will affect house prices	3
A34 -11 - Disagree with removing any trees	3
A34 -11 - Install extra traffic lane from the central reservation so residents keep parking lane	3
A34-03 Will cause more congestion/pollution	3
A34- 12 The house numbers on the map are wrong/no location of stops	2
A34 01 and 02 Should get closer to Walsall Bus Station/Walsall Town Centre	2
A34-03 - A34-04 Sprint stop needed at Jesson road for students of University of Wolverhampton	2
A34 - 14 - Should narrow the central reservation to allow a segregated cycle route	1
A34 - 17 northwards existing cycling provision is poor.	1
A34 - Agree with removal of parking due to residents having on-street parking	1
A34 -04 and 05 significantly closer to homes due to widening of carriage/ detrimental to noise and wellbeing of owners	1

A34 -06 - this road has only just been changed and caused significant disruption	1
A34 -10 - Does not address traffic congestion/safety issues at the junction between the A34 and Sundial Lane (traffic signal scheme needed).	1
A34 -11 - Does not address traffic congestion/safety issues at the junction between Jayshaw Avenue/A34 with traffic crossing 3 lanes to get to central reservation	1
A34 -15 - Bus Stop bypasses should be provided if segregated cycle route is not possible	1
A34 -17 - A segregated cycle path should be provided extending out of Perry Barr Centre	1
A34 -18 - A segregated cycle crossing of Heathfield Road must be provided	1
A34-01 Bridge Street / St Pauls is already overcrowded	1
A34-03 bus lane needed all the way between the flyover and Scott Arms	1
A34-03 like the section between Perry Barr and Scott Arms	1
A34-03 Route to Ablewell Street will make bus services more direct	1
A34-04 - Unsuitable for a bus lane	1
A34-06, A34-07 and A34-08 have concerns about impact on car drivers	1
A34-10 Tiny stretch of bus lane between Sundial Lane and Scott Arms junction will create longer queues of traffic	1
A34-14 - Disagree with the removal of parking for residents/visitors	1
A34-14 Measures are needed to stop illegal and inconsiderate parking at Badshar Palace	1
A34-15 - Against removal of parking	1
A34-16/17 Proposed bus lane needs enforcement via camera.	1
A34-17 and A34-18 Disagree with the demolition of the Perry Barr Flyover	1
A34-18 Birchfield Road junction left turn to Heathfield Road the left turn lane in Birchfield Road should have a "buses only ahead" sign	1
A34-20 Banning the left turn from High Street to Newbury Road	1
A34-23 - Ensure traffic lights change in advance of bus approaching	1
A34-23/24 Buses on regular services need to observe the Sprint stop for ease of interchange.	1
General non map specific	Frequency
Duplication of the X51 and 51/no difference to X51	12
Too many stops/more stops than the X51/slower than X51	8
Should serve more places (Sandwell/Aston Six Ways/Streetly/Oldbury/Dudley/Bartley Green/Harborne)	7
Invest in metro/tram/light rail/underground rail	5
Disagree with the removal of hard shoulder	4

General non map specific	Frequency
Maps too small/hard to read	4
Proposals make cycling worse/not good for cyclists	4
Segregated/dedicated bus lanes needed	3
Spend money on existing services	3
Concerned over increased traffic/hazards on Traffic Island (junction with the Broadway)	2
More provisions for increased passengers needed at Moor Street Station	2
Waste of money	2
The new turning restrictions into Pool Street will make it difficult for parents/caterers to gain access to on street parking at the rear of the Junior School	2
24/7 Enforced Bus lanes need to be introduced throughout the area	2
A34 do not agree with underpass plans	2
Concern over traffic/speeding outside Blue Coat Junior School	1
Good opportunity for improvements to the junction at Walsall Road/Rocky Lane/Access to Alexander Stadium and the crematorium	1
Have an Underpass on the Newton Road and keep the A34 Walsall Road corridor level	1
Invest in Footbridges and subways	1
Junction at Walsall Road/Old Walsall Road would need enhanced traffic lights.	1
Narrow the central reservation to create the extra outbound lane bus while still preserving the parking	1
Signs don't include powered two wheelers (PTWs)	1
Sprint stop in Walsall town centre should be as close to St. Pauls bus station	1
Unhappy with bus stop on Springhill Road	1
Use additional width within the Lancaster Circus tunnel to have segregated cycle lane	1
Will cycles still able to use bus lanes?	1
Total respondents	110

1.3.11: Two options are being considered for Walsall Town Centre. Which option do you prefer?

Option A: Sprint will stop on Bridge Street and exit the town centre via Hatherton Road and Hatherton Street. This will require a reduction to the taxi rank.

Option B: Sprint will stop on Darwall Street and exit the town centre via Tower Street. One Sprint vehicle every 8 minutes would travel along the pedestrianised section of Darwall Street travelling in one direction.

- There was a lot of uncertainty about these options with 58% unsure of which option they preferred.
- However 23% preferred option B the stop on Darwall Street, while 19% preferred option A, the stop on Bridge Street.

Table 17: Response to 1.3.11

(Base 558 respondents: Online, paper and Interviewer led survey)

	Frequency	%
Option A - stop on Bridge Street	106	19
Option B - stop on Darwall Street	127	23
Unsure	325	58
Base	558	100

1.3.12: Reason for Supporting Option A or Option B?

- 109 participants gave a reason for supporting Option A or Option B.
- The main reason given for supporting Option B was that it was more convenient (13 respondents), followed by the assertion that Darwell Street is more central/closer to shops (9 participants) and that it gives better integration with Walsall Bus Station (8 participants).
- The main reasons for supporting Option A were that the stop will be closer to the city centre/is more convenient (36 participants) and it will protect/keep the pedestrianised area (13 participants).

Table 18: Response to 1.3.12

(Base respondents who gave a valid reason for supporting Option A or Option B, Online, interviewer led and paper survey)

Reasons for supporting Option B - Stop on Darwall Street	Frequency
More convenient/better for me	13
Darwall Street more central/closer to shops	9
Better Integration with Walsall Bus Station/close to other buses/improve bus interchange	8
It will reduce congestion on bus station route/top of bus station	6
Will be quicker/smaller loop to travel so quicker	4
Should improve reliability	2
Prefer Darwall Street stop but concerned the taxi rank reduction on Bridge Street would be resisted by the trade	2
A34-01 Gives equal access to/from Bridge Street and the bus station.	2
Darwall Street will be safer	2
I prefer it as it separates Sprint vehicles from other buses in the town centre	1
Darwall Street would provide better access to the civic 'quarter	1
Bridge Street is too busy/congested	1
Better for local businesses	1
Will improve flexibility of Sprint	1
Total respondents	48

Reasons for supporting Option B - Stop on Bridge Street	Frequency
Will be closer to the City Centre/works better for me	36
Protect/keep pedestrianized area	13
It will stop closer to the Railway Station	4
Closer to other buses/bus connections	4
Darwall street will cause more delays	1
Bridge street has a taxi rank so would feel safe	1
Darwall street can be quiet so would feel unsafe	1
A stop on Darwall Street would prevent users of businesses gaining access.	1
Bridge street stop is isolated from the transport network	1
Sprint should utilise the bay opposite bus stands A to C	1
It will be quicker	1
Total respondents	61

1.3.13: Two options are being considered for Aston Six Ways, where the A34 meets Victoria Road and Witton Road. Which option do you prefer?

Option A: Provide new bus priority to allow the service to stop at Aston Six Ways (shown on the plans). This will remove some parking and increase the journey time of Sprint by 23 minutes.

Option B: Sprint will use the underpass and not stop at Aston Six Ways.

- Again there was a level of uncertainty amongst participants about which option they preferred, with 44% unsure.
- 37% preferred Option B – no stop at Aston Six Ways – while only 19% preferred Option A: to have a new bus priority stop at Aston Six Ways.

Table 19: Response to 1.3.13

(Base of 561 respondents: Online, interviewer-led and paper survey)

	Frequency	%
Option A - new bus priority and a stop at Aston Six Ways	106	19
Option B - no stop at Aston Six Ways	210	37
Unsure	245	44
Base	561	100

1.3.14: Reason for Preferring Option A or Option B for Aston Six Ways

- 187 respondents provided a reason for preferring either option A or option B.
- 91 participants preferred option B as it would provide an improved journey time/quicker journey time. 26 participants thought Six Ways was already served well by other buses while 23 participants thought Six Ways was already busy, and that Sprint should avoid the area therefore.
- The main reasons for supporting Option A were that it will improve transport options at Six Ways or that a new bus stop will be convenient/better for me (14 participants each).
- A further 13 participants thought it would provide an interchange hub.

Table 20: Response to 1.3.14

(Base of 187 respondents: Online, interviewer-led and paper survey)

Option A : New Bus Priority Stop at Six Ways Aston	Frequency
Will improve transport options at Six Ways	14
A new bus stop at Six Ways will be convenient/better for me	14
Better interchange/interchange hub with other services at Six Ways	13
Will give access to other areas/places/schools	5
Will improve traffic/congestion for all modes	4
Will prevent Sprint from travelling across the underpass	3
Agree if bus/sprint priority lanes are introduced	2
Will encourage modal shift from cars	1
Agree but it'll need additional cycle facilities	2
Base Respondents	49
Option B : No stop at Six Ways Aston	Frequency
Improve journey time/quicker journey time due to fewer stops	91
Already well served/lots of buses already stop here	26
Six Ways already busy so Sprint should avoid	23
A Sprint stop at Six ways will increase traffic for all road users	8
Already close to the City Centre/not needed	6
Do not reduce/remove parking	4
Should make it a more reliable service	3
Prefer no stop but only if the X51 remains	2
An 'underground' Metro station should be introduced instead	1
If Sprint stops at Six Ways it will get trapped by illegal parking	1
Buses would fill up with Lozells passengers leaving Scott Arms/Walsall passengers unable to get on	1
Base Respondents	138

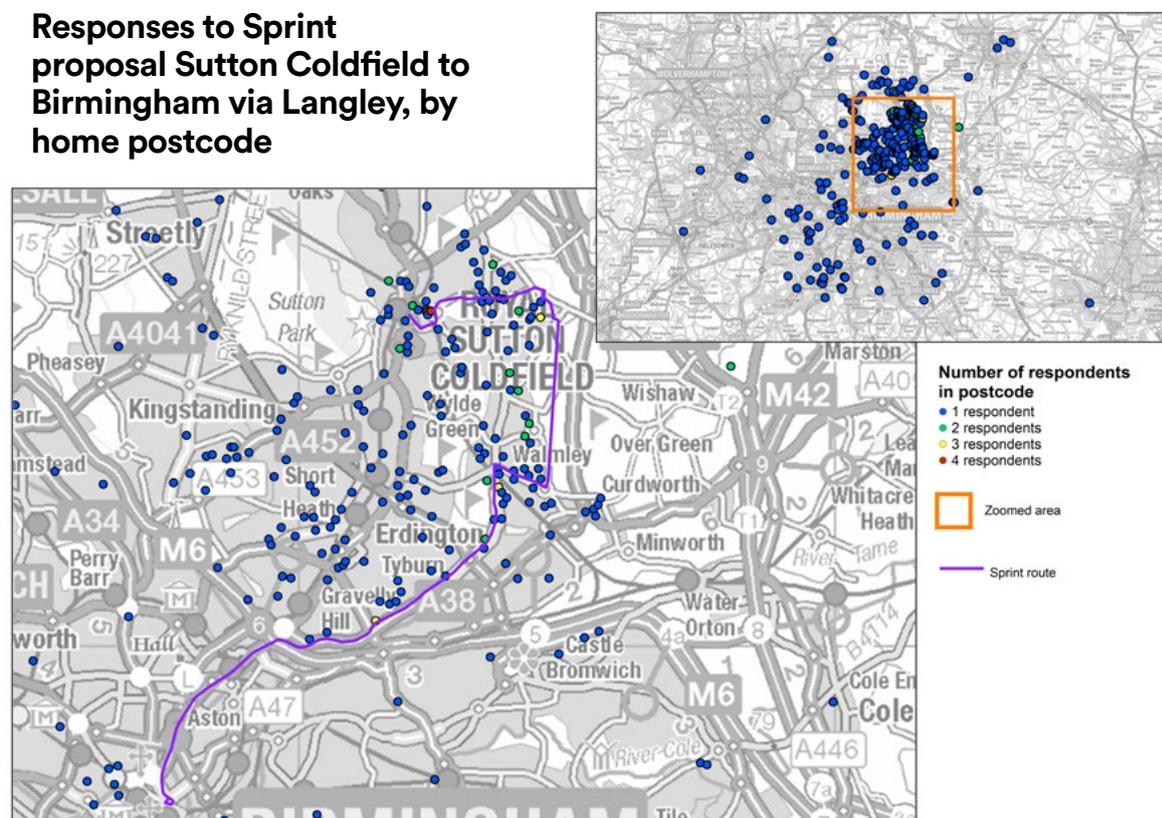
1.4 Responses to Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham Consultation

Table 21: Summary of responses

	Summary
Online survey	244
Interviewer-led surveys	153
Emails/letters	11
Paper survey	7

As **Figure 3** illustrates the majority of respondents lived in the Sutton Coldfield, Erdington and Gravelly Hill area.

Figure 3: Responses to Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham Consultation



1.4.1: Do you live/travel on the proposed Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham route?

- 54% of participants lived on or near the proposed Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham Sprint route. 39% regularly travelled along it, while 22% worked on or near to it.
- Only 4% studied on or near the route.
- 18% did none of these things.

Table 22: Responses to 1.4.1

(Base 405 respondents: online, paper and interviewer led survey, % exceed 100 due to multiple responses)

	Frequency	%
Live on or near the proposed Sprint route	217	54
Study on or near the proposed Sprint route	16	4
Work on or near the proposed Sprint route	89	22
Regularly travel along this route (by any mode of transport, including walking)	156	39
None of the above	72	18
Base	405	136

1.4.2: How often do you travel in the area of the proposed Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham route?

- 41% travelled on the route five days per week or more, a further 32% between 1-4 days per week.
- 8% travelled along the route once or twice a month, while 13% travelled less than once a month.
- 5% never travelled in the area.

Table 23: Response to 1.4.2

(Base 401 respondents: online, interviewer led and paper survey. Excluded no replies)

	Frequency	%
Five or more days per week	166	41
Three or four days per week	74	18
One or two days per week	56	14
One or two days per month	34	8
Less often than one day per month	52	13
Never	19	5
Base	401	100

1.4.3: What is the main purpose of your journey when travelling along this route?

- 43% of respondents were travelled along the route for work purposes.
- 20% travelled for leisure and 11% each for either shopping or to meet friends and relatives.
- 7% were travelling for education.

Table 24: Response to 1.4.3

(Base 397 respondents: Online, interviewer led and paper survey, excluded no replies, % exceed 100 due to multiple responses)

	Total	%
Work	169	43
Education	26	7
Shopping	42	11
Leisure/recreation	79	20
Meeting friends and relatives	43	11
Personal business	21	5
Medical	15	4
Live on the route	6	2
Base	397	101

1.4.4: What is your main mode of transport when travelling along this route?

- 50% of participants travelled along the route by bus.
- 33% travelled by car/van as a driver while a further 3% travelled by car/van as a passenger.
- 6% travelled along the route by train and 5% cycled.

Table 25: Response to 1.4.4

(Base 395 respondents: online, interviewer led and paper responses, excluded no replies, % exceed 100 due to multiple responses)

	Total	%
Car/van as driver	130	33
Bus	198	50
Train	24	6
Bicycle	20	5
Car/van as passenger	10	3
I rarely/never travel in this area	7	2
Walking	8	2
Base	395	101

1.4.5: Do you agree with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on this route?

83% agreed with the need to provide reliable bus journey times along the planned route. Only 12% disagreed.

Table 26: Response to 1.4.5

(Base 401 respondents: online, paper and interviewer led surveys, excludes no replies)

	Total	%
Yes - I agree	333	83
No - I disagree	47	12
Unsure	21	5
Base	401	100

1.4.6: Why do you agree or disagree with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on this route?

- 142 participants gave a reason for agreeing or disagreeing with more reliable bus journey times along the route.
- 27 respondents commented that Sprint will add to congestion/traffic, while 25 people commented they disagreed with Sprint as the route is already well served by public transport.
- 15 people commented that reliable buses will ease congestion, while 13 people thought reliable bus journeys would help with journey planning.
- 40 participants said reliability is important/ buses must run to timetable.

Table 27: Response to 1.4.6

(Base 142 respondents: online and paper survey, valid responses only)

Positive comments	Frequency
Reliability is important/buses must run to timetable	40
Will ease congestion on a busy route /help with heavy traffic in Sutton Coldfield/Erdington	15
Will help with journey planning to work/picking children up from school/ appointments	13
It will help/support Langley and Peddimore developments/6000 new homes	12
Will provide other transport options/alternative to train/bus	11
Will help with modal shift/get people out of cars	6
Will ease overcrowding on services/trains/will be able to get a seat	5
More environmentally friendly/less pollution	5
Will provide quicker journey times	4
Agree but need to invest in current services first/Sprint is not a priority	3
Agree if but only if current services are left alone	3
Current bus services are inadequate/can't cope so this will help	3
Local interchange/connections will be improved	3
Birmingham needs better public transport, walking and cycling provisions	2
It supports the regeneration of the Bromford Industrial Corridor	1
Negative comments	Frequency
Sprint will add to congestion/traffic	27
Disagree as route already well served by public transport	25
Extension to route needed/serve more places/doesn't go where I live	13
Need Segregated cycle routes/improved cycle lanes	10
Waste of money/not needed/spend money on re-instating old rail lines/ stations (Sutton Park line)	5

Negative comments	Frequency
The proposed route is long/needs to be more direct	5
Invest in a dedicated electric tram route/should be a tram/train	5
It will increase journey times for car users/proposal is anti-car	4
You are re-instating an already failed bus lane	4
Disagree with the Parking/lane restrictions/keep the parking along the route	4
Roads along the route too narrow/Riland Road not suitable	3
Cannot guarantee reliability/Sprint will still get stuck in traffic	3
Bendy buses will cause congestion/oversized/too big	3
Concerned over the greenbelt/trees	3
General comments	Frequency
Agree if earlier travel times/Sunday travel is provided/24 hour service	3
Will work if lane priority/segregated bus lanes are enforced	2
Sprint will need to provide interchange connections with bus/train (X3, X4 and X5)	2
Diesel vehicles will increase pollution	1
Still people prefer to drive	1
Base	142

1.4.7: Do you support the Sprint proposal for the Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham via Langley route?

Do you support the Sprint proposal between Sutton Coldfield and the proposed Langley/ Peddimore neighbourhood?

Do you support the Sprint proposal between the proposed Langley/Peddimore neighbourhood and Birmingham city centre?

- 77% fully/partially supported the Sutton to Langley route. A similar proportion (77%) supported the Langley to Birmingham Route. 19% did not support either route.
- Bus users and cyclists (95%) gave the highest level of support for the Sutton to Langley and Langley to Sutton routes respectively, while support dipped among car drivers (60%/59%).

Table 28: Percentage of support, by respondents mode of travel, for Sutton Coldfield to Langley and Langley to Birmingham proposals

(Base 403 and 400 respondents, online, paper and interviewer-led survey, no replies excluded; wording on interviewer-led survey varied and measures support for whole route)

	% Total	% Cycling	%Bus	% car/van, as a driver	% car/van, as a passenger	% Train	% Other	% rarely/never travel in this area
Sutton to Langley								
Yes- Fully support	48	67	58	32	50	54	30	50
Yes - Partially support	29	28	30	28	10	29	30	33
No - Do not support	19	6	10	34	30	17	40	0
unsure	4	0	3	5	10	0	0	17
Langley to Birmingham								
Yes- Fully support	49	71	57	33	50	61	30	50
Yes - Partially support	28	24	30	26	30	22	30	17
No - Do not support	19	6	12	35	10	17	30	0
unsure	4	0	1	7	10	0	10	33

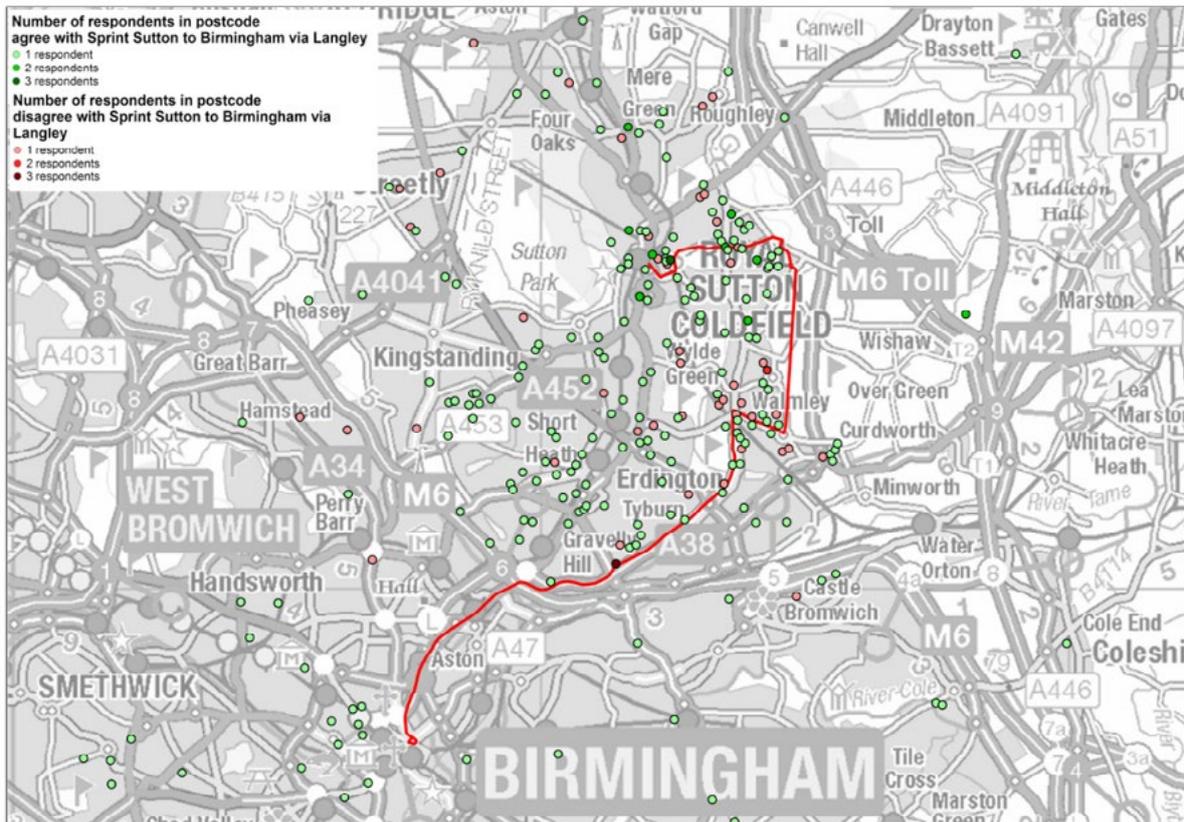
- Support also tended to be highest among those who worked or studied on the proposed Sprint Route.
- Support dipped among those who live on or near the route (27%/26% do not support).

Table 29: Percentage of support, by respondents use of route, for Sutton Coldfield to Langley and Langley to Birmingham proposals

(Base 403 and 400 respondents, online, paper and interviewer-led survey, no replies excluded, wording on interviewer-led survey varied and measured support for whole route)

	% Live on or near the proposed Sprint route	% Study on or near the proposed Sprint route	% Work on or near the proposed Sprint route	% Regularly travel along this route	% None of the above
Sutton Coldfield to Langley					
Yes - fully support	40	69	58	42	54
Yes - partially support	28	19	19	30	30
No - do not support	27	13	18	22	11
Don't know	5	0	4	5	4
Langley to Birmingham					
Yes - fully support	41	69	60	41	56
Yes - partially support	27	19	21	32	27
No - do not support	26	13	15	23	13
Don't know	6	0	5	5	4

Figure 4: Support for proposed route from Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham by home postcode



1.4.8: Why do you support or not support the Sprint proposal along this route?

- 251 participants gave a reason for supporting or not supporting the proposed Sprint Route.
- 40 participants agreed with Sprint if it is quicker/provides quicker faster journey times.
- 37 participants were concerned that Sprint will led to increased congestion/traffic/ delays on local roads.
- 30 participants gave other locations for Sprint to serve or commented that Sprint doesn't go where they live.
- 16 respondents thought Sprint would improve access for the Langley/Peddimore development or that it will improve transport options.
- 16 people thought Sprint gave more transport options.

Table 30: Summary of responses

(Base 251 respondent: Online, interviewer led and paper survey, letters, emails and social media)

Positive comments on route	Frequency
Agree if it's quicker/provide quicker/faster journey times	40
Will improve access for the Langley - Peddimore Development residents	16
It will improve transport options/will have Greater choice/alternatives/ flexibility	16
Support/good Idea/agree with improving public transport	14
Better service/works better for me	12
Should be more reliable/should improve reliability	11
Will provide extra capacity/buses/trains get very busy/services won't cope with extra demand (71)	9
It will promote modal shift/less cars on the road /ease congestion into Birmingham	8
Better for the environment/less pollution/reduce emissions	2
Negative comments on route	Frequency
It will increase congestion/traffic/delays on local roads/more traffic for commuters/more congestion on already busy roads	37
Other Sprint Suggestions/serve other locations/Sprint doesn't go where I live	30
Sprint not an express route/slower than other buses (X4, 5)/too many stops/ going through new housing estate will make it slower	14
Waste of money/nothing new/not required/just duplicating/same as current services/won't work so waste of tax payers' money	12
Already a regular train/bus services/already well served by public transport (67)	11
More information needed on cycling/information is unclear	10

Negative comments on route	Frequency
Disagree with narrowing the lanes/dedicated bus lane on Tyburn Road/ Already failed on the Tyburn Road	9
Concerned over parking restrictions/double yellow lines for residents/ Visitors/Riland Road/Tyburn Road/doctors surgery/local businesses/ hospitals/schools	9
Disagree with the removal of trees along Tyburn Road/building on green belt/conservation areas	9
Should be tram/metro/invest in tram/existing train lines	8
Agree if cycle infrastructure is put in place/needs a segregated cycle route/ Need better cycle provisions	8
Concerned over road safety/Sprint runs too close to nursery/schools/speed bumps/cameras needed (Bromford lane/Tyburn road/Webster Way/ Eachelhurst Road)	8
Other routes/buses need improving first/907 bus/Sprint should not be priority	7
Concerned Sprint being able to negotiate the railway bridge/three-way junction at the railway bridge	7
Not good for local businesses/business losing frontage on Tyburn Road/ properties will become un-rentable/loss of tenants	4
Concern over fares/cost of using Sprint	4
Concerned over effect on existing services (X14/67)	4
Concerned over lack of footpath/pavements are too narrow/narrow pavements on Walmley Ash Road	4
Will prevent access to property/getting on and off the drive (Eachelhurst/ Tyburn Road)	4
Buses are too big/disagree with the size of the buses/9.5m buses make it less safe for cyclists	3
Sprint will still suffer with delays/traffic/congestion/will suffer with traffic created by the warehouses to be built at Peddimore/traffic from Peddimore/Langley estates	3
Concerned over noise pollution on Riland Road	2
Need to build segregated bus ways/needs to be fully segregated	2
Additional Traffic on Riland/Rectory Road which will affect emergency services	2
Not enough demand for Sprint/not a popular route	2
Concerned it may affect the value of my house (Riland Road/Tyburn Road)	3
Poor consultation/lack of information/more information on effects to residents	3
General comments	Frequency
Improve bus/rail interchange/connectivity/local rail stations (Sutton Coldfield, Aston, City Centre)	6

General comments	Frequency
Park and ride should be implemented along the route/Park and Ride needed/Park and Ride at Asda	6
Car is still faster/won't get people out of their cars	3
Disagree with the proposal/disagree with the Langley proposal	2
Sprint needs to be a 24/7 service	1
Need Yellow Lines on Eachelhurst Road	1
Base	251

1.4.9: If Sprint was implemented along the Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham via Langley route, how likely would you be to travel on the service?

- 59% of respondents were likely/very likely to travel by Sprint along the Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham route.
- 26% were very unlikely/unlikely to use the service.
- Likely use rose to 77% amongst bus users and to 73% amongst cyclists.
- Potential use dipped to 35% among car drivers.

Table 31: Response to 1.4.9

(Base 402 respondents. Online, interviewer-led and paper surveys, excludes no replies)

	% Total	% Car/van as driver	% Car/van as passenger	% Bus	% Bicycle	% Train	% rarely/never travel in this area	% Other
Very likely/likely	59	35	40	77	73	50	28	30
Neither likely nor unlikely	12	14	30	9	22	8	0	20
Unlikely/very unlikely	26	48	30	11	6	42	57	40
Don't know	4	4	0	4	0	0	14	10
Base	402	130	10	198	18	24	7	10

1.4.10: Any further comments on the detailed maps and proposals for the Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham?

- 93 respondents made comments on the detailed maps and proposals. Some of these comments were about specific maps, while others were more general comments.
- In terms of map specific comments 16 participants commented on maps 13 and 14 with concerns about residential parking restrictions.
- 12 participants commented on maps 11 and 12 thinking the proposal would lead to more traffic/congestion in Sutton Lower Parade.
- A further 10 people commented on map 12 with concerns over Sprint crossing the congested railway bridge.
- 9 people disagreed with the proposals on map 14 to restrict traffic in Riland Road as it would put pressure on neighbouring roads.
- In terms of general comments 14 participants commented that the route didn't go near to them/needed extending, while 10 respondents didn't feel there was enough information/detail.

Table 32: Response to 1.4.10

(Base 93 respondents: Online and paper survey)

Map specific comments	Frequency
SBL 13 - 14 Awful Parking restrictions/concerned over residents/businesses/ do not get rid of parking/to lose 4-6 metres off our 11 metre frontage and car parking will make our business unable to operate	16
SBL-11 and SBL-12 will create more congestion/will cause more congestion/ More traffic in Sutton-Lower Parade	12
SBL-12 Concern over Sprint crossing the congested railway bridge/bridge cannot support the required volume of traffic	10
SBL-14 - Disagree with restricting the traffic on Riland Road. it will put pressures on Coleshill Road/Coleshill Street crossroads/Rectory Road/SPL-14 The whole triangle of Rectory Road/Riland Road/Coleshill Street needs addressing and redesigning.	9
SBL-07 to SBL - 11 A cycle lane is needed/Segregated Cycle Path should be provided	6
SBL-13 to SBL-14 Double yellow the park side before implementing Sprint	4
SB11 - SB13 - Houses on route need protection from road noise/noise pollution	3
SBL-05 There will be insufficient frontage/land left to park any vehicles/ Load lorries	3
SBL-08 concerned over Tyburn Road loss of space for cars/ will increase congestion/pass through the lane to access my driveway	3
SBL-12 - Walmley Ash Road needs Sprint priority/Sprint needs priority along all the route	3
SBL-13 Whitehouse Common bus stop towards Sutton. Move bus stop 5 metres to avoid issues with access	3
SBL 12-13 Walmley Ash Road is not wide enough for Sprint	2

SBL-12 No consideration for residents of Orton Avenue and Ashurst road (due to the Eachelhurst bus lane)	2
SBL-14/SPL-13 – Lane needs to be enforced/cameras	2
SB11 - SB13 - Speed restrictions need to be applied/Rectory Road	1
SBL 12 -Need to minimise disruption to other road users and residents of Eachelhurst Road	1
SBL-04 - Should be more outbound bus lanes	1
SBL-04 - Bus lane should be continuous	1
SBL-14 - ban the right turn from Coleshill Road on to Riland Road	1
SPL-01-11 Support the proposals at this location	1
General comments	Frequency
Extension to route needed/serve more places/doesn't go where I live (New Hall/Streetly/Perry Barr/Erdington/Minworth/Walmley/Peddimore directly)	14
Not enough information/detail/information not explained within the consultation documents/the Sketch Plan/Sprint Stop Location drawings are unhelpful/misleading	10
Maps are unclear/Peddimore is not a clearly identified/misleading	6
Disagree with the number of trees proposed to be removed/loss of the green space	5
Invest in metro/tram/light rail instead	5
Too many stops/ not a fast route	4
Concern over safety around Walmley Ash School/Nursery	3
Improve existing services first (X14s/X4/71/X4)	3
Won't work/poor idea	3
Concern over existing buses	2
Pavements/roads are too narrow for proposed stops	2
Needs to be completed quickly to prevent disruption	1
Will increase pollution	1
Base respondents	93

1.5 A45 Consultation

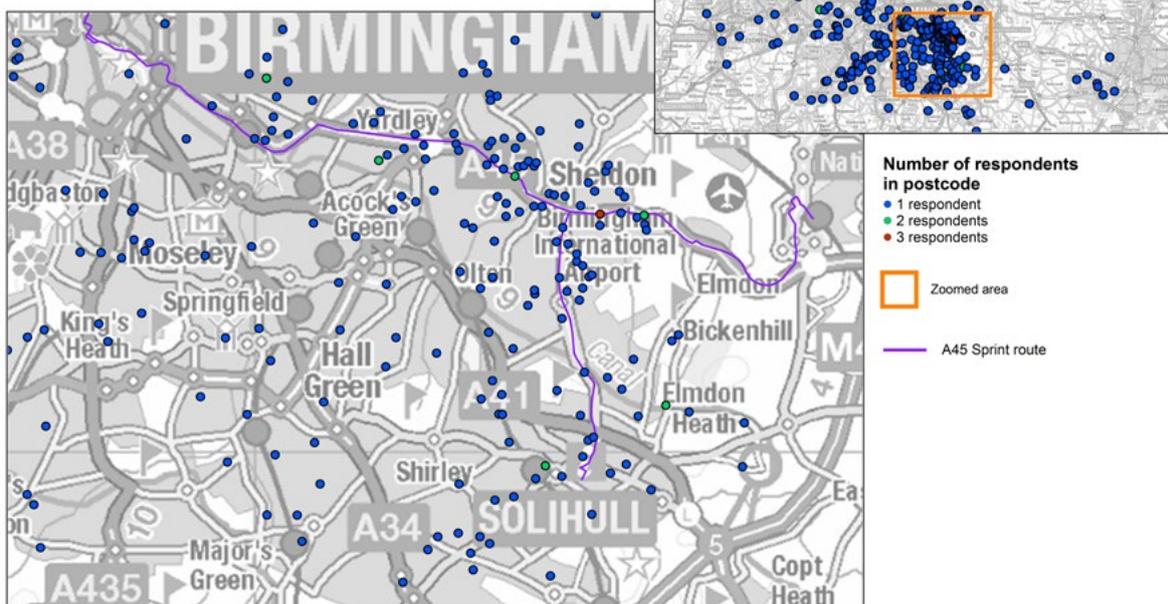
Table 33: Summary of responses to 1.5

Summary of response type A45	Summary
Online survey	284
Interviewer led surveys	139
Paper survey	6
Emails/letters	2
Exhibition comments	1

- The majority of respondents to the consultation lived in the Solihull area.
- However, there were also clusters of respondents from the Sheldon/Yardley area and from the Kings Heath/Moseley area of Birmingham.

Figure 5: Home Postcode of Participants In A45 Consultation

Responses to A45 Sprint proposal, by home postcode



1.5.1: Do you live/travel on or near the proposed A45 route?

- 40% lived on or near the A45 route, while 38% regularly travelled along the route. 35% worked on or near the route.
- Only 8% studied on or near the route, while 16% did none of the above.

Table 34: Response to 1.5.1

(Base 397 respondents: Online, interviewer led and paper survey, excluded no replies, % exceed 100 due to multiple responses)

	Frequency	%
Live on or near the proposed Sprint route	169	40
Study on or near the proposed Sprint route	32	8
Work on or near the proposed Sprint route	150	35
Regularly travel along this route	160	38
None of the above	67	16
Base	424	136

1.5.2: How often do you travel in the area of the proposed A45 Sprint route?

- 44% travelled along the proposed Sprint route 5 days per week or more, with a further 26% travelling between 1-4 days.
- 13% travelled along the route once or twice a month, 17% less often.

Table 35: Response to 1.5.2

(Base 423 respondents: online, Interviewer-led and paper survey)

	Frequency	%
Five or more days per week	186	44
Three or four days per week	63	15
One or two days per week	45	11
One or two days per month	54	13
Less often than one day per month	70	17
Never	5	1
Base	423	100

1.5.3: What is the main purpose of your journey when travelling along this route?

- The main reason for travelling along the route was for work purposes (49%).
- 24% travelled along the route for leisure.
- Other reasons for travel were very much in the minority with 7% travelling for education and 6% each for shopping or to meet friends/relatives.

Table 36: Response to 1.5.3

(Base 424 respondents: online, interviewer led and paper survey)

	Frequency	%
Work	208	49
Education	31	7
Shopping	27	6
Leisure/recreation	103	24
Meeting friends and relatives	26	6
Personal business	19	4
Medical	7	2
Live on the route	3	1
Base	424	100

1.5.4: What is your main mode of transport when travelling along this route?

- 50% of respondents travelled by bus along the A45 route.
- 28% travelled as a car driver with a further 2% travelling as a car/van passenger.
- 10% travelled by train and 5% by bicycle.

Table 37: Response to 1.5.4

(Base 422 respondents; Online, Interviewer-led and paper survey, excludes no replies)

	Frequency	%
Car/van as driver	119	28
Bus	209	50
Train	43	10
Bicycle	23	5
Taxi	10	2
Car/van as passenger	9	2
Walking	5	1
I rarely/never travel in this area	4	1
Base	422	100

1.5.5: Do you agree with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on this route?

Table 38: Response to 1.5.5

(Base 423 respondents: online, interviewer-led and paper survey, excludes no replies)

	Frequency	%
Yes - I agree	362	86
No - I disagree	32	8
Unsure	29	7
Base	423	100

1.5.6: Why do you agree or disagree with the need to provide reliable bus journey times on this route?

- 168 respondents gave a reason for agreeing or disagreeing with the need to supply a more reliable bus service along the A45.
- 55 participants simply said services should be more reliable/should stick to timetable.
- 30 respondents thought more reliable bus services would reduce congestion along the route.
- 28 participants thought more reliable bus services would improve the choice of transport/give better transport options along route.
- 24 respondents thought a more reliable bus service would improve connectivity/access to the airport/NEC and Small Heath.
- 21 respondents thought it would lead to quicker journeys.
- 20 participants thought the area was already well served by public transport.

Table 39: Response to 1.5.6

(Base 168 respondents; online and paper survey)

Positive comments	Frequency
Should be a more reliable service/should be able to stick to timetable schedule	55
Will reduce congestion (Coventry Road/Bordesely Circus/Sheldon at junction with Morrison's/Digbeth/St Andrew's)	30
Will improve choice of transport/better options/give better option than car/ alternative to train	28
Will improve connectivity/access to the airport/NEC/Small Heath/Small Heath Business Park	24
Quicker journey times/bus lanes will result in quicker journey times	21
Improve journey planning/get to places/work/school on time	19
More buses are needed on this route/buses are always full/I will get a seat	10
It will improve air quality/clean air/cut pollution	7
Will promote modal shift/will get people out of cars	6
Agree with proposals/it will showcase the city	5
Improve wait time at-stop	1
Negative comments	Frequency
Already well served by X1/X2/train	20
Improve existing services first /X1/X2/Sprint is a good idea but not a priority	18
Sprint will cause more congestion/traffic/disruption/delays	8
Waste of money/not needed	5

Negative comments	Frequency
Dedicated bus lanes on Lode Lane are frustrating	2
Invest in metro/tram instead	2
Paths are too narrow/unsafe for pedestrians/students	2
Extension to route needed/serve more places/doesn't go where I live	2
Needs a dedicated cycle highway from Birmingham Airport to the City Centre	1
Agree but concerned about the cost of fares	1
Too many stops/will be slower than current services/trains to the airport	1
General comments	Frequency
It may relieve parking at Olton station	1
Diesel buses bad for environment/cause more pollution	1
Needs to be a fully segregated system otherwise Sprint will fail	1
Base	168

1.5.7: Do you support the Sprint proposal for the A45 Solihull and Birmingham Airport to Birmingham route?

- 82% fully/partially supported the Sprint proposal on the A45.
- 14% did not support the proposal.
- Support rose to 89% amongst bus users and to 96% amongst cyclists.
- Support dipped among car drivers (69%) and passengers (71%).

Table 40: Percentage of support, by respondents mode of travel, for A45 proposals

(Base 428 respondents: online, interviewer led or paper survey)

	% Total	% Car/van as driver	% Car/van as passenger	% Bus	% Bicycle	% Train	% Taxi	% Other	% rarely/never travel
Yes - fully support	63	50	57	72	74	60	60	71	50
Yes - partially support	19	19	14	17	22	23	20	29	0
No - do not support	14	25	29	8	4	12	10	0	50
Don't know	4	6	0	3	0	5	10	0	0
Base	428	119	7	208	23	43	10	7	4

- Support for the proposals was highest amongst those who studied (91%) or worked (87%) along the route.
- It dipped slightly to 81% amongst those who lived on the route and to 77% amongst those who regularly travelled along the route.

Table 41: Percentage of support, by respondents use of route, for A45 proposals

(Base 428 respondents: online, paper and interviewer led survey, excludes no replies)

	% Live on or near the proposed Sprint route	% Study on or near the proposed Sprint route	% Work on or near the proposed Sprint route	% Regularly travel along this route	% None of the above
Yes - fully support	61	78	73	52	55
Yes - partially support	20	13	14	25	15
No - do not support	15	3	9	18	21
Don't know	5	6	4	5	9
Base	168	32	150	160	66

Figure 6: Support for proposed A45 route by home postcode



1.5.8: Why do you support or not support the Sprint proposal along the A45 route?

- 251 participants gave a valid response for supporting or not supporting the proposed Sprint route.
- The top response was that Sprint should result in quicker journey times (65 participants).
- 25 respondents agreed with the proposals/long overdue/support the improvements.
- 21 participants thought it would provide better links/connectivity to the Airport/NEC/City centre etc.
- However a further 21 respondents thought the route was already served by public transport.
- 20 participants thought that Sprint would reduce traffic congestion, while 19 participants thought it would improve reliability.
- 18 participants thought bus lanes will reduce road capacity/increase congestion.
- 16 participants thought the route needed to serve more places, while a further 16 participants thought the proposal was a waste of money.

Table 42: Response to 1.5.8

(Base 251 respondents: Online, paper and interview-led survey and comments via letters and email and from exhibition bus)

Positive comments on Sprint proposals	Frequency
Sprint should result in quicker journey times	65
Agree with the proposal/long overdue/support public transport improvements along this route	25
Provide better links/connectivity to the Airport/NEC/City Centre/Sutton Coldfield/JLR/Solihull/Good Hope	21
Will reduce congestion/Traffic (Coventry Road)	20
It will improve reliability/we need reliable transport	19
Will upgrade transport vehicles/more comfortable way to travel	15
Will encourage modal shift/stop people driving/get people out of their cars	13
It will showcase public transport/will be high profile for visitors	8
Sprint will bring investment/improve economy	4
Will improve air quality/pollution	4
It will support HS2	3
Negative comments on Sprint proposals	Frequency
Already well served by trains/buses (X1 and X2)/happy with current services	21
Bus lanes will reduce road capacity/increase congestion/will be disruptive to road users	18
Waste of Money/not a long term solution/not needed	16
Extension to route needed/serve more places/doesn't go where I live	16

Negative comments on Sprint proposals	Frequency
Spend the money on upgrading existing routes/buses X1/X2	12
Invest in metro/tram/light rail/underground rail	14
Need a protected cycle lane/concerned for cyclists/cycle lane needed between Glen Croft and Samson Parkway	9
Concern over expense of fares/combined ticket for Sprint and non-Sprint bus is essential	9
Construction works will cause more traffic/congestion/disruption for car users/residents	7
Concerned over existing buses/leave them alone (X1/X2/58)	5
Disagree/do not support part of the route (Digbeth/Solihull)	4
Not good for the environment/create air pollution	3
Concerns over pedestrian safety/disabled/elderly/need better footpaths/paths too narrow (Goodway Road and Damson Parkway)	3
Destroying Green Space/disagree with losing trees (Gilbertstone Avenue)	3
Too many stops/no quicker than current services/train	2
Will be an eyesore/not attractive transport	2
Cannot guarantee journey times	1
Not safe for cyclists/9.5m busses make it less safe for cyclists	1
Need to build segregated busways/won't work if not fully segregated	1
Sprint will still get delayed/stuck in traffic (by Yates/Box junction/Warwick Road/Pedestrian crossing delays buses)	1
Concerned for Residents turning right at Harvard Road (to Wheatsheaf) due to on-street parking it needs double yellows.	1
General comments	Frequency
We need a 24/7 service/run 24 hours	4
More/Additional stops needed (Bordesley Circus for Birmingham city football club/Sheaf Lane/Wells Road)	4
Need further information/lacking information	2
It will improve the Small Heath area/Interchange at Small Heath station	2
Improve journey planning	1
It is not guaranteed that commuters/general public will start using buses	1
Base Respondents	251

1.5.9: If Sprint was implemented along the A45 Solihull and Birmingham Airport to Birmingham route, how likely would you be to travel on the service?

- 70% of respondents said they were very likely/likely to travel by Sprint along the A45 route. Only 15% thought they were unlikely to use it.
- Likely use rose to 85% amongst bus users and to 90% amongst the small group of taxi users.
- Potential use dipped to 50% among car drivers and to 43% among car passengers

Table 43: Response to 1.5.9

(Base 423 responses, Online, paper and interviewer led survey, excludes no replies)

	% Total	% car/van, as a driver	% car/van, as a passenger	% Bus	% Bicycle	% Taxi	% Train	% Other	% rarely travel/ never travel
Very likely/likely	70	50	43	84	65	90	62	100	25
Neither likely nor unlikely	12	18	29	8	26	0	12	0	0
Unlikely/very unlikely	15	30	29	6	4	10	24	0	25
Don't know/ Unsure	2	3	0	1	4	0	2	0	50
Base	423	119	7	208	23	10	42	7	4

1.5.10: Further comments on the detailed maps and proposals for the A45 Solihull and Birmingham Airport to Birmingham Sprint route.

- 90 respondents made further comments on the maps and detailed proposals for the A45 Sprint route.
- There were more general comments on a number of specific maps about the need for segregated cycle lanes (8 participants).
- The main map-specific comment was on map 12 concerning Sprint increasing congestion at the Swan Island and on Lode lane (16 participants).
- There were also a number of more general comments about Sprint needing to serve more areas (14 participants).
- Comments on maps 23 and 24 involved concerns over removal of trees/grass (8 participants).

Table 44: Response to 1.5.10

(Base 90 respondents: Online and paper survey)

Map specific comments	Frequency
A45-12 - Bus lane will increase congestion at Swan Island and A45 -27 Lode Lane	16
A45-23 & 24 - Concerned over the removal of trees/grass	8
Proposals ignore cyclists safety/segregated cycle routes/paths alongside Sprint needed (Small Heath Highway/A45 06-08/A45 02-04/A45 05/A45-23-25-26-30)	8
A45-29 It will improve journey time/traffic in-out of Solihull.	6
A45-13/A45-15 - Bus stop at Wagon Lane should be a Sprint stop	2
A45-15 Stop needed at Barrows Lane (Aldi)	2
Maps are unclear/A45-26/A45-27	2
A45 19-21 - Between Goodway Road and Damson Parkway south side cycle way should be included	1
A45-01 - The pedestrianised street behind the Clayton Hotel should not become a Sprint bus gate	1
A45-03 - Proposal will not cut down congestion	1
A45-04 - Remove the 'hamburger lane' and build new bus only lane	1
A45-05 - Stop needed	1
A45-08 - A stop at the end of Talbot Way needed	1
A45-08 - Concern over buses crossing the carriageway	1
A45-09 A sprint bus stop and/or a crossing to the path along the river is needed	1
A45-10 - Getting the Sprint from the outside lane (at the island) to the inside lane for the stop is going to be dangerous	1
A45-10 - the River Cole cycle route does not appear to be catered for	1

Map specific comments	Frequency
A45-12 Should be built in the carriageway to increase X1/X2 journey times	1
A45-14 - Map not that clear/hard to understand	1
A45-18 - A zebra crossing on this bus lane needed	1
A45-21 - Stop needed outside the Travelodge	1
A45-23 - Do not restrict traffic leaving the roundabout northbound to one lane	1
A45-23 - Give cycle users some cycle cut-through	1
A45-25 - The cycle track must be 3 meters wide	1
A45-29 - Lode Lane gyratory: make the existing bus lane on Warwick Road two way	1
B425-1008 Bus stops potential volume from the school not looked at	1
B425-1008 Ensure visibility at the pelican crossing is not compromised.	1
A45-23 The existing pedestrian crossing and new crossing to be toucan crossings with dropped kerb	1
General comments	Frequency
Extension to route needed/serve more places/doesn't go where I live (have a flyover or underpass at W heatsheaf/Serve Coventry/Small Heath/Business Park/Heartlands Hospital/Castle Bromwich/Marston Green)	14
Area already well served (X1-X2-Trains)	9
Agree/support the A45 proposals	9
Direct connection from Solihull to airport/NEC needed	5
Waste of money	4
It will increase pollution/bad for the environment	3
Invest in metro/tram/light rail instead	3
Pavements are too narrow/footpath on Digbeth High street needs widening	3
Want to be able to take folding bicycle/bikes on Sprint	3
A45 - Should use the central reservation	2
Not enough information	2
Stops are too close together/Lyndon Road-Sheldon W heatsheaf-Coalway Avenue are too close together	3
Stop antisocial behaviour on buses	2
Bus lane should be a standard colour	1
Concerned over existing services to Coventry	1
Concerned that the added bus lane will push traffic onto the A41 (Residential Street)	1
Sprint not competitive with train	1
Will increase noise levels for residents	1
Base	90

1.6 Consultation Awareness

1.6.1: How did you find out about this consultation?

- 40% had heard of the consultation via social media and 18% via a website.
- 15% had a leaflet through the door and 10% had seen a poster at a bus stop.
- 6% had been to a consultation event.
- 19% stated 'other'. Other common sources of awareness included email, word of mouth and local newspapers.

Table 45: Response to 1.6.1

(Base 683 respondents: online survey and paper survey only, no replies excluded from base, % exceed 100 due to multiple responses)

	Frequency	%
Social Media e.g. Facebook	273	40
Website	125	18
Leaflet through the door	102	15
Poster at bus stop	68	10
Event	41	6
Electronic information display in the bus shelter	14	2
Travel Information Centre	6	1
Other (e.g. newspapers/word of mouth/emails)	133	19
Base	683	111

1.6.2: Do you feel that the information provided has enabled you to make an informed comment on the proposals?

- The majority of respondents (82%) thought they had enough information to make an informed comment, only 18% did not feel this way.

Table 46: Response to 1.6.2

(Base 716 respondents: Online and paper survey only, no replies excluded from base)

	Frequency	%
Yes	590	82
No	131	18
Base	716	100

1.6.3: What additional information would have helped you to comment on the proposals?

- 251 respondents suggested additional information which would be helpful. See Table 47.
- 45 participants wanted the consultation to be wider/more open more widely advertised.
- 40 participants wanted information on how decisions for Sprint were made/how the routes were selected/any alternatives considered.
- 30 participants wanted more details on ticket costs/how ticketing will work.
- 28 participants wanted more information on how the changes will impact road users/how changes will affect traffic along the route.
- 21 respondents wanted more details on timetables/operating hours of Sprint.
- 19 people wanted more detailed maps, while 18 respondents wanted more information on costs.

Table 47: Response to 1.6.3

(Base 251 respondents: Online and paper survey; valid responses only)

	Frequency
Wider consultation needed/more open/more widely advertised	45
Information on how decisions for Sprint was made /how routes selected/ alternative transport considered/expected passenger numbers	40
More details on ticket costs/how ticketing will work/will you be able to use current ticket passes on services	30
How the changes will impact road users/how changes will affect traffic along route	28
Timetables/operating hours	21

	Frequency
More detailed maps/easier to understand maps/able to zoom in on maps/accurate maps	19
Cost of scheme/value for money/longer term value of project	18
Who will be the operator/how will work with other operators/effect on other buses	17
More detailed explanation on how they will effect residents/how effects on residents will be negated (e.g. parking/access to property)	17
More information on cycle routes/cycle facilities/active travel	16
Estimates of journey time savings/expected journey times	15
More information on bus type/capacity/suitability	11
Animation/CGI of proposed schemes	10
More detail on bus priority measure/where will bus priority lanes be/who enforces it/where will space for lanes come from	8
Future route/plans/how links with future developments	8
More info on eco friendliness of vehicles	8
More detail (in general)	8
Decision made already	6
More detail on planned routes/bus stops/interconnectivity	6
A timeline/dates/implementation	5
Effect on environment/trees/houses etc.	4
More details on shelters	4
One sided/biased/gives no negatives	3
Disability access/consideration	3
plans weren't mobile friendly/hard to view online	2
More printed information for those without a computer	2
Pilot the scheme first	2
Personal safety on board (staff etc.)	2
Area needs more funding	1
More information on park and ride for route	1
Base	251

Table 48: Respondent profiles

(Base between 1070 and 482: Online, paper and interviewer-led surveys. No replies and prefer not to say excluded, questions on religion and sexual orientation asked on online survey only)

Age	Frequency	%
16-24	171	16
25-34	197	18
35-44	189	18
45-59	269	25
60+	244	23
Base	1070	100
Gender	Frequency	%
Male	594	56
Female	461	44
Base	1055	100
Ethnicity	Frequency	%
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	804	78
White: Other	45	4
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	18	2
Asian/Asian British	110	11
Black African/Caribbean/Black British	50	5
Base	1019	100
Sexual Orientation	Frequency	%
Bisexual	17	4
Gay or Lesbian	28	6
Heterosexual or Straight	431	89
Other	6	1
Base	482	100
Religion	Frequency	%
No Religion	246	49
Christian	219	43
Buddhists	2	0
Hindu	6	1
Jewish	1	0
Muslim	20	4
Sikh	11	2
Other	2	0
Base	507	100

Disability	Frequency	%
Yes	145	14
No	876	86
Base	1021	100

This report has been produced by the Human Intelligence Team who are Market Research Society (MRS) accredited and follow their code of conduct.

Glossary of terms

- BRT: Bus Rapid Transit
- GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation
- HS2: High Speed 2 (Railway)
- JLR: Jaguar Land Rover
- Langley: Housing development in Sutton Coldfield
- Metro: West Midlands Metro: a light-rail/tram which operates in the region
- NEC: National Exhibition Centre
- Peddimore: Industrial park development in Sutton Coldfield
- SBL: Sutton Birmingham Langley (proposed Sprint route)
- SPD: Supplementary Planning Documents
- TfWM: Transport for West Midlands

To request a printed copy of this document or a version in a different format, please get in touch:

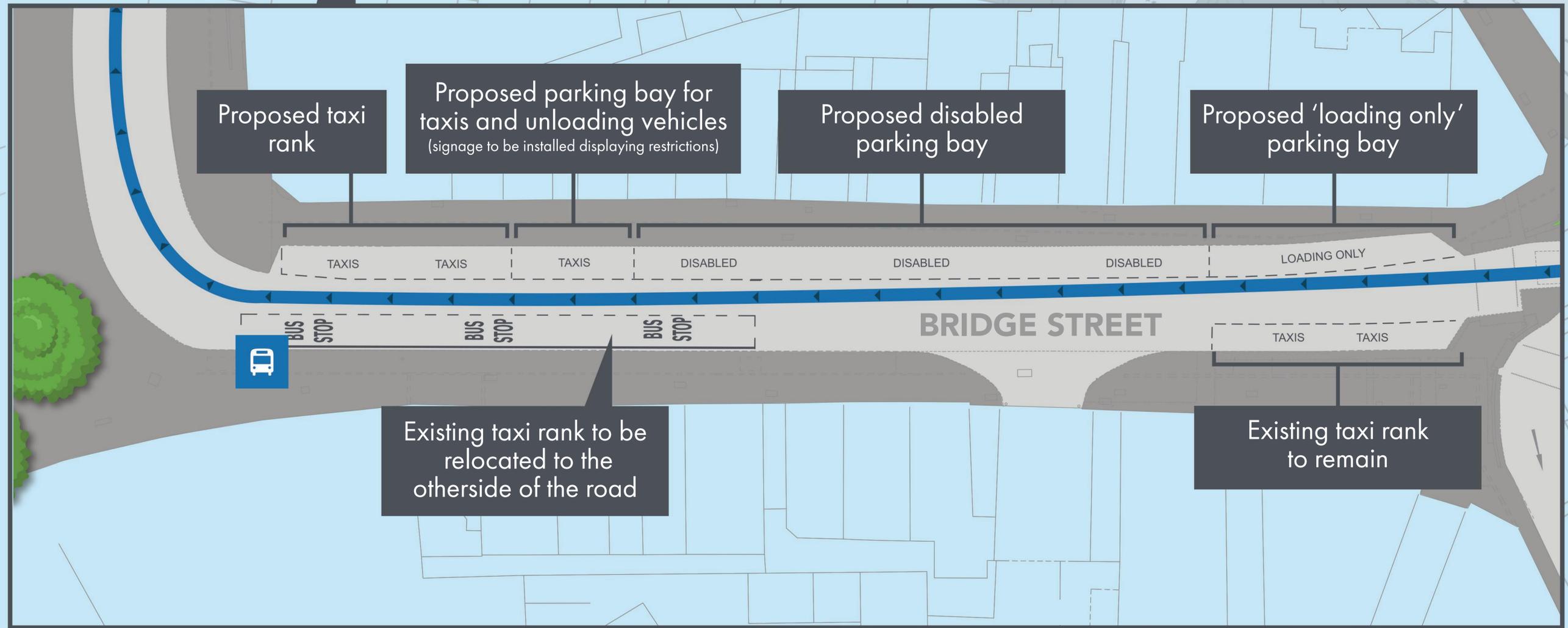
Transport for West Midlands
16 Summer Lane
Birmingham
B19 3SD
0121 214 7321

Building a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous West Midlands.

Section 1 | Walsall Town Centre

KEY

-  Landscape
-  Bus Lane
-  Sprint bus stop
-  Trees retained



KEY

- Carriageway adjustments
- Landscape
- Proposed footway
- Bus Lane
- Sprint bus stop
- Trees retained
- Parking removed
- Tactile pavement

2 straight ahead lanes changed to straight on and a right turn

Parking to be removed

Outbound lane reduced to one lane

Existing parking to remain

Upper Rushall Street made 2 way

Right turn from Ablewell Street removed

Mandatory left turn from Tantara Street

Existing parking to remain



Section 2 | Ablewell Street

Section 3 | Park Road to Beacon Road

Walstead Road Junction

The Bell Inn

LODGE ROAD

BEACON ROAD

Amended right turn

12 hour bus lane
7am - 7pm

M6 Jct 7

Handsworth Rugby Union Football Club

KEY

- Carriageway adjustments
- Landscape
- Proposed footway
- Bus lane
- Sprint bus stop
- Trees retained
- Trees removed
- Bollards added

KEY

- █ Landscape
- █ Bus lane
- █ Existing bus lane
- Trees retained

12 hour bus lane
7am - 7pm

Footway

Gap closed to
improve safety

Merrions Wood

Aston University
Recreation Centre

Existing bus lane to extend
back to Merrions Close

Section 4 | Merrions Close

A34 Sprint Walsall – Tree Mitigation Version 4.0 December 2020

Outline – what is Sprint?



1. The full cross-city Sprint route

1. The West Midlands is growing rapidly, with the population due to expand by a further 444,000 people and see an additional 50,000 jobs created in the region by 2035.
2. Sprint represents a solution to the growing needs of the regional public transport network through enhanced connectivity and reduced travel times on a more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable travel option for the West Midlands.
3. This improved transport system will greatly enhance connectivity and improve travel times, creating a more efficient, cost effective and sustainable travel option for the West Midlands.
4. A milestone project for the region, Sprint is being delivered by Transport for West Midlands and forms part of the region-wide ambition to improve the public transport experience. Sprint will integrate with other schemes such as the Midland Metro tram and HS2 High Speed rail service to create a truly integrated network.
5. Sprint has been designed to make journeys more reliable and sustainable and will generate:
 - Dependable timetables and potential journey time savings of 20% at peak times
 - Additional and extended bus lanes to minimise congestion

- Enhanced confidence in and use of public transport
 - State-of-the-art bus shelters, designed to improve passenger safety and comfort.
6. Sprint is a key element of creating an environmentally friendly transport network and will see the introduction of zero-emission, multi-door vehicles, supporting the West Midlands Combined Authority's commitment to tackle climate change and Birmingham's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2041.
 7. The ambition for Sprint is to deliver a network of seven enhanced bus routes, with the first part of the scheme connecting Walsall to Solihull and Birmingham Airport along the A34 and A45 routes respectively.
 8. Sprint will operate alongside existing services, with the 34km route expected to carry over 30 million bus trips a year. It will also deliver an estimated £200 million in economic benefits through improved connection to local businesses and places of work.
 9. This cross-city route will be delivered in two phases, the first of which will see improvements to infrastructure including delivery of new and extended bus lanes. It will also see the installation of 95 cutting-edge bus shelters with CCTV and enhanced real-time customer information, better seating and more accessible, cleaner and greener busses.
 10. The majority of the infrastructure will be implemented by mid-2022, with a limited service operating in time to support the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.
 11. Following the Games, the second phase will deliver the remaining infrastructure along the A34 and A45, with the full network due to be operational by 2024.

What works are being undertaken?

12. To ensure that the right infrastructure is in place, some work will need to be undertaken on and around the A34 between Walsall and Birmingham.
13. This includes the need to provide new and extended bus lanes and priority measures, changes to some kerbs, repositioning and upgrading of bus shelters, and in some cases removal and replacement of trees and vegetation along the route.
14. The tree loss associated with the project represents an opportunity for a large-scale co-ordinated regional tree planting scheme which can help to address strategic weakness in the existing tree stock and develop opportunities to promote greater and more resilient canopy cover into the future.
15. In addition to new tree planting a wide range of other mitigation measures including careful reuse of arisings¹, new habitat creation, improved proactive management of

¹ Arisings: the cut wood left after tree surgery (felling or pruning)

existing valuable habitats such as local woodlands and veteran trees could all be supported as part of the project.

How many trees are likely to be impacted? How were they identified?

16. TfWM fully understands the importance of ensuring sufficient canopy cover in the area and the Sprint designs have been adjusted to minimise the impact on surrounding trees as fully as possible.
17. Across the full cross-city Sprint route, around 1,000 trees will be planted by TfWM, to complement the Sprint corridor improvements.
18. We are committed to only removing trees where absolutely necessary and have identified a total of 13 individual trees, and 3 groups of trees (totalling 36 trees) that will require removal within Walsall's local authority area. Of these, only 4 individual trees will be affected by Phase 1, the remainder affected by Phase 2. See appended plans for further illustrative details.
19. It is important to note that TfWM has worked closely with a specialist contractor to undertake a dedicated tree analysis, identifying the location, type and number of trees affected by the project.
20. All discussions on the removal, replacement and replanting of trees have been taken in consultation with Walsall Council's dedicated tree officer and a member of the ecology team.

How are we approaching the replacement of trees?

21. While a total of 36 trees will be removed current plans allow for TfWM to fund the planting of approximately 100 replacement trees² within Walsall's local authority area. Of these, approximately 50 will be planted within 100m of the main A34 route on Birmingham Road.
22. This figure has been reached through replacement planting on mainly a 3:1 basis, as agreed with Walsall Council's tree officer.
23. Where possible, replacement tree planting will be undertaken prior to the removal of any existing trees and between November and March, with the first trees being planted ahead of the start of infrastructure works where this allows.
24. Trees not planted in this initial period will be allocated locations within the Park Hall and Gillity areas to the north of the site, along with other suitable locations which are yet to be identified.

² This is based on standard nursery sized trees – should the plans change to accommodate larger sized trees in the future this figure may be reduced accordingly.

25. Dialogue is ongoing with Walsall's tree officer to ensure that trees which are planted in key areas will enhance local biodiversity and ecology.
26. We will liaise with WMBC to identify and locate each replacement tree and will gladly work with the Council on engaging with the local community and residents' groups.

What will happen to trees that are removed?

27. We're committed to ensuring that trees that are removed are suitably processed and repurposed to ensure that material is not wasted.
28. To this end, we want to actively work with Walsall Council to identify organisations that would benefit from materials. A few of our initial suggestions include:
- Arranging with local schools for collection of materials to create conservation areas on their premises, or to send materials to children to create a 'bug hotel' at home – this could also be part of a wider community project that could be set up in local woodland
 - Chipping of material for use on Council-owned playgrounds
 - Providing chippings to local farms for animal bedding
 - Providing materials to dedicated outdoor education organisations
29. We would relish the opportunity to discuss these and any further plans with you in detail to find the most appropriate use of these materials.

When will this activity take place?

30. It is important that we can instil a sense of confidence within the community that new trees will be delivered and therefore we would like to begin planting as soon as possible, certainly before any major works are undertaken within WMBC's area.
31. Exact timings at this stage are still to be determined and we are working with our contractor to develop the overall delivery programme, but it is anticipated that works within the WMBC local authority area will take place from Spring 2021.

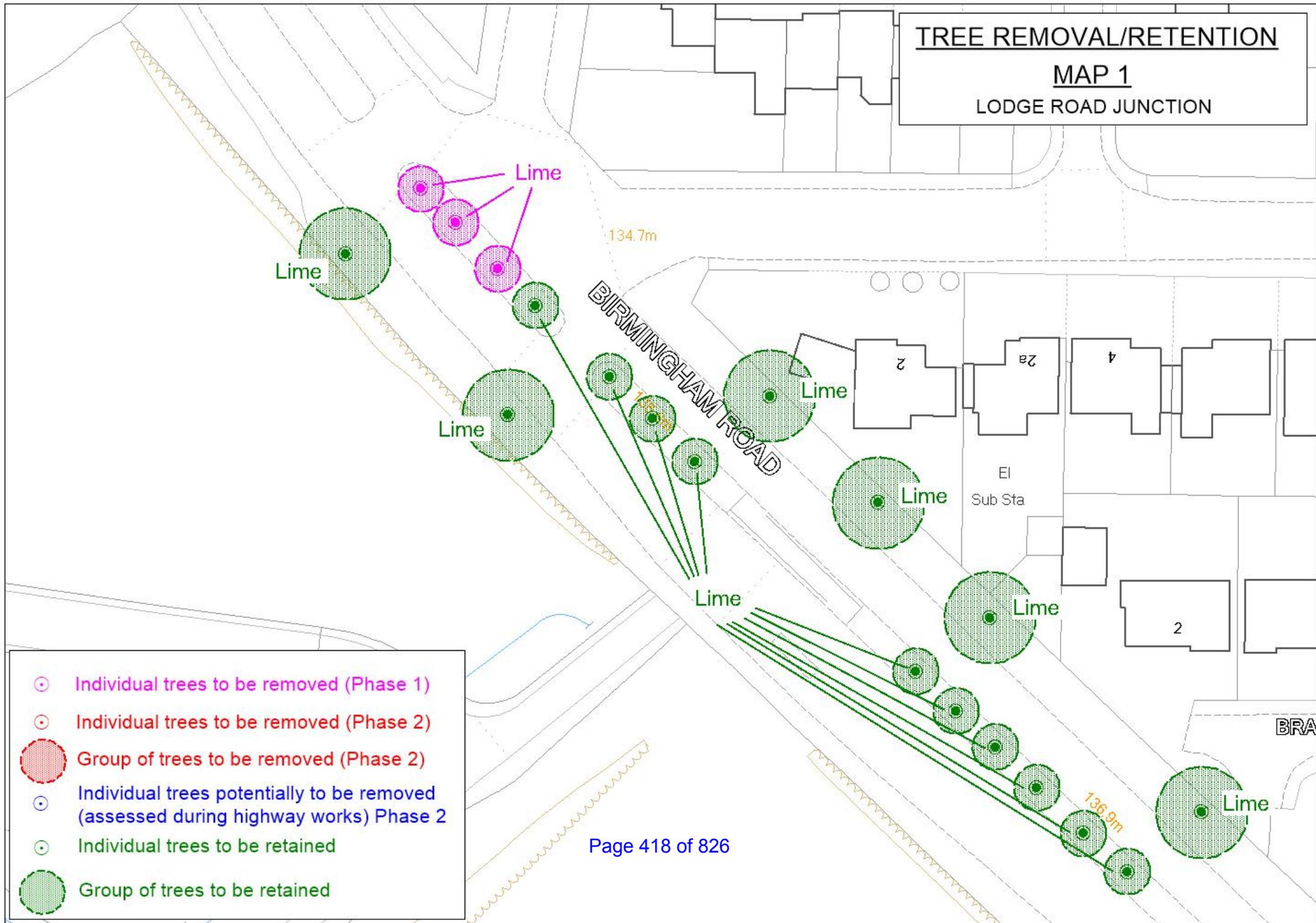
Will this need to be paid for through Council Tax or other public funding?

32. No. An agreement has been reached between TfWM and WMBC to fund the acquisition of replacement trees and fund their maintenance for three years.

TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

MAP 1

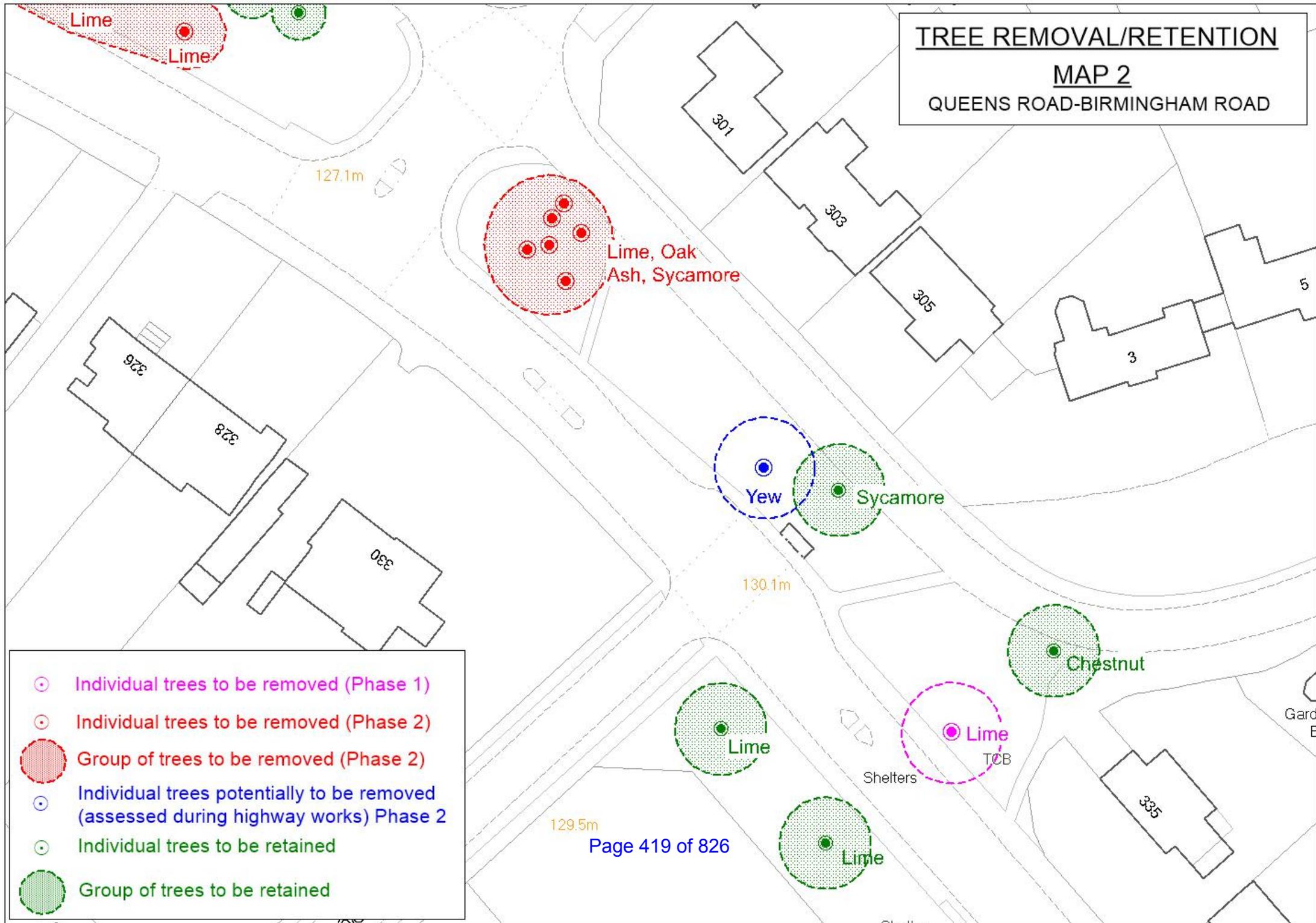
LODGE ROAD JUNCTION



TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

MAP 2

QUEENS ROAD-BIRMINGHAM ROAD

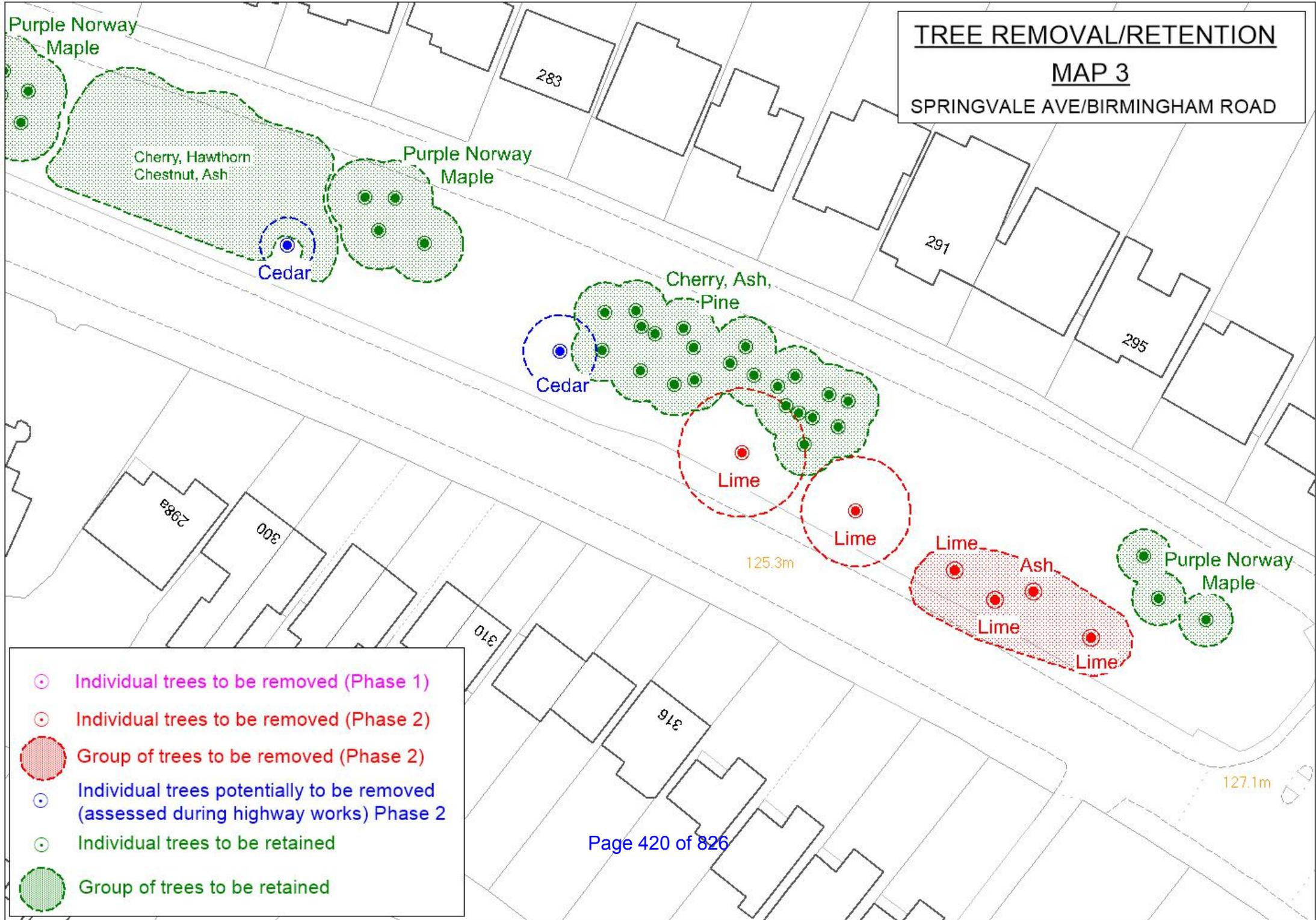


- Individual trees to be removed (Phase 1)
- Individual trees to be removed (Phase 2)
- Group of trees to be removed (Phase 2)
- Individual trees potentially to be removed (assessed during highway works) Phase 2
- Individual trees to be retained
- Group of trees to be retained

TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

MAP 3

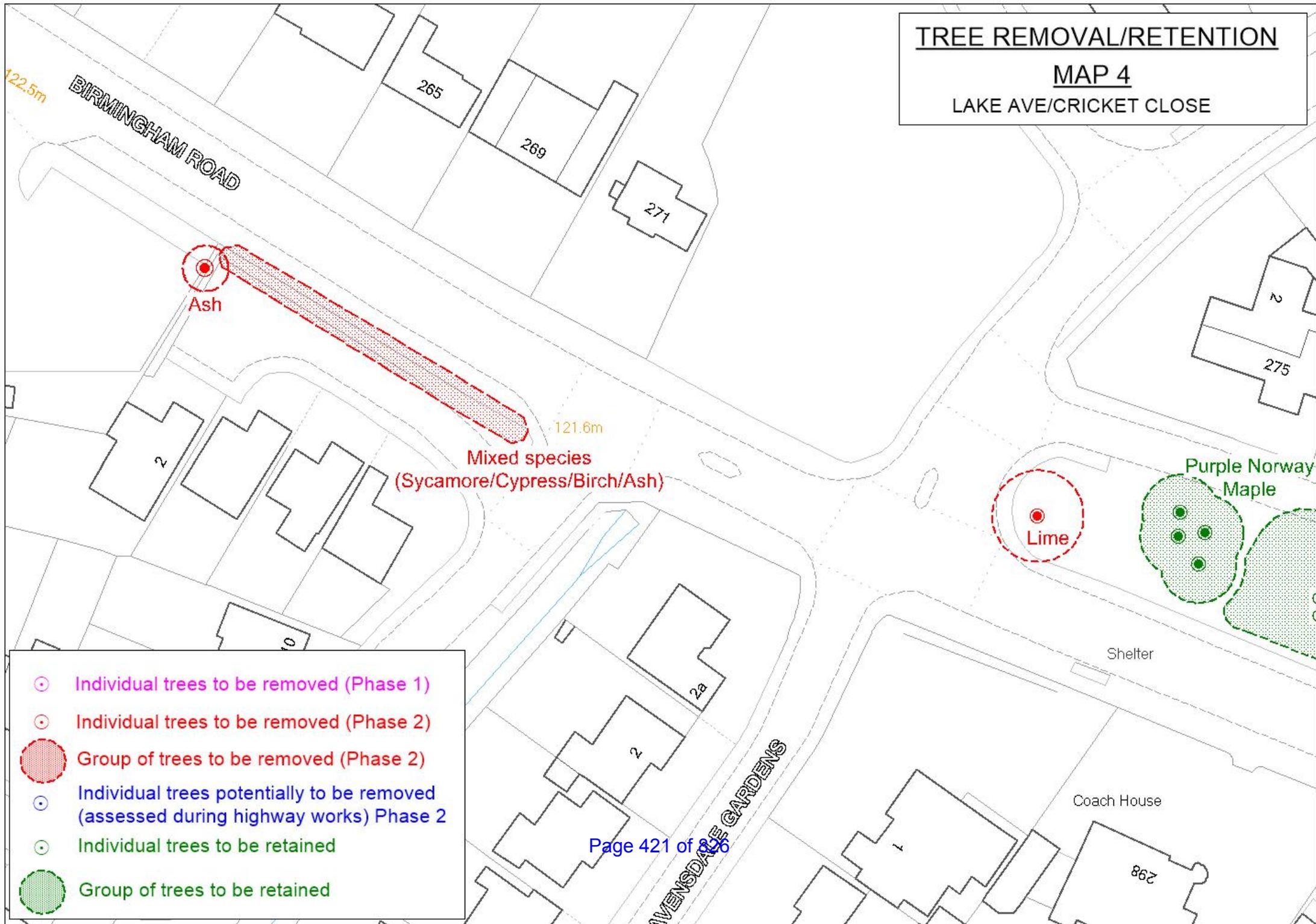
SPRINGVALE AVE/BIRMINGHAM ROAD



TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

MAP 4

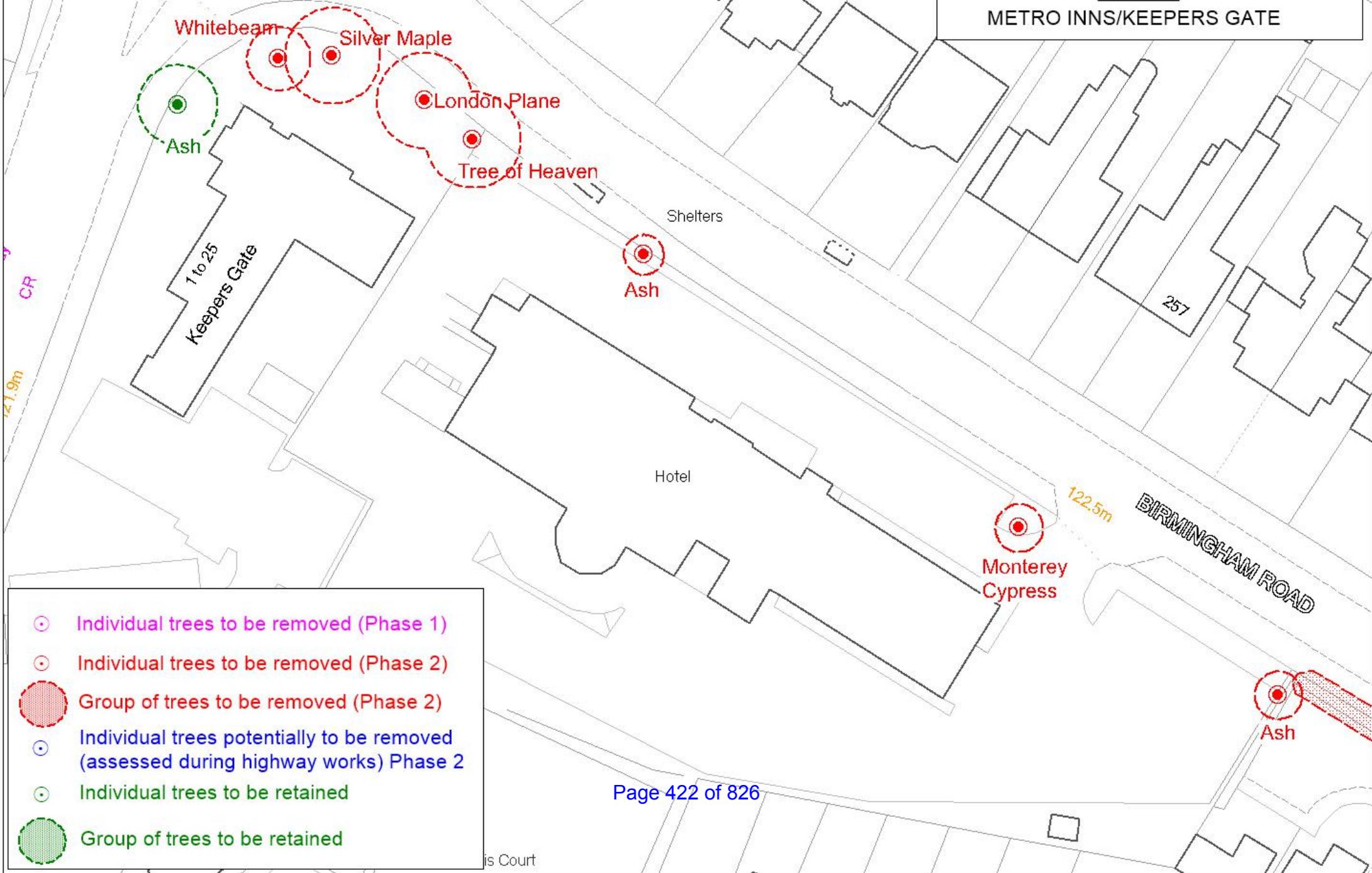
LAKE AVE/CRICKET CLOSE



TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

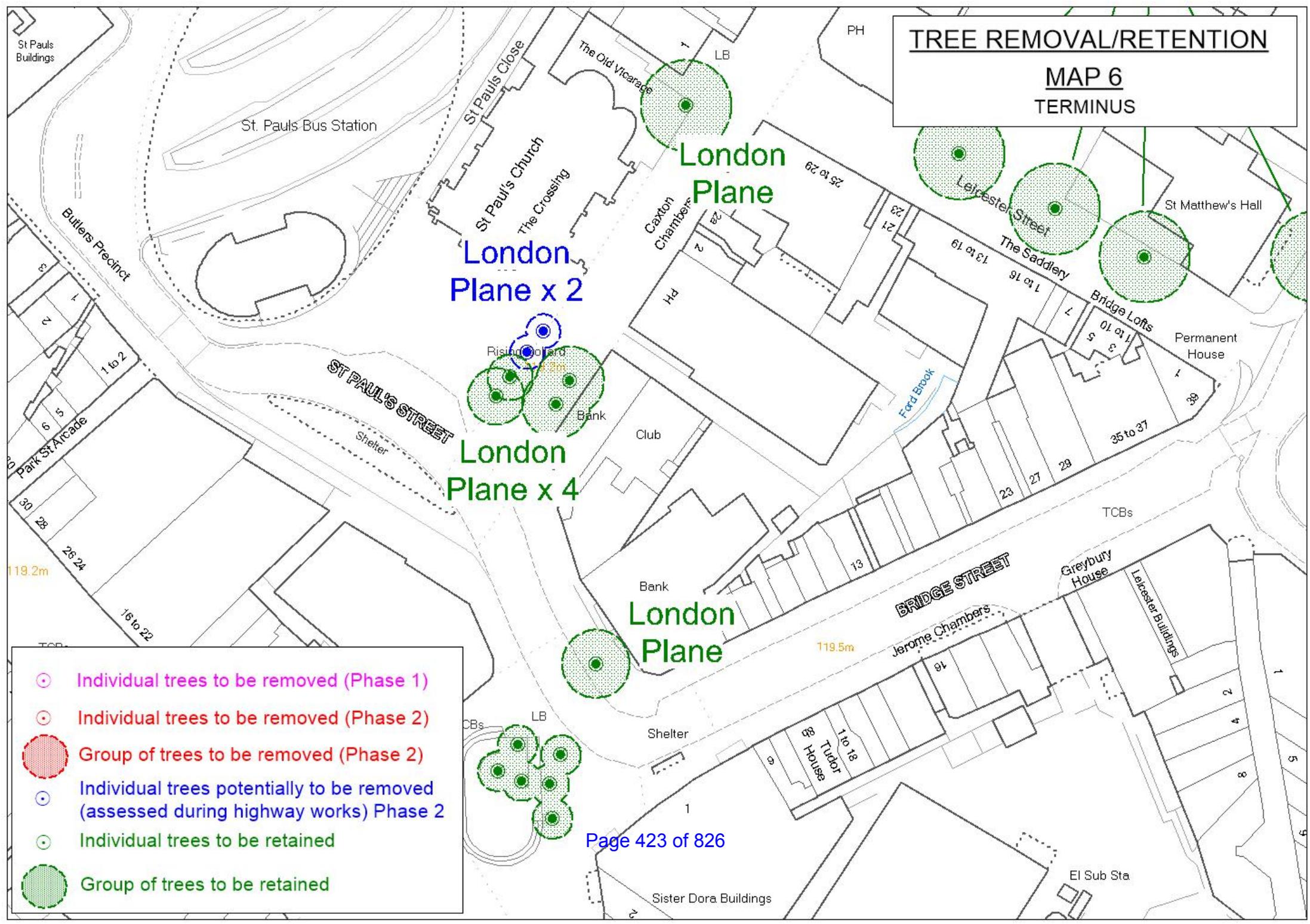
MAP 5

METRO INNS/KEEPERS GATE



TREE REMOVAL/RETENTION

MAP 6 TERMINUS

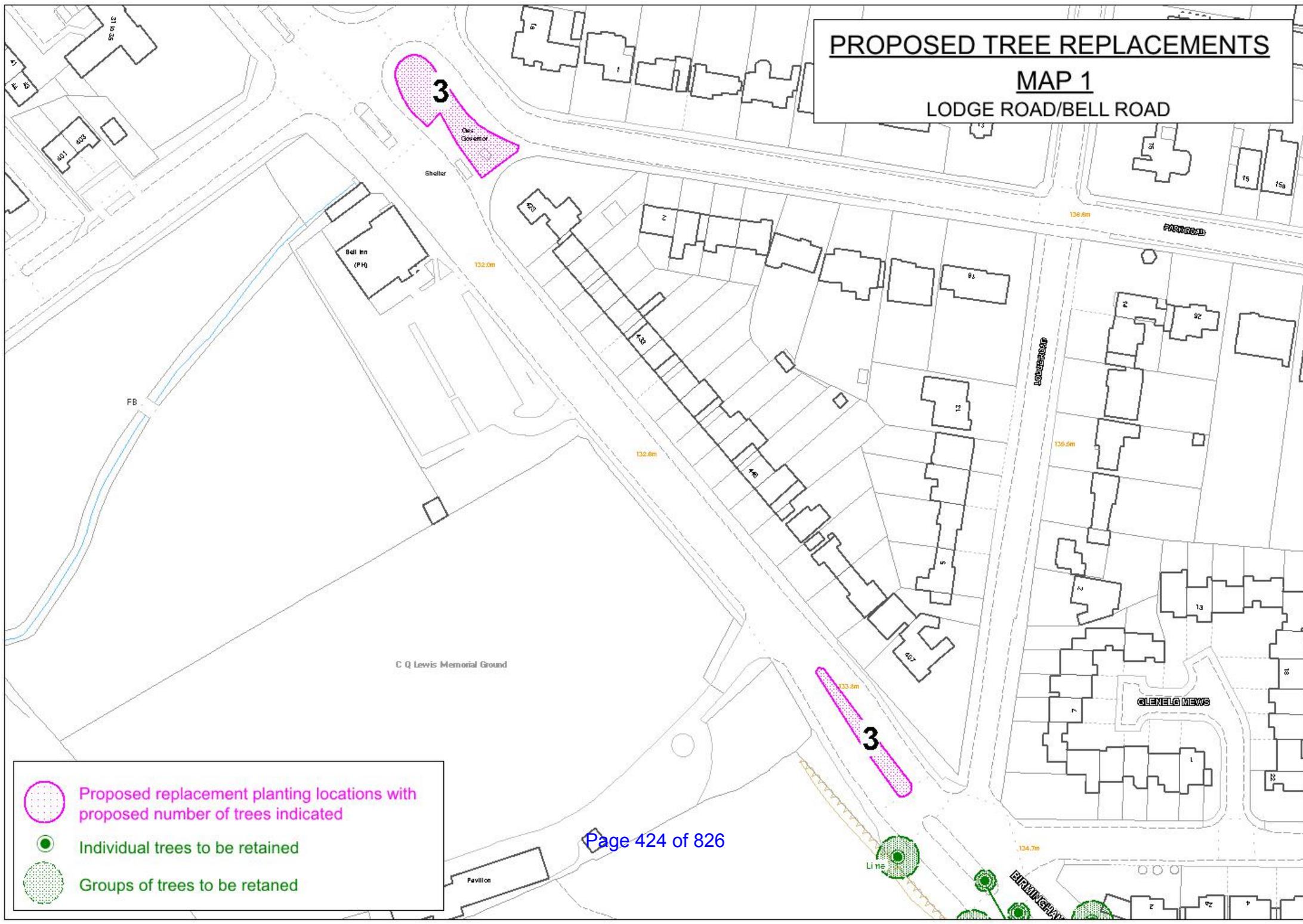


- Individual trees to be removed (Phase 1)
- Individual trees to be removed (Phase 2)
- ▨ Group of trees to be removed (Phase 2)
- Individual trees potentially to be removed (assessed during highway works) Phase 2
- Individual trees to be retained
- ▨ Group of trees to be retained

PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

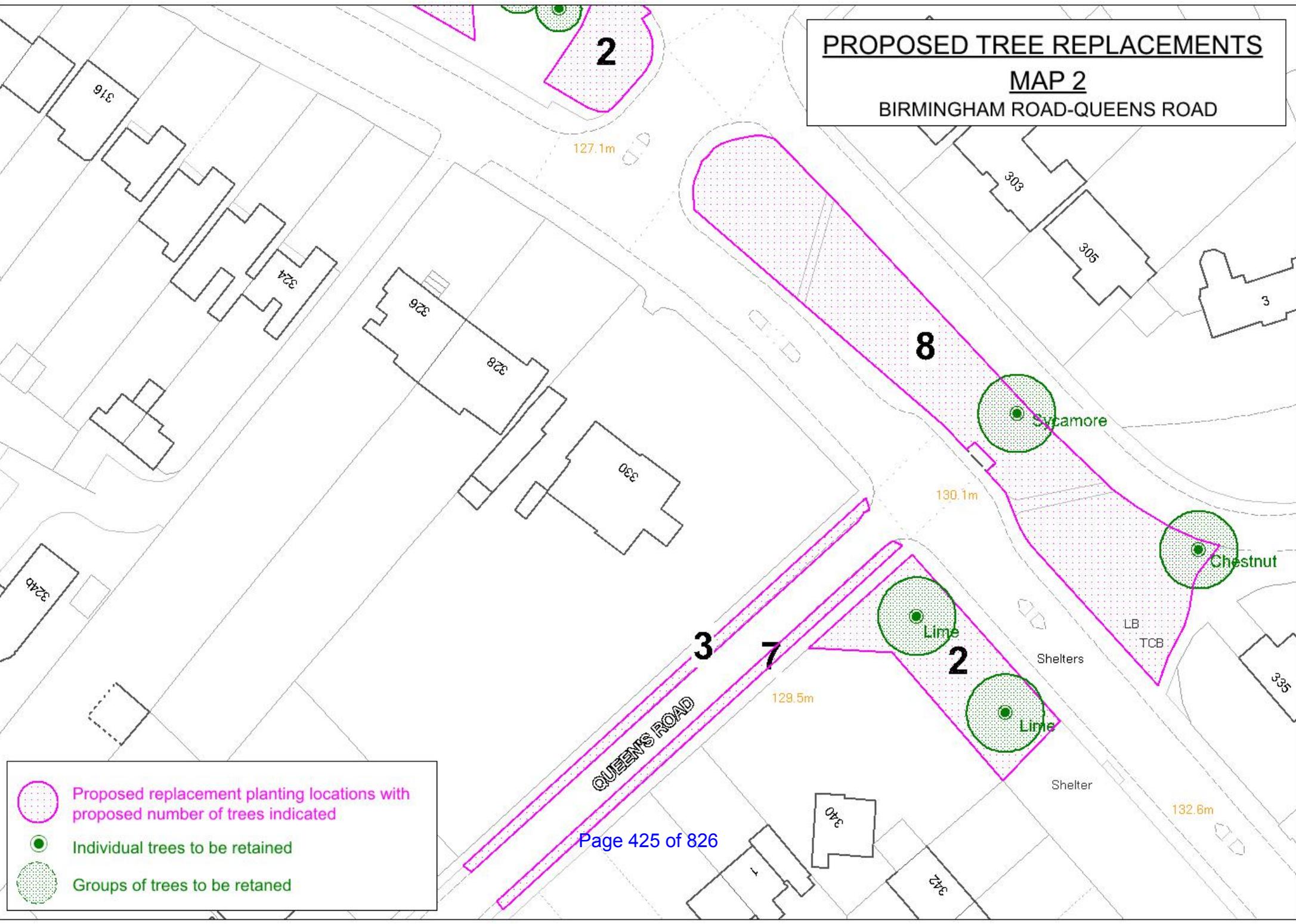
MAP 1

LODGE ROAD/BELL ROAD



-  Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated
-  Individual trees to be retained
-  Groups of trees to be retained

PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS
MAP 2
 BIRMINGHAM ROAD-QUEENS ROAD

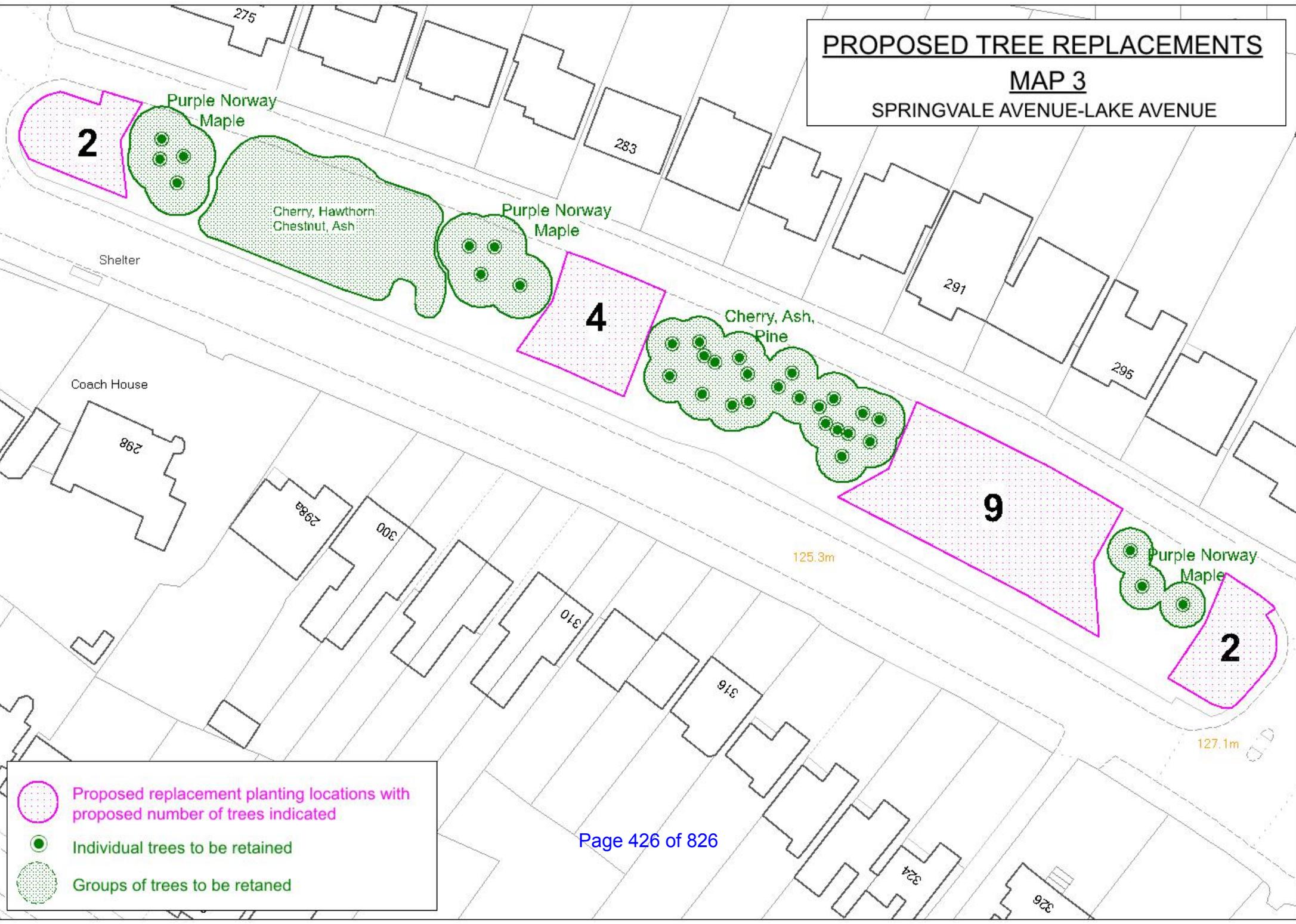


-  Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated
-  Individual trees to be retained
-  Groups of trees to be retained

PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

MAP 3

SPRINGVALE AVENUE-LAKE AVENUE

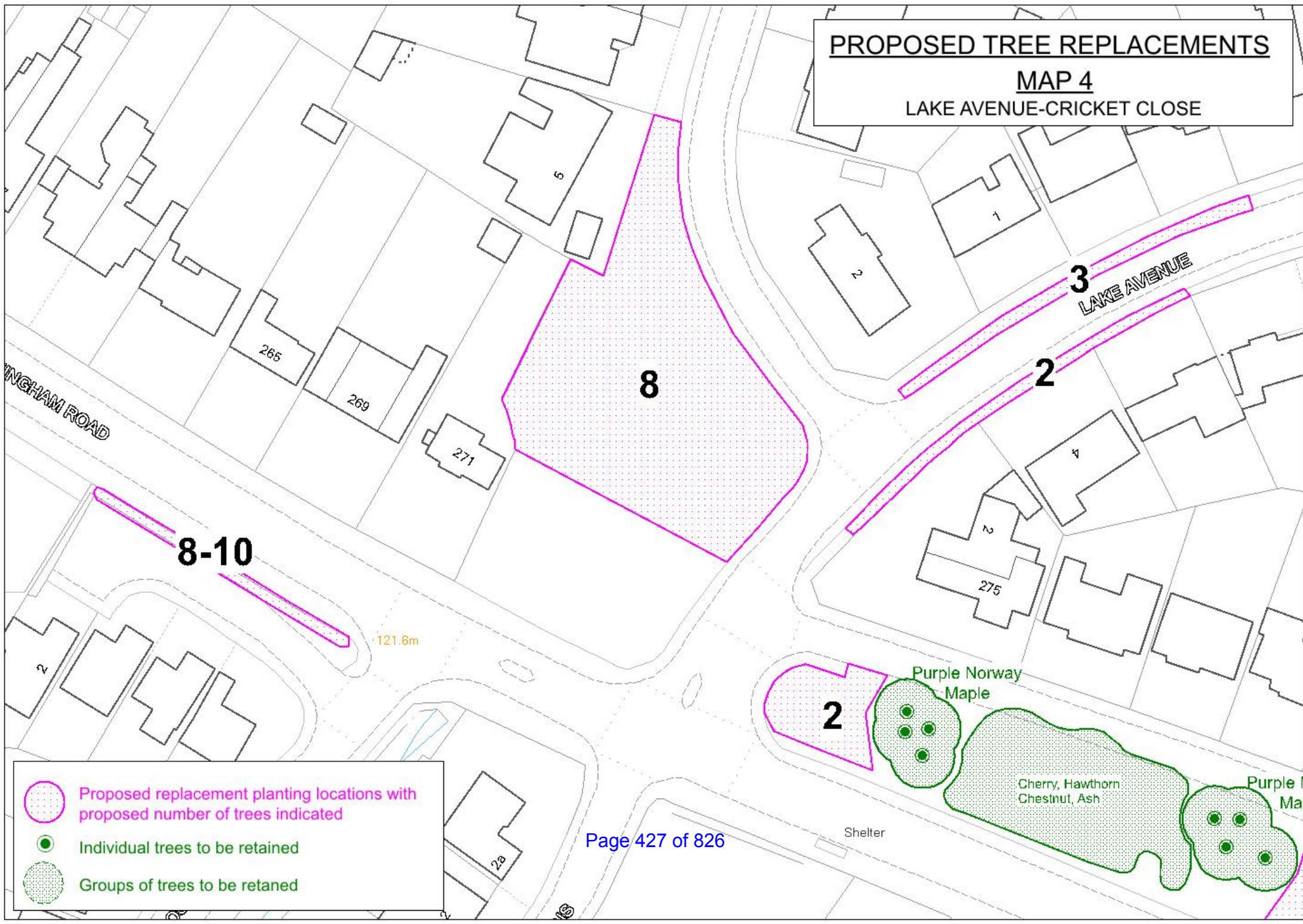


-  Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated
-  Individual trees to be retained
-  Groups of trees to be retained

PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

MAP 4

LAKE AVENUE-CRICKET CLOSE



8-10

121.6m

8

3

2

2

Purple Norway Maple

Cherry, Hawthorn Chestnut, Ash

Purple Norway Maple

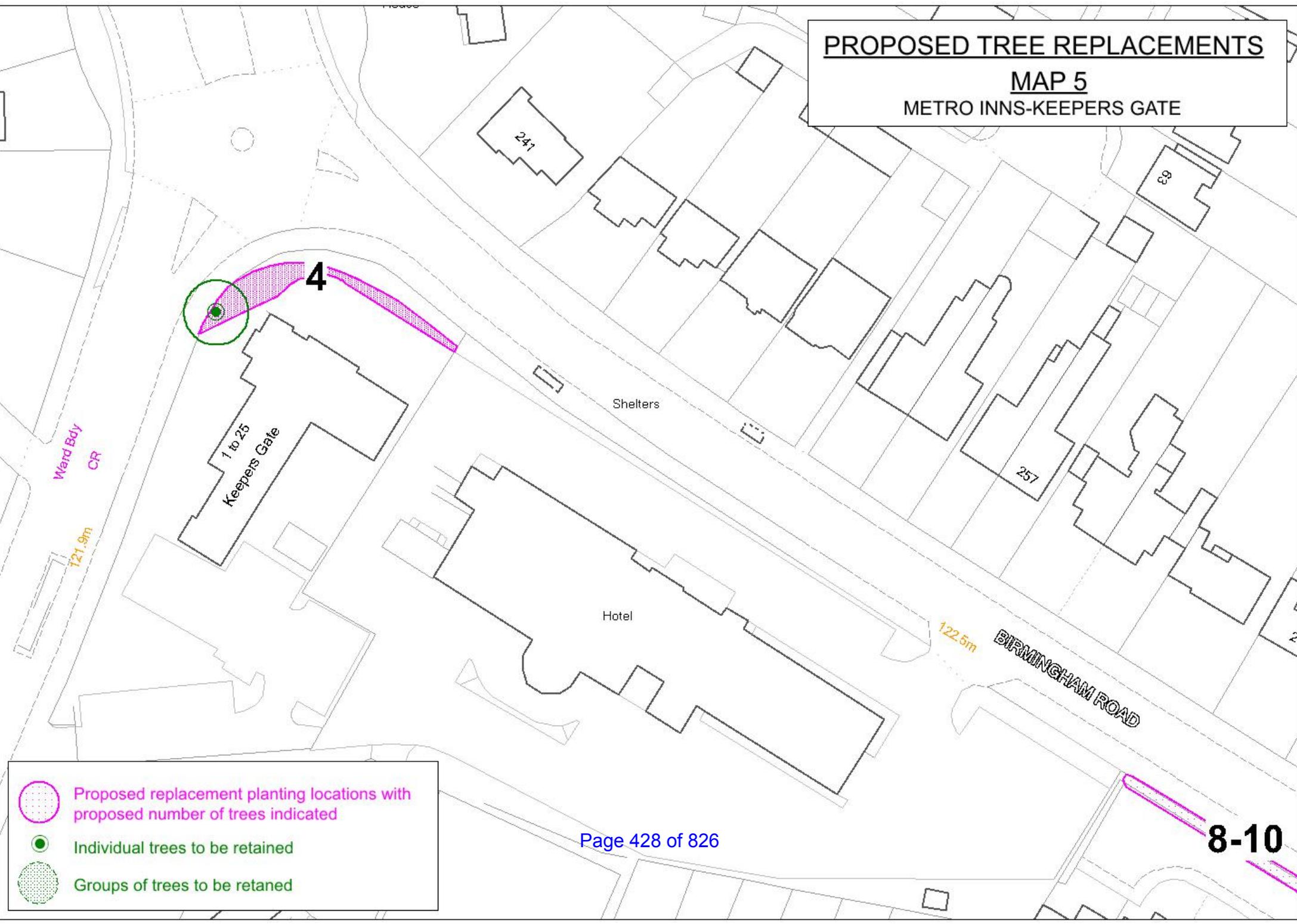
Shelter

- Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated
- Individual trees to be retained
- Groups of trees to be retained

PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

MAP 5

METRO INNS-KEEPERS GATE



Proposed replacement planting locations with proposed number of trees indicated



Individual trees to be retained

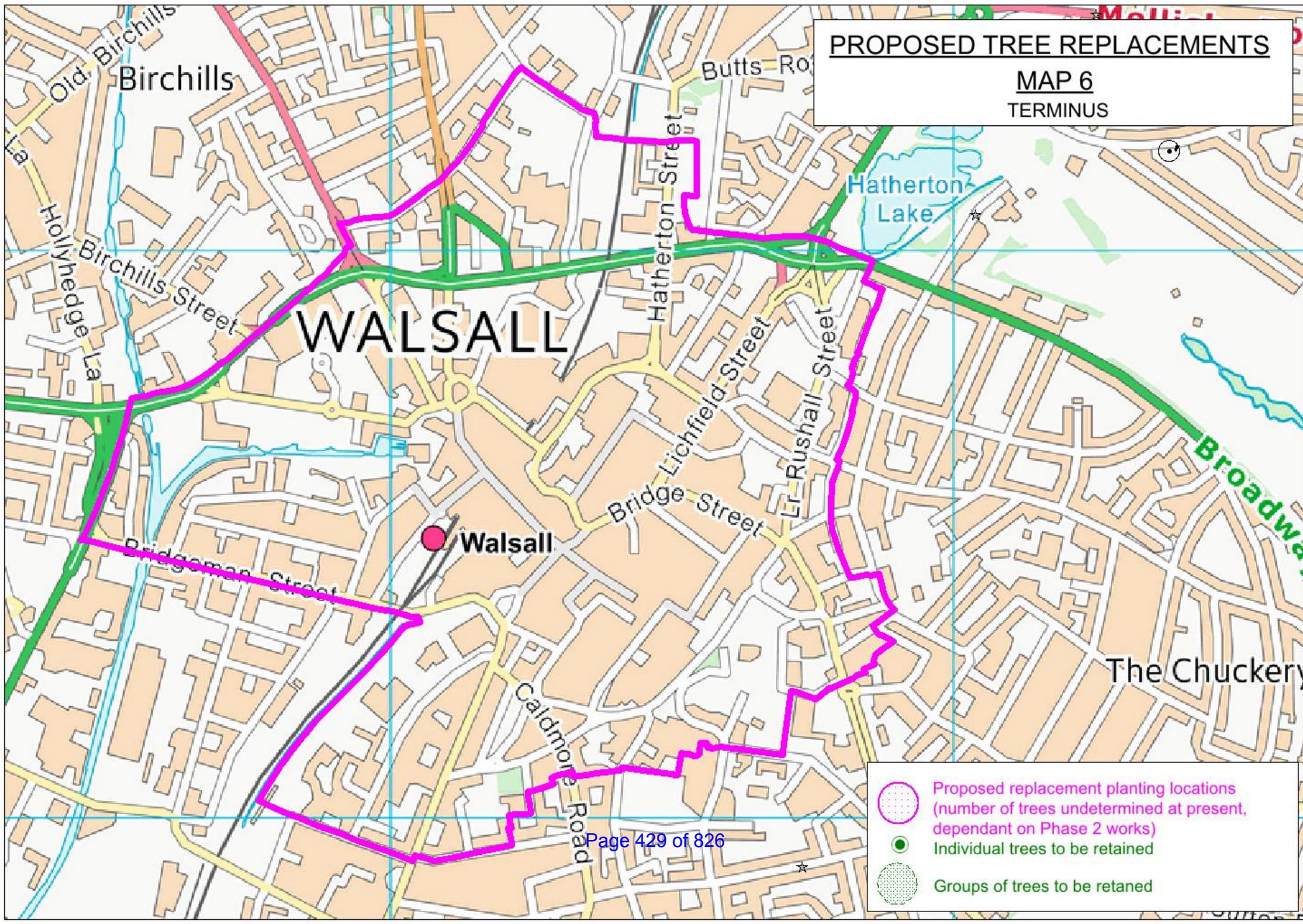


Groups of trees to be retained

PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

MAP 6

TERMINUS



WALSALL

Walsall

- Proposed replacement planting locations (number of trees undetermined at present, dependant on Phase 2 works)
- Individual trees to be retained
- Groups of trees to be retained

Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a review of a new or existing policy which establishes whether the policy has a differential impact on specific equality groups and identifies how the policy can help promote inclusion and improve equality of opportunity for different groups of people. The term policy is interpreted broadly and refers to anything that describes what we do and how we expect to do it. It can range from policies and procedures, to strategies, projects, schemes and everyday customs and practices that contribute to the way our policies are implemented and how our services are delivered. An EqIA aims at improving the WMCA's work, by promoting equality and ensuring that the proposed or existing policy promotes equality can benefit a wide range of people and will not disbenefit

DIRECTORATE	TfWM
PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDUCTING AND OVERLOOKING ASSESSMENT	Duncan Fry
NAME OR TITLE	Sprint A34 route
DATE OF COMPLETION	January 2019
DATE DUE FOR REVIEW	N/A
PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING REVIEW AND MONITORING	N/A

A. ABOUT THE POLICY

1. Describe the main aims, objectives, activities and outcomes of the policy. Who is expected to benefit?

Sprint is a brand new public transport service. It runs on the road, with dedicated bus lanes and priority through areas of congestion, making journey times much more reliable. It has been designed to deliver shorter and more dependable journey times for passengers. It will do this by providing priority over areas of congestion. A total of 7 routes will make up the Sprint network and these will be operational by 2026 in line with HS2. Three of these routes have been prioritised. They are:

Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

- Birmingham Airport and Solihull to Birmingham City Centre (A45)
- Walsall to Birmingham City Centre (A34)
- Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham City Centre via Langley (SBL)

Sprint will provide a level of service, comfort and presence close to a tram. The vehicles used on sprint will deliver a similar level of customer experience to Metro and will serve limited stops.

The scheme will deliver:

- An increase in public transport patronage evidenced through PRISM. The patronage forecast and modal shift for Sprint will help reduce highway congestion.
- Improved journey times evidenced through impact assessment of interventions.
- Improved reliability evidenced through impact assessment of interventions and PRISM.
- A range of sustainable transport choices available within the corridor will encourage future inclusive growth.
- Other bus services using parts of the route will benefit from additional bus priority (such as 51, 52, 77, 424, 907, 937, and X51) evidenced through PRISM.
- Environmental benefits from the use of low emission vehicles.

The overall impact of the scheme will improve access to sustainable modes, providing enhanced connectivity from residential and industrial development within the corridor. The key destinations which will be linked by high standard public transport will be: Birmingham City Centre, Alexander Stadium, Aston Regional Investment Site (via interchange), Perry Barr, and Walsall and other new developments.

B. EQUALITY RELEVANCE/IMPACT

2. Does the policy affect the public or employees directly or indirectly? In what ways?

3. What information is available on the equality issues in the key target groups¹? (what inequalities, discrimination /and health inequalities currently exist in relation to the target groups? What information/data do you have that explains why these inequalities exist and how they are maintained?)

Key A34 area data (**demographics** as per 2011 Census)

¹ Equality target groups: Age, gender disability, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, socio-economic, sexual orientation

Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

The 4 constituencies affected by the scheme are Ladywood, Perry Barr, West Bromwich and Walsall

Demographics for Ladywood: Over half the population live in the 5% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. The entire constituency lives in the 40% most deprived areas in the country. Ladywood Ward includes the city centre of Birmingham and an area to the west of it. It has a much younger age profile than the City average (21% are 20-24 compared to the 9% city average and the 7% England average). The percentage of ethnic minority residents is above the city average. Worklessness is below the city average but unemployment is similar to the city average. Over three quarters (78%) of Ladywood's population live in deprived neighborhoods, compared to 40% of the city as a whole. 43% of children in the Ladywood constituency are defined as being in poverty above the city rate of 37.1%. Within the constituency there is disparity in the levels of deprivation and child poverty, with Washwood Health having the highest levels and Hodge Hill ward the lowest levels. The constituency has a very diverse population with only 32% of the working age population from the White group, compared to 59% for Birmingham as a whole. Around 40% are Asian and 20% Black. In terms of language proficiency, 0.4% of the population cannot speak English at all while 3% do not speak English well.

Demographics for Perry Barr: In the 2011 census the population of Perry Barr was 23,652 and is made up of approximately 52% females and 48% males. The ward has a slightly older age profile than the city as a whole and a slightly higher BME share. The average age of people in Perry Barr is 36, while the median age is lower at 33. 78.0% of people living in Perry Barr were born in England. Other top answers for country of birth were 3.5% India, 3.3% Pakistan, 2.5% Jamaica, 1.8% Bangladesh, 1.4% Ireland, 0.8% China, 0.6% Nigeria, 0.5% Wales, 0.4% Scotland. In terms of language barriers, 2.9% of the population in Perry Barr whose main language is not English cannot speak English well and 0.6% cannot speak English at all. It is one of the least deprived wards in Birmingham. Resident employment rates are above the city average and claimant count unemployment proportions are below the Birmingham average.

Demographics for West Bromwich: In the 2011 census the population of West Bromwich Central was 13,290 and is made up of approximately 49% females and 51% males. The average age of people in West Bromwich Central is 38, while the median age is lower at 36. 66.2% of people living in West Bromwich Central were born in England. 40.9% of the population is BME. In West Bromwich 15% of residents do not have English as a main language, but this does not mean that they are not fluent English speakers. In Sandwell overall, 64.5% of residents whose main language is not English can speak English well or very well. Only a

Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

very small proportion cannot speak English at all (0.8% of all residents aged 3 and over).

Demographics for Walsall Central: The ward has 15,088 residents (2011 census) with a split of 49% females and 51% males. The average age of people is 36, with the median age at 33. 76.2% of people living in St. Matthew's were born in England and 82.9% speak English as a main language. 53.1% are White British and 46.9% are BME. St Matthew's ward is the 8th most deprived ward of 20 wards in Walsall. 42.6% of households do not own a car/van (which compares to 28.8% in Walsall and 25.6% in England).

Transport inequalities

- Around a fifth of disabled people report having difficulties related to their disability in accessing transport
- Low income groups spend a high percentage of their income on transport (15-25% of weekly expenditure). Transport costs can even exceed wages for some on very low incomes, after tax and benefits withdrawal.
- Low income groups are more likely to travel less/shorter distances due to cost and car availability. A quarter of all households and almost half of those from the poorest quintile do not have access to a car. Two-thirds of job seekers are without access to a car. Car availability also tends to be lower amongst BME groups and that may be linked to the fact that poverty is higher amongst BME groups. Other groups heavily reliant on public transport, largely due to lower car ownership, are disabled people and older age groups as well as single parents.
- More bus trips and walk trips are made by the lowest income group than any other group whereas more rail and bicycle trips are made by those from high income group than others
- For young people on low incomes (student, care leavers etc.) affordability is a key barrier to accessing education, training and social activities.
- Only 14% of households in the richest fifth did not have access to a car, compared to almost half of those in the poorest fifth (48%). Car ownership is also much lower amongst BME people, disabled people, older people and young people. Fewer women hold driver's licenses and fewer women own cars. All these groups are more reliant on public transport.
- A third of young people who are NEET or in jobs without training think they would have done something better after Year 11 at school if they had received more assistance with travel costs.



Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

4. Is the policy likely to have a positive or negative impact on any equality target groups? Please elaborate (Is it likely to affect some groups differently in either a positive or negative way? What elements of the policy will have a differential impact?)

The scheme is likely to have a positive impact on the general public as it will increase travel options for residents in the affected wards and improve transport connectivity, journey time and journey reliability. Positive impact is also anticipated for those groups that are more reliant on public transport – BME, young people, women and people with disabilities. The route also serves 4 of the most deprived wards in England – people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to be reliant on public transport.

5. Have you consulted interested parties (including representatives from the equality target groups) who will/may be affected by the policy? What were the outcomes of the consultation? If you haven't conducted consultation, is there need for consultation and who are you planning to consult?

Public consultation ran from 23rd August to 15th October. Members of the public had their say via:

- An online survey
- On-street interviews
- Self-completion paper survey made available at public consultation events and on request
- Comments by letter, email, telephone helpline and social media.

Events/interviews

30th August – Sutton Parade

4th September – Scott Arms

13th September – Station Road, Solihull

17th September – Walsall

20th September – Birmingham Colmore Row/Bull St/Moor St Queensway

Every shelter along each route had a poster advertising ways they can get involved/have their say.

The consultation was also communicated to over 200 community and equality groups in the region.

The response rate to the consultation was high. In relation to the A34 route consultation, 569 responses were received on the A34 scheme during the consultation, with 73% fully supporting or partially supporting the scheme. 24%

Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

did not support the Sprint proposal for the A34 Walsall to Birmingham. Support peaked amongst bus users (84% supported), dipping amongst car users (49% supported). The small group of cyclists also had a high level of support for the proposals (87%). Support was highest amongst those who travelled along the route for work (82% fully/partially support) or education purposes (92%, fully partially support). It dipped amongst those who lived on or near the route (68%, fully/partially support) with the share of respondents who do not support Sprint rising to 30%.

The main objections were from residents between Scott Arms and Perry Barr (where the proposal is to remove parking laybys) whose issues relate to loss of parking combined with safety and comparison to the X51. A separate petition was received from residents in this area, whose main objections to the scheme relate to these issues. The detailed design phase will look to mitigate parking issues where possible and this will be resolved prior to Full Business Case.

6. Is further research needed (i.e. consultations, working groups, surveys, data) to properly assess impact on the different equality target groups? If yes, how will it be undertaken and by when?

Engagement will continue throughout the project with all the stakeholders to ensure there is awareness of the impact of the scheme. The local highway authorities will need to present the final scheme for approval to their relevant council meetings, which will provide permission for WMCA to deliver works on the highway and provides another opportunity to express support of the proposals.

7. What measures does, or could, the policy or strategy include to help promote inclusion and equality of opportunity for and/or foster good relations between people from different equality groups?

- The scheme offers accessible and more spacious vehicles that are likely to improve the travel experience of disabled people, older people and people with children and buggies/prams
- Ticketing will remain in line with N network prices to ensure there are no barriers for people from lower economic backgrounds. On-board paying options should be retained to ensure that groups are not excluded due to their age, disability or/and employment status (for instance, a significant % of older people do not use debit cards)
- Disruption is anticipated during the construction phase. Any disruption information needs to be communicated effectively and widely to ensure



Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

- that people are aware – this is especially important for disabled people who often pre-plan their journeys
- Sprint shelters are longer and wider – pathway accessibility is key in ensuring safe pedestrian access in line with key access design standards
 - A number of on-street parking spaces are being removed on the A34 route in the Perry Barr section though all existing off street parking is to be retained. Where properties do not have off street parking the existing on street parking will remain. 4 properties to date have advised that there are accessibility/mobility needs and the scheme will ensure that on street parking is retained for those properties to access. Additional measures will help ensure that on-street parking is offered where possible

8. Do you think that the policy in the way it is planned and delivered will have a negative, positive or no impact on any of the equality target groups (please tick as appropriate)?

Positive impact: where the impact on a particular group of people is more positive than for other groups

Negative impact: where the impact on a particular group of people is more negative than for other groups

Neutral impact: neither a positive nor a negative impact on any group or groups of people, compared to others.



Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY TARGET GROUP	AGE	GENDER (including gender reassignment)	DISABILITY	MATERNITY	RACE	RELIGION/BELIEF	SEXUAL ORIENTATION	SOCIO-ECONOMIC
POSITIVE IMPACT	√	√	√		√			√
NEGATIVE IMPACT								
NEUTRAL IMPACT				√		√	√	

12. If adverse/negative impact is noted to any of the listed equality target groups, can it be justified, i.e. on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for any other group/s?

Not applicable

13. ACTION PLAN

What practical actions can be taken to promote inclusion and reduce/remove any adverse/negative impact?

Issues to be addressed	Actions required	Responsible officer	Timescales	How would you measure impact/outcomes in practice
Disruption during implementation of the	Changes need to be communicated	Project manager	During implementation	-Few or no complaints

Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

<p>scheme</p>	<p>effectively to the public including equality groups in a number of ways – talking news, communication to community organisations etc.</p>			
<p>Pathway accessibility may be an issue</p>	<p>Explore options (land purchase etc.) to ensure key access standars are retained</p> <p>Engagement with key equality groups throughout the detailed design process</p>	<p>Project manager</p>	<p>Design stage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key accessibility standards met
<p>Need to reduce the negative impact of the removal of on-street parking along the route (Perry Barr section)</p>	<p>Where properties do not have off street parking the existing on street parking will remain. 4 properties to date have advised that there are accessibility/mobilit</p>	<p>Project manager</p>	<p>Design stage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Satisfied residents, few complaints - Retention of accessibility for households

Appendix E – A34 Sprint Equality Impact Assessment

	<p>y needs and the scheme will ensure that on street parking is retained for those properties to access. Additional measures will help ensure that on-street parking is offered where possible</p>			
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Cabinet – 10 February 2021

West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme

Portfolio: Councillor Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Related portfolios: None

Service: Highways and Transport

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 The improvement of bus services across the West Midlands through an improvement plan for the whole of the West Midlands Combined Authority area and a more-detailed improvement scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 that will allow the subsequent implementation of SPRINT (bus rapid transit) service standards, including along the A34 between Walsall town centre and Birmingham city centre.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Bus Services Act 2017 inserts powers in the Transport Act 2000 (TA 2000) to enable authorities and local bus operators to establish formal partnership arrangements known as Enhanced Partnerships.
- 2.2 The West Midlands Enhanced Partnership (EP) has been set up to enable formal partnership working arrangements between bus operators, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and local authorities in the West Midlands (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton). The EP requires a strategic document which sets out a clear vision of improvements that are envisaged to bus services (e.g. transition to a low emission bus fleet, simpler payment methods, faster journeys, safer services, better passenger information, concessions tailored to excluded groups) known as an Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan). The EP Plan must be accompanied by one or more Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EP Schemes) which set out the actions and commitments to achieve the improvements in the EP Plan. An EP places a legal duty on all members of the EP including the Local Authority to deliver against the actions and commitments made in an EP Scheme.

- 2.3 The 'Strategic Vision for Bus' (November 2018) prepared by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) sets out the objective to achieve modal shift by providing exceptional service and reliability along with comfort and accessibility. It was adopted by the WMCA Board on the 9 November 2018.
- 2.4 The EP will be used to deliver the ambition set out in the 'Strategic Vision for Bus'. The EP Plan is concerned with services throughout the West Midlands Metropolitan Area. To complement this, there is a single EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 SPRINT routes, which will be operated as one single cross-conurbation service (Walsall – Birmingham – Solihull/Airport).
- 2.5 The EP Plan requires approval from all the local authorities within the West Midlands Combined Authority area as it affects bus services operating throughout the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.
- 2.6 The EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 requires approval only from the local authorities through which the qualifying bus services operate (Walsall, Sandwell, Birmingham and Solihull).
- 2.7 Cabinet is asked to note this report is not seeking approval of the A34 SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works, which will implement Phase 1 of facilities and measures set out in the EP Scheme for the A34 corridor within Walsall. This is subject to a separate report to Cabinet.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet: -

3.1.1 Agree to the making of the West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan in conjunction with TfWM / WMCA and the other local authorities subject to compliance with the relevant statutory objection and consultation processes for making the EP Plan in order to deliver improvements to bus travel as outlined in 'Strategic Vision for Bus' and deliver SPRINT in the A34 and A45 / B425 corridors annexed as **Appendix A**.

3.1.2 Agree to make the Enhanced Partnership Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 in conjunction with TfWM / WMCA and the other local authorities subject to compliance with the relevant statutory objection and consultation processes for making the EP Scheme annexed as **Appendix B**.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1 A 'Strategic Vision for Bus' was set out by TfWM in November 2018 to improve bus services right across the West Midlands. New bus rapid transit routes, known as SPRINT, have been developed by TfWM to help deliver this vision. Recent legislation has made provision for new powers to enable authorities

and local bus operators to establish formal partnership arrangements to achieve improvements to bus services.

Background

- 4.2 A review was undertaken by TfWM to assess the most appropriate statutory mechanism (set out in the TA 2000) to ensure the timely delivery of the first two SPRINT schemes ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games, whilst protecting the significant investment levels being made by the authorities and potential operator(s).
- 4.3 The TA 2000 provides local transport authorities, local authorities and bus operators with powers to enable improvements to be made to services in their area. TfWM made an assessment of the legislation currently in use for partnership in the West Midlands as well as the arrangements set out in the TA 2000 (as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017) and determined that the options were Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes, Enhanced Partnerships and Franchising. The details of each arrangement and their differences are summarised below: -
- 4.4 Advance Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS)
- An area-based statutory partnership replacing Quality Partnerships
 - Minimum five-year duration
 - The Local Transport Authority commits to bus facilities and measures
 - The Local Transport Authority can prescribe vehicle standards, payment methods, information and publicity requirements
 - The Local Transport Authority can additionally prescribe maximum fares and service frequency/timing, but only if there are no 'admissible objections' from relevant operators
- 4.5 Subject to consultation, AQPS will be available where the local transport authority is satisfied they will: -
- Contribute to implementing local transport policies; and
 - Improve service quality; or
 - Reduce/limit congestion, noise or air pollution; or
 - Increase, or prevent decline in, patronage.
- 4.6 Enhanced Partnership (EP)
- An EP is a new statutory-based partnership to facilitate the Local Transport Authority, local authorities and the majority of their bus operators to work together to improve local bus services;
 - It includes a clear vision of improvements that the EP is aiming for which is set out in the EP Plan and accompanying actions to achieve them;
 - The EP Plan cannot exist on its own and must be accompanied by one or more EP Schemes;
 - Can be indefinite, varied and/or revocable;

- There is no mandatory requirement for the Local Transport Authority to commit bus facilities or measures. The Local Transport Authority can prescribe not only the same characteristics as an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme but also entitlement passes, on-bus information equipment, vehicle and ticket appearance, ticketing arrangements (including multi-operator ticket prices, timetable change windows and other scheme facilitating arrangements);
 - Plans and schemes cannot be made where a 'sufficient number' of 'operators of qualifying local services' object.
- 4.7 Subject to consultation, EP Plans will be available where the Local Transport Authority is satisfied they will: -
- Improve service quality or effectiveness; or
 - Reduce/limit congestion, noise or air pollution.
 - An EP places a legal duty on all members of the partnership including the Local Authority to deliver against commitments made to facilities, measures and performance standards.
- 4.8 Franchising
- Replaces Quality Contracts;
 - Initially available only to Mayoral Combined Authorities;
 - Enables granting of an exclusive right to operate specified local services on specified terms (including frequency, fares and standards) and which may include public authority payments;
 - Service permits may be granted to others to operate in a franchise area if it benefits local service users in the area and 'will not have an adverse effect' on franchised services.
- 4.9 Subject to consultation, Franchising will be available where a Mayoral Combined Authority has: -
- Compared a franchising proposal to 'one or more other courses of action';
 - Assessed the proposal following a 'consideration' of a five-case business case covering strategic fit, value for money, feasibility, affordability, and deliverability;
 - Obtained an independent audit of the quality of its assessment (information and analysis) and compliance with guidance.

Preferred Option

- 4.10 The case for Franchising, an AQPS and an EP has been considered and assessed by TfWM and their conclusion was presented at WMCA Board on 28 June 2019. The assessment concluded that AQPS legislation does not provide the level of protection for local authorities and bus operators when considering the value and scale of investment. In addition, franchising was not considered suitable based on the ability to deliver it within the required

timescale, but it should also be noted that franchising would also likely not have been recommended or suitable for such a small geographical area e.g. a corridor-based bus route(s). Based on this assessment, TfWM have concluded that the most suitable mechanism for delivering and managing SPRINT schemes ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games is through an EP.

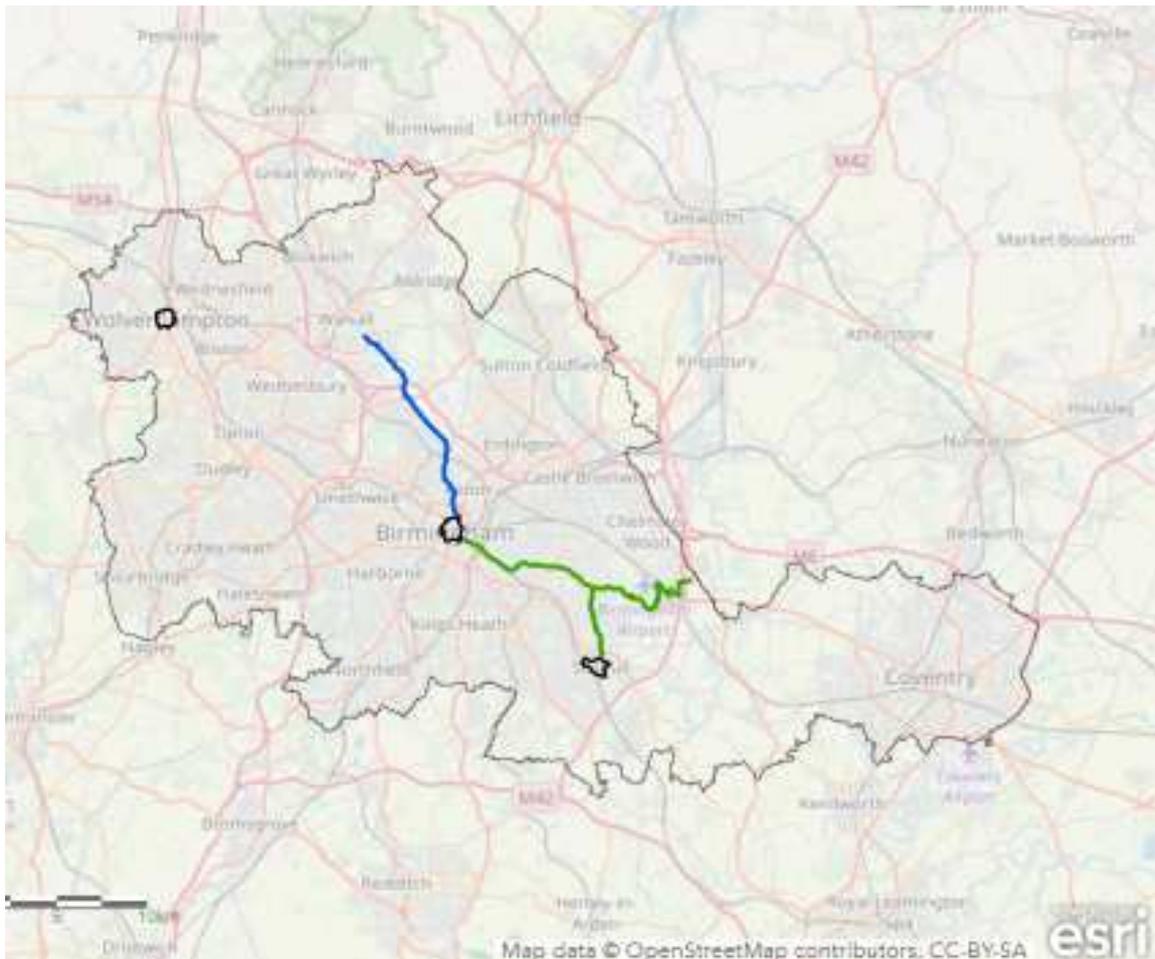
4.11 Officers from both TfWM and Walsall have concluded that there are several compelling reasons why an EP compared to franchising and an AQPS is the preferable mechanism to deliver SPRINT for the following reasons: -

- The ability to manage access to infrastructure by SPRINT and other services as the council is able to make commitments under the EP scheme by the provision of facilities and measures;
- The powers to set maximum frequencies or restrict access to only SPRINT vehicles on individual route sections (which cannot be achieved with an AQPS);
- The flexibility to trigger a review of the EP at certain points of the EP lifetime (whereas an AQPS has a minimum five-year lifespan);
- The ability to develop additional EP Schemes at a later date in the region if they are deemed an appropriate mechanism without having to create a new EP Plan;
- Supports the timescales for the operating model where commercial operators are required to procure the vehicles for use on the service;
- Provides clear accountability for all partners including bus operators; and
- An EP scheme can be implemented for a specific route, rather than a geographic area.

Plan Preparation

4.12 On 17 July 2019, TfWM issued a notice of intention to prepare an EP Plan and an EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425. From this time, formal discussions have taken place with both local authorities and local bus operators.

Figure 1: West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan Area, Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS) Areas and A34 & A45 / B425 Enhanced Partnership Scheme Area



- 4.13 TfWM prepared an EP Plan that covers the whole of the West Midlands Combined Authority¹ area excluding the three existing AQPS areas (Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres and Solihull town centre). This is because an EP and AQPS cannot operate alongside each other in the same geographical area.
- 4.14 The West Midlands EP Plan provides the framework to contribute towards meeting the nine objectives set out in the *'Strategic Vision for Bus'*: -
- UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.
 - Fully integrated bus network, including demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting interchange with rail, coach and Metro to form one network.
 - Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options, including full capping, providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.

¹ As defined in the West Midlands Combined Authority Constitution

- Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.
- Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long-held barriers and perceptions.
- Accountable network performance management, tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
- World-leading customer information, utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
- All young people under 25 supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
- Evolve a network to support a 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.

Scheme Preparation

- 4.15 Specific EP Schemes will provide the details of the actions and developments to be taken by the EP to deliver a marked improvement in bus services on certain corridors or in defined areas that will help meet the above objectives, particularly by speeding-up bus journey times and improving journey time reliability. Such schemes may be proposed and promoted by TfWM, constituent local authorities or bus operators.
- 4.16 Within each EP Scheme the details of the infrastructure commitments, service specification and standards, customer standards, performance requirements and maintenance are agreed between partners.
- 4.17 Two SPRINT routes – for A34(N) and A45 / B425 – have been identified by TfWM as a priority to facilitate the transport element of the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Delivering Phase 1 of these SPRINT routes in time for the Commonwealth Games is a commitment that has been made to the Commonwealth Games Federation.
- 4.18 Funding and an implementation timetable for these SPRINT routes was approved by the WMCA Board at its meeting on 14 February 2020, including: -
- Revised phasing plan for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 SPRINT routes to be delivered in two phases;
 - Funding of A34 Phase 1 (£32.4m) and A45 / B425 Phase 1 (£55.4m);
 - SPRINT Phase 1 is to be delivered by June 2022;
 - SPRINT Phase 2 is anticipated to be delivered by December 2024, and will be subject to separate approvals for funding and highway infrastructure works.

- 4.19 The introduction of these SPRINT Phase 1 routes by 2022 provides a major opportunity for investment by the public and private sector to achieve a step-change in public transport that will set the foundations for benefits and improvements across the integrated transport system throughout the region.
- 4.20 For these SPRINT routes, TfWM and its partners agreed that a single EP Scheme should be prepared. The EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 is annexed to this report as **Appendix B**. It sets out a range of improvements to bus infrastructure, highway infrastructure and bus vehicles to achieve the agreed ambition for these routes.
- 4.21 The facilities and measures to be provided by TfWM under the EP Scheme include: -
- New and existing bus lanes
 - Bus gates
 - Pedestrian crossing upgrades
 - Traffic signal upgrades
 - Bus stops/shelter infrastructure, including lighting, CCTV, Real Time Information and seating
 - Maintenance of bus stop infrastructure
 - Ticketing schemes
 - Passenger information
- 4.22 The facilities and measures to be provided by the Council under the EP Scheme (within the Borough of Walsall only) include: -
- Maintenance of bus lanes
 - Maintenance of bus gates
 - Maintenance of pedestrian crossings
 - Maintenance of traffic signals
 - Bus lane enforcement
 - Junction enforcement
 - Managing and coordinating highway works
 - Existing Local Highway Authority mechanisms and procedures
- 4.23 Bus operating companies will operate bus services that comply with the vehicle standards set out in the EP Scheme.
- 4.24 The making of the EP Plan and EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425, together with the complementary A34 SPRINT Phase 1 highway works, will provide the confidence to bus operating companies to invest in the necessary vehicles for the relevant commercially operated bus routes as required by the EP.

- 4.25 Once the EP Scheme is made, Walsall Council will be under a legal obligation to provide and maintain facilities and measures as set out in the EP Scheme's schedules.
- 4.26 The commitment made by the Council to provide the facilities and measures set out in the EP scheme is a legal obligation which will remain binding on the Council for the duration of the scheme, until such time it is varied to remove the obligation.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.27 The EP Plan and Scheme support the Council's vision that '*Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised*' as set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-2021. The EP Plan and EP Scheme will facilitate better public transport services on the A34, which will help delivery against the Council's priorities, including: -
- Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses;
 - People have increased independence, improved health, and can positively contribute to their communities;
 - Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.

Risk management

- 4.28 Failure to secure approval would have an impact on the deliverability of the Sprint schemes either in achieving the timescales set out or in achieving the standards and levels of protection for the investment.

Financial implications

- 4.29 The costs for preparing, consulting and making of the EP for Walsall Council will be met by the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 4.30 The SPRINT Phase 1 highway works will provide the initial facilities and measures that Walsall Council is obligated to deliver by the EP Scheme for the A34 corridor.
- 4.31 The capital costs of delivering the SPRINT schemes will be met by West Midlands Combined Authority. The total estimated cost of A34 Phase 1 is £32.4m, with £22.1m from WMCA funding and £10.3m from other central government contributions. (A45 Phase 1 has a cost of £55.4m with £20.2m of WMCA funding and £35.2m of other central government funding.) Phase 2

costs for the combined (A34 and A45) scheme are estimated at £50.3m. Phase 1 is fully funded. Phase 2 is subject to further funding being approved by WMCA.

- 4.32 Costs associated with the EP Schemes are agreed through the development and finalisation of those projects. For equipment assets delivered as part of the Sprint scheme (e.g. bus lane enforcement cameras, traffic signal equipment), equipment is being purchased with a maintenance package for the upkeep of such assets for a period aligned to the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.
- 4.33 Obligations on Walsall Council regarding the EP Scheme will be as follows: -
- Maintenance of highways will be in line with the Council's current reactive and planning maintenance procedures and will be managed within existing budgets;
 - Maintenance of bus lane enforcement cameras post the initial maintenance period will be between £2,500 and £3,500 per year per site for four sites, which has no committed budget at present;
 - Maintenance cost of bus priority equipment at traffic signals post the initial maintenance period will be up to £750 per year per site for seven sites, which has no committed budget at present.
- 4.34 Any rapid electric vehicle re-charging infrastructure subsequently installed as part of the SPRINT scheme will be owned and maintained by WMCA/TfWM, at nil cost (both capital and revenue) to the Council.

Legal implications

- 4.35 The Bus Services Act 2017 (the "2017 Act") amends the TA2000 by inserting a new wide range of powers to improve the local bus market, which includes franchising and two forms of partnership working.
- 4.36 Sections 113C – 113O of the TA 2000 creates AQPS, which is a mechanism based around the existing Quality Partnership Schemes (QPS) set out in s114 of the TA 2000.
- 4.37 Under the Quality Partnership Model a local transport authority ('LTA')(or two LTA's acting jointly agrees to invest in facilities at specific locations along bus routes (e.g. bus stops or bus lanes) and the operator who wished to use those facilities undertake to provide a service of a particular standard (e.g. new buses or driver training standards). Only those operators prepared to provide the facilities to the standard specified in the Scheme are permitted to use the facilities.

- 4.38 The AQPS model is more flexible than a QPS. Under AQPS, schemes can continue to be route- or corridor-specific, cover a larger network of routes, or even a geographical area. AQPS allows an LTA to specify requirements as to ticketing arrangements, information provided to passengers, and provisions about how bus services are marketed and publicised. It also removes the requirement that local authorities should always provide facilities and introduces the new concept of local authority 'measures' that can be taken to directly or indirectly encourage bus use.
- 4.39 In a franchising scheme, LTAs determine the details of the services to be provided, where they run and the standard of the service. Typically, bus operators provide their services under contract to the LTA. No other services can operate in franchised areas without the agreement of the franchising Authority.
- 4.40 The EP powers are contained in Sections 138A-138S of the TA 2000. An EP is a formal partnership arrangement between a LTA and local bus operator to work together to improve bus services. It includes a clear vision of the improvements that the EP is aiming for (known as the EP Plan) and accompanying actions to achieve them (the EP Scheme).
- 4.41 In meeting the statutory requirements an EP Plan should at least include: -
- A map of the geographical area it covers;
 - All the relevant factors that the parties consider will affect, or have the potential to affect, the local bus market over the life of the plan;
 - A summary of any available information on passengers' experiences of using bus services in the area and the priorities of users and non-users for improving them;
 - A summary of any available data on trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on local bus services;
 - What outcomes need to be delivered to improve local bus services in the plan area; and
 - What overall interventions the partnership believes need to be taken to deliver those outcomes.
- 4.42 Section 138 A and 138 H the TA 2000 impose legal requirements in relation to EP Schemes and the Scheme must state: -
- The area to which it relates;
 - The requirements imposed on local bus services under it;

- Whether the operation of the scheme is to be reviewed and, if so, how and by which dates;
- The date on which it is to come into operation; and
- The period for which it is to remain in operation.

4.43 Section 138 of the TA 2000 also provides that the scheme must: -

- Specify the 'facilities' (if any) that are to be provided by the authority (and the date from which they are to be provided if it is not the date when the scheme comes into operation);
- Specify the 'measures' (if any) that are to be taken by the authority (and the date from which they are to be provided if it is not the date when the scheme comes into operation); and
- Include provision (if any) about its variation or revocation (including any dates on which they come into force or cease to apply).

4.44 The LTA must comply with the notice requirements set out in S138F and S138 G, which relate to the intention to make and prepare EP Plans and Schemes.

4.45 Under Section 138A (10) of the TA 2000, an EP Plan may not be made unless the authority or authorities are satisfied that the scheme will contribute to the implementation of: -

- (a) The Policies set out in the related EP Plan, and
- (b) The Local Transport Policies.

4.46 In addition, an EP Scheme may not be made unless the authority or authorities are satisfied that the scheme will: -

- (a) Bring benefits to persons using the Local services in the whole or any part of the area to which the scheme relates by improving the quality or effectiveness of those services; or
- (b) Reduce or limit congestion, noise or air pollution.

4.47 The commitments made by the authority or by a bus operator once a formal EP Plan and EP Scheme are made are legally binding. An authority that does not fulfil its obligations can face legal action by the bus operators in the Courts. Likewise, an operator not meeting its service standards could be in breach of its bus service registration and face its bus registration being cancelled by a traffic commissioner.

4.48 Under Section 138(11) of the TA 2000, an EP Plan or EP Scheme may not be made unless the authority or authorities have complied with the requirements in: -

(a) Section 138F (preparation, notice and consultation), and

(b) Section 138G(1) to (4) (making of plan and scheme).

4.49 Further under s138 (12) an EP Plan may not be made without also making an EP Scheme.

4.50 If a Local Authority includes any facilities or measures under an EP Scheme they have a legal obligation in accordance with s138 J of the TA 2000: -

- Provide the facilities and take the measures not later than the date(s) specified in the Scheme; and
- Continue to provide those facilities and take those measures throughout the lifetime of the scheme or until a scheme is varied to remove the obligation to do so.

4.51 The only exception to this rule is if: -

- The scheme is formally postponed ; or
- If the local authority is temporarily unable to provide a facility or take a measure due to circumstances beyond their control.

4.52 The LTA has formal responsibility for making the Scheme, but at set points in the process they can only proceed with the proposals if they have the support of a defined number of bus operators on the expiry of the objection periods.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

4.53 There are no procurement implications.

Property implications

4.54 There are no property implications.

Health and wellbeing implications

4.55 The EP Plan has been tested against the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are:-

- Giving every child the best start in life – *the EP will see bus-based schemes deliver measures to support travel to school by sustainable modes. Schemes will also positively improve air quality throughout the borough.*
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – *the EP goal is to deliver bus-based sustainable travel which help promote healthy and independent travel choices;*
- Creating fair employment and good work for all – *improved public transport networks help people access employment and training opportunities;*
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all – *access to paid employment is facilitated by improved public transport networks;*
- Creating and developing sustainable places and communities – *schemes delivered through the EP all promote and assist with active travel and travel by public transport, which support sustainable places and communities;*
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention – *healthy travel choices, such as walking or cycling to and from bus based public transport routes, can help prevent ill health, as well as positively impacting on improving air quality.*

Staffing implications

4.56 There are no staffing implications.

Reducing Inequalities

4.57 Access to a wide range of opportunities (such as employment, education, training, healthcare and leisure) are important to all residents. The EP Plan and EP Scheme enable high-quality public transport, such as SPRINT, which can help ensure that young people, elderly people, disabled people and non-car drivers/owners, have access to the full range of services available in the Borough and wider West Midlands. SPRINT is part of a wider network of public transport (bus, rail and Metro) across the metropolitan area developed and promoted by TfWM. Whilst Sprint Phase 1 is focused on the Walsall to Birmingham corridor along the A34 and will inevitably have the most impact for residents of St Matthews ward and Paddock ward, the importance of good connectivity to the regional centre, Birmingham Airport and the wider West Midlands is important to all residents.

4.58 All vehicles operating SPRINT services will be low-floor and fully accessible for wheelchair users and parents with buggies. Engine standards and the ambition articulated for 'zero emissions at the point of use' will help promote improved air quality in the corridor.

4.59 WMCA have undertaken a Stage 1 initial analysis of the equalities implications and there are no concerns that the proposal affects or could affect people differently or that the needs of certain groups would not be met. This has been

reviewed by Walsall Council officers who are satisfied with the assessment. The Equality Impact Assessment is available at **Appendix D**.

Consultation

- 4.60 The WMCA Board gave approval for TfWM to commence the legal process for the EP, preparation of the EP Plan and a single EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 SPRINT routes on behalf of its constituent authorities for the area of the West Midlands Combined Authority on 28 June 2019.
- 4.61 Following the establishment of an EP there is a legal requirement for the LTA to publish an intention to make the EP Plan and EP Scheme. This is followed by an objection period for bus operators to make representations followed formal consultation prior to the making of the EP Plan and EP Scheme with at the least the following statutory consultees: -
- All local bus operators
 - Passenger Organisations
 - Other Local Authorities affected by the proposals
 - Traffic Commissioners
 - Chief of Police for the West Midlands
 - Transport Focus
 - Competition and Markets Authority
 - Any other person as WMCA sees fit
- 4.62 TfWM issued the notice of intent to prepare an EP Plan for the area of the West Midlands Combined Authority and a single EP Scheme for the first two SPRINT routes (A45 and A34) on 17 July 2019.
- 4.63 The EP Plan and EP Scheme were then developed by TfWM and its partners.
- 4.64 A notice was published on 20 December 2019 by TfWM giving operators until 24 January 2020 (at least 28 days as required by legislation), within which to make an objection to either the EP Plan and/or EP Scheme. TfWM did not receive any operator objections to the EP Plan or the EP Scheme.
- 4.65 Subsequently, a further review of the EP Scheme was undertaken with partners. It was agreed to undertake another operator objection period on the EP Scheme. TfWM issued a further notice on 28 February 2020, giving the relevant local bus operators until 27 March 2020 to lodge a formal objection to the Scheme. No operator objections were received, and the Scheme then proceeded to formal (public) consultation as approved by Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) – a WMCA sub-committee – at its meeting on 16 March 2020.

4.66 The statutory consultation process in connection with the preparation of the EP Plan and EP Scheme commenced on 6 July 2020 and closed on 13 September 2020. Further details of this consultation process can be found in the Public Consultation booklet at **Appendix C**.

4.67 In summary, a total of 347 responses were received to the online questionnaire, with a further 14 responses received by e-mail. Among the 347 responses received via the online questionnaire: -

- 68% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the vision laid out in the EP Plan, 11% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the vision in the EP Plan, 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 47% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the Scheme will raise standards along the three route corridors. 12% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Scheme would raise standards, 26% neither agreed nor disagreed. However, it was noted that 53% of respondents did not use the bus services in the Scheme area, so this could explain the higher percentage neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

4.68 The key themes to arise from the comments in the open questions were: -

- Support or Opposition to the EP Plan and/or Scheme
- Economics and cost
- General travel experience
- On-board experience
- Comments on the consultation

4.69 The EP Plan was unaltered following this consultation. However, the EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 was modified in line with the consultation feedback.

4.70 TDC reviewed the consultation outcomes and proposed revisions in connection with the EP Scheme at its meeting on 9 November 2020 and approval was given to 'make' the EP Plan and a modified EP Scheme. A further statutory objection period for bus operators commenced in connection with the modified EP Scheme and this ended on 7 December 2020 with no objections having been raised.

5. Decide

- 5.1 As discussed in Section 4, options for the best mechanism to deliver the A34(N) and A45 / B425 SPRINT schemes ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games have been fully explored and the EP selected as the preferred option.
- 5.2 Cabinet is asked to agree to the making of the EP Plan and EP Scheme in conjunction with TfWM / WMCA and the other local authorities, as both the resolution of objections and the consultation process have now successfully concluded for the EP Plan and the EP Scheme.
- 5.3 Cabinet is asked to note that granting this authority will not in itself give the Council authority to proceed with the SPRINT Phase 1 scheme on the A34, but to enable the legislative framework under which the SPRINT Phase 1 scheme will be delivered and subsequently managed.

6. Respond

- 6.1 The intention is for TfWM and Walsall Council to implement the SPRINT Phase 1 works on the A34 within the Borough of Walsall (this is subject to a separate report to Cabinet), which will deliver the necessary infrastructure to achieve the improvements envisaged in the West Midlands EP Plan and EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425.
- 6.2 Following the implementation of the SPRINT Phase 1 highway works, a commercial bus operator – National Express West Midlands – will operate bus services that meet the standards set out in the EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425. These will operate as cross-conurbation services (Walsall – Birmingham – Solihull/Airport) from 2022.
- 6.3 SPRINT Phase 2 will continue to be developed by TfWM and will be subject to future approvals for funding and highway works. If these approvals are obtained and SPRINT Phase 2 works are implemented it is envisaged that tram-style zero emission, low floor, articulated vehicles will be operated commercially on the SPRINT route. This will also necessitate that the EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 is further modified for SPRINT Phase 2, the operator objection process conducted, statutory consultation undertaken and the necessary approvals are sought and successfully obtained.

7. Review

- 7.1 As part of developing the EP Plan and EP Scheme, how the EP Scheme is to be monitored, managed and what the triggers are for variation and revocation have been agreed.

Appendices

Appendix A –West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan (TfWM)

Appendix B –West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 (TfWM)

Appendix C –West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Public Consultation Booklet (TfWM)

Appendix D –West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Equality Impact Assessment (TfWM)

Background papers

- WMCA Board Paper ‘Vision for Bus Next Steps – Part B. Enhanced Partnership for Sprint’, 28 June 2019
- Strategic Vision for Bus, November 2018 (TfWM)

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Simon Neilson
Executive Director

1 February 2021



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio holder - Regeneration

1 February 2021

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) seeks to develop and promote a fully integrated transport system, where each public transport mode (rail, Metro, bus and demand responsive transport) contributes towards the overall objective of enabling all residents to have easy access to a range of services and facilities. Bus is central to this and an Enhanced Partnership offers a mechanism to help achieve the objective.

Drawing on Transport for West Midlands' Strategic Vision for Bus, this document fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan for the West Midlands. Initially, this will facilitate the introduction of an EP Scheme for the first two Sprint corridors (A34 and A45) that have been prioritised to support the 2022 Commonwealth Games. However, over the Plan period, other potential EP Schemes may be put forward by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), constituent authorities or bus operators and promoted through the West Midlands Bus Alliance.

Whilst significant progress in improving bus services is being achieved through the Bus Alliance and the Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes already in place in central Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Solihull, an Enhanced Partnership is considered the best way of ensuring that some of the more ambitious plans to transform bus travel are achieved. Amongst these are the Sprint bus rapid transit corridors, which will rely on investment both in vehicles (by operators) and infrastructure (by local authorities). The EP will place binding commitments on partner organisations to provide the necessary enhancements, as well as ensuring on-going provision of high-quality bus services.

In accordance with statutory requirements for an EP Plan, this document includes:

- Details of the area covered
- Factors affecting the local bus market
- A summary of passengers' experiences of using bus services and the priorities of users and non-users for improvements
- Trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on bus services
- Objectives that are sought for bus service provision
- Interventions needed to achieve the desired outcomes



Overview

The West Midlands has strong growth ambitions to improve productivity and the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the region. The development of HS2, 2021 UK City of Culture in Coventry, and the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games will help transform the region and drive investment, offering opportunities for the bus to play an important role in meeting existing and new travel demands.

Transport is key to economic growth, but traffic congestion can constrain this ambition. TfWM is supporting local authority partners and investing to develop a world-class integrated transport system that will allow seamless, convenient travel across the region, thereby reducing the need for journeys to be made by car.

In 2017/18, 71.9¹ million bus service miles were operated in the West Midlands by 26 bus operators. This represents the largest number of bus service miles for a metropolitan area in England (outside of London) and the largest commercially-provided bus network (66.5 million bus service miles). Some 5.4 million bus service miles operate with financial support from TfWM and local authority partners.

With its widespread coverage, bus plays a vital role across the region. The bus accounts for 4 out of 5 public transport journeys and remains the most important, adaptable and flexible mode, serving and supporting a better quality of life for West Midlands residents. The importance of the bus for access to employment is illustrated in Figure 1.

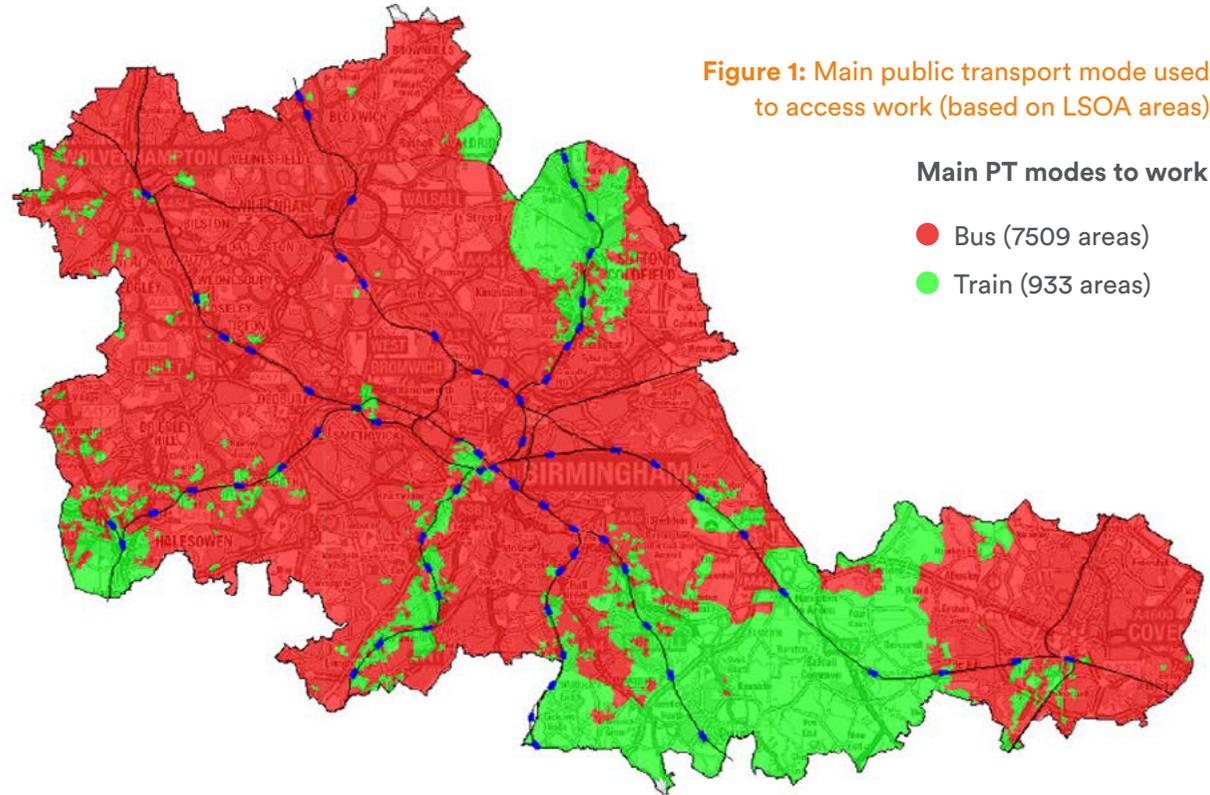


Figure 1: Main public transport mode used to access work (based on LSOA areas)

¹ DfT 2017/18, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus02-vehicle-distance-travelled>

Bus passengers' views

The 2018 Bus Passenger Survey, undertaken by Transport Focus, reported that overall satisfaction with bus travel in the West Midlands stood at 84%. While this demonstrates high levels of satisfaction, this was slightly below the levels in the equivalent metropolitan areas of West Yorkshire (85%) and Greater Manchester (87%) and somewhat lower than Merseyside and Tyne & Wear (both 91%).

66%
Bus driver
greeting/welcome



66%
Value for money
fare-payers only

82%
Journey time



84%
Overall journey



71%
Punctuality

84%
Availability of seating
or space to stand



74%
Interior cleanliness
and condition

Influences on bus travel

Across the UK, bus use has been in general decline, mainly due to growing car ownership and use. However, in recent years, some areas or specific bus routes have seen growth.

Research into changing patterns of bus use (illustrated in Figure 2) suggests that about a half of the reduction in bus patronage can be explained by changing customer needs, particularly due to changes in car ownership and economic circumstances and the availability and acceptability of alternatives to travel, such as online services. Much of the remainder of the reduction in bus patronage is explained by increases in bus journey times (linked to increasing traffic levels) and rises in bus fares. In contrast, there are some factors that have helped to increase bus use, attributable to population growth and reduced car use.

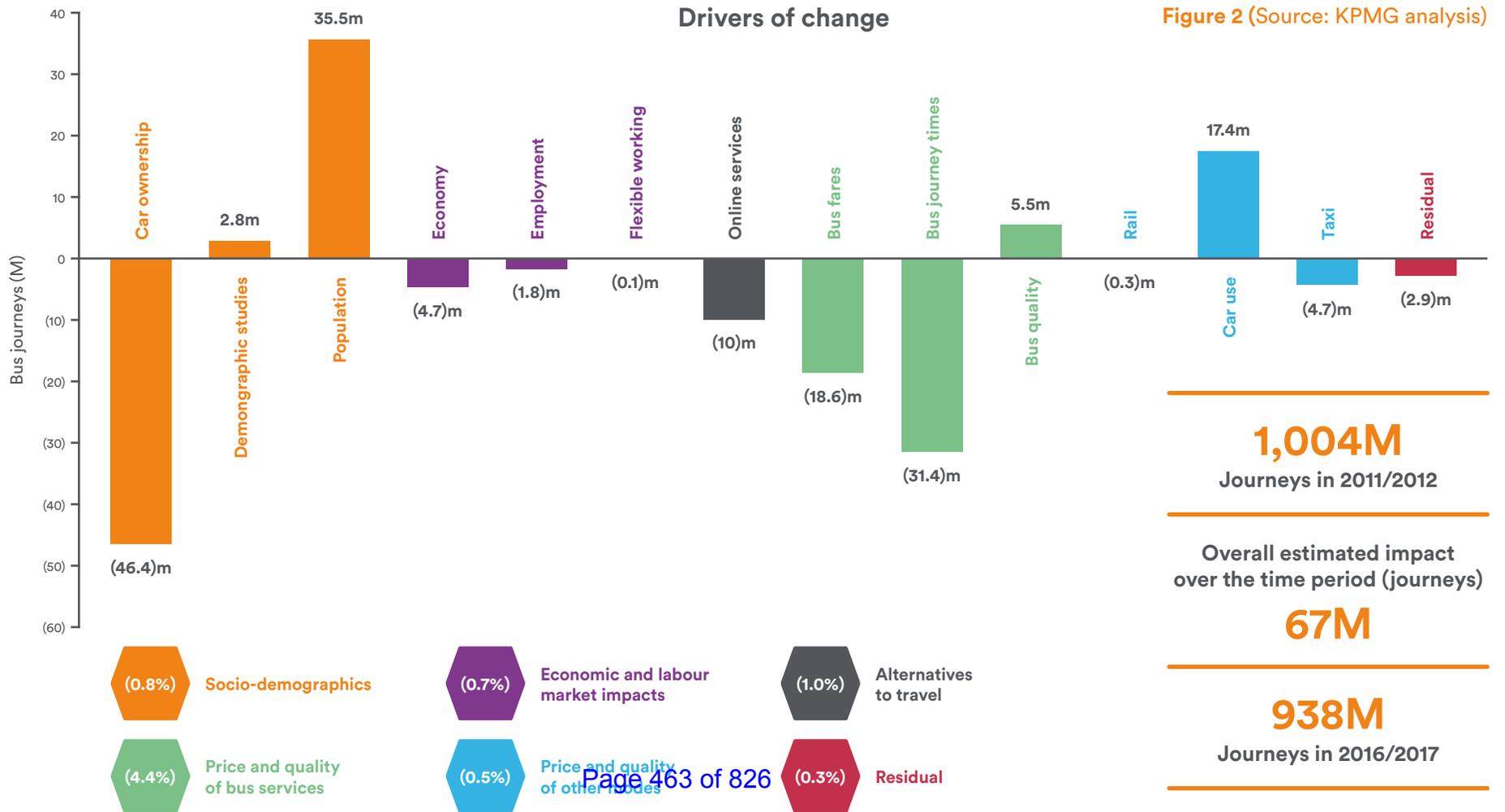


Figure 2 (Source: KPMG analysis)

Car ownership

In the West Midlands, over half of bus users have no access to a car and so rely on public transport for their travel needs. Where people have access to a car, their likelihood of using the bus reduces², from on average of 181 bus journeys per year to 55 (part access to a vehicle) and 14 (full access to a vehicle).

Figure 3: Car ownership in the West Midlands

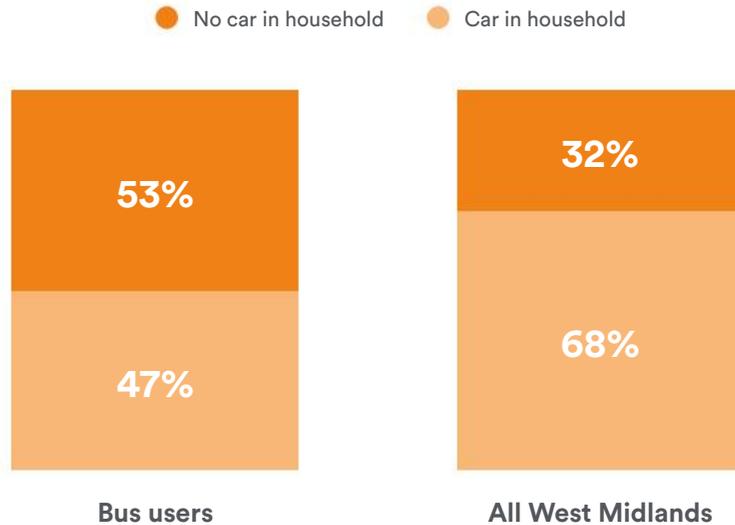
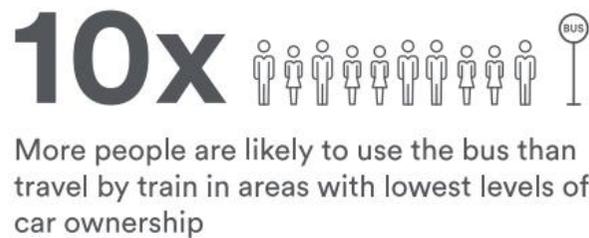


Figure 4: Car ownership usage and characteristics in the West Midlands



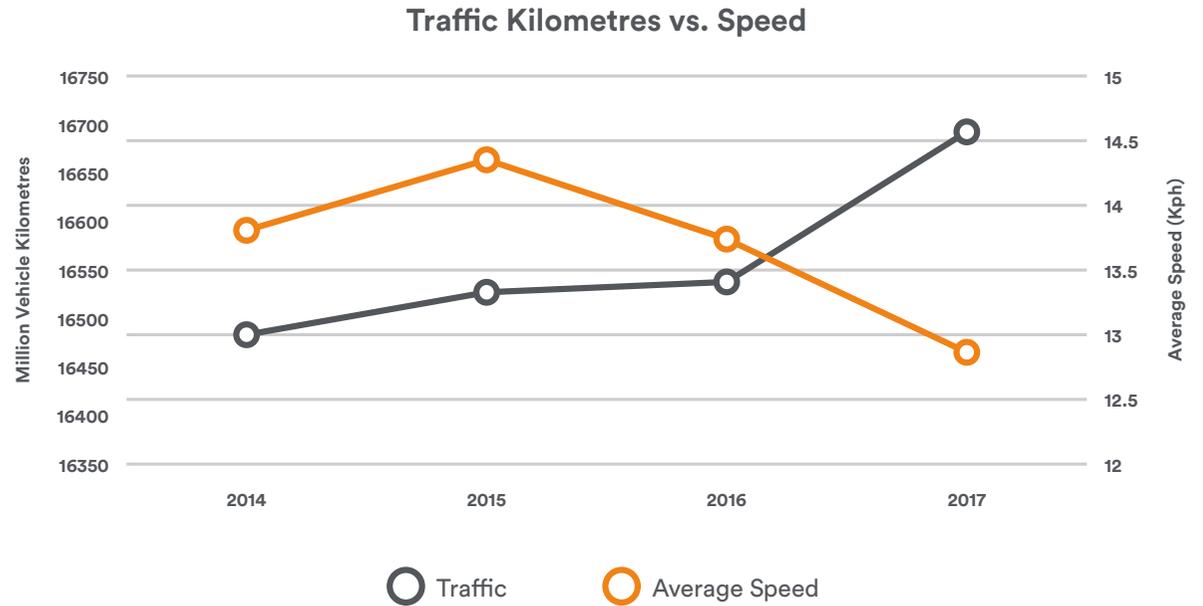
Car parking

In Birmingham city centre, the region's strategic economic centre, there are about 60,000 public and private non-residential car parking spaces available, both on-street and off-street. This is against an average weekday vehicle demand for parking spaces in the city centre of about 45,000 vehicles. This suggests an over-supply of parking, which undermines local and regional policies to see a shift towards reducing private car use and encouraging more sustainable forms of travel.

The high level of parking availability in Birmingham city centre also contributes to peak period traffic congestion and associated travel unreliability, together with problems of poor air quality.

Congestion

Traffic congestion is a significant challenge for buses, restricting their ability to reach their potential by increasing journey times and impacting negatively on service reliability. Since 2015, average traffic speeds have fallen as levels of traffic have increased. If congestion is unmanaged, it will continue to have detrimental impacts on people and businesses, increasing business costs, affecting productivity and reducing accessibility to labour markets, as well as being responsible for harmful emissions. Equally, if unchecked, congestion could worsen from increased travel demand resulting from development and population growth. Also, major infrastructure projects, such as HS2, might have impacts on bus services during their construction period.



Without addressing major sources of congestion, buses will continue to suffer delays, variability and increases in journey times and operating costs, leading to declining attractiveness of the service and thus fewer passengers. Bus operators are forced to respond to congestion in one of two ways – both with a similar outcome in terms of patronage decline. First, to maintain levels of service where congestion worsens, bus operators may need to run more buses, which adds to the costs of providing services. A second response is to operate services less frequently.

Congestion causes:

- **Journey time increases and variability** – whereby bus services become unreliable, with journey times varying from advertised timetables and overall journeys taking longer.

- **Decreasing accessibility** – slower average bus speeds lead to reduced accessibility, as fewer people can access places in a reasonable journey time.
- **Decreasing attractiveness of bus** – greater journey time variability and declining accessibility reduce the appeal of buses, meaning they are at risk of further patronage decline.
- **Higher bus operating costs** – a 10 per cent decrease in operating speeds leads to an 8 per cent increase in operating costs. If this is passed on to passengers through higher fares it results in a 5.6 per cent fall in patronage³.

Reduced use of the bus may lead to greater car use, creating further congestion.

One measure of the passenger experience is the real journey time incurred and the reliability of journey times. A tool to measure this has been devised and is shown in Appendix B, with some example journeys listed to highlight what it shows.

Accessibility analyses are another way of highlighting the relative ability of buses to provide services that people want. Such analysis shows that while 54.5% of residents could access at least three main centres within 45 minutes by public transport in October 2011, this had fallen to 44.8% in October 2017.

The impact of slower average traffic speeds on levels of accessibility is illustrated in Appendix A. For example, in the context of Birmingham between 2008 and 2018 increasing bus journey times resulted in 216,000 fewer people being within a 45-minute bus journey of the city centre.

³ The impact of congestion on bus passengers, Green Journeys, Professor David Begg

Air Quality

Air pollution in the West Midlands affects some 2.8 million people, reducing average life expectancy by up to 6 months, and is responsible for economic costs estimated at £860 million per year. It is estimated that road transport emissions account for around 1,460 premature deaths in the region each year, with 890 in Birmingham alone.

In all seven constituent authorities in the region, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and/or particulate matter concentration thresholds are currently exceeded (relative to EU limits). The authorities have been instructed by DEFRA to take local action. Birmingham City Council plans to implement a Class D Clean Air Zone, no earlier than July 2020.

Reducing bus emissions is an important vital part of the programme to improve people's health and quality of life by cleaning up the air in the West Midlands. The Mayor of the West Midlands and West Midlands Bus Alliance have committed to create the cleanest bus fleet in the UK, outside London. The aim is for the entire bus fleet in the West Midlands metropolitan area to meet at least Euro VI emissions standards by April 2021⁴, cutting harmful pollution from buses by up to 95 per cent.

Since 2015, over 350 new vehicles have entered service, older vehicles retrofitted to Euro VI standards, supported bus contracts specified as Euro VI standard, and orders placed for zero-emission buses (electric and hydrogen).

“Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK” [DEFRA, 2017]



⁴ West Midlands Combined Authority Board
28 June 2019 <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MIId=221&Ver=4>

This section sets out the policy background to the EP Plan.

Strategic Economic Plan

The bus has a significant role to play in helping overcome the strategic challenges outlined in the SEP, with transport interventions that:



500,000
new jobs



20,000
more businesses



16,000
additional
hectares of
employment land



215,000
additional homes

- **Support an accessible network**
Addressing transport barriers (accessibility, availability and affordability) for excluded groups.
- **Deliver support that connects people to key employment and skills opportunities**
Ensuring growth is inclusive by helping the most vulnerable and isolated groups share in economic prosperity.
- **Ensure alignment with the Public Service Reform agenda and Local Industrial Strategy**
Targeting interventions which secure better for less from public services, improving the life changes and the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Movement for Growth

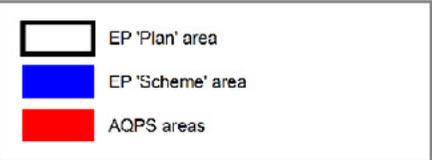
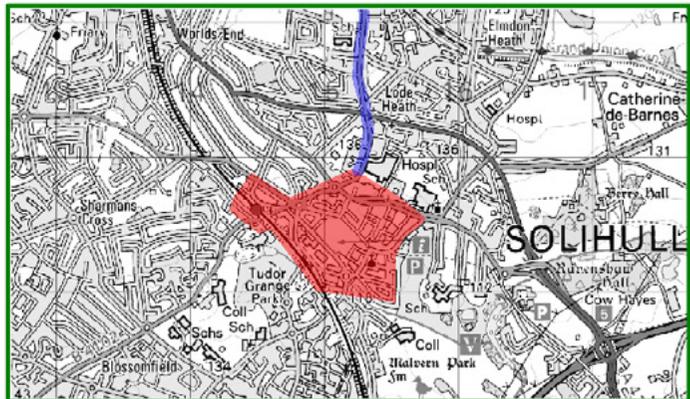
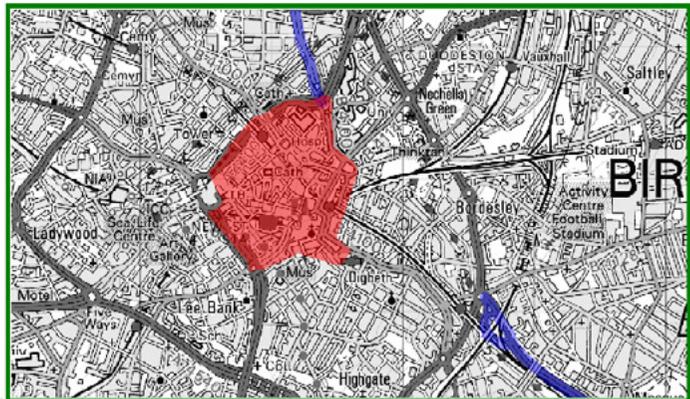
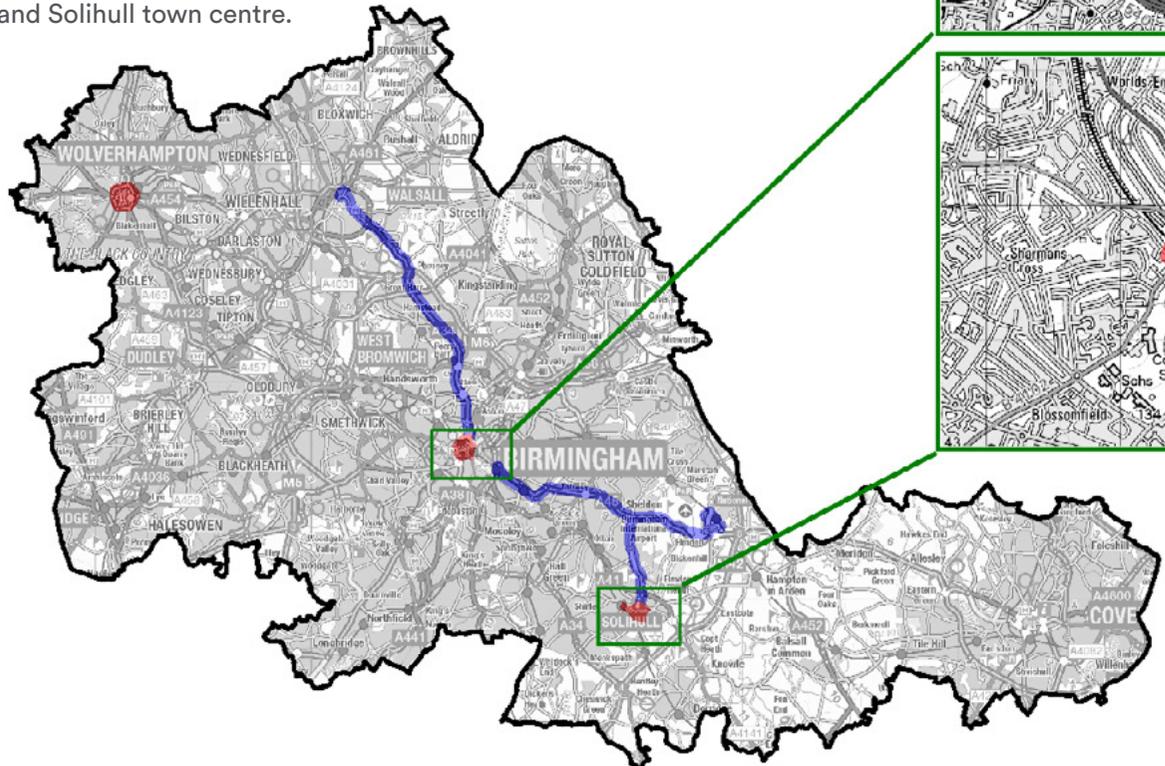
‘Movement for Growth’, the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, sets out improvements to the transport system to support the economic growth and regeneration of the region, support new developments and housing and improve air quality, the environment and social inclusion.



Map of Enhanced Partnership 'Plan' and 'Scheme' areas

Plan area

The EP Plan covers the entire area of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), excluding the areas within the existing Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes (AQPS) for Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres and Solihull town centre.



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Objectives

The EP Plan provides the framework to contribute towards meeting the 9 objectives set out in the ‘Strategic Vision for Bus’:

- UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.
- Fully integrated bus network, including demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting interchange with rail, coach and Metro to form one network.
- Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options, including full capping, providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.
- Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.
- Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long-held barriers and perceptions.
- Accountable network performance management, tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
- World-leading customer information, utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
- All young people under 25 supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
- Evolve a network to support a 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.

The Plan provides the backdrop for specific EP Schemes that will detail actions and developments to be taken jointly by partners to deliver a marked improvement in bus services on certain corridors or in defined areas that will help meet the above objectives, particularly by speeding up bus journeys times and improving journey time reliability. Such schemes may be suggested and promoted by TfWM, constituent local authorities or bus operators.

The first EP Scheme to be introduced will support the implementation of two Sprint corridors, including improved infrastructure and the operation of high-quality buses, as follows:

- Birmingham Airport and Solihull to Birmingham City Centre (A45)
- Walsall to Birmingham City Centre (A34)

Ultimately, a network of Sprint corridors will be established across the West Midlands, as shown in Figure 5.

The Plan supports the key principles underpinning the provision of Sprint corridors, in respect of:

- Providing confidence to operators to invest in high quality vehicles
- Ensuring reliable journey time performance
- Managing access at certain stops
- Enhanced vehicle standards
- Enhanced vehicle environmental standards
- Vehicle, driver and customer service standards are enhanced and maintained
- Infrastructure is maintained and enforced
- Continued availability of inter-operable ticketing

- Ensuring incident conditions are managed effectively on a collaborative basis
- Providing a mechanism for sharing data and reporting on corridor performance

Strategic Vision for Bus

Outlining the role of bus in supporting the overall transport aspirations, ‘Strategic Vision for Bus’ sets out the following vision:

“A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel for all across the West Midlands, with excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options. Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21st Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys.”

Governance

A Reference Group, comprising the following, developed this Plan:

- TfWM
- Constituent local authorities
- Bus operators
- Confederation of Passenger Transport
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Bus Users UK
- Transport Focus
- Birmingham Airport
- Neighbouring authorities (as observers)

The Group will be reconvened in the future if variations to the Plan are necessary.

The Enhanced Partnership is overseen by the West Midlands Bus Alliance and WMCA, who will also monitor progress made towards achieving the EP Plan objectives.

An EP Plan can only exist if there is at least one associated EP Scheme in place. Therefore, for as long as an EP Scheme is in place, a Plan must also be in place.



Small and medium-sized operators

The needs of small and medium-sized operators (SMOs) have been considered in the development of the Enhanced Partnership, with opportunities for all bus operators to participate throughout, either through individual discussions or through attendance at the Reference Group meetings. The Plan seeks to support improvements in all aspects of bus provision, regardless of the size of operators providing services. With the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area, smaller operators have been given extended periods to comply with the improved standards.

Competition

The Enhanced Partnership has been subject to the Competition Test as set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. The assessment, undertaken by TfWM and shared with the Competition and Markets Authority, concluded that there will be no adverse impact on competition.

The implementation of an Enhanced Partnership Plan and associated Scheme is aimed at delivering improvements to bus services for passengers in a deregulated environment. In particular, this will include improved quality of vehicles and emission standards (minimum standard of Euro VI). All operators in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area will be required to make improvements in their fleet, which are considered proportionate in respect of the Climate Emergency declared by the WMCA. The Enhanced Partnership will not impact on competition, as operators will be free to amend and introduce services in the area, provided that the standards that apply to all operators are met.



Variations to the Plan

Consideration will be given to potential EP Plan variations highlighted either by one of the organisations represented on the EP Reference Group or an operator of qualifying local bus services. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to busalliance@tfwm.org.uk.

On receipt of a valid request for a variation, TfWM will reconvene the EP Plan Reference Group, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. If the proposed variation is agreed by all bus operator and local highway authority and TfWM representatives present, TfWM will make the EP Plan variation with the relevant local highway authorities. Stakeholders not represented at the meeting will be deemed to be abstaining from the decision.

If there is not full agreement of all stakeholders present, then the proposed variation will be put to the operator objection mechanism, but with a reduced objection period of 14 days replacing Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 section 138L (2) (c). The proposed variation will be advertised on the TfWM website and emailed to operators of qualifying local services in the EP Plan area. If the proposed variation passes the operator objection mechanism, TfWM will make the EP Plan variation, subject to the approval of the relevant local highway authorities and TfWM.



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Review of the EP Plan

Once the EP Plan is made, it will be reviewed by the EP Plan Reference Group at least annually. TfWM will initiate each review and it will take no longer than 6 months to complete.

As part of the review process, at least every 2nd year consideration will be given to the appropriateness of the milestone dates for the implementation of non-diesel vehicles, which will take into account changes in national and regional guidance and policy.

Depending on the outcome of the Outline Business Case⁵ assessment to consider the best future delivery model for bus services in the West Midlands from the Bus Services Act 2017, due to be completed in 2021, it may be necessary to review the EP Plan.

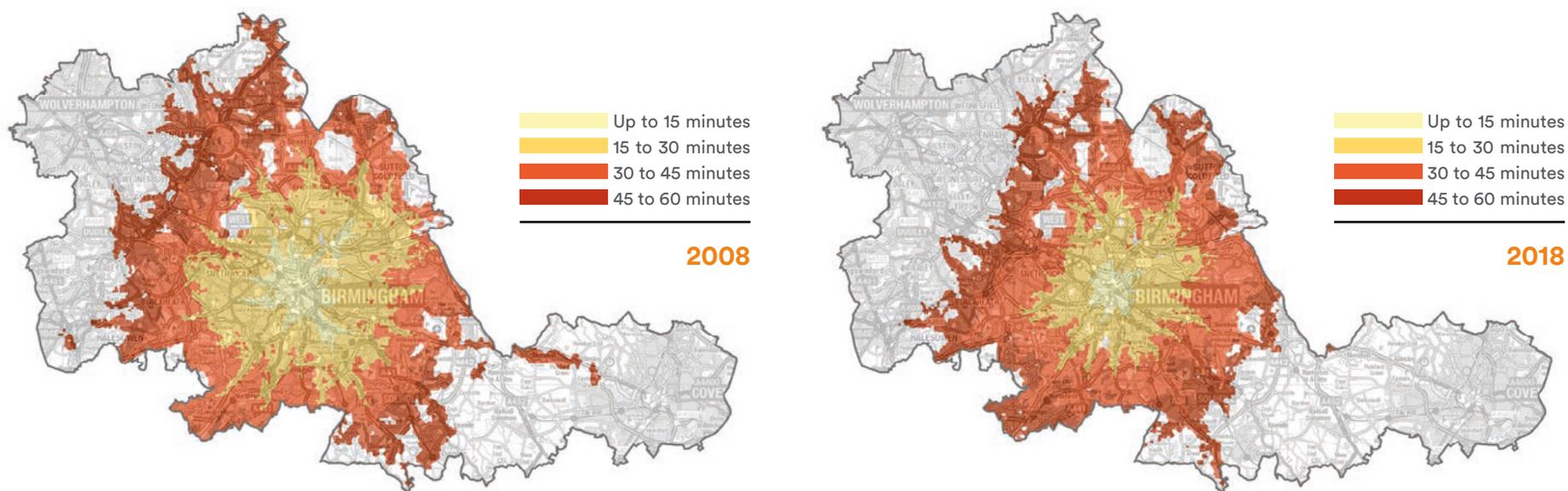
Revocation of the EP Plan

If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the EP Plan to be revoked, the EP Plan Reference Group will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined in the section 'Variations to the Scheme' (noting that the agreement will be for revocation and not variation).

If at any point in the future the EP Plan area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Plan document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

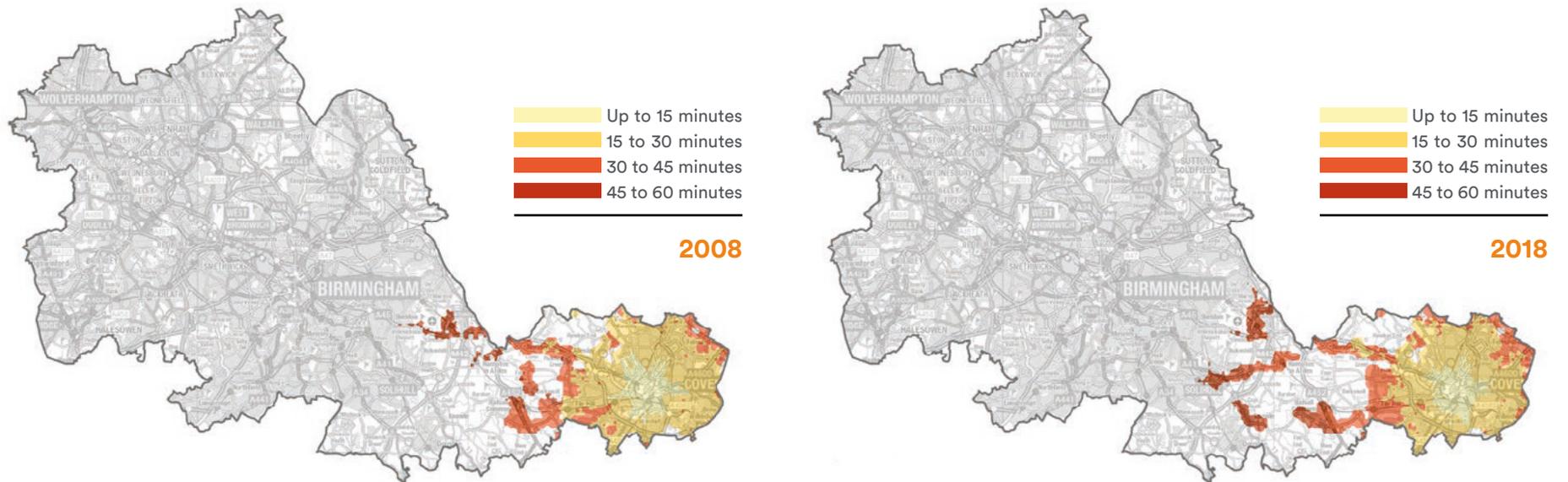
⁵ As approved by the WMCA Board at its meeting on the 28 June 2019: <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MIId=221&Ver=4>

Figure A1: AM Peak Journey Times to Birmingham City Centre by Bus (2008 and 2018)



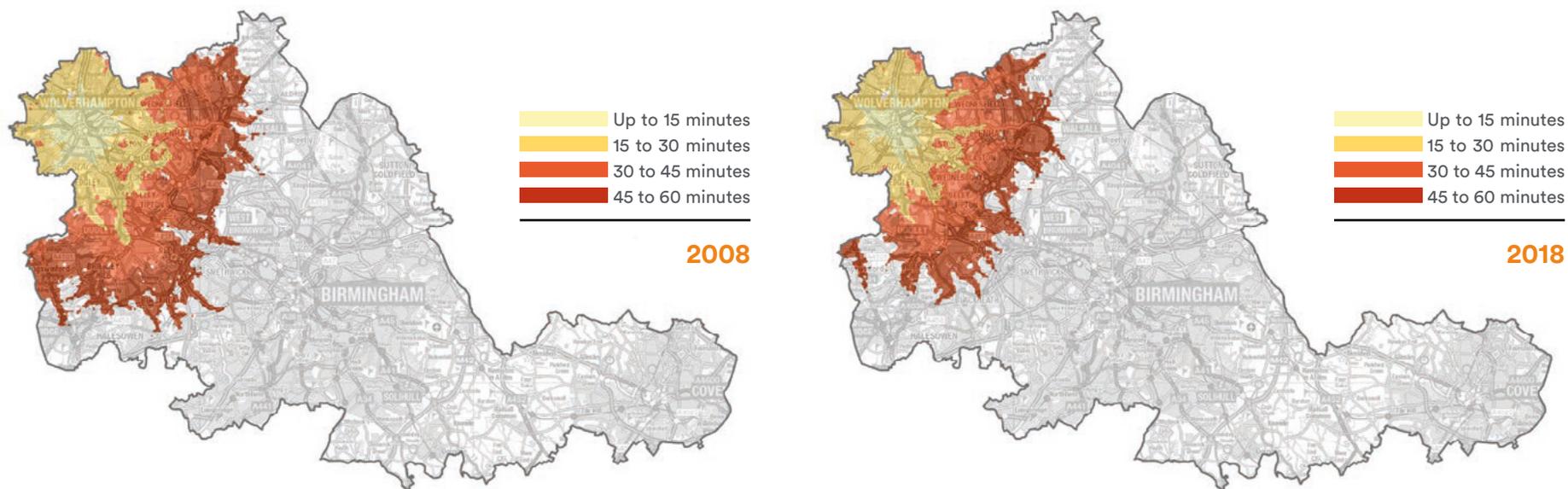
Population living within 60 minutes by bus from Birmingham: 1,511,350 in 2008, 1,287,810 in 2018.

Figure A2: AM Peak Journey Times to Coventry City Centre by Bus (2008 and 2018)



Population living within 60 minutes by bus from Coventry: 288,603 in 2008, 295,594 in 2018. The increase is due to improved service provision to Solihull.

Figure A3: AM Peak Journey Times to Wolverhampton City Centre by Bus (2008 and 2018)



Population living within 60 minutes by bus from Wolverhampton: 712,552 in 2008, 569,458 in 2018.

APPENDIX B: MEASURE OF BUS JOURNEY TIME
(actual and scheduled)

Real Journey Time (RJT) is a measure of how long passengers allow for a bus journey. This is not just a slowly-extending timetabled journey time, but also the contingency they add for delay, as passengers seek to reduce the risk of significant lateness more than to minimising their total travel time. Research suggests the contingency typically added to make up the RJT is that needed to cover the 95th percentile journey time.

An online tool (www.realjourneytime.co.uk) can be used to measure RJT for many services in the West Midlands. The output of the RJT for a selection of routes (April 2019) highlights some of the poorest passenger experiences of RJT compared with timetabled journey speed (TJS).

Journey from >to	Service	AM Peak journey times (mins)			Performance measures	
		Timetable	Real journey time	Must add	Current (all day) % service punctual	Additional (AM peak) RJ Speed /TJ Speed
Bloxwich > Walsall	31/32	12	21	9	65%	57%
Cape Hill > Birmingham	82/87	21	25	4	76%	84%
Foleshill > Coventry	20	13	21	8	69%	62%
Great Bridge > Birmingham	74	59	68	9	63%	87%
Halesowen > Birmingham	9	63	73	10	74%	86%
Harborne > Birmingham	23/24	25	41	16	80%	61%
Keresley > Coventry	16/A	31	47	16	77%	66%
Maypole > Birmingham	50	31	46	15	58%	67%
Solihull > Birmingham	4	45	55	10	63%	82%
Walsall > Oldbury	4	41	50	9	76%	82%
Wednesfield > Wolverhampton	59	14	22	8	82%	64%
Willenhall > Walsall	529	19	27	8	61%	70%
Wolverhampton > Dudley	1	47	51	4	69%	92%

One approach to improving network performance is to reduce the amount of contingency that passengers need to allow for their journeys, particularly targeting the worst ones first.

THIS DEED IS DATED:

PARTY SEALS

(1) THE WEST MIDLANDS
COMBINED AUTHORITY
(WMCA) of 16 Summer Lane,
Birmingham, B19 3SD affixed
hereto in the presence of its
duly Authorised Officer

.....

(2) BIRMINGHAM CITY
COUNCIL of The Council
House, Victoria Square,
Birmingham B1 1BB affixed
hereto in the presence of its
duly Authorised Officer

.....

(3) COVENTRY CITY
COUNCIL of Council House,
Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RR
affixed hereto in the presence
of its duly Authorised Officer

.....

(4) DUDLEY METROPOLITAIN
BOROUGH COUNCIL of
Council House,
Priory Road, Dudley, DY1 1HF
affixed hereto in the presence
of its duly Authorised Officer

.....

(5) SANDWELL
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH
COUNCIL of Sandwell Council
House, Freeth Street, Oldbury,
B69 3DE affixed hereto in
the presence of its duly
Authorised Officer

.....

(6) SOLIHULL
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH
COUNCIL of Council House,
Manor Square, Solihull, West
Midlands, B91 3QB affixed
hereto in the presence of its
duly Authorised Officer

.....

(7) WALSALL
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH
COUNCIL of Civic Centre,
Darwall Street, Walsall,
WS1 1TP affixed hereto in
the presence of its duly
Authorised Officer

.....

(8) CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL of Civic
Centre, St. Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1SH
affixed hereto in the presence
of its duly Authorised Officer

.....



Transport for West Midlands

Building a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous West Midlands.

West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Scheme for Buses

Supporting the development of bus services on two corridors:

A34(N) Walsall – Birmingham City Centre and

A45 Birmingham Airport / B425 Solihull – Birmingham City Centre



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Organisations Making the Enhanced Partnership Scheme for A34(N) and A45 / B425

THE WEST MIDLANDS ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138R(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY:

(1) THE WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY (WMCA) of 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD;

(2) BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL of The Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB;

(3) SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL of Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DE;

(4) SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL of Council House, Manor Square, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3QB;

(5) WALSALL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL of Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP.

Definitions used in the document

AQPS – means an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme made pursuant to section 114(1) of the Transport Act 2000 [as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008 and the Bus Services Act 2017].

Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) – is a means for automatically determining and transmitting the geographic location of a vehicle, allowing it to be tracked in real time.

Bus Franchising Area – an area in which a statutory franchising scheme operates, as prescribed in the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017 (section 123). Bus services in the area are controlled and specified by the transport authority, with bus operators providing services under one or more contracts.

Bus Gate – is a short stretch of road carriageway that is restricted to use by buses and (where specified) taxis and other authorised vehicles as indicated on appropriate signage on the approach.

Bus Lane – is a signposted lane, designated for use by buses and (where specified) taxis and other authorised vehicles, at the times also indicated by signage.

Bus lane enforcement – means the action taken to ensure that bus lanes are used only by authorised vehicles. This is often carried out by using cameras to record unauthorised use, with the issue of civil penalties to offenders under section 144 of the Transport Act 2000.

Bus Stand – means a bus stop clearway as defined in accordance with paragraph 1(a) of Part 1 to Schedule 19 of The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 but which will permit a local bus to stand within the clearway for as long as maybe necessary up to a maximum period of 10 minutes.

CCTV – means closed circuit television system, whereby static or mobile cameras are used to record offences or for surveillance and security purposes.

CVRAS – means Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme (CVRAS) and is a certification scheme for manufacturers of retrofit emissions reduction technology that will enable Clean Air Zone (CAZ) compliance of legacy fleet vehicles to address the air pollution emissions from buses.

Designated feeder service – means a bus service that is specifically designed by the operator and accepted by Transport for West Midlands as one that connects with another service allowing passengers to interchange at designated stops or stands

Enforcement camera – means a roadside camera that records and produces suitable evidence of unauthorised use of bus lanes or bus gates for the local highway authority to issue civil penalties under section 144 of the Transport Act 2000.

EP Scheme Area – means the area to which this EP Scheme document applies; namely the A34 (Birmingham to Walsall), A45 (Birmingham to Birmingham Airport) and B425 Lode Lane (Yardley to Solihull) corridors.

Euro VI equivalent standards – Euro VI diesel bus or a bus with CVRAS approved technologies retrofitted to a diesel bus to reduce NOx and PM emissions and achieve Euro VI equivalent standards

Facilities – means the physical assets that are provided at specific locations along particular routes (or parts of routes) within the EP scheme area or new and improved bus priority measures. This is deemed for such purposes of section 138D(1) of the Transport Act 2000.

Measures – means the improvements with the aim of:

- Increasing the use of local bus service serving the routes to which the measures relate or ending or reducing a decline in their use; or
- Improving the quality of local bus service.

Slot Booking System – means the system and process set out to manage the number of buses using a particular bus stop and their headway.

Local Authorities – as prescribed under section 23 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Local Highway Authorities – this is a local authority with responsibility for the maintenance of highway infrastructure in its local authority area. In the case of this EP Scheme, this means either Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council or Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

Local transport authority – collectively means the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

Local Qualifying Bus Services – means those Registered Local Bus Services operating within the EP Scheme area that must meet the requirements and obligations set out in the EP Scheme document.

Multi-Operator Capping – means a common fares and ticketing system, applied across multiple bus operators, that will cap a user's travel cost according to the lowest price available for the journey or journeys made.

Multi-Operator Ticketing – means a common fares and ticketing system applied and accepted by multiple operators. In the West Midlands this currently means nBus and nNetwork products.

Network Stability Protocol – this covers the specified dates through the year, agreed between WMCA and bus operators, on which local bus service changes take place.

Real Time Information – using technology to track the location of buses in real time, information is transmitted to bus stops or devices to indicate to passengers the predicted arrival time at a particular point.

Registered Local Bus Service – has the meaning set out in Section 2 of the Transport Act 1985.

Strategic Vision for Bus – approved in November 2018 by the WMCA to provide a clear view of what the region requires from its bus network. The Vision supports the region's Strategic Economic Plan and supporting West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan "Movement for Growth" in defining a longer-term strategy for bus in the West Midlands.

Highway Works Permit – is a permit issued by local highway authorities to any organisation that wishes to undertake street works promoted by a public utility company or highway works promoted by the Local Highway Authority, with the aim of managing all works on the public highway. Local authorities have powers to operate permit schemes under Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and The Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

Swift – is the brand name for smartcard ticketing products promoted and managed by Transport for West Midlands and that can be used on all public transport modes.

TRO – means a Traffic Regulation Order, made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or any other enactment regulating the use of roads or other places.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) – means the organisation within the West Midlands Combined Authority with responsibility for transport.

West Midlands Bus Alliance – established in 2015, this is an alliance of bus operators, local councils, and other partners that have agreed to work together to deliver high levels of passenger satisfaction and drive forward investment in bus services.

West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan – means the document made pursuant to section 138A of the Transport Act 2000 and which is required to be in place for an EP Scheme to be made.

Zero emission vehicle – means a vehicle that emits no pollutants at its tailpipe.

1. Introduction

1.1 This document fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 for an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme. In accordance with statutory requirements in section 138 of the Transport Act 2000, this EP Scheme document sets out:

- Area covered (Section 2)
- Commencement date (Section 2)
- Overall interventions to be made by the authorities (Section 3)
- Requirements imposed on local qualifying bus services (Section 4)
- Details for reviewing the operation of the EP Scheme (Section 5)

1.2 The EP Scheme can only be put in place if an associated Enhanced Partnership Plan has been made. Therefore, this document should be considered alongside the West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan.

1.3 The EP Scheme has been jointly developed by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), local highway authorities and those bus operators that provide local qualifying bus services in the EP Scheme area. The EP Scheme aims to support improvements to bus services on two corridors. It sets out obligations and requirements on both the local transport authority, local highway authorities and operators in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of passengers benefitting from attractive and convenient bus services.

1.4 The EP Scheme aims to contribute towards meeting the 9 objectives set out in the '*Strategic Vision for Bus*¹:

1. UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.
2. Fully integrated bus network, including demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting interchange with rail, coach and Metro to form one network.
3. Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options, with fare capping, providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.

¹ <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/38969/final-strategic-vision-for-bus.pdf>

4. Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.
5. Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long-held barriers and perceptions.
6. Accountable network performance management, tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
7. World-leading customer information, utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
8. All young people under 25 years supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
9. Evolve a network to support a 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.

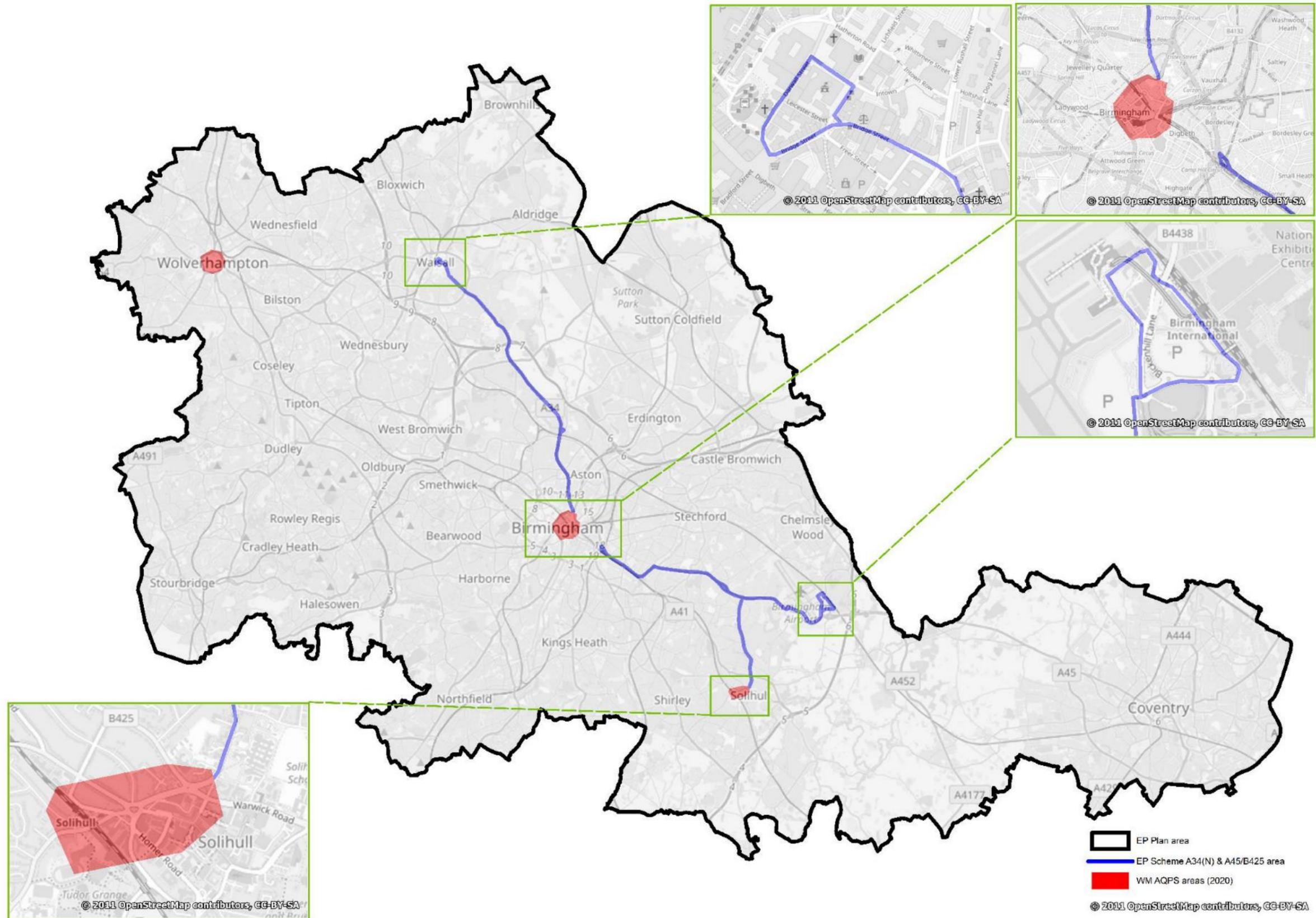
2. Scope of the EP Scheme

- 2.1 The EP Scheme will support the improvement of all local bus services operating in the following two corridor areas:
- 2.1.1 Walsall to Birmingham City Centre (A34(N))
 - 2.1.2 Birmingham City Centre to Birmingham Airport and Solihull Town Centre (A45 / B425)
- 2.2 The EP Scheme does not include the areas of the current Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS) for Birmingham City Centre and Solihull Town Centre, as there can be no overlap between different types of AQPS and EP Schemes. A map of the EP Plan and EP Scheme is shown in Figure 1.
- 2.3 The EP Scheme start date will be 70 days after it has been made, with subsequent milestone dates by which certain facilities and measures (Section 3) and bus service operator obligations will be introduced (Section 4). The EP Scheme will have no specific end date but will be subject to a review by TfWM at least annually (Section 5).
- 2.4 Registered Local Bus Services with one or more stopping places within the EP Scheme area are classed as 'qualifying local services', except those with locally-agreed exemptions, as set out below:
- 2.4.1 Services run under sections 89 to 91 of the Transport Act 1985 where the authority retains all the revenue.
 - 2.4.2 Registered local services that are excursions or tours.
 - 2.4.3 Services operated under section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 (community bus services).
 - 2.4.4 Services that have 10% or less of their overall distance registered as local bus services.
 - 2.4.5 Services operated by vehicles that by law do not permit standing.
 - 2.4.6 Services operating under contract to local transport authorities outside of the area of the West Midlands Combined Authority².
- 2.5 Bus services where all journeys operate under contract to WMCA through TfWM, will not need to comply with the vehicle requirements set out in this document for the duration of the current contract period, with the exception of the Euro VI equivalent standards engine standard or better by 28th April 2021. Any services procured after the making of the EP Scheme must comply with the Scheme requirements.

² As defined in the West Midlands Combined Authority Constitution

- 2.6 A list of qualifying local bus services (as of 9th November 2020) is given in Schedule A.
- 2.7 Before the expiry of the Birmingham City Centre AQPS (9th July 2022) and Solihull Town Centre AQPS (20th November 2027), TfWM will review these schemes to determine whether the boundaries between the AQPS and EP Scheme areas should be amended. Such reviews will commence by July 2021. Any proposed amendments to the EP Scheme will be determined through the EP Scheme variation process outlined in section 5.

Figure 1 Map of the EP Plan and EP Scheme



3. Requirements of the Authorities

Facilities – Transport for West Midlands

- 3.1 TfWM will provide the Facilities detailed in Schedule B2 to B6. These include:
1. New bus lanes
 2. Bus Gates
 3. Pedestrian crossing upgrades
 4. Traffic signal upgrades
- 3.2 TfWM will provide new bus stop infrastructure at locations listed in Schedule C1 to C3, prior to the introduction of the standards for buses of 15m-18.75m length.
- 3.3 The bus stops to be improved, as detailed in Schedule C1 to C3, will incorporate:
1. Real time information displays
 2. Lighting
 3. CCTV for security
 4. Bench seating
- 3.4 TfWM will maintain bus stop infrastructure in accordance with the standards set out in Schedule D5.

Facilities – Local Highway Authorities

- 3.5 Each local highway authority will maintain all existing (Schedule B1) and new facilities (Schedules B2 to B6) in good order for the use of qualifying local bus services in accordance with its published Highway Maintenance policies and procedures.
- 3.6 Local highway authorities will endeavour to protect these bus stops, where required by partners, by appropriate Bus Stop Clearway Orders, or other suitable action to ensure passengers have un-restricted access to the qualifying local bus services. Any changes requiring the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be subject to the statutory consultation process.

Provision of Measures – Local Highway Authorities

- 3.7 The following measures will be provided by the local highway authorities in the EP Scheme Area:
1. Local Highway Authority Mechanisms and Procedures
 2. Bus lane enforcement
 3. Junction enforcement
 4. Managing highway works in the EP Scheme Area
 5. Management and co-ordination of specific highway works

Local Highway Authority Mechanisms and Procedures

3.8 The reporting mechanisms for each local highway authority are shown in Schedule D (D1 to D4). Should the telephone numbers, email addresses or other aspects of the reporting procedures provided in Schedule D1 to D4 change, local highway authorities will inform TfWM and bus operators operating in the EP Scheme area at least 1 week in advance of the change via email to the bus operators and to busalliance@tfwm.org.uk.

3.9 Each local highway authority will use its powers and resources to enforce Traffic Regulation Orders, to improve compliance and make journey times for bus reliable.

Bus lane enforcement

3.10 Local highway authorities will use the discretionary powers granted in the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enforce bus lanes with CCTV equipment. The local highway authorities are approved local authorities under The Bus Lane Contraventions (Approved Local Authorities) (England) Order 2005 for the purposes of section 144 of the Transport Act 2000 (Civil Penalties for Bus Lane Contraventions).

3.11 The Enforcement cameras and recording systems will be approved in accordance with the requirements of The Bus Lanes (Approved Devices) (England) Order 2005.

3.12 Local highway authorities will implement an evidence-based assessment process to help determine the initial need and continued operational business case of any enforcement system used under this EP scheme, which must be provided and operated with due consideration to the whole enforcement process and the requirements of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office.

- 3.13 Should a local highway authority deem it necessary to relocate an Enforcement camera then it will provide a response as to the reasons why to the EP Reference Group.
- 3.14 A list of potential sites for Enforcement cameras to be installed is provided in Schedule B3, Table 11.

Junction Enforcement

- 3.15 If additional powers are provided to local highway authorities or WMCA to deter vehicles from blocking junctions, these will be taken up and used in the EP Scheme area. Bus operators will be able to report problem areas for enforcement action through the same processes given by the local highway authorities in Schedule D, unless otherwise notified.

Managing Highway works in the EP scheme area

- 3.16 Each local highway authority will establish mechanisms by the EP Scheme commencement date to minimise disruption to qualifying local bus services from both planned and emergency highway works, in accordance with the New Roads and Street Works Act (1991) available under a noticing scheme.
- 3.17 Each local highway authority will commit to investigating implementation of Highway Lane Rental Schemes 12 months after the implementation of the relevant permitting scheme referenced in section 3.16.
- 3.18 Where bus operators report a highway issue affecting bus travel to a local highway authority for investigation, they must also report the matter to TfWM using the busalliance@tfwm.org.uk email address.

Management and co-ordination of specific highway works

- 3.19 Birmingham City Council (BCC) will work with TfWM, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and relevant local bus operators to maximise the benefits to bus users of the changes to the transport network in the Perry Barr area. This will include BCC holding meetings with those partners, at least monthly, through the Perry Barr Cross Partner (Transport) Mitigations Group, to minimise bus disruption during construction by seeking to coordinate programmed activities, maximise available road space for bus and minimise traffic demand along the whole corridor, but particularly through the Perry Barr area, before and during the changes to the transport network in the Perry Barr area.
- 3.20 When necessary for future major highway works impacting bus travel in the scheme area, the relevant lead local highway authority will work with the relevant partners, including local bus operators, to maximise the benefits to bus

users of the changes to the transport network and minimise bus disruption during construction. Any partner can make a request for partner mitigation groups to major highway works, as they deem necessary.

Provision of Measures – Transport for West Midlands

- 3.21 The following measures will be provided by TfWM in the EP Scheme Area:
1. Promoting and prioritising bus travel
 2. Monitoring of bus journey times
 3. Helping the delivery of transport during Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022
 4. Working closely with stakeholders
 5. Integration with other sustainable travel modes
 6. Slot Booking System

Promoting and prioritising bus travel in the EP Scheme Area

- 3.22 TfWM will actively promote bus travel in the EP Scheme area through the actions within its Communication Strategy and those of the Bus Alliance Communications and Marketing Steering Group.

Monitoring of bus journey times

- 3.23 TfWM will monitor bus journey times in the EP Scheme area by collecting and analysing Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data and reporting these on a quarterly basis. The following measures will be made and compared with a first quarter baseline (after the EP Scheme is made) for each service that operates more than two journeys per day between defined stop points (as detailed in section 3.25):
1. RJT or Real Journey Time (95th percentile journey time)
 2. TJT or Timetabled Journey Time
 3. CT or Contingency Time passengers must allow = $RJT - TJT$
 4. Performance against TJT of TJT with CT added = $\% (TJT / (TJT + CT))$
= $\% (TJT / RJT)$
- 3.24 Measurements will be made on stop pairs (defined by TfWM) during the morning and afternoon peak periods (07:00-10:00 and 15:30-18:30) within the EP Scheme Area linking:
1. A local centre with its nearest district centre
 2. A local centre with its nearest strategic centre
 3. A district centre with its nearest strategic centre
 4. Two strategic centres
- 3.25 This data will be published on TfWM's website and used to identify the need for further possible measures, facilities and influence on the management of roadworks in the EP Scheme area.
- 3.26 Through its monitoring of bus journey times, TfWM will influence the management and mitigation of roadworks by local highway authorities in order

to minimise disruption to bus services and inconvenience to bus passengers in the EP Scheme Area.

An EP scheme to help the delivery of transport during Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022

- 3.27 The EP Scheme will be used as a tool in the 'Games Strategic Transport Plan', compiled by TfWM to ensure people in the EP Scheme area can continue to travel around the region during the Commonwealth Games. Certain key improvements and works will be completed by the start of the Games, helping to minimise disruption. This will include the development of an interchange at Perry Barr, offering a gateway for the games.

Working closely with stakeholders

- 3.28 TfWM will work with key stakeholders at Birmingham Airport and Network Rail to promote the best possible interchange facilities and routing around Birmingham Airport and Birmingham International Station.

Integration with other sustainable travel modes

- 3.29 Improved access for people to and from bus stop infrastructure, and to board and alight buses will be considered. Pavement audits provide one means to identify improvements for the needs of pedestrians in areas of interchange, which can be investigated when identified by partners.
- 3.30 The current Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) identifies infrastructure within the Scheme area³. Bus and active travel modes need to be integrated to ensure high quality improvements are delivered that enhance sustainable travel. This will consider improvements to bus stop design to allow for safe bus passenger access, whilst considering the needs of other non-motorised users as referenced in the West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance⁴.

Slot booking system

- 3.31 TfWM may introduce a 'Slot Booking System' at a stop in the EP Scheme area in situations where TfWM or an operator highlight the inability of that stop to accommodate all scheduled departures. Stops in this position will be considered on a case by case basis. An operator wishing to request consideration of slot booking at a particular stop should do so by emailing busalliance@tfwm.org.uk.
- 3.32 TfWM will review the slot booking system, together with any stops to which such a system is applied, based on demand and quality, when requested or when the threshold of a full slot allocation is reached at a bus stop. This will be

³ https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/47547/feb19-759487472899466-lcwip-roadmap_v30.pdf

⁴ <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/2713/2019-07-15-wm-guidance-wcovers.pdf>

reviewed against a quality framework process agreed through the West Midlands Bus Alliance within a 28-day period.

- 3.33 Operators wishing to use a stop that is subject to slot booking must submit a request for slots to TfWM. Such requests should be emailed to busalliance@tfwm.org.uk at least 14 days prior to submitting the service registration or variation to TfWM (itself at least 70 days before the service takes effect).

4. Requirements in respect of qualifying local bus services

Vehicle standards

- 4.1 Vehicles used on qualifying local bus services will be required to meet specified standards, dependent on their type and age. These will apply differently according to the number of vehicles deployed on local bus services by each operator.
- 4.2 The implementation period for completing obligations for buses of 15m-18.75m length are detailed in Table 1:

Table 1 Obligations for buses of 15m-18.75m length

Phase	Obligations for buses of 15m-18.75m length	Milestone date
1	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple doors for boarding and alighting • Zero emission (at tailpipe), as deemed zero emission (at tailpipe) by TfWM. • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • Ability to pay for tickets by contactless payment • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. • A display showing onward connection details by bus (including Designated feeder services), train, Metro or air, where applicable, from open data sources. • CCTV installed. This will provide images inside the vehicle for the safety and security of passengers. A forward-facing camera will help identify issues with traffic and road conditions. • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • USB charging available, including at every wheelchair spaces and priority seats • Free Wi-Fi • A specific livery agreed with TfWM 	<p>On completion of enhanced infrastructure listed in Table 9 Table 11 Table 12 Table 18 Table 19 Table 20 Table 21</p>

4.3 The implementation period for completing obligations for **Double Deck** vehicles not operating on Designated feeder services are detailed in Table 2:

Table 2 Obligations for Double Deck vehicles not operating on designated feeder services

Phase	Obligations for Double Deck vehicles not operating on designated feeder services	Milestone date
1	<p>New vehicles registered on or after the EP scheme start date must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues. • Free Wi-Fi • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • USB charging available, including at every wheelchair space and priority seats • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements on both decks, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements on both decks. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers on both decks to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers on both decks to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. • A display showing onward connection details by bus, train, metro or air, where applicable, from open data sources. • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. 	Scheme start date
2	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. 	28/04/2021
3	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements on both decks, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements on both decks 	29/05/2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers on both decks to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers on both decks to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. • A display showing onward connection details by bus, train, metro or air, where applicable, from open data sources. • Free Wi-Fi 	
4	New Vehicles registered on or after 25/05/25 will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles must be non-diesel. 	25/05/2025
5	All vehicles will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles must be non-diesel. 	26/05/2030

- 4.4 The implementation period for completing obligations for standard **Single Deck** vehicles not operating on Designated feeder services of operators with less than 21 local service buses, are detailed in Table 3:

Table 3 Obligations for Single Deck vehicles not operating on designated feeder services of operators with less than 21 local service buses

Phase	Obligations for Single Deck vehicles not operating on designated feeder services of operators with less than 21 local service buses	Milestone date
1	<p>New vehicles registered on or after the EP scheme start date must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues. • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • USB charging available, including at every wheelchair space and priority seats • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. 	Scheme start date
2	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. 	28/04/2021
3	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. 	25/05/2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A display showing onward connection details by bus, train, metro or air, where applicable from open data sources	
4	New Vehicles registered on or after 25/05/26 must meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicles must be non-diesel.	25/05/2026
5	All vehicles will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicles must be non-diesel.	29/05/2033

- 4.5 The implementation period for completing obligations for standard **Single Deck** vehicles not operating on Designated feeder services of operators with more than 20 local service buses, are detailed in Table 4:

Table 4 Obligations for Single Deck vehicles not operating on designated feeder services of operators with more than 20 local service buses

Phase	Obligations for Single Deck vehicles not operating on designated feeder services of operators with more than 20 local service buses	Milestone date
1	<p>New vehicles registered on or after the EP scheme start date must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues. • Free Wi-Fi • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • USB charging available, including at every wheelchair space and priority seats • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. 	Scheme start date
2	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. 	28/04/2021
3	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. 	29/05/2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A display showing onward connection details by bus, train, metro or air, where applicable, from open data sources.	
4	New Vehicles registered on or after 25/05/25 will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicles must be non-diesel.	25/05/2025
6	All vehicles will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicles must be non-diesel.	26/05/2030

4.6 If requested by an operator and in agreement with TfWM or designated by TfWM, a service that is specifically designed to connect with services at interchange points outlined in Schedule C3 Table 24, may be defined as a Designated feeder Service. Vehicles on such services will carry additional branding and have a co-ordinated timetable to facilitate connections.

4.7 The implementation period for completing obligations for vehicles used on Designated feeder services are detailed in Table 5:

Table 5 Obligations for vehicles of operators on Designated feeder services

Phase	Obligations for vehicles of operators on Designated feeder services	Milestone date
1	<p>New vehicles registered on or after the EP scheme start date must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues. • Free Wi-Fi • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • USB charging available, including at every wheelchair spaces and priority seats • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. • A display showing onward connection details for bus services operating in the Scheme area. • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. • A specific livery agreed with TfWM 	Scheme start date
2	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better • CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic and road maintenance issues • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into TfWM's real time information system • Heating and cooling for customer comfort • Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing. 	28/04/2021
3	<p>All vehicles will have:</p>	29/05/2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio visual announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats. ○ Next stop visual announcements. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle. ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle. • A display showing onward connection details by bus, train, metro or air, where applicable, from open data sources. • A specific livery agreed with TfWM 	
4	<p>New Vehicles registered on or after 25/05/25 will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles must be non-diesel. 	25/05/2025
5	<p>All vehicles will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles must be non-diesel. 	26/05/2030

Timetable changes

- 4.8 Qualifying local bus services within the EP Scheme Area may only be changed on the dates agreed with TfWM and in line with the Network Stability Protocol. In exceptional circumstances, and in agreement with TfWM, services may be changed on other dates.
- 4.9 Copies of registration applications and variations must be submitted to TfWM with at least 70 days' notice before the service takes effect.

Ticketing schemes.

- 4.10 The following ticket types must be offered and accepted by relevant services in the EP Scheme Area, subject to their validity in the given ticket types area. Services offering no more than 2 journeys in each direction per day (as highlighted in the Tables of qualifying services in Schedule A), will not be required to participate in the multi-operator ticketing scheme. The overall schemes for these tickets will be managed by TfWM. The following ticket types must be offered:
1. nBus (full suite)
 2. nNetwork (full suite)
- 4.11 Ticket vending machines may be provided by TfWM at some selected bus stops. These will be capable of selling operators' own tickets, as well as network tickets. Operators wishing to use this facility will need to agree an arrangement and fee with TfWM.
- 4.12 Subject to TfWM progressing multi-operator capping schemes, the following ticket types must be offered and accepted by all services in the EP scheme (excluding those services offering no more than 2 journeys in each direction per day):
1. Multi-operator capping on TfWM's Swift smartcard
 2. Multi-operator capping contactless
- 4.13 Advertisements carried on ticket rears on qualifying services (including campaigns on behalf of TfWM) should not conflict with the required standards outlined below, which supplement the requirements of the Advertising Codes. The regulation of advertising in the UK is the responsibility of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ASA applies the Advertising Codes which are written by the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP). Advertising will not be acceptable if:
1. It is likely to cause widespread or serious offence to reasonable members of the public on account of the product or service being advertised, the content or design of the advertisement, or by way of implication;

2. It relates to lap-dancing, 'gentlemen's clubs', escort agencies, massage parlours, or unproven health and weight loss products;
3. It promotes (directly or indirectly) food or non-alcoholic drink which is high in fat, salt and/or sugar ('HFSS' products), according to the Nutrient Profiling Model managed by Public Health England. It is for the advertiser to demonstrate (in case of any doubt) that any product is not HFSS, and/or that an advertisement is not promoting HFSS products, and/or that there are exceptional grounds.
4. It is unacceptable for some other substantial reason (which TfWM will identify and explain as reasonably required).

Providing information to the public

- 4.14 Operators providing multi-operator tickets will display a range of nBus and nNetwork day ticket prices at the point of entry to buses on qualifying local bus services using information posters provided by TfWM.
- 4.15 nBus and nNetwork information will be provided and maintained by TfWM on displays at bus stops.
- 4.16 Operators will display details of relevant planned route changes and timetable changes on vehicles at least 2 weeks prior and 1 week following the change.
- 4.17 Operators will publish the bus journey times data collected and processed by TfWM (referred to in section 3.23 – 3.26) on their website and on buses in the scheme area, as a minimum for the public.

The West Midlands Bus Alliance Customer Charter

- 4.18 Operators of qualifying local bus services will display the principles of the West Midlands Bus Alliance Customer Charter on all their buses in the EP Scheme Area. This must include a means of contacting the local bus service operator with comments or complaints and an escalation option if the passenger is not satisfied with the response they receive. This escalation option should be a registered Alternative Dispute Resolution body. Copies of the Customer Charter can be provided by TfWM if requested to busalliance@tfwm.org.uk.

5. EP Scheme Management .

Governance

5.1 The EP Scheme has been developed by an EP Scheme Reference Group of partners and directly impacted and interested stakeholders, comprising:

Partners

- 5.1.1 Transport for West Midlands (part of the West Midlands Combined Authority)
- 5.1.2 Birmingham City Council
- 5.1.3 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- 5.1.4 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- 5.1.5 Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- 5.1.6 Bus operators providing qualifying local bus services

Stakeholders

- 5.1.7 Birmingham Airport
- 5.1.8 Bus Users UK
- 5.1.9 Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
- 5.1.10 Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership
- 5.1.11 Transport Focus

5.2 The Group will be responsible for considering future variations, in accordance with the processes detailed in sections 5.3 to 5.5.

Variations to the EP Scheme

5.3 Consideration will be given to potential EP Scheme variations highlighted either by one of the organisations represented on the EP Reference Group or an operator of qualifying local bus services. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to busalliance@tfwm.org.uk.

5.4 On receipt of a valid request for a variation, TfWM will reconvene the EP Scheme Reference Group, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. If the proposed variation is agreed by all bus operator and local highway authority and TfWM representatives present, TfWM will make the EP Scheme variation, subject to the approval of the relevant local highway authorities and TfWM. Partners not represented at the meeting will be deemed to be abstaining from the decision.

5.5 If there is not full agreement of all partners present, then the proposed variation will be put to the operator objection mechanism, but with a reduced objection

period of 14 days replacing Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 section 138L (2) (c). The proposed variation will be advertised on the TfWM website and emailed to operators of qualifying local services in the EP Scheme area. If the proposed variation passes the operator objection mechanism, TfWM will make the EP Scheme variation, subject to the approval of the relevant local highway authorities and TfWM.

Review of the EP Scheme

- 5.6 Once the EP Scheme is made, it will be reviewed by the EP Scheme Reference Group at least annually, commencing no later than on the anniversary of the scheme commencement date. TfWM will initiate each review and it will take no longer than 6 months to complete.
- 5.7 As part of the review process, at least every 2nd year consideration will be given to the appropriateness of the milestone dates for the implementation of non-diesel vehicles, which will take into account changes in national and regional guidance and policy.
- 5.8 Depending on the outcome of the Outline Business Case⁵ assessment to consider the best future delivery model for bus services in the West Midlands from the Bus Services Act 2017, due to be completed in 2021, it may be necessary to review the EP Scheme.
- 5.9 Should Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) required for the facilities listed in Schedule B2, Table 9, not be made, TfWM will recognise the need to vary the EP Scheme for section 4.2 (Table 1) through the variation process set out in sections 5.3 to 5.5. Any such necessary changes will be considered as part of the first annual review.
- 5.10 Any changes to the future target dates within Table 13, Table 15, Table 17, Table 22 and Table 23 will be agreed, as required, between TfWM and the relevant local highway authority responsible for maintaining the infrastructure, and automatically varied in the EP Scheme, without the need to follow the variation process set out in sections 5.3 to 5.5.
- 5.11 The audio visual announcement requirements, set out in Table 1 to Table 5 inclusive, will be automatically amended, as necessary, to align with national legislation, when adopted, without the need for a variation to the EP Scheme. This will not change the milestone dates in the EP Scheme or the requirements specified for every wheelchair space.

⁵ As approved by the WMCA Board at its meeting on the 28 June 2019:
<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=221&Ver=4>

- 5.12 Any changes to the contact information contained in Schedule D, will be automatically updated, without the need to follow the variation process set out in sections 5.3 to 5.5. This only applies to amendments to existing contact information or additional information with regard to the mechanism for reporting issues. Any proposal to remove a mechanism for reporting issues will be subject to the variation process set out in sections 5.3 to 5.5.

Revocation of the EP Scheme

- 5.13 An EP Scheme can only exist if an EP Plan is in place. If, for any reason, the EP Plan is revoked, it would automatically mean that the EP Scheme would cease. Equally, if all EP Schemes ceased, the EP Plan would be revoked.
- 5.14 If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the EP Scheme to be revoked, the EP Scheme Reference Group will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined in sections 5.3 to 5.5 (noting that the agreement will be for revocation and not variation).
- 5.15 If at any point in the future the EP Scheme area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Scheme document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the franchising scheme.

Schedule A: List of qualifying local services as of 09/11/2020**Schedule A1: A45 / B425 Corridor****Table 6 Qualifying services on the A45 / B425 corridor as of 04/12/2020**

Service	Description	Operator
58	Kingshurst – Solihull	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
60	Birmingham – Cranes Park	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
71W	Buckland End – Jaguar Land Rover	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
72	Chelmsley Wood – Solihull	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
72A	Chelmsley Wood – Solihull	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
73	Heartlands Hospital – Solihull	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
75	Birmingham International – Birmingham Business Park	Diamond Bus Ltd.
75A	Birmingham International Stn – Bishop Walsh School	Claribels Coaches Ltd.
89	Coventry – Solihull	Diamond Bus Ltd.
844*	King Edward VI School – Sheldon*	The Green Bus Company Ltd.
871*	King Edward VI School – Sheldon*	The Green Bus Company Ltd.
876*	Blossomfield – South Yardley*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
877*	Bordesley – St Peters School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
883*	Hockley – King Edwards VI Five Ways	The Green Bus Company Ltd.
891*	Bordesley – Cosehill School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
897*	Sheldon – Lode Heath School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
898*	Sheldon – St Peters RC School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
A1	Solihull – Damsonwood circular Tendered until 24/04/2021	Diamond Bus Ltd.
A2	Solihull circular Tendered until 24/04/2021	Diamond Bus Ltd.
A10	Cranes Park – Solihull	Silverline Landflight Ltd.
S16	Yardley – Solihull Tendered until 05/06/2021	Claribel Coaches Ltd.
X1	Birmingham – Airport – Coventry	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
X2	Birmingham – Solihull	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
X12	Birmingham – Solihull	West Midlands Travel Ltd.

* - These services are exempt from the multi-operator ticketing scheme requirements.

Schedule A2: A34 (N) Corridor**Table 7 Qualifying services on the A34 (N) corridor as of 04/12/2020**

Service	Description	Operator
7	Birmingham – Perry Common	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
28	Heartlands – Great Barr	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
33	Birmingham – Pheasey	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
46	West Bromwich – Great Barr	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
51	Birmingham – Walsall	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
52	Birmingham – Perry Beeches	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
54	Perry Barr – Hamstead	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
54A	Perry Barr – Hamstead	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
61	Perry Barr – Handsworth Tendered until 02/01/2021	Diamond Bus Ltd.
68A	Perry Barr and Aston circular Tendered until 23/01/2021	Diamond Bus Ltd.
68C	Perry Barr and Aston circular Tendered until 23/01/2021	Diamond Bus Ltd.
74	Walsall – Gillity Village Tendered until 28/10/2023	Diamond Bus Ltd.
77	Sutton Coldfield – Walsall	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
424	Birmingham – Queslett Tendered until 23/01/2021	Claribel Coaches Ltd.
700*	Darlaston Comp School - Ryecroft	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
705*	Gillity Village – Barr Beacon School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
788*	Walsall – Barr Beacon School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
842*	Hill Hook – King Edward VI Aston *	The Green Bus Company Ltd.
848*	Great Barr – King Edward VI Aston*	The Green Bus Company Ltd.
851*	Edgbaston – Queen Mary’s School*	The Green Bus Company Ltd.
881*	Palfrey – Barr Beacon School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
888*	Birmingham – Perry Beeches School*	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
907	Birmingham – Sutton Coldfield	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
907A	Birmingham – Sutton Coldfield	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
934	Birmingham – Walsall	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
935	Birmingham – Walsall	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
936	Birmingham – Brownhills West	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
937	Birmingham – Brownhills	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
937A	Birmingham – Brownhills West	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
997	Birmingham – Walsall	West Midlands Travel Ltd.
X51	Birmingham – Cannock	West Midlands Travel Ltd.

* - These services are exempt from the multi-operator ticketing scheme requirements.

Schedule B: Facilities provided and maintained by local highway authorities

B1 Current bus lanes

The current bus lanes detailed in Table 8 will be maintained by the relevant local highway's authority as part of the EP Scheme. Maps of the proposed bus lanes on the two corridors are shown in Schedule E:

Table 8 Current bus lanes to be maintained

Intervention number	Bus lane description	Hours of operation	Category of vehicle permitted	Responsibility for Maintaining
1.	Bus lane from the junction of Birchfield Rd/Heathfield Rd to Perry Barr Island (northbound)	7 am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
2.	Bus lane from Aston Six Ways to junction of New Town Row/New Town Middleway junction (southbound)	7 am to 10 am and 4pm to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
3.	Bus lane from after Dovehouse Lane to before Rowood Drive (southbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles.	Solihull MBC
4.	Bus lane from the junction of Lode Lane/Lighthorne Rd to the junction of Lode Lane/Hermitage Rd (southbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Solihull MBC
5.	Bus lane from o/s 42 Lode Lane to EP scheme boundary north of Solihull (southbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Solihull MBC

6.	Bus lane from Walsall Rd bridge over River Tame to Cliveden Avenue bus stop (northbound)	7 am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
7.	Bus lane from after Livingstone Road bus stop to the junction of Walsall Rd/Trinity Rd (southbound)	7 am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
8.	Bus lane on the A34 flyover of Junction 7 of the M6 (southbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Sandwell MBC
9.	Bus lane from before Marathon Point to the junction of Walsall Rd/Church Road (southbound)	7am to 10am	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
10.	Bus lane from New Town Row canal bridge to before Aston Six Ways (northbound)	7 am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
11.	Bus lane from after Aston Six Ways to junction of Birchfield Rd/Wilson Rd (northbound)	7 am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council

B2 New bus lanes

The new bus lanes detailed in Table 9 will be implemented by TfWM by 30th June 2022, and then maintained by the local highway authority as part of the EP Scheme.

Table 9 New bus lanes to be provided by 30/06/2022

Intervention number	Bus lane description	Hours of operation	Category of vehicle permitted	Responsibility for maintaining
12.	Bus lane from Clay Ln/Coventry Rd to the junction of Coventry Rd/Charles Edward Rd (westbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
13.	Bus lane from junction of Coventry Rd/Forest Rd to the junction of Coventry Rd/Redhill Rd (westbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
14.	Bus lane from junction of Small Heath Highway/Energy Rd to the proposed Poets Corner bus stop (westbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
15.	Bus lane on Small Heath Highway from approx. 40959, 285240 OSGR co-ordinates to approx. 408851, 285709 OSGR co-ordinates (westbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
16.	Bus lane from junction of Lawden Rd/Small Heath Highway to Small Heath Highway before Bordesley Circus (westbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
17.	Bus lane from approx. 408873, 285722 OSGR co-ordinates to Small Heath Highway before Poets Corner (eastbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
18.	Bus lane from after Poets Corner to proposed Poets Corner bus stop (eastbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
19.	Offside bus lane from approx.. 410210, 284767 OSGR co-ordinates to after Heybarnes Circus (eastbound)	24hrs	Bus services	Birmingham City Council
20.	Bus lane from junction of Coventry Rd/Deakins Rd to junction of Coventry Rd/Howard Rd (eastbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
21.	Bus lane from junc. of Birmingham Rd/Skip Lane to	7 am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney	Walsall MBC

	Walsall boundary(southbound)		carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	
22.	Bus lane from Walsall Boundary to junction of Birmingham Rd/Chapel Ln (southbound)	7 am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles.	Sandwell MBC
23.	Bus lane from Scott Rd stop to the junction of Walsall Rd/Sundial Ln (southbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Sandwell MBC
24.	Bus lane from after Booths Farm Rd to the Beeches Rd bus stop (southbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
25.	Bus lane from Marathon Point to opposite Cliveden Avenue (southbound)	7am to 10am	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
26.	Bus lane from junction of Birchfield Rd/Trinity Rd to Arden Road (southbound)	7am to 10am	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
27.	Offside Bus lane from after Mansfield Road to before Aston Six Ways	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
28.	Northbound underpass between James Watt Queensway and New Town Row under Lancaster Circus	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
29.	Bus lane from Tennis Court bus stop to o/s 392 Walsall Rd (northbound)	4pm to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
30.	Bus lane from o/s 514 Walsall Rd to o/s 616 Walsall Rd (northbound)	4pm to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
31.	Bus lane from after the junction of Walsall Rd/Booths Farm Rd to before Old Walsall road (northbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
32.	Bus lane from after the junction Old Walsall road to Scott Arms junction (northbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles.	Sandwell MBC
33.	Bus lane from the junction of New Town Row/Manchester Street to New Town Row canal bridge (southbound)	24hr	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
34.	Bus lane from Chapel Lane bus stop to Peak House Road	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles.	Sandwell MBC
35.	Bus Peak House Road to Walsall Boundary	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles.	Sandwell MBC

36.	Bus lane from Walsall Boundary to o/s The Bell Inn PH (northbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Walsall MBC
37.	Contraflow bus lane on Ablewell Street towards, Walsall	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles. Motorcycles	Walsall MBC
38.	Bus lane on Lancaster Street from Bagot St to Lancaster Circus Queensway	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles. Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
39.	Bus lane on James Watt Queensway from Lancaster Circus Queensway to Coleshill Street	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles. Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council

TfWM will look to implement the new bus lanes detailed in Table 10 by a future target date, which will then be maintained by the local highway authorities under the terms of the EP Scheme.

Table 10 New bus lanes to be provided by a future target date of 31/12/2024

Intervention number	Bus lane description	Hours of operation	Category of vehicle permitted	Responsibility for Maintaining
40.	Bus lane from junction Coventry Rd/Horse Shoes Ln to the junction of Coventry Rd/Sheaf Ln (eastbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
41.	Bus lane from junction of Coventry Rd/Arden Oak Rd to the junction of Coventry Rd/Terminal Rd (eastbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council and Solihull MBC
42.	Bus lane from junction of Hobs Moat Rd/Jillcot Rd to the junction of Coventry Rd/Hobs Moat Rd (northbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council and Solihull MBC
43.	Bus lane on Darwall Street, Walsall	24hrs	Local bus services	Walsall MBC
44.	Bus lane from junction of Birmingham Rd/Queens Rd to the junction of Birmingham Rd/Broadway (northbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles. Motorcycles	Walsall MBC
45.	Offside bus lane from junction of Springhill Rd/Hill St to the junction of Ablewell St/Town Hill	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles. Motorcycles	Walsall MBC
46.	Bus lane from Jaguar-Landrover works Lode Lane North Gate to Jaguar-Landrover main gate (southbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Solihull MBC
47.	Offside bus lane from junction of Birmingham Rd/Chapel Lan to the southern end of M6 Motorway J7 flyover (southbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Sandwell MBC
48.	Bus lane from junction of Coventry Rd/Damson Parkway to junction of Coventry Rd/Glencroft Rd (westbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
49.	Bus lane from before the junction of Coventry Rd/Lyndon Rd to the junction of Coventry Rd/Clay Lane	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council
50.	After Dyas Avenue (658 Walsall Rd) to Opp Booths Farm Rd (northbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council

51.	Bus lane from after Walsall Rd/Stanford Avenue to Booths Farm Rd (southbound)	7am to 7pm	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
52.	Bus lane from Canal Bridge Marathon Point (southbound)	7am to 10am	Bus services, bicycles, hackney carriage vehicles, Motorcycles	Birmingham City Council
53.	Bus lane from junction of Coventry Rd/Glencroft Rd to the junction of Coventry Rd/Hobs Moat Rd (westbound)	24hrs	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Birmingham City Council

B3 Bus lane enforcement

Bus lane Enforcement cameras will be provided in at least 10 locations across the EP Scheme Area and will be implemented or retained as agreed by TfWM with the relevant local highway authority from 30/06/2022, subject to approved business cases where applicable. These will be maintained and operated by the local highway authorities as part of the EP Scheme. These, minimum 10 locations will be provided at locations listed in Table 11:

Table 11 Bus lane enforcement locations

Intervention number	Description	Responsibility for Maintaining
54. – 63.	Install bus lane enforcement from Ada Road to Redhill Rd (westbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Holder Rd to Howard Rd (eastbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Lawden Rd to Bordesley Circus (westbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Poets Corner to Camp Hill Line Rail Bridge (westbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Small Heath Bridge to Poets Corner (eastbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Ackers to Poets Corner (westbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement in the central reserve before Heybarnes Circus	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement before Old Walsall Rd (northbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement before Dyas Avenue (southbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement before Cliveden Avenue (southbound). In operation at peak hours only.	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement before Trinity Rd (southbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Mansfield Rd to Aston Six Ways (southbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement before Aston Six Ways (northbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Milton Street to Newton Road (northbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Moorsom Street to Newtown Middleway (southbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Price Street to Princip St (northbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement at the Lancaster Circus Underpass (southbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Birmingham/Solihull boundary to Wells Rd (westbound)	Birmingham City Council
	Install bus lane enforcement from Damson Parkway to Birmingham/Solihull boundary (westbound)	Solihull MBC
	Birmingham/Solihull boundary to Damson Parkway (eastbound)	Solihull MBC
To retain bus lane enforcement from JLR South Entrance to Henley Crescent (southbound)	Solihull MBC	

Install bus lane enforcement on the approach to the junction of Walstead Road (northbound)	Walsall MBC
Install bus lane enforcement on the approach to the junction of Broadway (northbound)	Walsall MBC
Install bus lane on the approach to the junction of Botts Lane (northbound)	Walsall MBC
Install bus lane enforcement for the Ablewell Street/Town Hill bus gate (northbound)	Walsall MBC

B4 Bus Gates

The bus gates detailed in Table 12 will be implemented by TfWM by 30th June 2022 and then maintained by the relevant local highway authority as part of the EP Scheme.

Table 12 Bus gates to be implemented by 30/06/2022

Intervention Number	Description	Implementation	Responsibility for Maintaining	Hours of Operation
64.	Bus gate at Haybarns Circus (eastbound)	TfWM	Birmingham City Council	24hrs
65.	Bus gate at the southern end of M6 motorway J7 flyover (southbound)	TfWM	Sandwell MBC	24hrs
66.	Bus gate at junction of Birmingham Road/Chapel Lane (southbound)	TfWM	Sandwell MBC	24hrs
67.	Bus gate at the entry to northbound underpass at Lancaster Circus	TfWM	Birmingham City Council	24hrs

TfWM will look to implement the new bus gates detailed in Table 13 by a future date, which will then be maintained by the local highway authority as part of the EP Scheme.

Table 13 Bus gates to be implemented by a future target date of 31/12/2024

Intervention Number.	Description	Implementation	Responsibility for Maintaining	Hours of Operation
68.	Bus gate southbound at Lancaster Circus Underpass	TfWM	Birmingham City Council	24hrs

B5 Traffic Signal upgrades to include priority for local bus services

The traffic signal upgrades detailed in Table 14 will be implemented by TfWM by 30th June 2022 the dates given and the maintained by the relevant local highway authority as part of the EP Scheme.

Table 14 Traffic signal upgrades to be implemented by 30/06/2022

Intervention number	Description	Implementation	Responsibility for Maintaining
69.	Coventry Rd/Kings Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
70.	Coventry Rd/Berkeley Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
71.	Coventry Rd/Holder Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
72.	Lode Ln/Moat Ln	TfWM	Solihull MBC
73.	New Town Row/New John St West	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
74.	New Town Row/St. Stephens St	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
75.	High St/Newbury Rd/Park Ln	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
76.	Walsall Rd/Cliveden Ave	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
77.	Walsall Rd/Church Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
78.	Walsall Rd/Rocky Ln	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
79.	Walsall Rd/Beeches Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
80.	Walsall Rd/Old Walsall Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
81.	A34/Walstead Rd	TfWM	Walsall MBC

TfWM will look to implement traffic signal upgrades detailed in Table 15 by a future target date, which will then be maintained by the local highway authorities under the terms of the EP Scheme.

Table 15 Traffic signal upgrades to be implemented by a future target date of 31/12/2024

Intervention number	Description	Implementation	Responsibility for Maintaining
82.	Coventry Rd/Gilbertstone Ave	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
83.	Coventry Rd/Wagon Ln	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
84.	Coventry Rd/Lyndon Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
85.	Coventry Rd/Sheaf Ln/Hobs Moat Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
86.	Coventry Rd, Morrisons access	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
87.	Coventry Rd/Hatchford Brook	TfWM	Birmingham City Council

88.	Jaguar Landrover north access	TfWM	Solihull MBC
89.	Lode Ln/Dovehouse House	TfWM	Solihull MBC
90.	Birchfield Rd/Trinity Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council

B6 Pedestrian Crossing upgrades

The pedestrian crossing upgrades detailed in Table 16 will be implemented by TfWM by the dates given and maintained by the local highway authority as part of the EP Scheme:

Table 16 Pedestrian crossings to be upgraded by 30/06/2022

Intervention number	Description	Implementation	Responsibility for Maintaining
91.	E2916/7 – Walsall Rd nr Tuckers Fasteners Crossing	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
92.	E2911/3 – Walsall Rd nr Tennis Court Crossing	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
93.	C0711 – Sundial Lane Dual Crossings	TfWM	Sandwell MBC
94.	Beacon Rd Dual Crossings	TfWM	Walsall MBC
95.	Ablewell St / Town Hill dual crossings (bus gate)	TfWM	Walsall MBC

TfWM will look to implement pedestrian crossing upgrades detailed in Table 17 by a future date, which will then be maintained by the local highway authorities as part of the EP Scheme.

Table 17 Pedestrian crossings to be upgraded by a future target date of 31/12/2024

Intervention number	Description	Implementation	Responsibility for Maintaining
96.	E2124/5 Coventry Rd nr Clay Ln Crossing	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
97.	E2004/5 Coventry Rd nr Steyning Rd Crossing	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
98.	E2106/7 Coventry Rd Nr Brays Rd Crossing	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
99.	E2002 Coventry Rd nr Arden Oak	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
100.	New pedestrian crossing nr Old Lode Ln	TfWM	Solihull MBC
101.	B0966 – Nr Queen's Rd Crossing	TfWM	Walsall MBC
102.	Nr Metro Inns Crossing	TfWM	Walsall MBC
103.	New crossings nr Hill Street	TfWM	Walsall MBC
104.	E2000/1 Coventry Rd nr Wells Green Crossing	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
105.	E2113 Coventry Rd nr Wells Rd Crossing	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
106.	E2918/9 – Walsall Rd nr Perry Park Cres	TfWM	Birmingham City Council
107.	E2906 – Walsall Rd nr Booths Farm Rd	TfWM	Birmingham City Council

Schedule C: Bus stops, shelters and information

C1 Enhanced Bus Stops

The enhanced bus stops detailed in Table 18, Table 19, Table 20, Table 21 will be equipped to accommodate vehicles of 15m-18.75m length by TfWM, facilitating multi-door boarding and alighting, by 30th June 2022 and maintained by TfWM as part of the EP Scheme.

The enhanced bus stops detailed in Table 22 will be equipped to accommodate vehicles of 15m-18.75m length by TfWM, facilitating multi-door boarding and alighting by a future target date of 31/12/2024 and maintained by TfWM as part of the EP Scheme.

These bus stops will also include:

- Real time information displays
- Lighting
- CCTV for security
- Bench seating

Local highway authorities will be responsible for maintaining bus stop clearway orders associated with the enhanced bus stops.

Although all stops will allow multi-door boarding.

Enhanced bus stops will be available to all local bus services to use.

Table 18 Enhanced bus stops on the A34 towards Birmingham City Centre

Intervention number	Location
108.	Walsall Town Centre (location to be confirmed)
109.	Walsall Six Ways, Birmingham Road
110.	Jesson Road, Birmingham Road
111.	Travelodge, Birmingham Road
112.	Queens Road, Birmingham Road
113.	Bell Inn, Birmingham Road
114.	Chapel Lane, Birmingham Road
115.	Scott Road, Birmingham Road
116.	Scott Arms, Walsall Road
117.	Beeches Road, Walsall Road
118.	Rocky Lane, Walsall Road
119.	The Tennis Court, Walsall Road
120.	Cliveden Avenue
121.	Perry Barr One Stop Birchfield Rd
122.	Livingstone Road
123.	Trinity Road, Birchfield Road
124.	Six Ways Aston, Birchfield Road
125.	Swimming Baths, Newtown Row
126.	St Stephens Street, Newtown Row
127.	Lower Tower Street

Table 19 Enhanced bus stops on the A34 towards Walsall

Intervention number	Location
128.	Lower Tower Street, Newtown Row
129.	Milton Street, Newtown Row
130.	Six Ways Aston, Birchfield Road
131.	Heathfield Road, Birchfield Road
132.	Livingstone Road
133.	Perry Barr Interchange
134.	Cliveden Avenue
135.	The Tennis Court, Walsall Road
136.	Rocky Lane, Walsall Road
137.	Beeches Road, Walsall Road
138.	Scott Arms, Walsall Road
139.	Cross Lane, Birmingham Road
140.	Chapel Lane, Birmingham Road
141.	Bell Inn, Birmingham Road
142.	Queens Road, Birmingham Road
143.	Travelodge, Birmingham Road
144.	Jesson Road, Birmingham Road
145.	Walsall Six Ways, Springhill Road

Table 20 Enhanced bus stops on the A45 towards Birmingham City Centre

Intervention number	Location
146.	Keresley Close, Lode Lane OR Solihull Hospital (this stop lies OUTSIDE the EP Scheme area)
147.	Lode Heath School, Lode Lane
148.	Henley Crescent, Lode Lane
149.	Castle Lane, Lode Lane)
150.	Solihull Ice Rink, Lode Lane
151.	Old Lode Lane, Lode Lane
152.	The Wheatsheaf, Coventry Road
153.	Lyndon Road, Coventry Road
154.	Brays Road, Coventry Road
155.	Steyning Road, Coventry Road
156.	Swan Island, Coventry Road
157.	Kathleen Road, Coventry Road
158.	Kings Road, Coventry Road
159.	Small Heath Highway, Poets Corner

Table 21 Enhanced bus stops on the A45 towards Birmingham Airport/Solihull

Intervention number	Location
160.	Small Heath Highway, Poets Corner
161.	Kings Road, Coventry Road
162.	Kathleen Road, Coventry Road
163.	Swan Island, Coventry Road
164.	Sunnymead Road, Coventry Road
165.	Brays Road, Coventry Road
166.	Lyndon Road, Coventry Road
167.	Old Lode Lane, Lode Lane
168.	Ulleries Road, Lode Lane
169.	Lode Lane, (opp Olton Tavern)
170.	Dovehouse Lane, Lode Lane
171.	Henley Crescent, Lode Lane
172.	Rowood Drive, Lode Lane
173.	Solihull Hospital

Table 22 Enhanced bus stops to be delivered by a future target date of 31/12/2024

Intervention number	Location
<i>A34 towards Birmingham City Centre</i>	
174.	Walsall Town Hall
175.	Skip Lane
176.	Fentham Road
<i>A34 towards Walsall</i>	
177.	Swimming Baths
178.	Hatfield Rd
179.	Old Walsall Road
180.	Skip Lane
<i>A45 / B425 towards Birmingham city centre</i>	
181.	The Hermitage
182.	Keswick Road
<i>A45/ B425 towards Solihull</i>	
183.	The Hermitage
184.	Keswick Road

C2 Enhanced Bus Stands

TfWM will look to implement the new bus stands detailed in Table 23 by a future target date. These will be designated as bus stands capable of accommodating vehicles of 15-18.75m length, with buses able to stand for up to 10 minutes depending on the location.

Table 23 Enhanced bus stands to be implemented by a future target date of 31/12/2024

Intervention number	Stand location
185.	Swan Island, Coventry Road
186.	Sandwell/Walsall boundary
187.	Walsall Town Centre (position to be confirmed)
188.	Perry Barr One Stop, Birchfield Road

C3 Designated Feeder Bus Stands

TfWM will look to implement Designated feeder service Bus Stands listed in Table 24 at a future date. These stands will be specifically for 'feeder bus services' that are advertised to connect with other key bus services in the corridor, with buses able to stand for up to 10 minutes depending on the location. TfWM will define when these locations will be designated as feeder bus stands, as and when required. Standing buses will not be permitted to idle. These stops may be used by other qualifying local bus services.

Table 24 Designated feeder service Bus Stands

Intervention number	Stop location
189.	Birmingham International Stn, Station Way (NEC Grounds)
190.	Perry Barr One Stop, Birchfield Road
191.	Swan Island, Coventry Road
192.	Sandwell/Walsall boundary
193.	Walsall Town Centre (position to be confirmed)

Schedule D: Reporting Mechanisms to Local Highway Authorities and Transport for West Midlands

Schedule D1: Birmingham City Council reporting mechanisms

Highway Issues

All highway defects reported to Birmingham City Council will be dealt with in accordance with the City Council's current highway maintenance and management service contract requirements. Highway defects should be reported through:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20110/report_road_and_pavement_issues

This includes:

- a. Potholes (or other road and pavement problems);
- b. Faulty or broken street lights;
- c. Faulty traffic lights, signs or signals;
- d. Flooding or drainage issues; and
- e. Defects with or damage to other council street furniture.

Response times to defects will be prioritised according to their assessed urgency and the council's current service provisions.

Parking Issues

For specific parking issues, operators can report these by using the online form at: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20109/parking/1983/report_an_illegally_parked_vehicle

The parking team can be contacted at: Parking@birmingham.gov.uk

Roadwork notifications

Information on roadworks, including Urgent, Emergency and notified roadworks, can be requested from BHM.Streetworks@kier.co.uk

Any operators wanting to join the list should contact BHM.Streetworks@kier.co.uk

Schedule D2: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council reporting mechanisms

Highway Issues

In the first instance all highway related defects related to carriageways, footways, potholes, manhole covers, road markings, road signs, streetlights, traffic lights, bridges and structures and blocked drains should be reported through the 'Report a Problem' page on Sandwell Council's website:

<http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/reportit>

Alternatively, defects can be reported through Sandwell Council's call centre (currently 0121 368 1177). In the event of an emergency response being required, this is the route we would encourage.

Defects will be automatically allocated to the correct team. Highway Safety Inspections will typically be assigned and undertaken the following working day. Defects will be prioritised and rectified in line with Sandwell Council's Asset Management Plan

Parking Issues

For the reporting of specific parking issues, operators can notify the council through the MySandwell Web Portal or contact centre by calling (currently) 0121 368 1177.

Roadwork notifications

Sandwell use one.network to make roadwork information available to operators on a self-help basis through a link on the council's website:

<https://one.network/custom/sandwell/>.

Operators can also follow on twitter on @sandwellroads.

Upcoming traffic management information is emailed on a weekly basis, normally a Wednesday. If any bus operators wish to be added to the weekly email distribution, they should request this via TfWM using busalliance@tfwm.org.uk.

Schedule D3: Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council reporting mechanisms**Highway Issues**

Solihull has a dedicated web page for reporting highway related issues, including potholes, street lights and flooding: <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/About/report>

In using this website it is possible to create an account on which a response to an enquiry will be posted. There is a daytime Contact Centre telephone (currently) 0121 704 8001 and an out of hours telephone (currently) 0121 704 8000.

Response to any reported defect will be assessed depending on the severity and risk, any repairs required will be prioritised using a risk-based approach with a standard defect response within 28 days.

Parking Issues

For specific parking issues, bus operators can notify the council by calling (currently) 0121 704 611 or e-mail parkingservices@solihull.gov.uk

Highway work notifications

Details of all planned and approved works are published on the One Network system at: <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/solihullroadworks>

Schedule D4: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council reporting mechanisms

Highway Issues

Walsall Council specifies that all defects relating to roads and pavements, potholes, manhole covers, road markings, road signs and blocked drains be reported through its 'Report a street problem within Walsall' webpage: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/forms/Report-A-Street-Problem-Within-Walsall>

All Street lighting defects should be reported via:

www.walsallstreetlighting.amey.co.uk

All Traffic Signal Defects should be reported to Walsall and Wolverhampton shared urban traffic control service by:

Calling (currently) 01902 555795 or through:

utc.controlroom@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Defects will be rectified in line with Walsall Council's procedures (shown on page https://go.walsall.gov.uk/highway_maintenance), giving priority to those sites which are most urgent.

Parking Issues

For specific parking issues operators can notify the Civil Parking Enforcement Team by calling (currently) 01922 652433 or e-mail carparks@walsall.gov.uk.

Roadwork notifications

Roadworks Notices will be e-mailed to operators and other stakeholders on a mailing list managed by the Traffic Management Team. They are also available on Walsall Council's website: -

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/roadworks>

Any operators wanting to join the list should contact: -

trafficmanagement@walsall.gov.uk.

Schedule D5: Transport for West Midlands Bus stop infrastructure maintenance

We know that sometimes things can get damaged, dirty or show the wrong information and we want you to tell us as soon as you see anything wrong so we can Fix It. This should be done via the following link:

<https://www.networkwestmidlands.com/get-in-touch/report-a-problem/>

TfWM will maintain bus stop infrastructure in accordance with the following standards.

Response within 4 hours of being reported, where a defect is identified, which requires an immediate response to ensure infrastructure is safe for use, with **repairs carried out within 48 hours**:

- Bus shelter

Response within 4 hours of being reported, where a defect is identified, which requires an immediate response to ensure infrastructure is safe for use, with **repairs carried out within 5 working days** to ensure all elements are fully functional:

- Advertisement panel
- Lighting panel
- Digital screen
- Stop flag
- CCTV
- Real time information

Response within 4 hours of being reported, where a defect is identified, which requires an immediate response to ensure infrastructure is safe for use, with **repairs carried out within 10 working days**:

- Feeder pillar

Response and removal within 24 hours of being reported

- Bus shelter offensive graffiti

Response within 4 hours of being reported, where a defect is identified, which requires an immediate response to ensure infrastructure is safe for use:

- Ticket machine

Planned maintenance of bus stop infrastructure:

- Weekly shelter and floor cleaning within the shelter footprint, including litter removal
- Annual shelter roof clean
- Every 5 years full electrical tests and inspections

Schedule E: Maps of the EP Scheme area

Figure 2 Indicative map of enhanced bus stops to be provided on the A34 corridor



Figure 3 Indicative map of bus lanes to be provided on the A34 corridor

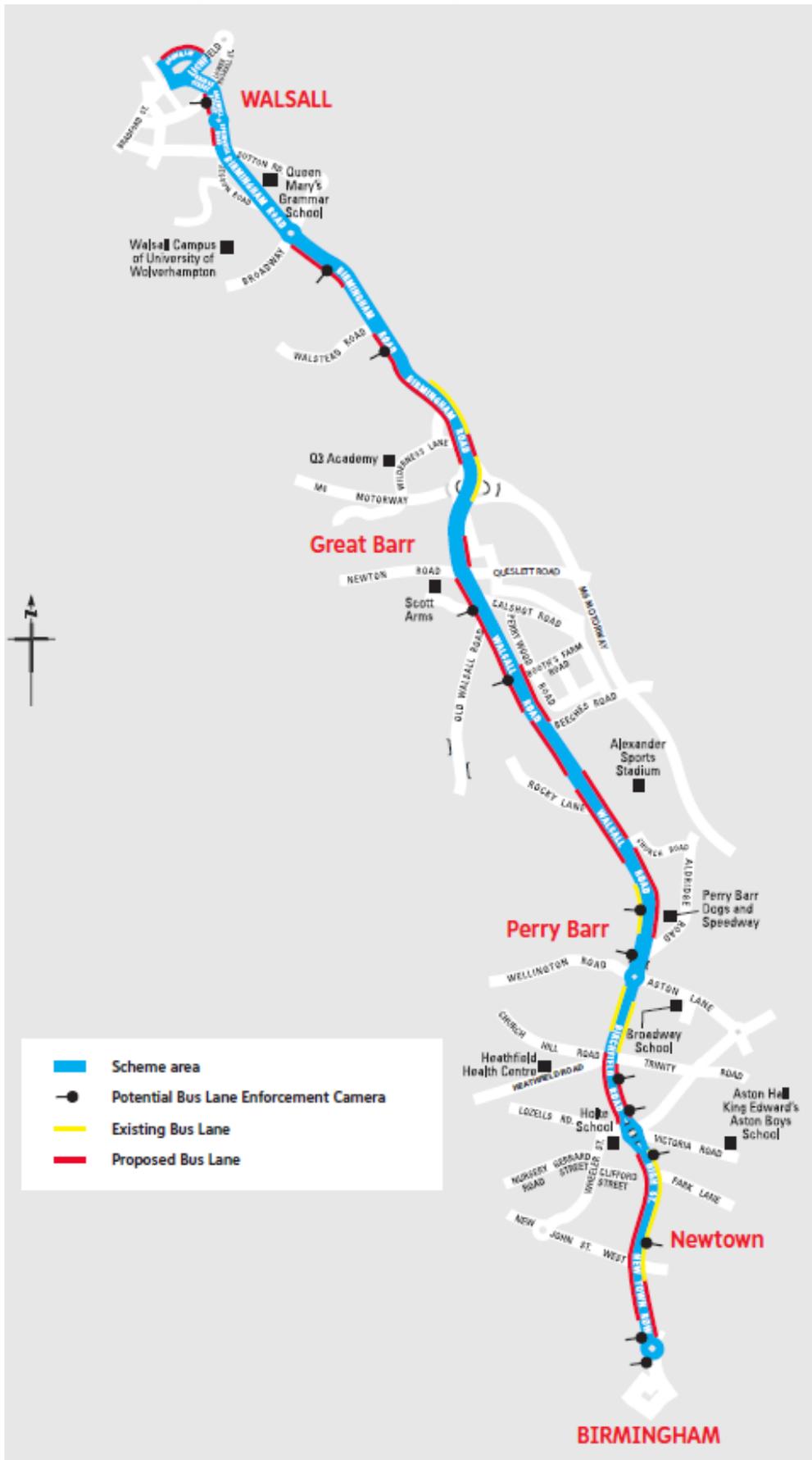


Figure 4 Indicative map of enhanced bus stops to be provided on the A45 and B425 Lode Lane corridor

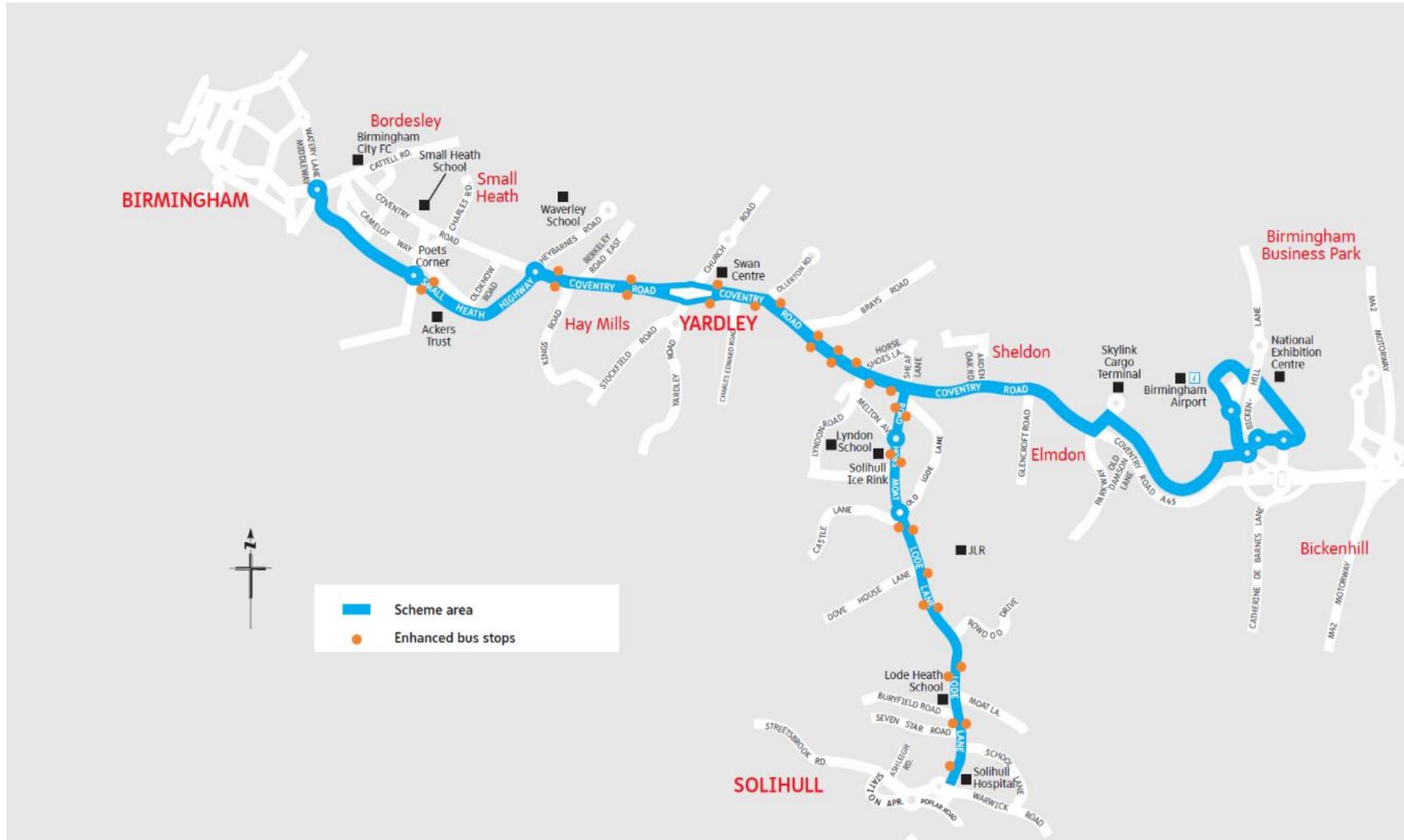
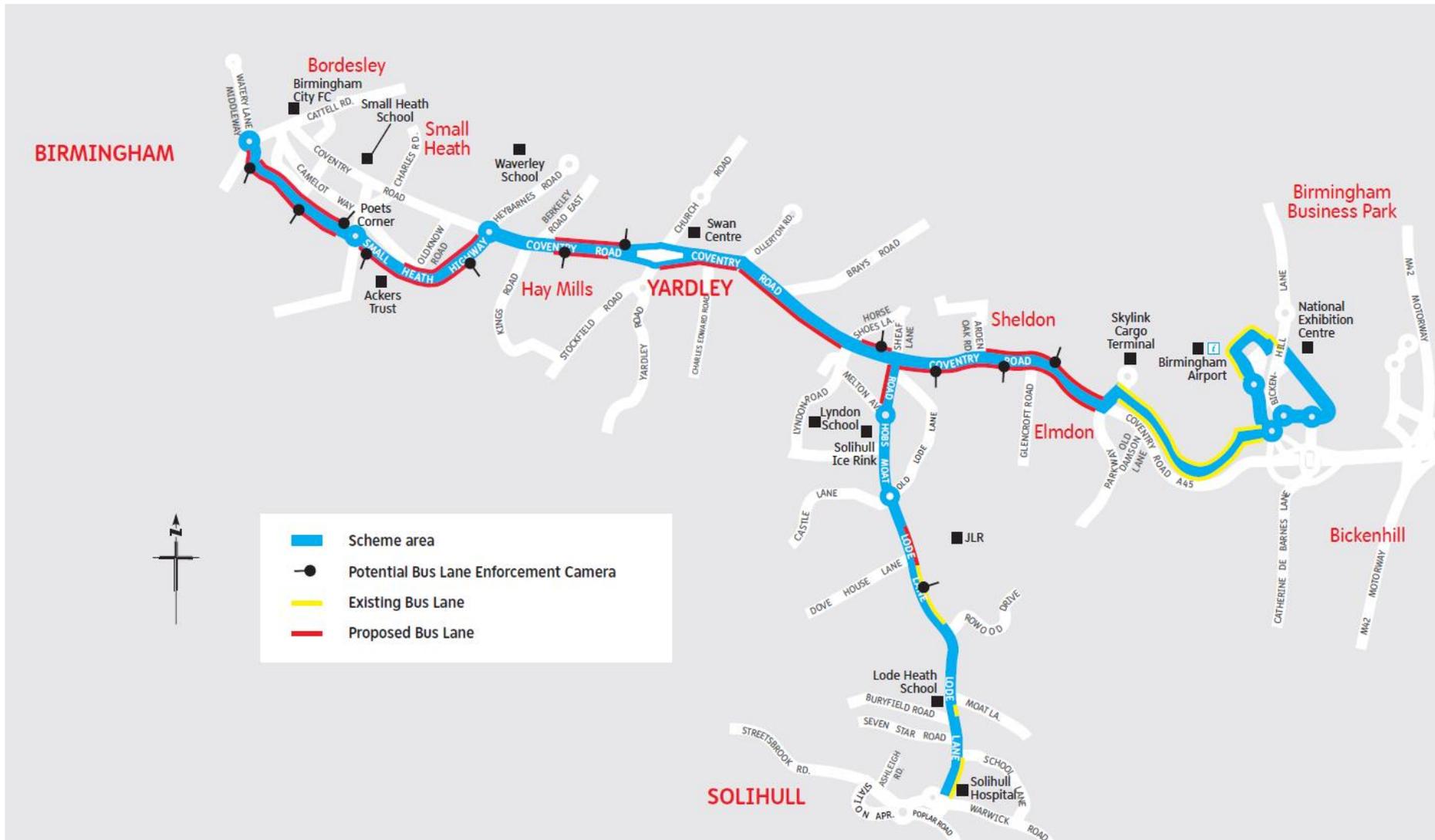


Figure 5 Indicative map of bus lanes to be provided on the A45 and B425 Lode Lane corridor



Signatory page

THIS DEED is dated _____

PARTY SEALS

(1) THE WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY (WMCA) of 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD affixed hereto in the presence of its duly Authorised Officer

(2) BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL of The Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB affixed hereto in the presence of its duly Authorised Officer

(3) SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL of Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DE affixed hereto in the presence of its duly Authorised Officer

(4) SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL of Council House, Manor Square, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3QB affixed hereto in the presence of its duly Authorised Officer

(5) WALSALL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL of Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP affixed hereto in the presence of its duly Authorised Officer

Public consultation

Proposals to transform bus services in the West Midlands





Transforming bus services in the West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is responsible for making transport “happen”. We are accountable for delivering improvements in transport across the region, to create a happier, healthier, better connected and more prosperous West Midlands.

The Bus Services Act 2017 offers us new powers and opportunities to bring together local authorities and bus operators in an Enhanced Partnership (EP) to develop a coordinated approach to improving bus travel in the West Midlands. This will help all partners involved in the EP to achieve the ambition to deliver a world-class integrated transport system which is clean, safe and affordable. More information about the act itself is available on the consultation webpage www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk

The Enhanced Partnership is formed by a Plan and a Scheme. The EP Plan sets out our overall vision to improve bus services. This is accompanied by the EP Scheme which sets out how we aim to achieve this vision along the A34 (north) Walsall – Birmingham City Centre, the A45 and Lode Lane Corridors, from Birmingham Airport / Solihull – Birmingham City Centre.

We would like to hear your views on the proposed Enhanced Partnership, Plan and Scheme.

This document summarises the proposals, or you can find a copy of the full Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme by visiting the consultation webpage www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk

We will be running a 10-week consultation from Monday 6 July 2020. All responses must be received by 11.59pm on Sunday 13 September 2020.

Further information about the consultation process and how to take part can be found in the ‘**Have your say**’ section of this document.

The EP Scheme follows some of the bus corridors that are included within the proposed Sprint programme, which will deliver a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Work on the first stages of the project is due to commence in the second half of 2020. For more information about proposed infrastructure improvements related to the delivery of Sprint, please go to www.tfwm.org.uk/development/sprint/

Why change?

The EP will see all partners invest in bus improvements to support the delivery of a world class integrated transport system that will allow seamless, convenient and more reliable journeys by public transport, and help to reduce journeys made by car.

Buses are key to the provision of public transport in the region, with around 4 out of 5 public transport journeys taken by bus. Between April 2018 and the end of March 2019, 267 million journeys were made using bus services across the region – the equivalent of 71.5 million vehicle miles. The West Midlands has the largest commercially operated bus network in Western Europe.

Given the importance of bus travel to the region's society and economy, better bus services are vital to achieving inclusive growth in the West Midlands.

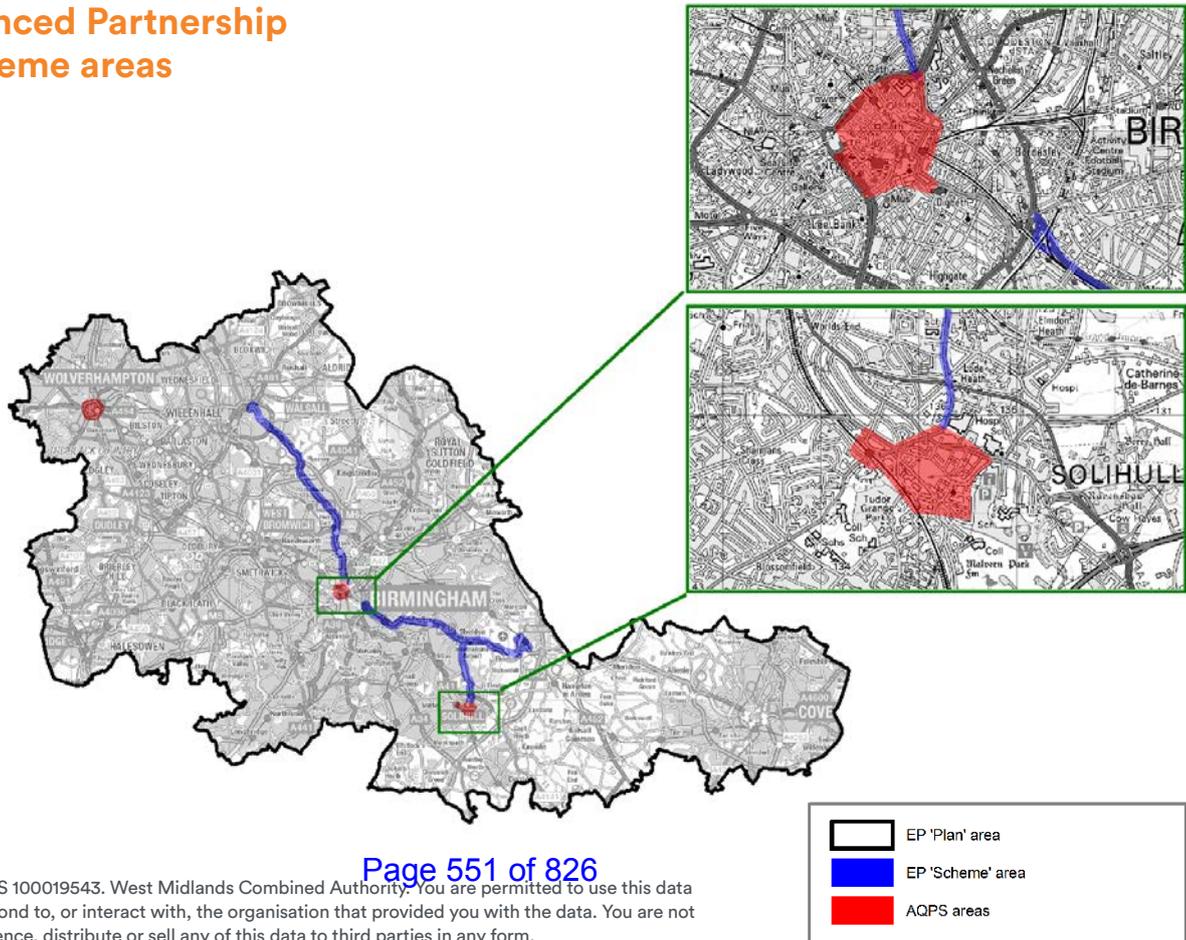
Unemployed residents and those on low incomes are much more reliant on bus services and as a result, improvements to bus travel are essential to tackling transport inequalities.

Our Enhanced Partnership (EP)

An EP is a formal agreement between local transport authorities and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services. It provides a legally binding commitment on all parties that will ensure delivery of our vision for better bus travel, setting the standard across the West Midlands.

Whilst significant progress in improving bus services is being achieved through the Bus Alliance and the existing Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes in place in central Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Solihull, these schemes do not cover the whole of the West Midlands. The EP Plan provides the strategic vision across the West Midlands, adopting the objectives from our Strategic Vision for Bus¹, with the EP Scheme ensuring the delivery of specific improvements to transform bus travel.

Map of Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme areas



How was the EP Plan and Scheme developed?

In June 2019, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) gave approval for TfWM to proceed with the development of the EP Plan (or vision for improvement) and Scheme (the actions to be taken to deliver the vision).

The EP Plan and Scheme have been developed with the agreement of participating partners (TfWM, the seven local authorities and local bus operators) as well as other key stakeholders, including passenger groups, industry and business.

Further information on the EP Plan and Scheme documents can be found by visiting the consultation webpage www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk

The EP Plan

The EP Plan sets out our overall vision to improve bus services in the region, building on the 9 objectives set out in TfWM's Strategic Vision for Bus:

1. UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.
2. Fully integrated bus network including local demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting rail, coach and Metro interchange as one network.
3. Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options including full capping providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.
4. Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long term change.
5. Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long held barriers and perceptions.
6. Accountable network performance management – tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
7. World-leading customer information, utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
8. All younger people under 25 supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
9. Evolve a network to support the 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.



The EP Scheme - A34 (north), A45 and Lode Lane Corridor improvements

The EP Scheme provides the framework to improve and deliver better bus travel in the scheme area. The first Scheme put forward will set minimum standards for the delivery of bus services along the A34 (north), A45 and Lode Lane Corridors, forming part of our integrated transport network. More schemes may be brought forward under the EP Plan in the coming years, if it is necessary to formally agree bus improvements for an area.

This EP Scheme involves the delivery of facilities and measures to provide better bus travel, alongside improved bus service standards. These corridors will run from:

- **A34 (north):** Walsall to Birmingham City Centre (passing the Commonwealth Games Athletes Village and Games venue The Alexander Stadium at Perry Barr).
- **A45 and Lode Lane:** Birmingham Airport and Solihull to Birmingham City Centre (passing the Games venues at the NEC).

We have developed this Scheme as a priority to help facilitate the transport element of the 2022 Commonwealth Games. This will see significant investment both in vehicle standards (by operators) and infrastructure (by authorities), as well as complementary supporting measures (by the authorities).

Delivered by TfWM and the local highway authorities, the EP Scheme includes many new bus lanes, 77 enhanced bus stops and improvements to traffic signal priority. The Scheme will set minimum standards for 52 existing bus services and the 320 buses that serve these routes, covering approximately 550 miles across the West Midlands. Any new routes introduced into the Scheme area will also need to meet these standards.

Due to begin in 2021, this Scheme aims to deliver the following improvements in collaboration with bus operators and authorities:

- Investment in bus priority facilities and bus stop upgrades, providing pleasant waiting environments and real-time information that will provide reassurance to passengers, on the next bus arrival.
- A safer and more enjoyable travel experience including minimum standards for buses to ensure a high quality. This will include CCTV, Wi-Fi, USB charging points, audio/visual next stop announcements, provision of induction hearing loops at every wheelchair space and priority seat, and integrated travel information onboard, enabling passengers to link journeys with other transport modes.
- Setting of minimum vehicle specifications for emission standards that will help improve air quality in the region and provide a roadmap towards a zero-emission fleet.
- Contactless payment options available for every operator. Continued availability of operators ticketing products, as well as network-wide multi-operator tickets, enabling passengers to easily interchange between services within the scheme area without payment of a separate fare.
- Provision of better integrated bus services which will help support the shift towards use of more sustainable forms of transport, reducing the need for private car trips.
- More joined-up maintenance of infrastructure and traffic enforcement at roads, bus stops and traffic signals.
- Better managed and a more joined-up response to highway disruption such as roadworks.
- Improved sharing of bus performance data.

Benefits of the EP Scheme

Investment in bus priority infrastructure and bus measures will provide a more enjoyable, more reliable and safer travel experience relative to current bus provision, with the improvement of bus journey times. The EP Scheme improvements will help to support a greater use of bus services – encouraging people to use bus in place of private transport. This proposed EP Scheme runs through some of the most deprived areas of the region, with 11 of the 14 areas served being in the 50% most deprived in the West Midlands. The EP will help to tackle transport inequalities in the region.

Reducing bus emissions is an important and vital part of the programme to improve people's health and quality of life by cleaning up the air in the West Midlands. Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, and West Midlands Bus Alliance have committed to create the cleanest bus fleet in the UK, outside of London.

In addition to setting standards for electric/zero emission buses, encouraging people to use bus services instead of private vehicles will also help improve air quality in the region by reducing congestion.

The EP Scheme will ensure clear accountability of partners to deliver, maintain and manage better bus services that is more binding than traditional partnerships, to ensure a better passenger experience.

Whilst improvements are made to the network we will work together with partners to manage disruption and keep this to a minimum.

The EP Plan and Scheme are available from the consultation webpage and provides more detailed information on the objectives and the expected benefits of the scheme. www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk



Next steps

Once the consultation closes on Sunday 13 September 2020, we will carefully consider all feedback received and prepare a consultation report. This report will summarise the key themes and note how your responses have been used to inform the final EP Plan and EP Scheme. The report will be published on the TfWM website.

The EP Partners, including operators, will consider how the proposed EP Plan and Scheme need to change to reflect suggestions made in this consultation. If changes are made to the EP Plan and/or Scheme, the EP will be subject to another operator period, for a minimum 28 days. Once agreed, the EP Plan and EP Scheme will go to the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee for approval. The EP Plan and EP Scheme will

then be made by the WMCA and the local authorities. The figure below provides our current timeline for the making of the Enhanced Partnership.



Have your say

Our public consultation will run between Monday 6 July to Sunday 13 September 2020. **All responses must be received by 11.59pm Sunday 13 September 2020.**

There are a number of ways for you to comment on our proposals during the consultation period:

- **Online:**
www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk
and completing the questionnaire
- **By email:**
EPConsultation@tfwm.org.uk
- **By post:** Request a printed copy of the questionnaire and Business Reply envelope by contacting TfWM

To support the environment, we encourage you to respond using the **online questionnaire if you can.**

Printed copies of this consultation booklet, questionnaire and business reply envelope are available by request from Transport for West Midlands.

For digital copies of all consultation materials and further details please visit the consultation webpage www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk

**To request a copy of these documents
in a different format please contact
Transport for West Midlands.**

Phone: 0345 303 6760

Email: EPConsultation@tfwm.org.uk



**This consultation will close on
Sunday 13 September 2020**

Appendix D – Enhanced Partnership Equality Impact Assessment (TfWM)

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a review of a new or existing policy which establishes whether the policy has a differential impact on specific equality groups and identifies how the policy can help promote inclusion and improve equality of opportunity for different groups of people. The term policy is interpreted broadly and refers to anything that describes what we do and how we expect to do it. It can range from policies and procedures, to strategies, projects, schemes and everyday customs and practices that contribute to the way our policies are implemented and how our services are delivered. An EqIA aims at improving the WMCA's work, by promoting equality and ensuring that the proposed or existing policy promotes equality can benefit a wide range of people and will not disbenefit

DIRECTORATE	TfWM
PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDUCTING AND OVERLOOKING ASSESSMENT	Edmund Salt
NAME OR TITLE	Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme
DATE OF COMPLETION	March 2020
DATE DUE FOR REVIEW	To be updated following consultation and once EP drafted
PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING REVIEW AND MONITORING	Edmund Salt

A. ABOUT THE POLICY

1. Describe the main aims, objectives, activities and outcomes of the policy. Who is expected to benefit?

The Enhanced Partnership Scheme will provide binding commitments on all participating parties (TfWM, LAs, operators etc.) to support delivery of improved bus measures, facilities and standards along the first two Sprint corridors and will facilitate the delivery of the EP Plan objectives that will be designed to make a marked improvement in bus services on certain corridors or in defined areas. It sets out obligations and requirements that will transform bus services on identified corridors. Initial outcomes will be the delivery of the necessary infrastructure and

bus service operating model for the first two Sprint corridors (on the A34 and the A45) in readiness for the Commonwealth Games.

The Enhanced Partnership Plan covers the entire area of the West Midlands Combined Authority, excluding the areas of the existing Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes for Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Solihull town/city centres. Initially the scheme will cover the following two Sprint corridors that have been prioritised:

- Birmingham Airport and Solihull to Birmingham City Centre (passing the Games venues at the NEC)
- Walsall to Birmingham City Centre (passing the Athletes Village at Perry Barr and Alexander Stadium)

The introduction of an Enhanced Partnership is a way of ensuring bus travel transformation can be accelerated.

Scheme obligations for local authorities/WMCA include:

- Providing and maintaining the necessary facilities and measures to facilitate the effective operation of Sprint on the corridors in this EP scheme and making them available until the end of the scheme
- Introducing additional bus priority facilities and undertaking enforcement of bus lanes
- Providing new highway bus stop infrastructure at articulated bus stops and articulated bus stands equipped with real time information displays

Scheme obligations for operators include:

- Registering and varying services with the Traffic Commissioner, providing an undertaking to comply with all requirements of the EP scheme
- Registering services that have fixed stopping points only in the Scheme area

Vehicles within the scheme area will need to meet the standard to be fully accessible and will need to be fitted with audio-visual equipment throughout with on-board displays and announcements of next stops, be emission friendly and offer a high quality passenger experience; they need to offer wi-fi and fitted with equipment to provide location data to the real time information system. Sprint vehicles will be equipped to provide enhanced levels of passenger information including interchange information and feeder service buses will be equipped to provide passenger information regarding connections with Sprint Services.

B. EQUALITY RELEVANCE/IMPACT

2. Does the policy affect the public or employees directly or indirectly? In what ways?

The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme will have a direct impact on bus users as it will involve the delivery of infrastructure and services/measures that will affect people's bus travel experience.

3. What information is available on the equality issues in the key target groups¹? (what inequalities, discrimination /and health inequalities currently exist in relation to the target groups? What information/data do you have that explains why these inequalities exist and how they are maintained?)

Key area data/demographics

The 4 districts affected by the scheme are Birmingham, Solihull, Sandwell and Walsall

Demographics for Walsall: Walsall has an estimated resident population of 269,323. Walsall has an above average proportion of the resident population made up of children and older people, and a correspondingly lower proportion of working age people. 23.1% of residents in Walsall are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The largest ethnic minority group is Asian. Minority ethnic groups are highly concentrated in certain parts of the borough. Nine out of ten Walsall residents were born in the U.K. Levels of English proficiency in Walsall are high and in line with the England average with 93% speaking English as their first language and a further 5% speaking English well. Over 6,200 residents cannot speak English well, 1,200 of which cannot speak English at all. People in Walsall have a greater level of religious affiliation than in England and Wales overall, with almost three quarters identifying with a religion compared to two thirds nationally. Top Religion is Christianity, followed by Islam. Overall health is poorer in Walsall than in England and Wales. One in five residents has a health condition that limits their day to day activities. There are slightly more cars and vans than households in Walsall, giving an average of 1.1 cars per household. Car availability is slightly lower than England and Wales but higher than Sandwell and Wolverhampton where there are fewer vehicles than households. Almost three in ten Walsall households have no car or van, which is higher than the 25.6% found nationally. This equates to over 31,000 households who are dependent on public transport to access employment, education and recreation opportunities. Economic activity in Walsall

¹ Equality target groups: Age, gender disability, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, socio-economic, sexual orientation



is lower than the national average and unemployment is higher. Disability wise, one in twenty of Walsall adults are economically inactive because they are long-term sick or disabled (compared to 4.2% nationally). Walsall also has a higher proportion of residents over 16 with no qualifications or low qualifications. One in three Walsall adults has no formal qualification – this is much higher than the national average. Deprivation is deeply entrenched in Walsall. 34 out of 167 neighbourhoods (LSOAs) are amongst the most deprived 10% in England. The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation now ranks Walsall as the 33rd most deprived English local authority (out of 326), nudging Walsall just outside the most deprived 10% of districts in the country. There are extremes of deprivation, with central and western areas typically much more deprived than eastern areas, although pockets of deprivation exist even in the more affluent parts of the borough. Walsall fares particularly badly in terms of income (18th), employment (30th) and education, skills & training deprivation (12th), and many of the issues that challenge the borough match the geography of deprivation. 1 in 3 (29.9%) aged under 16 years are living in low income families, higher than the national average of 20.1% (HMRC, 2016). By the end of January 2017, 20.8% of primary school pupils were entitled to free school meals compared to the national average of 14.5% and 19.1% of secondary school pupils compared to 13.2% nationally (DfE June 2016).

Demographics for Solihull: Solihull is a broadly affluent borough in both the regional and national context, characterised by above-average levels of income and home ownership. Levels and extent of deprivation are limited with only 22 of the borough's 134 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most 20% deprived areas in the country and just eight in the bottom 5%. Solihull as an authority is, however, challenged by a prosperity gap, with performance indicators in the Regeneration area, framed by the wards of Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst & Fordbridge and Smith's Wood to north of Birmingham International Airport, significantly lagging the rest of the borough. Alongside below average income levels the regeneration area is notable for a relatively higher population density, less green space per head and a substantially greater proportion of socially rented housing (62% of the borough's total). The regeneration area contains the 20 most deprived LSOA neighbourhoods in Solihull, with 23 of the areas 29 LSOAs in the bottom 25% nationally. The impacts of this are felt across a broad range of outcomes including educational attainment, employment, crime and health. Solihull is in the midst of dynamic and rapid socio-demographic change. The Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) population has more than doubled since the 2001 Census and now represents nearly 11% of the total population. On this basis the borough is less diverse than England as a whole (and significantly less so than neighbouring Birmingham), but with BAME groups representing a relatively higher proportion of young people in Solihull (over 17% of those aged 15 and under) this representation is set to increase.

The second significant demographic change is Solihull's ageing population. Between 1996 and 2016 the population aged 65 and over increased by 40% and from 16% to 21% of the total population. As a result, there are now over 9,100 more residents aged 65 to 84 years and nearly 3,600 more aged 85 years and over than 20 years ago. Population projections based on the 2016 population estimates indicate the relative ageing of the Solihull population will continue and by 2036 those aged 65 and over will account for one in four of the borough population, with those aged 85+ numbering over 11,600 (5% of total). The growth in the numbers of those aged 85 and over represents a significant and growing challenge in terms of health and social care.

Demographics for Sandwell:

The latest population estimate for Sandwell is 327,378, this is the 2018 mid-year estimate produced by the Office for National Statistics. Sandwell has a relatively young age profile compared with the population of England & Wales as a whole. There are particularly high proportions of young people and lower proportions of older people. Younger people in Sandwell, 0 to 14 year olds, accounted for 21.4% of the Sandwell's total population and 15.0% were aged 65 plus. This compares to 18.1% for 0 to 14 year olds and 18.3% for the 65 plus age group for England and Wales. Sandwell is the 13th most deprived local authority out of a total of 326 (where 1 is the most deprived). On most measures Sandwell is the most deprived local authority within the Black Country. Sandwell's deprivation is spread across the borough rather than being concentrated in certain hotspots. As per the Census in Sandwell overall 34.2% of residents are from Minority Ethnic groups Smethwick town has the highest ranked proportion of residents from Minority Ethnic groups in Sandwell. These groups make up 62.1% of the town's population, which is considerably higher than West Bromwich town which ranks second with 40.9% of its population from Minority Ethnic groups. In 2016, 4% of full-term babies have a low birth weight in Sandwell, compared with an England average of 2.79%. This is the 2nd highest in the region. Infant mortality (deaths aged under 1 year) in Sandwell stands at 5.8 per 1,000 live births, compared with 3.9 per 1,000 in England. For 2015/17, male (77.1 years) and female (81.3 years) life expectancy at birth is significantly lower in Sandwell than England (79.6 and 83.1 respectively). The pattern is the same for healthy life expectancy - male (57.1 years) and female (59.0 years) figures are significantly lower in Sandwell than England (63.4 and 63.8 respectively). In terms of child obesity, for 2015/16 Sandwell has the 2nd highest rate in the region and is among the worst in England (ranked 141 out of 150 local authorities). In March 2011, 35% of Sandwell residents had no qualifications, compared to 29% in the West Midlands and 23% in England & Wales.

Demographics for Birmingham:



1,141,400 people live in Birmingham according to the 2018 mid-year population estimates. Birmingham's population has been increasing and this trend is set to continue. There has been an increase of 9.9% since 2008.

Age: 22.8% are children, 64.3% are of working age and 13% are pensioners. In Birmingham there are fewer people in the older age groups than in the younger age, showing Birmingham's young age structure. Compared with England, Birmingham has more people in the younger age and less in the older age groups. The proportion of children in Birmingham (22.8%) is markedly higher than in the region (19.7%) and England (19.2%). At 13% Birmingham has a relatively small proportion of pensioners compared with the regional and national averages (of 18.5% and 18.2% respectively).

Gender: There are more males than females in the younger age groups up to 18 but there are generally more females than males in the adult ages. The difference between the number of males and females is most marked in the older age groups due to female longevity.

Ethnicity: The proportion of White British residents in Birmingham decreased by 13% between 2001 and 2011. As per the latest Census, 53% of Birmingham residents are White British (lower than the England average of 80% and most other core cities), followed by Pakistani at 13%, Black or Black British at 9% and other Asian or Asian British at 7%. 6% are Indian, 5% is Other White group and 4% is Mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

Languages spoken as per the 2011 Census: There were 47,000 people who said they did not speak English well or at all, which represents 2.4% of the population aged three years or more. This is more than twice the regional and national averages. Children were more likely to speak English well, than the working age and pensioner populations. Where English was not the main language the most commonly spoken were Southern Asian languages.

Religion/belief: 74.1% of residents identified themselves as belonging to a particular faith in the 2011 Census, while 19.3% stated they had no religion and a further 6.5% did not answer the question. 46.1% of Birmingham residents said they were Christian. Over 1 in 5 people that responded to the religion question said they were Muslim, making Islam the 2nd largest religion in Birmingham. This differed from the region and England, where the proportion of people who said they had no religion was greater. However, Birmingham does follow the upward trend of people saying they do not have a religion.

Socio-economic: The latest Indices of Deprivation (2015) published by the Department of Communities and local Government show that Birmingham has high levels of deprivation with 40% of the population living in SOAs in the 10%

most deprived in England and is ranked the 6th most deprived authority in England. It is the 6th most deprived when measured by extent of deprivation. The city is ranked the most deprived of all the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP authorities. Birmingham is also the most deprived authority in the West Midlands Metropolitan area and the third most deprived core city after Liverpool and Manchester. While there are pockets of deprivation in all parts of the city, deprivation is most heavily clustered in the area surrounding the city centre. Sparkbrook, Aston and Washwood Heath are the most deprived wards while Hodge Hill is the most deprived constituency. Birmingham is ranked as being slightly less deprived for employment than income. This may reflect relatively low average earnings for those in work compared to other authorities.

Key transport inequalities (national and regional statistics)

- Mobility and accessibility inequalities are highly correlated with social disadvantage. Some social groups are therefore more at risk from mobility and accessibility inequalities
- Car owners and main drivers in households are least mobility constrained across all social groups. They make more trips over longer distance for all journey purposes giving them higher levels of access to activity opportunities;
- Lowest income households have higher levels of non-car ownership, 40% still have no car access – female heads of house, children, young and older people, black and minority ethnic (BME) and disabled people are concentrated in this quintile;
- In addition, there are considerable affordability issues with car ownership for many low-income households.
- Inequalities in the provision of transport services are strongly linked with where people live, and the associated differences in access to employment, healthcare, education, and local shops. The lack of private vehicles in low-income households, combined with limited public transport services in many peripheral social housing estates, considerably exacerbates the problem
- Transport problems have been linked to low participation in post-16 education and to college dropouts which mostly impacts low income households
- Cost of transport constraints access to key activities for a number of lower income groups
- Lower income households travel much less and travel over much shorter distances than higher income household. They make nearly 20% fewer trips and travel 40% less distance than the average household.



- Approximately 38% of all people with mobility difficulties are main drivers, while approximately 40% have access to a private vehicle. People with disabilities are more reliant on public transport than other groups.
- Around a fifth of disabled people report having difficulties related to their disability in accessing transport. Key barriers reported: lack of accessible railway stations, getting to and from bus stops or bus/train stations, the lack of integration between the different modes of transport, staff ignorance and attitudes, inaccessible or inadequate information provision, passenger attitudes, safety concerns etc.
- People on low incomes and unemployed people, including people working part time and those claiming state benefits are much more reliant on public transport. A quarter of all households and almost half of those from the poorest quintile do not have access to a car. Two-thirds of job seekers are without access to a car. Car availability also tends to be lower amongst BME groups and that may be linked to the fact that poverty is higher amongst BME groups. Other groups heavily reliant on public transport, largely due to lower car ownership, are disabled people and older age groups as well as single parents.
- Fear of safety in using public transport is more prevalent amongst BME groups, women, people with disabilities and young people.

4. Have you consulted interested parties (including representatives from the equality target groups) who will/may be affected by the policy? What were the outcomes of the consultation? If you haven't conducted consultation, is there need for consultation and who are you planning to consult?

Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders (Birmingham Airport, Bus Users UK, operators etc.). Public consultation will take place within 2019 once an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme is drafted and approved by operators

5. Is further research needed (i.e. consultations, working groups, surveys, data) to properly assess impact on the different equality target groups? If yes, how will it be undertaken and by when?

The EqIA will need to be updated following public consultation and once the final EP is to be 'made'.

6. What measures does, or could, the policy include to help promote equality of opportunity for and/or foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic?

The Enhanced Partnership Scheme will introduce measures that are likely to help promote equality of opportunity for a number of protected groups (as identified in question 4) – namely those who are more likely to be reliant on public transport and those who face increased barriers to using public transport (as identified in question 4)

Measures include:

- Higher quality, accessible vehicles
- Higher quality, RTI enabled stops/shelters
- RTI/audio-visual information and free wi-fi on board
- Enhanced information provision on board and in stops/shelters
- Faster services through the implementation of bus priority facilities and bus lane enforcement measures
- Implementation of a slot booking system that will help reduce overcrowding and help improve passenger experience in shelters/stops as it will help manage the spread of buses and number of buses using high frequency stops

7. Do you think that the policy in the way it is planned and delivered will have a negative, positive or no impact on any of the equality target groups (please tick as appropriate)?

Positive impact: where the impact on a particular group of people is more positive than for other groups

Negative impact: where the impact on a particular group of people is more negative than for other groups

Neutral impact: neither a positive nor a negative impact on any group or groups of people, compared to others.



EQUALITY TARGET GROUP	AGE	GENDER (including gender reassignment)	DISABILITY	MATERNITY	RACE	RELIGION/BELIEF	SEXUAL ORIENTATION	SOCIO-ECONOMIC
POSITIVE IMPACT	√	√	√		√			√
NEGATIVE IMPACT								
NEUTRAL IMPACT				√		√	√	

Please explain in detail

As identified above, some groups of people are more likely to be reliant on public transport and are more likely to face barriers to public transport. The Enhanced Partnership is likely to enhance the travel experience for everyone but will especially positively impact these groups. From a disability perspective measures such as audio-visual availability will help address some of the key information barriers.

The implementation of cashless ticketing options (currently considered) may exclude individuals who rely on cash as a means of purchase. This can have an adverse effect on individuals who do not have access to a bank account (only a small %) thus being unable to use debit/credit cards to make transactions. Similarly, some of the elderly population feel more comfortable using cash to purchase tickets. In addition, those from a low socio-economic background may not have enough cash within their bank accounts to reach the cap threshold via contactless/card and therefore will rely on cash purchasing being available. Cashless ticketing may restrict the accessibility for these groups.

To ensure the measures do not have negative impact on a number of groups (disabled people, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and different age groups) it is important to ensure a) ticketing options are broad and cash payments continue to be an option, and b) pricing remains at the same level for Enhanced Partnership area services as with other services.

7. If adverse/negative impact is noted to any of the listed equality target groups, can it be justified, i.e. on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for any other group/s?

N/A

8. ACTION PLAN

What practical actions can be taken to promote inclusion and reduce/remove any adverse/negative impact?

Issues to be addressed	Actions required	Responsible officer	Timescales	How would you measure impact/outcomes in practice
EP includes key equality/accessibility considerations	Consult with key equality groups during public consultation Update this EqlA once EP drafted	Anna Sirmoglou Edmund Salt	By January 2020	-consultation took place -EqlA updated -Equality/accessibility considerations embedded within EP
Pricing and ticketing policy is inclusive	Consider pricing and ticketing options for customers	Edmund Salt	By January 2020	-pricing and ticketing not restrictive for customers

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Extension of the Contract for the Provision of Domestic Abuse Emergency Accommodation Support Service

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader, Regeneration

Related portfolios: Councillor Martin – Adult Social Care
Councillor Perry – Deputy Leader, Resilient Communities
Councillor Wilson – Children’s

Service: Money Home Job

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

To ensure suitable refuge services are in place to safely house and support victims of domestic abuse (DA).

2. Summary

2.1 The Council has a duty to assist victims of DA. To help deliver these aims, the Council has a contract with Accord Housing Association for the Provision of Domestic Abuse Emergency Accommodation Support Service (the ‘Contract’). This Contract commenced in April 2017, and expires on 31 March 2021, following a two year extension approved by this Cabinet.

2.2 In 2019/20, 83% of households housed through the Contract were from out of borough. It is appropriate for the Council to periodically review the most appropriate way to provide accommodation and support services to victims of DA, and ensure a service that has a focus on assisting victims from within the Walsall borough boundary. Whilst this review is undertaken, authority is sought to extend the Contract for a further six months, to 30 September 2021. The service was not retendered during the existing lifetime of the contract as it has been important to ensure consistency of the DA refuge service, and as such it was unreasonable to expect providers to go through a tendering process during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This is why a further extension has been sought.

2.3 The current Contract was awarded in 2017 as a Major contract under delegated authority by the Executive Director Adult Social Care. However, the previous extension and variation proposals reported to cabinet on 20 March

2019 resulted in the total contract value exceeding £500,000, and it is now a Strategic contract, for which Cabinet approval is required for any further changes.

- 2.4 This is a key decision because it exceeds the threshold for significant expenditure, and affects more than two wards.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the extension valued at £94,435 of the contract for the Provision of Domestic Abuse Emergency Accommodation Support Service with Accord Housing Association for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services to subsequently authorise the sealing or signing of any associated contracts, deeds or other related documents for the following contracts.
- 3.3 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements for the services identified above, should this be required at any time during the term, in line with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Rules.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to assist victims of DA who are homeless or threatened with homelessness due to this abuse. In addition, the Council will need to make provision for the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Bill, which has an estimated Royal Assent of 31 March 2021. The Council currently contracts with Accord Housing Association to provide a DA24-bed refuge and three dispersed units. This Contract was awarded following the completion of a compliant procurement process to cover the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2019. The Contract contained provision to extend for the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, and to extend for a further 12 months. On 20 March 2019, Cabinet approved extensions to the Contract until 31 March 2021.
- 4.2 This Contract has been funded through existing Public Health Transformation Funds. However, it is proposed that this budget is now part of the Council's savings proposals, and that options for an alternative, more cost effective, and modernised service are considered, following the results of the DA Needs Assessment, which is being carried out by the Communities Directorate. The current service is a significant 'net importer' of DA victims into Walsall, with 83% of the 84 households assisted through the contract in 2019/20 coming from out of Borough. It is of course acknowledged that the nature of DA can result in victims needing to leave the immediate area for their personal safety,

which results in households from out of borough needing to use the refuge. During 2018 to 2020, 66% of the households with a DA need who presented to the Council's Homelessness service, and required help with a place of sanctuary, were housed within Walsall. The 34% of households who were housed out of Walsall went predominantly to Wolverhampton. It is noted that many more households will have presented through Adults, Children's services, and the Police and some of these will have been placed out of borough into a refuge.

- 4.3 The Refuge is not the only emergency accommodation option for DA, and we do also place people in our mainstream temporary accommodation (TA), and also nominate straight into Housing Association tenancies. The TA option has been bolstered during the COVID-19 pandemic, by local housing associations providing dispersed TA, which has primarily been used as a safety net for victims of DA. This is part of our wider work with Housing Associations on piloting a dispersed TA model, that could potentially replace the Council's existing flatted TA blocks.
- 4.4 This emergency DA accommodation support service works alongside a number of other services, including working closely with:
- The Housing Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA), which is externally grant funded by the 20/21 Fund for Domestic Abuse Services;
 - Black Country Women's Aid who are commissioned by the Council to provide an IDVA service.

The IDVA services are aimed at working with women to prevent re-victimisation, and ensure safety of their children. We also operate a 'Sanctuary' service, which carries out works to existing properties to help victims of DA to remain there safely.

- 4.5 A further report will be submitted to Cabinet, outlining any future proposals for housing related DA services, following the completion of the DA Needs Assessment.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.6 The emergency DA accommodation support service will contribute to the Council's priorities as follows:
- Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses – homelessness and lack of access to settled and supported housing remains a key barrier to accessing employment, and so the proposed Service can help increase employment prospects.
 - People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities – preventing homelessness, and advice and support in maintaining a tenancy can promote independence and can improve mental and physical health and wellbeing.

- Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion – ensuring that victims of DA have the right housing to meet their needs, and that they are able to remain in these homes or be rehoused, sustain tenancies and be part of their community.

Risk management

- 4.7 Not extending the Contract, whilst awaiting the results of the DA Needs Assessment and appraising alternative options, could result in vulnerable households not having suitable accommodation and support options.

Financial implications

- 4.8 The six month extension will cost £94,435 and be funded by a non-recurrent Public Health Transformation budget. The annual cost of the Refuge is £188,870, and this has been funded over the lifetime of the original contract by the Public Health Transformation budget that is now part of the overall Council savings proposals. The overall cost of the original contract (from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021) is £755,480, and with the addition of this proposed six month extension, covering the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021, the total cost will be £849,915. There is no further funding identified beyond 30 September 2021.

Legal implications

- 4.9 This additional proposed extension was not provided for in the Contract originally. The extension will be implemented in accordance with any legal and/or procurement advice, in a manner that is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Rules

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.10 All procurement activity will need to be undertaken in compliance with Public Contract Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) and the Council's Contract Rules. Procurement and legal services will coordinate to ensure that there is a consistency of advice and approach.
- 4.11 As the contract extension options, which were originally available in the Contract, have now been used, in order to extend this contract further it must be modified in line with Regulation 72 of the Regulations. This regulation sets out the scenarios under which contracts, which are subject to the Regulations, can be modified.
- 4.12 Procurement advice has been sought as to whether or not this modification falls under the range of modifications which are permitted by Regulation 72. The main considerations under Regulations 72 (c), are in relation to whether

or not the need for modification has been brought about by circumstances which a diligent contracting authority could not have foreseen (i), whether the modification alters the overall nature of the Contract (ii) and the value of any modification (iii)

- 4.13 Procurement has considered these factors and advice relating to these is summarised below:
- i. Could this need for a modification have been foreseen by a diligent contracting authority – the reason that this modification is required and that a competitive procurement process has not commenced is due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (detailed in 2.2 above), which is a situation which could not have been predicted.
 - ii. Overall nature of the contract – this modification is to extend the services for a period of six months, rather than to materially change the subject matter of the contract.
 - iii. Value – the proposed modification is for £94,435, which is within the limit of 50% of the original contract value (£755,480).
- 4.14 On this basis Procurement has advised that this contract modification would be compliant with Regulation 72 of the Regulations, and the Council's Contract Rules.
- 4.15 Procurement will ensure that all notices are published in order to carry out in line with the Regulations and guidance published by the Cabinet Office.
- 4.16 During the scoping of any benefits, which can be realised through any future commissioning activity, there might be opportunities to implement initiatives that enable benefits to be realised prior to any recommissioning of these services. In these instances, procurement will provide specific advice in relation as to how any additional changes could be implemented in compliance with the Regulations.

Property implications

- 4.17 There are no property implications for the Council.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.18 The principles and actions contained within this report are in full accordance with the Marmot objectives. The prevention of homelessness and support to households helps to ensure that individuals have the best environment to maximise their potential. The security of a roof over their head, and associated support, helps provide households with stability to engender a better environment for study, training or employment. Preventing and relieving homelessness contributes to the likelihood of a healthier environment for households to live in.

Staffing implications

- 4.19 There are no direct staffing implications for the Council as all staff engaged in providing the relevant services are employed by Accord Housing Association.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.20 The implications for reducing inequalities have been taken into account and assessed as set out in a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). The EQIA shows positive impacts for certain groups, particularly women, by extending the Contract, and is attached at Appendix A.

Consultation

- 4.21 Consultation has been carried out internally with Adult Social Care, Public Health and Communities Directorates on the proposal, and they are supportive of the extension whilst the DA Needs Assessment is being completed. In addition, the service provider Accord have been consulted and are willing to accept a six month contract extension if offered.

5. Decide

A 'do nothing' option is not seen as viable, on the basis that there would be no refuge provision in Walsall for victims of DA, before the DA Needs assessment is completed and alternative options had been considered. Therefore, it is recommended that a short term six month extension is put in place.

6. Respond

If approved, then the necessary contractual documentation will be completed with the Contract provider (Accord Housing Association), facilitated by the procurement team.

7. Review

Usage and outcomes of the refuge will be monitored, and will be fed into the review of DA services.

Background papers

None

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SARNE

Sally Rowe
Executive Director Children's Services

Councillor Andrew
Portfolio holder Regeneration

February Month 2021

XX Month 2021

APPENDIX A

Ref No.51/20

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Extension and variation of the Contract for the Provision of Domestic Abuse Emergency Accommodation Support Service		
Directorate	Customer Access Management		
Service	Money Home Job		
Responsible Officer	Neil Hollyhead		
Proposal planning start	01/12/2020	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	01/04/2021

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy	Yes	Extension of an existing contract for up to 6 months
	Procedure		
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Yes	
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	Yes	
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>The Council currently commissions Accord HA to provide a 24 bed refuge and 3 dispersed units through the Domestic Abuse (DA) Emergency Accommodation Support Service contract. This contract was originally awarded following the completion of a compliant procurement process, by approval of Paula Furnival, Executive Director Adult Social Care on 06 March 2017. The original procurement process and contract contained provision to extend the contract for the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2021 and this was agreed by Cabinet in March 2019.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Bill was heard in the house of lords 5th January 2021 and is currently in progress towards future statute legislation. The current draft bill makes provision in relation to domestic abuse and will place new burdens on the council along with other partner agencies. This report seeks to extend the contract by a further 6 months whilst a Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment is formulated and consideration of alternative options of domestic abuse services are realised in line with the council's transformation approach.</p> <p>In 2019/20 a total of 84 service users utilised the refuge and a further 32 utilised the service between April 2020 to September 2020. In 2019/20 74 service users moved on in a planned way and for the first 2 quarters of 2020/21, 27 service users moved on in a planned way either returning back to their homes or by securing accommodation in the social or private rented sector.</p>		

The Housing and Welfare services in 2019/20 assessed 1,101 households and 1,097 (99.6%) were households assessed as owed a duty.

From the 1,097 households which were owed a duty:

- 537 households were threatened with homelessness and were owed a prevention duty and domestic abuse accounted for 6.7% (36 cases).
- 560 households were homeless and a relief duty owed and domestic abuse accounted for 94 cases (16.8%).

A further analysis was done over the period 2018/20 of a total of 73 households presented to the council with a domestic abuse need and who required help with housing either to a refuge or other provision in Walsall or outside of Walsall. It is noted this figure is not for the total DA housing need presented for Walsall and the 73 households are for those that presented to the Housing and Welfare advice service and required help to move to a place of a sanctuary.

The current commissioned service is a significant 'net importer' of DA victims into Walsall, with 83% of all households assisted through the contract in 2019/20 coming from out of Borough and for the first 2 quarters of 2020/21 81% were households from outside of Walsall. It is of course acknowledged that the nature of domestic abuse can result in victims needing to leave the immediate area for their personal safety, which results in households from out of borough needing to use the refuge.

3 Who is the proposal likely to affect?

People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
All		The provision is aimed at those families and individuals fleeing domestic abuse. We recognise the current provision is primarily for females and households where there are male children under a certain age, as male children over a certain age will not be accommodated due to various risk factors. However, the 3 dispersed units can be used for families with older male children, male victims, our Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities and those with complex needs and who may not be suited to a refuge setting.
Specific group/s	Yes	
Council employees		
Other (identify)		

4 Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.

In the year ending March 2019, an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year (1.6 million women and 786,000 men).

The prevalence of domestic abuse has reduced from 8.9% in the year ending March 2005 to 6.3% in the year ending March 2019; this indicates a gradual, longer term downward trend. (Domestic Abuse Bill 2020)

Figures submitted to MHCLG show that out of 1097 acceptances of a homeless duty in 2019/20 for Walsall and in total (including prevention and relief) 130 were for Domestic violence. Key data includes:

- 1097 households were initially assessed (eligible) in Walsall 2019/2020, this compares to

Dudley 2197, 2173 Wolverhampton, 1234 Sandwell.

- 1093 households in Walsall were assessed as owed a homelessness duty and accepted (99%) compared to Dudley (80%). Nationally around 95% of applications are accepted.
- In Walsall 55% of those owed a duty accepted have a support need with the top 3 reasons being mental health, support for domestic abuse victims and young people.
- In the main Walsall customers accessing the service were living with family, living in the private rented sector or those who stated no fixed abode.
- The top 3 reasons for homelessness in Walsall in 2019/20 were family and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, end of a private rented tenancy (assured short hold) and domestic abuse. These reasons are similar to those across the Black Country and England.
- Similar to the Black Country and England the single applicants were mainly male and those who are single parent households tend to be female plus child.

In 2018/19, 96 service users came through the refuge. This figure fell in 19/20 to 84 a decrease of 12.5%, the key factor to this was due to referrals managed better and void turnaround were slower. Just over half of the referrals (45) were females with families. Meaning 39 referrals were single females some with time limited immigration statuses. Over the 12 month period 75% of service users were moved on in a planned way. There were also 47 service users who were declined access this was due to a number of reasons including previous arrears, no recourse to public funds and affordability. For the first 6 months of 20/21 there were 32 referrals into the service, compared to 46 in the first six months of 19/20. This shows a decrease in referrals for 3 consecutive years. However, it is noted that for 20/21 quarters 1 and 2, the COVID situation had an impact as customers were unable to move on from the refuge and sign ups were restricted.

Age

The homelessness review 2017 identified that almost half of all homelessness applicants to whom a duty is accepted, are aged 25 – 44 years of age, just over one-third being aged 16-24, just over one-tenth are aged 45-59. Those aged 60 years and older equal about 4%. During the past five years, applications from those aged 25-44 have increased by 6% and those aged 16-24 have increased by 47% (falling in the past 12 months by 16%).

When compared to population data the age profile of homeless applicants suggests that young people are disproportionately impacted by homelessness compared to other age groups.

Data from service users accessing the refuge show a mixed age range of people. In 2019/20 the largest age group which accessed services was 21-39 year olds, this is also the same for the first half of 2020.

Disability

The refuge facility has 3 accessible units for those with a need. In 2019/20 we had 3 service users with a need for an accessible unit, however to date in 20/21 we only have 1 service user requiring the facility.

Race, Religion or Belief

Walsall's Homelessness review identified that people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are more likely to experience domestic abuse than other groups; (Just over three-quarters (77%) of people accepted by the local authority as being owed the main housing (homelessness) duty, were of a white ethnic origin. The remaining one-quarter

(23%), were from black or other minority ethnic origins. Compared to the overall population of Walsall, for which 81% are of a white ethnic origin and 19% are from black or other minority ethnic origins, the persons of the latter type of ethnic origin have a disproportionately higher likelihood of becoming homeless).

Persons of a white and Asian or Asian British ethnic origin being homeless have increased (by 10% and 36% respectively) during the past five years, where persons from black or black British, mixed, or other ethnic origin have reduced (by 17%, 18% and 100%) during the same time-period.

In 2019/20, 29% of homeless applicants were from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, however for the same period 46% of referrals into the refuge were from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The first half of 2020/21 is pretty consistent with 43%.

The dispersed units will look to meet the needs of these communities by providing an alternative to refuge accommodation, which is usually stigmatised.

There is no specific data or information on whether religion or belief impacts upon prevalence of homelessness.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment

The homelessness review did not specifically review sexual orientation or gender reassignment of homeless applicants. There is no reason to consider that the proposed actions held within the homelessness strategy would have a negative impact upon individuals with these protected characteristics. There have been no known cases to date.

Marriage, Civil Partnership, Gender, Pregnancy and Maternity

The Walsall Homelessness Review concluded that women are more likely to experience homelessness than men.

Applicant households consisting of a lone parent with dependent children, is the most common household formation, this is followed by one-person households, and then couples with children (a small number of other household formation also are recorded). It is worth noting that there are almost four-times more lone parent households with dependent children than there are couples with dependent children.

All of the households in the 24 unit block refuge are female. In 2019/20 54% of the refuge's households were women with children. A slight increase in the first half of 2020/21 shows 56% of women have children.

5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).

Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders, partner agencies and the provider of the service. The feedback received has supported the extension of the service for a period of 6 months until a more informed position can be ascertained from the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment and the results of the transformation work stream.

Type of engagement / consultation	Key MHJ staff and stakeholder	Date : Nov / Dec 2020
Who attended / participated?	key stakeholders, partner agencies and the provider of the service.	
Protected characteristics of participants	A cross section of staff including those from different ethnic, age, gender, disability related groups.	
Feedback	The feedback received has supported the extension of the service for a period of 6 months until a more informed position can be ascertained from the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment and the results of the transformation work stream.	

Type of engagement / consultation	The refuge	Date : February 2019
Who attended / participated?	Refuge customers	
Protected characteristics of participants	A cross section of customers including those from different ethnic, age, gender, disability related groups.	
Feedback	The feedback showed a need for both a hub style service and support for dispersed accommodation.	

6 Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation

- Quarterly monitoring of existing service users – based on contract out-turns the service user data shows a number of trends including over the last year an increase in single people but also the complexity of issues increasing also.
- Consultation with the refuge– A Focus group in February 2019 showed a need for both a hub style service and support for dispersed accommodation.
- Feedback from MHJ staff – feedback from MHJ staff shows a variety of needs from women, in particular women unable to flee in cases where they have dependant older children, and the need for some families to provide a step-down approach before they are able to move to independent living.

7 How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group?

The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.			
Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes / No
Age	positive	<p>The biggest age group in the refuge are 21 – 39 year olds. This age group is also shown to be more likely to become homeless. The Homeless Reduction Act (2017) is set to improve outcomes for young single people.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring of services will help deliver the right service for the individual in a timely manner.</p>	NO
Disability	Positive	<p>28% of all customers in poverty have a disability (JR Foundation 2016)</p> <p>Disabled people are therefore more likely to become homeless than non-disabled people.</p> <p>In the first half of 2020, 1 person with a disability accessed the refuge. There would be adequate provision should there be further referrals.</p>	No
Gender reassignment	Positive	No referrals to date, however access to the refuge would be available, there are limited refuge spaces available nationally.	Unknown
Marriage and civil partnership	neutral	No information specific- data is available and so	Unknown

			the impact is not currently known – The cohort of people from previous years have not generally been in a marriage or civil partnership and tend to be single or a lone parent household. Where service users have been married, this normally will only be an issue if the service user wants to divorce (this is likely after permanent housing is secured)	
	Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known. Where a service user is pregnant consideration is given to the household. The current availability of flats is family orientated and takes into account key areas such as family rooms and will ensure service users have access to sure start and health services.	Unknown
	Race	Positive	There is a higher proportion (46%) of Black and Minority Ethnic households accessing the refuge compared to Black and Minority Ethnic households becoming homeless (29%) The delivery of these services have been sought with the requirements of taking into consideration key race, religion, cultural and disability.	No
	Religion or belief	Neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known The delivery of these	Unknown

			services have been sought with the requirements of taking into consideration key race, religion, cultural and disability.	
	Sex	Positive	Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men. The refuge service is for women so all customers accessing the refuge will be female.	No
	Sexual orientation	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known.	Unknown
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.			(Delete one) Yes
	<p>This emergency domestic abuse service works alongside a number of other services, including working closely with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA), which is council funded for 20/21. The IDVA role will help move those service users who are ready for independence from the refuge onto their own accommodation. • Black Country Women's Aid who are commissioned by the Council to provide an IDVA service. The IDVA services are aimed at working with women to prevent re-victimisation, and ensure safety of their children. 			
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?			
	A	No major change required		
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality		

	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
01/04/2021	Monitor all characteristics where possible of those DV victims who access service to help to inform the development of future services.	MHJ	Qtrly	Measure which clients are on project What outcomes have been achieved
	Conduct customer feedback		Annually	Look at service improvement and have feedback from Accord's residents meetings

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail

Contact us

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Inside Walsall: [http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service information/Equality and diversity](http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/Equality_and_diversity)

DRAFT

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Options for a transit site within Walsall.

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew, Deputy Leader & Regeneration

Related portfolios: Councillor Garry Perry, Deputy Leader & Resilient Communities
Councillor Bal Chattha, Personnel & Business Support
Councillor Stephen Craddock, Health & Wellbeing

Service: Place & Environment

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: No

1. Aim

- 1.1. To provide a transit site to support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community and to mitigate the community disruption and cost impact of unauthorised encampments (UEs).

2. Summary

- 2.1. The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up an Unauthorised Encampment Working Group which reported back on the 20th February 2020. The report made a number of recommendations including the development of a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) transit site.
- 2.2. In April 2020 and again in November 2020, Lord Greenhalgh, Communities Minister, wrote to local authority chief executives to highlight the support needed by some members of the GRT communities. A transit site, whether temporary or permanent, would provide a location which would better facilitate the Council's offer to the GRT community.
- 2.3. This report considers the following options:
 - Option 1 - Do nothing

- Option 2 - Create a temporary transit site at Narrow Lane
- Option 3 - Create a permanent transit site at Narrow Lane
- Option 4 - Look for alternative sites

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1. That Cabinet approve Option 2 and consequently, the submission of a planning application to construct a temporary traveller transit site at Narrow Lane.
- 3.2. That, subject to planning approval, Cabinet approve a budget of £160k for the construction of a traveller transit site in accordance with the planning consent.
- 3.3. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, to award a contract for the provision of a traveller transit site at Narrow Lane.
- 3.4. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities to enter into the contract, and to subsequently authorise the sealing, signing or variation of any deeds, contracts or other related documents for such services, within the approved budget envelope.

4. **Report detail - know**

Context

- 4.1. The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up an Unauthorised Encampment Working Group to establish a long-term strategy to reduce the numbers of UEs in the borough and to explore options for a transit site.
- 4.2. In gathering its evidence, the working group spoke with representatives from different organisations and invited the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups (NFGLG) to take part in discussions.
- 4.3. The working group noted that there is a shortage of transit sites across the country. A critical factor underpinning the poor outcomes experienced by the community is the lack of lawful sites on which to establish encampments. Without lawful sites, the community continues to face evictions, which disrupts schooling, access to healthcare and employment.
- 4.4. In 2020 there were 53 unauthorised encampments (UEs) in the Borough, 33 on Council Land and 20 on private land (which were dealt with by the

respective landowner). The number UEs has varied significantly from year to year, averaging around 60 per year over the last 8 years. Typically, each UE costs the Council around £8.5k although this does not include the costs incurred by the Police, partner organisations and the potential opportunity costs such as investments by businesses or loss of income.

- 4.5. Quality homes are a key element of any thriving, sustainable community. This is true for the settled and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities alike. In conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG's Planning Policy for Traveller sites sets out the Government's aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 4.6. Construction of a transit site will allow the Police to use powers, prescribed in section 62 of the Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994, to move UEs to transit sites. These section 62 powers can only be used if the transit site is located within the borough and managed by either the Council or Housing Association.
- 4.7. The working group recommended that a set of criteria should be used to assess the suitability of potential transit sites. These criteria are detailed at **Appendix A**.

Option 1 – Do nothing.

- 4.8. If the Council decides to do nothing, it will have to continue to manage UEs in the community setting. In some instances, this creates a risk of increased community tensions. More widely, there are the ongoing challenges and costs arising from the occupation of unsuitable sites, lacking the facilities to support the basic day to day needs of the GRT community.
- 4.9. It should also be noted, whilst the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact the region and indeed the county, management of an outbreak within a UE would be more difficult if an appropriate location, that supports self-isolation, is not identified.
- 4.10. From April 2021, the Council propose to employ bailiffs as part of their response to UEs due to the potential risks to Council staff arising from community tensions. The cost of managing UE's in 2021/22 using the Council's new process is estimated to be £245k in bailiff costs and £70k in clean-up costs.

Option 2 – Build a temporary transit site at Narrow Lane

- 4.11. A temporary transit site would allow the Council the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of transit provision in managing unauthorised activity. It would also offer further time to confirm the most suitable site for longer term, permanent provision within the borough. As far as possible, the proposed design encompasses infrastructure that can be easily removed and reused.
- 4.12. A high-level desktop review of 583 development sites has been carried out on the basis of the criteria detailed at **Appendix A**. This review and a further evaluation based on a refined set of criteria, has identified Narrow Lane, adjacent to the junction of Darlaston Road and Pleck Road, as a potentially suitable transit site.
- 4.13. The brownfield site is owned by the Council and is not currently in use although the site was previously utilised as a compound for highway works. Planning permission would be required to develop a transit site at this location, as it would at any other location.
- 4.14. The site area is 0.48Ha, which can comfortably accommodate six caravans and 12 accompanying vehicle spaces, meeting with the NFGLG preference for fewer, smaller transit sites rather than one single site. As there would be no designated pitches, there would be flexibility to accommodate alternative combinations.
- 4.15. The site is situated near to local amenities and in close proximity to a range of primary and secondary school provision that is Ofsted rated “Good” and “Outstanding”. Furthermore, the site offers access to healthcare, welfare and employment in the immediate surrounding area.
- 4.16. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and approximately 290m from the nearest higher risk area. It allows for the provision of safe and direct access to the A4038 (Darlaston Road) and is less than 2 miles from M6 Junction 9. Bus services can be accessed close by and there are rail links from both Bescot Stadium Station and Walsall Station.
- 4.17. Costs associated with this option are:
- £55k on design work and surveys (excluding any additional works identified by the surveys or arising from the planning process).
 - £105k for the construction of the site.
 - Operational costs, including management, utility provision and maintenance costs will be off-set by rental payments from the site occupants.
- 4.18. The impact on the revenue costs for bailiffs and the clean-up of council owned land is largely unknown. An initial assumption of a 20% reduction in

bailiff costs and a £30k reduction in clean-up costs has been used. The temporary arrangement will present the opportunity to ascertain more accurately the impact on revenue expenditure.

- 4.19. The delivery of temporary transit provision could, within a reasonably short timescale, facilitate the Council's offer of support to the GRT community whilst giving them a safe and secure place to stay. It would also give the Council and the Police the opportunity to use new powers to address unauthorised incursions when the need arises.
- 4.20. **Appendix B** details the proposed site layout for a temporary transit site.

Option 3 – Build a permanent transit site at Narrow Lane

- 4.21. The suitability of the site is described above. However, rather than applying for a temporary consent, an application could be made for a permanent consent.
- 4.22. Costs associated with this option are:
- £55k on design work and surveys (excluding any additional works identified by the surveys or arising from the planning process).
 - £310k for the construction of the site.
 - Operational costs, including management, utility provision and maintenance costs will be off-set by rental payments from the site occupants.
- 4.23. As noted in respect to Option 2, the impact on revenue expenditure is largely unknown. The first 12 to 24 months of permanent site operation will provide an opportunity to more accurately determine the likely revenue saving in the long term.
- 4.24. **Appendix C** details the proposed site layout for a permanent transit site.

Option 4 – Recommence a search for a more appropriate site

- 4.25. Further work could be carried out to identify the most suitable location for a transit site. This could involve expanding the search criteria and include land not currently in the Council's ownership with a view to finding a more appropriate site.

- 4.26. It is important to note that such a search would delay the provision of appropriate transit facilities for the GRT community. There are also no guarantees that a more appropriate and viable alternative could be found.
- 4.27. The costs associated with this option would be determined by the breadth of the search and the extent of the evaluation criteria to be considered. Further work would be needed to extend the search, in addition to acquisition costs, planning costs and the costs associated with laying out the site and rendering it suitable for the use.

Other considerations

- 4.28. The Council and West Midlands Police will update their protocol on the Management of UE's to ensure it is appropriate for any new arrangements if options 2 or 3 are approved.
- 4.29. If the Council approves options 2 or 3 there will be a need for an amendment to the capital programme. This amendment will need approval by Full Council.
- 4.30. The adoption of options 2 or 3 allows for more effective support for members of the GRT community, including a better opportunity to support healthcare, welfare and education needs.
- 4.31. A transit site would not eliminate UEs or all the associated bailiff and clear up costs. The required speed and availability of police resources may mean the Council needs to take its own enforcement action, however costs should be significantly reduced.
- 4.32. The site must be managed by either the Council or a Housing Association to be considered a transit site and facilitate the Police in using their section 62 powers.
- 4.33. Consideration needs to be given to the sustainability of the Council's injunctions against unnamed persons. The Council has an excellent record of achieving appropriate injunctions, but their future cannot be guaranteed. If injunctions were not in place the length of time for eviction would be increased which could increase community tension and cost. The legal implications are outlined in greater detail below.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.34. Providing a transit site supports the following Council priorities:
- People
 - People live a good quality of life and feel that they belong

- People know what makes them healthy and are encouraged to get support when they need it.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.
- Communities
 - Housing meeting all peoples' needs is affordable, safe and warm.
 - People are proud of their vibrant town, districts and communities.
 - Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.
- Children
 - Children thrive emotionally, physically and mentally, and feel they are achieving their potential.
 - Children grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere.
 - Children have the best start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

4.35. The transit site will enable a more focused level of support across these priorities within a Resilient Communities approach.

Risk Management

4.36. If the decision is made to do nothing, the Council would be the only Black Country authority without a transit site creating operational, financial and reputational risks. Operational risk from a lack of resources within the authority and within West Midlands Police to manage transit sites which, as evidenced this year, is proving increasingly challenging. Financial risk through increased pressure on service budgets to manage the operational risk. Reputational risk both from a failure to provide a transit site and the increased tensions in our communities.

4.37. If the decision is made to develop a transit site, there are a number of risks will need to be managed. Failure to secure planning permission would impede development meaning that the immediate progression of a planning application and associated consultation is essential. Linked to this, a failure to communicate effectively with both the GRT and settled the communities, local businesses and other key stakeholders could not only impact the planning process but also have a reputational impact on the Council. Although there was some initial engagement by the working group with the

NFGLG, a bespoke communications plan will be required to mitigate these risks.

- 4.38. Site usage is not something that can be easily predicted and in neighbouring boroughs demand for transit sites has been low and in one case, non-existent. Nevertheless the provision of satisfactory site management arrangements need to be assured to ensure adequate service provision to both the GRT community and the local settled community.
- 4.39. In respect to the construction of the site, initial surveys have commenced in respect to the site topography, ecology and service connections. However any uncharted services, unidentified geological issues or unforeseen disruption to progress on site could result in additional cost and an extended programme for delivery.
- 4.40. Finally, if the decision is taken to recommence a search for a more appropriate site, there is no guarantee that such a site will be identified. If such a site can be identified, there would be financial risks associated with the negotiation of the lease or purchase of the site that would need to be considered

Financial Implications

- 4.41. Cabinet are asked to consider three options in relation to transit sites in the borough.
- 4.42. Option 1 (do nothing) will incur increased costs due to the proposed use of Bailiffs to deal with UEs in the borough. The additional cost net off small savings from clear up costs due to the use of the bailiff model will be in the region of £215k. Expenditure will vary year on year subject to the number of UEs in the borough and on Council owned land. The 2021/22 cost would need to be funded from earmarking of current year's reserves for 2021/22 with an adjustment to the medium term financial plan required for 2022/23 onwards to meet the ongoing costs.

Option 1 Do Nothing	Year 1 21/22	Year 2 22/23	Total
Revenue			
UE response Bailiff Costs	£245,000	£245,000	£490,000
UE response Clean up	£70,000	£70,000	£140,000

Site operation (management, utilities, routine maintenance and provision of temporary welfare facilities)	£0	£0	£0
Site rental income	£0	£0	£0
Total Revenue	£315,000	£315,000	£630,000
Expenditure			
Potential Funding Clean & green clear up budget	(£100,000)	(£100,000)	(£200,000)
Revenue Unfunded	£215,000	£215,000	£430,000

- 4.43. Option 2 (temporary transit site at Narrow Lane) requires capital expenditure of £160k and revenue expenditure of £512k over two years. Capital funds have been identified to fund the capital expenditure. There is currently £200k revenue and £40k will be recovered from the tenants leaving an unfunded revenue balance of £272k. The table below shows details of the total spend, the funding currently available and the additional/unfunded expenditure that is required.
- 4.44. The likely impact on revenue costs remains largely unknown. An initial assumption of a £49k (20%) reduction in bailiff costs and a £30k (40%) reduction in clean-up costs has been applied..
- 4.45. The unfunded shortfall on revenue is recommended to be funded from earmarking of current year's reserves.

Option 2 Temporary Site	Year 1 21/22	Year 2 22/23	Total
Capital Investment			
Design (inclusive planning application submission)	£39,000	£0	£39,000
Site Surveys	£16,000	£0	£16,000
Construction	£105,000	£0	£105,000
Total Capital	£160,000	£0	£160,000
Revenue			
UE response Bailiff Costs	£196,000	£196,000	£392,000
UE response Clean up	£40,000	£40,000	£80,000

Site operation (management, utilities, routine maintenance and provision of temporary welfare facilities)	£20,000	£20,000	£40,000
Total Revenue	£256,000	£256,000	£512,000
Potential Funding			
Capital Programme 2021/22 – Health and safety	(£160,000)	£0	(£160,000)
Revenue - Reduction in clean-up costs	(£100,000)	(£100,000)	(£200,000)
Site rental income	(£20,000)	(£20,000)	(£40,000)
Revenue Unfunded	£136,000	£136,000	£272,000
Capital Unfunded	£0	£0	£0
Unfunded balance to be funded by reserves	£136,000	£136,000	£272,000

- 4.46. Option 3 (permanent transit site at Narrow Lane) requires capital expenditure of £365k and revenue expenditure of £512k over two years. Capital funds have been identified to fund the capital expenditure. There is currently £200k revenue and £40k will be recovered from the tenants leaving an unfunded revenue balance of £272k. The table below shows details of the total spend, the funding currently available and the additional/unfunded expenditure that is required.
- 4.47. As with Option 2, the extent to which Option 3 will reduce the bailiff and clean ups costs is largely unknown. An initial assumption of a £49k (20%) reduction in bailiff costs and a £30k (40%) reduction in clean-up costs has been applied. This would be refined in the first 12 to 24 months of operation.
- 4.48. The unfunded shortfall on revenue is recommended to be funded from earmarking of current year's reserves for 2021/22 with an amendment to the medium term financial plan from 2022/23 onwards to incorporate an on-going budget to meet this on-going commitment.

Option 3 Permanent Site	Year 1 21/22	Year 2 22/23	Total

Capital Investment			
Design (inclusive planning application submission)	£39,0000	£0	£39,000
Site Surveys	£16,000	£0	£16,000
Construction	£310,000	£0	£310,000
Total Capital	£365,000	£0	£365,000
Revenue			
UE response Bailiff Costs	£196,000	£196,000	£392,000
UE response Clean up	£40,000	£40,000	£80,000
Site operation (management, utilities, routine maintenance and provision of temporary welfare facilities)	£20,000	£20,000	£40,000
Total Revenue	£256,000	£256,000	£512,000
Potential Funding			
Capital Programme 2021/22 – Health and safety	(£332,000)	£0	(£332,000)
Capital –Willenhall Travellers Site (current year allocation)	(£33,000)	£0	(£33,000)
Revenue - Reduction in clean-up costs	(£100,000)	(£100,000)	(£200,000)
Site rental income	(£20,000)	(£20,000)	(£40,000)
Revenue Unfunded	£136,000	£136,000	£272,000
Capital Unfunded	£0	£0	£0
Unfunded balance to be funded by reserves	£136,000	£136,000	£272,000

Legal implications

Gypsy Roma and Traveller (GRT)

- 4.49. The council needs to provide a transit site for a variety of reasons. Paragraph 001 of the Planning Policy Guidance, entitled “Addressing the need for

different types of housing” (Rev. 22.7.2019) requires plan making authorities to “identify and plan for the housing needs of particular groups of people” and “the extent to which the identified needs of specific groups can be addressed”. In doing so, authorities must take into account the overall level of need (using the standard method), the extent that can be translated into a housing requirement figure for the plan period and the deliverability of the different forms of provision. Authorities must also consider the implications of their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

4.50. The Equality Act 2010 defines GRT communities as ethnic groups and, consequently, they are protected against race discrimination. Race discrimination occurs when there is unfair treatment because of colour, nationality, national origin or ethnic origin.

4.51. If planning authorities are unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable GRT sites, this in turn may make it more difficult for them to justify reasons for refusing planning applications for temporary pitches at appeal. The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015) states, “The Government’s overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.” It sets out a series of aims in respect of traveller sites including:

- a) that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning
- b) to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites
- c) to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale ...
- f) that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective ...
- h) to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply
- i) to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions
- j) to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure
- k) for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment

... amongst others.

Unauthorised Encampments

- 4.52. A transit site would assist in removing unauthorised encampments which have been set up in the borough. Under the provisions of Section 62A of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 the Police have power to move on those who have trespassed on land with vehicles. That power is, however, exercisable only if there is a suitable pitch on a relevant caravan site to accommodate the trespassers. The provision of a transit site would thus enable the Police to have greater powers to deal with those setting up unauthorised encampments on any land across the borough.
- 4.53. The Council currently has a number of injunctions in place to prevent UEs on land which it considers should be safeguarded against such use. There is a risk that if the council were to continue to be unable to provide any short term stopping place for travellers within the borough it might be refused an injunction to remove travellers who have set up an unauthorised encampment. The grant of an injunction is a discretionary remedy.
- 4.54. In a legal case this year involving the London Borough of Enfield, the High Court Judge, Mr Justice Nicklin, adjourned the application, without granting an Interim Injunction, relisting it for hearing in January 2021. Mr Justice Nicklin has also ordered 37 other councils who have obtained injunctions to deal with the problems caused by unauthorised encampments to be joined in these proceedings. Those councils include Walsall Council. The cases which have been brought by all 37 councils have been transferred for consideration by the same Judge in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court. There is a rigorous set of directions which require us to carry out a substantial amount of work and submit documents and legal arguments to the High Court on various dates during the course of November and to attend a hearing in the middle of December. One direction from this case is to consider the Court of Appeal decisions in Bromley LBC -v- Persons Unknown [2020] PTSR 1043 and Canada Goose UK Retail Ltd -v- Persons Unknown [2020] 1 WLR 2802 and their relevance to Walsall Council injunctions. This matter has now been listed for a substantive hearing on 27 and 28 January 2021 to consider the legal issues and the court's powers to grant such injunctions. Judgment is likely to be reserved and given at a later time. It is only when judgment has been handed down that matters will become clearer.
- 4.55. This review by the High Court is a major challenge to the council's operational response to UE's and therefore it is vitally important that the council, as soon as possible, makes proper provision by way of a transit site.

Planning permission

- 4.56. As set out in the Risk Management Section, it will not be possible to carry out works, or to use the site, for the purposes of a transit site until planning permission is obtained. To do so would be unlawful and the Council cannot knowingly act unlawfully. (Art 1 Constitution)As a minimum, the planning process will take two months, with a requirement for the application to be considered by Planning Committee. It should be noted that this timeframe may be extended if it is necessary to deal with an appeal or challenge.
- 4.57. There can be no guarantee that planning permission will be granted, or that a decision to grant would not be challenged. Transit sites (temporary and permanent) are controversial planning applications, which generate considerable interest and thus greater potential for challenge.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.58. Due to the time constraints associated with the project, outline design and site surveys have been commissioned via the Highway Infrastructure Services Contract (HISC) with Tarmac on an Option E basis [Cost Reimbursable Contract]. Subject to a Cabinet decision, this commission will be extended to include detailed design and the submission of a planning application in respect to either Option 2 or Option 3 on behalf of the Council.
- 4.59. The procurement exercise and associated contract award will be conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and Walsall Council's Social Value Policy and Contract Rules.

Property implications

- 4.60. The Narrow Lane site is wholly owned by the Council and has previously been used as a site compound to facilitate the Darlaston Strategic Development Area Access Project highway improvement works in 2015.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.61. Improving Health and wellbeing outcomes amongst some members of GRT communities is challenging because of a nomadic lifestyle. The provision of a temporary transit site will enable a more structured and robust approach of support which will positively impact the health and wellbeing of GRT communities. To understand the full extent to which this is the case, further negotiations and information are required in respect to access to local health and education facilities in order to ensure that the community do not become more marginalised.
- 4.62. If a Covid-19 infection was identified in a GRT Community, who were temporarily in the borough, it would be prudent to identify a transit site where

social isolation of the index case and associated contacts could be directed to protect themselves and others whilst allowing appropriate health support services to be offered.

Staffing implications

- 4.63. There are no staffing implications of this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.64. The GRT community are a recognised ethnic group and are protected from discrimination. Like any other section of society, they have their own ethnic identity, differences and traditions and what is true of one group of travellers is not necessarily true for all others. All GRT groups do however share common cultural values of independence and a strong emphasis on the family group. Many still lead a nomadic or semi nomadic lifestyle; some have no fixed base and are constantly travelling between one temporary stopping place and another. Community tensions can arise between the traveller and the settled communities because of the difference in lifestyle and a lack of understanding of culture and customs.

- 4.65. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (incorporated into British law in the **Human Rights Act 1998**) protects the right to respect for private and family life and home and the right of Gypsies and Travellers to respect for their traditional way of life, an integral part of which involves living in caravans. Indeed, in *Chapman v United Kingdom* (27238/95) (2001) 33 E.H.R.R. 18, the European Court of Human Rights held that art.8 imposed a positive obligation on the State to facilitate the Gypsy and Traveller way of life:

"96. ...The vulnerable position of gypsies as a minority means that some special consideration should be given to their needs and their different lifestyle both in the relevant regulatory framework and in reaching decisions in particular cases ... To this extent, there is thus a positive obligation imposed on the Contracting States by virtue of Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way life."

- 4.66. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are ethnic groups protected by the **Equality Act 2010**. Section 149 of that Act lays down what is known as the "public sector equality duty" and provides that:

'(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic

and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it ..’

4.67. Further to this the Equality and Human Rights Commission has noted¹ that:

“The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low”.

4.68. The Equality and Human Rights Commission states that:

“The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. If you do not consider how a function can affect different groups in different ways, it is unlikely to have the intended effect. This can contribute to greater inequality and poor outcomes. The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

Consultation

4.69. Plans for a transit site have been developed over a lengthy period and work has been carried out through a Scrutiny working group formed by the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20th June 2019.

4.70. The working group reported back to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20th February 2020 with a series of recommendations for a transit site.

4.71. A temporary transit site, by its nature, may require compromises in terms of build and facilities as it has a short term nature, however representatives of the GRT community have been and will continue to be engaged in supporting the build and operation of any temporary or permanent traveller site.

5. **Decide**

- 5.1. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the development of a temporary traveller transit site at Narrow Lane. The site complies with the acceptance criteria set out by the Scrutiny Working Group, minimises revenue costs and support the GRT community.
- 5.2. The provision of a temporary site will facilitate a better understanding of the impact a transit site will have on UEs in the borough. The lessons learned will be used to inform a future recommendations to Cabinet on the need, size and location of permanent provision.

6. **Respond**

- 6.1. Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommended option, officers will submit a planning application for a temporary transit site at Narrow Lane. It is envisaged that the site will be operational within 2 months of the granting of planning consent, subject to any conditions that may need to be discharged prior to first use.

7. **Review**

- 7.1. Any investment in a transit site, either permanent or temporary, needs to be measured against the following PROUD criteria:
 - Improve outcomes and customer experience through a reduction in Unauthorised Encampments and Improved health outcomes in the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities whilst they stop in Walsall.
 - Improve employee satisfaction and engagement by reducing the high risk work associated with unauthorised encampments.
 - Improve service efficiency and performance through delivering an effective infrastructure for supporting the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community and putting on place a legal framework for managing Unauthorised Encampments.

Background papers

Report of the Unauthorised Encampment Working Group – 20/2/2020
Arcadis

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Simon Neilson
Executive Director

2 February 2020



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio holder

2 February 2021

Appendix A - Transit Site Criteria
Appendix B – Proposed Layout – Temporary Site (Option 2)
Appendix C – Proposed Layout – Permanent Site (Option 3)

Appendix A– Transit Site Criteria

The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Unauthorised Encampment Working Group recommended that the following criteria should be used to assess the suitability of potential transit sites:

- The site(s) should have sufficient pitch capacity to cater for different GRT Communities whilst considering the surrounding population's size and density;
- The deliverability and development viability of the site(s) should be considered including planning conditions and site ownership. In particular, feedback from the NFGLG indicated a preference for fewer smaller transit sites rather than one single site;
- Careful site management should be secured and adequate maintenance on the site(s);
- The site(s) should be situated near to local amenities to ensure that sufficient access to education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure;
- The site(s) access to local amenities and services should not overload schools and health services and be situated away from local housing estates;
- The site(s) should be attractive to users and enable support services to assist residents and reduce the health and socio-economic inequalities aid integration into the community and reduce tensions between the settled and traveller communities;
- The site(s) should be suitable, safe places to live and promote peaceful community integration with the local area;
- The site(s) should not be within flood plains with a rating of 2 – 3, as caravans would be particularly susceptible to damage from resulting flooding;
- The site(s) should be built to a moderate specification (good standard) and provide sufficient toilet/shower facilities for all families and create an enjoyable living space without requiring a disproportionate financial investment;
- There should be safe and convenient access to road infrastructure and the site(s) should be located so as to cause minimum disruption to surrounding communities;
- The site(s) selection should protect existing Green Belt land from any inappropriate development;
- The site(s) should accommodate specific welfare needs from existing GRT Communities in the area;
- The site(s) should not have an adverse impact on the local amenities and environment (such as noise, air and ground quality) for the travellers, or to any surrounding areas as a result of the development;
- The site(s) should be able to provide sufficient accommodation for travellers for up to 15 years;

- The site(s) selection should avoid conditions and constraints such as poor drainage, air/ground pollution, sharp/sloped gradients, Tree Protection Orders, Rights of Way, below ground mineshafts;
- The site(s) should have adequate storage and parking areas;
- The site(s) should have access to basic utilities such as power, water, data, telephones and mains sewage if possible;
- The site(s) boundaries should be suitably secured to ensure the safety of the GRT communities.

Appendix B – Proposed Layout – Temporary Site (Option 2)



Appendix C – Proposed Layout – Permanent Site (Option 3)



Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Title:	Options for a transit site within Walsall	
Officer completing:	Kathryn Moreton	
Description of proposal and/or objective:	To provide a transit site to support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community and to mitigate the community disruption and cost impact of unauthorised encampments (UEs).	
Screening Questions	Yes/No	Comments:
Could the impact of the report affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
Age?	No	
Disability?	No	
Gender reassignment?	No	
Marriage or civil partnership?	No	
Pregnancy or maternity?	No	
Race?	Yes	Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are ethnic groups protected by the Equality Act 2010. The provision of a transit site is intended to enable a more structured and robust approach of support which will positively impact the health and wellbeing of GRT communities. The temporary nature of the recommended site will enable the authority to assess the extent to which the site achieves this.
Religion or belief?	No	
Sex?	No	
Sexual orientation?	No	
If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	Yes	The discrimination identified is positive in nature.
Is the impact likely to be negative?	No	
If yes, can it be avoided?	N/A	
Are there any alternatives that achieve the same objectives	N/A	

Title:	Options for a transit site within Walsall	
Officer completing:	Kathryn Moreton	
Description of proposal and/or objective:	To provide a transit site to support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community and to mitigate the community disruption and cost impact of unauthorised encampments (UEs).	
Screening Questions	Yes/No	Comments:
without the impact?		
Can the impact be reduced by taking a different action?	N/A	
If you have identified a potential discriminatory impact you will need to complete a full equality impact assessment.		
Is an EIA required:	No	

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Update 2 on Supplier Relief Payments to Contracted and Non-contracted Adult Social Care Providers

Portfolio: Councillor Rose Martin: Adult Social Care

Related portfolios: All

Service: Adult Social Care

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: No

1. Aim

To continue to financially support or provide financial relief to Adult Social Care providers and ensure continuity of care for service users. To do this the Council will continue to make payments outside of usual contracted arrangements (as detailed in the procurement section of this report), as COVID-19 continues to have an impact on the cost of service provision, thus incurring further additional expenditure of up to £900,000 (based on previous applications and modelling until the end of March 2021).

2. Summary

- 2.1. In line with Government guidance and as part of the Adult Social Care's response to COVID-19, a number of measures have been adopted, to enable providers of commissioned care services to be paid in a way that supports their cash flow and sustainability.
- 2.2. In May 2020, Cabinet approved funding of £200,000 for additional supplier relief to contracted and non-contracted Adult Social Care providers following a task and finish analysis of provider Covid-19 related additional expenditure.
- 2.3. In August 2020, as a first update to Cabinet, a further amount of £500,000 was approved for additional supplier relief with the same conditions as the £200,000 approved in May 2020.
- 2.4. Since May last year, the Council has received over £1,099,119 worth of claims from 52 providers and paid £691,068 funded from the approved £700,000 supplier relief, the Infection, Prevention and Control Grant funding and the

recovery of unspent direct payments. The remaining approximately £400,000 worth of claims are requiring processing and payment, subject to cabinet approval.

- 2.5. The £700,000 previously approved additional supplier relief budget has now been exhausted; however the pandemic is continuing to have a significant impact on providers and Adult Social Care commissioners do not foresee an end to the additional cost in the near future.
- 2.6. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, this is a Key Decision for the following reasons:
 - The decision will incur 'significant' expenditure of greater than £250,000.
 - The decision is likely to have a significant impact on two or more wards of the borough as the proposed alternative model is a change to the way in which service is delivered.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet approves funding of up to a further £900,000 for additional supplier relief to contracted and non-contracted Adult Social Care providers. This will be subject to agreed governance, as set out in this report. This additional supplier relief is projected to meet the demand from the adult social care market until 31st March 2021.
- 3.2. That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Adult Social Care to enact these recommendations and subsequently authorise the sealing or signing of any associated contracts, deeds, variations and other related documents.
- 3.3. That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Adult Social Care and the S151 officer to extend the flexible arrangements, within the approved budget envelope and in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

4. Report detail

Know

- 4.1. Adult Social Care have approximately 200 providers who deliver domiciliary care, residential and nursing care, supported living, day centres and social clubs. Domiciliary, supported living, residential and nursing care providers have contractual agreements in place with the Council for the provision of care services.
- 4.2. Additional specific funding has also been provided for Infection Prevention Control totalling £4,632,000 funding from the Government. However ongoing support from the Council for providers continues to be required for additional

expenditure as a result of COVID-19. In May 2020 Cabinet approved funding of £200,000 and a further £500,000 in August 2020 for additional supplier relief to contracted and non-contracted Adult Social Care providers, which has been allocated to providers through an open-book process overseen by the Supplier Payment Action Group (SPAG).

- 4.3. As the pandemic continues to impact the way in which providers can operate, the associated cost and inflated price of essential supplies including personal protective equipment (PPE) remains a significant financial pressure.
- 4.4. In addition and in line with our Care Act 2000 responsibilities, and as agreed in the Cabinet report on Provider Payments in May 2020, the Council has undertaken an open-book accounting exercise to review the financial impact of voids on individual Care Home providers and this has been cross-referenced against the previous open-book accounting exercise conducted with these providers. This initial review has not highlighted any significant concerns about provider financial viability prior to the pandemic.
- 4.5. Although there have been a limited number of provider representations there have been no requests for emergency payments from providers.
- 4.6. Providers have received financial support in the form of the Infection Prevention Grant and Additional Expenses claims. The Additional Expenses claim is the process where providers submit evidence to support the reimbursement of COVID-19 related cost which forms the basis of the Council's supplier relief to this market.
- 4.7. For consistency, it is proposed that the Council continue to utilise the Additional Expenses claim process in order to ensure provider stability whilst retaining appropriate assurance. The tools that the Council utilise for the Additional Expenses process will be adapted to take into account any regional developments or initiatives, particularly in relation to managing supplier risk.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.8. This proposal links to the Council's corporate priority 'Communities are prospering and resilient. The most vulnerable are protected from avoidable harm, including treating and caring for people in a safe environment through working within the local community. It enhances quality of life for people with care and support needs and those with long term conditions; out of hospital, community based provision provides a safe and more appropriate environment for individuals recovering from ill health and/or injury or requiring long term care.
- 4.9. More specifically this proposal seeks to align to the Care Act 2014 Duty of Market Oversight.

Risk management

- 4.10. The monitoring of the expenditure will be overseen by the Adult Social Care directorate in conjunction with finance colleagues. This agenda is also discussed as required as part of the COVID-19 chain of control groups (BRONZE; SILVER and GOLD), which has representatives of all internal and external Stakeholders responsible for delivering safe outcomes as a result of COVID-19.
- 4.11. There is potential challenge in relation to the equity of impact/benefit of the preferred option on providers. This is understood and is managed via the Additional Expenses process to ensure consistency, equity and transparency in how this is enacted as well as the decision making process.
- 4.12. The Walsall Adult Social Care Market is a fragile market in ordinary times; our Adult Social Care Commissioners continue to flag that sustainability of Adult Social Care provision is a significant risk.
- 4.13. In addition to the financial relief implement, as a result of the pandemic commissioners have regular engagement and provide practical support and guidance to mitigate the risk of provider failure

Financial implications

- 4.14. As a result of the continuing pandemic it is now forecasted that total expenditure of £2,100,000 will be required for Additional Expenses for 2020-21. Of this sum £110,000 for PPE expenditure has been funded by Walsall CCG and it is also projected that £390,000 will be funded by the discretionary element of the Infection Prevention Control grant 2 (IPC2). This leaves a balance of £1,600,000 of which cabinet have previously approved £700,000.
- 4.15. Approval is therefore required for an additional £900,000. The table below sets out this position.

	£
Total forecast expenditure 2020-21	2,100,000
PPE expenditure recharged to CCG	(110,000)
Forecast use of IPC2 grant discretionary element	(390,000)
	1,600,000
Additional expenses already approved budget	(700,000)
Additional funding requirement	900,000

- 4.16. This additional funding requirement will be met from Covid funding from Government. In December 2020 the requirement of an additional £800,000 was included in the monitoring return to Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. The additional forecasted £100,000 will be included in the next return in January 2020.
- 4.17. The impact of the proposal on providers' financial sustainability, in creating capacity and ensuring good value for money will continue to be reviewed by Adult Social Care commissioners. Dialogue across the region will also continue in relation to spend levels across a commissioned market where many providers deliver services across the region as well as in Walsall.

Legal Implications

- 4.18. The legal implications of making payments to providers outside of usual contracted arrangements have already been considered and highlighted in the earlier reports to Cabinet last May and August and are further dealt with in the *Procurement implications* section, below.
- 4.19. Legal advice and support has been and will continue to be sought as required as regards to the contractual and regulatory requirements of making additional non-contracted payments to providers.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.20. Decisions made prior to and as a result of Cabinet's approval of the recommendations made in this report may constitute variations to existing contracts. In order to protect the interests of service users, the Council will ensure compliant variation of contracts in relation to any decisions that Cabinet may wish to make, Adult Social Care will seek advice and support from Procurement and Legal Services, in order to execute any associated contractual variations or other contractual arrangements, in a lawful and compliant manner.
- 4.21. Contractual variations that were implemented in relation to the previous Cabinet approvals in May and August 2020 were implemented in accordance with the Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Notes PPN 02/20 and PPN 04/20
- 4.22. PPN04/20 had an end date of 31 October 2020, so any future contractual variations cannot rely on a mandate from these policy notes for future provision. Procurement and legal advice will therefore be required in order to ensure that the recommendations made in this report are executed in a compliant manner via the most appropriate contractual method. This will include provisions for open book accounting and requirements to ensure that providers cannot 'profiteer' from supplier relief.
- 4.23. Procurement advice will be proportionate and seek to reduce unnecessary administrative burden in so far as the Council is able to ensure that it is not counterproductive to the Council's aim of supporting the market at this time.
- 4.24. Any variation of contracts must be in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, Regulation 72 ('Modification of contracts during their term'). Variations must not be 'material', ie alter the overall nature of the contract, whether or not they were included for in the initial procurement and their value.
- 4.25. To date Adult Social Care has implemented the following contract variations to support market as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - (i) Increasing the frequency of payment to providers in receipt of Scheduled Payments, namely the Residential and Nursing contracts and the Community Based Services (CBS) framework;

- (ii) 'Payment on Plan' for Domiciliary Care providers on the Community Based Services framework.
 - (iii) Payment of 'Additional Expenses' as supplier relief for costs that are attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.26. Cabinet has previously made a decision to continue with the variations detailed (i) and (ii) above in December 2020.
- 4.27. In view of the continued variation of contracts referred to in this report and the expiry of provisions set out in PPN02/20 and PPN04/20, continued variation of these contracts has to be carefully considered and managed in order to avoid risks associated with breach of the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Consideration of this risk should also be balanced against the duty to continue to support the provider market during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.28. Contractual variations were initially put in place following guidance published in Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Notes, in response to the pandemic. In addition the requirements referred to in this report could not have been foreseen when these contracts were originally subject to competitive tender.
- 4.29. On this basis continuing with these arrangements, through a continuation of contractual variations, is considered to be the option which poses the least risk to the Council.
- 4.30. It is recommended that any contract variations relating to this matter are only in place for the shortest amount of time required in order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst recognising that the timescale for this is unknown at this time, so will therefore be subject to management by the Adult Social Care Directorate.
- 4.31. In order to secure a longer-term sustainable contractual solution it is recommended a procurement process should be prioritised and completed at the earliest opportunity to enable the establishment of fit for purpose contracting arrangement that appropriately meet the needs and reduce the risks associated with current contractual arrangements.
- 4.32. Relevant controls should be retained within the Adult Social Care directorate to ensure consistency and transparency in terms of both the implementation of this proposal and decision making. This will assist in providing assurance to the Council that that providers are not 'profiteering' from any support measures and are being administered appropriately. Procurement will continue to support Adult Social Care in the implementation of any supplier relief.

Property Implications

- 4.33. There are no property implications.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.34. It is in the health and well-being interests of those supported by Adult Social Care services that the Adult Social Care market is supported to be financially sustainable and to flex its capacity so that it can continue to meet the assessed care needs of those who require them.

Staffing implications

- 4.35. There are no staffing implications arising out of this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.36. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and is appended to this report.

Consultation

- 4.37. All Social Care providers across Walsall and the Council's Health and Carepartners are engaged in regular tele-conferences, by email, through a dedicated 'provider hotline' and through an ASC provider information and advice internet page to address issues as they arise to ensure provider stability and continuity of service.

5 Decide

- 5.1. Adult Social Care have considered the following options for continuing to offer additional financial support to providers:
- Option 1 – Do nothing, cease additional expense payments. The Council is not obliged to fund the additional COVID-19 related expenditure faced by providers. However, failure to do so could see an already limited local market stretched to the point where operation becomes financially unviable for some providers and they may not be in operation post-pandemic.
 - Option 2 (**Preferred**) - To continue to make payments through an open-book process up to a fixed value. The current approach places the onus on providers who need financial assistance to submit a claim to the Council. The claim can then be scrutinised through the open book accounting process and appropriate payments to cover additional costs arising directly from the pandemic can be made.
 - Option 3 – Pay a flat uplift to ASC providers. Whilst this option would be simpler to transact and would offer greater clarity on projected costs, this approach does not target the funding on those providers in greatest need and most at risk of provider failure and is likely to cost significantly more. Nor is this option in line with the decisions taken by Cabinet in May 2020 and August 2020.

- 5.2. Option 2 is considered to be the most cost effective and has the strongest rationale in terms of transparency and providing consistent support to the market during the pandemic and preventing provider failure.

6 Respond

- 6.1. Following the Cabinet approval in May 2020 providers were invited to submit claims for additional COVID-19 related expenditure along with supporting evidence.
- 6.2. Previous claims have been considered by a panel of representatives from Adult Social Care commissioning, procurement and finance who have subsequently made recommendations regarding payment based on their collective knowledge of the sector. Where additional information or clarification is required, Adult Social Care commissioners have contacted the provider directly to ensure that the claim can be reconsidered at the next panel meeting. Panel meetings have taken place twice weekly to ensure the timely processing of payments.
- 6.3. The approach to date has been welcomed by providers and the structure remains in place to continue to review and process provider claims subject to the availability of funding.
- 6.4. Our offer of support ranges from day care and social clubs who have been required to close requesting support with meeting their fixed costs to avoid provider failure compared to our residential and nursing homes and community based service providers such as domiciliary care, extra care and supported living who have requested support with costs over and above what they would normally spend and can't be claimed anywhere else.
- 6.5. Additional supplier relief to contracted and non-contracted Adult Social Care providers will continue to be monitored and allocated to providers through an open-book process overseen by the Additional Expenses Group, which includes officers from finance and commissioning.

7 Review

- 7.1 These arrangements will be continually reviewed in line with any new guidance or as a result of the pandemic ending and/or budget implications.

Background papers

Cabinet Paper – Paying for Community Based Commissioned Care Services During the COVID-19 Period - 19May 2020

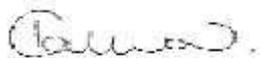
Cabinet Paper - Update on Supplier Relief Payments to Contracted and Non-contracted Adult Social Care Providers – 12 Aug 2020

Cabinet Paper - To approve extension to flexible arrangements for Adult Social Care providers during COVID-19 pandemic – 9 December 2020

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Kerrie Allward
Executive Director Adult Social Care

Date: 1 February 2021



Councillor Rose Martin
Portfolio holder – Adult Social Care

Date: 1 February 2021

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Update 2 on Supplier Relief Payments to Contracted and Non-contracted Adult Social Care Providers		
Directorate	Adult Social Care Directorate		
Service	Commissioning		
Responsible Officer	Kerrie Allward		
Proposal planning start	Emergency plan commenced 23 March 2020 due to COVID-19	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	ongoing

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Interim change to the way community based commissioned care providers are paid during COVID-19 – to pay providers against the value of service users support plan		
	Policy	N	N
	Procedure	Y	Y
	Guidance	Y	Y
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Y	Y
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	Commissioned	
	Other - give details	Interim proposal replacing current contractual payment arrangements	
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>In line with Government guidance and as part of the Adult Social Care's response to COVID-19, a number of measures have been adopted, to enable providers of commissioned care services to be paid in a way that supports their cash flow and sustainability.</p> <p>In May 2020, cabinet approved £200k and a further £500k in August 2020 for additional supplier relief to contracted and non-contracted Adult Social Care providers to support with Covid-19 related additional expenditure.</p> <p>Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the Council has received over £1,099,119.22 worth of claims from 52 providers and paid £691,068.95 funded from the approved £700,000 supplier relief, the Infection, Prevention and Control Grant funding and the recovery of unspent direct payments.</p> <p>The £700,000 previously approved additional supplier relief budget has now been exhausted however the pandemic is continuing to have a significant impact on providers</p>		

	<p>and Adult Social Care commissioners do not foresee an end to the additional cost in the near future.</p> <p>The priority is to ensure as per Government guidance – community based commissioned care providers are supported in terms of cash flow and sustainability during this period. Thus ensuring our vulnerable service users continue to receive care to sustain their independence.</p>																																													
3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?																																													
	People in Walsall	Yes																																												
	All	Y																																												
	Specific group/s	Y																																												
	Council employees	Y																																												
	Other (identify)	<p>All citizens of the borough who have received a statutory community care assessment, where it has been determined they have assess needs requiring services in the community within which they live.</p> <p>All staff who process payments to care providers will be required to change the way and the frequency of payments. Meaning payments will be paid at much greater pace.</p> <p>Systems development staff will be required to temporarily reconfigure social care systems to enable payment processes to temporarily change</p>																																												
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.																																													
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vulnerable Adult Social Care service user group who receive community based services either directly commissioned through Walsall Council or via a Direct Payment by age banding are as follows @ May 2020: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>Day Care</td> <td>18 - 65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>407</td> <td>Direct Payment</td> <td>18 - 65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>84</td> <td>Direct Payment</td> <td>66 - 75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>228</td> <td>Direct Payment</td> <td>76 +</td> </tr> <tr> <td>164</td> <td>Dom Care – CM (CM electronic monitoring tool care recorded)</td> <td>18 - 65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>130</td> <td>Dom Care – CM</td> <td>66 - 75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>542</td> <td>Dom Care – CM</td> <td>76 +</td> </tr> <tr> <td>43</td> <td>Dom Care - Non CM</td> <td>18 - 65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40</td> <td>Dom Care - Non CM</td> <td>66 - 75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>131</td> <td>Dom Care - Non CM</td> <td>76 +</td> </tr> <tr> <td>269</td> <td>Supported Living</td> <td>18 - 65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>Supported Living</td> <td>66 - 75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Supported Living</td> <td>76 +</td> </tr> </table> The vulnerable Adult Social Care service user group who receive community based services either directly commissioned through Walsall Council or via a Direct Payment by gender are as follows @ May 2020: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>Day Care</td> <td>Female</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Day Care</td> <td>Male</td> </tr> </table> 		15	Day Care	18 - 65	407	Direct Payment	18 - 65	84	Direct Payment	66 - 75	228	Direct Payment	76 +	164	Dom Care – CM (CM electronic monitoring tool care recorded)	18 - 65	130	Dom Care – CM	66 - 75	542	Dom Care – CM	76 +	43	Dom Care - Non CM	18 - 65	40	Dom Care - Non CM	66 - 75	131	Dom Care - Non CM	76 +	269	Supported Living	18 - 65	24	Supported Living	66 - 75	7	Supported Living	76 +	9	Day Care	Female	6	Day Care
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9	Day Care	Female																																												
6	Day Care	Male																																												

394	Direct Payment - Client	Female
325	Direct Payment - Client	Male
540	Dom Care – CM (Care recording tool)	Female
296	Dom Care - CM	Male
132	Dom Care - Non CM	Female
82	Dom Care - Non CM	Male
104	Supported Living	Female
196	Supported Living	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vulnerable Adult Social Care service user group who receive community based services either directly commissioned through Walsall Council or via a Direct Payment by ethnicity are as follows @ May 2020: 		
6	Day Care	Asian/Asian British
1	Day Care	Black/Black British
8	Day Care	White
133	Direct Payment	Asian/Asian British
30	Direct Payment	Black/Black British
		Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
6	Direct Payment	Other Ethnic Groups
5	Direct Payment	White
545	Direct Payment	White
79	Dom Care – CM (CM electronic care recording tool)	Asian/Asian British
21	Dom Care – CM	Black/Black British
		Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
8	Dom Care – CM	NULL
6	Dom Care – CM	NULL
5	Dom Care – CM	Other Ethnic Groups
717	Dom Care – CM	White
12	Dom Care - Non CM	Asian/Asian British
3	Dom Care - Non CM	Black/Black British
1	Dom Care - Non CM	No ethnicity recorded
2	Dom Care - Non CM	Other Ethnic Groups
196	Dom Care - Non CM	White
33	Supported Living	Asian/Asian British
5	Supported Living	Black/Black British
		Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
7	Supported Living	Other Ethnic Groups
2	Supported Living	White
253	Supported Living	White
5	Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).	

Detailed engagement has taken place with all community based providers of commissioned care and with direct payment support agencies on the proposal to support their cash flow and sustainability during this COVID-19 period and to empower them to work with service users differently during this period to ensure care is delivered proportionality across our whole community based service user cohort.

There is ongoing engagement with our regional authorities to determine the approaches being undertaken by other local authorities in the payment of providers.

Engagement has taken place with Association of Directors of Adult Social Care to seek a steer and understand guidance being issued nationally.

Internal staff engagement has taken place for those staff who's work practices will be changed during this period, recognising this is now a dispersed staff cohort working remotely, which brings additional challenges.

Engagement and approval sought on approach being proposed and adopted via Gold Command.

Consultation Activity

Type of engagement/consultation	<p>Affected staff engagement - face to face; conference calls</p> <p>weekly conference calls to commissioned care providers including day care and social club providers</p> <p>Engagement and escalation of proposed approach through bronze to gold command</p>	Date	<p>All commenced 20 March, 2020 and continues</p>
Who attended/participated?	<p>Adult Social Care staff; Corporate Finance Payment Team; Community Based Care externally commissioned care providers (circa 200)</p>		
Protected characteristics of participants	<p>The officer participants are representative of the make-up of the council organisation</p> <p>The community based providers also represent the make-up of the local community and include both small scale independent provider and larger regional and more national providers</p>		
Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider feedback was overwhelmingly positive in response to the proposed interim change • Staff feedback was one of concern that usual validation processes would be deferred; limited timeline to mobilise all changes including significant system reconfiguration; concern the pace staff would need to work in order to deliver the refreshed payment timetable 			

6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation			
	<p>Continued routine engagement takes place each week; with briefings as appropriate and communication material issued to the market as required. The expectation was that providers would communicate directly with service users.</p> <p>Full Cabinet report and associated documentation that is linked directly to this EQIA</p>			
7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed			
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes
	Age	<p>The intention of this interim change during COVID-19 was aimed at ensuring we meet our market management responsibilities in that providers are supported to remain financial viable and able to resume business as usual when the pandemic is over. Our approach supports providers to ensure community based service users receive a level of 'safe' care, even though was unlikely to be at the usual level as per their individual care and support plan.</p> <p>It is also intended that services users who contribute towards the cost of their care, continue to make payments in line with the community based charging policy – meaning payment was against care received.</p>		
	Disability			
	Gender reassignment			
	Marriage and civil partnership			
	Pregnancy and maternity			
	Race			
	Religion or belief			
	Sex			

	Sexual orientation	
	Other (give detail)	
	Further information	
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.	(Delete one) Yes
	<p>This proposal is aligned to community based market supplier relief and as such aligns to wider organisational work package focusing on executing government directive on supplier payment relief. It is clear that individual providers of commissioned care should not profiteer from the current COVID-19 situation; however emergency funding has been passed down from central government to local authorities recognising an anticipated increase in spend by care providers to the value of 10%.</p> <p>Adult Social Care does recognise that our community based commissioned care market varies in make-up from independent local provision, to regional and national providers of care and this in turn will have an impact on ability to be flexible in delivering care and financially stability. Adult Social Care accept this position of a disproportionate effect across an unequal market and we seek to continue with this approach, endorsed by all providers of care.</p>	
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?	
	A	A change required due to urgent needs
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal

Action and monitoring plan

Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
February 2021	Consider and accept the EQIA alongside the Cabinet report and associated documentation	To refresh as required		

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
May 2020	£200k approved by Cabinet to support the provider Additional Expenses process
August 2020	£500k approved by Cabinet to support the provider Additional Expenses process
<p>Since March significant support both financial and other has been offered to the provider market. It is believed that this support continues to contribute to the stability of the market as to date there has been no provider failure</p>	

Contact us

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Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Sub-Regional Supported Accommodation Framework

Portfolio: Councillor Wilson

Related portfolios: Not applicable

Service: **Children's Commissioning – Sub-Regional Supported Accommodation Framework**

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to inform that the current sub regional supported accommodation Framework Agreement expires on the 11th July 2021 and to seek approval for Walsall to continue to be a member for a further 4 year term (with an option to extend for an additional 2 years, if this is required), creating a maximum contract term of 6 years.
- 1.2 This will improve the outcomes for 16 and 17 year old looked after young people in the process of leaving care and vulnerable and homeless 16 and 17 year olds supported by Children's Social Care.

2. Summary

- 2.1 In June 2016 Cabinet approved that Walsall Council join the **Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework** from 23rd November 2016 to 22nd November 2018 with the added provision to extend for an additional one year + one year.
- 2.2 This report seeks delegated authority for the Executive Director Children's Services to enter into Call-off contracts with supported accommodation providers under the **Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework to be awarded in June 2021 ("the Framework")**, following Staffordshire County Council's completion of a competitive tender process.
- 2.3 The current contract expires on the 11th July 2021 and preliminary work has already begun to ensure we are able to commission the new service within timescales. The aim is to advertise the tender in January 2021, for a commencement date of the 12th July 2021.

- 2.4 The Framework will last for four years from 12 July 2021, with the option to extend for an additional two years from 12 July 2025.
- 2.5 The Framework will allow all eligible young people across the borough to access a range of supported accommodation within the region. Of the current 78 supported accommodation providers, Walsall Council has made placements with 48 different providers. Walsall Council currently spot purchases with 15 providers who are not part of the Framework and these placements will remain spot purchased.
- 2.6 The local commissioning intention is to procure services within a competitive Supported Accommodation market where quality has been pre-measured and evaluated and rates have been benchmarked by accommodation cost and an hourly support rate for the term of the Framework. This will allow more accurate forecasting of cost based on the pattern of demand and analysis by age group.
- 2.7 The Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2000 requires Local Authorities to provide a comprehensive service to all young people leaving care after age 16 and who have been looked after for 14 weeks or more. As part of the Act, local authorities must ensure Young People leaving care have access to a range of suitable accommodation options, in the case of Young People leaving care aged 16 and 17, and this accommodation should be appropriately supported.
- 2.8 The Framework will have a positive impact on the Council's Looked After Children (LAC) sufficiency responsibility which requires the Council to secure sufficient accommodation within the Council's administrative area. Alongside local in-borough provision, this Framework will support LAC closer to home by facilitating them remaining within the region wherever possible when there is no local placement possibility.
- 2.9 All young people who are currently in placements will remain in their accommodation after July 2021 with providers who are successful in their tender to join the Framework. Transition arrangements will allow for any young people placed with unsuccessful providers to either remain or move to another provider on the Framework.
- 2.10 All of Walsall Council's existing spot purchase providers that are successful in tendering to join the Framework will transfer to the terms and conditions which are prescribed by the Framework, via the call-off contracts and the new Individual Placement Agreements which the Council puts in place with each of such providers.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve Walsall Council to continue to be a member of the sub regional supported accommodation framework approach, where applicable, for 16 and 17 year old looked after young people in the process of leaving care

and vulnerable and homeless 16 and 17 year olds supported by Children's Social Care.

- 3.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Children's Services, to enter into call-off contracts with supported accommodation providers that successfully tender to Staffordshire County Council to join the Framework.
- 3.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents for the provision of such services, as appropriate, including any agreement with the Staffordshire County Council to facilitate these services.
- 3.4 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of any contracts and provided they are in line with the Council's Contract Rules and relevant Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 3.5 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children Services, to extend any existing arrangements, in line with the Council's Contract Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015, where this is required to enable a successful transition from the existing framework agreement to the new one for these services.

4. Report detail – know

- 4.1 Supported accommodation provides accommodation, typically for 16 to 17 year olds, to prepare them for their transition into independence. The Council has a statutory duty to work with housing providers to ensure that care leavers are provided with suitable accommodation when they leave the care system. This Framework Agreement is aimed to support this requirement. It will also meet the Council's legal obligation to help prevent homelessness. The Framework is aimed predominately at 16 to 17 year old's, however the Framework will cater for up to 21 year old's to help meet the requirements of the West Midlands Region.
- 4.2 Supported Accommodation providers are not regulated by Ofsted as their primary purpose is to provide accommodation and not care. Therefore, quality assurance is undertaken by commissioners from Local Authorities and Trusts, which needs to be robust given the vulnerability of the young people accessing these services. The lack of regulation of this type of provision has come under recent scrutiny. The DfE are currently out to consultation on this subject therefore this Framework will have the flexibility to change to reflect any changes to the regulations.

- 4.3 Quality can differ considerably between providers and with a high number of new entrants to the sector this provides challenges in terms of consistency in service delivery but also quality. A regional approach is aimed to address this and help improve quality across the region and sector.
- 4.4 The DfE is currently consulting on the sector, specifically around an appropriate approach to regulation and on a proposed quality assurance framework. The outcome of this consultation is likely to have a significant impact on the future commissioning of the supported accommodation market.
- 4.5 Work to recommission the Framework has been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Most notably, market engagement was postponed in March 2020 and delays to the DfE consultation. However, this has provided an opportunity to develop a regional approach and implement any DfE recommendations or changes arising from the consultation.

**The Procurement Process
Implementing the Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework**

- 4.6 In June 2020 Staffordshire County Council commenced leading the sub regional procurement process which will result in Staffordshire County Council's award of the Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework, commencing in July 2021. The tendering exercise will be conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 4.7 As this comes under the "Light Touch Regime" of Public Contract Regulations 2015, it provides the flexibility to model the Framework to meet the requirements of the participating Councils. In order to help manage the market and provide flexibility, the Framework is aiming to have the capability of opening every 2 years to allow new entrants. The proposal is to seek a Framework for 4 years with an option up to extend for another 2 years, creating a maximum contract term of 6 years.
- 4.8 The table below shows the proposed timeline from the issue of tender documentation:

EVENT	DATE
Tender Published	January 2021
Tender Deadline	30 days after publication
Evaluation of bids	April / May 2021 (4 to 5 weeks)
Notification to Award (Standstill period)	June 2021 (10 days)
Contracts issued for Signatures	June / July 2021
Contract Commencement Date	July 2021

- 4.9 The Council has participated in the regional process for this tender from the outset. The contracting authority (Staffordshire County Council) has also procured the Framework Agreement for the benefit of the other local authorities which are named below:

Staffordshire County Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Wolverhampton City Council, **Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council**, Herefordshire Council, Birmingham City Council, Worcestershire County Council, Stoke on Trent, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan, Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

4.10 The service specification and the pricing schedule are being developed to commission the best quality service at the most competitive cost. The rates for accommodation and the hourly support rate will be benchmarked and split into the following four service categories;

- 1) Single accommodation + face to face support hours as specified
- 2) Shared 2 -4 accommodation + face to face support hours as specified
- 3) Outreach not linked to accommodation
- 4) Shared 2+ sleep in staff on site from 10.00pm to 7.00am each night, individual daytime support hours to meet the individual young person's needs. Staff to be on call to provide support if necessary.
- 5) Shared 2+ with staff on site 24/7 with daytime support hours to meet the individual young person's needs. Additional staff available to support individual young people within the community. (This is predominately the service category which Walsall Council currently purchases for our young people).

4.11 Staffordshire County Council's standard quality / price split is (80% price and 20% quality). However, given the nature of the market, the region feels it is vital that a quality service is achieved and is therefore advocating for a 40% price and 60% quality split. Without a regulatory body overseeing this sector it is felt to be the most appropriate option to obtain the best quality service for some of our most vulnerable young people. Competition will still be achieved by using a tier system so providers will be encouraged to submit their best price to ensure they are in the highest tier and therefore receive the most referrals.

All providers will have to submit a tender submission which will have to meet the following essential criteria to join the Framework:

- Correct and full submission.
- Financial checks.
- Minimum qualifications of staff (80% achieved or working towards – NVQ 3, QCF level 3 or equivalent) and 1 year experience working with young people.

4.12 Young people may require additional support or services as part of their supported accommodation placement. Additional service requirements are either defined at the point of referral by the case holding Social Worker or requested as part of the ongoing review of individual placements in response to their changing needs.

- 4.13 In preparation for a July 2021 contract start date; a project group of regional commissioners have been coordinating the commissioning and transition process in preparation for contract award. This has included:
- Amending the Service Specification
 - Procurement decisions
 - ITT Questions & Scoring
 - Transfer to new provider if needed in a planned way
 - Amend Individual Placement Agreements if needed
 - Review Individual Placement Agreements to identify additional expenditure arrangements to ensure value for money if needed.
 - Establishing the implementation arrangements to ensure continuity and smooth transition of existing service provision
- 4.14 Each Local Authority is independently responsible for the conduct of its call-off of placement contracts under the Framework and are required to abide by the calling-off process detailed in the Framework.
- 4.15 The West Midlands Placements database is being redesigned to act as the main tool for sourcing placements. It is intended to incorporate a tracking system which ensures that each Local Authority which calls off placements under the Framework is using the tiered process.
- 4.16 Maintenance of service quality and best value will be monitored and assured throughout the lifetime of the Framework by commissioning contract management and social work feedback and the attainment of the young peoples' outcomes. Continuous intelligence will be shared between the participating Local Authorities and analysis reporting will be carried out on a regional level with Local Authority commissioners.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.17 **Corporate Plan 2018 -2021**

Economic Growth – Creating an environment where Supported Accommodation providers;invest, grow and develop in Walsall, which may also create job opportunities for Walsall residents.

People – Young People aged 16 & 17 living in quality supported accommodation will have increased independence, improved health, live a good quality of life and feel that they belong so that they can positively contribute to their communities

Internal Focus – Internal services can deliver quality supported accommodation to young people which are efficient and effective and deliver value for money.

Children – Young people feel safe from harm, happy, healthy and are learning well while thriving emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential.

Communities – Young people feel connected to their community and feel safe also housing meets their needs of being affordable, safe and warm.

4.18 **Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2022**

Getting placements right to support our children in care to be safe, happy and learning well - Updated January 2019

Children in Care Reduction Plan - to safely reduce the number of Children in Care

Locally placing and returning our children home – How will we do this?

Continue our successful use of the WM Regional Frameworks (IFA / Residential / Supported Accommodation) to place within 20 miles from home.

Recommendations to Improve Sufficiency

To bring about a safe reduction in admissions and increase CiC discharges by;

For care leavers, **increased access to specialist supported accommodation** providers with specialist support workers to actively assist young people in moving onto suitable permanent tenancies (i.e. our commissioned St. Basil's Scheme).

- 4.19 All commissioned services are explicitly designed to deliver the above priority by putting the life chances and outcomes of vulnerable children at the centre of their care planning.

Risk management

- 4.20 The risks relating to both the procurement and implementation of the Framework have been actively assessed and managed as part of the tendering process.
- 4.21 Joining the Framework will enhance Walsall Council's ability to purchase quality, value for money placements for looked after children and young people, whose needs cannot be met within internal provision, thus mitigating the risk for the Council being reliant on spot purchasing supported accommodation placements which may result in more expensive and poorer quality placements.
- 4.22 Risks of securing poor value for money services are mitigated by having an effective and properly resourced Placement and Resources Team and a Social Work workforce able to identify Supported Accommodation Framework needs as early as possible, so that the right placement at the right cost in the right locality can be called off by the Council.
- 4.23 If a regional approach is not implemented, the impact is likely to be one or more of the following outcomes:
- Leverage as a region will be diminished.

- Loss of market management if the region is not operating collectively.
- Increased prices due to greater use of spot purchases and area by area commissioning arrangements.
- Lost opportunity to increase the quality of provision across the region.

Financial Implications

- 4.24 There is no financial cost to the Council to continue to be a member of the Framework. The Framework sets the overall terms and conditions for the service - i.e. contractual terms and pricing. An individual contract is called-off once a placement is made by a Local Authority. It is not unusual for a provider to have no guaranteed minimum business or financial commitment through a Framework.
- 4.25 There are no specific cost benefits relating to the continued use of this framework. However, the framework will allow robust contracting processes and a standardised process for securing supported accommodation for young people leaving care aged 16/17. This process will deliver procedures enabling the Council to better manage stability, cost and best value consistently across the regions of the Framework.
- 4.26 Prices for the vast majority of providers has remained static over the last 4 years, therefore there is an expectation that prices may increase. However, having a regional approach will help manage this more effectively by encouraging new entrants and thus competition into the market, providing cost benefits to Walsall and other participating Councils and Trusts.
- 4.27 Over the last three years a total of 170 young people aged up to 18 have lived in supported accommodation placements, mainly with providers on the Framework as detailed in the table below:

Year	Number of Young People	Average Stay in Days
1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	54	169
1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019	68	172
1 st April 2019 – 31 st March 2020	48	146

The total spend for the three years is £4.118m of which £2.481m was through the Sub Regional Framework and £1.637m was spent on spot purchased high need placements with tailored support that could not be met by the Framework.

Legal Implications

- 4.28 Staffordshire County Council will procure the Framework in compliance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and in accordance with the County Council's own Contract Rules. The relevant Notice which is to be published by the County Council in due course will be checked to ensure

that Walsall Council is named as one of the benefiting Local Authorities, so that the Council can then commence calling off the required contracts and placements from the successful tenderers.

- 4.29 All new placements via the Framework will be evidenced by a call-off contract with the provider in question and an Individual Placement Agreement.
- 4.30 The Children's (Leaving Care) Act and Regulations 2000 requires Local Authorities to provide a comprehensive service to all young people leaving care after age 16 and who have been looked after for 14 weeks or more. As part of the Act, local authorities must ensure Young People leaving care have access to a range of suitable accommodation options and 16 and 17 year olds must be appropriately supported. Joining the proposed Framework will enable the Council to comply with these requirements.
- 4.31 Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children, S.22G The Children Act 1989 and Chapter 7, The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3, Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010, revised 2014, requires Local Authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation is 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. The statutory duty requires they must have regard to the benefits of securing a range of accommodation through a number of providers, which meets the wide-ranging needs of young people in line with their individual's care plan / pathway plan. Joining the proposed Framework will enable the Council to comply with these requirements.
- 4.32 The Children Act 1989 places the primary duty for homeless 16/17 year olds with Children's Services, R (G) v London Borough Southwark 2009. The Housing Act 1996, part 7 and S. 199(1) and the Homeless Code of Guidance sets out when a young person, including care leavers post 18, have priority housing need and local connection. R (on the application of SO) v Barking and Dagenham 2010 sets out that in certain circumstances the duty to support some care leavers in post 18 accommodation remains with Children's Services. Joining the proposed Framework will enable the Council to comply with these requirements.
- 4.33 The Homeless Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities to ensure that Children's Services and Housing departments work together to ensure that the accommodation needs of young people leaving care are met and, have priority need status, The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002. Joint working is also recommended in non-statutory good practice guidance 'Joint working between Housing and Children's Services', Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Children, Schools and Families 2008. Joining the proposed Framework will enable the Council to comply with these requirements.
- 4.34 Children's Services will continue to work with Legal Services and the Supported Housing Team and Money, Home, Job to ensure that the Council delivers through this Framework.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.35 The procurement process will be conducted in accordance with the procurement rules which are set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Council's Contract Rules and Social Value Policy.
- 4.36 Collaborative procurement process have the benefit of shared resource, knowledge and experience however care has been taken protect Walsall Council's interest and minimise any increased procurement related risk that may be associated with such arrangements. Procurement and Legal advice has been sought to minimise procurement-related risk, however, there will always remain an inherent risk of legal challenge associated with any procurement undertaken by the Council.
- 4.37 Specific procurement advice will be sought prior to the tender documents being published and during the process as required to ensure that Walsall Council's interests are safeguarded, however as Staffordshire County Council is the lead authority, the procurement will be led by their procurement department.
- 4.38 Social value is an integral part of this contract and all tenders have been evaluated based on their ability to bring social value including employment and volunteering opportunities as part of their service delivery. The proposed successful bidders clearly demonstrated their social value through a commitment to create opportunities for local people and voluntary sector organisations.

Property implications

- 4.39 The Framework providers will provide all required premises from which to deliver their service. There are no property implications as these services are delivered by contracted providers external to any Local Authority owned property.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.40 The Council has a statutory responsibility to promote the health and wellbeing of its population. This procurement supports the Corporate Plan priorities for the Council by ensuring that these services protect and promote the health and wellbeing of all vulnerable LAC. The quality of service to be provided will contribute to reducing health and wellbeing inequalities by providing Care Leavers with healthy, stable life experiences, an explicit objective of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 4.41 The Framework will also adhere to the objectives of the Marmot Review:

- Give every child the best start in life – by providing care and support
- Enable all children, young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives – by providing stable care and support and transition to adulthood
- Create fair employment and good work for all – by providing local work Opportunities, where appropriate, in those regions where accommodated

Staffing implications

- 4.42 The Framework requires dedicated input from Corporate Parenting Team, Transition & Leaving Care (TLC) Officers, Placement & Brokerage Team, Legal Services, Safeguarding and Family Support, Children’s Commissioning and Finance Services.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.43 No Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been required as this service will be available to all eligible service-users and people with protected characteristics. Therefore, no major change would be required.

Consultation

- 4.44 Consultation was undertaken by regional commissioners collectively for this project and a virtual market engagement event was held on the 3rd September 2020 which was a great success.

5. Decide

- 5.1 To agree for Walsall Council to be part of the 4 year (with an option to extend for an additional further 2 years, if this is required) Sub Regional Framework for supported accommodation for the West Midlands region which covers all 14 local authorities and Trusts, thus creating a maximum contract term of 6 years.

6. Respond

- 6.1 Subject to approval of the recommendation, the decision will be implemented by continuing to be part of the Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework and undertake the procurement exercise alongside the other 14 Councils.

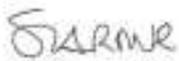
7. Review

- 7.1 Monitoring will be undertaken by the Children’s Commissioning Team with checks being undertaken on the provider when a young person is placed, this monitoring will then feed into the regional quality assurance group.

Background papers

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Sally Rowe
Executive Director

February 2021



Councillor Wilson
Portfolio holder

February 2021

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Proposed High Needs Local Funding Formula 2021/22

Portfolio: Councillor Towe

Related portfolios:

Service: SEND

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

Cabinet on 21 October 2020 received details of the proposed High Needs Funding Formula for Walsall targeted to provide a fair, needs led and child centred approach to allocating funding for school aged children with SEND from 1 April 2021. Approval was given to undertake formal consultation on the revised proposed model in line with School's Forum proposed decision on 23 September 2020. Following formal consultation, further changes to the model were made and supported by Schools Forum at their meeting on 12 January 2021 and are referred to Cabinet for consideration and final approval for implementation from 1 April 2021.

2. Summary

This report provides Cabinet with a proposed updated Walsall High Needs Funding formula model for schools supporting pupils with identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from that previously presented to Cabinet on 21 October 2021, taking account of the consultation process, further analysis and moderation undertaken and details of any recommended changes to the model.

It also provides an overview of the work undertaken, including:

- Specifying provision for each band/area of need within the banding document and financial modelling
- A summary of consultation responses and amendments made to the model previously presented to Cabinet on 21 October 2020

Finally, a summary of implementation details and future actions

This constitutes a key decision as a change to the High Needs funding model could potentially have an impact on all school aged children with SEND, across all wards within the borough, and incur expenditure which is in excess of £250,000. Financial modelling and projections indicate that the proposed revised model is affordable within the totality of funding that is available within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that is paid to the authority.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the revised local high needs funding model, recommended by Schools Forum at their meeting on 12 January 2021 and set out in appendices A and B of this report.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approve the implementation of the proposed high needs funding model for 2020/21, as set out in section 4.5 of this report. Namely for all new EHCPs and all special school EHCP pupils from 1 April 2021 and for mainstream pupils with existing EHCPs through scheduled Annual Reviews from 1 April 2021 onwards.
- 3.3 That Cabinet approves to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, to amend the final formula, within the total High Needs block funding that is available, to accommodate any protection that may be required if the request to disapply the Minimum Funding Guarantee is not supported by the Department for Education.
- 3.4 That Cabinet approves to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, to agree the utilisation of any amount of available High Needs funding to support special schools and Pupil Referral Units in financial difficulty, as allowed within the High Needs Funding guidelines.

4. Report detail - know

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 The high needs funding formula is the local process that is utilised to allocate the High Needs Block of the Dedicated schools Grant (DSG) funding that the Council receives, to the providers of support to children with additional needs in the Borough of Walsall.
- 4.1.2 A working group of the Schools Forum, comprising of representatives from all school phases and sectors has continued to meet and work on a proposed revised high needs funding methodology and model, which is child centred, needs based, transparent, equitable and affordable.
- 4.1.3 The methodology builds on the work undertaken in 2019 and the additional work in 2020 encompassing revised moderated SEN data from schools and academies to propose an updated model to be implemented from 1 April 2021. The model has

been developed through extensive work with schools and partner services, led by the Schools Forum High Needs Funding working group.

- 4.1.4 The proposed basis of the high needs local funding formula for 2021/22 is set out in this report. Feedback from the consultation undertaken has been considered and informed changes in the original model, approved by School Forum on 12 January 2021 and forwarded to Cabinet for final approval of the model and implementation.
- 4.1.5 Once approved by Cabinet the new local high needs funding formula rates will be used to determine indicative budget shares for all special schools for 2021/22 and will determine the high needs top-up funding attracted by mainstream schools. As funding for PRUs and ARPs was not included in the review work undertaken to date, funding in these areas will continue to be allocated using the existing model for 2021/22, with a further review of the funding formula for these provisions then due to take place during 2021/22.

4.2 Feedback From The Consultation Process

- 4.2.1 Consultation has been actively undertaken through the engagement of schools, SENCOs and parents and has involved communications to parents from schools, an online survey, email and telephone responses and the Walsall Local Offer website. Video conferencing and drop in sessions were also held for parents, carers, headteachers and school staff, governors and internal and external support services to enable participants to ask questions and receive responses to any queries they have about the proposal.
- 4.2.2 The consultation process commenced on 23 November 2020 and closed on the 20 December 2020 to inform the high needs funding formula model and proposal and enable outcomes to be summarised and shared at the School Forum meeting on 12 January 2021.
- 4.2.3 Feedback from the consultation process is summarised below:

Information regarding respondents:

- 158 respondents from the detailed questionnaire, of which 85 were parents, 81 parents of children with SEND and 17 parents of pupils attending special schools
- 55.1% of respondents were parents; 33.6% were school staff or governors
- Of the responses received: 3.8% were nursery related, 73.6% primary and 22.6% secondary
- 32.1% of school responses were from academies, free schools or independent schools

Agreement to principles underpinning the proposed model:

- 98% agreed with the need for it to be 'Child centred' - all children and young people will receive the 'right help, in the right place at the right time, for the right amount of time
- 96% agreed it should be 'transparent' - there needs to be a transparent approach to funding across all sectors (mainstream/special, primary/secondary)
- 98% agreed with the need for 'Equity' – there needs to be a fair approach to funding that is based on a needs based approach rather than a setting based approach

- 97% agreed with the focus on 'Early intervention' – there needs to be a graduated approach to support, and therefore funding for provision
- 93% agreed that approaches should support 'Inclusion' – the majority of children and young people with SEND, including those with an EHCP, should be able to access the right support within their local mainstream school and local community.

4.2.4 Views regarding whether the Walsall Right 4 SEND document would achieve its identified aims:

- In general there was a high level of agreement that the proposed model and document would support the identified aims
- Ensuring effective identification of childrens' special educational needs – 81% agreed, 9% did not know and 11% disagreed
- Ensuring children with SEND get the right help in school: -72% agreed, 18% did not know and 11% disagreed
- Ensuring children with SEND are better prepared for adulthood: - 66% agreed, 23% did not know and 11% disagreed.

4.2.5 Response rates from services were relatively low as they were directly engaged and involved in the development of the banding document and the Walsall Right 4 SEND document over the past 18 months

4.2.6 A number of suggestions were made which have been taken on board, as outlined in section 4.3 below.

A summary analysis of responses received is included in Appendix C

4.3 Proposed Amendments To The High Needs Funding Formula And Banding Model

4.3.1 Concerns were raised that the proposal was a cost saving exercise

Response: This is clearly not the case as the envelope of resources has factored in overall High Needs Funding block increases, it does however prioritise resources to the highest levels of need.

4.3.2 A number of individual child specific comments and funding issues were raised alongside some concerns re the moderation of bandings, consistency of application and the need to hold schools and educational establishments to account to ensure a child centred approach.

Response: Whilst individual funding issues will not be addressed as part of the overall review, as part of the implementation process it is proposed to implement the new bandings for mainstream school pupils via scheduled annual reviews. This will ensure parental involvement in reviews and support discussions and provide an additional layer of moderation and avoid the need to open up EHC plans unnecessarily. Special school provision and designations will be encompassed in the specialist review currently being undertaken and hence new bandings can be implemented in full from 1 April 2021.

4.3.3 The need to review cognition and learning bands was expressed

Response: Details expanded in the banding document with specificity added

4.3.4 Concerns were raised that there was a strong focus on primary need and given complexities of need, this focus should not mean that other needs are not met.

Response: Schools need to assess children holistically, further detail is to be added to the document, with a matrix for each child. This will not impact on the funding but should help with discussions with parents to show schools have fully considered multiple needs whilst identifying primary needs. The need to ensure that the model caters for our children with the most complex needs has also been recognised by adding an additional higher funded band 8

4.3.5 Concerns were expressed re the need to review the medical need strand.

Response: this has been recognised and has been removed from the document and replaced with a signpost to medical provision to secure adequate provision.

4.3.6 View expressed that there is a need to ensure that schools recognise and meet needs of children who are neuro divergent.

Response: Recognised and an additional section will be included at the start of the document. This will be coproduced with children and young people and parents/carers with lived experience and relevant services.

4.3.7 Views expressed that there is a need to ensure that children with autism have their needs identified and met.

Response: Separate guidance document to be coproduced with children and young people and parents/carers with lived experience and schools and services. This will be progressed through the Autism Working Group to ensure it is fully integrated with other developments.

4.3.8 Concerns were expressed re the choice and level of specialist support and provision available in mainstream and specialist settings. References to specialist teaching resources for hearing impairment and CAMHS waiting times were also referred to.

Response:- Recognition of need for a full child centred approach, not just education. Specialist provision review will incorporate specialist provision and specialist support and teaching services. CAMHS and health related service issues to be raised and addressed through new Partnership board working arrangements. There will be a continued focus on a needs led approach to provision.

4.4. Financial modelling:

4.4.1 The draft resourcing needs for each area of need and band were provided to finance officers, based on the Walsall Rights 4 SEND guidance document. This was informed by the high needs funding working group supported by specialist services, knowledge of provision currently provided in Walsall schools and relevant guidance to provide quantification of provision for each of the bands in each area of need for the purpose of the financial modelling work. This resourcing need then provides an assessment of the costs of meeting the needs of children in each band, which can then be compared to funding that the authority is predicted to receive in its DSG High Needs block. Further work

will continue to be undertaken to identify the potential impact on individual schools/providers to plan for these changes

- 4.4.2 The outcome of the modelling indicates that for 2021/22 the proposed funding is estimated to be affordable within the totality of funding that is available within the High Needs Block of DSG that is paid to the authority (based on a predicted total top-up cost for the year for the revised model of circa £16.25 million). This includes an assumption of a 7% increase in demand in that year, which has been built in to accommodate anticipated pressures.
- 4.4.3 The breakdown of the financial model is contained in Appendix A for both special and mainstream schools. It takes account of existing predicted funding levels and existing pupil numbers in the moderation exercise and includes an estimate of funding required to support 7% potential growth in the year
- 4.4.4 Implementation is recommended for new EHCPs from 1 April 2021 and further moderated through scheduled Annual Reviews for existing mainstream school EHCPs from 1 April 2021 onwards. The Annual Review process which will introduce a further robust level of moderation and challenge and supplement Annual Review and EHCP Hub training being delivered to SENCOs from the autumn term 2020 onwards.
- 4.4.5 The School's Forum Working Group considered a range of funding models from other Local Authorities. The current model is proposed as it allowed for categorisation of primary need and would allow for the bandings to be used across all phases (primary and secondary) and settings (mainstream and special school).
- 4.4.6 Prior to 1 April 2021 the Transitional Top Up Support (TTS) scheme, approved by Schools Forum and Cabinet in February and March 2020, will continue. However this scheme will then cease from 31 March 2021 with the implementation of the new formula on 1 April 2021.

4.5 Implementation

- 4.5.1 Consultation feedback was supportive of implementation as detailed above. Parent consultation sessions conveyed a strong desire for parents to be involved in discussions around children's needs under the new banding arrangements in mainstream settings. This would also provide an additional layer of moderation at annual review stage re levels of need and support required in mainstream settings. Hence, it is proposed to implement the new banding levels at scheduled annual review stage for children with an existing EHCP in mainstream settings. All new EHCPs issued will fall under the new model from 1 April 2021, as they will be subject to the revised banding and assessment processes.
- 4.5.2 Special school bandings, provision and budgets were more clearly designated, with less risk of banding anomalies and will be subject to the specialist services review currently being undertaken, matching designation and provision to higher identified levels of need. Hence the implementation of the

revised banding levels can be more readily implemented from 1 April 2021.

- 4.5.3 The School Forum on 12 January 2021 approved the revised High Needs Funding model subject to Cabinet approval of the revised High Needs Funding model and its implementation.
- 4.5.4 Going forward the future approach to High Needs funding will be subject to an annual review by an identified sub group of Schools Forum. The allocation of funding will be reviewed alongside an analysis of the changing need reported through the audit process and pupil place planning.

5 Council Corporate Plan priorities

This work relates to the Corporate Plan Priorities for Children (Ch2 - The gaps in educational attainment between the least and most deprived communities will be narrowed for all under achieving groups). Specifically, the allocation of High Needs Funding should ensure that children identified as having SEND have the right support at the right time to ensure they access their entitlement to a full time education and can make good academic progress and achieve their potential.

6 Risk management

- 6.1 The financial modelling supports the proposed funding formula within projected resources assuming a 7% growth factor. Budget monitoring and control will need to ensure the formula's financial sustainability into the future.
- 6.2 The funding formula proposed is a needs based model based on defined principles to ensure resources are allocated on the basis of pupil need and not the school or provision children and young people attend. Changes to the model would need to be closely monitored to ensure the core principles of the review are complied with.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 The intention of revising Walsall's High Needs Funding Formula is to ensure that there is an equitable system in place to accurately identify pupil's additional needs and provide appropriate funding in support of this to achieve the best outcome for them. However this needs to be balanced against the fact that the High Needs funding the authority receives is a cash limited grant and any spend against this to support children's needs must be contained within the totality of the High Needs funding that is available to the council.
- 7.2 The outcome of the financial modelling that has been undertaken in relation to the proposed revised funding formula indicates that for 2021/22 the proposed funding is estimated to be affordable within the totality of funding that is

available within the High Needs Block of DSG that is paid to the authority (based on a predicted total top-up cost for the year for the revised model of circa £16.25 million). This includes an assumption of a 7% increase in demand in that year, which has been built in to accommodate anticipated growth.

- 7.3 The proposal may be subject to the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) for special schools, which is set by a condition of grant that applies to local authorities' DSG and protects special schools from seeing a reduction in funding from year to year, of more than 0% per pupil, assuming that the number and type of places remains the same between two financial years. The final MFG calculation cannot be completed until later in the financial year when it is known no further pupil changes are likely prior to April 2021.
- 7.4 As this is a major reorganisation of high needs funding for special schools, moving from a 3 banded framework based on designation of school to a funding framework based on 5 areas of pupil need across 10 bands, a like for like comparison required by the MFG is not possible. Additionally if any MFG is required the impact of applying this may result in anomalous outcomes and potentially thwart one of the main principles of the funding review ie. that a pupil with assessed needs will attract the same funding for those needs regardless of the special school they attend.
- 7.5 Schools Forum and Cabinet supported the authority to submit a disapplication request to disapply the MFG for 2021/2022 for special schools to enable increased flexibility in the implementation and ensure that the principles of the review can be delivered in full. The Department for Education (DfE) at the time of writing this report are still considering the request. It is not yet known whether (if the application is approved by the secretary of state) the disapplication will need to be utilised, but financial modelling to date suggests that the potential impact of applying the MFG, through varying the top up rates of those special schools affected by offering a 'protection top up' to them, can be accommodated and be affordable as part of the process to agree the final implementation of the formula. As such a recommendation has been proposed to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, to amend the final formula, within the total High Needs block funding that is available, to accommodate any protection that may be required if the request to disapply the MFG is not supported by the DfE.
- 7.6 The national High Needs funding regulations also allow the authority to utilise available High Needs funding to support special schools and Pupil Referral Units in financial difficulty. This flexibility is useful in both supporting these categories of schools to manage the current pressures that they are experiencing, whilst also managing any impact of changes in the local high needs funding formula top up rates. As such a recommendation has also been proposed to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, to agree the utilisation of any amount of available High Needs funding to support special schools and Pupil Referral Units in financial difficulty, as allowed within the High Needs Funding guidelines.

- 7.7 With any change in the allocation of the overall High Needs funding amongst individual schools / providers, as a result of the implementation of a revised funding formula, there are likely to be some schools that see an increase in the High Needs funding that is allocated to them, and others that may see a reduction. The authority will seek to work with those schools that do see a reduction in funding to help them plan for the impact of this.
- 7.8 The local High Needs funding formula also incorporates top up values which are attributable for Additional Resourced Provision (ARP's) and Pupil Referral Units (PRU's). Whilst these areas of provision did not form part of the wider review undertaken as part of setting the 2021/22 local high needs funding formula, the proposed rates are set out in Appendix A.

8 *Legal implications*

- 8.1 The DfE has prescribed the way in which schools should be financed for the 2021/22 financial year. These guidelines are set out in the Schools Revenue Funding 2021 to 2022 operational guide. The purpose of these arrangements is to help secure greater consistency in the way in which high needs funding is distributed to schools. The Council is bound to adhere to the rules issued by DfE.
- 8.2 It is essential that we achieve a fair, effective and efficient formula that meets the needs of those pupils and the schools where they are placed. Failure to do this could result in an increase in SEND tribunals and greater legal challenge from parents and carers as well as support groups within the areas of SEND.

9 *Procurement Implications/Social Value*

There are no procurement/social value implications arising from the proposals in this report.

10 *Property implications*

There are no property implications arising from the proposals in this report.

11 *Health and wellbeing implications*

It is expected that the new model for High Needs Funding will support the Marmot objectives of:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

This will be achieved by ensuring that the approach to funding ensure children have access to the right support at the right time to promote their development, educational outcomes and prepare them for adulthood.

12 Staffing implications

There are no staffing implications arising from the proposals in this report.

13 Reducing Inequalities

An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed.

The overall aim of the proposed model is to ensure a fair and equitable approach to the allocation of High Needs Funding. This will reduce inequalities and ensure that children with SEND have access to the provision required to meet their needs, ensure access to their entitlement to fulltime education and to address the gap in outcomes between those with SEND and those without.

14 Consultation

14.1. Walsall schools and parents of children with SEND at those schools were consulted on the revised high needs funding arrangements.

14.2 The outcomes of the consultation were shared at the School's Forum meeting on 12 January 2021 and a number of consequent amendments agreed to the revised proposal for a new model for high needs funding.

14.3 The consultation included the distribution of a survey to gather views as well as a number of 'drop in or video conferencing sessions' where people could ask questions and receive responses to any queries they had about the proposal.

14.4 The following actions were be taken:

- Consultation with schools, parents/carers and partner services
- Responses to consultation were considered and amendments were made to the model as a consequence
- School Forum approved the changes and recommended requested approval from Cabinet for the implementation of revised High Needs Funding model
- Identification of schools that will see an increase in the High Needs funding that is allocated to them. Further work to be undertaken to identify actions to support those schools that see a reduction in funding to help them plan for the impact of this.

15 Decide

The School's Forum Working Group considered a range of funding models from other Local Authorities. The current model was developed and consulted

upon as it allowed for categorisation of primary need and would allow for the bandings to be used across all phases (primary and secondary) and settings (mainstream and special school).

16 Respond

The principles underpinning the revised High Needs Funding model were consulted upon and the following actions taken:

- Finalisation of financial modelling
- Finalisation of model
- Responses to consultation considered and a number of amendments were made as a result of this
- School Forum considered the results of the consultation and amendments and approved, subject to Cabinet approval, the implementation of the revised High Needs Funding model
- Report to Cabinet to seek approval for the implementation of revised High Needs Funding model
- Further work on the Identification of schools that will see an increase in the High Needs funding that is allocated to them and to Identify actions to support those schools that see a reduction in funding to help them plan for the impact of this.

17 Review

The approach to High Needs funding will be subject to an annual review by an identified sub group of Schools Forum. The allocation of funding will be reviewed alongside an analysis of the changing need reported through the audit process and pupil place planning.

Background papers

Schools Forum reports – 23.09.20 and 12.01.21 – Proposed High Needs Local Funding Formula

Walsall Right 4 SEND guidance document

Cabinet report 21 October 2020 Proposed High Needs Funding Formula 2021/22

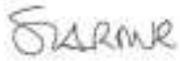
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Sally Rowe
Executive Director Children's Services

February 2021



Councillor Towe
Portfolio holder Education and Skills

February 2021

Appendix A

Revised Proposed High Needs Top-up Rates 2021-22 following Consultation

SEND Band	Proposed Special schools High Needs Top-Up Rates 2021-22	Proposed Mainstream High Needs Top-Up Rates 2021-22
SEMH Band 1,2 & 3 - funded by school budget	Na	Na
SEMH Band 4	Na	4,181
SEMH Band 5	Na	6,847
SEMH Band 6	16,311	10,392
SEMH Band 7	21,280	17,075
C&L Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	Na	Na
C&L Band 4	Na	3,095
C&L Band 5	Na	4,611
C&L Band 6	5,896	11,800
C&L Band 7	14,209	15,312
C&L Band 8	24,810	20,388
SLCN Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	Na	Na
SLCN Band 4	Na	3,326
SLCN Band 5	Na	6,891
HI Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	Na	Na
HI Band 4	Na	4,611
HI Band 5	Na	6,847
HI Band 6	9,905	9,923
HI Band 7	14,209	14,471
VI Band 1, 2 & 3 – funded by school budget	Na	Na
VI Band 4	Na	5,375
VI Band 5	Na	8,407
VI Band 6	Na	15,006
VI Band 7	Na	17,432
MSI Band 1,2, &3 – funded by school budget	Na	Na
MSI Band 4	Na	6,216
MSI Band 5	Na	10,764
MSI Band 6	20,710	16,643
MSI Band 7	35,622	18,159
Physical Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	Na	Na
Physical Band 4	Na	3,791
Physical Band 5	Na	6,745
Physical Band 6	19,624	13,718
Physical Band 7	23,154	18,432

Automated Adjustment for Walsall Special Schools Above / Below Commissioned Number:

With the review and implementation of updated top-up rates for special schools the previous automatic allocation /clawback of enhanced top-up for places above or below the commissioned number has been removed from April 2021.

Where a special school does see a significant increase in numbers above their commissioned number they will need to follow the guidance set out by the DfE and provide evidence to the authority of the

actual increase in costs that have been incurred to allow the authority to consider if any additional funding should be allocated.

Top-Up Rate for Pupil Referral Unit:

	Proposed PRU top-up rate for excluded pupils
New Leaf PRU	9,665

Top-Up Rates for Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) in Mainstream Schools – 2020/21 (places filled on October 2020 census)

	Proposed ARP top-up rates for Filled places
Speech & Language -primary	TBC
Speech & Language -secondary	TBC
Dyslexia - secondary	TBC
Visual Impaired - primary	TBC
Physical Disability - primary	TBC
Physical Disability - secondary	TBC
Autism - primary	TBC
Autism - secondary	TBC

Top-Up Rates for Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) in Mainstream Schools – 2020/21 (places unfilled on October 2020 census)

	Proposed ARP top-up rates for Un- Filled places
Speech & Language -primary	TBC
Speech & Language -secondary	TBC
Dyslexia - secondary	TBC
Visual Impaired - primary	TBC
Physical Disability - primary	TBC
Physical Disability - secondary	TBC
Autism - primary	TBC
Autism - secondary	TBC

Walsall Getting It 'Right for SEND' Guidance and Banding Document (January 2021)

THIS IS AN UPDATED DRAFT DOCUMENT FOLLOWING THE FORMAL CONSULTATION, THE CURRENT VERSION DOES NOT INCLUDE HYPERLINKS AND A CONTENTS PAGE – THE FINAL WEBSITE READY VERSION WILL BE PRODUCED FOLLOWING FORUM AND CABINET APPROVAL.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is a tool for any professionals supporting or working with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes Walsall schools and settings and external support services supporting Walsall children and young people. It is also a tool for young people and the parents/carers of children and young people with SEND.

What is the purpose of this guidance?

The purpose of this guidance is to support those who are directly supporting or working with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to:

- Implement whole school approaches and high quality first teaching that promotes the inclusion of all children and young people, including those with SEND
- Implement a consistent and transparent approach to the identification of children's special educational needs
- Implement an effective and appropriately targeted graduated approach to meeting SEN needs in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015) to ensure all children with SEN make good academic progress and achieve good outcomes in relation to education, health and social care. This document provides signposting to national and local guidance documents and evidence based approaches and interventions suitable for supporting children with a range of needs
- Identify when it is appropriate to request additional high needs funding (via an EHC assessment)

It also provides a transparent structure for a needs led and equitable funding model for the allocation of high needs funding for children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (see attached top up rates for 2021-22).

What are the national expectations for schools in relation to SEND?

- That they have an identified SENCO who is a qualified teacher working at the school. A newly appointed SENCO must be a qualified teacher and, where they have not previously been the SENCO at that or any other relevant school for a total period of more than twelve months, they must

achieve a National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination within three years of appointment. The school should ensure that the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out these functions. This should include providing the SENCO with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in a similar way to other important strategic roles within a school.

- That they publish a SEN Information Report on their website and update this at least annually. This must include the school’s SEN Policy, key contacts, the school’s Local Offer and links to the Local Authority Local Offer
- That they have an identified individual on the Governing Board or Committee with specific oversight for the school’s arrangements for SEND
- That they have a Behaviour Policy (or equivalent) which is inclusive and protects against discrimination, particularly for children with SEND
- That they have an Attendance Policy which is inclusive and protects against discrimination, particularly for children with SEND

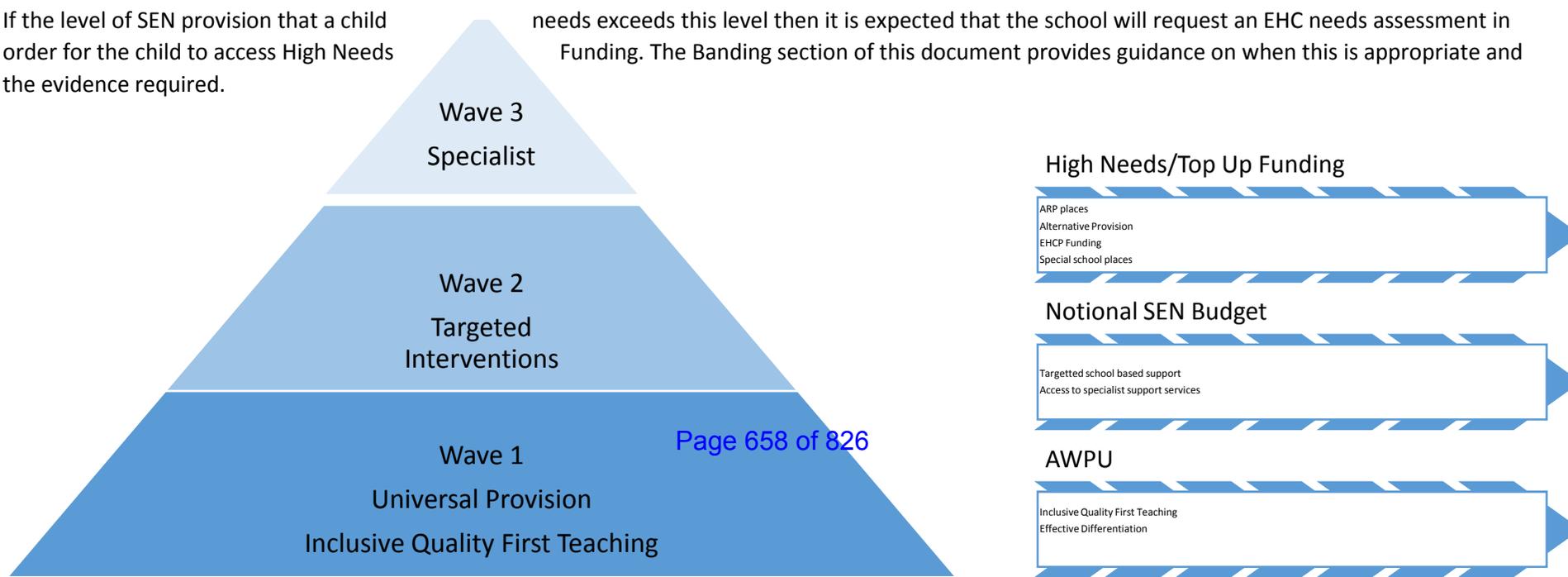
What funding do schools receive to support children with SEND?

Schools have an amount identified within their overall budget, called the notional SEN budget. This is not a ring-fenced amount, and it is for the school to provide high quality appropriate support from the whole of its budget. In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, it is for schools, as part of their normal budget planning, to determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEN. The SENCO, headteacher and governing body or proprietor should establish a clear picture of the resources that are available to the school. They should consider their strategic approach to meeting SEN in the context of the total resources available, including any resources targeted at particular groups, such as the pupil premium.

Schools are not expected to meet the full costs of more expensive special educational provision from their core funding. They are expected to provide additional support which costs up to a nationally prescribed threshold per pupil per year (£6,000 per pupil per year).

If the level of SEN provision that a child order for the child to access High Needs the evidence required.

needs exceeds this level then it is expected that the school will request an EHC needs assessment in Funding. The Banding section of this document provides guidance on when this is appropriate and



What are the principles for practice which guide support for children and young people with SEND in Walsall?

The Walsall SEND Partnership Group, which comprises all relevant stakeholders including young people, parents/carers, schools and specialist education, health and social care services, has co-produced a set of principles that should guide and inform all work with children and young people with SEND in Walsall. The principles for practice are set out below:

- Access to the right specialist support at the right time, with a focus on early intervention
- Child/young person-centred approaches
- Outcomes focussed and strengths based assessments
- Co-production with children and young people and their parents/carers, Walsall schools and settings and support services. Using restorative practices ensuring we are collaboratively 'working with' children, young people and their families
- Ways of working that ensure everyone is heard and understood and can question and understand
- Inclusion of children and young people with SEND within local universal provision wherever possible
- Partnership working and effective information sharing across education, health and care
- High aspirations for all children and young people
- Focussing on preparation for adulthood and providing support which builds independence and reduces dependency
- Ethical and transparent ways of working
- Reducing barriers and bureaucracy

- Skilled and stable workforce

What is the 'Walsall Right for Children' Vision?

This guidance has been developed in accordance with the Walsall Right for Children Vision. This sets out Walsall's ambition for providing children and young people, and their families, with the 'right support at the right time'. A restorative approach underpins the Walsall Right for Children vision and work. This is an approach that seeks to provide 'high challenge' alongside 'high support' and ensuring that we are 'working with'. The Walsall Right for SEND Guidance aims to provide a tool which is supportive of Walsall schools and helps to ensure that there is a consistent and appropriate response to SEND provision across all schools, for all Walsall children. This guidance has been developed by schools for schools and also with parents/carers so it seeks to be an accessible and supportive tool to support Walsall Local Area to move forward in its effective identification of children and young people's SEND needs and in ensuring an appropriate provision offer which supports positive outcomes for all children and young people with SEND.

What national guidance is relevant to supporting children and young people with SEND?

This guidance document should be read in conjunction with relevant national guidance, including:

- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- SEND Regulations (2014)
- Equality Act (2010)
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (2015)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)
- Exclusion from mainstream schools, academies and Pupil Referral Units in England (2017)

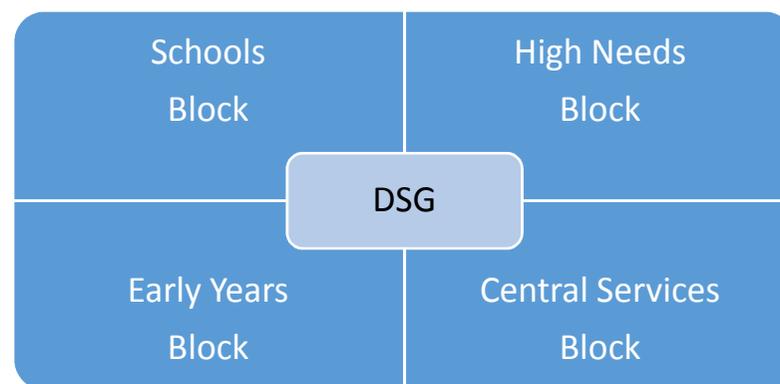
What local guidance is relevant to supporting children and young people with SEND?

This guidance document should be read in conjunction with relevant local guidance, including:

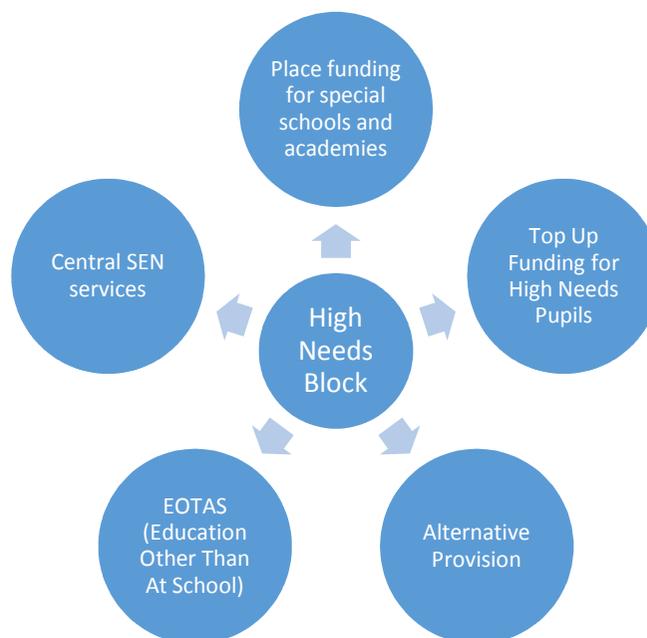
- Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy (include link)
- FAP/exclusion protocol (include link)
- How to request an EHC needs assessment – a guide for schools/settings, young people and parents/carers (include link)
- My SEND Support Plan – a guide for schools/settings, young people and parents/carers (include link)
- My SMART targets – a guide for schools/settings, young people and parents/carers (include link)
- My SEND transition Plan – a guide for schools/settings, young people and parents/carers (include link)
- SEND toolkit (school age) (in development)
- Early Years SEN toolkit (0-5) (include link)
- Supporting children with medical needs
- Supporting children and young people with Autism: Guidance for schools (in development – to be co-produced with CYP and parents/carers with lived experience and relevant services through the Autism Working Group)
- Walsall Personal Care Policy (include link)
- Walsall Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines (include link)
- Walsall 'Good SENCo Guide' (include link)
- Walsall ARP Partnership Document (include link)

How is SEN provision funded within Walsall Local Authority?

The local authority receives central funding in the Designated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG comprises 4 blocks:



The High Needs Block is required to fund:



Who decides how High Needs Funding is spent?

The Children and Families Act (2014) requires Local Authorities to keep the services and provision for children with SEND under review. Local Authorities are also required to make decisions about the delegation of funding through consultation with their Schools Forum. To strengthen the partnership and ensure an effective restorative approach consisting of high support, high challenge, Walsall Local Authority have worked with Walsall School's Forum to develop a Schools Forum High Needs Funding Working Group. The Working Group was established in July 2019 and comprises representatives from the primary & secondary sector as well as from mainstream, Additionally Resourced Provision and special school settings. Local Authority Officers, Governors representatives and Parent/Carer representatives are also included in the group.

A core task of the group has been to develop and implement a revised High Needs Funding Formula which is applied across mainstream and special schools for children from their Reception Year to Year 13. This guidance document supports the implementation of the revised approach.

Going forwards the Working Group will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the annual audit of need (all Walsall schools required to complete the SEND banding audit annually)
- Arranging and overseeing moderation of the annual audit data

- Reviewing the final annual audit data and making recommendations for cost effective approaches to meeting SEND needs in Walsall
- Reviewing the High Needs Funding Formula
- Making recommendations to Schools Forum and the Local Authority for how to use High Needs Funding to meet needs in a child centred, needs led and cost effective way

How are schools required to use this guidance?

Walsall schools are required to use this guidance in 2 ways:

1. As a tool to ensure they are effectively identifying children and young people with SEND who should be included on their SEN register and who they support through an assess-plan-do-review cycle of support in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015). Schools should make use of the links to related guidance documents, resources and recommendations for evidence based provision to help them support children with SEND. Schools are required to 'regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the support they offer or can access' in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015). This document should help schools to do that.
2. To complete an annual SEN audit. All SENCOs will be asked to identify where each child on their SEN register (Reception to Year 13, excluding children in ARP places) is on the banding document and submit this information to the Local Authority to support a longer term strategic approach (supported by the Schools Forum High Needs Funding Working Group) to provision planning across Walsall.

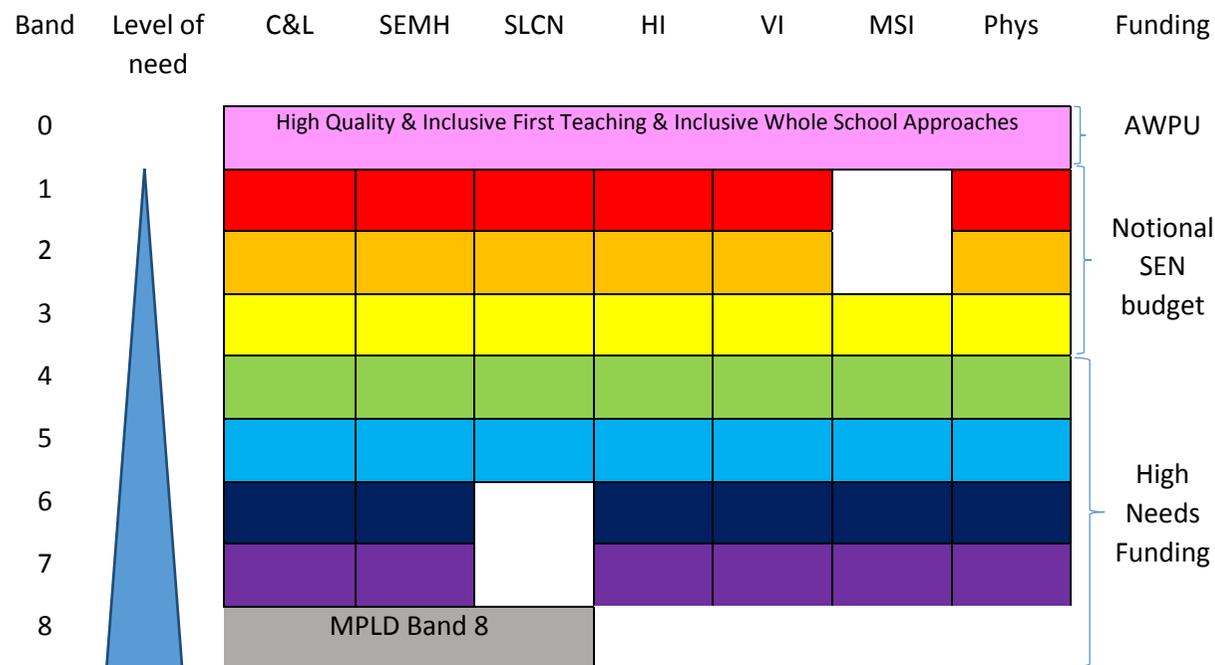
How do schools complete the Banding audit?

The banding document is organised into 7 areas of primary need, which correlate to the 4 areas of the SEND Code of Practice. The 7 areas of primary need are:

- Cognition & Learning (C&L)
- Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH)
- Speech, Language, Communication & Social Interaction (SLCN)
- Physical & Sensory:
 - Hearing Impaired (HI)
 - Visually Impaired (VI)

- Multi-Sensory Impaired (MSI)
- Physical Needs (Phys)

Generally each area of need is categorised into up to 7 'bands'.



Schools are required to look at each child on their SEN register (Reception to Year 13, excluding children in ARP places) and **identify their primary area of need** (from the 7 areas specified above) and **the level/Band of need** (from Bands 1-7/8). **Each child should only be identified once** on the banding document – according to their primary area of need. To do this schools should:

- Identify all relevant areas of need. This should be following appropriate holistic assessment which identifies all areas of need
- Identify what level of need the child has in each area. The provision guidance and groupings/ratios should also be considered – a child cannot be judged to be within a Band if they are not receiving a level of provision identified as appropriate for that Band
- Identify the area of need where the child has the highest level of need – this is the area of need which is having the most significant impact on their access to, and progress within education. This will be identified as the Primary area of need (this may change over time and should be reviewed regularly).

Schools should take a considered approach when completing the audit, bearing in mind that the needs of all children in Walsall schools, including special schools, are included within the audit, so an approach to banding needs to be relative to Walsall as a whole rather than relative to the needs within an individual school. Schools should take an evidence based and needs led approach.

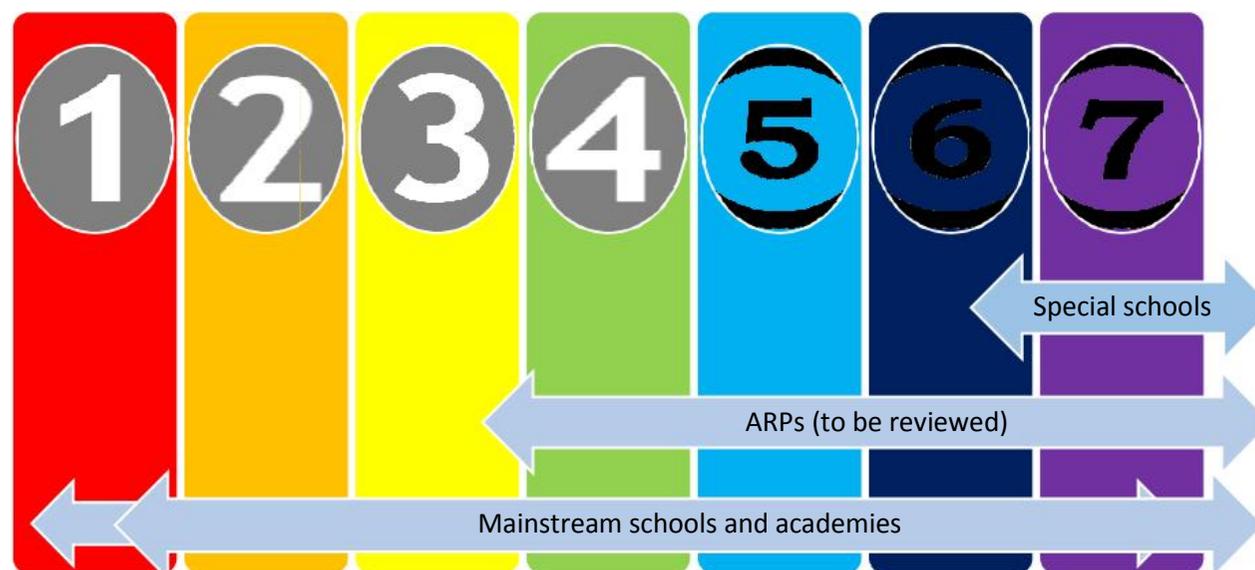
What factors are taken into account when deciding on educational placement?

Walsall Local Authority expect that the majority of children with SEN in Walsall (including those with an EHCP) will be able to receive the 'right support at the right time' to meet their special educational needs and will be fully included within their local mainstream school. Parents/carers of some children with more complex needs who have an EHCP or young people with an EHCP themselves may request a particular school/setting to be named in their EHCP. This will be complied with unless it is considered to be:

- unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or
- the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources

Walsall Local Authority will continue to review the designations of our special schools in light of the annual audit data submitted by schools and our growing knowledge of the range of SEN needs children have in Walsall. In general, it is only expected that children will require access to specialist provision within a special school if they have needs at Band 6 or above. Many children with needs at Band 6 and above will also continue to access education within their local mainstream school.

Walsall also has Additionally Resourced Provision schools (ARPs). During 2021-22 these schools will continue to maintain the same entry criteria and attract the same high needs funding top up rates. Children who currently have a place in an ARP may have levels of need in a range of bands. ARPs will be subject to a review in the future and it is expected that they will be included within the WR4SEND banding approach.



Promoting inclusion and responding to individual needs:

The WR4SEND Guidance and Banding document aims to promote inclusion across all Walsall schools and supports the aims set out within Walsall's Inclusion Strategy.

Whilst the WR4SEND Guidance and Banding document aims to provide a transparent approach to allocating high needs funding for children with EHCPs through use of the banding approach, focussed on identifying a child by their primary need, it is important to continue to recognise the complexity of children's special educational needs and the often interrelated factors and areas of need. This encourages a 'best fit' approach and schools are expected to carry out holistic assessments of children's special educational needs to ensure all of their needs are identified and planned for.

Preparing for Adulthood:

One of the principles underpinning SEND practice in Walsall is – 'Focussing on preparation for adulthood and providing support which builds independence and reduces dependency'. We are committed to ensuring there is a focus on 'preparing for adulthood' from the earliest years. It is important that schools

and other professionals supporting children and young people with SEND are skilled in identifying children's aspirations and hopes for the future, and engage in collaborative planning to ensure that the right support is put in place at the right time to enable children and young people to make progress towards, and achieve their aspirations in relation to:

- education and employment
- independent living
- engagement in their community
- their health

The aim of all SEND support should be to help children develop their skills, maximise their independence and enable them to achieve their aims and aspirations. It is therefore essential that there is a real focus on setting SMART targets and putting in place highly targeted and evidence based support to achieve this.

Neurodiversity:

*Section to be co-produced with young people and parents/carers with lived experience and relevant services.

Supporting children with medical and health care needs:

*Section to be co-produced with relevant services with signposting to national and local guidance and health pathways.

Cognition & Learning			
Universal – Band 0			
Services who can support:	Whole school approaches:	Training:	Useful websites/resources:
<p>Walsall Educational Psychology Service</p> <p>Advisory Teaching services</p> <p>Specialist Teachers spld/dyslexia</p> <p>Walsall Speech and Language Therapy</p>	<p>Peer support/modelling</p> <p>Scaffolded learning</p> <p>Differentiation by output, support, pace, resource</p> <p>Use of alternative methods of recording as required</p> <p>Differentiated approach to homework and in school support for homework</p>	<p>Effective differentiation</p> <p>Teaching and Learning approaches to support Learners with Down's Syndrome</p> <p>Teaching and Learning approaches to support Learners with ADHD</p> <p>Precision Teaching</p>	<p>johnandgwyn.co.uk/probe.html</p> <p>https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/for-new-parents/education/education-support-packs/</p> <p>www.bdadyslexia.org.uk</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/literacy-ks-1/</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/literacy-ks-2/</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools/</p> <p>https://nasen.org.uk/uploads/assets/e227fce8-87f7-4630-bc4606a87e2bec53/Supporting-pupils-with-SID.pdf</p> <p>https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130323065803/htt</p>

			<p>ps://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00086-2009-maths_difficulties.pdf</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Metacognition/EEF Metacognition and self-regulated learning.pdf</p> <p>https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/documents/files/What-works-for-children-and-young-people-with-literacy-difficulties-5th-edition.pdf</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Maths/EEF Maths Evidence Review.pdf</p> <p>http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/media/downloads/inline/the-rose-report.1294933674.pdf</p>
Book recommendations for children/young people	Book recommendations for adults (parents/carers/professionals)		
	<p>Hattie, J. (2012). <i>Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning</i>. Routledge.</p> <p>Stein, M., Kinder, D., Silbert, J., & Carnine, D. W. (2005). <i>Designing effective mathematics instruction: A direct instruction approach</i>. Pearson.</p> <p>Carnine, D., Silbert, J., Kameenui, E. J., & Tarver, S. G. (2009). <i>Direct instruction reading 5th edition</i>. Columbus, OH: Merrill.</p>		

Cognition & Learning	
Ordinarily Available - Band 1	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with the acquisition / use of language, literacy, numeracy skill and requiring more than differentiated teaching approaches and reasonable adjustments. • Expected that literacy and/or numeracy skills are at least 3 terms behind age related expectations. • Difficulty with the pace of curriculum delivery. • Some problems with concept development. • Evidence of some difficulties in aspects of literacy, numeracy or motor coordination.
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have been subject to enhanced assessments to identify needs. At this stage this is expected to be carried out by the class teacher with guidance from the SENCo if required. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies cognition and learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition and learning skills, although there should be an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • Provision should be directly related to the child's targets and primary area of need, as well as an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil grips • Writing slopes • Laptop for recording • Visual cues • Visual timeline • Task lists

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlearning • Word mats/topic mats • Pre-teaching key vocab • Personalised topic dictionaries • Practical resources for maths • Sentence starters • Task slicing • Peer support • Talk partners • Adult check ins • Kim's game, shopping list game (memory games) • Small group targeted support
Adult support & ratios	<p>Inclusion within mainstream class group/s</p> <p>Small group targeted support for core subjects (1:8)</p>
Academic progress	Likely to be up 3 terms behind age related expectations. This may be across the curriculum or in certain subject areas.

Cognition & Learning	
Ordinarily Available - Band 2	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing and persistent difficulties in the acquisition/use of language/literacy/numeracy skills. • The pupil is operating at a level well below expected outcomes (this is likely to be 1 to 2 years behind age related

	<p>expectations) and there is evidence of an increasing gap between them and their peers despite targeted intervention and differentiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of difficulties with aspects of cognition i.e. memory, concept development, information processing, understanding, sequencing and reasoning that impact on learning and/or limit access to the curriculum • Progress is at a slow rate but with evidence of response to intervention and that ongoing support is required to maintain gains and to access the curriculum. • Processing difficulties limit independence and may need adult support in some areas. • The pupil will have mild but persistent difficulties in aspects of literacy, numeracy or motor coordination despite regular attendance, appropriate intervention and quality first teaching. • May have difficulties with organisation and independence in comparison to peers • Difficulties impact on access to the curriculum and the pupil will require special arrangements and additional support in the classroom. • Self-esteem and motivation may be an issue. • Possibly other needs or circumstances that impact on learning and progress
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have been subject to enhanced assessments to identify needs. At this stage this is expected that this will involve more specialist school based assessments (such as Sandwell Maths, Salford Reading Assessment, Phonological Assessment Battery, British Picture Vocabulary Scales, YARC), carried out by the class teacher and/or the SENCo. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies cognition and learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition and learning skills, although there should be an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • Provision should be directly related to the child's targets and primary area of need, as well as an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs. Provision should be evidenced based. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toe by Toe • Precision Teaching

Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colourful semantics • Words First • Kinetic letters • Memory Fix • Alphabet arc • Multi-sensory approaches • Write Dance • Nessy • Sticky Kids • Get Moving • Numicon • Individual timeline/task lists • Tailored group interventions
Adult support & ratios	<p>Inclusion within mainstream class group/s.</p> <p>Small group (up to 1:8) targeted support for core subjects.</p> <p>Some targeted individualised support to deliver planned interventions (this may be in a very small group) (e.g. 3x 30 min 1:1)</p>
Academic progress	Likely to be 1 to 2 years behind age related expectations. This may be across the curriculum or within certain subject areas.

Cognition & Learning

Ordinarily Available - Band 3	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent difficulties in the acquisition/use of language/literacy/numeracy skills and appear resistant to previous interventions • The pupil is operating at a level significantly below expected outcomes (this is likely to be 2 to 3 years behind age related expectations) and there is evidence of an increasing gap between them and their peers despite targeted intervention, differentiation and curriculum modification. • Moderate difficulties with independent working and needs the ongoing support of an adult and a modified curriculum. • Assessment by an external support service indicates significant and enduring difficulties with several aspects of cognition e.g. memory, concept development, information processing, understanding sequencing and reasoning that impact on learning and/or limit access to the curriculum and/or there may be significant discrepancies between different areas of cognition or a highly unusual profile of strengths and difficulties which require a personalised learning plan, access to advice from a specialist and is likely to require support for reading/recording to access the curriculum at the appropriate level of understanding. • The pupil will have moderate and persistent difficulties with literacy, numeracy or motor co-ordination despite regular attendance, significant levels of focused intervention, effective provision mapping and quality teaching. • Difficulties in some aspect of cognitive processing will be present, i.e. slow phonological processing, poor working memory, and difficulties with auditory and visual processing. • The difficulty will affect access to curriculum and specialist support/advice and arrangements will be required. This is likely to include assistive technology and/or augmented or alternative communication supports. • Difficulties with learning may now impact on self-esteem, motivation and emotional wellbeing despite positive support, involvement of pupil in target setting and personalised learning.
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Cognition and learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. If the child is not making accelerated progress then it may be appropriate to request an EHC assessment (see 'Making an EHC assessment request guidance') • Specialist and highly targeted assessments may be carried out to inform interventions and adjustments to curriculum and learning. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition and learning skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly 'different from and additional to'. • Enhanced and personalised transition planning will be required (see 'My transition plan' guidance) • SENCo is usually directly involved at this stage to support further assessments to identify any other underlying needs. • Advice will be sought from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Specialist Teacher Services. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target boxes • Distraction reduced work area • Sensory diet • Precision Teaching • Scribe • Touch type training • Attention Autism • Black Sheep – attention and listening • Wellcomm • Talk Boost • Multi-sensory dyslexia friendly strategies • Individual approaches and strategies recommended by external support services
Adult support & ratios	<p>Inclusion within mainstream class group/s.</p> <p>High level of small group support (1:8) targeted across core and foundation subjects.</p>

	Daily 1:1 support to deliver planned targeted interventions (e.g. 30 mins daily 1:1)
Academic progress	Likely to be 2 to 3 years behind age related expectations. This may be across the curriculum or within certain subject areas.

Cognition & Learning	
High Needs Funding - Band 4	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil will have significant and persistent difficulties with literacy, numeracy or motor coordination despite regular attendance and high quality specialist intervention and teaching. This may be described as ‘moderate learning difficulties’ • Key language, literacy and/or numeracy skills are well below functional levels for their year group (this will be 3 or more years behind age related expectations) – the pupil cannot access text or record independently. • The pupil has significant levels of difficulty in cognitive processing requiring significant alteration to the pace and delivery of the curriculum. These are likely to be long term/lifelong • The needs are persistent and significantly affect access to the curriculum and academic progress. High levels of support are required which include assistive technology/curriculum modifications • Social skills and behaviour may be affected and issues of self-esteem and motivation are likely to be present • The pupil may appear to be increasingly socially immature and vulnerable because of limited social awareness, delayed independence skills, and difficulties with reasoning, understanding or expressing thoughts.
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended ‘My SEN Support Plan’), which identifies Cognition & Learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. If the child is not making accelerated progress then it may be appropriate to request an EHC assessment (see ‘Making an EHC assessment request guidance’) • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see ‘My SMART targets’ guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition & Learning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Highly differentiated curriculum and adaptations. • Detailed and robust transition planning will be required (see 'My transition plan' guidance) • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Specialist Teachers is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<p>Touch Type Training Objects of Reference Makaton Communication Books Communication In Print Work Stations</p>
Adult support & ratios	<p>Inclusion within a mainstream setting.</p> <p>Individualised targeted support (may be very small group or 1:1) across the curriculum (e.g. may be 1:1 support for core subjects and 1:6 small group support across other areas of the curriculum).</p>
Academic progress	<p>Likely to be 3 or more years behind age related expectations across the curriculum. This may be described as 'moderate' learning difficulties.</p>

Cognition & Learning

High Needs Funding - Band 5

Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties are so significant that specialist daily teaching in literacy and numeracy and access to a modified curriculum is required. Their needs are likely to be at a level described as ‘moderate learning difficulties’. • The child is likely to have some significant speech and language needs which are in line with their cognitive ability • The level of adjustment and specialist teaching across the curriculum required is significantly greater than is normally provided in a mainstream setting • Progress gains are not maintained without ongoing direct support and intervention • The child will demonstrate a lack of independence in relation to learning and often other areas such as self care and awareness of risks.
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended ‘My SEN Support Plan’), which identifies Cognition & Learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also very likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see ‘My SMART targets’ guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition and Learning. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly ‘different from and additional to’. • Highly differentiated curriculum focussed on developing basic functional literacy and numeracy skills and independent living skills • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Specialist Teachers will be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs. • If the child makes limited progress despite appropriately targeted curriculum and support, specialist placement may be considered.
Recommended Provision &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured interventions and programs of support advised by specialist support services • Structured social skills support • Modelling

Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic life skills curriculum • Travel training • Highly practical approach to curriculum delivery • Also see recommended provision and interventions for Band 5 SLCN (link)
Adult support & ratios	<p>Inclusion within a mainstream setting.</p> <p>Individualised targeted support across the curriculum (including planned 1:1 support and structured small group support). Support provided by adults appropriately trained to support children with significant learning difficulties (e.g. trained and confident in using Makaton)</p>
Academic progress	Likely to be at least 4 years behind age related expectations across the curriculum. This may be described as 'moderate learning difficulties'.

Cognition & Learning	
High Needs Funding - Band 6	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate difficulties with learning and other significant needs, or severe learning difficulties have been identified • Significant and persistent difficulties in the acquisition/use of language/literacy/numeracy skills, with the curriculum and out of school activities • Complex and severe language and communication difficulties. • Access to specialist support for personal needs • Complex needs identified requiring a holistic approach to support
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Cognition and Learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also very likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an

	<p>application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition & Learning. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Curriculum planning and delivery will be completed by specially trained and skilled staff • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, and Specialist Teaching services is likely to be integrated throughout provision. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication in Print books • Multi-sensory stories • Makaton • Multi-sensory approach to curriculum delivery • Basic skills curriculum • Travel Training
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Inclusion within either mainstream or specialist setting.</p> <p>Individualised highly specialist targeted support throughout the day.</p> <p>This may be highly targeted 1:1 and small group support in mainstream</p> <p>or access to highly targeted small group (3:9) support in a specialist setting. Small group support throughout the day including meal and transition times.</p>

Academic progress	Likely to be more than 4 years below age related expectations. This may be described as complex moderate or severe learning difficulties which affect all areas of development including communication skills and social skills.
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Cognition & Learning	
High Needs Funding - Band 7	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe learning needs with needs likely across other areas (SLCN, SEMH etc). NB For children with severe learning difficulties and physical needs (children with needs described as PMLD) please refer to Physical needs, Band 7 (link) • Severe difficulties with learning that significantly restrict access to the curriculum and require specialist provision. • Severe and persistent difficulties in the acquisition/use of language/literacy/numeracy skills, that impact on all aspects of daily life. • Complex and profound language and communication difficulties. • Complex Needs identified
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Cognition and Learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children would also be expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing very small step SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets will focus on all areas for development. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. There will be a specialist approach to measuring progress • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, and Specialist Teaching services is likely to be integrated throughout provision. Support and

	guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Body Sign • Multi-Sensory Cues • Sensory room/dark/light room • Low and high tech communication aids • Total communication environment • Changing bed • Hoists
Adult support & ratios	<p>Inclusion within a mainstream or specialist setting.</p> <p>1:1 specialist support throughout day within a mainstream setting, overseen by a qualified teacher with appropriate training and experience.</p> <p>Small group support (at least 4:8) in specialist setting with additional targeted 1:1 support at key times. High ratio (1:2) support at unstructured times (transition, breaks, mealtimes)</p>
Academic progress	<p>Profound and complex learning difficulties. Likely to be more than 5 years behind age related expectations.</p> <p>For children with significant physical needs in addition to the above (PMLD) please see Band 7 Physical Needs (link). For children with significant multi-sensory needs in addition to the above please see Band 7 MSI Needs (link). For children with significant multi-element needs requiring highly specialised approaches see MPLD Band 8 (link)</p>

Multidimensional Profound Learning Needs – MDPLN (<i>Beyond Cognition and Learning, SCLN & SEMH Band 7</i>)	
High Needs Funding – Band 8	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidimensional Profound Learning Needs with needs that combine to exceed Band 7 descriptors across Cognition & Learning, SEMH and SCLN areas of primary need, despite purposeful provision informed by relevant specialist services. • Profound difficulties with learning that significantly restrict access to the curriculum and require specialist provision • Profound and persistent difficulties in the acquisition/use of language/literacy/numeracy skills, that impact on all aspects of daily life • Profoundly limited functional social communication skills which lead to daily, persistently high levels of distress and anxiety • Profoundly limited language skills; possibly nonverbal or extremely limited purposeful and very limited or no understanding of language • Unable to manage self in group without dedicated highly ‘tuned in’ and responsive support • Requiring a range of therapeutic interventions requiring staff with specialist experience and training, or referral to specialist support services • Highly unpredictable behaviour, often impulsive often with no identifiable or highly fluctuating triggers, which is difficult to plan for and manage. Behaviour is risk to self and others, is not responsive to appropriate boundaries and is persistent across contexts • Will present with severe and increasing behavioural difficulties, often compounded by additional needs and requiring a high level of support by staff who are skilled and experienced in supporting children with MDPLN/SCLN/SEMH difficulties • Refusal to engage/extreme disengagement • Social, emotional, mental health needs likely to be related to a social communication need • May also have other developmental barriers; elements of Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment and/or Physical Needs, as a secondary area of need • High likelihood of total reliance on adult supervision in meeting intimate/personal care needs and supervision required throughout the school day due to lack of awareness of personal safety
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage the child has an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made urgently with a request for exceptional high needs funding and/or an assessment place at a special school • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended ‘My SEN Support Plan’), which identifies Cognition and Learning/SCLN or SEMH as primary need and highlights contributing needs that place the child in the MDPLN category. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing very small step SMART targets (see ‘My SMART targets’ guidance) and

	<p>should know how progress will be measured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets will focus on all areas for development. Targets may be focussed as equally on SLCN/social interaction skills as the aspects of cognition and learning identified in ongoing assessments and EHC Plan • Provision at this stage would be highly specialist, with intensive support provided • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly escalated from the description 'different from and additional to'. • There will be a specialist approach to measuring progress • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Walsall Occupational Therapy Service and Specialist Teaching services is likely to be integrated throughout provision and a 'Team Around the Child' type approach will be required. • Enhanced and highly individualised transition planning is required
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring access to learning in an environment that is supportive and tailored to meet MDPLN needs, structured in a way which reduces triggers and allows flexibility. • Need for lengthy, highly structured and rigorously implemented positive behaviour management programmes designed to develop acceptable patterns of behaviour and reduce incidents of undesirable behaviour. • Specialist teaching focusing on both learning and social-emotional outcomes throughout the school day. • Need for a developmental, sensory, functional curriculum which recognises the very high level of dependency of the pupil. • Requires intensive communication therapy input and alterantive/augmentative communication systems. • Need for an intensive multi agency approach • Pupils likely to need specialist equipment (e.g. software, hardware) in order to achieve curriculum access within the special school environment. • Needs highly structured and rigorously applied behaviour management focused on significant challenging behaviours e.g. persistent self-harm. • Will require a high level of specialist training in mobility and other related independence skills, and to enhance the acquisition of independent learning skills.
Adult support & ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly specialist individualised support and supervision throughout the school day (including lesson time and unstructured times) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support. • Requiring specialist support and approaches throughout the school day in order to reduce risk and support engagement in learning. • 1:1 support throughout the school day to promote inclusion and ensure safety

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular periods of 2:1 adult support required for manual handling, de-escalation, physical intervention and positive support. • Frequent periods of additional adult support beyond 2:1 at times of crisis (i.e. 3:1 or 4:1) to maintain safety of pupil, peers, staff and environment • Supported by staff who are experienced and highly skilled in supporting children with MDPLN needs. • Requiring a very high level of additional targeted support within a specialist small group learning context and requiring planned therapeutic support provided by specially trained staff. • Pupils need constant intensive adult support to access learning activities within the classroom. • Will require additional 1:1 support for access to and participation in the curriculum and wider school life. • High likelihood of total reliance on adult supervision (inclusive of the tiers above) in meeting intimate/personal care needs
Academic progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple and complex learning difficulties. • Academic and social progress tracked at the appropriate level. Likely to see inconsistent patterns of progress and may see periods of regression in progress and skills. • There may be some areas of more developed skills (e.g. number) but these will not be functional and generalised. • Will follow a highly personalised and modified curriculum in terms of content and delivery but may require exemption from specific attainment targets.

Social, emotional, mental health needs

Before identifying a child as having SEMH special educational needs, the following should be considered.

It should be noted that children and young people may present with changes to their usual responses and behaviour in relation to known triggers (such as a bereavement, a change of care placement, bullying). This should usually be regarded as a 'normal' response to a trigger/stressor. Children and young people should receive responsive support during a period of change/stress and reasonable adjustments and additional support should be provided to promote inclusion and support their wellbeing. Where there are long-lasting difficulties schools should consider whether the child might have SEN.

Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches such as the Early Help Assessment, may be appropriate. Schools should seek support from the Early Help service (link).

Social, emotional, mental health			
Universal – Band 0			
Services who can support:	Whole school approaches:	Training:	Useful websites/resources:
Walsall Educational	Inclusive 'behaviour policy'	School Nursing for parents:	www.nurtureuk.org/

<p>Psychology Service Walsall School Nursing Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Walsall Youth Justice Service WPH Positive Steps CAMHS iCAMHS Walsall SLEs Inclusion & Wellbeing Team BRICS Nurture Hubs (in development) BRICS Attachment & Trauma aware hubs (in development) BRICS Restorative Practice lead schools</p>	<p>KOOTH Emotion coaching Restorative practice approaches Nurturing approaches Transition Toolkit Circle Time</p>	<p>Emotional Health – for parents Behaviour workshops Understanding your child’s behaviour Triple P primary & secondary Adult resilience Sleep Scotland SRE training Mental Health Toolkit FRIENDS EPS: Emotion Coaching Managing stress and anxiety Restorative Practice Nurturing approaches Attachment and trauma aware approaches Loss and bereavement Positive communication and de-escalation strategies Circle Time</p>	<p>www.beaconhouse.org.uk/ https://www.mind.org.uk/ https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/ www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-examples-of-best-practice www.bullying.co.uk/advice-for-schools/ https://www.nicco.org.uk/ www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/ http://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf www.kooth.com/ https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/ https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/local-hubs/toolkit-resources www.healthforkids.co.uk www.healthforteens.co.uk Change Your Mind (peer education support) QMGS changeyourmind@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk</p>
<p>Book recommendations for children/young people</p>	<p>Book recommendations for adults (parents/carers/professionals)</p>		

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Social, emotional, mental health	
Ordinarily Available - Band 1	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have been identified as presenting with some low level features of behaviour, emotional, social difficulties • They may sometimes appear isolated, have immature social skills, be occasionally disruptive in the classroom setting, be overactive and lack concentration • They may present with consistent difficulty in following developmentally appropriate whole school/class expectations/routines • They may experience some difficulties with social /interaction skills • They may show some low level difficulties in relation to the ability to self-regulate, identify and manage emotions (including anxiety, anger etc) • They may present with frequent but predictable episodes of poor self-management despite universal offer within an inclusive classroom environment
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have been subject to enhanced assessments to identify needs. At this stage this is expected to be carried out by the class teacher with guidance from the SENCo if required. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies SEMHas a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on SEMH skills, although there should be an ongoing focus on all of the

	<p>child's areas of needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision should be directly related to the child's targets and primary area of need, as well as an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable adjustments • Unconditional positive regard • Conditional and unconditional positive feedback • Identify and respond to preferred learning styles • Planned small group intervention – anxiety, emotional regulation, pragmatics, self esteem • Emotion coaching • Regular planned rest breaks • Personalised approach to rewards/motivation • Person centred approaches – my communication plan (link) • Children should experience no more than 2 managed moves within a phase (primary/secondary) • NB managed moves, isolation and exclusion are not considered to be targeted interventions
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some access to small group intervention and reasonable adjustments as required.</p>
Academic progress	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but SEMH needs are becoming a barrier to access to learning.</p>

Social, emotional, mental health

Ordinarily Available - Band 2	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties persist/worsen and there has been no significant measured change in the target behaviour/social skill despite quality first teaching and Band 1 interventions being in place. • SEMH continues to interfere with childrens' social/learning development across a range of settings • Children may have become socially and emotionally vulnerable, withdrawn, isolated, and unpredictable patterns of behaviour begin to emerge that impact on learning • Children may show patterns of stress/anxiety related to specific times of the day • Children may have a preference for own agenda and be reluctant to follow instructions • They may present with persistent difficulty in following developmentally appropriate whole school/class expectations/routines throughout the day and across contexts • They may experience some difficulties with social /interaction skills and find it difficult to maintain positive interactions with peers (beyond what is expected developmentally) • They may show some persistent difficulties in relation to the ability to self-regulate, identify and manage emotions (including anxiety, anger etc) throughout the day • They may present with frequent and unpredictable episodes of poor self-management despite Band 1 support within an inclusive classroom environment • Presenting behaviour may be putting the child at risk of exclusion
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have been subject to enhanced assessments to identify needs. At this stage this is expected that this will involve more specialist school based assessments (such as frequency recording, ABC charts etc), carried out by the class teacher and/or the SENCo. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies SEMH as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. (NB. Children should not have a separate IBP and IEP, these should be combined and support development in areas of need) • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on SEMH skills, although there should be an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • Provision should be directly related to the child's targets and primary area of need, as well as an ongoing focus on all

	<p>of the child's areas of needs. Provision should be evidenced based.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCOs should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELSA • FRIENDS • Resiliency wheel as a planning tool (link) • Emotion coaching • Planned debriefs following behaviour incidents • Key adult identified • Emotion check ins • Emotion thermometers • May be appropriate to refer to School Nursing and Early Help for further assessment/support • Children should experience no more than 2 managed moves within a phase (primary/secondary) • NB managed moves, isolation and exclusion are not considered to be targeted interventions
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Engagement in regular, planned, small group intervention throughout the week, and reasonable adjustments as required.</p>
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but SEMH needs are a barrier to access to learning.

Social, emotional, mental health

Ordinarily Available - Band 3

Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties persist/worsen and there has been no significant measured change in the target behaviour/social skill despite quality first teaching and Band 1 and 2 interventions being in place. • SEMH needs interfere more frequently with pupils' social/learning development across a range of settings • Children have consistent difficulty following developmentally appropriate routines/expectations and rely on direct adult support to engage in learning in the whole class environment • Children may have experienced fixed term exclusions (sequential exclusions within a term) • Presenting with sustained difficulties in social interactions/relationships with both adults and peers (well beyond what is expected developmentally) resulting in regular periods of social isolation or conflict • unpredictable patterns of behaviour that impact on learning • children may present with patterns of stress/anxiety related to specific times of the day which have become more common • Children may have a preference for own agenda and are reluctant to follow instructions • They show persistent difficulties in relation to the ability to self-regulate, identify and manage emotions (including anxiety, anger etc) throughout the day • They may present with frequent and unpredictable episodes of poor self-management despite Band 2 support within an inclusive classroom environment. This is having a significant impact on their access to learning within a classroom environment
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies SEMH as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. If the child is not making accelerated progress then it may be appropriate to request an EHC assessment (see 'Making an EHC assessment request guidance') • Specialist and highly targeted assessments may be carried out to inform interventions and adjustments to curriculum and learning. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focused predominantly on SEMH skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly 'different from and additional to'. • Enhanced and personalised transition planning will be required (see 'My transition plan' guidance) • SENCo is usually directly involved at this stage to support further assessments to identify any other underlying

	<p>needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice will be sought from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Specialist Teacher Services, Early Help and CAMHS. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs. • There should be evidence of a robust approach to assessment through intervention and assessment over time. More specialist and targeted assessments may be required to identify underlying needs. Tools such as 'locus of control', Boxall profile, Resiliency Scales, Myself As a Learner
<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotion Coaching • ELSA • FRIENDS • Peer mentoring/buddy • Pragmatics • TEACH • De-escalation approaches • Transactional Analysis • 'Positive entrapment model' as a planning tool • 'arousal curve' as a planning tool • Social stories • CBT based approaches (e.g. challenging negative automatic thoughts) • Nurture group/nurture based interventions • Planned lunch/break activities • Planned activities to support transitions • Children should experience no more than 2 managed moves within a phase (primary/secondary) • NB managed moves, isolation and exclusion are not considered to be targeted interventions

Adult support & ratios	Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio, ensuring access to planned intervention as well as ensuring that adult support can be responsive to needs and prevent risks from escalating. Engagement in regular, planned, highly targeted 1:1 or small group intervention (for up to 50% timetable) and consistent implementation of reasonable adjustments as required.
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but SEMH needs are a significant barrier to access to learning and progress is not at the expected rate.

Social, emotional, mental health	
High Needs Funding - Band 4	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil continues to present with significant and persistent levels of behaviour, emotional, social difficulties which are now more complex and which require a multi-agency response. • May be responding positively to planned, highly targeted support/interventions but requires this support to be ongoing • Pupil is more likely to have experienced fixed term exclusion from school • Pupil does not have the social and emotional skills needed to cope in a mainstream environment without adult support for a significant proportion of the school day • Significant and increasing difficulties with social interaction, social communication and social understanding which regularly impact on classroom performance • Pupil is increasingly isolated and struggles to maintain positive relationships with adults or peers • Careful social and emotional differentiation of the curriculum essential to ensure access to the curriculum and progress with learning • They show persistent difficulties in relation to the ability to self-regulate, identify and manage emotions (including anxiety, anger etc) throughout the day. This presents as either extremely withdrawn and isolated behaviour or behaviour

	<p>which poses a risk to self and others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may present with frequent and unpredictable episodes of poor self-management despite Band 2 support within an inclusive classroom environment. This is having a significant impact on their access to learning within a classroom environment
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies SEMH as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. If the child is not making accelerated progress then it may be appropriate to request an EHC assessment (see 'Making an EHC assessment request guidance') • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on SEMH. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • Use of specialist assessment tools should be ongoing (such as Boxall profile, resiliency Scales) • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Highly differentiated curriculum and adaptations. • Detailed and robust transition planning will be required (see 'My transition plan' guidance) • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Specialist Teachers, Early Help, CAMHS is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified key adult • Emotion Coaching • ELSA • FRIENDS • Pragmatics • TEACH • De-escalation approaches • Transactional Analysis approach

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Positive entrapment model' as a planning tool • 'arousal curve' as a planning tool • Co-regulation strategies • Social stories • Nurture group/nurture based interventions • Planned lunch/break activities • Planned activities to support transitions • Therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive behavioural interventions, solution focussed approaches, person construct approaches, narrative approaches and play therapy • Counselling support • Individually planned support and approaches informed by specialist services such as Educational Psychology, School Nursing, CAMHS • Children should experience no more than 2 managed moves within a phase (primary/secondary) • NB managed moves, isolation and exclusion are not considered to be targeted interventions
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio, ensuring access to planned intervention as well as ensuring that adult support can be responsive to needs and prevent risks from escalating.</p> <p>Engagement in small group support across the timetable, including regular, highly targeted 1:1 support forplanned intervention and to support engagement in learning (up to 50% timetable). Consistent implementation of reasonable adjustments as required. Supported by staff who have relevant experience and skills in supporting children with SEMH needs.</p>
Academic progress	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but SEMH needs are a significant barrier to access to learning and progress is not at the expected rate.</p>

Social, emotional, mental health	
High Needs Funding - Band 5	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child will present with Severe and increasing behavioural difficulties, often compounded by additional needs and requiring a high level of support by staff who are skilled and experienced in supporting children with SEMH difficulties • Moderate/ severe mental health difficulties, acute anxiety, attachment needs resulting in either extremely withdrawn behaviour or behaviour which poses a risk to self and others • May show patterns of regular school absence • Disengaged from learning, significant under performance • Reliant on direct adult support to remain on task • Engaging in high risk taking activities both at school and within the community • Difficulties expressing empathy, emotionally detached, could have tendency to hurt others or self • Issues around identity and belonging • Needing to be in control, not able to negotiate or follow direction of others • Difficulties sustaining positive relationships • Over-friendly or withdrawn with strangers, may be at risk of exploitation • May present with sexualised language or behaviours • Slow to develop age appropriate self-care skills due to levels of maturity or degree of Learning Difficulties • Physical, sensory and medical needs that require medication and regular review • Complex Needs Identified
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies SEMH as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they do not have an EHCP then an application should be made in discussion with the young person and their parents/carers • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on SEMH skills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly 'different from and additional to'. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Use of specialist assessment tools should be ongoing (such as Boxall profile, resiliency Scales) • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS will be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified key adult • Emotion Coaching • ELSA • FRIENDS • Pragmatics • TEACH • De-escalation approaches • Transactional Analysis approach • 'Positive entrapment model' as a planning tool • 'arousal curve' as a planning tool • Co-regulation strategies • Social stories • Nurture group/nurture based interventions • Planned lunch/break activities • Planned activities to support transitions • Therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive behavioural interventions, solution focussed approaches, person construct approaches, narrative approaches and play therapy • Counselling support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually planned support and approaches informed by specialist services such as Educational Psychology, School Nursing, CAMHS • Children should experience no more than 2 managed moves within a phase (primary/secondary) • NB managed moves, isolation and exclusion are not considered to be targeted interventions
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio, ensuring access to planned intervention as well as ensuring that adult support can be responsive to needs and prevent risks from escalating.</p> <p>Engagement in small group support across the timetable, including regular, highly targeted 1:1 support for planned intervention and to support engagement in learning (more than 50% timetable). Consistent implementation of reasonable adjustments as required. Supported by staff who have relevant experience and skills in supporting children with SEMH needs.</p>
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but SEMH needs are a significant barrier to access to learning and there is evidence of significant underperformance compared to individual potential.

Social, emotional, mental health	
High Needs Funding - Band 6	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child will present with Severe and increasing behavioural difficulties, often compounded by additional needs and requiring a high level of support by staff who are skilled and experienced in supporting children with SEMH difficulties • Requiring a range of therapeutic interventions or referral to specialist support services (CAMHS, YOT) • Unable to manage self in group without dedicated highly 'tuned in' and responsive support • May be Involved in substance misuse either as a user or exploited into distribution/selling • May have poor attendance, requiring a high level of adult intervention to bring into school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusal to engage, extreme disengagement • Engage in high risk behaviours (risk to self, others and property) requiring high level of supervision and support to reduce risk • Require targeted teaching in order to access learning • Health and safety risk to self and others due to increased levels of agitation and presenting risks • May present with sexualised language and behaviour, identified at risk of CSE • Social, emotional, mental health needs may be related to a social communication need
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have a personalised education plan (see recommended 'My Support Plan'), which identifies SEMH as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also very likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focused predominantly on SEMH. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, and CAMHS is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified key adult • Emotion Coaching • ELSA • FRIENDS • Pragmatics • TEACH • De-escalation approaches

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transactional Analysis approach • 'Positive entrapment model' as a planning tool • 'arousal curve' as a planning tool • Co-regulation strategies • Social stories • Nurture group/nurture based interventions • Planned lunch/break activities • Planned activities to support transitions • Therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive behavioural interventions, solution focussed approaches, person construct approaches, narrative approaches and play therapy • Counselling support • Individually planned support and approaches informed by specialist services such as Educational Psychology, School Nursing, CAMHS • Children should experience no more than 2 managed moves within a phase (primary/secondary) • NB managed moves, isolation and exclusion are not considered to be targeted interventions
Adult support & ratios	<p>Requiring specialist support and approaches throughout the school day in order to reduce risk and support engagement in learning. This may be small group support across the timetable (including social and transition times) with a very high level of targeted 1:1 support in a mainstream setting, or very high ration small group support (e.g. 4:6) within a specialist environment.</p> <p>Requiring access to learning in an environment that is supportive and tailored to meet SEMH needs, structured in a way which reduces triggers and allows flexibility. Supported by staff who are experienced and highly skilled in supporting children with SEMH needs.</p>
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but SEMH needs are a significant barrier to access to learning

	and there is evidence of significant underperformance in relation to individual potential.
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Social, emotional, mental health	
High Needs Funding - Band 7	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child will present with severe and increasing behavioural difficulties, often compounded by additional needs and requiring a high level of support by staff who are skilled and experienced in supporting children with SEMH difficulties • Requiring a range of therapeutic interventions or referral to specialist support services (CAMHS, YOT) • Unable to manage self in group without dedicated highly ‘tuned in’ and responsive support • May be Involved in substance misuse either as a user or exploited into distribution/selling • May have poor attendance, requiring a high level of adult intervention to bring into school • Refusal to engage, extreme disengagement • Engage in high risk behaviours (risk to self, others and property) requiring high level of supervision and support to reduce risk • Highly unpredictable behaviour which is difficult to plan for and manage • Require targeted teaching in order to access learning • Health and safety risk to self and others due to increased levels of agitation and presenting risks • May present with sexualised language and behaviour, identified at risk of CSE • Social, emotional, mental health needs may be related to a social communication need
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended ‘My SEN Support Plan’), which identifies SEMH as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see ‘My SMART targets’ guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focused predominantly on SEMH.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced and highly individualise transition planning is required, with a focus on developing secure relationships in new environments • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, and CAMHS is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified key adult • Emotion Coaching • ELSA • FRIENDS • Pragmatics • TEACH • De-escalation approaches • Transactional Analysis approach • ‘Positive entrapment model’ as a planning tool • ‘arousal curve’ as a planning tool • Co-regulation strategies • Social stories • Nurture group/nurture based interventions • Planned lunch/break activities • Planned activities to support transitions • Therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive behavioural interventions, solution focussed approaches, person construct approaches, narrative approaches and play therapy • Counselling support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually planned support and approaches informed by specialist services such as Educational Psychology, School Nursing, CAMHS • Direct therapeutic support provided by specialist staff • Children should experience no more than 2 managed moves within a phase (primary/secondary) • NB managed moves, isolation and exclusion are not considered to be targeted interventions
Adult support & ratios	<p>Requiring specialist support and approaches throughout the school day in order to reduce risk and support engagement in learning.</p> <p>Requiring access to learning in an environment that is supportive and tailored to meet SEMH needs, structured in a way which reduces triggers and allows flexibility. Supported by staff who are experienced and highly skilled in supporting children with SEMH needs. Requiring a very high level of additional targeted support within a specialist small group learning context and requiring planned therapeutic support provided by specially trained staff. This is likely to be 1:1 support throughout the day, including all learning and unstructured times, within a mainstream environment.</p>
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but SEMH needs are a significant barrier to access to learning and there is evidence of significant underperformance compared to individual potential.

Speech, Language, Communication & Social Interaction

Universal – Band 0

Walsall services who can support:	Whole school approaches:	Training:	Useful websites/resources:
<p>Walsall Speech & Language Therapy</p> <p>Walsall Educational Psychology</p> <p>Walsall Occupational Therapy</p> <p>Walsall Inclusion Support Team - Hearing Impaired Team</p> <p>Early Help</p>	<p>Makaton</p> <p>Sensory spaces (sensory room, quiet areas, regulation zones)</p> <p>Sensory Audit</p> <p>Finger gym</p> <p>Visual timelines</p> <p>Positive prompts</p> <p>Transition planning</p> <p>Structured play/club options at break and lunch times</p>	<p>Identification of speech and language difficulties (including Wellcomm) – SaLT</p> <p>Makaton tasters – SaLT</p> <p>Communication Friendly Classrooms – SaLT/ARPs</p> <p>Communication strategies in the classroom – SaLT/ARPs</p> <p>Visual Timelines – SaLT/ARPs</p> <p>Positive Prompts – SaLT/ARPs</p> <p>Autism Education Trust Training – AET Hub</p>	<p>NASEN</p> <p>www.nasen.org.uk</p> <p>ICAN</p> <p>www.ican.org.uk</p> <p>NAPLIC</p> <p>www.naplic.org.uk</p> <p>Afasic</p> <p>www.afasic.org.uk</p> <p>National Autistic Society</p> <p>www.autism.org.uk</p> <p>Autism West Midlands</p> <p>www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk</p> <p>National Literacy Trust</p> <p>www.literacytrust.org.uk</p> <p>The Communication Trust www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk</p>

			<p>SMIRA</p> <p>www.selectivemutism.org.uk</p> <p>Emotion Coaching</p> <p>www.bathspa.ac.uk/education/research/emotioncoaching/</p> <p>Nurture UK</p> <p>www.nurtureuk.org</p>
Book recommendations for children/young people		Book recommendations for adults (parents/carers/professionals)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's happening to Ellie? A book about puberty for girls and young women with Autism and related conditions by Kate E Reynolds. • What's happening to Tom? A book about puberty for boys and young men with Autism and related conditions by Kate E Reynolds. • My family is different – a workbook for children with a brother or sister on the autism spectrum by Carolyn Brock. • My friend Sam – a story about introducing a child with Autism to nursery school by Liz Hannah. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Friendships in the Playground: A Peer Befriending Programme for Primary Schools by Brigitte Bishop (Lucy Duck Books) • Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom by Jenny Mosley. • Quality Circle Time in the Secondary school by Jenny Mosley & Marilyn Tew. • Circle Time for young children by Jenny Mosley. • More Quality Circle Time by Jenny Mosley. • 101 Activities to help children get on together by Jenny Mosley & Helen Sonnet. • Jenny Mosley's Small Books of the 5 Skills by Jenny Mosley. • The Homunculi approach to social and emotional wellbeing by A. Grieg & T. MacKay. (Cognitive behavioural approach for young people on the autistic spectrum) • Autism: talking about a diagnosis, a guide for parents and carers of children with an autism spectrum disorder by Rachel Pike. • Autism: Supporting your teenager by Caroline Hattersley. • The Selective Mutism Resource Manual: 2nd Edition. By Alison Wintgens & Maggie Johnson. 	

Speech, Language, Communication & Social Interaction

Ordinarily Available - Band 1

Description of need

SLCN is an emerging but is not yet a clearly identified primary area of need; the pupil has some difficulty with speech, language, communication or social interaction.

Will present with some/all of the difficulties below and these will mildly affect curriculum access and social development.

- Direct literacy learning may be included in cognition and learning.
- Speech is understood by familiar adults but has some immaturities, which may impact on social interaction and may impact on the acquisition of literacy.
- Difficulties with listening and attention that affect task engagement and independent learning, including in large group situations.
- Comments and questions indicate difficulties in understanding the main points of discussion, information, explanations and the pupil needs some support with listening and responding.
- Difficulties in the understanding of language for learning (conceptual language; size, time, shape, position)
- Reduced vocabulary range, both expressive and receptive.
- These children may rely on simple phrases with everyday vocabulary
- Social interaction could be limited and there may be some difficulty in making and maintaining friendships.
- Behaviour as an indicator of SLCN: difficulties with independent learning, poor listening and attention, frustration, stress, lack of engagement.
- Children may present with difficulty in talking fluently e.g. adults may observe repeated sounds, words or phrases.
- Children may have difficulties with social interaction with peers
- Children may be reluctant to communicate in specific social situations within the educational setting
- Children with needs on the Autism Spectrum may also present with sensory needs (this may be hyper or hypo sensitivity across the range of senses). This may have a mild impact on learning and access to some social contexts

Children may or may not have an identified condition, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (made by an appropriate multi-agency team), Hearing Impairment, Cleft palate.

Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have been subject to enhanced assessments to identify needs. At this stage this is expected to be carried out by the class teacher with guidance from the SENCo if required. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies cognition and learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition and learning skills, although there should be an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • Provision should be directly related to the child's targets and primary area of need, as well as an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<p>Sensory diet Personalised Visual timeline Choice boards Now and next boards Makaton Sensory environmental audit Social stories Social communication/pragmatics group Friendship Terrace Black Sheep materials NELI – Nuffield Early Language Intervention Wellcomm Early Talkboost (Early Years) Talkboost (KS1 & 2) A 5 Can Make Me Lose Control Emotion Coaching</p>

Adult support & ratios	Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios. Children should be receiving a small amount of additional targeted small group or individual support (likely to be in core subjects and during non-structured times)
Academic progress	Children are likely to be achieving just below age related expectations. There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and literacy based subjects.

Speech, Language, Communication & Social Interaction

Ordinarily Available - Band 2

Description of need	<p>SLCN is identified as the primary area of need; the pupil has some difficulty with speech, language, communication or social interaction.</p> <p>Will present with some/all of the difficulties below and these will mildly-moderately affect curriculum access and social development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech is usually understood by familiar adults; unfamiliar people may not be able to understand what the child is saying. • The child's speech may have some immaturities or use of more unusual sounds within their talking, which may impact on social interaction and the acquisition of literacy. • Difficulties with listening and attention that affect task engagement and independent learning, including in large group situations. • Comments and questions indicate difficulties in understanding the main points of discussion, information, explanations and the pupil needs some support with listening and responding. • Difficulties in the understanding of language for learning (conceptual language; size, time, shape, position) • Reduced vocabulary, both expressive and receptive. • These children may rely on simple phrases with everyday vocabulary
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely heavily on Non Verbal Communication(adult’s gestures, copying peers, visual timelines etc) to complete tasks and support communication. • Social interaction could be limited and there may be some difficulty in making and maintaining friendships. • Children may present with difficulties with independent learning, poor listening and attention, frustration, stress, lack of engagement. • Children may present with difficulty in talking fluently e.g. adults may observe repeated sounds, words or phrases. • Children may be reluctant to communicate in a range of social situations within the educational setting • Children with needs on the Autism Spectrum may also present with some sensory needs (this may be hyper or hypo sensitivity across the range of senses). This may interfere with learning and access to some social contexts <p>Children may or may not have an identified condition, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (made by an appropriate multi-agency team), Hearing Impairment, Cleft palate.</p>
<p>Assessment & Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended ‘My SEN Support Plan’), which identifies SLCN/ASD as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see ‘My SMART targets’ guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on SLCN/social interaction skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.

Recommended Provision & Interventions	Personalised Visual timeline Choice boards Now and next boards Makaton Sensory environmental audit Social stories Social communication/pragmatics group Friendship Terrace Black Sheep materials NELI – Nuffield Early Language Intervention Wellcomm Early Talkboost (Early Years) Talkboost (KS1 & 2) A 5 Can Make Me Lose Control Emotion Coaching
Adult support & ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should access the majority of learning within a mainstream whole class context. • Children should be receiving daily targeted small group and/or individual support (likely to be during core subjects and at social/unstructured times)
Academic progress	Children are likely to be more than 1 year behind age related expectations. There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and literacy based subjects.

Speech, Language, Communication & Social Interaction

Ordinarily Available - Band 3

Description of need	<p>SLCN is identified as the primary area of need; the pupil has moderate difficulties with speech, language, communication or social interaction.</p> <p>Children will present with some/all of the difficulties below and these will moderately affect curriculum access and social development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent delay against age related speech, language and communication • Persistent difficulties that do not follow a normal developmental patterns (disordered) <p><u>Speech</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech may not be understood by others. • Difficulty in conveying meaning, feelings and needs to others due to speech intelligibility. • Speech sound difficulties impact on literacy development. • Speech sound difficulty may lead to limited opportunities to interact with peer; be socially vulnerable as a result, may become isolated or frustrated. <p><u>Language:</u></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><u>Expressive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child may have difficulty speaking in age appropriate sentences and the vocabulary is reduced. This will also be evident in written work • Talking may not be fluent. • May have difficulties in recounting events in a written or spoken narrative. <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><u>Receptive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in accessing the curriculum; following instructions, answering questions, processing verbal information, following everyday conversations. Needs regular and planned additional support and resources. • Difficulties with listening and attention that affect task engagement and independent learning. Not be able to focus attention for sustained periods. Appear passive or distracted. • Difficulties with sequencing, predicting, and inference within both social and academic contexts. This may impact on behaviour and responses in everyday situations e.g. not understanding the consequences of an action.
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	<p><u>Communication & Social Interaction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely heavily on Non Verbal Communication(adult’s gestures, copying peers, visual timelines etc) to complete tasks and support communication. • Difficulties with speech and/or language mean that social situations present challenges resulting in emotional outbursts, anxiety, social isolation and social vulnerability. • Difficulties with using and understanding non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures. • Poor understanding of abstract language and verbal reasoning skills needed for problem solving, inferring and understanding the feelings of others. • Anxiety related to lack of understanding of time and inference. • Finds new environments, situations and changes in routines anxiety provoking/difficult to manage. • Children may be reluctant to communicate in a range of situations within the educational setting which has been persistent and may concur with a diagnosis of Selective Mutism. • Children with needs on the Autism Spectrum may also present with sensory needs (this may be hyper or hypo sensitivity across the range of senses). This may present an increasingly significant barrier to learning and access to some social contexts <p>Children may or may not have an identified condition, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (made by an appropriate multi-agency team), Hearing Impairment, Cleft palate.</p>
<p>Assessment & Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended ‘My SEN Support Plan’), which identifies SLCN/ASD as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. If the child is not making accelerated progress then it may be appropriate to request an EHC assessment (see ‘Making an EHC assessment request guidance’) • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see ‘My SMART targets’ guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on SLCN/social interaction skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly ‘different from and additional to’.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCo is usually directly involved at this stage to support further assessments to identify any other underlying needs. • Advice will be sought from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS, Walsall Occupational Therapy. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	Personalised Visual timeline Choice boards Now and next boards Makaton Sensory environmental audit Sensory processing assessment Social stories Social communication/pragmatics group Friendship Terrace Black Sheep materials NELI – Nuffield Early Language Intervention Wellcomm Early Talkboost (Early Years) Talkboost (KS1 & 2) A 5 Can Make Me Lose Control Emotion Coaching SCERTS for assessment and intervention Circle of Friends The Homunculi approach to social and emotional wellbeing (Cognitive behavioural approach for young people on the autistic spectrum) Nurture Group Intervention

Adult support & ratios	<p>Children will require a high level of adjustment and support to access learning within a mainstream whole class context.</p> <p>Children should be receiving a high level of daily targeted small group and/or individual support (this should be across all core subjects and social times).</p>
Academic progress	<p>Children are likely to be achieving up to 2 years below age related expectations. There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and literacy based subjects.</p>

Speech, Language, Communication & Social Interaction

High Needs Funding - Band 4

Description of need	<p>SLCN is identified as the primary area of need; the pupil has significant difficulties with speech, language, communication or social interaction.</p> <p>Will present with some/all of the difficulties as described at Band 3 and these will severely affect curriculum access and social development. The child will have an identified speech, language and/or communication delay/disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent delay against age related speech, language and communication despite highly targeted interventions advised by relevant specialists • Persistent difficulties that do not follow a normal developmental patterns (disordered) despite highly targeted interventions advised by relevant specialists <p><u>Speech</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintelligible speech • Significant difficulty in conveying meaning, feelings and needs to others due to speech intelligibility. • Speech sound difficulties significantly impact on literacy development. • Speech sound difficulties lead to limited opportunities to interact with peers; be socially vulnerable as a result, may become isolated or frustrated.
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Language:**Expressive**

- Significant difficulties/delay with expressive language skills, likely to be at least 2 years below age related expectations. This will be having a significant impact on curriculum access (particularly literacy skills), social interactions and behaviour
- Talking may not be fluent.
- May have difficulties in recounting events in a spoken narrative.
- Will have limited vocabulary and/or word retrieval difficulties

Receptive

- Significant difficulties in accessing the curriculum; following instructions, answering questions, processing verbal information, following everyday conversations. Needs regular and planned additional support and resources.
- Significant difficulties with listening and attention that affect task engagement and independent learning. Not be able to focus attention for sustained periods. Appear passive or distracted.
- Difficulties with sequencing, predicting, and inference within both social and academic contexts. This may impact on behaviour and responses in everyday situations e.g. not understanding the consequences of an action.
- Require non-verbal approaches (e.g. individualised visual timeline, symbols and signs) and/or increased adult support to facilitate understanding of language.

Communication& Social Interaction:

- Reliant on Non Verbal Communication(e.g. Makaton, copying peers, visual timelines)as a primary means of communication
- Significant difficulties with speech and/or language mean that social situations present challenges resulting in frustration, emotional outbursts, anxiety, social isolation and social vulnerability. This may manifest as challenging behaviour.
- Significant difficulties with using and understanding non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures.
- Very limited understanding of abstract language and verbal reasoning skills needed for problem solving, inferring

	<p>and understanding the feelings of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety related to lack of understanding of time and inference. Needs reassurance and forewarning of changes to routine or when encountering new situations/experiences. • Children may be reluctant to communicate in a range of situations within the educational setting which has been persistent and may concur with a diagnosis of Selective Mutism. • Children with needs on the Autism Spectrum may also present with sensory needs (this may be hyper or hypo sensitivity across the range of senses). This may present a significant barrier to learning and access to a range of social contexts <p>The pervasive nature of the presenting needs is likely to have a detrimental effect on the acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills and therefore on the result of any assessment. This may include behaviours and responses that may be repetitive and reflect a lack of flexibility of thinking and require a high level of routine and structure. Will require significant adjustments to the learning environment.</p> <p>Pupils will have an uneven learning profile that can be context dependent but their attainment levels suggest they can access a differentiated mainstream curriculum. Will require significantly more support than is normally provided in a mainstream setting.</p> <p>Children may or may not have an identified condition, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (made by an appropriate multi-agency team), Hearing Impairment, Cleft palate.</p>
<p>Assessment & Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies SLCN/ASD as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. If the child is not making accelerated progress then it may be appropriate to request an EHC assessment (see 'Making an EHC assessment request guidance') • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on SLCN/social interaction skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Walsall Occupational Therapy, CAMHS is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	Personalised Visual timeline Choice boards Now and next boards Makaton Sensory environmental audit Social stories Social communication/pragmatics group Friendship Terrace Black Sheep materials NELI – Nuffield Early Language Intervention Wellcomm Early Talkboost (Early Years) Talkboost (KS1 & 2) A 5 Can Make Me Lose Control Emotion Coaching SCERTS for assessment and intervention Circle of Friends Communication Book Aided language displays PECS High and low tech communication aids PODD Objects of Reference

Adult support & ratios	<p>Children require a very high level of adjustments and support to access the majority of learning within a mainstream whole class context.</p> <p>Children should be receiving a high level of daily targeted small group and/or individual support (this is likely to be across the majority of curriculum areas and during some social/unstructured times) (for example, 1:1 support for core subjects and small group support across the rest of the curriculum and during social times).</p>
Academic progress	Children are likely to be achieving up to 3 years below age related expectations. There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and literacy based subjects.

Speech, Language, Communication & Social Interaction

High Needs Funding - Band 5

Description of need	<p>SLCN is identified as the primary area of need; the pupil has severe and complex difficulties with speech, language, communication or social interaction.</p> <p>Will present with an increased number and severity of difficulties as described at Band 4 and these will <i>severely</i> affect curriculum access and social development. The child will have an identified speech, language and/or communication delay/disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent and increasing delay against age related speech, language and communication requiring intensive, specialist approaches throughout the curriculum • Persistent and complex difficulties that do not follow a normal developmental patterns (disordered) requiring intensive, specialist approaches throughout the curriculum <p><u>Speech</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintelligible speech • Significant difficulty in conveying meaning, feelings and needs to others due to speech intelligibility.
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- Speech sound difficulties significantly impact on literacy development.
- Speech sound difficulties lead to limited opportunities to interact with peers; be socially vulnerable as a result, may become isolated or frustrated.

Language:

Expressive

- Significant difficulties/delay with expressive language skills, likely to be at least 2 years below age related expectations. This will be having a significant impact on curriculum access (particularly literacy skills), social interactions and behaviour
- Talking may not be fluent.
- May have difficulties in recounting events in a spoken narrative.
- Will have limited vocabulary and/or word retrieval difficulties

Receptive

- Significant difficulties in accessing the curriculum; following instructions, answering questions, processing verbal information, following everyday conversations. Needs regular and planned additional support and resources.
- Significant difficulties with listening and attention that affect task engagement and independent learning. Not be able to focus attention for sustained periods. Appear passive or distracted.
- Difficulties with sequencing, predicting, and inference within both social and academic contexts. This may impact on behaviour and responses in everyday situations e.g. not understanding the consequences of an action.
- Require non-verbal approaches (e.g. individualised visual timeline, symbols and signs) and/or increased adult support to facilitate understanding of language.

Communication& Social Interaction:

- Reliant on Non Verbal Communication(e.g. Makaton, copying peers, visual timelines)as a primary means of communication
- Significant difficulties with speech and/or language mean that social situations present challenges resulting in frustration, emotional outbursts, anxiety, social isolation and social vulnerability. This may manifest as challenging behaviour.
- Significant difficulties with using and understanding non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, tone of

	<p>voice and gestures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited understanding of abstract language and verbal reasoning skills needed for problem solving, inferring and understanding the feelings of others. • Anxiety related to lack of understanding of time and inference. Needs reassurance and forewarning of changes to routine or when encountering new situations/experiences. • Children may be reluctant to communicate in a range of situations within the educational setting which has been persistent and may concur with a diagnosis of Selective Mutism. • Children with needs on the Autism Spectrum may also present with sensory needs (this may be hyper or hypo sensitivity across the range of senses). This may present a significant barrier to learning and access to a range of social contexts <p>The pervasive nature of the presenting needs is likely to have a detrimental effect on the acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills and therefore on the result of any assessment. This may include behaviours and responses that may be repetitive and reflect a lack of flexibility of thinking and require a high level of routine and structure. Will require significant adjustments to the learning environment.</p> <p>Pupils will have an uneven learning profile that can be context dependent but their attainment levels suggest they can access a differentiated mainstream curriculum. Will require significantly more support than is normally provided in a mainstream setting.</p> <p>Children may or may not have an identified condition, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (made by an appropriate multi-agency team), Hearing Impairment, Cleft palate.</p> <p>Pupils at Band 5 will have communication and interaction needs that significantly affect their access to the National Curriculum, including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life, even in known and familiar contexts and with familiar support/people available.</p> <p>Children who present with greater difficulties than those identified at Band 5 (above) require a multi-agency approach to further assessment and intervention as this is likely to be secondary to their learning needs or social, emotional mental health needs – please refer to Band 6 SEMH or Band 6 Cognition & Learning.</p>
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Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies SLCN/ASD as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually.• Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured.• Targets should be focused predominantly on SLCN/social interaction skills.• Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly 'different from and additional to'.• SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services.• Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service, Walsall Occupational Therapy, CAMHS will be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs.
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Recommended Provision & Interventions	Personalised Visual timeline Choice boards Now and next boards Makaton Sensory environmental audit Wobble cushion Weighted blanket Social stories Social communication/pragmatics group Friendship Terrace Black Sheep materials NELI – Nuffield Early Language Intervention Wellcomm Early Talkboost (Early Years) Talkboost (KS1 & 2) A 5 Can Make Me Lose Control Emotion Coaching SCERTS for assessment and intervention Circle of Friends Communication Book Aided language displays PECS High and low tech communication aids PODD Objects of Reference Specialist approaches recommended by appropriate support service
Adult support & ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children require a very high level of adjustments and specialist support to access the majority of learning within a mainstream whole class context. • Children should be receiving a high level of daily targeted small group and/or individual support (across the

	curriculum and during social/unstructured times) which is recommended and supported by specialist support services (such as Walsall Speech and Language Therapy, Walsall Educational Psychology, CAMHS)
Academic progress	Children may be achieving more than 3 years below age related expectations. There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and literacy based subjects.

Hearing Impairment			
Universal – Band 0			
Walsall services who can support:	Whole school approaches:	Training:	Useful websites/resources:
<p>Walsall Inclusion Support – Hearing Impairment</p> <p>Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf-friendly learning environments • Good listening conditions. E.g. Soft furnishing, suitable lighting, seating position and minimal background noise. • Deaf awareness. E.g. celebration of deaf awareness week. • Whole school visual strategies. E.g. Visual timelines, object of referencing and Makaton • 	<p>NDCS offer a range of courses on deaf awareness. Click here.</p>	<p>The Supporting and Achievement series found on the National Deaf Children’s Society website are useful for advice on deaf-friendly strategies and support. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the achievement of hearing impaired children in early years. • Supporting the achievement of deaf children in primary schools. • Deaf friendly teaching: For secondary schools. • Supporting the achievement of hearing impaired children in special schools. • Supporting the achievement of deaf children who use English as an additional language.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps: Supporting successful transitions into post-16 education and employment for deaf young people in England. • Supporting the achievement of deaf young people in further education • Supporting the achievement of deaf young people on apprenticeships.
<p>Book recommendations for children/young people</p> <p><u>Songs for a Whale</u></p> <p>Author: Lynne Kelly Publisher: Piccadilly Press Interest age: 8-12 Reading age: 8+</p> <p><u>Harriet Versus the Galaxy</u></p> <p>Author: Samantha Baines Illustrator: Jessica Flores Publisher: Knights Of Interest age: 6-11 Reading age: 7+</p>		<p>Book recommendations for adults (parents/carers/professionals)</p> <p><u>How Deaf Children Learn: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know (Perspectives on Deafness)</u></p> <p>Author: Marc Marschark and Peter C. Hauser</p> <p>Supporting the Achievement of hearing impaired children books found on National Deaf Children's Society website.</p>	

<p><u>Max and the Millions</u></p> <p>Author: Ross Montgomery Publisher: Faber Interest age: 8-11 Reading age: 8+</p> <p><u>The Silent Striker</u></p> <p>Author: Pete Kalu Publisher: Hope Road Interest age: 13+ Reading age: 13+</p> <p><u>Fairy Magic</u></p> <p>Author: Cerrie Burnell Illustrator: Laura Ellen Anderson Publisher: Scholastic Interest age: 4-6 Reading age: 6+</p> <p>Freddie and the Fairy</p> <p>Author: Julia Donaldson Illustrator: Karen George Publisher: Macmillan Children's Books Interest age: 3+</p>	
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<p>Reading age: 6+</p> <p><u>What the Jackdaw Saw</u></p> <p>Author: Julia Donaldson Illustrator: Nick Sharratt Publisher: Pan Macmillan Interest age: 5+ Reading age: 6+</p> <p><u>River of Ink: Genesis</u></p> <p>Author: Helen Dennis Publisher: Hachette Children's Group Interest age: 9-13 Reading age: 9+</p> <p><u>Proud to be Deaf</u></p> <p>Authors : Ava Lilli and Nick Beese Publisher : Wayland Interest age : 5 - 7 Reading age: 6 +</p>	
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<p><u>Dachy's Deaf</u></p> <p>Author: Jack Hughes</p> <p>Publisher: Wayland</p> <p>Interest age: 3 – 8</p> <p>Reading age: 6 +</p> <p>More book recommendations can be found on the NDSC website.Click here.</p>	
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Hearing Impairment	
Ordinarily Available - Band 1	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild, temporary conductive loss, potentially aided in the short term • Unilateral, mild loss may be aided. • May have mild difficulty accessing spoken language and presents with a slight delay • May have mild difficulty with listening, attention, concentration and class participation.
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies HI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets should be focussed predominantly on HI/language skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing management of hearing aids if prescribed and any specialist equipment. • Ongoing, inclusive classroom management strategies, using materials and guidance from the National Deaf Children's Society. Communication strategies, creating good listening conditions and good acoustics, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Favourable positioning ○ Management of background noise ○ Repetition of instructions ○ Multi-sensory approaches to teaching and learning – practical and visual reinforcement ○ Management of turn taking in classroom discussion, repeating key points • Targeted support for language and literacy skills as needed and may include: pre and post teaching for new subjects/topics and key topic vocabulary • Support and advice by the QToD on request
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult: child ratios.</p> <p>Children may require a small amount of daily additional targeted small group or individual support (likely to be for language and literacy skills and possibly support in core subjects and sometimes during non-structured times).</p> <p>Staff supporting should receive advice on issues surrounding HI and the use of specialist equipment (if aided) during the one-off visit by a QTOD. Advice also provided on request.</p>
Academic progress	<p>Children are likely to be having difficulty in achieving their potential and may be achieving just below age related expectations.</p> <p>There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and language based subjects.</p>

Hearing Impairment	
Ordinarily Available - Band 2	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild/moderate hearing loss, or Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSO) operating as a mild/moderate hearing loss likely to be aided • Unilateral aided loss • Mild difficulty accessing spoken language • Mild difficulty with listening, attention, concentration, speech, language and class participation.
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies HI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on HI/language skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • Assessment of hearing impairment by QToD and/or Audiology • SENCOs should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Band 1 • Possibly some small group teaching in an acoustically favourable environment • Support and advice by the QToD may be on request or at least annually.
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult: child ratios.</p> <p>Children may require additional targeted small group or individual support (up to 25% of timetable) likely to be</p>

	focussed on language and literacy and support in core subjects.
Academic progress	Children are likely to be having difficulty in achieving their potential and may be achieving just below age related expectations. There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and language based subjects.

Hearing Impairment	
Ordinarily Available - Band 3	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent conductive or permanent bilateral, moderate hearing loss and/or ANSD functioning as a moderate hearing loss. • Will have hearing aids and will possibly require a radio aid • Likely to have moderate difficulty accessing spoken language and likely to present with a language delay • Likely to have moderate difficulty with listening, attention, concentration and class participation
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies HI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on HI/language skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • There should be ongoing assessment of hearing impairment carried out by a QToD. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.
Recommended Provision &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Bands 1-2 • Targeted support provided by QTOD or Specialist HI LSP for language and communication skills

Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist equipment costs up to £2,500 to be usually funded by notional SEN budget (this would not be an annual cost). Support and advice by the QToD at least termly.
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult: child ratios.</p> <p>Children are likely to be receiving regular additional targeted small group or individualised support (up to 50% of timetable) likely to be for language and communication skills, pre and post teaching, support in core subjects and during non-structured times.</p> <p>Staff providing support should receive training on issues surrounding HI and the use of specialist equipment by QToD.</p>
Academic progress	<p>Children are likely to be having difficulties in achieving their potential and may be achieving below age related expectations.</p> <p>There are likely to be particular delays in literacy and language based subjects.</p>

Hearing Impairment

High Needs Funding - Band 4

Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilateral moderate or severe permanent hearing loss. Will be aided or have a cochlear implant. ANSD functioning as a moderate to severe hearing loss. Will require a radio aid Likely to have significant difficulty accessing spoken language and the curriculum Likely to have significant difficulty with listening, attention, concentration and classroom participation
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Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies HI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage some children are also likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they do not have an EHCP then an application may need to be considered in discussion with the young person and their parents/carers. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on HI/language skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • Ongoing, specialist assessment of hearing impairment, assessment and guidance provided by QToD • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s. • For children with an EHCP the SENCo will be directly involved to oversee and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services including Specialist Inclusion Team – HI, Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs. • Specialist advice from Deaf CAMHS may be needed.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Bands 1-3. • Specialist equipment costs up to £2,500 may be funded by notional SEN budget if not already used (this would not be an annual cost). • Support and advice by the QToD at least half-termly.
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult: child ratios.</p> <p>Children should be receiving a significant amount of additional targeted small group or individual support likely to be for language and literacy skills and additional targeted support in core subjects and during non-structured times, up to 75% of the school day.</p> <p>Staff providing support should receive ongoing training and mentoring provided by QToD on issues surrounding HI.</p>

Academic progress	<p>Children are likely to be having significant difficulties in achieving their potential and are likely to be achieving significantly below age related expectations.</p> <p>There are likely to be particular delays in language and literacy based subjects.</p>
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Hearing Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 5	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral, permanent moderate/severe/profound hearing loss with associated language and learning difficulties or ANSD functioning as a severe hearing loss • Wearing hearing aids or cochlear implants as well as a radio aid • Signed Supported English (SSE) or British Sign Language (BSL) may be needed for effective communication • Likely to have severe difficulty accessing spoken language, the curriculum and therefore learning in a classroom context • Likely to have severe difficulties with attention, concentration, listening and class participation
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies HI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage, children are also likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they do not have an EHCP then an application should be made in discussion with the young person and their parents/carers • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on HI/language skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly 'different from and additional to'. • Regular, specialist assessment of hearing loss, provided by QToD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services (including Inclusion Support Team – HI) • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Inclusion Support Team – HI, Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service will be ongoing. Walsall special schools and ARPs may also provide support and guidance. • Specialist advice from Deaf CAMHS may be needed.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Bands 1-4 • Additional approaches tailored to the individual needs of the child, as advised by QToD e.g. SALT • Support and advice by the QToD is likely to be weekly.
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult: child ratio, ensuring access to planned intervention as well as ensuring that adult support can be responsive to needs.</p> <p>Engagement in regular, planned, targeted 1:1 or small group intervention (for up to 90% of time in school) and consistent implementation of reasonable adjustments as required. Likely to be supported by staff who have relevant experience and skills in supporting children with HI needs.</p> <p>Ongoing support, training and mentoring provided by QToD on issues surrounding HI.</p>
Academic progress	<p>Children are more likely to be having significant difficulties in achieving their potential and are likely to be achieving significantly below age related expectations.</p> <p>There are likely to be particular delays in language and literacy based subjects.</p>

Hearing Impairment

High Needs Funding - Band 6	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral, permanent severe/profound hearing loss or ANSD functioning as severe/profound hearing loss with severe to profound language difficulties associated with hearing loss • Will be aided or have cochlear implants and use a radio aid • May have additional difficulties and learning needs not associated with hearing loss
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies HI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage, children are also very likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on HI/language skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall's Specialist Inclusion Team – HI, Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service, Walsall Educational Psychology Service is likely to be ongoing. Walsall special schools and ARPs may also provide support and guidance. • Specialist advice from Deaf CAMHS may be needed.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Bands 1-5 • Support and advice by the QToD at least weekly.
Adult support & ratios	Requiring specialist support and approaches throughout the school day in order to access learning at a level which matches their cognitive ability.

	<p>Requiring access to learning in an environment that is supportive and tailored to meet HI needs.</p> <p>Supported by staff who are experienced and highly skilled in supporting children with HI needs and/or QTOD who would provide ongoing training and mentoring on issues surrounding HI.</p>
Academic progress	<p>Likely to have very significant difficulties achieving full potential and will be below age related expectations.</p> <p>HI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without specialist support and approaches.</p>

Hearing Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 7	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral, permanent, severe or profound hearing loss and severe or profound language difficulties associated with hearing loss or ANSD functioning as profoundly deaf. • Wears hearing aids or cochlear implants. Radio aid user • Severe difficulties accessing learning and the curriculum as a result of the hearing loss • Severe difficulty accessing spoken language and likely to require access to BSL/SSE/Augmentative communication • Requiring ongoing specialist support to access learning
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies HI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage, children are expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets should be focused predominantly on HI/language skills. • Enhanced and highly individualised transition planning is required. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Specialist Inclusion Team – HI, Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Service and Walsall Educational Psychology Service is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools and ARPs • Specialist advice from Deaf CAMHS may be needed.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Bands 1-6. • Support and advice by the QToD at least weekly.
Adult support & ratios	<p>Requiring specialist support and approaches throughout the school day in order to support access to learning.</p> <p>Requiring access to learning in an environment that is supportive and tailored to meet HI needs.</p> <p>Supported by staff who are experienced and highly skilled in supporting children with HI needs and/or QTOD who would provide ongoing training and mentoring on issues surrounding HI.</p> <p>Requiring a very high level of additional targeted support within a specialist small group or individual learning context.</p>
Academic progress	<p>Will have very significant difficulties achieving full potential and will be significantly below age related expectations.</p> <p>HI needs will be a very significant barrier to access to learning without specialist support and approaches.</p>

Visual Impairment			
Universal – Band 0			
Walsall services who can support:	Whole school approaches:	Training:	Useful websites/resources:
Walsall Inclusion Support – Visual Impairment			
Book recommendations for children/young people		Book recommendations for adults (parents/carers/professionals)	
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Visual Impairment	
Ordinarily Available - Band 1	
Description of need	<p>Mild Visual Impairment</p> <p>Distance vision within the range of 6/9 to 6/12. This means that the pupil needs to be approximately twice as close from the point of interest than their fully sighted peers.</p> <p>Near vision: likely to have difficulty with print sizes smaller than 12 point or equivalent sized details in pictures. May have monocular vision.</p>
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have been subject to enhanced assessments to identify needs. At this stage this is expected to be carried out by the class teacher with guidance from the SENCo if required. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies cognition and learning as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Cognition and learning skills, although there should be an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • Provision should be directly related to the child's targets and primary area of need, as well as an ongoing focus on all of the child's areas of needs • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.

Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement advice from QTVI on teaching styles and modifications to learning materials • Attention to seating position, lighting in classroom; high contrast resources/modifications as advised by QTVI. • Teaching methods which facilitate access to the curriculum, social / emotional development and class participation as advised by QTVI. • Learning materials must be selected or modified for their clarity. • ICT is used to increase access to the curriculum, where appropriate. • QTVI to advise about potential referral to rehabilitation team. • QTVI level of support: Advice on Request.
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some additional support (direct support to facilitate effective use of low vision aids, additional supervision at unstructured times and time to prepare resources) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support.</p> <p>Low level, short term support from QTVI including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual skills program • monitoring of personal, social and emotional learning skills (PSHE) • transition between key phases
Academic progress	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but VI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.</p>

Visual Impairment

Ordinarily Available - Band 2

Description of need	<p>Mild visual impairment.</p> <p>Distance vision within the range of 6/12 to 6/18. This means that the pupil needs to be approximately 3 metres away from the point of interest than their fully sighted peers.</p> <p>Near vision: likely to have difficulty with print sizes smaller than 14-18 point or equivalent sized details in pictures.</p> <p>May have monocular vision.</p>
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have an initial assessment from QTVI that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies VI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on Vland learning skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCOs should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.

<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement advice from the QTVI on teaching styles and modifications to learning materials • Attention to seating position, lighting in classroom; high contrast resources/modifications as advised by QTVI • Teaching methods which facilitate access to the curriculum, social / emotional development and class participation as advised by QTVI. • Learning materials must be selected or modified for their clarity. • Adaptations to curriculum delivery and materials to facilitate access based on QTVI recommendations • QTVI to provide information sheets at the start of each school year, updated throughout the year • Large print materials provided by school, including assessment materials as appropriate. • Use of ICT to increase access to the curriculum, where appropriate; availability of Ipad in school. • Specialist equipment to be advised by QTVI, which may include low vision aids, writing slope, darker pencil, bold lined paper, to be provided by school • QTVI to advise about potential referral to rehabilitation team. • QTVI will provide appropriate training and support for staff working with VI CYP, so that they are confident and competent in their needs <p>QTVI level of support: Bi-annual</p>
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some additional support (direct support to facilitate effective use of low vision aids, additional supervision at unstructured times and time to prepare resources) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support.</p> <p>Low level, short term support from QTVI including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual skills program • monitoring of personal, social and emotional learning skills (PSHE) • transition between key phases
<p>Academic progress</p>	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but VI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.</p>

Visual Impairment	
Ordinarily Available - Band 3	
Description of need	<p>Moderate visual impairment.</p> <p>Distance vision within the range of 6/19 to 6/24. This means that the pupil needs to be approximately 4 times closer to the point of interest than their fully sighted peers.</p> <p>Near vision: likely to have difficulty with print sizes smaller than 18 point or equivalent sized details in pictures.</p> <p>May have monocular vision.</p>
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have had an initial assessment from QTVI that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies VI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on VI skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.

<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice for the school on teaching styles and modifications to learning materials • Attention to seating position in classroom based on QTVI recommendations • Teaching methods which facilitate access to the curriculum, social / emotional development and class participation. • School staff make basic adaptations to curriculum delivery and materials to facilitate access based on QTVI recommendations. • Resources made available from within school, following advice from QTVI report. • Learning materials must be selected or modified for their clarity. • Large print materials provided by school, including assessment materials as appropriate. • ICT is used to increase access to the curriculum, where appropriate: availability of Ipad within school. • Specialist equipment to be advised by QTVI, which may include low vision aids, writing slope, darker pencil, bold lined paper, to be provided by school. • QTVI to provide information sheets at the start of each school year, updated throughout the year • QTVI will provide appropriate training and support for staff working with VI CYP, so that they are confident and competent in their needs • QTVI to advise about potential referral to rehabilitation team • QTVI level of support: Termly
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Additional adult support is used throughout the school day (up to 50% of school day) to increase pupil success and independence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level, short term support from QTVI including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ visual skills program ○ monitoring of personal, social and emotional learning skills (pse) ○ transition between key phases ○ family support ○ use of low vision devices (LVDs)

Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but VI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.
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Visual Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 4	
Description of need	<p>Moderate visual impairment.</p> <p>Distance vision within the range of 6/24, with fluctuation of vision. This means that the pupil needs to be approximately 4 times closer to point of interest than their fully sighted peers.</p> <p>Near vision: likely to have difficulty with print sizes smaller than 24 point or equivalent sized details in pictures.</p> <p>May have monocular vision.</p> <p>May have cerebral visual impairment (CVI). Band 4 will be those pupils in mainstream with CVI who are experiencing mild, moderate or severe difficulties.</p>
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have had an initial assessment from QTVI that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies VI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on VI skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s.

<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods which facilitate access to the curriculum, social / emotional development and class participation. • Significant adaptations to curriculum delivery and materials to facilitate access based on QTVI recommendations • Resources made available from within school, following advice and training from QTVI. • Personalised, large print materials provided by school, including assessment materials as appropriate. • ICT is used to increase access to the curriculum, where appropriate: availability of Ipad within school. Provision of laptop with software as appropriate to meet assessed needs • Specialist equipment to be advised by QTVI, which may include low vision aids, writing slope, darker pencil, bold lined paper, to be provided by school. • Specialist electronic devices (provided by LA), along with appropriate training and support for school staff by QTVI and technical support from manufacturers • Attention to seating position in classroom based on QTVI recommendations • Adapted teaching styles and modifications to learning materials as advised by QTVI • QTVI will provide appropriate training and support for staff working with VI CYP, so that they are confident and competent in their needs • QTVI to provide information sheets at the start of each school year, updated throughout the year • QTVI to advise about potential referral to rehabilitation team • QTVI level of support: Half-Termly
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Regular one to one pre/post teaching from school Teaching Assistant.</p> <p>Additional support from a Teaching Assistant in class, and around school, as indicated by assessment (likely to be direct support for all core subjects, additional supervision at unstructured times and time to prepare resources and liaise with QTVI).</p> <p>Moderate level of support from QTVI to develop the following skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual perception • developing independence • teaching and monitoring of personal, social and emotional learning skills • transition between key phases and each year group • family support • environmental audit

Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but VI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.
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Visual Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 5	
Description of need	<p>Moderate visual impairment.</p> <p>Distance vision within the range of 6/24 -6/36, with fluctuation of vision. This means that the pupil needs to be approximately 6 times closer to point of interest than their fully sighted peers.</p> <p>Near vision: likely to have difficulty with print sizes smaller than 28 point or equivalent sized details in pictures.</p> <p>May have monocular vision.</p> <p>May have cerebral visual impairment (CVI). Band 5 will be those pupils in mainstream with CVI who are experiencing mild, moderate or severe difficulties.</p>
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have had an initial assessment from QTVI that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies VI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they do not have an EHCP then an application should be made in discussion with the young person and their parents/carers • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • QTVI will provide written targets to be incorporated into school planning, targets should be focussed predominantly on VI skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly

	<p>'different from and additional to'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services (including Inclusion Support Team – VI) • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Inclusion Support Team – VI, Walsall Educational Psychology Service will be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources made available from within school, following advice and training from QTVI. • Personalised, large print materials provided by school, including assessment materials as appropriate. • Use of ICT to increase access to the curriculum, where appropriate: availability of Ipad within school. Provision of laptop with software as appropriate to meet assessed needs • Specialist equipment to be advised by QTVI, which may include low vision aids, writing slope, darker pencil, bold lined paper, to be provided by school. • Specialist electronic devices (provided by LA), along with appropriate training and support for school staff by QTVI and technical support from manufacturers • Attention to seating position in classroom based on QTVI recommendations • Teaching methods which facilitate access to the curriculum, social / emotional development and class participation. • Significant adaptations to curriculum delivery and materials to facilitate access based on QTVI recommendations • QTVI to provide information sheets at the start of each school year, updated throughout the year • QTVI to provide advice for the school on teaching styles and modifications to learning materials • QTVI will provide appropriate training and support for staff working with VI CYP, so that they are confident and competent in their needs • QTVI to advise about potential referral to rehabilitation team • QTVI level of support: Monthly
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio.</p> <p>Regular one to one pre/post teaching from school teaching assistant Additional support from a Teaching Assistant in class, and around school, as indicated by assessment (likely to be direct support for all subjects, additional supervision at unstructured times and time to prepare resources and liaise with QTVI).</p> <p>Moderate level of support from QTVI to develop the following skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual perception

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing independence • teaching and monitoring of personal, social and emotional learning skills • specialist equipment training and support • transition between key phases and each year group • family support • environmental audit
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but VI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.

Visual Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 6	
Description of need	<p>Severe visual impairment.</p> <p>Distance vision within the range of 6/36 -6/60, with fluctuation of vision. This means that the pupil needs to be approximately 10 times closer to point of interest than their fully sighted peers.</p> <p>Near vision: likely to have difficulty with print sizes smaller than 36 point or equivalent sized details in pictures.</p> <p>May have monocular vision.</p> <p>May have cerebral visual impairment (CVI). Band 6 will be those pupils in mainstream with CVI who are experiencing mild, moderate or severe difficulties.</p>
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have an initial assessment from QTVI that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies VI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also very likely to have an EHCP.

	<p>This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • QTVI will provide written targets to be incorporated into school planning. Targets should be focussed predominantly on VI skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Inclusion Support Team – VI, Walsall Educational Psychology Service is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools.
<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to seating position in classroom based on QTVI recommendations • Resources made available from within school, following advice and training from QTVI. • Personalised, large print materials provided by school, including assessment materials as appropriate. Tactile resources may be indicated; school to produce/provide materials under the guidance of QTVI/LSP-VI • CYP has access to social and emotional intervention provided by school with guidance from QTVI/LSP-VI • Use of ICT to increase access to the curriculum, where appropriate: availability of Ipad within school. Provision of laptop with software as appropriate to meet assessed needs • Specialist equipment to be advised by QTVI, which may include low vision aids, writing slope, darker pencil, bold lined paper, to be provided by school. • Specialist electronic devices (provided by LA), along with appropriate training and support for school staff by QTVI and technical support from manufacturers • Teaching methods which facilitate access to the curriculum, social / emotional development and class participation. • Significant adaptations to curriculum delivery and materials to facilitate access based on QTVI recommendations • QTVI to provide information sheets at the start of each school year, updated throughout the year • Advice for the school on teaching styles and modifications to learning materials • QTVI will provide appropriate training and support for staff working with VI CYP, so that they are confident and competent in their needs • QTVI to advise about potential referral to rehabilitation team • QTVI level of support: Weekly/Fortnightly

<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio.</p> <p>Regular 1:1 pre/post teaching from school teaching assistant</p> <p>Additional support from a Teaching Assistant in class, and around school, as indicated by assessment (likely to be direct support across the curriculum, additional supervision at unstructured times and time to prepare resources and liaise with QTVI).</p> <p>Provision of 1:1, specialist LSP, VI weekly/fortnightly to support the work of the QTVI</p> <p>High level of support from QTVI to develop long term programmes of teaching and support of the following skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual perception • developing independence and self advocacy • teaching and monitoring of personal, social and emotional learning skills • specialist equipment training and support • transition between key phases and each year group • environmental audit • family support • touch typing and keyboard skills
<p>Academic progress</p>	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but VI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.</p>

Visual Impairment

High Needs Funding - Band 7	
Description of need	<p>Educationally Blind.</p> <p>Distance vision within the range of 3/60 to no light perception, or has a diagnosis of CVI. They are educationally blind, unable to identify any distance information.</p> <p>Near vision: The pupil is educationally blind/ Braille user/ can access small quantities of print larger than point 36.</p> <p>May have cerebral visual impairment (CVI). Band 7 will be those pupils in mainstream with CVI who are experiencing mild, moderate or severe difficulties.</p>
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have an initial assessment from QTVI that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies VI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • QTVI will provide additional written targets to the school to support non-sighted methods of learning. Targets should be focussed predominantly on VI skills. • Enhanced and highly individualised transition planning is required. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Inclusion Support – VI and Walsall Educational Psychology Service is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools.
Recommended Provision &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sensory approach to curriculum planning and delivery. • Braille/ tactile resources and teaching methods. • Access to modified large print (if appropriate).

Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult 1:1 support to augment direct teaching. • Advice for the school on teaching styles and modifications to learning materials • Access to multi-sensory equipment (subject specific) as advised by QTVI. • Provision of specialist electronic equipment including Braille-note, specialist electronic magnification system (Prodigy Connect 12), embosser, ZY-fuser, specialist Braille and screen reading software (Duxbury, Jaws and SuperNova). Specialist electronic devices provided by LA, along with appropriate training and support for school staff by QTVI and technical support from manufacturers. • Resources made available from within school, following advice and training from QTVI. • Personalised, Braille and tactile resources provided by school, under the guidance of QTVI/LSP-VI, including assessment materials as appropriate. • Social and emotional interventions (guidance provided by QTVI/LSP-VI) • Use of ICT to increase access to the curriculum, where appropriate. Provision of laptop with braille keyboard and access software as appropriate to meet assessed needs • QTVI will provide appropriate training and support for staff working with VI CYP, so that they are confident and competent in their needs
Adult support & ratios	<p>Small group teaching within a mainstream or specialist setting.</p> <p>1:1 daily Braille teaching, support provided by staff with specialist skills and training.</p> <p>1:1 TA support focussed on additional curriculum skills.</p> <p>1:1 support throughout the school day to promote inclusion and ensure safety. Keyworker to be trained in accessing the curriculum through non-sighted methods.</p> <p>Access to rehabilitation officers as required.</p> <p>High level of support from QTVI (1-5 times per week) to develop long term programmes of teaching and support of the following skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ non-sighted methods of communication including Braille and tactile ○ developing independence and self advocacy ○ teaching and monitoring of personal, social and emotional learning skills ○ specialist equipment training and support- to include specialist Braille equipment and software.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ transition between key phases and each year group ○ Family support ○ environmental audit ○ touch typing and keyboard skills (Braille keyboard) <p>Additional support provided by LSP-VI weekly to support the work of the QTVI.</p>
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but VI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.

Multi-Sensory Impairment			
Universal – Band 0			
Walsall services who	Whole school	Training:	Useful websites/resources:

can support:	approaches:		
Walsall Inclusion Support – Visual Impairment Walsall Inclusion Support – Hearing Impairment			
Book recommendations for children/young people	Book recommendations for adults (parents/carers/professionals)		
•	•		

Multi-Sensory Impairment	
Ordinarily Available - Band 3	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild loss in both and making good use of at least one modality • May have hearing aids and/or LVAs • Non-progressive condition • May have a slower pace of working but has good compensatory strategies • May have some difficulty with listening, attention and concentration but language and communication largely matches potential given appropriate support • Low level of support needed to manage equipment and aids • May have additional learning needs • May have Auditory Processing Disorder/Auditory Neuropathy/Cerebral Visual Impairment
Assessment &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have had an initial assessment from QTVI & TOD that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies MSI

Planning	<p>as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. If progress is not accelerated with support at Band 3 then a request for an EHC needs assessment should be considered through discussion with the young person/their parent/carers (see 'Making a request for an EHC needs assessment' guidance) • Targets should be focussed predominantly on independence and learning skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCOs should be overseeing and co-ordinating provision with the support of relevant specialists
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to seating, lighting, acoustics • Pre-and post teaching to support access to lessons • Opportunities for 1:1 and small group work • Targeted support for subject specific vocabulary • Support to use low vision aids and for preparation of adapted lesson materials • Follow advice provided by ToD & QTVI regarding individualised approaches
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some individualised and targeted support within 1:1 or small group context, focussing on pre and post teaching and facilitating social inclusion (up to 50% of timetable, including time spent preparing materials).</p>

Academic progress	Likely to be below age related expectations and MSI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.
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Multi-Sensory Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 4	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate loss in one modality and mild/moderate in the other • Have hearing aids and/or LVAs • Non-progressive condition • Have additional language/learning needs associated with dual sensory impairment • Likely to have difficulties accessing incidental learning, including signed and verbal communication • Have a slower pace of learning, difficulties with attention, concentration and the development of independence and social skills • Have additional learning needs • Have Auditory Processing Disorder / Auditory Neuropathy / Cerebral Visual Impairment
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have had an initial assessment from QTVI & TOD that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies MSI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. A child at this level would be expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed annually. If they do not already have an EHCP then one should be requested through discussion with the young person/their parent/carers (see 'Making a request for an EHC needs assessment' guidance) • Targets should be focussed predominantly on independence and learning skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCOs should be overseeing and co-ordinating provision with the support of relevant specialists
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible class groupings with frequent opportunities for small group and 1:1 work in a quiet environment • Particular attention to seating, lighting, visual environment and acoustics • Adaptations to curriculum delivery to ensure access to the curriculum, social/emotional development and class participation • Additional time to experience new activities, complete work, preview and review lessons • Follow guidance provide by ToD and QTVI for individualised approaches
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Flexible groupings to provide time in small groups and for highly individualised targeted support across the school day, this may be in a 1:1 or very small group context.</p>
Academic progress	Likely to be below age related expectations and MSI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.

Multi-Sensory Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 5	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profound/severe loss in one modality and moderate in the other or has a late diagnosed or recently acquired MSI • Uses hearing aids and/or LVAs • Non-progressive condition • Have delayed development in some areas of learning and difficulties generalising learning and transferring skill • Have difficulties coping with new experiences and have underdeveloped independence and self-help skills • Likely to have communication difficulties

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant difficulties accessing incidental learning and the curriculum • Significant difficulties with attention, concentration, confidence and class participation • Likely to require some individual support to access learning and social interactions and to develop life-skills • Likely to require a tactile approach to learning with access to real objects and context-based learning experiences and/or access to visual or tactile signed communication • Significantly slower pace of learning • May have additional learning needs • May have Auditory Processing Disorder / Auditory Neuropathy / Cerebral Visual Impairment
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have had an initial assessment from QTVI& TOD that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies MSI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children would be expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they do not have an EHCP then an application should be made in discussion with the young person and their parents/carers • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • QTVI & TOD will provide written targets to be incorporated into school planning, targets should be focussed predominantly on independence and learning skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly 'different from and additional to'. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services (including Inclusion Support Team – VI, HI) • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Inclusion Support Team – VI& HI, Walsall Educational Psychology Service will be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily access to individual support, trained to meet the needs of pupils with MSI • Input from other educational and non-educational professionals as appropriate • Need for balanced approach to support and intervention to facilitate social inclusion • Significant modification to learning materials and curriculum delivery • Individual mobility and independence/life skills programmes • Additional time to experience new activities, complete work, preview and review lessons

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted equipment to meet specialised MSI needs • Access to a quiet room for small group and 1:1 sessions • Low vision aids, electronic magnification, laptop with software, large print materials
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio.</p> <p>A high level of highly individualised support throughout the school day (up to 90% of school day), including support to ensure safety and wellbeing at unstructured time.</p>
Academic progress	Likely to be working well below age related expectations and MSI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.

Multi-Sensory Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 6	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profound/severe loss in one modality and moderate/severe in the other and/or progressive condition • Likely to use hearing aids and/or LVA's • Severe communication difficulties requiring an individual communication system using alternative and augmentative approaches • Require a tactile approach to learning with access to real objects and context-based learning experiences and/or access to visual or tactile signed communication • Have severe difficulties generalising learning and transferring skills • Difficulties coping with new experiences • May have underdeveloped independence and self-help skills • May have difficulties developing relationships and lack social awareness leading to social isolation • Likely to require a high level of individual support to access learning and social opportunities and to develop life-skills • Display challenging and/or self-injurious behaviour

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have additional learning needs • May have limited clinical assessment information because of additional complex educational needs • May have Auditory Processing Disorder / Auditory Neuropathy / Cerebral Visual Impairment
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have an initial assessment from QTVI & TOD that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies MSI as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • QTVI & TOD will provide written targets to be incorporated into school planning. Targets should be focussed predominantly on independence and learning skills. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Inclusion Support Team – VI& HI, Walsall Educational Psychology Service is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual curriculum to facilitate learning through tactile and experiential approaches and using alternative or augmentative communication systems • Individual programmes to facilitate the development of communication, compensatory, independent living, mobility and social skills • Adapted equipment to meet specialised MSI needs • Access to a quiet room for small group and 1:1 sessions • Tactile resources • Materials to support development of alternative communication systems • Sensory stimulation resources
Adult support &	<p>Supported within mainstream or specialist setting with an enhanced adult:child ratio.</p> <p>Access to highly specialist support and approaches throughout the school day, supported by staff who have training and</p>

ratios	experience in supporting children with MSI. Ongoing specialist advice provided by ToD, QTVI and MSI teacher.
Academic progress	Likely to be working significantly below age related expectations and MSI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.

Multi-Sensory Impairment	
High Needs Funding - Band 7	
Description of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profound and multiple complex needs, including HI & VI (educationally blind and deaf). • Will have significant learning needs requiring a highly adapted and multi-sensory curriculum offer • Severe and complex communication difficulties requiring an individual communication system using alternative and augmentative approaches • Severely restricted access to incidental learning • Require a tactile and experiential approach to learning and individual curriculum and/or access to visual or tactile signed communication • Require individual support with most aspects of basic care needs and to access learning and social opportunities • Lack the strategies and motivation to make effective use of residual hearing and vision and require sensory stimulation programmes • Tactile defensive/selective and highly wary of new experiences • Have difficulties developing relationships and lack social awareness leading to social isolation • Display challenging and/or self-injurious behaviour • May have additional learning needs • May have limited clinical assessment information because of additional complex educational needs • May have Auditory Processing Disorder / Auditory Neuropathy / Cerebral Visual Impairment

Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have an initial assessment from QTVI& TOD/MSI teacher that will indicate NatSIP criteria and level of need. • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies MSIs as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • QTVI& TOD will provide additional written targets to the school to support non-sighted, non-hearing methods of learning. Targets should be focussed predominantly on experiential learning skills. • Enhanced and highly individualised transition planning is required. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Inclusion Support – VI& HI and Walsall Educational Psychology Service is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sensory approach to curriculum planning and delivery • Trained intervener providing 1:1 support throughout the day • Individual curriculum to facilitate learning through sensory and experiential approaches and using alternative or augmentative communication systems • Individual sensory stimulation programmes • Individual programmes to facilitate the development of communication, compensatory, independent living, mobility and social skills
Adult support & ratios	<p>Specialist small group teaching(1:3) within a mainstream or specialist setting.</p> <p>Trained intervener providing additional 1:1 support throughout the day.</p>

Academic progress	Functioning significantly below age related expectations and MSI needs are a significant barrier to access to learning. Requiring direct support to manage all needs.
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Physical needs

It should be noted that children and young people throughout their ongoing development may present with changes to their usual physical state which could have an impact on their access to learning. This may be as a result of a trauma such as injury, elective or unexpected surgery, a new diagnosis or as a direct result of normal skeletal growth.

Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. They may require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all of the opportunities available to their peers.

Children and young people should receive responsive support during a period of change and reasonable adjustments and additional support should be provided to promote inclusion and support their wellbeing. Where there are long-lasting difficulties schools should consider whether the child might have SEN.

Where there are concerns with changes, in needs schools and families are encouraged to make contact with a named therapist if support remains ongoing or asking for a new assessment/referral when a new concern is identified.

In accordance with Walsall's Inclusion strategy it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all Walsall schools are inclusive and welcoming to children with a range of special educational needs and disabilities, including a physical disability. School's should plan proactively and take steps to ensure their physical environment and their educational offer is accessible as possible to children with a range of physical needs.

Physical Needs			
Universal – Band 0			
Walsall services who can support:	Whole school approaches:	Training:	Useful websites/resources:
<p>Walsall Physiotherapy</p> <p>Walsall Occupational Therapy</p> <p>Walsall Physical Disability Outreach Service (<i>Outreach@Lindens</i>)</p> <p>School</p>	<p>Moving & Grooving</p>	<p>PD Net Level 1 training (free online)</p> <p>Muscular Dystrophy UK training (free online)</p> <p>Assisting People to Move training – Walsall Physical Disability Outreach Service(<i>Outreach@Lindens</i>)</p>	<p>Walsall Personal Care Policy</p> <p>Walsall Intimate Care Policy</p> <p>Walsall Manual Handling of People (Adult Social Care, Children’s Residential Service and Schools) www.walsallsocialcareworkforce.co.uk/ckfinder/userfiles/files/manual_handling_of_people_document_v3%20REVIEWED%20NOV%2019.pdf</p> <p>Walsall Assisted Manual Handling of People – Guides</p> <p>National Back Exchange https://www.nationalbackexchange.org</p> <p>NICE Guidance</p> <p>Contact for families with disabled children https://contact.org.uk/</p> <p>Muscular Dystrophy UK www.muscular dystrophyuk.org</p> <p>PD Net https://pdnet.org.uk</p>

Nursing Community Nursing		ch @ Lindens)	Kids Independently Developing Skills (KIDS) www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids UK Bladder and Bowel https://www.bbuk.org.uk/ ERIC: the children’s Bowel and Bladder Charity https://www.eric.org.uk Changing places http://www.changing-places.org Disabled Living https://www.disabledliving.co.uk Disabled Living Foundation www.dlf.org.uk Whizzkidz www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/ Scope www.scope.org.uk Cerebral Palsy Sport www.cpsport.org/
Book recommendations for children/young people	Book recommendations for adults (parents/carers/professionals)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willis, J. and Ross, T.(1999). <i>Susan Laughs</i>. Random House Children’s Books. • Elliot, R. (2010). <i>Just Because</i>. Lion Hudson. • Elliot, R. (2011). <i>Sometimes</i>. Lion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoskin, J. ed., (2017). <i>A guide to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy: Information and Advice for Teachers and Parents</i>. Jessica Kingsley • Allard, A., Carlin, J., and Delamore J. (eds), (2014). <i>Dignity & Inclusion: Making it work for children with complex health care needs</i>. Council for Disabled Children • Rayner, J. and Richardson, D. (2019) <i>Managing Bladder and Bowel Issues in Nurseries, Schools and Colleges: Guidance for School Leaders, Proprietors, Governors, Staff and Practitioners</i>. Bladder and Bowel UK viewed www.bbuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Managing-Continence-Problems-in-Schools-2019.pdf. May 2020 • Hill, M. and Hill, K. (2007). <i>Visual Perception Skills</i>. LDA • Hill, M. and Hill, K. (2008). <i>Visual Memory Skills</i>. LDA 		

<p>Hudson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Griffiths, N. (2006). <i>Ringo the flamingo</i>. Red Robin Books. • Andreae, G. (1999). <i>Giraffes can't dance</i>. Orchard Books. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hill, M. (2015). <i>Differentiating for Inclusion: Target Ladders Visual Perception</i>. LDA • Addy, L. (2006). <i>Get Physical: An Inclusive Therapeutic PE Programme to Develop Motor Skills</i>. LDA • Addy, L. (2016). <i>How to Identify and Overcome Handwriting Difficulties</i>. LDA • Addy, L. (2016). <i>How to Support pupils with Sensory Processing Needs</i>. LDA •
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Physical Needs	
Ordinarily Available - Band 1	
<p>Description of need</p>	<p>Child experiences difficulties* which have a mild impact on access to learning, for which direct specialist support/supervision is required occasionally during the week.</p> <p>*Difficulties known to be commonly associated with physical impairment/s and physically disabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the physical environment • Using equipment and facilities safely • Taking part in learning tasks and assessments • Doing practical tasks and activities (e.g. food technology) • Recording ideas and thoughts legibly or to time • Achieving independent work • Developing self care skills • Communicating with others • Managing fatigue and pain

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing associated or additional healthcare needs • Interacting socially • Processing and regulating sensory information • Developing positive social emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing • Achieving/maintaining the required pace of lessons • Completing the required experiences in the time available (due to time missed for health related absence and appointments)
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Physical needs as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on physical skills and independence. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s • Individualised transition planning may be required.

<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p> <p><i>Nb List is common to Bands 1 & 2</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible groupings • Peer buddy support • Alternative methods of recording available • Adapted equipment (e.g. writing slope, pencil grips, adapted rulers adapted scissors/cutting equipment etc) • Additional time to complete activities • Regular planned rest breaks to prevent against fatigue • Access to resources that support independence • Access to appropriate seating/workstation to maximise function and promote both comfort and independence • Small group support to develop physical skills • Complete risk assessment if any manual handling is required • Moving & Grooving • Foot supports • ERIC • Caring cutlery • Plate guards • Adapted PE equipment • PD Net strategies (https://pdnet.org.uk/) • Access to appropriately adapted toileting facilities • Physical Management plans and approaches recommended by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some low level and occasional small group or individualised additional support alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support.</p>
<p>Academic progress</p>	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but physical needs are a barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.</p>

Physical Needs

Ordinarily Available - Band 2	
Description of need	<p>Child experiences difficulties* which have a mild impact on access to learning, and for which direct specialist support/supervision is required occasionally during the day.</p> <p>*Difficulties known to be commonly associated with physical impairment/s and physically disabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the physical environment • Using equipment and facilities safely • Taking part in learning tasks and assessments • Doing practical tasks and activities (e.g. food technology) • Recording ideas and thoughts legibly or to time • Achieving independent work • Developing self care skills • Communicating with others • Managing fatigue and pain • Managing associated or additional healthcare needs • Interacting socially • Processing and regulating sensory information • Developing positive social emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing • Achieving/maintaining the required pace of lessons • Completing the required experiences in the time available (due to time missed for health related absence and appointments)
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Physical needs as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance)

	<p>and should know how progress will be measured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets should be focussed predominantly on physical skills and independence. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s. • Individualised transition planning may be required.
<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p> <p><i>Nb List is common to Bands 1 & 2</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible groupings • Peer buddy support • Alternative methods of recording available • Adapted equipment (e.g. writing slope, pencil grips, adapted rulers, adapted scissors/cutting equipment etc) • Additional time to complete activities • Regular planned rest breaks to prevent against fatigue • Access to resources that support independence • Access to appropriate seating/workstation to maximise function and promote both comfort and independence • Small group support to develop physical skills • Complete risk assessment if any manual handling is required • Moving & Grooving • Foot supports • ERIC • Caring cutlery • Plate guards • Adapted PE equipment • PD Net strategies (https://pdnet.org.uk/) • Access to appropriately adapted toileting facilities • Physical Management plans and approaches recommended by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some daily low level and occasional small group or individualised additional support alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support.</p>

Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but physical needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.
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Physical Needs	
Ordinarily Available - Band 3	
Description of need	<p>Child experiences difficulties* which have a moderate impact on access to learning and for which direct specialist support/supervision is required frequently throughout the day.</p> <p>*Difficulties known to be commonly associated with physical impairment/s and physically disabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the physical environment • Using equipment and facilities safely • Taking part in learning tasks and assessments • Doing practical tasks and activities (e.g. food technology) • Recording ideas and thoughts legibly or to time • Achieving independent work • Developing self care skills • Communicating with others • Managing fatigue and pain • Managing associated or additional healthcare needs • Interacting socially • Processing and regulating sensory information

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing positive social emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing • Achieving/maintaining the required pace of lessons • Completing the required experiences in the time available (due to time missed for health related absence and appointments)
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended ‘My SEN Support Plan’), which identifies Physical needs as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see ‘My SMART targets’ guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. If adequate progress is not being made then a request for an EHC needs assessment should be considered (see ‘Making an EHC request’ guidance) • Targets should be focussed predominantly on physical skills and independence. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCos should be providing advice and guidance to the class/subject teacher/s. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services (including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Disability Outreach Service (Outreach@Lindens), Walsall School Nursing Service). • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and School Nursing is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools. • Individualised transition planning is required. •

<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible groupings • Peer buddy support • Alternative methods of recording available • Adapted equipment (e.g. writing slope, pencil grips, adapted rulers, adapted scissors/cutting equipment etc) • Additional time to complete activities • Regular planned rest breaks to prevent against fatigue • Access to resources that support independence • Access to appropriate seating/workstation to maximise function and promote both comfort and independence • Small group support to develop physical skills • Complete risk assessment if any manual handling is required • Moving & Grooving • Foot supports • ERIC • Caring cutlery • Plate guards • Adapted PE equipment • PD Net strategies (https://pdnet.org.uk/) • Access to appropriately adapted toileting facilities • Physical Management plans and approaches recommended by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy • Access to additional therapy equipment as identified for the young person • Safe therapy space which is accessible, supports a young person's privacy and meets any additional manual handling needs
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some frequent small group or individualised additional support and supervision (up to 50% of the school day including lesson time and unstructured times) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support.</p>
<p>Academic progress</p>	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but physical needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.</p>

Physical Needs	
High Needs Funding - Band 4	
Description of need	<p>Child experiences difficulties* which have a moderate impact on access to learning, for which direct specialist support is required frequently throughout the day.</p> <p>*Difficulties known to be commonly associated with physical impairment/s and physically disabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the physical environment • Using equipment and facilities safely • Taking part in learning tasks and assessments • Doing practical tasks and activities (e.g. food technology) • Recording ideas and thoughts legibly or to time • Achieving independent work • Developing self care skills • Communicating with others • Managing fatigue and pain • Managing associated or additional healthcare needs • Interacting socially • Processing and regulating sensory information • Developing positive social emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing • Achieving/maintaining the required pace of lessons • Completing the required experiences in the time available (due to time missed for health related absence)

	and appointments)
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Physical Needs as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. It is expected that at this stage a child would have an EHCP. If they don't already have one a request for an assessment should be considered through discussion with the young person/their parents/carers (see 'Making an EHC request' guidance) • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on physical skills and independence and will be advised by occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services (including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Disability Outreach Service (Outreach@Lindens), Walsall School Nursing Service). • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and School Nursing is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools. • Enhanced, individualised transition planning is required.

<p>Recommended Provision & Interventions</p> <p><i>Nb List is common to Bands 4,5 & 6</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible groupings • Peer buddy support • Alternative methods of recording available • Adapted equipment (e.g. writing slope, pencil grips, adapted rulers, adapted scissors/cutting equipment etc) • Additional time to complete activities • Regular planned rest breaks to prevent against fatigue • Access to resources that support independence • Access to appropriate seating/workstation to maximise function and promote both comfort and independence • Small group support to develop physical skills • Complete risk assessment if any manual handling is required • Moving & Grooving • Foot supports • ERIC • Caring cutlery • Plate guards • Adapted PE equipment • PD Net strategies (https://pdnet.org.uk/) • Access to appropriately adapted toileting facilities/Changing Places Standard hygiene room • Physical management plans and approaches recommended by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy • Safe therapy space which is accessible, supports a young person's privacy and meets any additional manual handling needs • Children requiring assistance to move (manual handling) will have a Safer Handling Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Access to appropriate Manual Handling Equipment as identified in their Safer Handling Plan • Children requiring assistance with personal/intimate care needs will have a Personal/Intimate Care Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Children requiring assistance with feeding will have a feeding plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs
<p>Adult support &</p>	<p>Supported within the mainstream class group with the usual adult:child ratios.</p> <p>Some frequent small group or individualised additional support and supervision (up to 75% of the school day including lesson</p>

ratios	time and unstructured times) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support.
Academic progress	May or may not be below age related expectations but physical needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.

Physical Needs	
High Needs Funding - Band 5	
Description of need	<p>Child experiences difficulties* which have a severe impact on access to learning, for which direct specialist support/supervision is required constantly for the majority of the day.</p> <p>*Difficulties known to be commonly associated with physical impairment/s and physically disabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the physical environment • Using equipment and facilities safely • Taking part in learning tasks and assessments • Doing practical tasks and activities (e.g. food technology) • Recording ideas and thoughts legibly or to time • Achieving independent work • Developing self care skills • Communicating with others • Managing fatigue and pain • Managing associated or additional healthcare needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacting socially • Processing and regulating sensory information • Developing positive social emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing • Achieving/maintaining the required pace of lessons • Completing the required experiences in the time available (due to time missed for health related absence and appointments)
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Physical needs as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they do not have an EHCP then an application should be made in discussion with the young person and their parents/carers • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on physical skills and independence and will be advised by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be significantly 'different from and additional to'. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to oversee provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services (including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Disability Outreach Service (Outreach@Lindens), Walsall School Nursing Service). • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and School Nursing is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools. • Enhanced, individualised transition planning is required.
Recommended Provision &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible groupings • Peer buddy support • Alternative methods of recording available • Adapted equipment (e.g. writing slope, pencil grips, adapted rulers, adapted scissors/cutting equipment etc)

<p>Interventions</p> <p><i>Nb List is common to Bands 4,5 & 6</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional time to complete activities • Regular planned rest breaks to prevent against fatigue • Access to resources that support independence • Access to appropriate seating/workstation to maximise function and promote both comfort and independence • Small group support to develop physical skills • Complete risk assessment if any manual handling is required • Moving & Grooving • Foot supports • ERIC • Caring cutlery • Plate guards • Adapted PE equipment • PD Net strategies (https://pdnet.org.uk/) • Access to appropriately adapted toileting facilities/ Changing Places Standard hygiene room • Physical management plans and approaches recommended by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy • Safe therapy space which is accessible, supports a young person's privacy and meets any additional manual handling needs • Children requiring assistance to move (manual handling) will have a Safer Handling Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Access to appropriate Manual Handling Equipment as identified in their Safer Handling Plan • Children requiring assistance with personal/intimate care needs will have a Personal/Intimate Care Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Children requiring assistance with feeding will have a feeding plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs
<p>Adult support & ratios</p>	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio.</p> <p>Small group or individualised additional support and supervision throughout the majority of the school day (including lesson time and unstructured times) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support.</p>
<p>Academic progress</p>	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but physical needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.</p>

Physical Needs	
High Needs Funding - Band 6	
Description of need	<p>Child experiences difficulties* which have a severe impact on access to learning, for which direct highly specialist support/supervision is required constantly throughout the day.</p> <p>*Difficulties known to be commonly associated with physical impairment/s and physically disabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the physical environment • Using equipment and facilities safely • Taking part in learning tasks and assessments • Doing practical tasks and activities (e.g. food technology) • Recording ideas and thoughts legibly or to time • Achieving independent work • Developing self care skills • Communicating with others • Managing fatigue and pain • Managing associated or additional healthcare needs • Interacting socially • Processing and regulating sensory information • Developing positive social emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing • Achieving/maintaining the required pace of lessons • Completing the required experiences in the time available (due to time missed for health related absence)

	and appointments)
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Physical needs as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are also very likely to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on physical skills and independence as advised by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services (including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Disability Outreach Service (Outreach@Lindens), Walsall School Nursing Service). • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and School Nursing Service is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools. • Enhanced, individualised transition planning is required.
Recommended Provision & Interventions <i>Nb List is common to Bands 4,5 & 6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible groupings • Peer buddy support • Alternative methods of recording available • Adapted equipment (e.g. writing slope, pencil grips, adapted rulers, adapted scissors/cutting equipment etc) • Additional time to complete activities • Regular planned rest breaks to prevent against fatigue • Access to resources that support independence • Access to appropriate seating/workstation to maximise function and promote both comfort and independence • Small group support to develop physical skills

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete risk assessment if any manual handling is required • Moving & Grooving • Foot supports • ERIC • Caring cutlery • Plate guards • Adapted PE equipment • PD Net strategies (https://pdnet.org.uk/) • Access to appropriately adapted toileting facilities/ Changing Places Standard hygiene room • Physical management plans and approaches recommended by Occupational Therapy and/or Physiotherapy • Safe therapy space which is accessible, supports a young person's privacy and meets any additional manual handling needs • Children requiring assistance to move (manual handling) will have a Safer Handling Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Access to appropriate Manual Handling Equipment as identified in their Safer Handling Plan • Children requiring assistance with personal/intimate care needs will have a Personal/Intimate Care Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Children requiring assistance with feeding will have a feeding plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs
Adult support & ratios	<p>Supported within mainstream class group with an enhanced adult:child ratio.</p> <p>Small group or individualised additional support and supervision throughout the school day (including lesson time and unstructured times) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support. Some periods of 2:1 may be required for manual handling.</p>
Academic progress	<p>May or may not be below age related expectations but physical needs are a significant barrier to access to learning without appropriate support.</p>

Physical Needs	
High Needs Funding - Band 7	
Description of need	<p>Child experiences difficulties* which have a profound impact on access to learning, for which direct specialist support is required constantly. Child will have significant cognition and learning needs and communication needs in addition to the impact of physical needs. Child may also have significant needs across other areas of learning.</p> <p>The child is likely to have needs described as complex and multiple or PMLD.</p> <p>*Difficulties known to be commonly associated with physical impairment/s and physically disabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the physical environment • Using equipment and facilities safely • Taking part in learning tasks and assessments • Doing practical tasks and activities (e.g. food technology) • Recording ideas and thoughts legibly or to time • Achieving independent work • Developing self care skills • Communicating with others • Managing fatigue and pain • Managing associated or additional healthcare needs • Interacting socially • Processing and regulating sensory information • Developing positive social emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing • Achieving/maintaining the required pace of lessons

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the required experiences in the time available (due to time missed for health related absence and appointments)
Assessment & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should have an individual education plan (see recommended 'My SEN Support Plan'), which identifies Physical Needs/PMLD as a primary need. This should be reviewed at least termly. At this stage children are expected to have an EHCP. This should be reviewed at least annually. If they have not yet got an EHCP then an application should be made through discussion with parents/carers/young person • Children will also have an intimate needs care plan which should be updated regularly and on an ongoing basis dependent upon changing needs • Children are likely to have a feeding plan – as advised by Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy dysphagia team • Children and their parents/carers should be involved in agreeing SMART targets (see 'My SMART targets' guidance) and should know how progress will be measured. • Targets should be focussed predominantly on experiential learning skills as advised by relevant specialist support services. • Enhanced and highly individualised transition planning is required. • Provision should be directly related to targets and area of need. Provision at this stage would be highly specialist. • SENCo will be directly involved at this stage to co-ordinate provision and monitor progress in liaison with relevant specialist support services. • Advice from specialist support services such as Walsall Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Walsall Educational Psychology Service is likely to be ongoing. Support and guidance may also be provided by Walsall special schools.
Recommended Provision & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sensory approach to curriculum planning and delivery. • On Body Sign • Multi-Sensory Cues • Sensory room/dark/light room • Low and high tech communication aids • Total communication environment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to appropriate seating/workstation to maximise function and promote both comfort and independence • Access to appropriately adapted toileting facilities/ Changing Places Standard hygiene room • Safe therapy space which is accessible, support a young person's privacy and any additional manual handling needs • Children requiring assistance to move (manual handling) will have a Safer Handling Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Access to appropriate Manual Handling Equipment as identified in their Safer Handling Plan • Children requiring assistance with personal/intimate care needs will have a Personal/Intimate Care Plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs • Children requiring assistance with feeding will have a feeding plan (Safe System of Work) which should be reviewed and updated regularly and on an on-going basis dependent upon evolving needs
Adult support & ratios	<p>Small group teaching within a mainstream or specialist setting.</p> <p>Small group or individualised highly specialist additional support and supervision throughout the school day (including lesson time and unstructured times) alongside reasonable adjustments and peer support. Frequent periods of 2:1 may be required for manual handling.</p>
Academic progress	Will be working significantly below age related expectations, at a very early stage of development.

Consultation on the new guidance document for SEND and high needs funding arrangements for children with special educational needs and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Are you responding as.... Tick one only.

- 85 (53.8%) A parent of a child / children born between 1 September 2002 and 31 August 2016 (school age)
- 2 (1.3%) Parent of a child / children born on or after 1 September 2016 (not yet school age)
- 3 (1.9%) A Walsall resident
- 35 (22.2%) Head Teacher / teaching staff
- 18 (11.4%) School Governor
- 1 (0.6%) Partner service
- 12 (7.6%) Council service
- 2 (1.3%) Community and voluntary sector organisation
- 0 (0.0%) Other

Responding in some other capacity, please tell us below

0 (0.0%)

Is your school a:

- 2 (3.8%) Nursery
- 39 (73.6%) Primary school
- 12 (22.6%) Secondary school

Is your school a special school?

- 5 (9.4%) Yes
- 48 (90.6%) No

Is your school an independent school, free school or academy?

- 17 (32.1%) Yes
- 36 (67.9%) No

What is the name of the school do you work for / represent?

53 (100.0%)

Which partner service do you work for?

0 (0.0%) Walsall Speech and Language Therapy service

0 (0.0%) Walsall Physiotherapy service

1 (100.0%) Walsall Occupational Therapy service

0 (0.0%) Walsall School Nursing service

0 (0.0%) Walsall CAMHS

0 (0.0%) Other

Other, please tell us

0 (0.0%)

Which council service do you work for?

3 (25.0%) Walsall Educational Psychology Service

7 (58.3%) Walsall Specialist Inclusion Service

2 (16.7%) Walsall EHC Assessment Team

0 (0.0%) Walsall Early Help

0 (0.0%) Walsall Children's Social Care

0 (0.0%) Other

Other, please tell us

0 (0.0%)

What organisation / agency do you work for?

2 (100.0%)

In your day to day job, do you personally support or work directly with children and young people who have recognised special educational needs?

49 (72.1%) Yes

19 (27.9%) No

Does your child / children born between 1 September 2002 and 31 August 2016 attend a school (not a college place) in the borough of Walsall?

84 (100.0%) Yes

0 (0.0%) No

Please note that Walsall's Higher Needs Policy only applies to Walsall schools.

Does your child or any of your children who attends a school in Walsall have recognised special educational needs?

81 (96.4%) Yes

3 (3.6%) No

Does your child or any of your children who attends a school in Walsall have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

43 (53.1%) Yes

38 (46.9%) No

School led virtual information sessions

All schools in the borough have been asked to run virtual information sessions for parents to find out more about Walsall Right 4 SEND Guidance and have their say.

Have you attended or plan to attend the school led virtual session on the Walsall Right 4 SEND Guidance document and proposed High Needs Funding Arrangements?

20 (24.7%) Have attended

24 (29.6%) Plan to / will attend

9 (11.1%) Not attending / not able to attend

28 (34.6%) Don't know

Does your child / children, not yet at school, have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)?

2 (100.0%) Yes

0 (0.0%) No

0 (0.0%) Don't know

Walsall Right 4 SEND Guidance Document

Have you read or reviewed the Walsall Right 4 SEND document?

88 (56.1%) Yes, fully

55 (35.0%) Yes, partly

14 (8.9%) No

To what extent do you agree or disagree that funding for children with special educational needs in Walsall should be led by the following principles...

'Child centred - all children and young people will receive the 'right help, in the right place at the right time, for the right amount of time'.

129 (82.7%) Strongly agree

23 (14.7%) Agree

2 (1.3%) Disagree

1 (0.6%) Strongly disagree

1 (0.6%) Don't know

'Transparency – there needs to be a transparent approach to funding across all sectors (mainstream/special, primary/secondary).'

127 (81.4%) Strongly agree 24 (15.4%) Agree 1 (0.6%) Disagree 1 (0.6%) Strongly disagree 3 (1.9%) Don't know

'Equity – there needs to be a fair approach to funding that is based on a needs based approach rather than a setting based approach'

129 (82.7%) Strongly agree 23 (14.7%) Agree 2 (1.3%) Disagree 1 (0.6%) Strongly disagree 1 (0.6%) Don't know

'Early intervention – there needs to be a graduated approach to support, and therefore funding for provision.'

125 (80.1%) Strongly agree 26 (16.7%) Agree 1 (0.6%) Disagree 1 (0.6%) Strongly disagree 3 (1.9%) Don't know

'Inclusion – the majority of children and young people with SEND, including those with an EHCP, should be able to access the right support within their local mainstream school and local community.'

105 (67.3%) Strongly agree 40 (25.6%) Agree 6 (3.8%) Disagree 3 (1.9%) Strongly disagree 2 (1.3%) Don't know

Do you have any comments on the Walsall Right 4 SEND principles?

72 (100.0%)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that that the Walsall Right 4 SEND document will help Walsall schools effectively identify children's special educational needs?

52 (33.5%) Strongly agree 72 (46.5%) Agree 13 (8.4%) Disagree 4 (2.6%) Strongly disagree 14 (9.0%) Don't know

To what extent do you agree or disagree that that the Walsall Right 4 SEND document will help ensure that children with special educational needs get the right help in school?

49 (31.8%) Strongly agree 61 (39.6%) Agree 13 (8.4%) Disagree 4 (2.6%) Strongly disagree 27 (17.5%) Don't know

To what extent do you agree or disagree that that the Walsall Right 4 SEND document will help ensure that children with special educational needs are better prepared for adulthood and achieve successful long term outcomes (including working towards employment, independent living, being included within their communities and being as healthy as possible)?

47 (30.5%) Strongly agree 54 (35.1%) Agree 13 (8.4%) Disagree 5 (3.2%) Strongly disagree 35 (22.7%) Don't know

Do you feel that, if approved, the Walsall Right 4 SEND guidance would adversely or negatively impact you and / or your child in anyway due to your / their protected equality characteristic; age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender reassignment or maternity. Please explain how below.

73 (100.0%)

Do you have any further comments on the Walsall Right 4 SEND guidance document?

69 (100.0%)

About you

The following five questions are about you. We ask these questions so we can better understand your responses and how they differ between groups. These questions are voluntary.

What age group are you in?

0 (0.0%) 16-24

22 (25.0%) 25-34

40 (45.5%) 35-44

20 (22.7%) 45-54

0 (0.0%) 55-64

1 (1.1%) 65+

5 (5.7%) Prefer not to say

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

19 (21.6%) Yes

61 (69.3%) No

8 (9.1%) Prefer not to say

Does your condition or illness / do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? Tick ONE only.

6 (33.3%) Yes, a lot

10 (55.6%) Yes, a little

2 (11.1%) Not at all

0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

Are you:

- 9 (10.3%) Male
- 74 (85.1%) Female
- 4 (4.6%) Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

- 67 (76.1%) White British
- 1 (1.1%) White other
- 10 (11.4%) Asian or Asian British
- 4 (4.5%) Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- 2 (2.3%) Mixed or multiple groups
- 0 (0.0%) Other ethnic group
- 4 (4.5%) Prefer not to say

How many of your children attend a school in the borough of Walsall and have special educational needs and / or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

- 4 (5.0%) 0 children
- 57 (71.3%) 1 child
- 14 (17.5%) 2 children
- 2 (2.5%) 3 children
- 2 (2.5%) 4 children
- 1 (1.3%) Prefer not to say

About your child or children

The next questions are about your child / children with special educational needs. We ask these questions so we can better understand your responses and how they differ between groups. These questions are voluntary. If you have more than one child, these questions will be repeated for each child up to a total of four children.

About child one

Does your child attend a Special School?

- 17 (22.7%) Yes
- 58 (77.3%) No

What school phase is your child in?

- 50 (66.7%) Pre-school / nursery, primary (reception - Year 6)
- 19 (25.3%) Secondary (Year 7-11)
- 6 (8.0%) Post 16 education
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

Is your child?

- 52 (69.3%) Male
- 22 (29.3%) Female
- 1 (1.3%) Prefer not to say

What is the nature of your child's special educational need and / or disability? Please tick all that apply

- 46 (61.3%) Cognition and learning
- 45 (60.0%) Social, emotional, mental health
- 47 (62.7%) Communication and interaction
- 1 (1.3%) Hearing Impairment
- 8 (10.7%) Visual Impairment
- 15 (20.0%) Multi-sensory impairment
- 11 (14.7%) Physical needs
- 13 (17.3%) Medical needs
- 13 (17.3%) Other
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

What is your child's ethnic group?

- 53 (71.6%) White British
- 1 (1.4%) White other
- 11 (14.9%) Asian or Asian British
- 5 (6.8%) Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- 3 (4.1%) Mixed or multiple groups
- 0 (0.0%) Other ethnic group
- 1 (1.4%) Prefer not to say

About child two

Does your child attend a Special School?

- 3 (16.7%) Yes
- 15 (83.3%) No

What school phase is your child in?

- 9 (50.0%) Pre-school / nursery, primary (reception - Year 6)
- 8 (44.4%) Secondary (Year 7-11)
- 1 (5.6%) Post 16 education
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

Is your child...?

- 11 (61.1%) Male
- 7 (38.9%) Female
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

What is the nature of your child's special educational need and / or disability? Please tick all that apply

- 7 (41.2%) Cognition and learning
- 9 (52.9%) Social, emotional, mental health
- 8 (47.1%) Communication and interaction
 - 1 (5.9%) Hearing Impairment
 - 1 (5.9%) Visual Impairment
- 3 (17.6%) Multi-sensory impairment
 - 1 (5.9%) Physical needs
- 4 (23.5%) Medical needs
- 5 (29.4%) Other
 - 1 (5.9%) Prefer not to say

What is your child's ethnic group?

- 12 (66.7%) White British
 - 0 (0.0%) White other
- 3 (16.7%) Asian or Asian British
- 2 (11.1%) Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
 - 1 (5.6%) Mixed or multiple groups
- 0 (0.0%) Other ethnic group
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

About child three

Does your child attend a Special School?

- 1 (25.0%) Yes
- 3 (75.0%) No

What school phase is your child in?

- 3 (75.0%) Pre-school / nursery, primary (reception - Year 6)
- 1 (25.0%) Secondary (Year 7-11)
- 0 (0.0%) Post 16 education
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

Is your child...?

- 2 (50.0%) Male
- 2 (50.0%) Female
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

What is the nature of your child's special educational need and / or disability? Please tick all that apply

- 3 (75.0%) Cognition and learning
- 2 (50.0%) Social, emotional, mental health
- 2 (50.0%) Communication and interaction
- 0 (0.0%) Hearing Impairment
- 0 (0.0%) Visual Impairment
- 1 (25.0%) Multi-sensory impairment
- 1 (25.0%) Physical needs
- 0 (0.0%) Medical needs
- 0 (0.0%) Other
- 1 (25.0%) Prefer not to say

What is your child's ethnic group?

- 3 (75.0%) White British
- 0 (0.0%) White other
- 0 (0.0%) Asian or Asian British
- 0 (0.0%) Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- 1 (25.0%) Mixed or multiple groups
- 0 (0.0%) Other ethnic group
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

About child four

Does your child attend a Special School?

- 0 (0.0%) Yes
- 1 (100.0%) No

What school phase is your child in?

- 2 (100.0%) Pre-school / nursery, primary (reception - Year 6)
- 0 (0.0%) Secondary (Year 7-11)
- 0 (0.0%) Post 16 education
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

Is your child...?

- 1 (50.0%) Male
- 1 (50.0%) Female
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

What is the nature of your child's special educational need and / or disability? Please tick all that apply

- 1 (50.0%) Cognition and learning
- 1 (50.0%) Social, emotional, mental health
- 1 (50.0%) Communication and interaction
- 0 (0.0%) Hearing Impairment
- 0 (0.0%) Visual Impairment
- 0 (0.0%) Multi-sensory impairment
- 0 (0.0%) Physical needs
- 0 (0.0%) Medical needs
- 0 (0.0%) Other
- 1 (50.0%) Prefer not to say

What is your child's ethnic group?

- 1 (100.0%) White British
- 0 (0.0%) White other
- 0 (0.0%) Asian or Asian British
- 0 (0.0%) Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- 0 (0.0%) Mixed or multiple groups
- 0 (0.0%) Other ethnic group
- 0 (0.0%) Prefer not to say

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Please click 'submit' to finish and send us your responses.**

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Proposed High Needs Funding formula 2021/22		
Directorate	Childrens services		
Service	SEND		
Responsible Officer	Andy Crabtree		
Proposal planning start	1 April 2019	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	1 April 2021

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy		
	Procedure	Yes	
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Yes	
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	Yes	
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	The proposed revised High Needs Local funding Formula is being consulted upon with the aim of allocating High Needs Funding Block resources on the basis of defined need for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The resources are targeted equitably on the basis of recognised need for children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans and complies with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.		
3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All		Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The resources are targeted equitably on the basis of recognised need for children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans and complies with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.
	Specific group/s	Y	
	Council employees		
	Other (identify)		
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		



All Children and Young People must go through the SEND assessment process to determine need and obtain an Education Health and Care Plan in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015. The revised High Needs Local Funding Formula proposed for 2021/22 allocates funding to individual schools and providers on the basis of need as set out in the formula.

5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).

The School Forum on 23 September 2020, which consists of nominated representatives across the school sector, and Cabinet on 21 October 2020 agreed to consult all schools and SEND Children parents and carers on the proposed High Needs Local Funding Formula proposals for 2021/2022.

The School Forum on 12 January 2021 considered the feedback from the consultation process undertaken and agreed the proposed amendments to the formula and banding model recommended as a result of the consultation feedback; referring to Cabinet for final approval on 10 February 2021.

Consultation Activity			
Type of engagement/consultation		Date	
Who attended/participated?			
Protected characteristics of participants			
Feedback			
<p>Consultation has been actively undertaken through the engagement of schools, SENCOs and parents and has involved communications to parents from schools, an online survey, email and telephone responses and the Walsall Local Offer website Video conferencing and drop in sessions were also held for parents, carers, head teachers and school staff, governors and internal and external support services to enable participants to ask questions and receive responses to any queries they have about the proposal.</p> <p>The consultation process commenced on 23 November 2020 and closed on the 20 December 2020 to inform the high needs funding formula model and proposal and enable outcomes to be summarised and shared at the School Forum meeting on 12 January 2021.</p>			
6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation		
<p>A summary analysis of the consultation responses is included in Appendix C of the 10 February 2021 Cabinet report.</p> <p>There were no specific concerns raised in relation to discrimination / /disadvantage of the proposals for children with any protected characteristics raised in response to the equalities question on the survey responses.</p>			
7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.		
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason
	Action needed Yes / No		
	Age	The proposal targets resources equitably on the basis of recognised need for children and young people with	
	Disability		

	Gender reassignment	Education Health and Care Plans and complies with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.
	Marriage and civil partnership	
	Pregnancy and maternity	
	Race	
	Religion or belief	
	Sex	
	Sexual orientation	
	Other (give detail)	
	Further information	
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.	(Delete one) No
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?	
A	No major change required Consultation completed and amendments made but the formula continues to be needs based.	
B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality	
C	Continue despite possible adverse impact	
D	Stop and rethink your proposal	

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
23 November	Wider Consultation Process	Andy Crabtree / Emma Thornberry	January 2021	Further reports, post consultation required to Schools Forum and

2020	begins			Cabinet
20 December 2020	Formal consultation process ends	Andy Crabtree / Emma Thornberry	January 2021	Feedback from consultation process considered and proposed amendments to funding and banding model made. Approved at School Forum on 12 January 2021 and referred to Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for final approval.

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.	

Contact us

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Resources and Transformation

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Inside Walsall: http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/Equality_and_diversity

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Determination of the Scheme for Coordinated Admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2022/23 academic year

Portfolio: Councillor Towe

Related portfolios:

Service: School Admissions and Appeals Team, Access Service

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

To ensure that Walsall Council meets its statutory duty to offer a school place to all Walsall resident children, and to determine the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in accordance with the requirements of Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the proposed scheme for co-ordinated secondary and primary admissions and midyear admissions (including independent schools, academies, and free schools) for the 2022/23 academic year and the proposed admission arrangements for primary community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2022/23 academic year.
- 2.2 Walsall Council is not the Admission Authority for any of the secondary schools in the borough, all of whom must determine their own admission arrangements for 2022/23 by 28 February 2021.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the proposed schemes as set out in **Appendix A** for inter-authority coordinated admissions for 2022/23 are approved.

- 3.2 That the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary schools for the academic year 2022/23, as set out in **Appendix B** of this report, are determined.
- 3.3 That Walsall Council informs all relevant stakeholders of the determination of its admission arrangements for the 2022/23 academic year in accordance with the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2014.

4. Report detail - know

4.1. Context

As the Local Authority, Walsall Council has the responsibility to draw up and agree schemes for secondary and primary admissions for the 2022/23 academic year. Walsall Council is the Admission Authority for all community and voluntary controlled Primary schools in Walsall. Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires admission authorities to determine the admission arrangements for the 2022/23 school year by 28 February 2021.

4.2. Council Corporate Plan priorities

The schemes for coordinated admissions, and the admission arrangements for primary community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2022/23 academic year set out a fair and equitable process for children wishing to enter Walsall schools in September 2022 and throughout the academic year as midyear admissions. These proposals support the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, specifically the priority that children have the best start and are safe, happy, healthy and learning well.

4.3. Risk management

The admission arrangements will be included in Walsall's admissions information booklet. This is the Council's composite prospectus and this document will be published on Walsall Council's website. The provision of clear information will help parents and carers to decide upon their preferences when applying for a school place for their child and should contribute to a reduction in the number of admission appeals.

4.4. Financial implications

None

4.5. Legal implications

All Local Authorities are required by section 88M of the School Standards and Framework Act and the Co-ordination Regulations, to have in place a scheme each year for co-ordinating admission arrangements for maintained schools and academies within their area.

Walsall Council, as the Admission Authority, has a statutory duty to determine the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools.

Admissions authorities are statutorily required to complete consultation on any changes to their proposed admission arrangements for the 2022/23 school year by 31 January 2020, and must determine (or finalise) these by 28 February 2020. However, Walsall Local Authority is not proposing to make any changes to its admissions arrangements for the 2022/23 academic year therefore in accordance with s.1.42 of the School Admissions Code 2014 there was no requirement for Walsall Local Authority to consult on its admission arrangement prior to determination. Walsall Local Authority did consult on its proposed admissions arrangements for the academic year 2021/22.

The proposed admission arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code (2014).

4.6. *Procurement Implications/Social Value*

None

4.7. *Property implications*

None

4.8. *Health and wellbeing implications*

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that all children resident within the borough have a school place, and this contributes to their health and wellbeing by ensuring that they have the best start in life in a Walsall school.

The admissions arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and the scheme for coordinated admissions ensure that, where possible, children are placed in one of their parents' preferred schools, and where this is not possible that they are allocated a place at a suitable school, enabling them to receive an appropriate education and maximise their opportunities.

Children who miss education because they do not have a school place are at risk of failing to develop the skills necessary to enable them to enter the workforce, and developing the social skills which they require, there are also associated safeguarding risks. The admissions arrangements and coordinated admissions process ensure that school places are offered fairly and equitably to applicants, and that children who cannot be offered one of

their parent's preferred schools are allocate a place at an alternative school in mitigation against these risks.

4.9. Staffing implications

None

4.10. Reducing Inequalities

In line with the requirements of the School Admissions Code (2014), and in order to ensure greater equity and fair access, full consideration has been given to the possible impact, direct or indirect, of the proposed admission criteria on equal opportunities.

The implications for reducing inequalities have been taken into account and assessed as set out below.

4.11. Consultation

In accordance with the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2014, s.1.42 where there are no proposals to make changes to the admission arrangements from the previous year "there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admissions authorities **must** consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period."

Walsall Local Authority has previously consulted on its admissions arrangements for the 2021/22 academic year. Since there are no proposed changes to these admissions arrangements for the 2022/23 academic year then there is no requirement for Walsall Local Authority to undertake any consultation prior to determination.

5. Decide

Cabinet is asked to determine the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, and to approve the scheme for coordinated admissions for 2022/23.

6. Respond

The determined admission arrangements and scheme for coordinated admissions will be published on the Walsall Council website by 15 March 2022.

7. Review

The admissions arrangements for Walsall community and voluntary controlled schools, and the scheme for coordinated admissions are reviewed annually each summer term. The 2022/23 admission arrangements and coordinated scheme will be reviewed in summer term 2022.

Background papers

School Admissions Code (2014)

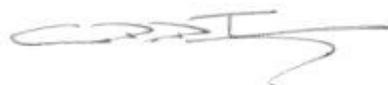
Author

Sharyn Duffey
School Admissions and Appeals Manager (Interim)

✉ sharyn.duffey@walsall.gov.uk



Sally Rowe
Executive Director
January 2021



Councillor Towe
Portfolio holder
January 2021

Appendix A

Proposed Schemes for coordinated Primary, Secondary and Midyear Admissions for Walsall for 2022/23.

1. Secondary Admissions

Walsall Council participates in an inter-Local Authority coordinated admission scheme with a number of neighbouring Local Authorities, namely Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton .

Parents should complete an online application. This will enable Walsall parents of Year 6 children (who will transfer to secondary education in September 2022) to name up to five secondary schools, rank them in order of preference and give reasons for their preference. The online application may be used to apply for a place at any secondary school in or outside the borough.

Parents who name Queen Mary's Grammar School, Queen Mary's High School, The Walsall Academy, a Specialist Music Place at Aldridge School or a Sport's Place at Ormiston Shelfield Academy on the online form must also complete the school's own Registration Form.

Parents who name Blue Coat CE Academy, Brownhills School, Shire Oak Academy or St Francis of Assisi Catholic School, or St Thomas More Catholic Business and Enterprise College on the online form must also complete the school's own supplementary information form.

Online applications must be submitted by the national closing date of **31 October 2021**.

Preferences, which are changed or added after the closing date without a significant change in circumstances, will be processed as late applications. When notifying a significant change of circumstances the applicant must supply documentary evidence to confirm the change. An example of a significant change of circumstances is a house move that necessitates a change of preference(s). This would need to be validated by documentary evidence such as a solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contract or a copy of the tenancy agreement.

All applications for named schools will be considered in accordance with each school's published admission criteria. Schools, which are their own Admission Authority, will be informed of all applications naming their school, but not the rankings. These schools will inform the School Admissions and Appeals Team of the order in which all applicants meet their admission criteria.

Walsall Council will exchange application data and supporting documentation in respect of pupils resident in Walsall, who have applied for schools outside the borough, with the appropriate maintaining Local Authorities. Similar information will be received for applications from out of borough residents who have expressed preferences for Walsall secondary schools.

By 2 January 2022 (tbc), Walsall Council will input the results of all applications to Walsall schools and a list of potential offers will then be produced. These potential offers will then be exchanged with other Local Authorities in respect of the results of out of borough applications. The information received will state which Walsall residents have the potential offer of a place in an out of borough school. This information will be transferred onto the Walsall database, compared to rankings and will result in a list of provisional offers.

By 16 January 2022 (tbc), the provisional offers will be exchanged with other Local Authorities in respect of out of borough applications. The information received will state which Walsall residents have a provisional offer of a place in an out of borough school. These will be transferred onto the Walsall database, compared to rankings and the results will be the final allocation of places at Walsall secondary schools.

By 6 February 2022 (tbc), the final allocations will be exchanged with the other Local Authorities in respect of the results of out of borough applications.

If a Walsall child does not meet the admission criteria for any of their preferred schools then Walsall Council will allocate a place at the nearest alternative secondary school with vacant places following consultation with the relevant admission authority.

On the National Notification Date, 1 March 2022 (or the next working day), email notification of the outcome of their application will be sent to all parents resident in Walsall who submitted an online application and requested email notification.

The Local Authority will make just one offer of a school place to each child, further offers will only be made after the offer date if it is subsequently possible to offer a child one of their parents higher ranked preferences. An offer of a school place will not be withdrawn unless it is subsequently found to have been made in error, or as the result of a fraudulent, or intentionally misleading application, or the parent informs the Local Authority that they have made alternative arrangements for their child's education and no longer require a secondary school place.

2. Primary Admissions

Walsall Council participates in an inter-Local Authority coordinated admission scheme in partnership with a number of neighbouring Local Authorities, namely Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton.

Parents should complete an online application. This will enable Walsall parents of Nursery children to name up to 3 primary schools and parents of Year 2 children (for junior schools) to name up to 3 junior schools, rank them in order of preference, and give reasons for their preference. The online form may be used to apply for a place at any primary/junior school in or outside the borough.

Parents of children who are in nursery provision in Walsall, and are resident in Walsall must apply online if they want their child to join a reception class in a Walsall primary school or in another local authority's area.

Attendance at a Walsall school's nursery provision or co-located children's centre does not guarantee a place at a Walsall primary school.

Online applications must be submitted on the Walsall Council website by the closing date of **15 January 2022**

Preferences changed or added after the closing date without a significant change in circumstances will be processed as late applications. When notifying a significant change of circumstances the applicant must supply documentary evidence to confirm the change. An example of a significant change of circumstances is a house move that necessitates a change of preference(s). This would need to be validated by documentary evidence such as a solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contract or a copy of the tenancy agreement.

All applications for named schools will be considered in accordance with each school's published admission criteria. Schools that are their own Admission Authority will be provided with a list of information in respect of all applications naming their school, but not the rankings, together with copies of any supporting documentation. These schools will use the information provided to apply their admission criteria and will then inform the School Admissions and Appeals Team of the order in which all applications meet their admission criteria.

The table below gives details of Walsall primary schools, which are their own admission authorities:-

Foundation Schools	Voluntary Aided Church of England Schools	Voluntary Aided Catholic Schools	Academies
Manor Primary	Blue Coat CE (A) Infant	St Anne's Catholic Primary	All Saint's Academy
	Blue Coat CE (A) Junior	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary	Birchills CE Primary Community School
	Cooper and Jordan CE(VA) Primary	St Francis Catholic Primary	Bloxwich Academy
			Busill Jones Primary School
		St Joseph's Catholic Primary	Caldmore Primary Academy
		St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary	Croft Academy
		St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary	Edgar Stammers Primary Academy
		St Patrick's Catholic Primary	Fibbersley Park Primary Academy
		St Peter's Catholic Primary	Goldsmith Primary Academy
		St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary	Jubilee Academy Mossley
			Lodge Farm Primary Academy
			North Walsall Academy
			Park Hall Infant

			Academy
			Park Hall Junior Academy
			Reedswood E-Act Academy
			Rivers Primary Academy
			Ryders Hayes School
			Wood's Bank Primary Academy
			Woodlands Academy of Learning
			Pheasey Park Farm Primary

Where a child meets the admission criteria of more than one of the schools named on the online application form then Walsall Council will allocate a place at the highest ranked of those schools. Admission Authorities will be advised of the pupils to be offered places.

By 23 January 2022 (tbc), Walsall Council will exchange application data and supporting documentation in respect of pupils resident in Walsall, who have applied for schools outside the borough, with the appropriate maintaining Local Authorities. Similar information will be received for applications from out of borough residents who have expressed preferences for Walsall primary schools.

By 13 February 2022 (tbc), Walsall Council will input the results of all applications to Walsall schools and a list of potential offers will then be produced. These potential offers will then be exchanged with other Local Authorities in respect of the results of out of borough applications. The information received will state which Walsall residents have the potential offer of a place in an out of borough school. This information will be transferred onto the Walsall database, compared to rankings and will result in a list of provisional offers.

By 4 March 2022 (tbc), the provisional offers will be exchanged with other Local Authorities in respect of out of borough applications. The information received will state which Walsall residents have a provisional offer of a place in an out of borough school. These will be transferred onto the Walsall database, compared to rankings, and the results will be the final allocation of places at Walsall secondary schools.

By 27 March 2022 (tbc), the final allocations will be exchanged with the other Local Authorities in respect of the results of out of borough applications.

If a Walsall child does not meet the admission criteria for any of their preferred schools then Walsall Council will allocate a place at the nearest alternative primary school with vacant places, after consultation with the relevant admission authority.

On the National Notification Date, 16 April 2022 (or next working day), email notification of the outcome of their application will be sent to all parents of Walsall resident children who submitted an online application and requested email notification.

The Local Authority will make just one offer of a school place to each child, further offers will only be made after the offer date if it is subsequently possible to offer a child one of their parents higher ranked preferences. An offer of a school place will not be withdrawn unless it is subsequently found to have been made in error, or as the result of a fraudulent, or intentionally misleading application, or the parent informs the Local Authority that they have made alternative arrangements for their child's education and no longer require a secondary school place.

3. Late Application Policy

The online portal will close for secondary applications on 31 October 2021. Late Applications and, where appropriate, schools' own Registration Forms, received after the Closing Date, are processed as late applications. Any request to change the name or ranking of a school made after the Closing Date will be processed as a late application.

The online portal will close for primary applications after 15 January 2021. Late Applications and, where appropriate, schools' own Registration Forms, received after the Closing Date, are processed as late applications. Any request to change the name or ranking of a school made after the closing date will be processed as a late application.

Late applications will normally be considered for places after all the applications that were received by the Closing Date therefore, it is very likely that late applicants will not be offered a place at one of their preferred schools.

Applications received after the closing date will be passed to the appropriate Admission Authority for consideration under its Late Application Policy. Each Admission Authority is required to publish its own Late Application Policy which explains how late applications will be dealt with. The Late Application Policy for all Walsall community and voluntary controlled schools is shown below.

3.1 Late Applications received up to 4 weeks after the Closing Date

Late applications received up to four weeks after the Closing Date may be considered as being on-time but only where there are exceptional circumstances, including:

- Where the family were unable to submit their online application to Walsall Council on time because they moved into the Borough of Walsall after the Closing Date;

- The family were unable to comply with the admission timetable because of exceptional circumstances which prevented them from submitting their online application;
- When a single parent has been ill for some time.

In these cases, the circumstances must be given in writing at the time of application they will be subject to verification by Walsall School Admissions and Appeals Team.

This applies to applications for secondary schools received between 1 November 2021 and 29 November 2021. For primary schools, this applies to applications received between 16 January 2022 and 13 February 2022.

3.2 Late applications received more than 4 weeks after the closing date

Applications for schools received more than 4 weeks after the closing date but before the notification date will be considered only after all other applications.

This applies to applications for secondary schools received between 30 November 2021 and 28 February 2022. For primary schools, this applies to applications received between 14 February 2022 and 15 April 2022.

3.3 Late applications received after the notification date (once places have been offered)

Applications received after the notification date: a place will be offered at the highest ranked school if places are available. For Walsall residents, if a place is not available at any of the preferred schools a place will be offered by Walsall Council at the nearest alternative Walsall school with vacant places, after consultation with the relevant admission authority and the child's name will be added to the waiting list for schools listed as preferences in admission criteria order.

4. Waiting list policy

Waiting Lists for all Walsall schools, other than Walsall Academy, will be maintained by Walsall Council until 31 December 2022. Parents may enquire about their child's position on any Waiting list by contacting the School Admissions and Appeals Team at schooladmissionsadvice@walsall.gov.uk

Looked after children, previously looked after children and those who are allocated to a school in accordance with Walsall's Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over those children on the waiting list.

Waiting lists are kept of all children who have been refused a place at any school that was ranked higher than the school at which they have been offered a place, for example

- If a child is offered a place at the school that was ranked 2nd on their application, then the child's name will only be placed on the waiting list for the school that was ranked 1st.
- If a child is offered a place at their parent's first preference school the child's name will not be added to any waiting list kept for lower ranked schools.

After 1 March 2022 (or next working day) for secondary transfers, or 16 April 2022 (or next working day) for primary admissions, a parent may contact the School Admissions and Appeals Team to apply for a place at an oversubscribed Walsall school. Their child's name will be placed on the school's waiting list in admission criteria order. Any vacancies will be offered on the basis of the admission criteria for the school.

Waiting lists will be kept for one term only and then discarded. From 1 January 2023, parents who wish their child to be added to a new waiting list for a Walsall primary school should submit an online mid-year application. Parents who wish their child to be added to a new waiting list for a Walsall secondary school should contact the school directly.

5. Midyear Admissions

5.1 Applications for midyear admission to Walsall primary schools:

The Local Authority will coordinate the midyear admission process for applications to all Walsall primary schools and academies.

Parents who wish to apply for admission to any Walsall maintained mainstream primary school other than at the usual point of entry (Reception or Year 3 when transferring from an infant school to a junior school) should submit an online application through the School Admissions pages of the Walsall Council website. Applications may not be made directly to any maintained mainstream primary school or academy. Any supplementary information forms required by a school must be returned to the relevant school. Where a parent completes a supplementary form, it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also listed a preference for the school on their online midyear admission application.

Parents who wish to apply for places at schools outside of Walsall should contact the relevant local authority directly.

All Walsall maintained mainstream primary schools and academies must provide the School Admissions and Appeals Team with accurate details of the number of vacancies in each year group on a weekly basis to enable places to be offered to applicants for primary midyear admission without unnecessary delay.

On receipt of an application for primary midyear admission, the School Admissions and Appeals Team will assess the application to determine if it meets the criteria

for consideration under the Walsall Fair Access Protocol, and where appropriate a referral will be made to the Fair Access Panel.

Once an application has been assessed in accordance with the published admission criteria of the preferred schools, the Local Authority will write to the applicant to indicate one of the following outcomes:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at one or more of their parent's preferred schools they will be offered a place at the highest ranked preference;
- Where it is not possible to offer the highest ranked preference, where possible a place will be offered at a lower ranked preference and the offer letter will contain details of how the parent may appeal against the decision to refuse a place at the higher ranked school, and where there is a waiting list their child's name will be added to it. Waiting lists will be held for one term only and parents who wish their child's name to be added to the new waiting list will need to resubmit their online application at the start of each new term;
- If it is not possible to offer the applicant a place at any of their parent's preferred schools and the child is currently without a school place, a place will be offered at an alternative Walsall school, which has places available, following consultation with other admissions authorities where appropriate.

Parents of children with a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) must contact Walsall Council's SEN Team or the Local Authority that issued their statement or EHCP if they wish their child to move to a new school.

5.2 Applications for midyear admission to Walsall secondary schools:

Parents who wish to apply for admission to any Walsall maintained mainstream secondary school other than at the usual point of entry (Year 7) can submit an online application through the School Admissions pages of the Walsall Council website, or may apply directly to their preferred schools.

Parents who submit an online application to Walsall Council must also submit any supplementary information forms required by a school directly to the relevant school. Where a parent completes a supplementary form it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also listed a preference for the school on their online midyear admission application or applied directly to the school.

Parents who wish to apply for places at schools outside of Walsall should contact the relevant local authority directly.

All Walsall maintained mainstream secondary schools and academies must provide the School Admissions and Appeals Team with accurate details of the number of vacancies in each year group on a weekly basis to enable the Local Authority to provide accurate information on the availability of places to parents who enquire about midyear admission.

On receipt of an online application for secondary midyear admission, the School Admissions and Appeals Team will assess the application to determine if it meets the criteria for consideration under the Walsall Fair Access Protocol, and where appropriate a referral will be made to the Fair Access Panel.

The Local Authority will forward details of all applications received to the schools that are listed as preferences. Schools must write to notify the applicant of the outcome of their application. Schools must notify the Local Authority promptly of all direct applications that are received, and of the outcome of all applications for midyear admission.

Schools must not refuse to process an application which has been submitted on the Local Authority's online common application form, or require that an applicant completes the school's own application form.

Parents of children with a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) must contact Walsall Council's SEN Team or the Local Authority that issued their statement or EHCP if they wish their child to move to a new school.

Proposed Admission Arrangements for Walsall Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for 2022/23

1. Admissions numbers for community and voluntary controlled primary schools for 2022/23

The following pages show the capacities and proposed Admission Numbers for community and voluntary controlled primary schools for 2022/23.

The Admission Number is the capacity of the school to admit children at the normal age of entry in the 2022/23 academic year, that is:

- Admissions into Reception in infant and primary schools;
- Admissions into Year 3 in junior schools.

Community or Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools	Proposed Admission Number
Abbey Primary	30
Alumwell Infant	90
Alumwell Junior	90
Barcroft Primary	60
Beacon Primary	60
Bentley West Primary	60
Blackwood*	90
Blakenall Heath Junior	60
Brownhills West Primary	30
Butts Primary	30
Castlefort JMI	30
Christ Church CE (C) JMI	60
Chuckery Primary	60
County Bridge Primary	30
Delves Infant	90
Delves Junior	90
Elmore Green Primary	45
Greenfield Primary	45
Hillary Primary	90
Holy Trinity CE Primary	30
King Charles Primary	60
King's Hill Primary	60
Leamore Primary	30
Leighswood	60
Lindens Primary	60
Little Bloxwich CE (VC) Primary	30
Lower Farm Primary	60

Meadow View JMI	60
Millfield Primary	30
Moorcroft Wood Primary	30
New Invention Infant	90
New Invention Junior	90
Old Church CE (C) Primary	60
Palfrey Infant	90
Palfrey Junior	90
Pelsall Village	45
Pinfold Street Primary	60
Pool Hayes Primary	30
The Radleys Primary	30
Rosedale CE (C) Infant	90
Rushall JMI	30
Salisbury Primary	45
Short Heath Junior	90
St Giles CE Primary	60
St James Primary	30
St John's CE Primary	45
St Michael's CE (C) Primary	60
Sunshine Infant and Nursery	60
Walsall Wood	30
Watling Street JMI	30
Whetstone Field Primary	30
Whitehall Nursery and Infant	90
Whitehall Junior Community	90

*Blackwood Primary School are currently in the process of converting to academy status.

2. Oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled primary schools

If there are more applications than there are places available, places will be allocated using the Oversubscription Criteria in the following order of priority:

1. Children in Public Care (looked after children) and previously looked after children (see 3.1 below);
2. Pupils who have a sibling already in attendance at the school, or paired junior school when the application is made and who will be still attending the school at the proposed admission date (see 3.2 below);
3. Pupils for whom a place at the school is essential on medical or social grounds as supported in writing by a medical practitioner or a social worker. (Applications will be subject to verification by the School Admissions and Appeals Team) (see 3.3 below);

4. *For applications to junior schools only.* Attendance by the child at the relevant paired infant school, when the application is made (see 3.4 below);
5. *For applications to voluntary controlled Church of England primary schools only.* Up to 25% of places may be allocated as 'Church Places' to children, regardless of distance between home and school, whose parents are regular worshippers at a Christian church and whose application is supported in writing by the minister of the church where they worship (see 3.5 below);
6. Distance between the home address and the school as measured in a straight line with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority (see 3.6 below).

If there is oversubscription in criteria 2 to 5, priority will be given to those living closest to the school as measured in a straight line.

3. Explanatory notes for Oversubscription Criteria

3.1 Children in Public Care (looked after children) and previously looked after children

Children who are in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority and previously looked after children who ceased to be looked after because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order.

3.2 Sibling

A sibling is a child who resides at the same address as the child for whom a place is being requested and is one of the following:

- A brother or sister sharing the same parents;
- A half-brother or sister sharing one common parent;
- A step-brother or sister (i.e. related by their parent's marriage);
- Any other child for whom it can be demonstrated that he or she is residing permanently at the same address (e.g. under the terms of a residence order).

3.3 Social or medical factors

If parents believe there are specific medical or social reasons for claiming priority for a child to attend a particular school, the relevant part of the application must be completed and evidence to support the claim must be submitted to the Local Authority.

Requests for such consideration will be subject to verification by the School Admissions and Appeals Team. This is necessary because parents will be asking the Authority to assess the child as having a stronger case than many other children, some of whom may live closer to the school.

3.3a Medical Evidence

Medical evidence must be submitted in writing from a medical practitioner and should state why the preferred school is **the only school that can meet the child's needs**. This must relate to either the child or the parents, for example where the parent(s) or the child has a disability that may make travel to a school further away more difficult. Medical evidence, which relates to parent, will be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where the child lives with a single parent who has a medical condition or disability that may make travel to a school further away more difficult;
- Where the child lives with both parents and both parents have a medical condition or disability that may make travel to a school further away more difficult;
- Where a child lives with both parents and one parent has a medical condition or disability that may make travel to a school further away more difficult medical evidence may be considered if the other parent is unable to accompany the child on the journey to and from school because they are the sole carer for the other parent.

3.3b Social Evidence

Social evidence must be submitted in writing from an appropriate professional and should state why the preferred school is **the only school that can meet the child's needs**.

Please note that preferences are only given priority under the medical/social criterion in very exceptional cases where medical or social evidence clearly demonstrates that the preferred school is the only school which can meet the child's needs.

3.4 Paired infant and junior schools

The paired infant and junior schools are:

Alumwell Infant	paired with Alumwell Junior
Delves Infant	paired with Delves Junior
New Invention Infant	paired with New Invention Junior
Palfrey Infant	paired with Palfrey Junior
Rosedale CE (C) Infant	paired with Short Heath Junior
Sunshine Infant and Nursery	paired with Blakenall Heath Junior
Whitehall Nursery and Infant	paired with Whitehall Junior Community

3.5 Church Places at voluntary controlled Church of England primary schools

Voluntary controlled Church of England primary schools with an admission number of 30 will offer a maximum of 7 Church Places; schools with an admission number of 45 will offer a maximum of 11 Church Places; schools with an admission number of 60 will offer a maximum of 15 Church Places; schools with an admission number of 90 will offer a maximum of 22 Church Places.

If there is over-subscription for Church Places, priority will be given to those living closest to the school as measured in a straight line.

'Regular worshipper' is defined as attending a place of worship on at least one occasion per month over the past twelve months.

3.6 Distance

Distance will be measured in a straight line from the centre point of the home address to the centre point of the school address using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

3.6a Definition of a home address

The home address of a child is considered to be the permanent residence of a child in a residential property when the place is offered. The address must be the child's only or main residence and is either:

- owned by the child's parent(s) or guardian; or
- leased to or rented by the child's parent(s), or guardian under lease or written rental agreement of not less than six months duration.

Documentary evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required together with proof of actual permanent residence at the property concerned. In certain circumstances the child's current school will be asked to verify the address given.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child and the child lives with both parents for part of the week, the main residence will be determined as the address where the child lives for the majority of the week. Parents may be requested to supply documentary evidence to support the address used for the application.

The offer of a place is based upon the address of the child when the offer is made. If a child is offered a place at an oversubscribed school the place may be withdrawn if it is found that the child moved (before the place was offered) to a new address, which was further away from the school, and the child would not have qualified for a place under the distance criterion.

In the event that a family moves between the application and the date of offer, the School Admissions and Appeals Team must be informed as soon as possible of these circumstances.

If the home address is a flat (or apartment) and there is more than one flat at the same address, priority will be given to applicants living at the lowest numbered flat on the lowest floor.

4. Oversubscription criteria for Nursery Schools

Applications for nursery places should be made directly to the school.

If there are more applications than there are nursery places available then places will be allocated using the Oversubscription Criteria in the following order of priority:

4.1 Priority for nursery places will be given to children born between **1 September 2018** and **31 August 2019**. If places are oversubscribed, the following Oversubscription Criteria will apply:

1. Children in Public Care (looked after children) and previously looked after children.
(see 3.1 above)
2. Pupils who have a sibling already in attendance at the school, or paired junior school when the application is made and who will be still attending the school at the proposed admission date. (see 3.2 above)
3. Pupils for whom a place at the school is essential on medical or social grounds and supported in writing by a medical practitioner or a Social Worker. (Applications will be subject to verification by the School Admissions and Appeals Team). (see 3.3 above)
4. Distance between the home address and the school as measured in a straight line with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. (see 3.6 above)

4.2 Where places are still available schools may only offer places to children who have attained the age of 3. If the remaining places are oversubscribed the Oversubscription Criteria 1-4, shown above, will apply.

If there is oversubscription in criteria 2 and 3, priority will be given to those living closest to the school as measured in a straight line.

5. Policy for deferred entry to Reception

Children reach compulsory school age on the first day of the term following their fifth birthday. However, all Walsall primary schools provide full time places for pupils in a reception class from September in the year before children reach their fifth birthday.

If parents prefer their child to start school later than 1 September 2022, they have the option of deferring the child's entry until later in the 2022/23 school year. Parents opting for this must notify the school in writing of the date they wish their child to start in a reception class.

Parents are not able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term following their child's fifth birthday or beyond the academic year for which admission is sought.

The effect of this is that the place is held for that child and is not available to be offered to another child.

6. Admission of 'summer born' children to Reception

Summer born children, (born between 1 April and 31 August) reach compulsory school age in the September following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August). Parents of summer born children may submit a request for their child to be admitted to a reception class in the September following their fifth birthday, at the point at which other children in their age group are moving from the reception class to year 1.

Parents seeking deferred admissions to reception in a community or voluntary controlled primary school should make a request in writing to Walsall Council, providing details of the reason for the request and supporting medical evidence or evidence from the child's current head teacher, if appropriate, demonstrating that deferred admission to Reception would be in the child's best interests.

Requests for deferred admission to Reception in respect of children who would normally be admitted in September 2022, should be submitted by 15 January 2022 where possible.

When an application for deferred admission to reception at the point at which other children in their age group are moving into Year 1 is received for a community or voluntary controlled primary school, Walsall Council, as admission authority for the school, will make the decision on whether or not to grant the request based on the individual circumstances of each case. Requests will only be approved in circumstances where it is in the best interests of the child to defer admission to Reception.

Parents seeking deferred admission to Reception in a voluntary aided school, foundation school or in an academy should submit a request directly to their preferred school. They must also notify the Local Authority in writing of the request and must complete a Local Authority application for the year of admission.

Admission to a year group outside of a child's chronological year group.

Parents who wish to apply for their child to be admitted to a Walsall community or voluntary controlled primary school, in a year group other than that which is designated by their chronological age should submit a written request to the

Local Authority. Walsall Council, as admission authority for the school, will make the decision on whether or not to grant the request based on the individual circumstances of each case. Requests will only be approved in circumstances where it is in the best interests of the child to be educated outside of their chronological year group.

Parents wishing to make an application for their child to be admitted out of their chronological year group to a voluntary aided or foundation school or academy, should write to the admission authority for the school. In either case, the letter should include details of why the parents/carers believe it is in the best interests of their child to be educated out of their chronological year group, and should include supporting evidence from an appropriate professional.

Parents applying for midyear admission to a year group outside their child's chronological age, in a Walsall primary school will also need to submit an online midyear admission application to the Local Authority.