

Cabinet – 29 October 2014

Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2018/19: Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for Consultation

Portfolio: Councillor S. Coughlan – Leader of the Council (Lead Portfolio)

Related Portfolios: All

Service: Finance – council wide

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines plans for future service delivery, including proposals to meet funding reductions and cost pressures within the context of a four year financial outlook for the period 2015/16 to 2018/19, and a draft capital programme, for onward consultation (**Appendix 1**).
- 1.2 A new Corporate Plan, setting out the council's priorities for the next 4 years will be put forward for adoption by Council alongside the budget in February 2015. It is proposed that the draft expression of challenges, priorities and commitments contained within this report will form the basis of that plan and will continue to be shaped over the coming months, informed by consultation through the budget setting process.
- 1.3 A provisional revenue cash limit is shown. These follow a service redesign review that has been undertaken within each service, to meet our forecast budget reduction of c£86m over the four year period from 2015/16 to 2018/19. Resident surveys and stakeholder consultation to date have been considered in the formulation of the draft budget. Any changes arising from consultation arrangements, including feedback from scrutiny and performance panels and further stakeholder consultation, will be presented to Cabinet over the coming months, alongside the findings of equality impact assessments, to allow Cabinet to formulate final budget proposals for recommendation to Council in February 2015.
- 1.4 The draft capital programme for 2015/16 totals £46.73m. It sets out new capital investment funded from the council's own resources of £24.93m (funded by capital receipts and unsupported borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £21.80m (funded by capital grants) and represents a balanced programme for 2015/16. In addition, the report sets out a further three years of indicative proposals for 2016/17 to 2018/19.

- 1.5 Despite reductions in capital funding in recent years and going forward, the draft capital programme contains significant investment into highways, education, and into adult social care and housing to support vulnerable households through Health through Warmth and provision of aids and adaptations. A reserve list of new projects is also reported, where funding could be redirected in year if available.
- 1.6 This draft budget will be distributed to scrutiny panels and stakeholders for consultation. The final budget, including any changes arising from consultation arrangements, tax base changes and final allocation of direct Government funding and other grants will be presented to Cabinet on 5 February 2014 for recommendation to Council, and will be considered by full Council on 26 February 2015.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopt the draft expression of priorities and commitments as detailed within this report as a basis for the development of a Corporate Plan for 2015-2019.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve as the basis for consultation, provisional revenue cash limits by portfolio for 2015/16 and savings as set out in the individual portfolio plans in Appendix 1, along with indicative cash limits for a further three years.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approve as a basis for consultation the current draft capital programme of £46.73m for 2015/16, and an indicative capital programme of £26.20m for 2016/17, £18.59m for 2017/18 and £18.59m for 2018/19.
- 2.4 That Cabinet refer this report to all scrutiny and performance panels, to enable their comments to be considered by Cabinet on 17 December 2014.
- 2.5 That Cabinet refer this report and saving options for wider public and stakeholder consultation and receives reports on the results of this, to inform the budget as it progresses.
- 2.6 That Cabinet note that the provisional revenue cash limit for each year is based on a forecast government grant position, and includes appropriate cost pressures and estimates of other specific grants. 2015/16 is the second of a two year settlement announced on 5 February 2014, which is expected to be confirmed in the draft settlement to be announced in late December 2014. Should the final allocation be less than current estimates, revised cash limits and options for ensuring a balanced budget will need to be brought back for Cabinet consideration as the budget develops and information is published.
- 2.7 That following formal approval of the capital programme in February by Council, Cabinet delegate responsibility to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Asset Strategy Group, to designate resources to projects off the capital reserve list should resources become available in year.

- 2.8 That Cabinet note that the level of contingency funds and general reserves will need to be in line with the levels set out with the council's medium term financial strategy, the final allocation to be based on a detailed risk assessment which will be reported to Cabinet in February 2015.
- 2.9 That Cabinet note and approve the consultation arrangements and reporting framework back to Cabinet set out in section 3, and that the findings from the budget consultation be used and evidenced alongside other feedback and available data by Cabinet as it develops the council's 2015/16 draft corporate revenue and capital budget.
- 2.10 That Cabinet note that options in relation to the council tax reduction scheme and council tax discounts are subject to consultation and then formal Council approval.
- 2.11 That Cabinet note that options in relation to the senior management review and employee terms and conditions review are subject to consultation and then formal approval by Personnel Committee.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 The budget setting timetable of key reporting dates, following publication of this report, is as follows:
- Scrutiny of the first draft budget by scrutiny and performance panels from 6 November to 25 November 2014, and feedback to Cabinet on 17 December 2014.
 - Cabinet on 17 December 2014 to consider the recommendations of scrutiny panels on the first draft budget and draft capital programme, and make any amendments it sees fit to make to the second draft budget.
 - Phase 2 budget consultation with stakeholders between October and November 2014
 - Consultation on specific options reporting back as they are received, to allow Cabinet to take this into account in the formulation of the final budget recommendations report.
 - Council tax base approved by January 2015 (Chief Finance Officer delegated powers).
 - Budget briefings for political groups.
 - Receipt of the final settlement late January / early February 2015.
 - Recommendation of the final budget, in light of consultation and the final settlement, by Cabinet on 4 February 2015
 - Council set the final budget and council tax levels on 26 February 2015.
- 3.2 The draft settlement for 2015/16 was announced on 5 February 2014 as part of a 2 year settlement. This is expected to be confirmed in December when the draft settlement is announced, and then the final settlement in January/February 2015. The council's medium term financial outlook has been updated to reflect predicted changes to direct government funding and other known cost pressures (contractual inflation, pay, pensions revaluation,

income projections, etc) resulting in a requirement to make changes to service delivery to meet a four year funding shortfall.

3.3 In considering resource allocation, funding for the development of services will need to be met from the redirection of existing resources, the implementation and rollout of service redesigns, efficiencies and other models of service delivery; and a review of existing and potential income streams including levels of fees and charges. The budget process considers:

- The council's priorities – what does it want to do, to what standard and what results does it want to achieve (i.e. what services will it fund, what can it afford).
- The level of funding anticipated (subject to Government direction).
- Income that can be generated (through increased or new charges, new grants, etc).
- The levels of balances required for financial prudence and to proactively manage the council's risks.
- The methods of service delivery that will deliver value for money (e.g.: in-house, partnerships).
- Stakeholder consultation and lobbying.
- An assumed level of council tax.

3.4 We are anticipating the need to deliver revenue savings / revenue funding changes of £29.28m in 2015/16. Draft revenue proposals of around £16m are considered to have minimal impact on front line service provision, and cover the following:

- Review of senior management
- Review and reduction of back office and support functions
- Use of a reduced number of agency staff
- Reduction in general operational costs
- Review of council buildings and rented accommodation
- General efficiencies
- Grant funding opportunities
- Review of procurement of council expenditure and contracted services.

3.5 Draft savings proposals with direct impact on services will be referred for specific public consultation and these are identified in the individual portfolio plans, titled as policy items. The outcome of consultation to date will be reported to Cabinet on 17 December 2014 and during December and January as feedback is received, for consideration towards the final draft budget to be recommended to Council on 26 February 2015. Any changes to the proposals as a result of equality impact assessments and consultation will be fed into the final budget report to council.

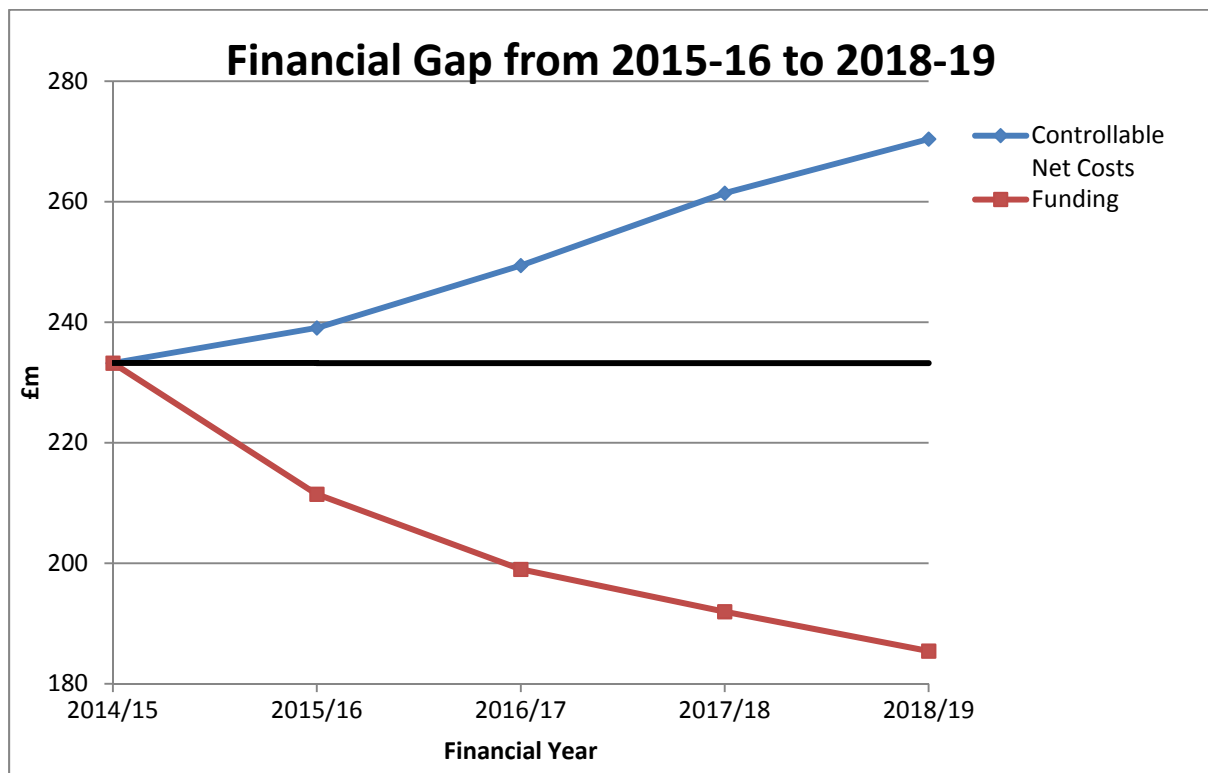
4. Council priorities

4.1 The budget process is an annual cycle aiming to support delivery of council priorities 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.

4.2 Our Challenges

The council is, as others, experiencing significant financial challenges. Over the last four years (2010/11 – 2014/15) the council has reduced its spending by £79.67m but will need to save a further £86m over the next four years to be able to balance the budget in 2018/19.

The graph below illustrates the projected widening gap in finances, as a combination of reducing funding and increasing costs. It is clear that funding for key priorities will be significantly diminished and the council will not be able to sustain services at the current level.



Note: the black line in the graph above represents the current level of funding and costs.

Like all other public sector bodies, Walsall has seen government grant funding reduce since the Emergency Budget of 2010 when the Government set out its initial plans to reduce the overall Government deficit, quoting a 28% reduction in funding to local authorities. This has continued following government Spending Reviews in 2010 and 2013, with a one year spending round in June 2013 setting out spending plans for 2015/16.

4.3 Our Priorities

In order to meet our purpose and vision, the council will be focussing its' energy over the next four years on the following key priorities, recognising that we must do so with decreased and decreasing resources and concentrating our efforts on those most in need:



The financial constraints we must operate within mean that, in the short term difficult decisions have to be made, with cuts to some services that we would otherwise wish to protect. However the commitments we are making in this plan are achievable over four years.

4.4 *Cost of Living*

Low wage growth, cuts to welfare and spiralling costs of essentials such as gas and electricity have severely impacted on the living standards of many of our residents. We also know that inflation hits older people particularly hard, with the combination of increasing fuel costs for heating and low interest rates for savings. Doing what we can to ensure the people have enough money to live on will help ensure a fairer society, improve the life chances of children and young people and boost the local economy.

Key Facts:

- The average weekly full-time earnings of Walsall residents is £94 less than the national average
- 27.9% of under 16s are living in families who experience poverty – including in-work poverty (compared to 19.2% nationally)
- Almost 1 in 7 Walsall adults are out of work and dependent on key benefits (compared to 1 in 10 nationally)
- 17% of those who receive housing benefit in Walsall are in work



We
will

Review support and advice for residents suffering with problem debt to reprioritise and better coordinate across the range of advice services, including improved collaboration with the voluntary sector

Help residents address problem debt by promoting the use of credit agencies and alternative forms of responsible lending, whilst taking action against payday loan companies by restricting their access to advertising on billboards and bus stops.

Introduce the Living Wage for Council employees and work toward and encourage the Council's sub-contractors and partners to do likewise.

Do what we can, within financial constraints, to help those most in need through a 75% subsidy to council tax

4.5 *Creating Jobs and helping people get new skills*

Economic prosperity has a fundamental impact on a number of aspects of people's lives, including health, community safety and the life chances of our young people. We know that the economic divide between the east and west of the borough corresponds with poorer health, lower educational attainment and higher crime rates. Creating jobs, and ensuring that local people have the rights skills to fill those jobs is essential to improving outcomes for our residents.

Key Facts:

- There are just 0.59 jobs per working age adult in the borough
- 1 in 2 Walsall adults have a literacy standard below level 2 (equivalent to Grade C at GCSE), with 4 in 5 having numeracy standards below this level.
- The number of active business enterprises in Walsall is 40% lower than the national average for an area of this size
- Only 3 in 10 Walsall companies have their main supply chain in the Black Country meaning a considerable amount of potential spending is lost to the local economy

We
will

Spend more of our money with local firms, boosting the local economy and helping local businesses.

Review Council contracts and procurement practices to ensure that contracting decisions have a positive impact on local jobs and skills, with rules favouring organisations with a smaller gap between the highest and lowest paid staff, social enterprises that put profits back into creating more jobs, and firms that demonstrate clear local added value benefits.

Require that companies who want Council contracts do not participate in the illegal practice of "blacklisting", and will give opportunities, apprenticeships and training to local people.

Work with local businesses and colleges to create more opportunities for our young people

Offer a guaranteed interview for all available jobs in the council to former service personnel

4.6 *Improving Educational Achievement*

Raising educational attainment across the borough is vital to the future success and wellbeing of our young people as well as to our economy. We are determined to provide all our children with an education that allows them to get the best possible start in life as well as helping Adult learners to improve their own prospects.

Key Facts:

- Walsall has fewer adults with qualifications than nationally: almost 18% of working age residents have no formal qualifications
- In Walsall, only 68% of Primary pupils and 57% of Secondary pupils attend a school judged as good or better by Ofsted; less than the national averages of 79% and 73%.
- Children from poorer families are 30% less likely to achieve 5 GCSEs including English and maths at grade A*-C

We
will

Use an independent Performance Board to oversee, monitor and robustly challenge educational attainment across the Borough, paying particular attention to schools and academies whose key stage results fall below an acceptable level.

Undertake a comprehensive review of school support and school to school support arrangements to produce a more challenging and school focused improvement service, to work with all schools and particularly those facing challenges.

Review and improve universal and preventative early years services across the Borough, ensuring that those families and children most in need of help receive targeted support, including much closer joint working with NHS colleagues.

Adopt a whole family approach to education and learning, including supporting parents back into work via programmes of education and training.

4.7 *Helping Local High Streets and Communities*

We recognise that strong and resilient communities have a vital role to play in shaping services to their own needs and supporting the most vulnerable. A cooperative approach that is integrated and tailored to local need and demand can help us to deliver more with less by getting the best out of the assets and potential that already exist in the community to improve the social and economic prosperity of local areas, address equality gaps and help fight crime and antisocial behaviour. We recognise that local high streets and district centres provide an important focal point for communities, act as a boost to the local economy and help generate pride and a sense of belonging.

Key Fact:

- Incidences of police reported Anti-social behaviour have increased by 30% compared to the same period last year

**We
will**

Listen to the voice of the community, putting Walsall residents and businesses at the heart of decision making

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

Address anti-social behaviour through more integrated work with partners including the police, trade associations and the third sector

Continue to seek out new sources of income to support regeneration of district centres

Review existing council, partner and community assets to find options for greater integration and improved access to services.

4.8 *Improving Health and Wellbeing*

There are stark health inequalities within Walsall and we know there is a strong association between poorer health and the social and economic conditions that differ across the borough. As well as being determined by social inequalities, poor health also perpetuates these by being a barrier to work (including for those acting as carers.) As well as steps to tackle wider social inequalities that may help improve health and wellbeing, the Council must also ensure effective preventative health and social care services are targeted at those most in need, recognising the detrimental impact on the quality of residents' lives caused by issues of mobility, social isolation and children being at risk of harm or sexual exploitation.

Key Facts:

- Men living in the most deprived wards in the borough die on average 10.8 years younger than those in affluent areas.
- There is a high prevalence of a range of preventable conditions such as diabetes for which Walsall has the 7th highest rate in the country
- Less than half (44%) of adult social care service users said that they have as much social contact as they would like
- Walsall has a higher rate of children with a child protection plan and more Looked After Children than expected for the level of poverty



Maintain a clear and committed approach to safeguarding for vulnerable adults and children, with a particular focus on tackling the underlying causes of Child Sexual Exploitation

Develop a genuine integrated approach to the delivery of services alongside our partners, including the NHS

Ensure a focus on the most vulnerable, recognising the major detrimental impact of mobility problems and social isolation

Use Council powers to hold local care providers to account for their performance

Pilot a free school meals service for 8-11 year old in areas where deprivation is highest

4.9 Affordable Housing

There is a pressing need for an adequate supply of good quality and affordable housing to meet both the current and future needs of Walsall's population. A lack of quality housing supply has a real and substantial effect on the quality of life for residents, as well as their future aspirations, with areas of poor housing experiencing higher crime, poorer health and lower educational achievements. There is also a strong economic argument for house building with the ability to boost spending, attract and retain workers and enable residents to be more productive and to participate in society.

Key Facts:

- 332 Statutory Homelessness Acceptances in 2013/14
- 1 in 4 Walsall residents are in socially rented accommodation
- 3831 on the waiting list for social housing in the borough



We
will

Use Council powers to force owners of long term vacant properties to sell up to create new homes for people in housing need

Introduce a borough wide licensing scheme for private landlords to give tenants assurances that their landlord is reputable and able to carry out their duties

Work with social landlords and private developers to create a housing market which provides good quality affordable homes

5. Risk management

- 5.1 The budget 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 budget variances and risks to be identified early and addressed.
- 5.2 There is a significant amount of uncertainty around Government funding for 2016/17 and beyond, with a high likelihood that austerity measures will continue and be tightened even further. The medium term financial outlook will need to be updated once these measures are confirmed.
- 5.3 The budget is risk assessed and this is used to formulate the recommended level of contingencies and reserves. The outcome of this will be reported to Cabinet and Council in the final budget report.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The Council must set a balanced budget to meet its legal requirements.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Under the Local Government Act, 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.

8. Property implications

- 8.1 Any direct property implications as a result of service redesign and revenue savings proposals are included within the individual plans within this report.

9. Health and Wellbeing implications

- 9.1 This report is prepared with consideration of health and wellbeing implications and policy development

10. Staffing implications

- 10.1 There will be some staffing implications arising from this report and consultation with employees and unions will be undertaken in accordance with required procedures.

11. Equality implications

- 11.1 None directly associated with this report. An equality impact assessment is undertaken on all proposals as they develop and on the overall budget and any implications reported as they arise, to allow Cabinet to consider and revisions required to the budget as it progresses.

- 11.2 Assessing the impact of proposed organisational changes and changes to policies, procedures, services is a positive opportunity for us to ensure we make good decisions, based on robust evidence. It is clear that the decisions taken by individual services do not operate in isolation. Thus, when making policy, it is important not just to look at the potential impact of individual measures, but also to ensure that their interaction is properly understood and that the cumulative impact is taken into account. Understanding the cumulative impact on protected groups should be a pre-requisite of any policy making process.
- 11.3 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty an analysis of impact on equality (EqIA in Walsall) must contain enough information to enable us to;
- demonstrate we have had 'due regard' to the aims of the equality duty in our decision making
 - consider ways of mitigating or avoiding any adverse impacts.
- 11.4 Failure to meet the requirements in the Public Sector Equality Duty may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges. Walsall Council uses the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to check lawfulness of council decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. An EqIA must contain relevant data and sufficient analysis to enable the members to understand the equality implications of a proposal and any alternative options before any decisions are arrived at.
- 11.5 Just under 200 proposals were considered for their impact on the equality protected characteristic groups. Each proposal had an equality screening and 107 proposals required further analysis.
- 11.6 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out on the 106 proposals and decisions made as to what type of EqIA was required. There were 68 requiring an Organisational Change EqIA, 68 requiring a Policy, Procedures and Services EqIA and 30 proposals requiring both. Initial analysis suggests that approximately 60 of the proposals may *potentially* have some adverse impact which requires further exploration as EqIAs develop.
- 11.7 Full EqIAs will be carried out on the 106 proposals, which will offer the opportunity to consider more deeply and broadly the equalities implications of the proposals. This will include the gathering of evidence and more consultation to enable an informed decision to be made of the potential impact of each proposal.

- 11.8 The EqlAs will clearly identify the outcomes, and their potential impacts, and document the reasons for this decision. There are four possible outcomes:
- A. No major change required
When no adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
 - B. Adjustments are needed to adverse impact to better promote equality
 - C. Continue despite possible adverse impact
 - D. Compelling reasons will be needed and mitigating actions may be required to minimise adverse impact.
 - E. Stop and rethink the proposal
When an EqlA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination and needs to be reviewed immediately
- 11.9 If adjustments are needed or potential adverse impact is identified, an action plan will be developed to show how this will be mitigated or in exceptional circumstances, justified.
- 11.10 EqlAs will be distributed to Members with the proposal reports to enable them to understand the equality implications of proposals and any alternative options prior to any decision being made as to their inclusion in the final recommendations to Council.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 Consultation is an integral part of the budget process and arrangements are in hand to consult with a wide range of stakeholders (i.e. councillors, council tax payers, service users, and potential service users as appropriate, NNDR rate payers, voluntary and community organisations, etc).
- 12.3 During August and September 2014 over 4,600 responses to the council's initial 'phase one' of budget consultation were received. This level of response was achieved via a range of methods including face to face, online, in writing and over the phone, most of which has been gathered 'in house'. A full report of findings is provided in Appendix 2.

- 12.4 Phase one of consultation was conducted prior to draft budget proposals being available. The feedback sought was general in nature, though it has been designed to help inform detailed budget proposals. A second phase of consultation will be undertaken during November 2014 and in specific cases continue into 2015. It is intended that feedback from this phase 2 stage will help inform future decisions regarding the reshaping of future service delivery and the impact on residents and customers.
- 12.5 Residents are fairly well aware of the challenges faced with public sector budgets; though up to one fifth responding through the telephone survey are not aware. Residents often feel that all things are important and struggle with the concept of things needing to change. Based on the overall comments received they find it difficult to comprehend the scale of savings needed or the extent to which the council controls services within their area and hence the need for ongoing communication for the challenges ahead in order for the public to feel able to influence future decisions.
- 12.6 People find it far easier to say what services they wish to see protected rather than ceased, reduced or changed. Few call for ceasing services altogether, preferring to suggest reductions in services, possibly across services they do not directly use and perceive are underused; that they express a dislike or have a complaint about; are perceived to offer poor value for money or are seen to them as a waste of money.
- 12.7 There are calls for the protection of core universal services such as those that help keep the area looking cared for and helping people move around; hence allowing them to get about their daily lives and feeling safer i.e. cleanliness, household waste collection, road maintenance, community transport services, improving the image of town and district centres.
- 12.8 Residents expect the council to deliver value for money and will first and foremost look to itself to make savings rather than cut front facing services that are important to them. Achieving this through better housekeeping, efficient service delivery, streamlining staffing and political structures including pay.
- 12.9 Depending on the research method there are differing views about income generation through increases to fees and charges including council tax as discussed in section 4.8 and 4.9 of Appendix 2. For example when cold called about this without receiving an explanation of what the financial implications of any increases in council tax are, residents tend to be more vociferously against this approach. However, compared with more detailed research undertaken in 2013 and with feedback through other channels this year where people came forward to offer their views, there appears to be more of an appetite to paying 'a little' more to help protect services.
- 12.10 Regarding thoughts on out-sourcing the clear message is that residents do not want to see services outsourced to the private sector. There is however an appetite to share services with other councils on the assumption that there are savings to be made. Using the voluntary sector to deliver services is also seen as positive for both parties, with the sense that community based services would be more suited to this approach.

12.11 A detailed report on consultation feedback from both phases of consultation, to include scrutiny feedback, will be presented to Cabinet on 17 December 2014. Further reports will be presented on specific proposals once consultation closes.

12.12 This report is prepared in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Chief Executive, relevant managers and executive directors.

Background papers: Various financial and working papers.

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James Walsh
Assistant Director – Finance (CFO)

20 October 2014

Councillor S Coughlan
Leader of the Council

20 October 2014

Appendix 1

Revenue proposals, draft capital programme, and Portfolio Plans 2015/16 to 2018/19

This appendix outlines the portfolio plans for future service delivery. A provisional revenue cash limit is shown.

2015/16 Draft Revenue Budget Headlines

The revenue budget is constructed in accordance with the council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS) 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 **£91.92m**
- Provision for inflationary pressures of **£2.07m**
- Provision for other known budget pressures, including cost pressures and reduced levels of income or grant, of **£5.66m**.
- New service savings of **£16.15m**
- New corporate savings of **£1.5m**
- Use of Grant Funding **£2.20m**
- Review of base budgets and MTFO review **£3.04m**
- Council tax base changes of **£5.16m**.
- Full year impact of savings approved in the 2014/15 budget of **£1.04m**
- Opening general reserves in line with the council's MTFS

The estimated gross revenue expenditure budget for 2014/15, as approved by Council on 27 February 2014, is **£633.90m**. For 2015/16, this will change following the allocation of final savings, changes in grant allocations and changes to the council tax base, and will be reported as the budget process progresses.

New service savings are identified in the individual portfolio appendices. Corporate savings include:

- A senior management review to be undertaken by the Chief Executive – aiming to save £1m over 2015/16 and 2016/17
- A review of employee terms and conditions, aiming to save in the region of £1m in 2015/16.
- Both of the above will be subject to consultation and consideration by Personnel Committee.

It has been possible to commit to £7.73m to address key priorities and funding of essential cost pressures. It also covers a provision to fund inflationary pressures (i.e. contractual), and corporate cost pressures to fund for example, the revenue implications of the capital programme and pay and pension costs. Income targets have also been corrected in some areas.

The predicted change in council tax requirement from 2015/16 to 2018/19 is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 : Net council tax requirement 2015/16 to 2018/19				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Opening Council Tax Requirement	86.76	91.92	93.75	95.61
<i>Cash Limit Changes :</i>				
Inflationary pressures	2.07	2.19	2.32	2.47
Corporate cost pressures / other funding changes	5.66	7.40	11.22	6.70
Removal of one off investment	(0.51)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Full year effect of previous years' approved savings	(1.04)	(0.61)	0.00	0.00
New savings (included in portfolio plans) *	(16.15)	(13.52)	(12.49)	(7.59)
New savings (corporate) *	(1.50)	(1.00)	(2.00)	(2.00)
Base budget adjustment / change in accounting treatment *	(3.04)	(4.69)	(4.06)	(4.05)
Use of Grant Funding (Public health & Better Care Fund) *	(2.20)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Reduction in central Government funding	21.87	12.06	6.87	6.38
Predicted Net Council Tax Requirement	91.92	93.75	95.61	97.52

Government Funding and Income

A provisional Government funding settlement for 2015/16 of £125.35m was announced on 5 February 2014 representing a reduction in funding of £21.55m over 2014/15. We have been advised that this will be further reduced by changes to RPI, thus expect a net reduction of c£21.87m in 2015/16. This is expected to be confirmed in the draft settlement due to be announced in December 2014. There is considerable uncertainty in respect of the amount of income we will receive in Government funding from 2016/17 onwards.

In reviewing savings proposals, reviews of income and fees and charges have been undertaken, including those relating to council tax discounts and where applicable draft proposals include increases in some fees and charges.

The council is also in the process of consulting on its current council tax reduction scheme and additionally intends to consult on the current scheme of discounts in respect of empty properties. In respect of this, currently privately owned empty properties can receive up to 100% council tax discount for the initial three months that they are unoccupied. Under the proposal, all homeowners would be liable for 100% of their council tax bill and full council tax charge would apply to empty and unfurnished properties or properties under or requiring structural repair once they have been unoccupied for seven days. This proposal will be subject to consultation and then consideration by full Council.

During 2014/15, services have been working on options to meet this reduced funding, whilst maintaining and optimising as far as possible, front line services to the public. The draft revenue budget contained within this report is summarised below, and spend on individual portfolios is as follows:

Table 2 : Provisional Revenue Cash Limits by Portfolio					
Portfolio	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Finance & Communications	9.32	8.22	7.69	7.09	6.63
Children's Services	61.24	56.29	54.26	51.44	50.08
Community, Leisure & Culture	19.15	16.35	15.23	14.41	14.02
Environment & Transport	32.94	31.11	28.71	27.60	27.00
Health	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personnel & Business Support	15.67	14.04	12.63	10.38	8.80
Regeneration	5.81	4.17	3.72	3.27	3.12
Social Care	70.68	65.93	59.78	55.47	52.43
Net Portfolio Cash Limits	214.81	196.11	182.02	169.66	162.08
Capital Financing	5.28	4.23	2.30	3.69	3.69
Levies	13.67	12.97	12.97	12.97	12.97
Central budgets *	(147.00)	(121.39)	(103.54)	(90.71)	(81.22)
Council Tax Requirement	86.76	91.92	93.75	95.61	97.52

**Central budgets includes direct Government funding and business rates.*

2015/16 Draft Capital Programme

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 success that Walsall has had in securing a wide range of external funding may be harder to achieve as many of the sources of funding may stop or reduce. Government has also published its intention for more pooling of funds regionally which will require greater collaborative working between Local Authorities.

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 provided, 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 four years 2015/16 to 2018/19 and the draft capital programme is balanced for 2015/16. 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 capital programme is presented in three parts:

- Council funded programme - funded by the council's own resources, through borrowing and receipts.
- Externally funded programme - funded from capital grants and third party contributions.
- Leasing Programme – funded from revenue (this is currently under review, and will be reported in the second draft budget report to Cabinet on 17 December 2014).

Table 3 shows the draft capital programme against predicted available resources.

Table 3 : Draft Capital Programme				
<u>Anticipated Capital Resources</u>	<u>2015/16</u> <u>£m</u>	<u>2016/17</u> <u>£m</u>	<u>2017/18</u> <u>£m</u>	<u>2018/19</u> <u>£m</u>
Capital Receipts target	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Anticipated Surplus Capital Receipts	0.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
General Borrowing	5.20	4.67	4.67	4.67
Specific Borrowing	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73
Prudential borrowing (Active Living)	14.97	1.24	0.00	0.00
Earmarked capital receipts	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00
Uncommitted 2014-15 underspend	0.34	0.00	0.00	0.00
Use of Reserves	0.96	0.30	0.29	0.29
<i>Total council funded resources</i>	<i>24.93</i>	<i>8.44</i>	<i>7.19</i>	<i>7.19</i>
External Funding	21.80	17.76	11.40	11.40
<i>Total capital resources</i>	<i>46.73</i>	<i>26.20</i>	<i>18.59</i>	<i>18.59</i>
<u>Capital Bids</u>				
Prior Year Approvals	17.67	1.29	0.00	0.00
Rolling Programme Schemes	3.51	4.59	4.21	4.21
New capital bids	2.34	1.73	1.45	1.42
Council wide bids	1.41	1.25	1.00	1.00
<i>Total council funded schemes</i>	<i>24.93</i>	<i>8.86</i>	<i>6.66</i>	<i>6.63</i>
Externally funded schemes	21.80	17.76	11.40	11.40
<i>Total draft capital programme</i>	<i>46.73</i>	<i>26.62</i>	<i>18.06</i>	<i>18.03</i>
<i>Funding shortfall (surplus)</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.42</i>	<i>(0.53)</i>	<i>(0.56)</i>

The list of schemes are shown in the respective portfolio plans in **Appendices 1 a – h, and summarised as follows:**

Table 4 : Capital summary by portfolio				
Portfolio	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Finance & Communications	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Children's Services	8.65	7.97	7.97	7.97
Community, Leisure & Culture	19.94	7.70	0.04	0.04
Environment & Transport	5.09	4.77	4.42	4.42
Health	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personnel & Business Support	0.13	0.21	0.03	0.00
Regeneration	7.94	1.42	1.32	1.32
Social Care	3.58	3.30	3.28	3.28
Centrally held*	1.40	1.25	1.00	1.00
Total draft capital programme	46.73	26.62	18.06	18.03

**Centrally held relates to funding to support essential works, including health and safety, and provision to support match funding of externally funded schemes when approved*

Through the anticipated generation of additional capital receipts in 2015/16, it is predicted that all bids contained in the portfolio plans at Appendix 1 can be funded. A further review of proposed schemes will be required before capital allocations are released in year. For 2016/17 onwards, the full impact of these projects will be reviewed, and funding revisited as part of the ongoing budget process. There are also a number of projects totalling £756k that may require a match funding requirement in order to secure external funds. Due to the timing of these, it is proposed to allocate £350k funding in 2015/16, whereby funds will be drawn down as projects are confirmed.

Capital receipts projections are based on professional estimates of property colleagues. Any additional receipts received in year (excluding those earmarked i.e. for Smarter Workplaces, Bentley, Rushall JMI) will be considered to fund projects identified on the reserve list of schemes. Reserve list schemes are shown on the respective portfolio plan at Appendix 1.

General unsupported borrowing relates to additional borrowing which is funded from the council's own resources – generated through savings, and/or paid for via the council tax. Council's are allowed to borrow in accordance with the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The current capital financing cash limit is forecast to be able to support £5.2m of additional unsupported borrowing to fund high priority items in 2015/16.

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 2015/16.

As well as those in the draft programme, there are a number of large capital schemes that are in development or planning stages. It is expected that as individual business cases are developed and considered by Cabinet, they are then included in the latest update of the draft capital programme if they are deemed to be a high priority and affordable. Funding for these will need to be identified and may be through a combination of unsupported borrowing and/ or other contributions. Where practical, a payback agreement will be implemented, whereby projects should, wherever possible be self funded over the life of the project and beyond. Business cases currently in train include Bentley Employability and Learning, Street Lighting and Darlaston Strategic Development Area Access Project.

For externally funded schemes, where a bidding process is required, it is assumed the full cost of the project is met from external grant and/or third party contributions. If it becomes clear during the process that this is not the case, the project cannot proceed if the grant is not approved.

Portfolio Plans

Each portfolio plan identifies the indicative revenue cash limit and draft capital programme, summary of services within the portfolio, objectives and future plans, along with a list of revenue savings and efficiencies proposed for each of the 4 year budget plan from 2015/19 to 2018/19. Savings and efficiencies are split into two categories:

- *Non Policy* – savings which officers have delegations to implement; examples include restructures, back office savings, operational efficiencies
- *Policy* – savings which require an executive (Cabinet) decision to implement – these are shown in section F of each portfolio plan.

All of the above are included for consultation with stakeholders. Comprehensive consultation arrangements are in place. Any changes arising from consultation findings will be presented in future Cabinet reports prior to recommendation of the final draft budget to Council.

Portfolio Plans are set out as follows:

1a	Finance & Communications (Leader of the Council)	Page 24
1b	Children's Services	Page 27
1c	Community, Leisure & Culture	Page 61
1d	Environment & Transport	Page 95
1e	Health	Page 127
1f	Personnel & Business Support	Page 134
1g	Regeneration	Page 140
1h	Social Care	Page 143

PORTFOLIO: FINANCE AND COMMUNICATIONS (LEADER OF THE COUNCIL)

Summary of services within the portfolio

Communications

- Media management
- Reputation management
- Communications strategy, planning and campaign delivery
- Media monitoring and evaluation and reporting
- Internal communications
- Social media
- Digital and websites (including: council websites and internet)

Finance

- Accountancy, financial reporting, financial management, financial systems, financial strategy and planning, budget setting, financial support and advice to directorates
- Risk and Insurance - claims handling, insurance fund management, risk management
- Treasury Management including cash management and banking
- Financial administration – Accounts payable and receivable, debt management and recovery

Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose

Communications

To let me know what the council does and how I can access the 800 services delivered I need in a way that suits me.

To tell me (and a range of other customers, including the media) honestly what the council is doing.

To provide a two-way communications service to internal departments and to support them in the delivery of their service priorities

Finance

Enable the council to be financially stable, well governed, making the best use of money the council is given, and providing the citizens and businesses of Walsall with the services they require.

Objectives for support services

We are taking a customer-focused approach to our work to re-design support services to make them fit for purpose for our future organisation. Our work to understand purpose from the customer perspective and to understand customer demand over the last few months has led to two working purposes for our support services; 'Help me when I need it – right, fast and simple' and 'Spend my council tax money wisely'.

Our intention is to continue to work to understand at a much greater level of detail the demand from our customers going forwards so that we can empower our staff and re-design our services to help to deliver the best possible public services. From what we know already, we expect underlying principles of our continued re-design to include:

- Increasing integration of support services with public service delivery – to ensure real end-to-end service delivery for the customers and businesses of Walsall
- Collaborative, multi-functional advice and support easily obtained.
- Ready access for our customers to the help and advice that they need at first point of contact – not having to speak to several people in order to get to the help that is needed.
- Our staff having optimum flexibility to give customers the help they need in the way they need it

Clearly, the needs from support services will be derived very largely from the changes made to direct public service delivery and so a collaborative approach will be needed with all executive directors to bring forward complementary savings options going forwards.

Financial summary

Table 1 details the revenue cash limits for the Finance & Communications (Leader of the Council) Portfolio for the next four years. Full details of savings and efficiencies for 2015/16 and 2016/17 are shown in table 2.

Table 1: Finance & Communications Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	9.322	8.215	7.692	7.088
Base budget adjustment	(0.002)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies – <i>see table 2 below</i>	(1.105)	(0.523)	(0.465)	(0.404)
Less: reductions still to be finalised	0.000	0.000	(0.139)	(0.052)
Revised cash limit	8.215	7.692	7.088	6.632

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

There are no specific capital schemes proposed for this portfolio. However, funding for self insured property damage and risk management will be considered for funding from a central reserve for essential works as they arise.

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

Table 2 details the proposed revenue savings and efficiencies for the Finance & Communications (Leader of the Council) Portfolio for both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
1	Communications – reduce the corporate communications support to the organisation	0.164	
2	Finance – review and restructure of Finance Accountancy and Financial Administration services	0.692	0.171
3	Finance – restructure the risk and insurance service		0.100
4	Finance – bring some additional insurance claims handling in-house	0.030	
5	Finance – require treasury management team to cover own costs through income	0.184	
6	Finance – increase income from treasury management		0.252
7	Finance – reduce external audit fees	0.035	
	Total	1.105	0.523

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

PORTFOLIO: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Summary of services within the portfolio

Access & Achievement	<u>Education Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Improvement • Access & Attendance and Education Welfare • Virtual School for Looked After Children • Integrated Behaviour Support <u>Youth Support Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Advice and Guidance • Targeted Youth Support • Youth Justice Service • Positive Activities for young people • Active Involvement • Education Business Partnership • Teenage Pregnancy, Prevention & Support • Parent Partnership Service
Early Help, Commissioning & Workforce Development	<u>Early Help</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years • Children's Centres • Intensive Family Support <u>Workforce Development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, Training & Development • Recruitment & Retention <u>Commissioning</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Commissioning Activity • Contract Management • Commissioning Intelligence & Monitoring • School Transport Co –ordination
Specialist Children's Services	<u>Provider Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Service • Fostering Service • Residential Care <u>Looked After Children and Care Leavers</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and Assessment Service • CAMHS (located in health - matrix managed) • Sufficiency and Placement Commissioning • Looked After Children Social Work teams • Care Leavers Service <u>Safeguarding</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Reviewing Officers • Safeguarding Board • Child Death Overview Panel

Quality Assurance, Performance Information and Management	<u>Initial Response Service</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) • Initial Response Teams • Vulnerable Children Social Workers
	<u>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Social Workers • Education Psychologist • SEN Assessment • SEN Advisory
	<u>Directorate and Partnership Performance Support</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management • Management Information • Quality Assurance • Statutory Returns • Systems Development

Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose

We believe that all children and young people in Walsall have the right to be healthy, happy and safe, to be valued and respected and to have high aspirations for a successful present and to achieve their potential in the future. Our ambition is to be *'Better Together For Children'* by working in partnership to offer the very best standard of help, support, education, care and protection for children and young people throughout their journey through our services.

Our Key Priorities agreed with the Children & Young People's Partnership:-

- Supporting the most vulnerable families to provide the best start in life for children.
- Ensuring that children maintain a healthy weight.
- Reducing the harm caused by child sexual exploitation including children missing from school, care and home.
- Greater diversity of choice for learning, training and employment for young people.
- Supporting the transition into adulthood for children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities by creating single 'through life' plans.
- Promoting pride in the achievements of the children and young people in Walsall.
- Better communication between frontline staff and all agencies that support children and families
- Reducing the impact of child poverty

Our Key Priorities linked to the Education Improvement Plan:-

- Work to ensure all Walsall schools are good or outstanding.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Narrow the gap for those children who are vulnerable to underachievement and potential exclusion.
- Ensure that all children make as much progress as they can and they achieve standards that are in line with national expectations.

- Support the achievement of children within and between educational phases.
- Work better together to improve children's behaviour, care, safeguarding and attendance to maximise their learning.
- Improve schools' and pupil achievement through high quality school to school improvement support.
- Strengthen school leadership and management.
- Strengthen school governance.

Financial summary

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

Table 1: Children's Services Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	61.236	56.288	54.260	51.436
Base budget adjustment	(0.562)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies – <i>see table 2 below</i>	(4.386)	(2.028)	(2.824)	(1.358)
Revised cash limit	56.288	54.260	51.436	50.078

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

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

Capital investment for the Children's Services Portfolio over the next four years is £32.556m. Full details of capital investment are shown in table 3.

2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Total £m
8.649	7.969	7.969	7.969	32.556

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

Table 2 details the revenue savings and efficiencies for the Children's Services Portfolio for both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
8	Delete non pay management & admin budgets	0.205	
9	Early Help – savings from the redesign of Early Help and intensive family support and further alignment of Early Help and the Troubled Families Programme	0.171	
10	Outcomes & Quality – deliver the bookstart programme differently	0.032	
11	Children with Disabilities Service – move the ‘buddies’ service from externally purchased to in house provision	0.036	
12	Safeguarding – remove some financial support to some domestic violence support providers (Policy)		0.120
13	Children’s Specialist Services – reduce by 25% over 4 years and remodel the delivery of short breaks for children with disabilities / special needs. This will deliver savings totalling £460k by 2018/19 (Policy)	0.050	0.150
14	Looked after Children – start using internal Children’s Centre’s staff and locations to provide ‘contact’ services and reduce externally commissioned work.	0.065	0.070
15	Vulnerable Children – reduce premise costs by 50%		0.038
16	Admin Review – savings from reduction and reshaping of administrative support staff	0.300	
17	Children’s taxi budget – reduce budget and promote independent travel where possible (Policy)	0.067	
18	Internal foster care - reduce budget for new furniture for foster carers	0.004	
19	Reduce resource for additional requirements to support placements in s23 of the Care Act	0.020	
20	Children’s Residential Services – reduce external training budget	0.020	
21	Children’s Residential Services – reduce Bluebells repair and maintenance budget	0.004	
22	Children’s Centre Services – reduction in children’s centres to align service with need. Phase 1 sees a reduction of 5 centres and Phase 2 (from Sept 15) a further 7 centres will close (Policy)	1.350	0.500
23	Educational Psychologists – reduce catering and reference books budget	0.001	
24	School Improvement – delete vacant post	0.070	
25	School Access – reduce non traded service (Policy)		0.089
26	Virtual School – to deliver the service differently	0.063	
27	Children’s SEN School Assisted Transport and School Bus Passes (Policy)	0.020	0.075
28	Information Services – reduce team leader capacity (from 2 to 1) and reinvest in front line support to schools to increase potential for income generated from traded services	0.097	
29	Review of Performance and Outcomes team	0.025	

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
30	Youth Services – Information, Advice and Guidance - focus on work with vulnerable groups and young people most at risk of becoming NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training). We are able to meet minimum statutory requirements, monitoring and reporting on destination outcomes and providing support to looked after children, care leavers, young people with learning disabilities and to provide support to other vulnerable groups (Policy)	1.000	0.040
31	Youth Services - Targeted Youth Work – reduce and reshape the budget for direct and commissioned delivery of targeted youth work (Policy)	0.490	0.580
32	Youth Services – Targeted Youth support. Year 1 to end contracts with Aspire counselling and Sandwell Young carers, and reduce contract with NACRO. Year 2 to review Child Sexual Exploitation contract. (Policy)	0.086	0.054
33	Youth Services – youth opinion unite team review and reshape service delivery	0.020	
34	Youth Services – redesign of administrative function		0.040
35	Youth Services – Review Parent Partnership Service ensuring appropriate alignments to other SEND activity (Policy)	0.020	0.010
36	Youth Services – reduce costs of teenage pregnancy support and work with Public Health to consider use of related transformation monies (Policy)		0.030
37	Youth Services – reduce funding of admission and pupil place planning team. This equates to 11.4% reduction in revenue of school admissions team		0.031
38	Children’s Commissioning – reduce staff	0.060	
39	Early Years team – deliver the toy library service in a different way and delete one post	0.033	
40	Area Family Support Teams – reduce budgets, linking families in need of financial support for furniture and food to the council’s Crisis Support service and other community resources.	0.015	0.065
41	CAMHS – withdraw funding for psychologist working in schools	0.040	
42	Safeguarding – reduce postage	0.003	
43	Safeguarding – reduce fees to voluntary bodies	0.014	
44	Safeguarding – reduce support to family centres		0.068
45	Specialist Services Management – reduce travel allowances budget	0.005	
46	Workforce Development – reduce workforce development to be fully traded		0.068
	Total	4.386	2.028

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

Proposed capital investment

Table 3 details the capital investment for the Children's Services Portfolio over the next four years.

Table 3: Children's Services Portfolio Capital Investment 2015/16 – 2018/19					
Capital Project	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Source of funding
Social ICT Systems Review & Enhancement	0.550				Council
Rushall Primary / EDC alterations	0.350				Council
Basic Need	4.393	4.613	4.613	4.613	External
Devolved Formula Capital	0.571	0.571	0.571	0.571	External
Capital Maintenance	2.785	2.785	2.785	2.785	External
Total	8.649	7.969	7.969	7.969	

In addition to the above, there is also the proposed strategic scheme for the review of the Family Contact Centre, to be funded from a combination of earmarked capital receipts and council funding. This will be subject to a separate business case to be reported to Cabinet and will be included in the latest update of the draft capital programme when confirmed. Where practical, a payback agreement should be implemented, whereby projects should, wherever possible be self funded over the life of the project and beyond.

Draft Proposal – reference 12: Remove financial support to some domestic violence support providers in 2016/17 in line with establishing a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) that will take on responsibility for Domestic Violence Screening to safeguard children and young people.

Estimated Net Saving		Implementation cost
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	
-	£120,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Provision of services to support victims of domestic violence in Walsall has changed over time with the provision of services from a range of organisations. In the near future it is expected to change further as we move toward the establishment of a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). The MASH will streamline the way that information is received about a range of welfare issues concerning children and it is expected to lead to swifter more efficient responses to need. The consequence of these changes is that the need and activity from external providers will reduce and it may not be necessary in the longer term.

- 1.2 As the planned savings are not due until 2016/17 there should be ample time for all necessary consultation and preparation allowing full year effects of the planned savings from April 2016.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Addressing the needs of children in households experiencing domestic abuse meets the fourth of Walsall's corporate priorities, improving learning and life chances for children and young people. It also contributes to creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities, but the primary function is the part played in safeguarding children. As indicated above, there are changes which are affecting the way this is done which will enable us to withdraw this funding in ways that reduce any associated risks to a very minimal level.

2.2 **Customers**

The needs of "customers" (i.e. adult victims and their children) will continue to be met but in alternative ways that are expected to have greater impact on those needs and offer a better service to safeguard children and young people.

2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

There will be no direct impact on Council employees. Consultation with providers will determine the extent to which any changes will impact on their staff.

2.4 **Partners**

The formation of the MASH will change the way children's social care services engage with a wide range of partners and significantly improve the way partners they work together to prevent harm to children and young people.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

None anticipated.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None anticipated.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

See 1.1 and 2.1.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None anticipated.

3. **Associated Risks**

These fall under two headings:

- Risk to children: Although this provision directly relates to the protection of children the intention is for the MASH development to improve our performance and protection of children. Care will be taken that, in spite of the apparent cut in support to domestic abuse work, there will be no adverse effect on children and young people.

- Risk to relationships with partners, especially in the third sector: We will proceed with this risk in mind and thereby aim to avoid it.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

In view of the nature of the process for identifying and considering budget reduction proposals, it has not been possible or correct for there to be any discussion of this proposal with providers at the time of writing this paper. Discussions will take place as soon as possible within the budget setting timescale. Work on development of the MASH (which enables the reduction to be achieved) will be the subject of consultation with partners and will be informed by customer feedback.

5. **Legal Implications**

This proposal affects our methods for meeting statutory requirements (in respect of child protection). There are no direct legal implications.

6. **Equality Implications**

Victims of domestic abuse are generally and disproportionately female and/or from disadvantaged groups. In making improvements in this area of work – especially through the development of the MASH – we will be aware of that. Removing funding from providers is not seen as producing any negative impact for any specific group and there is therefore no such impact that we need to manage.

Draft Proposal – reference 13: Reduce the budget by about 25% over the next 4 years and re-model the delivery of short breaks provision for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities so that the Service is more efficient, meets needs more effectively and is targeted at Children, Young People and Families with the most need.

Estimated Net Saving		Implementation cost
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	
£50,000	£150,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Short breaks provision for children with complex levels of need and disabilities currently consists of short break respite care with the local provider (the Bluebells) and various external residential providers, as well as commissioned evening and weekend clubs. The support packages provided to children and their families are subject to assessment and review through the multi agency short breaks panel. The identification of needs through assessment has not always been robust and support packages have often ‘drifted’ without re assessment for long periods. This is the first area of work where a more focused, needs led approach to provision is required. In recent months the Children with Disabilities Team (CWDT) has made progress in terms of reassessment of cases evident in the step-down/closure of approximately one third of cases previously open to the team. This has included reducing Direct Payments in

some cases where needs had changed and where assessments had not previously been robust. The process of assessment/reassessment and presentation to the panel will continue; all workers in the CWDT have been given realistic timescales for the reviews.

- 1.2 Connected to this reassessment process is a drive to make full use of local provision with an expectation that children with disabilities are maintained with appropriate support within their families and communities. Full use of local resources is central to this as is the early identification of need and effective early help support, which is being further developed and re-shaped in Walsall. Positive progress has been made with the establishing of Early Help posts in preventative services. In addition, the Bluebells unit is currently operating well under full capacity; it is a well resourced, recently built provision that should always be fully considered before external residential options are sought. A further route for potential budget reduction is through the re-tendering process for short breaks that will be commencing imminently.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

The required savings coincide with the introduction of the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms as detailed in the Children and Families Act 2014 and implemented from September 2014. The reforms place a statutory responsibility on Local Authorities to improve outcomes for children with SEND. The key principles are co-production and personalisation; therefore the Local Authority is required to work in full partnership with children and families to devise packages of support that will effectively meet needs. There is an emphasis on families being given opportunity to manage the support through personal budgets and direct payments. Engaging with families in line with these principles whilst making significant budget cuts will be challenging. Parental expectations are high. However, the four year programme of savings recognises that the benefits can be progressively realised, especially as parents and children increasingly recognise that we can work in partnership with them to meet the same aims more efficiently and that this is not simply about a 25% reduction in the availability of provision.

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Implementation of these budget reductions means that the Corporate Plan priority of “improving learning and life chances for children and young people” will be achieved in different ways. Support for families at an early stage and well targeted use of short breaks should improve life quality for children with complex needs/disabilities and will also deliver the third priority on the corporate plan in that better use of local services will increase the inclusivity of the local community.

2.2 **Customers**

Children and their families are likely to be anxious about proposals to change/reduce support services so it will be imperative that changes are dealt with openly and sensitively. Early help and universal services are available to support children with disabilities and their families. Where needs are most acute the statutory context does require the Local Authority to provide a level of specialist intervention and support.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

The plan will depend on the availability of good quality assessments of need and there will therefore be no impact on the number of social work staff employed. Some short breaks care is provided by council employees. We expect that savings will be achieved by more efficient use of these resources rather than reductions in it. For example, Bluebells currently operates at around 50% occupancy. The intention would be to significantly improve this as an alternative to funding alternative provision, not the other way round. As the programme of change proceeds and unfolds the situation may potentially change, but at this stage it is not dependent on any staffing reductions.

2.4 Partners

Although already included under the “customers” heading, our principal partners are parents and they are key to our success in this venture. Other partners include Early Help services and commissioned short break providers. Their interests and the impacts on them will vary and will require good communication and careful management.

2.5 Economic Implications

There is some potential for these proposals to alter the market for short breaks provision. There is the potential for returning some service provision from other Local Authorities back in to Walsall, which could be beneficial to the local economy.

2.6 Environmental Implications

None are predicted.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Effectively targeted support will contribute to improving health and well being for children with special needs and disabilities and their families.

2.8 Other Council Services

The commissioned services noted above will be considered through the tendering process. The Bluebells unit will be reviewed in terms of effectiveness.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 There is a potential impact on children and families if there are significant reductions in either the quantity or quality of short break provision. This could lead to unmet need. If not managed well this could lead to increases in the issues that the provision is intended to prevent, including harm to children and/or family breakdown. That in turn could lead to the need for responses that are significantly more costly than the savings derived from reducing short breaks. There is the potential for an increasing number of complaints or legal challenges from parents where they do not feel needs are being met or where services are reduced from what they have become accustomed to receive.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

- 4.1 Independently of these budget proposals, the Local Offer for disabled children (as required by recent legal changes) will need to be published in November

2014. For that purpose, the forthcoming period will require us to engage with partners and others about threshold criteria for short breaks provision and a linked matrix assessment approach. It will therefore afford us with a natural point for consultation and feedback from parents/carers and families.

5. **Legal Implications**

See 2.2 and 3.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 The short breaks service is one that specifically addresses the needs of disabled children and their families. Any change to it therefore falls on a disadvantaged group. Beyond that there is no expectation of this leading to any potential impact on other groups. We will be explicitly aware of impacts as we develop the detail of the changes to be introduced.

Draft Proposal – reference 17: Children’s taxi budget

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£67,000	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 To reduce the budget and promote either:
- Independent travel where possible by young people
 - Carers to transport children to and from school, contact with their birth family and to recreational activities.
 - Where it becomes apparent that the use of a taxi is required that these arrangements are reviewed on a monthly basis.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

- 2.1 Children’s Services Care plans can require the use of taxis to transport children to school, contact with their birth family members or to recreational activities. Taxis are often required where carers have caring responsibilities to more than one child and those children are attending different schools different contact arrangements or different recreational activities in different parts of the Borough. The opportunity for children and young people to partake in learning and social opportunities is integral and there are no proposals for these to reduce.

Carers are expected to transport children wherever possible either with their own transport or by using public transport. There are incidences whereby carers do not drive and to exclude carers who do not drive from our overall recruitment drive would reduce the numbers of available placements. If carers don’t drive, the expectation will be that they use public transport where

possible and feasible to do so, to ensure that children attend school, contact and recreational activities as required. Where carers don't drive and they have more than one child to transport to different parts of the Borough, the use of taxis may be required and these proposals will not mean that a taxi will not be provided in the appropriate circumstances.

The service currently has a number of carers who have a variation of approval in place to accommodate more children in foster care placements; this is because of the growing number of Looked after Children and is an alternative to children being placed in independent fostering or residential placements. Whilst the increase in variations to maximise internal capacity is positive, it also increases the likelihood of taxi arrangements being needed to enable carers to manage the responsibilities of caring for more than one or two children.

This saving plan will not discriminate against carers, children or young people where it is clear taxis are required. It will focus on reducing taxis for those carers where it is safe and appropriate to consider alternative methods of transport.

Foster carers have been advised by their supervising social workers that all on-going taxi arrangements are under review. All taxi arrangements currently in place or any new arrangements will now be required on a monthly basis. No formal consultation has yet taken place with carers.

2.2 Customers

Children and young people and their carers will be encouraged to travel independently where it is safe and appropriate to do so. A programme of independent travel training will be in place to support children and young people in being able to travel independently. This will be managed in partnership with schools.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

Local Authority and commissioned carers will need to have a flexible approach to the transportation of children.

2.4 Partners

No foreseen impact on partners.

2.5 Economic Implications

As a result of the review of taxi arrangements for children and young people, Walsall could potentially see a reduction in its foster carer pool and an increase in independent fostering or residential placements.

Walsall will need to review its overall payment scheme to foster carers to ensure that carers are not lost from Walsall to other fostering agencies.

2.6 Environmental Implications

The increased use of sustainable public transport arrangements will have a positive impact on the local environment.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

Independent travel arrangements should only be used for children and young people where it is safe and appropriate to do so and where there will be no long-term detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the family or carer.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

Other than the implications for the fostering and adoption service and the independent travel training programme, no other Council Services are involved in the proposal nor is it expected that they will be affected.

3. **Associated Risks**

3.1 The transition from having a taxi provided to alternative transport arrangements will need to be managed proportionally to avoid the risk of carers being unable to continue to look after children, become dissatisfied and make a decision not to foster in Walsall.

3.2 An increase in the numbers of children not attending or missing activities/contact/appointments

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

4.1 A carer consultation event and an event for providers will take place in the Autumn.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this proposal

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 An initial screening will be undertaken and equality impact assessment will be completed as appropriate for this savings proposal.

Draft Proposal – reference 22: Children's Centre Services

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£1,350,000	£500,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

1.1 Reduction in Children's Centres to align service with need. Phase 1 sees a reduction of 5 centres and in Phase 2 (Sept 2015) a further 7 centres will close based on the following drivers for change:

- Increased targeting to those children and families with greatest need

- Integrated partnership model with partners such as Public Health and Early years childcare providers so they can play a greater role in the delivery of universal services, enabling children centre workers to focus more of their work on children and families in most need
 - Shifting resources from a buildings focus to needs led outreach service and locality based delivery model.
 - An affordable model that delivers statutory required Children Centre services
 - Shift from provider to enabler of childcare and from subsidised to self sustaining model prioritising the delivery of sessional 2 year old provision for 40% most disadvantaged.
- 1.2 It is proposed that delivery of Walsall's statutory requirement to provide sufficient and appropriate Children's Centre services will be implemented through a redesigned model that targets Walsall's most vulnerable under 5 year olds and their families. To better target resources it is proposed to close centre buildings in areas with the lowest levels of deprivation. It is also proposed to close centres on school based sites, enabling those buildings to be used to deliver the Local Authority's statutory requirement to provide sufficient sessional childcare to eligible 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds.
- 1.3 It is proposed to deliver the required savings by reducing staff numbers and building revenue costs.
- 1.4 Following the proposed closure of some buildings, a redesigned service will comprise a small number of Children Centre Hubs in areas of greatest need that will outreach across the borough to children and families that need access to the services.
- 1.5 It is proposed to further develop partnership working with Public Health, Schools and Early years childcare providers so they play a greater role in the delivery of universal services to all children and families. The transition of Health Visiting and the expansion of education entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds over recent years mean that schools, nurseries and childcare settings are better placed to provide early support to an increasing number of children. Prior to expansion of this entitlement, Children's Centres were central to the delivery of early learning, particularly for vulnerable families, much of which is now delivered in a different way.
- 1.6 It is proposed to expand services provided by Walsall Family Information service as part of the redesigned outreach service. This will ensure that standard universal services are accessible and taken up by all families through effective advice, information and signposting services. Greater use of the internet and social media will be developed to improve access to support and information.
- 1.7 It is proposed to target the following services, identified in Walsall's Early Help Strategy and Health and Well Being Strategy at those families in greatest need:
- Support in pregnancy

- Breastfeeding support
- Support to play and communicate with young children
- Support to manage behaviour and set routines
- Support to promote healthy weaning / healthy eating
- Brief interventions to support smoking cessation and smoke free homes
- Sexual health advice and signposting
- Early Education
- Bookstart
- Play and Stay
- Parenting Support
- Child development support
- Money management
- SEN support
- Family Learning
- Employment and Training Advice and Support
- Parenting programmes

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

This proposal aims to target resource in the first years of life to support the delivery of two Corporate Plan priorities specifically ‘improving learning and life chances for children and young people’ and ‘improving health and well being’

2.2 **Customers**

Customers will see and experience a change in how services are delivered. With less centre buildings there will be an increasing emphasis on the use of community venues as outreach facilities to run groups and activities.

Families that access daycare provision in Children’s Centres will be consulted about a shift to sessional childcare and change in management of childcare either with schools managing and leading early education or private and voluntary sector providing services in areas where places are needed.

Health Visitors will have an increased role in the delivery of advice, support and information to families and the Family Information Service will provide high quality information about childcare, family learning and activities across the Borough.

Parents will be supported and helped to volunteer to run ‘play and stays’ and local groups and rather than providing services as a local authority more emphasis will be placed on referring to voluntary organisations and community groups, the development of which will be supported.

Service delivery will be targeted at families with under 5’s with greatest need. Family support, parenting and behaviour support will be provided at ‘Hubs’ in areas of greatest need and via outreach to venues within communities and through home visits.

Families with older children will have a reduced service from a redesigned Children Centre resource. Instead early help and support will be delivered by a range of agencies and organisations with lead professionals identified who have most contact with families. This could be, for example, school staff, health workers, youth workers or housing support workers.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

To deliver the level of savings proposed in phase 1 and 2, it is estimated that 54 FTE children centre posts will be deleted, with a corresponding number of staff redundancies.

In addition, the proposed shift from provider to enabler of childcare and from a subsidised model of childcare to self sustaining model, will result in the deletion of some children centre childcare posts. The number estimated is 15.

Both will form part of a separate consultation with those staff affected.

2.4 Partners

The Council recognises the positive work carried out by partners to improve life chances and outcomes for children and their families. Delivery of this proposal will rely heavily on a multiagency, multi professional approach with greater delivery and hands on support from health visitors and early help lead professionals across the partnership.

Schools with Children Centre buildings on site will also be afforded the opportunity to expand early education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds by expanding services into space currently accommodating children centre staff and services.

2.5 Economic Implications

The level of reduction in staff numbers is likely to have some economic impact.

2.6 Environmental Implications

None.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The council has a statutory duty to promote health and wellbeing and this proposal aims to create a redesigned integrated service that better targets services at the highest level of need. This will improve the well being of young children and reduce inequalities between young children across the Borough

2.8 Other Council Services

The proposal will impact on Children's Social Care, Schools and Health who refer families with over 5's for support from Early Help staff within Children Centres.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 The proposal relies on an integrated approach to future delivery of children centre services. There are a number of risks related to the proposal including refund of Government capital grants if take up from partners is not secured.

Intended outcomes not achieved, not meeting regulatory frameworks, partners and key agencies do not commit to arrangements for more integrated working which may impact negatively on the ambition to integrate and drive outcomes up and associated costs down, adverse media coverage and damage to the reputation of the council and likely disruption to families as they adjust to a targeted delivery model.

These risks will be managed and mitigated by ensuring robust consultation, communication strategy and commissioning processes are in place with an increased focus on partnership working and community development.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

4.1 The Childcare Act 2006 and related guidance identifies that Local Authorities have a statutory requirement to consult service users, partners and local communities about any proposal that will significantly change how Children Centre services are delivered; formal consultation will begin in November 2014 to determine:

- If the proposed redesigned service meets legal requirement to provide sufficient children centre services to meet needs
- Whether alternate options exist (that meet need and budget proposal) and should be considered
- Which services should be prioritised in the new model of delivery for Children's Centres
- How best the new model can ensure that services are accessible and deliverable, particularly to families in greatest need.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 These proposals have the following legal implications:

- Duty to provide sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need, although the Authority retains the autonomy and flexibility to determine how services are delivered.
- Duty to consult on any changes or proposals to close – changes to Children's Centres are subject to public and stakeholder consultation as set out in statutory guidance and the Childcare Act 2006 which requires consultation before closing or making significant change.
- Capital Claw back: Where there has been an investment in building utilising Children Centre grant, a capital claw back may apply if the building is not used to provide services for children. It is anticipated that clawback will be limited by working with partner to deliver services for children from buildings that may close as Children's Centres.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 An initial screening has been undertaken and an equality impact assessment completed as appropriate for this draft savings proposal, which has been assessed by the council's equalities team.

Draft Proposal – reference 25: Reduce non-traded service: Access & Attendance Team (within Access and Achievement Service)

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
-	£89,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 The core (non-traded) part of the Access and Attendance Team's work relates to Local Authority statutory functions, for example, Elective Home Education (EHE), prosecutions for school non-attendance, ensuring school's compliance with exclusions legislation, registration regulations and child employment legislation. The delivery of the Local Authority's statutory functions are not affected by this proposal.
- 1.2 In addition, there are elements of service delivery which are not statutory, for example the staff acting as Lead Professional for Early Help role, provision of a full time Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to the council's Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) and contribution to other multi agency Forums.
- 1.3 The proposal will reshape the service delivered by the Access and Attendance team. This will include reducing the delivery of some aspects of the service that are not statutory requirements and generating more income for the service through greater traded service with Schools and Academies. Areas of the service to be considered for trading with schools and generating income would include specialist support for exclusion and re-integration, support for Early Help, reintegrating children into mainstream school and support for Academies at exclusion hearings. Income will be generated through extending traded services. The costs of issuing and administering penalty notices will be found from penalty notice fines.
- 1.4 Consideration will be given to run the Behaviour and Attendance Service as a 'Social Enterprise' with income through a traded service and being commissioned by the Local Authority to deliver statutory services.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

Some services that (as noted in 1.3 above) are currently provided to schools at no costs, which fall outside of Local Authority statutory requirement, will need to be paid for by schools or will not be provided at the current level or at all.

2.1 Corporate Plan

Priorities impacted will be the following.

- Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities
- Improving learning and life children for children and young people

There will be greater responsibility on Schools and Academies to contribute directly to deliver these objectives of the Corporate Plan in the areas where central services will be reduced or not provided.

2.2 Customers

Local Authority statutory functions to Schools and Academies for access and attendance will be delivered appropriately. Schools and Academies will be offered the opportunity to purchase a range of non-statutory services, some of which are currently provided at no direct cost. As customers of the Council, Schools and Academies will be able to influence and direct the delivery of services in a positive way to ensure that they meet their needs. Schools and Academies will need to use more of their own budget to pay for services currently paid for by the Council.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

The staffing implications will be determined by the level of traded income from schools and level of fees paid for commissioned services. Up to seven full-time equivalent (fte) posts could be at risk.

2.4 Partners

Implications for Schools and Academies as noted above.

2.5 Economic Implications

None.

2.6 Environmental Implications

None.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The council's statutory duty to promote health and wellbeing has been considered.

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

There is a potential risk that permanent exclusions will increase due to schools not being able to provide Early Help work for children and young people most at risk. This risk will be mitigated by working with schools and Academies to develop and access inclusion strategy which will secure the commitment and expectations of Heads and Governors to make direct provision or secure suitable alternative provision for children and young people at risk of exclusion.

The potential for challenge and complaint may increase because the Local Authority will have a limited expertise for Schools and Academies regarding exclusion processes if they do not buy the traded service. This risk will be mitigated through the roll out of school to school support and sector led improvement and the provision of a high quality and effective traded service that school and Academies will buy into.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**
Staffing and stakeholder consultation will take place.
5. **Legal Implications**
None.
6. **Equality Implications**
6.1 This has commenced for organisational change and policies, procedures and services.

Draft Proposal - reference 27: Children's SEN School Assisted Transport and School Bus Passes

Estimated Net Saving				
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	Implementation cost
£20,000	£75,000	£100,000	£100,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**
 - 1.1 Reduce expenditure on school bus passes, restrict eligibility for Special Educational Needs (SEN pupils) assisted transport and promote more independent travel training for children with Special Needs.
 - 1.2 It is proposed that discretionary concessions for faith transport and bus passes will cease from 1st September 2015 and only that required by statutory guidance will be provided
 - 1.3 Consideration will be given where a motability car has been provided for the benefit of the pupil and this will be taken into account in determining any transport requirement from 1st September 2015.
 - 1.4 Remove all respite travel, and respite travel after school and after school activities, journeys where they involve an additional cost.
 - 1.5 To increase concessionary fare mileage limit for 8 to 11 years of age from 2 miles to 3 miles.
 - 1.6 Clarification and implementation of current policy where parents who choose a SEN school out of borough, whether or not agreed by Tribunal, will not receive free transport to school and back.
 - 1.7 All proposals will apply to new applications for School year 15-16, subject to Cabinet approval of the new policy.
 - 1.8 It is proposed to introduce the changes in a phased way and those children who had the discretionary funding in school year 2014/15 will continue to receive it until the end of year 11.

- 1.9 The proposals are implemented by school year so in any financial year the savings in the first year will be part year, then in following years it will become full year.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Restricting bus passes and travel to SEN schools could impact on the ability to meet the Corporate Plan priority of 'improving learning and life chances for children and young people'.

2.2 **Customers**

Currently the majority of faith school discretionary bus passes are provided to pupils attending two main Catholic Secondary Schools based in Walsall and Out of Borough Catholic Schools (340) and a few (5) attend a Church of England school. This will save £63k by 2018/19, profiled as £15k in year 1, a further £16k in year 2

The proposal to increase concessionary fare mileage limit for 8 to 11 years of age from 2 miles to 3 miles will currently impact on no children

For SEN pupils:

1. ceasing out of borough transport will affect approximately 11 pupils and savings profile is £14k in year 2
2. cease respite travel £35k in year 2

2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

There are no staffing implications.

2.4 **Partners**

Potential impact on local schools and health services if parents do not choose to send children out of borough, and so remain in Walsall, if travel is not paid by the councils. Further impact on possible reduction in use of respite care provided in Walsall by council and independent sector providers.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

There may be implications for bus companies if there is a reduction in demand for bus passes and local taxi companies and transport operators if parents stop choosing out of borough SEN schools or travel to respite care. Phased application of the policy will mitigate against impact.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

There may be an increase in parents taking children to school in their own cars.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

Children may need to walk to school more often which can bring health benefits.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

There could be an increase in admissions to SEN schools within the borough for SEN pupils and non-faith schools if partners choose to stop sending children to faith schools if bus passes are removed.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 The possible risk is that parents who have previously benefited from the current policy will be disadvantaged in the selection of their children's school.
- 3.2 There is a possible additional financial burden on families with 2 or more siblings where one child continues to receive free transport to a school and the younger sibling does not under new rules.
- 3.3 There is a risk of adverse publicity against the local authority by affected parents and interest groups. The implication of not removing discretionary concessions may open the opportunity for other "religions or beliefs" led schools to request equal treatment or concessionary support at a significant cost.
- 3.4 The key risk to delivering savings on this budget is that if 'demand' grows for SEN travel (more children are assessed as needing specialist SEN schooling) then the savings will be reduced

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Consultation will take place during November 2014 and a Cabinet report seeking approval to the proposed policy changes will be in February 2015.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Sections 508B and 508C of the Act place a duty on local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary to facilitate a child's attendance at school. The policy proposals do not affect the authorities' adherence to the statutory obligations.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 This policy will remove existing inequalities that non faith schools do not receive free transport and bring faith educated children in line with all other children educated within Walsall. An EqlA is currently being completed.

Draft Proposal – reference 30: Walsall Youth Support Services - Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£1,000, 000	£40,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

Reduction in Year 1 budget for targeted careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) that focuses on work with vulnerable groups and young people most at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). We will be able to meet our statutory requirements, monitoring and reporting on destination outcomes and providing support to looked after children / care leavers, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and to provide support to other vulnerable groups (teenage mums and young offenders) and some support to NEET young people and those at risk of becoming NEET.

There will be a reduction in the current number of personal advisers supporting this area of work.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

This budget reduction will have a direct impact on corporate priorities particularly:

- Economic development, employment and improving employability
- Improving learning and life children for children and young people

A reduction in the numbers of personal advisers will have an impact on the number of young people who are NEET and those whose destination are not known and could impact on the levels of Youth Unemployment.

2.2 Customers

A reduction at the level proposed could have an impact on the levels of 'not known' and NEET young people, and potentially on the levels of youth unemployment. We would however be able to meet our minimum statutory requirements, monitoring and reporting on destination outcomes and providing support to LAC/care leavers, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and to provide support to other vulnerable groups (teenage mums and young offenders) and some support to NEET young people.

A new way of working with, and by schools/academies and other providers, will be explored and developed in order to ensure IAG continues. Schools/academies will ensure work more collaboratively as a 14-19/25 group

will strategically coordinate a pathway approach to ensure all statutory requirements are met.

The statutory provision for IAG changed in 2012 where universal provision was transferred to schools. The Council continues to have a statutory duty (under the Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008), for tracking and assisting the most vulnerable young people.

Local authorities retain their statutory duty (under section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008), to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-19 and for those aged 20-24 with a learning difficulty. A local authority should make available to young people aged 13-19 and to those aged 20-24 with a learning disability assessment, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training. In addition, the Education and Skills Act 2008 places two new duties on local authorities from June 2013 with regard to 16-17 year olds in relation to the raising of the participation age:

- to promote the effective participation in education or training of young people covered by the duty to participate; and
- to have arrangements in place to identify those who are not participating and re-engage them back into learning.

To fulfil these duties local authorities are required to track all young people participation successfully through the local CCIS. Local authorities are expected to meet any costs incurred in the delivery of these duties from their overall budgets. These statutory requirements will be met.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

It is given the proposed level of related budget reduction that if all staff currently employed by Prospects are TUPE'd across at least 50% will be put 'at risk' of redundancy.

2.4 Partners

Secondary schools will be involved in reshaping a new service where schools and academies will take more ownership of the delivery model.

The school IAG universal offer is purchased from Prospects by 12 schools in Walsall.

2.5 Economic Implications

There could be adverse impact on the numbers of unemployed young people and those not in education, employment or training.

2.6 Environmental Implications

No direct environmental implications.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

There is the potential of an increase in poor health and well being outcomes related to any increase in the levels of NEET and unemployed young people.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

There will be impact on the support currently offered by personal advisers to the Walsall Works programme.

3. **Associated Risks**

- Reputation risk with schools that will see a reduction in provision. To mitigate will seek to involve and communicate early with schools on the proposed changes and to support schools in fully understanding their universal careers IAG responsibilities. We will also support schools and work with Prospects to ensure related and current 'traded services' continue to be offered for the universal element
- Risk of increase in the numbers of NEET young people and unemployed young people and a significant increase in the numbers of young people whose destinations are unknown. To mitigate we will work to ensure continuity of arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of young people's destinations. Personal advisers will focus their activity on the most vulnerable young people to help mitigate the adverse impact of the budget reductions and to ensure we meet at least our minimum statutory requirements.. We will work with schools as outlined above and seek to gain added value by locating personal advisers within the existing IYPSS targeted youth support arrangements.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

This will be developed from 29th November 2014. A full staff meeting has been scheduled for 7th November 2014 and conference for young people arranged for 6th November 2014 to discuss all related budget proposals.

5. **Legal Implications**

We will need to meet our related statutory requirements as outlined above

6. **Equality Implications**

An EIA is underway that will consider all policy, procedures and service changes.

Draft Proposal – reference 31: Walsall Youth Support Services - Targeted Youth Work

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£490,000	£580,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

Reduce the budget and re-shape the direct delivery and commissioned delivery of Targeted Youth Work.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be a reduction in the provision of some youth work activity and a review of where the direct youth work is delivered and prioritised across the Borough. This will reduce the ability to support a range of activity which could impact adversely on Corporate priorities. This includes:

- Reduction of support to some disaffected and disengaged young people
- Increase in youth related crime and an adverse impact on community cohesion and prevent agenda
- Poorer outcomes for young people if there is a reduction in the range of targeted personal and social development programmes

2.2 **Customers**

Youth Work in Walsall is focused on personal and social development and reducing youth related Anti-Social Behaviour. It is delivered via young people's centres, detached and mobile work and holiday programmes via projects and residential activity.

It is delivered through teams of full-time and part-time staff based in the 6 areas of the Borough and increasingly focussed on agreed areas of most need within those areas

The 2006 Education and Inspection Act (Section 507B) gave Local Authorities in England a duty to "so far as reasonably practicable, secure for qualifying young persons in the authority's area access to:

- a. sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and
- b. sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities."

This duty is underpinned by the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education under Section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which relates to local authorities' duty to secure services and

activities for young people aged 13 to 19, and those with learning difficulties to age 24, to improve their well-being, as defined in Subsection 13.

This includes youth work and other services and activities that: offer young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of sports, arts, music and other activities, through which they can develop a strong sense of belonging, socialise safely with their peers, enjoy social mixing, experience spending time with older people, and develop relationships with adults they trust.

Support the personal and social development of young people through which they build the capabilities they need for learning, work, and the transition to adulthood – communication, confidence, creativity, managing feelings, planning and problem solving, relationships and leadership, and resilience and determination; improve young people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

About half of the current directly delivered or commissioned targeted youth work in Walsall and support for the corresponding number of young people will continue to be delivered as a result of these proposals. The impact of this will be managed by delivering services in the parts of the Borough that have most need and where the impact of Youth Services on the young people and their families and communities is greatest.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

The draft proposal includes the loss of 14 posts in 2015/16 with 2-4 potential redundancies and the loss of 10-12 posts (full time equivalent) in 2016/17 and corresponding number of potential redundancies.

2.4 Partners

The proposals give an opportunity for partners to work in a more integrated and co-ordinated way. If this partnership working cannot be achieved there could be an adverse impact on the work of other partners within the area partnerships, schools and the Police, for example in work on reducing youth related Anti-social Behaviour.

2.5 Economic Implications

No direct economic implications are anticipated.

2.6 Environmental Implications

No direct environmental implications are anticipated aside from a potential increase in youth related Anti-Social Behaviour, for example involving graffiti and vandalism.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

A reduction in Youth Provision could have an impact on the health and well being, for example mental health and health outcomes, adverse pressure on teenage pregnancy rates and potential alcohol and substance misuse.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

Community Safety Services could be adversely effected particularly the Anti-Social Behaviour team and activity.

The Council will seek to work more extensively and in partnership with other organisations including Schools, Police, Health, Commissioning and Voluntary Organisations and the business sector to deliver services in a different way which is less reliant on Council funding.

3. **Associated Risks**

There is a risk that youth related crime and youth related ASB increases as resources reduce and the ability to support both the community cohesion and prevent agendas diminishes.

There is a reputational risk with partners and providers (particularly related to the probable termination and/or reduction in value of contracts) as some youth provision is closed.

To mitigate these risks a whole service redesign will be implemented, focusing resources even further on the areas of absolute geographical and thematic priority need; use of maintained buildings will be reviewed to help reduce costs and to increase further the flexibility and responsiveness of service delivery; areas of effective practice will be retained and developed; young people will be fully engaged in decision making to help shape and deliver reduced services; partnership arrangements will be reviewed to ensure that effective and mature partnership relationships continue and the youth offer will be reviewed and rigorously differentiated based on need.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

Residents and communities have repeatedly prioritised things to do and places to go for young people and the involvement of youth related anti-social behaviour as a priority.

Over 3,000 young people contributed to the pre-October corporate budget consultation process and a young person conference is scheduled for 6th November.

A staff conference to consider all related proposals is scheduled for 7th November 2014.

5. **Legal Implications**

No direct legal implications. The Council's statutory requirements will continue be met.

6. **Equality Implications**

An EIA is underway that will consider all policy, procedures and service changes.

Draft Proposal – reference 32: Walsall Youth Support Services Targeted Youth Support

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£86, 000	£54, 000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

Reduce budget for Targeted Youth Support (TYS) - Year 1 - end contracts with Aspire counselling and Sandwell Young carers and reduce value of contract with NACRO. Year 2 - review IYPSS elements of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) contract and undertake YYS team review of posts and grades. Some of the above functions to be integrated into the role of Youth Workers and /or YYS staff in Year 1 (support to young carers) and Year 2 (CSE preventative).

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

There is likely to be some impact on the ability to deliver the Corporate priorities;

- Improving health and well being
- Improving learning and life opportunities for children and young people and particularly Early help support services

2.2 Customers

The YYS team provides 1:1 support to children and young people (8 or 10 – 19 and up to 25 with Learning Needs and Disabilities) where problems are beginning to emerge or where it is felt problems may escalate. Around 170 children and young people are supported at any one time with the aim being to help reduce those entering the youth justice system or becoming Looked After.

Bespoke targeted support is also provided (directly delivered or commissioned) for example young carers, young runaways and those at risk of sexual exploitation.

The statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education under Section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 relates to local authorities' duty to secure services and activities for young people aged 13 to 19, and those with learning difficulties to age 24, to improve their well-being, as defined in Subsection 13.

Local authorities' duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, equality of access for all young people to be positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their well-being. This is broken into a number of sub sections. In relation to YYS: raise young people's aspirations, build their

resilience and inform their decisions – and thereby reduced teenage pregnancy, risky behaviours such as substance issues, and involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

No loss of TYS posts or staff jobs but a review of post grades to take place.

2.4 Partners

Contracts to be ended for Year 1 with providers (Aspire Counselling and Sandwell young carers) and arrangements to be reviewed for the provision of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and related contract functions. This will take place in conjunction with the Walsall Safeguarding Children's Board CSE Committee.

2.5 Economic Implications

No direct economic implications.

2.6 Environmental Implications

No direct environmental implications.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Some implications for level of support to young carers and other vulnerable groups and some potentially negative impact on health and well being outcomes.

2.8 Other Council Services

Links to and impact on Early Help offer, services supporting CSE work (Children's Services, Specialist Services)

3. Associated Risks

Minimal negative impact on outcomes for some vulnerable groups including young carers. To mitigate this impact functions for the support to young carers will be provided in house by youth workers and TYS staff.

We will maximise the use of existing NHS commissioned counselling services to mitigate the ending of the Aspire counselling arrangement and explore the potential for youth workers and TYS staff to undertake missing/return interviews.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

Children and Young People to be involved in re-shaping related services. Young person's conference scheduled for 6th November 2014 and full service staff meeting for 7th November 2014.

5. Legal Implications

No direct legal implications.

6. Equality Implications

An EIA is underway that will consider all policy, procedures and service changes.

Draft Proposal – reference 35: Walsall Youth Support Services - Parent Partnership Service

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£20, 000	£10,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

Parent Partnership Service - Review and reshape service, ensuring appropriate alignments to other Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) activity.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

This saving proposal could negatively impact on the Corporate Priority to 'improve learning and life opportunities for children and young people; but it will be mitigated by increased and better joined up working with other Youth support service colleagues and with SEND related functions and activities.

2.2 Customers

Walsall Parent Partnership Service give free, independent, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs.

They are independent and work closely with the Local Authority, Schools, Health, Social Services, other agencies and the voluntary sector. They offer a variety of opportunities for parents/carers by offering workshops, training and volunteering opportunities to strength the voice of parents/ carers and provide them with the skills and knowledge to support the needs of children, young people and families with SEND.

The Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 introduced a statutory duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to provide Parent Partnership Services (PPS). The revised SEN Code of Practice (2001) that supports the legislation sets out minimum standards for Parent Partnership Service. This duty is enshrined in the Children and Families Act 2014. It covers:

- provision of impartial advice, information and support to all parents/carers of children with SEN;
- a role in ensuring that parents' views are heard and understood, and inform and influence the development of local SEN policy and practice;
- working with schools, LA officers and others to help them develop positive relationships with parents.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

A 'net' deletion of one post with potential for 2 staff to be 'at risk' of redundancy.

2.4 **Partners**

Partners involved on the Parent Partnership Service Steering Group will be involved in shaping future service delivery as will all those who deliver SEND services across the Council and partner organisations, including Health and Education. Schools are a key partner and will continue to be needed to engage in shaping service delivery.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

There are no direct economic implications.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

There are no direct environmental implications.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

Some potential negative impact on the health and well-being of some children and young people which will be mitigated by increased partnership working with other Youth support service colleagues, Health Partners and with SEND related functions and activities.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

The range of SEN/Specialist Children's Services teams will be impacted upon and relevant colleagues will be engaged to help shape the future of the Parent Partnership Service delivery.

3. **Associated Risks**

Some level of reduction in the level of quality and quantity of associated service delivery, but Local Authority statutory requirements will be met. We will seek to mitigate any negative impact during the service review ensuring the provision is more joined up with other related aspects of IYPSS and Children's services, including those areas closest to the SEND agenda.

We will ensure we take full advantage of all modern technology and target resources as effectively as possible to provide information, advice and support for parents. We will continue to engage schools as key partners in a positive relationship arrangement.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

Children and Young People, parents, carers and stakeholders including the Parent Partnership Service steering group to be involved in helping shape the future service.

All service staff meeting scheduled for 7th November and Young people's conference for 6th November to consider all draft service budget reduction proposals.

5. **Legal Implications**

The Council will be required to and will be able to meet its statutory requirements as outlined above under '2.2, Customers'.

6. **Equality Implications**

An EIA is underway that will consider all policy, procedures and service changes.

Draft Proposal – reference 36: Walsall Youth Support Service - Teenage Pregnancy Reduction

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£0	£30, 000	£0

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

Reduce costs and agree with Public Health to the use of public health transformation funding to continue current level of service provision. (A bid has been submitted to the Public Health Transformation Fund – awaiting outcome).

If there is a budget reduction of £30k in overall budget, this will be delivered by revising the Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Strategy and adjusting the level and nature of service activity delivered.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Some negative impact on provision that supports the corporate priority of 'improving health and well being' that may be mitigated through use of Public Health transformation funding.

2.2 **Customers**

Some limited reduction (if not mitigated by use of public health transformation monies) on level of service delivery to either/or teenage mums or those at risk of teenage pregnancy.

2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

No direct impact on employees or staffing.

2.4 **Partners**

We will work with Public Health and NHS colleagues to mitigate the impact on services for Young People. The Children and Young People's Partnership have a key Governance role.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

No direct economic impact.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

No direct environmental implications.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

A limited potential reduction in services for pregnant young women or those at risk of teenage pregnancy if not mitigated through use of Public Health Transformation Funding.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

The direct impact relates to Public Health who the Council we will work with to mitigate any adverse impact from the proposed budget reduction, including to ensure that we are joined up in delivery of sexual health services across the Borough.

3. **Associated Risks**

Limited adverse impact on the levels of teenage pregnancy rates in Walsall. Any potential adverse impact if not mitigated by the support of Public Health transition funding will be by a review of the Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Strategy and increased focus of resources on the most effective interventions and areas of greatest need. A more effective partnership with schools and further integration of activities within IYPSS and Public Health (particularly as regards sexual health services) will also be secured.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

Young people and the Teenage Pregnancy Advisory Board will be engaged to shape future service delivery, including young people at a conference scheduled for 6th November.

5. **Legal Implications**

No direct legal implications. Service delivery is via a formal service level agreement (SLA) with the NHS and all appropriate processes as regards the value of the SLA will be adhered to.

6. **Equality Implications**

An EIA is underway that will consider all policy, procedures and service changes.

PORTFOLIO: COMMUNITY, LEISURE & CULTURE

Summary of services within the portfolio

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

Portfolio Objectives/Outcomes/Purpose

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Financial summary

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

Table 1: Community, Leisure & Culture Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	19.152	16.349	15.234	14.413
Base budget adjustment	(0.326)	(0.289)	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies - <i>see table 2 below</i>	(2.477)	(0.826)	(0.821)	(0.391)
Revised cash limit	16.349	15.234	14.413	14.022

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

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

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

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

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

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

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
47	Area Partnerships – removal of communications budget	0.020	
48	Area Partnerships – removal of 4 Support Officer posts	0.107	
49	Area Partnerships – removal of Area Partnerships Project Officer post	0.047	
50	Community Development – deletion of manager post	0.050	
51	Community Development – reduction in support to Community Associations – removal of building management budgets which support 8 CA's in council owned buildings and a 50% reduction in community grants to voluntary and community sector organisations (Policy)	0.080	0.100
52	Regulatory Services – loss of 2 Trading Standards posts	0.061	
53	Regulatory Services – 65% reduction in administrative support	0.110	
54	Regulatory Services – restructure of Environmental Health, Enforcement and Community Safety Officer roles		0.120
55	Regulatory Services – deletion of posts in Environmental Health	0.030	0.030

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

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

Proposed capital investment

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

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

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

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

- Heritage centre for Walsall
- New Art Gallery building maintenance

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

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

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

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

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

- *Improving learning and life children for children and young people*
 - Activities for children and young people are provided through youth clubs and offer a base for Integrated Youth Services to provide activities

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

There is no direct impact on employees of the council.

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.8 **Other Council Services**

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

3. **Associated Risks**

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An EQiA has been completed.

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

None.

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

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

4. Consultation and customer feedback

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

5. Legal Implications

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

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

6. Equality Implications

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

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Green Spaces and Countryside Management currently cover 63 parks and play areas and 31 countryside sites over a seven day week period including public and bank holidays. The team consists of 18 employees.
- 1.2 The proposal is to remove five posts which would reduce the team by 28%. It will be delivered by removing a vacant senior post, voluntary or compulsory redundancies of the other four posts by April 2015. Other savings include a reduction in community events and activities to achieve a saving of £362,708 in 2015/16, as shown below, with the consequences being:
- Senior Manager – No impact; the post is vacant and the associated work has been incorporated within the remaining resource.
 - Strategic Development Officer – Our ability to manage, develop and implement strategies, procedures and initiatives will be reduced. We will be less able to prepare maintenance and management plans, seek external funding and generate income, liaise with community groups, undertake public consultation and implement and monitor enhancement projects.
 - Park Rangers/Community Liaison Officers – We will be less able to liaise and engage with members of the public, including reduced education to improve recycling and reduce contamination. There will be a reduced Park Ranger presence in parks during evening and weekend periods. We will be able to undertake less environmental enforcement, environmental education and fewer recycling initiatives resulting in less public awareness and appreciation of environmental issues. Our ability to carry out environmental and health education programmes and promote the use of outdoor classrooms and facilities will be also compromised. Liaison with Friends groups and local communities will only be possible on a reactive basis only.
 - Senior Countryside Ranger - The landscape and nature conservation values of green spaces will diminish, with reduced opportunities to assist with voluntary conservation work and we could not offer work experience placements to students. The risk of failing to meet health and safety requirements in respect of, for example, site maintenance and repairing defects will increase but the Council will endeavour to ensure that it continues to meet its statutory obligations. Footpath maintenance and public access to sites may be compromised.
 - Events – Events such as bonfires, Easter egg hunts, fun days, etc will cease.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

- Improving health, including wellbeing and independence for older people

- Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities
- Improving learning and life children for children and young people

There will be a negative impact in terms of:

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

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

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

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.8 **Other Council Services**

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

3. **Associated Risks**

3.1 Associated risks are as follows:

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

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

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

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

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

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

None identified.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

Reduced tractor mowing:

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

Arboretum:

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

Cease all bedding:

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

Reduce grass cutting:

- Increased complaints as a result of longer grass during peak periods and the later commencement of grass cutting.

- Risk of highway hedges infringing sight lines at key junctions although the Council will address any such problems that may arise as a priority.
- May generate complaints from residents e.g. unsightly hedges, litter

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

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

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Clean & Green services undertake all tree maintenance and management in parks, open spaces, highways and town/district centres across the borough. This includes a range of tasks such as tree planting, cyclical maintenance programme, re-active work e.g. storm damage and out of hours' services, sustainable timber management and income generation from log sales.
- 1.2 The tree service covers aspects such as tending to dead, diseased and dangerous trees, good housekeeping through routine pruning and maintenance of tree stock, increasing canopy cover by tree planting initiatives to provide sustainability, and environmental benefits.
- 1.3 The proposal is to reduce tree operations by 23% from 9 front line staff to 7 with effect from 1 April 2015. The overall impact:
- Reduction of the cyclical management programme from the current 4 year cycle to circa 6 year cycle.
 - Potential (although managed) impact on reactive maintenance for storm damage e.g. severe winds, etc.
 - Long term effects on tree management plans and delivery of the council's Urban Forestry Strategy.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

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

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

2.2 Customers

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

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

Operational Team Leader x 1 – potential redundancy process.

2.4 Partners

None.

2.5 Economic Implications

Trees can have a positive impact on the economy through:

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

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

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

2.8 **Other Council Services**

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

3. **Associated Risks**

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

- Reduced inspections will mean less proactive maintenance and more reactive maintenance with the likelihood that there will be an increase of the frequency that trees become damaged, particularly in times of severe

weather. This is likely to lead to an increase in the number of customer complaints due to longer response times with less resource.

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

4. Consultation and customer feedback

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

5. Legal Implications

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

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

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

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

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

Draft Proposal – reference 62: Cease the Outdoor Adventure Service

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 The Outdoor Adventure Service operates two centres: Sneyd Water Activities Centre and Aldridge Airport Outdoor Activities Centre. The service has a particular focus on delivering outdoor adventure for children and young people with disabilities for which it has received a number of regional and national awards. In 2013/14 the service had just under 5,000 attendances engaging with up to 300 disabled young people per month.
- 1.2 The proposal is to remove the operating subsidy from the service. Options for continued service delivery with higher income and lower expenditure levels are currently being explored. At this stage the likely outcome will be:
- The closure of Sneyd Watersports Centre.
 - Supporting schools (especially special schools) to access alternate out-of-borough provision – initial discussions have taken place with EnTrust the Staffordshire County Council/Capita joint-venture that manage Chasewater.

- Relocating the Behaviour Improvement Service (already running at no cost to the Council) to the Aldridge Airport Centre.
- A major reduction in the outdoor adventure activities taking place at Aldridge Airport – focusing solely on those activities that can be delivered on a full cost recovery basis.
- The redundancy of 2 of the staff in the Outdoor Adventure team.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

- **Supporting Business to Thrive and Supporting Local People into Work**
The Outdoor Adventure team currently employs 5 staff – one post will be deleted as a 2014/15 budget saving measure that was deferred for 12 months. Of the remaining 4 it is anticipated that at least 2 will be at risk of redundancy through this proposal.
- **Improving Health and Wellbeing, including Independence for Older People**
The Outdoor Adventure Service offers a service for young people with disabilities, allowing them to achieve a degree of independence they could not otherwise experience.
- **Creating Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Communities – Reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in.**
- **Improving Safeguarding, Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young**
As outlined above, the service provides disabled young people the opportunity for independent activity and achievement they may otherwise never experience.
- **People – Recognising that a person's early years crucially help determine what kind of future they will have**

2.1 **Customers**

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

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

2.2 Employees/Staffing

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

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

2.3 Partners

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

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

2.4 Economic Implications

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

2.5 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications.

2.6 Health and wellbeing implications

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

2.7 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

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

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

Informal consultation is already underway with one alternative provider.

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

Draft Proposal – reference 65: The Closure of Libraries

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

- *Economic development, employment and improving employability*
Libraries play an important role in supporting people into employment by helping and supporting job searches, writing CVs, interview techniques, company information and re-training and up-skilling. By helping to improve literacy and numeracy, they also improve the life chances of young people.

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

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

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

local needs of the communities it serves, both in terms of the stock it has available and the services it offers.

2.3 Employees

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

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

2.4 Partners

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

2.5 Economic Implications

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

2.6 Environmental Implications

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

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

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

2.8 Other Council Services

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

3. **Associated Risks**

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

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

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

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

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

- *Improving learning and life children for children and young people*
The Local History Centre offers an education programme and works with local schools and colleges. It helps children and young people understand the place they live and the drivers for Walsall's development in the past. It also offers courses in family history research as a way of encouraging people to improve their computer skills.

2.2 **Customers**

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

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

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

2.4 **Partners**

None.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

None.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

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

3. **Associated Risks**

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 The service will undertake customer consultation through November.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The collection, preservation and management of archival materials would continue and the Centre would continue to act as a Records Office and the repository of the Council's Archives, although the capacity for pro-active collecting other materials would be reduced. Public access would still be available within the reduced opening hours with professional support and advice for customers
- 5.2 There is a statutory obligation on local authorities under the Local Government Act 1972 to make provision for their own archives.
- 5.3 The Act also requires local authorities to provide access to certain classes of the records which they create. The Local History Centre is designated as a local repository for certain classes of public records (i.e. the records of central government and its local agencies) under the terms of the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967. This includes coroner's records for which the council has to make provision.
- 5.4 The service is also approved by the Master of the Rolls as a place of deposit for manorial and tithe records under the terms of the Law of Property Act 1922 and the Tithe Act 1936, as amended by the Local Government (Records) Act 1962.
- 5.5 The Local Government (Records) Act 1962 empowers local authorities to purchase records, to accept gifts or bequests of records or to accept records on deposit or loan and to make provision for the use of archives. On this basis the council has collected a wide range of records which were given to the council on the understanding that they would be held in trust in perpetuity for the people of Walsall, would be maintained to an agreed standard and would be made available as far as compatible with legislative requirements such as the Data Protection Act. This means that access would be provided to the records.

6. **Equality Implications**

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

Draft Proposal – reference 67: The Closure of Walsall Museum

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Walsall Museum contributes to the council's priorities:

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

2.2 **Customers**

Walsall Museum offers access to the historical and material evidence of the development of Walsall as a borough and how the lives of people and communities have shaped that development. It also continues to collect memories and artefacts showing the continued changes to communities and the emergence of new communities. This access and collecting of historical materials will cease if the Museum closes, meaning that the public will no longer have access to the museum or be able to view its collections. This will include several collections of specific interest: the Hodson Shop collection of working clothes, the Old Hall and Crabtree collections and the Bayards Colts.

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

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

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

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.7 **Other Council Services**

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

3. **Associated Risks**

- The collections evidencing the historical and social development of Walsall will remain in storage and be inaccessible to residents and students.
- Many items are “on loan” from residents who may ask for them to be returned.
- Collecting will cease and many items of historical importance will be lost or destroyed.
- The Heritage Lottery awarded £50,000 towards the refurbishment of the “Changing Face of Walsall” gallery in 2008. The Council will ensure that this saving does not result in some repayment of this grant.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Access to the collections of Walsall Museum will no longer be available to any member of the public.

- 6.2 An equality impact assessment will be completed for this savings proposal and will be assessed by the Equalities Team.

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

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

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

2.2 Customers

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

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

- 2.4 **Partners**
There will be minimal impact on partners. Costa Coffee is able to remain open with access to the Gallery.
- 2.5 **Economic Implications**
None.
- 2.6 **Environmental Implications**
None.
- 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**
None.
- 2.8 **Other Council Services**
None.
- 3. **Associated Risks**
 - 3.1 There may be some adverse criticism of this proposal from customers to the New Art Gallery as it reduces access to the Gallery and its collections.
- 4. **Consultation and customer feedback**
 - 4.1 Consultation will be undertaken with those staff affected and with New Art Gallery customers during the month of November
- 5. **Legal Implications**
 - 5.1 None.
- 6. **Equality Implications**
 - 6.1 A reduction in the opening hours would limit the gallery's availability when visitors and users could attend to view exhibitions and engage in its activities and use its facilities. This would affect all customers and particularly those who are unable to visit until late afternoon and after school.

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

Summary of services within the portfolio

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

Portfolio Objectives/Outcomes/Purpose

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

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

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

Financial summary

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

Table 1: Environment & Transport Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	32.941	31.108	28.709	27.604
Base budget adjustment	(0.280)	(0.324)	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies - <i>see table 2 below</i>	(1.553)	(2.075)	(1.105)	(0.608)
Revised cash limit	31.108	28.709	27.604	26.996

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

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

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

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

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

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

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
76	Willenhall Lane Depot - Reduction in property related costs	0.077	
77	Household Waste Recycling Centre – reduce opening hours to 9am – 5pm and close one additional day at each site per week (Policy)	0.098	
78	Waste Collection (Residual) – amend frequency of residual waste collections from weekly to fortnightly (Policy)		0.532
79	Waste Collection (Garden) – operate for 6 months only between April and September (currently 8 months) (Policy)	0.140	

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
80	Waste Collection (Garden) – introduce charges for garden waste collection service (Policy)		0.310
81	Waste Disposal – reduced costs from the anticipated reduction in waste arisings from proposed changes to waste collection services		0.290
82	Street Cleansing – reduction in 15 front line posts across the town centre and district areas. This would involve the ceasing of the Walsall town centre Gold Standard and moving to a mobile on demand service basis. The frequency of road sweeping will reduce from fortnightly to monthly, district centres changed from fortnightly to 3-4 weekly, barrow routes reduced, graffiti removal and hot washing reduced (Policy)	0.478	
83	Public Conveniences – closure of Pelsall toilets (Policy)	0.012	
84	Fleet Services – reduced vehicles based on service changes outlined above	0.146	0.248
85	Mgmt & Admin – reduction in administration staff	0.026	
86	Urban Traffic Control – shared service with Black Country boroughs	0.040	
87	Highways Maintenance – reduce highways maintenance budget through improved efficiencies (Policy)	0.050	
88	Highways Maintenance – reduce reactive maintenance (Policy)		0.180
89	Highways Maintenance – replacement of revenue funding with capital for some elements of highways maintenance	0.100	0.350
90	Street Nameplates – reduced replacement of road name plates (Policy)	0.010	
91	Minor Improvements – alternate funding for minor improvements e.g. junction improvements	0.040	
92	Parking enforcement – efficiency savings	0.040	
93	Lighting active management – reduce energy costs following Invest to Save invested in LED technology	0.010	
94	Road Safety – more effective use of various existing funding regimes to deliver the road safety service	0.035	
95	Parking Services – increase in charges for staff parking and town centre business (Policy)	0.030	
96	Parking Services – introduction of nominal car parking charge of £1 for 4 hours to assist with ongoing car park maintenance charges in District Centres (Policy)	0.100	
97	Car Parking – reduce maintenance of car parks	0.010	
98	Engineering & Transport – staffing reorganisation	0.025	
99	Highway Development Control – non filling of vacancy	0.045	
100	Drainage & Streams – reduced maintenance. Year 1 is a pilot scheme (Policy)	0.018	0.072

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
101	Road Markings – reduced maintenance. Year 1 is a pilot scheme (Policy)	0.007	0.029
102	Traffic Signs – reduced maintenance. Year 1 is a pilot scheme (Policy)	0.016	0.064
	Total	1.553	2.075

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

Proposed capital investment

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

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

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

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

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

Draft Proposal – reference 77: Reduction in HWRC Opening Times

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

2.2 Customers

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

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

2.4 Partners

There is no impact on partners.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

No impact.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

No impact.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

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

3. **Associated Risks**

Risk of challenge or counter offer from SITA.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

Draft Proposal – reference 78: Alternate Weekly Residual Waste Collections

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

2.2 Customers

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

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

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

2.4 Partners

No impact on partners.

2.5 Economic Implications

None.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Risk of increased fly tipping.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

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

2.8 Other Council Services

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

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

3. **Associated Risks**

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 An EqlA has been prepared.

Draft savings proposal – reference 79: Garden Waste Collection

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

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

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

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

2.2 Customers

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

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

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

2.4 Partners

None.

2.5 Economic Implications

None.

2.6 Environmental Implications

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

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

None.

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

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

4. Consultation and customer feedback

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

5. Legal Implications

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

6. Equality Implications

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

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

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Unlike the recycling and rubbish collection service, the council does not have a statutory obligation to make a separate collection of garden waste. Over 100 councils have switched from a free to a charged garden waste collection service. Some of these councils have subsequently returned to free collections.

- 1.2 Switching to a charged garden waste service reduces both participation in the service and the amount of material collected for recycling. This will impact on the recycling rate and disposal costs.
- 1.3 The estimated annual charge for this service is £28 although this is subject to change depending on the circumstances at the time of its introduction. The savings would come from reduced staff numbers and reduced vehicle numbers. It may or may not lead to a fall in disposal costs as waste that is not collected at the kerbside is likely to be displaced to the HWRC.
- 1.4 A charged service will be demand-led and will change year on year. Currently, approximately 13000 tonnes of garden waste is collected from the kerbside each year. This makes a significant contribution to the recycling rate. It is envisaged that residents who wish to use the service will sign up to an annual service agreement. The council will incur costs to administer this process and this cost is reflected in the identified saving. Clean and Green Services would look to promote home composting in tandem with introducing the charged service.
- 1.5 This proposal affects only the garden waste service. Other proposed changes to waste services are discussed in the following papers;
- HWRC – reduced opening times
 - Garden waste collections – shorter seasonal working
 - Alternate weekly collection of residual waste
- This proposal needs to be considered in relation to other proposed savings listed above, as all the services are inter-related and changing one service will have a knock-on effect to another service.
- 1.6 A change in the council's waste policy is required. The free garden waste service would cease in Autumn 2015 (subject to a separate saving to reduce the seasonal operation hours). Promotion of the charged service would start in Spring 2016 in readiness to start the new charged service on 1st April 2016.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

2.2 Customers

The garden waste collection service is not a statutory function.

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

- Be unpopular with residents.

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

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

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

2.4 **Partners**

No implications.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

None.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

None.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

Other council Services affected include:

Public Protection – increase enforcement activity

Legal – annual service level agreement with residents.

Finance - processing payments for annual agreements.

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

3. **Associated Risks**

- Increased fly tipping of garden waste and unwanted garden waste bins.
- Residents who do not use the charged service will still generate garden waste. Some residents will take waste to the HWRC but other residents are likely to put their garden waste into the rubbish bin, therefore increasing the cost of disposal.

- Some residents may put garden waste in the recycling bin leading to higher contamination rates, increased council costs and contractual issues with recycling contractors.
- Some councils who have introduced charged garden waste services have seen unprecedented queues at their Household Waste Recycling Centres. The queues have been difficult and costly to manage and subject to bad publicity.
- Failure to meet statutory recycling targets.
- Increased pressure on Household Waste Recycling Centres (see proposed reduction in HWRC opening hours)

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

An EqlA has been prepared.

Draft Proposal - Reference 82: Reduction in Street Cleansing Service

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Clean & Green Services undertake all street cleansing operations on Council land across the borough. This includes a range of tasks such as footway sweeping, channel sweeping, litter picking, emptying of litter bins, street washing and graffiti removal. The service area deploys 58 FTE staff. It is a non-statutory service.
- 1.2 The proposal is to reduce street cleansing frequencies and activities across the borough, including the removal of both dedicated resources from Walsall Town centre and agency cover for holidays and sickness. This will be achieved by:

- **A reduction of 15 Environmental Operatives**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Large Mechanical Sweeper**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

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

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

The saving will affect the following posts:

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

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

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

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

None identified.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

The risks with this savings option will include:

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

- Increased risk of anti-social activity such as fly tipping
- Reduced ability to respond within 48 hours of reported fly tips.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An EqIA has been prepared for this saving.

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

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

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Not applicable.

2.2 **Customers**

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

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

Not applicable.

2.4 Partners

Not applicable.

2.5 Economic Implications

Not applicable.

2.6 Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Not applicable.

2.8 Other Council Services

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

3. Associated Risks

None.

4. Consultation and customer feedback

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

5. Legal Implications

Not applicable.

6. Equality Implications

An EqIA has been prepared.

Draft Proposal – reference 88: Reduce Reactive Maintenance Budget

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

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

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 Highway maintenance claims have the potential to place the council at significant financial risk. If the council is unable to carry out as many emergency repairs as it currently does it will inevitably be placed at greater

risk of increased risk and insurance claims and the costs associated with dealing with claims matters.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

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

2.2 **Customers**

Maintaining the highway in a reasonably safe condition is an explicit statutory function placed on the council under the Highways Act 1980. This budget reduction will mean that the time taken to provide and replace street name

plates will be significantly increased. The service receives frequent requests for street name plates from elderly and less mobile residents where they are disturbed by misdirected emergency services, deliveries and late night taxis.

2.3 Employees/Staffing

None.

2.4 Partners

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

2.5 Economic Implications

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

2.6 Environmental Implications

None.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

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

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

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

4. Consultation and customer feedback

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

5. Legal Implications

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

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

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

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

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 This proposal will have no impact on staff holding a parking permit issued under the national blue badge scheme. Such staff will be exempt from the proposed parking charges.

- 6.2 Given this proposal is for a fixed increase irrespective of the salary grade of staff, it may have a disproportionate impact on those employed at lower grades. However, even when accounting for the proposed increase in monthly fee, this will still provide significant savings when compared to normal pay and display parking charges that would otherwise apply.

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

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

Implementation of this proposal will assist with securing the longer term ongoing provision of car parking spaces in the district centres. Local businesses rely upon these facilities to help them thrive and continue to provide employment for local people.

2.2 Customers

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

None.

2.4 Partners

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

2.5 Economic Implications

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

2.6 Environmental Implications

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

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

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

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

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

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

4. Consultation and customer feedback

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

5. Legal Implications

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

6. Equality Implications

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

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

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

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

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

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

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

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

2.2 Customers

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

2.3 Employees/Staffing

None.

2.4 Partners

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

2.5 Economic Implications

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

2.6 Environmental Implications

None.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

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

2.8 Other Council Services

None.

3. Associated Risks

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

4. Consultation and customer feedback

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

5. Legal Implications

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

6. Equality Implications

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

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

None.

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 Potential for non compliance with Traffic Signs Road General Direction Regulations which specify the standard and requirements of all DfT approved road markings and signs on the highway.
- 3.2 For all potential fatalities and life threatening incidents on the highway the road safety team and police must formally investigate and, as part of the site inspection, must detail in the report the state of repair and compliance of all necessary conditions and signage in accordance with regulations.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

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

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

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

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

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

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

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

2.2 **Customers**

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

2.3 **Employees/Staffing**

None.

2.4 **Partners**

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

2.5 **Economic Implications**

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

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

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

2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

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

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

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

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

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Equality Implications**

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

PORTFOLIO: HEALTH

Summary of services within the portfolio

Health Improvement:

- Sexual health services - contraception
- Sexual health services - advice, prevention and promotion
- NHS health check programme
- Programmes and services to reduce levels of adult obesity
- Programmes and services to reduce levels of childhood obesity
- National child measurement programme
- Nutrition initiatives including promotion of breastfeeding
- Programmes and services to increase adult physical activity levels
- Programmes and services to increase children's physical activity levels
- Adult Drug misuse - prevention and treatment programmes
- Adult Alcohol misuse - prevention and treatment programmes
- Drug and alcohol prevention and treatment services – young people
- Smoking and tobacco - Stop smoking services and interventions
- Smoking and tobacco - Wider tobacco control
- Children 5–19 public health programmes including the School Nursing Service
- Health and work, including the Healthy Workplace Programme
- Programmes to prevent accidents including falls prevention
- Public mental health promotion
- Dental public health promotion
- Water fluoridation

Health Protection:

- Sexual health services – Sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment
- Local authority role in health protection
- Local authority role in surveillance and control of infectious disease
- Public health aspects of environmental hazards protection
- Health emergency planning including cold weather and heat wave planning

Healthcare Public Health:

- Interventions to identify and reduce risk of disease by screening
- Actions to mitigate poor physical and mental health
- Actions to reduce long term disability and loss of independence
- Specialist public health advice
- Improving primary care

General prevention activities

- Community safety, violence prevention and social exclusion
- Local initiatives to reduce excess deaths from seasonal mortality
- Population level interventions to reduce and prevent birth defects (supporting role)
- Wider determinants of health

Information and Intelligence

- Population needs assessment and strategy

Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose

Walsall council receives a ring fenced grant from the Department of Health, via Public Health England (PHE), to enable the council to discharge its statutory duty to achieve population level improvements in public health. In 2014/15 the council received an allocation of £15.8 million.

The Public Health grant is provided to the council to discharge its responsibilities to:

- Improve significantly the health and wellbeing of local populations
- Carry out health protection and health improvement functions delegated from the Secretary of State
- Reduce health inequalities across the life course, including within hard to reach groups
- Ensure the provision of population healthcare advice.

Our key priorities, informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and outlined in the Walsall Health and Wellbeing Strategy, are to:

1. Improve health and wellbeing in Walsall
2. Reduce health inequalities
3. Give every child the best start in life
4. Improve health and wellbeing through healthy lifestyles: Making 'healthier choices easier'
5. Reduce the burden of preventable disease, disability and death
6. Promote healthy ageing and independent living.

In 2014/15, £1.2M of the Public Health grant has been released into a Transformation Fund, through a process of disinvestment in some existing Public Health services. Money released in this way will be reinvested across council service areas which will be commissioned to deliver Public Health outcomes.

The Public Health Transformation Fund aims to:

- Support the delivery of priority local health and wellbeing activities
- Facilitate collaborative and integrated approaches to population health and wellbeing
- Improve value for money by evaluating the outcomes of activities and the associated impact on Walsall residents, the Council and its partners.
- Leverage wider public health benefits across the far larger spend of Walsall Council.

Financial summary

Confirmation has been received that the 2015/16 grant allocation will not be subject to a financial uplift, therefore we expect this to be £15.8m. We await confirmation of the following three years allocation.

There are no capital schemes proposed for this portfolio.

Table 1 details the savings and efficiencies for the Health Portfolio for both 2015/16 and 2016/17 and table 2, the proposed areas for investment.

Table 1: Proposed savings and efficiencies

Programme Area	Potential Savings 2015/16 £	Potential Savings 2016/17 £	What is the savings option?	Details of the option	Impact on the customer / purpose / risks	Mitigations
PH1 : Sexual Health: Contraception services, prevention, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).	53,000	70,000	Reduce contract values for some elements of sexual health activity	Rationalisation of services providing HIV prevention activity, reduction of Chlamydia screening and other outreach activity. Redesign of service to provide more integrated delivery.	Increased STI rates, and teenage conceptions. Reduced capacity to diagnose HIV at an early treatable stage of infection. Some prevention work will be lost and reduced ability to manage demand for expensive mandated open access Genitourinary Medicine services. Increased costs to the NHS and other partners.	Outreach activity to be included in the contracts for core sexual health services
PH2 : Drugs and Alcohol: Prevention and treatment services for alcohol and drug misuse	390,141	70,000	Reduce expenditure through a retendering exercise and a reducing year by year contract values.	Reduce capacity of the service through tendering a redesigned service with a single provider agency to maximise economies of scale. Optimise the transfer of patients into primary care to reduce drug costs.	Reduced prevention activity, increased waiting times, potential impact upon safeguarding for vulnerable children and adults, negative impact on crime and community safety, increased costs to NHS with increased hospital admissions and potential increase in blood-borne viruses and drug and alcohol related overdose and deaths.	Seek funding through Safer Walsall Partnerships for crime reduction elements of the service, although this could create additional referrals to a service operating at full capacity.
PH3 : 0 to 5 Healthy Child Programme: Promotion of breastfeeding and programmes to reduce maternal obesity	45,000	0	Reduce contract value, reduce staffing and scope of service	Reduce capacity of whole service Reduce cost of specialist midwife Decommission the Maternal and Early Years service.	Impact on infant mortality and morbidity. Possible negative impact on link between midwifery service and breastfeeding support service. Breastfeeding is protective against obesity which may rise as a result. Decrease in Healthy Start vitamins in pregnancy delivered (currently very low). Less support for Maternal obesity in pregnancy which increases costs of care. Groups that will notice the difference: Parents and carers, Children's Centres.	Increased role of community midwives and health visitors with an increase in the role of volunteer peer supporters.

Programme Area	Potential Savings 2015/16 £	Potential Savings 2016/17 £	What is the savings option?	Details of the option	Impact on the customer / purpose / risks	Mitigations
PH4 : 5 to 19 Healthy Child Programme: Walsall school nursing service this is the public health nursing service for children aged 5 to 19 years	100,000	0	Reduce contract value with loss of 1 WTE (currently 14 school nurses against a recommended 19 school nurses) and reduced scope of service	Reduce capacity of the service through tendering a redesigned service with a single provider agency.	Increased longer term costs. Teenage pregnancy increases, emotional health and wellbeing decreases leading to increase in antisocial behaviour, more parenting support needed, increase in numbers of looked after children increasing, less support for behaviour management. Less support for care leavers and school staff. Reduction in parenting courses offered. Elements of Public Health prevention work on sex and relationships education (SRE), support for governors, support for special educational needs and disabilities and work with young carers may be reduced.	New provider may demonstrate efficiency savings and reduced overheads so be able to deliver a more comprehensive service.
PH5 : Healthy Weight/Physical activity. These services help people to maintain a healthy weight through lifestyle support	155,000	45,000	Decommission /reduce investment in adult weight management programmes	Remodelling the service through procurement should enable us to provide a service to the same number of patients (albeit at lower level of intervention) within the reduced financial envelope	Decommission specialist weight management services. Impact on residents who are very overweight and have not been able to lose weight though less intensive programmes. Impact on NHS England as may lead to increase in demand for bariatric surgery and other health services.	As the service is being remodelled service availability for adults would continue, although there would be reduced access to more intensive programmes. However, there will be access to new less intensive services. Increased targeting of services would help to mitigate some of the risks.

Programme Area	Potential Savings 2015/16 £	Potential Savings 2016/17 £	What is the savings option?	Details of the option	Impact on the customer / purpose / risks	Mitigations
PH6 : Health Trainers. These services help people to develop healthier behaviour and lifestyles in their own communities	62,000	20,000	Reduce contract value.	Restrict support to certain subgroups e.g. those at highest risk of long term conditions. Negotiate a lower payment for the existing service.	A limit on the support offered may not achieve the results anticipated from the programme. Negotiating a lower payment will result in a more limited service.	Increased targeting of services on vulnerable groups will maximise reduction of health inequalities.
PH7 : Work and Health. These services aim to improve the health of the working age population	30,000	10,000	Reduce investment in healthy workplace programme support. Generate income through charging for Healthy Workplace Programme.	Use Council Public Health, HR and Environmental Health support to supplement the healthy workplace programme. Charge companies who do not meet inclusion criteria for access to healthy workplace programme or individual elements depending on the needs of the company.	Reduced capacity through healthy workplace programme to target hard to reach groups with poor health outcomes. Less resource to support small and medium sized enterprises Reduced capacity to develop structures and provide targeted support to residents who are out of work due to ill health.	Transformation funding used to increase Council HR and Health and Safety support to the programme. Costs of programme will need to be covered by local companies that do not meet inclusion criteria.
PH8 : Local Authority Role In Health Protection These services protect the population from infections including those acquired in hospitals	134,000	0	Disinvestment from Hospital Infection Control	This can be done in 2015/16 following discussion with the current providers and action to mitigate the impact of disinvestment in 2015/16 if necessary	Reduced levers on hospital infection control services with impact on wider community, care homes and primary care	Walsall Healthcare Trust to absorb costs of service.
PH9 : Population Mental Health - These services aim to improve the emotional wellbeing of the population	133,000	0	Reduce investment in population mental health programmes.	Decommission two contracts relating to population mental health	Extremely limited population mental health initiatives, impact on mental wellbeing and suicide rates	Explore opportunities to align with social care through Public Health Transformation Funding. Roll out of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing initiative

Programme Area	Potential Savings 2015/16 £	Potential Savings 2016/17 £	What is the savings option?	Details of the option	Impact on the customer / purpose / risks	Mitigations
PH10 : NHS Health Checks programme: The NHS Health Check programme is provided to 40 to 74 year olds to help prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia	12,000	5,000	Reduce budget for NHS Health Checks programme	Achieve savings from I.T. software and programme support	Minimal	n/a
PH11 : Employees and overheads	90,000	30,000	Reduce staffing and spend on departmental overheads	Vacancy management / replacement of vacant posts at lower grades	Reduced expertise in the department, recruitment and retention adversely affected	Increase matrix working.
Total	1,204,141	250,000				

Table 2 - Proposed areas for Transformation Fund investment

Investment Area	Service Area
Teenage Pregnancy	IYPSS
Early Intervention/Children's Centres	Early Intervention and Family Support
Healthy Schools Programme	School Improvement
Air Quality and Respiratory Health	Pollution Control
Healthy Takeaway Awards, Workplace Health and Safety, Tobacco Control	Environmental Health
Sports development	Sports and Leisure Services
Health and work	Regeneration, Employment and Skills
Occupational Health and work	Human Resources
Health through warmth	Housing, money, home, jobs
Community allotments/ranger service	Green Spaces
Possible areas identified including drug rehabilitation, community development, mental health, advocacy older people	Social Care

PORTFOLIO: PERSONNEL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

Summary of services within the portfolio

Summary of services within the portfolio

Human Resources

- HR Direct – recruitment, payroll, pensions and transactional HR services
- HR Specialist Services – HR advisors (directorates support), health & safety, HR policy and job evaluation, wellbeing and equality and learning and development
- Payroll and HR advice to schools

Legal and Democratic Services

- Legal Services providing legal advice and dealing with litigation
- Constitutional advice
- Administration of the council's formal decision-making processes
- Elections and electoral registration

Procurement

- Advice, guidance and practical support to enable effective procurement across the organisation

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- ICT Services and Support
- Print & Design

Programme Delivery and Governance

- Business Information and Intelligence, Business Analysis, service re-design
- Systems thinking training
- Programme and Project Management
- Governance Reviews - (of strategic programmes or projects)
- Freedom of Information Act/Data Protection Act - (co-ordination and management of all enquiries)
- Customer Complaints - statutory - (Social Care and Children's) and non-statutory
- Ombudsman - (co-ordination and management of issues and relationship with Ombudsman)
- Policy co-ordination - (maintenance of strategies and policy database, production and distribution of monthly policy round-up and legislation tracker, ad hoc support to policy development)
- Strategic Planning (production of Corporate Plan and contribution to other strategic documents)

Internal Audit

- An assurance service that provides an independent and objective opinion to the organisation on the control environment
- Advisory and related client services which are carried out to improve services and to add value, including the impact of proposed policy initiatives, programmes and projects as well as emerging risks
- Prevention, detection and investigation of fraud and corruption; and other irregularity

Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose

Human resources

- Human Resources will work with local community partners to promote 'local jobs for local people'; Continue to engage and involve staff; Reduce sickness absence within WMBC; Support a healthy workforce. Continue to manage the TUPE transfers in and out of services. Successful implementation of Pay & Grading; Successful restructuring and realignment of services

Legal and Democratic services

- Support the councillors to do the best job they can for the citizens and businesses of Walsall.
- Enable the citizens and businesses of Walsall to trust the integrity of the Council and what it does and provide the legal services that they require.

Procurement

- To help my council procure the best value for money.

ICT

- To allow me to access council services that are efficient at a time and place that I choose.

Programme Delivery and Governance

- To listen to what I tell the council and help change the council to focus on me.

Internal audit

- Enable the Council to be financially stable, well governed, making the best use of money the Council is given, and providing the citizens and businesses of Walsall the services they require.

Re-designing support services

We are taking a customer-focused approach to our work to re-design support services to make them fit for purpose for our future organisation. Our work to understand purpose from the customer perspective and to understand customer demand over the last few months has led to two working purposes for our support services; 'Help me when I need it – right, fast and simple' and 'Spend my council tax money wisely'.

Our intention is to continue to work to understand at a much greater level of detail the demand from our customers going forwards so that we can empower our staff and re-design our services to help to deliver the best possible public services. From what we know already, we expect underlying principles of our continued re-design to include:

- Increasing integration of support services with public service delivery – to ensure real end-to-end service delivery for the customers and businesses of Walsall
- Collaborative, multi-functional advice and support easily obtained.
- Ready access for our customers to the help and advice that they need at first point of contact – not having to speak to several people in order to get to the help that is needed.
- Our staff having optimum flexibility to give customers the help they need in the way they need it
- Effective use of ICT to assist our customers where it can be shown to meet their needs and add real value for them, not for the sake of 'cheapness' (which would be huge false economy).

Clearly, the needs from support services will be derived very largely from the changes made to direct public service delivery and so a collaborative approach will be needed with all executive directors to bring forward complementary savings options going forwards.

Financial summary

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

Table 1: Personnel & Business Support Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	15.674	14.040	12.632	10.383
Base budget adjustment	(0.183)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies -- <i>see table 2 below</i>	(1.451)	(1.408)	(2.249)	(1.586)
Revised cash limit	14.040	12.632	10.383	8.797

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

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

Capital investment for the Personnel & Business Support Portfolio over the next four years is £0.374m. Full details of capital investment are shown in table 3.

2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Total
0.127	0.214	0.033	0.000	0.374

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

Table 2 details the revenue saving and efficiencies for the Personnel & Business Support Portfolio for both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
103	Corporate Management Team – delete support post and reduction in staffing and non staffing budget in the Chief Executive's office	0.023	
104	Democratic Services – reduce Members Special Responsibility allowances	0.092	
105	Democratic Services – improve efficiency of arrangements for support to Councillors	0.036	
106	Democratic Services – reduce food and drink provided for meetings at the Council House	0.009	
107	Democratic Services – reduce the number of scrutiny panels and the frequency of meetings		0.050
108	Legal Services – remove one lawyer post	0.048	
109	Legal Services – reduce the administrative support across the service	0.035	
110	Legal Services - Increase legal traded services fees by 5%	0.006	
111	Human Resources – cease participation in Recruitability (Policy)	0.048	

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
112	Human Resources – review and restructure of management and staff posts across the service	0.202	0.121
113	Human Resources – review of contracts including Employee Assistance and Physiotherapy, and restructure of management and administrative posts across the service		0.175
114	Human Resources – Cease the Sickness Absence Reporting Centre (from 01 October 15)	0.024	0.024
115	Human Resources – reduce the Occupational Health service	0.042	
116	Human Resources – reduce frequency of Disclosure and Barring Service re-checks	0.018	
117	Human Resources – Cease the Jobs Go Public contract given we have suitable alternative arrangements in place to advertise job vacancies	0.016	
118	Human Resources – reduce Trade Union facility time (UNITE, GMB, UNISON)		0.080
119	Internal Audit – restructure within the service	0.103	
120	Internal Audit – reduce non staff budgets	0.017	
121	Programme Delivery – downsize the programme delivery and governance team	0.220	0.079
122	Programme Delivery – reduce training budgets	0.002	
123	ICT – downsize management and staffing	0.296	
124	ICT – reduce and re-commission services in ICT through contract adjustment and terminations	0.158	
125	ICT – revise delivery of ICT to make increased use of web based access to systems		0.250
126	ICT – cease use of the current central time recording system across the council	0.056	
127	Resources Wide – review of management and administrative support		0.629
	Total	1.451	1.408

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

Proposed capital investment

Table 3 details the capital investment for the Personnel & Business Support Portfolio over the next four years.

Table 3: Personnel & Business Support Portfolio Capital Investment 2015/16 – 2018/19					
Capital Project	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Source of funding
Email enhancements		0.050			Council
ICT essential growth – server capacity		0.046			Council
Essential resilience for internet facing servers		0.046			Council
Essential upgrade to Blackberry Server	0.017				Council
Essential upgrades to Windows 2003 server	0.110				Council
Wi-Fi in public council buildings		0.025	0.033		Council
Improving internet capacity and resilience		0.047			Council
Total	0.127	0.214	0.033	0.000	

Draft Proposal – reference 111: Cease participation in Recruit-Ability

Estimated net saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£47,502	-	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

1.1 Background

Recruit-Ability is a positive action programme that aims to further support the employment prospects of disabled people. Recruit-Ability opportunities are only open to people with a disability. Each placement is for up to 12 months with each person employed on a fixed term contract. The scheme aims to provide work experience and the opportunity to study for a qualification and is one of a number of provisions the Council currently has which supports equal opportunity and in particular people with a disability in the recruitment and selection process.

1.2 Savings

This proposal concerns the removal of the available budget of £47,502 per annum and the closure of the Recruit-Ability programme.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

No Implications.

2.2 Customers

No implications.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

Employees – The removal of the Recruit-Ability budget will mean that 6 part time, 12 months placements will not be available from April 2015. The Council however will continue to fully support people with a disability in all of its recruitment activity and display the two tick symbol on all job adverts. This guarantees people with a

disability an interview where their application meets the minimum specification for the job.

2.4 **Partners**

No Implications.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

No Implications.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

No Implications.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

No Implications.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

No Implications.

3. **Associated Risks**

The council is currently under represented with regards to disabled employees, compared to the number of disabled people in the Walsall borough. Removal of the budget will reduce the specific opportunities on offer to disabled people and may also reduce the overall representative figure of people with a disability across the council's workforce. The council however continue to take positive action for disabled applicants and provide a guaranteed interview scheme for all jobs. This provision will continue to positively support applications from disabled applicants.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

Consultation took place last year with Walsall's Disability Forum when the budget was reduced from £90k to £45k per annum and whilst they were not supportive of last year's budget cuts they were supportive of the fact that we continued to offer the same number of places but on a part time basis. Further consultation will take place before a decision is made.

5. **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications.

6. **Equality Implications**

Walsall Council is committed to a robust equal opportunities recruitment policy and all advertisements display the two tick symbol. This means that people with a disability, who submit an application which meets the minimum criteria for the job, are guaranteed an interview. The Council will continue to offer support through schemes that support its citizens including young people, the long term unemployed and people with disabilities.

An equality impact assessment form has been completed for this savings proposal, which has been assessed by the equalities team.

PORTFOLIO: REGENERATION

Summary of services within the portfolio

- Strategic Regeneration
- Development & Delivery
- Planning Services
- Property Services

Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose

“Create the conditions for sustained economic growth by supporting the growth of business and jobs in Walsall, ensuring Walsall people have the right skills and environment to make the most of opportunities”

Manage our assets well

- Stimulate private investment
- Support service delivery
- Reduce costs & liabilities

Support our town & district centres

- Improve footfall
- Increase investment
- Improve customer experience

Create the right sites for business

- Attract new business
- Retain existing business
- Raise external reputation of Walsall
- Create future supply
- Business friendly council

Support business growth

- Understand & respond to new & existing business needs
- Retain & increase jobs
- Promote Walsall to new investors

Address unemployment

- Reduce worklessness & resulting demands
- Raise aspirations
- Increase spending & demand in Walsall economy

Improve skills

- Improve chances of getting & keeping a job
- Improve future resilience & employment flexibility

New & better homes

- Respond to housing need
- Improve existing homes
- Create new homes

Note: - Delivery of the above activities (all or in part) rely on our continued ability to attract external resources, either through grants or income for services delivered. Cuts in mainstream budgets together with the austerity measures planned by the Government will have adverse effects on our ability to maintain delivery of services. Where known these have been factored into this plan.

Financial summary

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

Table 1: Regeneration Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	5.808	4.174	3.720	3.271
Base budget adjustment	(0.145)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies - <i>see table 2 below</i>	(1.489)	(0.454)	(0.449)	(0.148)
Revised cash limit	4.174	3.720	3.271	3.123

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

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

Capital investment for the Regeneration Portfolio over the next four years is £12.002. Full details of capital investment are shown in table 3.

2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Total £m
7.942	1.420	1.320	1.320	12.002

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

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

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
128	Development & Delivery – Black Country Archaeological Service cease payment of Walsall's share of funding post	0.007	
129	Development & Delivery – removal of vacant post	0.036	
130	Planning & Building Control – remove vacant LLPG post	0.026	
131	Planning & Building Control – reduce directorate management hub support	0.025	
132	Planning & Building Control – reduce stationary budget	0.015	
133	Planning & Building Control – increase planning fee income target	0.080	
134	Property Services – merge facilities and project management teams to remove duplication, and change delivery to procure single contract to deliver £945k in total over the 3 years from 2015/16	0.801	0.094
135	Property Services – additional shop rental income	0.050	
136	Property Services - Cleaning / Caretaking and Curators – market testing review of consumables	0.003	

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
137	Property Services – restructure and reposition Asset Management team	0.142	0.064
138	Regeneration Management – replace Black Country Consortium payment with alternate external funds	0.144	
139	Regeneration Management – efficiencies through revised service management and remodelling	0.043	0.229
140	Regeneration Management – develop alternative income streams to cover costs	0.072	0.067
141	Strategic Regeneration – replacement of revenue funding with other funding	0.045	
	Total	1.489	0.454

Proposed capital investment

Table 3 details the capital investment for the Regeneration Portfolio over the next four years.

Table 3: Regeneration Portfolio Capital Investment 2015/16 – 2018/19					
Capital Project	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Source of funding
Walsall Market	1.750				Council
Shop Maintenance		0.120	0.120	0.120	Council
Regenerating Walsall		0.200	0.200	0.200	Council
Walsall Town Centre Public Realm Improvements		1.100	1.000	1.000	Council
Integrated Transport Block / Local Transport Plan	1.247				External
Darlaston Strategic Development Area Access Project	4.945				External
Total	7.942	1.420	1.320	1.320	

In addition to the above, there are schemes under development within the Enterprise Zone and wider Darlaston areas to unlock employment sites, together with innovative proposals, and also a project covering combined heat and power for central council buildings. These will be subject to a separate business case to be reported to Cabinet, and will be included in the latest update of the draft capital programme when confirmed. Where practical, a payback agreement should be implemented, whereby projects should, wherever possible be self funded over the life of the project and beyond.

A separate allocation has been set aside for projects of a health and safety nature. This can be drawn upon as required in year for asbestos removal, statutory testing, legionella, fire risk, condition surveys and any demolition works as required.

A reserve list of schemes is also identified to start should funds become available in year which includes the following in regeneration - regenerating Walsall (further provision in 2015/16).

PORTFOLIO: SOCIAL CARE**Summary of services within the portfolio**

The portfolio covers social care services for adults and older people with physical disability, sensory impairment, learning difficulties, mental health issues, substance misuse, autism, HIV/AIDS. It also includes the responsibility for 'Money, Home, Job' (Revenues, Benefits, Housing and Customer Services)

Social Care

- Response, information, advice and signposting
- Preventative services, community alarms, tele-care, tele-healthcare
- Enablement and re-ablement
- Assessment and review
- Resource allocation and support planning
- Safeguarding of vulnerable adults
- Whole sector workforce planning and development
- Commissioning of services including residential, nursing, day care, home care, extra care (incl. Housing 21), supporting people and the learning disability and integrated community equipment pooled budgets
- Shaping and development of adult social care market
- Quality assurance of services
- Direct service provision: reablement, response, day and respite care, adult placements
- Housing related support for vulnerable groups

Money, Home, Job

- Advice, customer application support, assessment, revision, payment, recovery of overpayments, customer queries, complaints and appeals of the following benefits and reliefs:-
 - Housing benefit
 - Council tax reduction scheme
 - Discretionary housing payments
 - Free school meals
- Disabled Persons' Parking permits (Blue Badge)
- The Crisis Support scheme
- The prevention, detection and investigation of benefit fraud and error, including the application of sanctions.
- Council tax - billing, collection, recovery and enforcement
- Non domestic rates (business rates) - billing, collection, recovery and enforcement
- Welfare rights– income maximisation, debt advice
- Supported Housing and homelessness
- Housing Standards and Improvements
- The First Stop Shop at the Civic Centre
- The Council's contact centre and switchboard
- Banking hall – corporate income collection service and social care payments

Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose

Social Care

Our main aim is to assist people to live independent lives. To that end our prime interventions will be looking at ways in which a person can be supported to recover from the crisis that they presented to the Council when they wanted help. For some people this can be achieved through a bit of help by signposting to a community or voluntary sector organisation; for others they may need more help and may need a period of help to support recovery, reablement, rehabilitation or recuperation. We will focus on the outcomes from our interventions that assist with reducing or delaying the need for longer term help.

The broad aims are:

- To help citizens to access universal services
- To assist citizens to access mainstream services
- To provide access to a range of community based health and social care services
- To prevent citizens becoming socially excluded and needing more intensive and costly health and social care services by providing a range of practical services close to home
- To reduce dependence on services, and support independence and self directed support
- To commission good quality services that provide real choices for citizens to achieve their outcomes

Money, Home, Job

The purpose of this service is: 'Help me with my money, my home, my job'.

The service helps people to become or remain independent and assists them with extra help when they fall into crisis and helps them to get back on their feet.

The service increasingly integrates what used to be stand-alone services so that the resident or business that needs help from the council receives a customer-focused service that addresses all of their needs in a streamlined way, making best use of public money in the round.

Financial summary

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

Table 1: Social Care Portfolio Cash limit 2015/16 – 2018/19				
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Opening cash limit	70.676	65.934	59.780	55.475
Base budget adjustment	(1.053)	0.050	0.137	0.000
Less: Savings / efficiencies - <i>see table 2 below</i>	(3.689)	(6.204)	(4.442)	(3.044)
Revised cash limit	65.934	59.780	55.475	52.431

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

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

Capital investment for Social Care Portfolio over the next four years is £13.445m. Full details of investment are shown in table 3.

2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Total £m
3.579	3.302	3.282	3.282	13.445

Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

Table 2 details the revenue saving and efficiencies for Social Care Portfolio for both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies			
Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
142	Access, Assessment & Care Management – redesign of care and support through the assessment and reviews of older people and those with physical disabilities using promotion of independence methods	1.684	2.421
143	Access, Assessment & Care Management – Learning Disabilities long term care placement review and resettlement efficiencies	0.200	0.400
144	Access, Assessment & Care Management – joint funded learning disability placements review and resettlement efficiencies – relating to people funded in care homes for whom a long term resettlement or therapeutic change can improve outcomes at lower cost		0.500
145	Access, Assessment & Care Management – reduction in administration costs through the implementation of the Mosaic IT system and related automation of invoices, billing, and financial transactions which will result in efficiencies		0.400
146	Commissioning – Memory Clinic funding – the CCG has agreed to a change of funding source for what is now a NHS service	0.200	
147	Commissioning – Housing 21 contract – further review of the extra care sheltered housing contract to find ways to switch to personal budgets and reduce overall cost (Policy)		0.250
148	Commissioning – review of service level agreements with third party organisations – redesign the prevention and diversion impact of investment in the voluntary sector, targeted at most cost effective user led outcomes		0.150
149	Mental Health – expand resettlement and care reviews of those in residential care and high cost packages, with promotion of independence support	0.400	

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
150	Mental Health – Section 75 review of partnership jointly with CCG with a view to more effective outcomes and targeted commissioning (Policy)		0.200
151	Commissioning – removal of recruitability payments to sheltered employment users - continue withdrawal of the subsidy for apprenticeships whilst expanding support to volunteering, vocational and training opportunities in partnership with colleges (Policy)	0.104	
152	Provider – Fallings Heath respite care - review and replace residential provision with a wider range of alternatives, subject to consultation. No carers will receive a reduction	0.260	0.020
153	Provider – review and redesign day opportunities that produce cost effective non buildings based options using Goscote as a " hub" for these users and staff (Policy)		0.517
154	Provider – Links to Work - replace current service with a redesigned service that supports users to access volunteering, vocational and training opportunities in partnership with colleges and employers (Policy)		0.300
155	Strategic Development – review community alarm and related services in line with the new charging policy, and the implementation of the Care Act. Proposals would require consultation and procurement follow on (Policy)		0.570
156	Strategic Development – withdraw subsidy to apprenticeships, whilst revising the vocational support, access to work placements and volunteering with LINKS to Work which will also be revised	0.271	
157	Strategic Development – review of Programme Office following the implementation of the Care Act and Children and Families Act, and related changes, leading to a reduced need for support with changes managed with the service	0.100	0.100
158	Strategic Development – review of Paris & Performance team following the implementation of the MOSAIC customer relationship management IT system and associated systems, leading to reduced due to new automated support functions	0.050	0.050
159	Money, Home, Job - review and restructure across the service	0.398	0.158
160	Money, Home, Job – cease the bus service that provides a mobile first stop shop (Policy)	0.022	
161	Money, Home, Job – provide more efficient ways for residents to pay in or collect money from the council		0.072
162	Money, Home, Job – improve the arrangements for residents contacting the council by telephone		0.096
	Total	3.689	6.204

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

Proposed capital investment

Table 3 details the capital investment for Social Care Portfolio over the next four years.

Table 3: Social Care Portfolio Capital Investment 2015/16 – 2018/19					
Capital Project	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Source of funding
Preventative Adaptations & Supporting Independence	0.250	0.760	0.750	0.750	Council
Health through Warmth	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	Council
Aids & Adaptations	0.750	0.760	0.750	0.750	Council
Disabled Facilities Grant	1.632	1.632	1.632	1.632	External
Social Care Community Capacity Grant	0.797				External
Total	3.579	3.302	3.282	3.282	

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

- Preventative adaptations & Supporting Independence (additional allocation)
- Aids & Adaptations (additional allocation)

Draft Proposal – reference 147: Housing and Care 21 – Extra Care Services

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
-	£250,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Further review of the extra-care sheltered housing contract during 2015/16 to find ways to switch to personal budgets and reduce overall costs by £250,000 during 2016/17 out of an annual sum of approximately £4.5 million.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Allowing people to receive their service via a personal budget will help them to make decisions about how they can retain as much independence as possible within the physical environment of the extra care courts which are designed to support a community of residents in each scheme to take part in a choice of activities during the day.

2.2 **Customers**

Residents of the five extra care schemes run by Housing and Care 21.

2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

The staff are directly employed by Housing and Care 21 and further partnership work is needed before any direct impact on staffing levels can be identified.

2.4 **Partners**

The service is delivered by Housing and Care 21 under contract with the council.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

These services are specific to the contract with Housing and Care 21 so there is no significant impact on other parts of the Walsall economy.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

No direct implications.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The development of the extra care schemes has been successful in providing older people with an alternative to having to go in to a care home and thus maintaining a higher level of independence in line with the Health and Well Being Strategy.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

No implications for other council services.

3. **Associated Risks**

3.1 Reducing the extent to which individuals are supported to lead independent lives in the extra care courts may raise the risk of them having to enter residential care funded by the council at greater cost.

3.2 Some people (older, disabled, whose first language is not English) may find the personalisation agenda difficult to understand and may struggle to take on the additional responsibilities that go with having greater freedom and choice so the council will continue to offer a traditional approach to service delivery.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

4.1 The process of supporting people to receive a personal budget is handled via the individual assessment and care management process.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The council will need to mutually agree these changes with Housing and Care21 with whom there is an ongoing positive working relationship.

5.2 If the variation to the Housing21 contract is deemed to be a material variation, then there is a risk of challenge that the council has not procured the varied contract in the correct way. Legal services will advise as to whether the proposed variation is likely to be deemed material.

6. **Equality Implications**

An initial screening form has been completed. A full EQIA will be completed as part of the review.

Draft Proposal – reference 150: Dudley Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
-	£200,000	-

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 There will be a review of the current S75 partnership agreement between Walsall Council and Dudley Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust for the provision of mental health social care services. A number of social care staff (e.g. social workers and care co-ordinators) are hosted within the Trust so as to support improved joint working with health staff such as nurses and psychiatrists. In this way people with mental health problems are supported more effectively to recover from mental illness.
- 1.2 It is planned that the review and any subsequent changes to practice and management will deliver savings of £200k in 2016/17

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

2.1 Corporate Plan

Supporting people to overcome mental health problems is an important part of promoting health and well-being and helping people to sustain their employment.

2.2 Customers

People with mental health problems who receive support from Dudley Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust.

2.3 Employees / Staffing

Currently there is 39 FTE's council staff employed with this partnership arrangement. There are potential efficiencies in re-integration of Council staff with other Social Care functions.

2.4 Partners

The service is provided in partnership with Dudley Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust.

2.5 Economic Implications

There no economic implications other than the impact on staff.

2.6 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications of this change.

2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The focus will be primarily on statutory responsibilities to assess and meet the needs of people with mental health problems, thus promoting early recovery.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

The review will examine opportunities for further integration of adult social care services with children's services.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 A full risk analysis will be undertaken that assesses implications on staffing levels and the impact on the effectiveness of meeting needs. This saving could lead to a different relationship with the Trust as a result of aligning and defining roles in a different way.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 A full consultation with key patient and carer representative group will be undertaken as part of the review. All key partner agencies will be included.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 A full assessment of any risk arising out of legal duty and risk of challenge following implementation of this proposal will be undertaken as part of the review.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An initial EqIA has been undertaken. A full EqIA will be conducted as part of the review.

Draft Proposal – references 151, 153 and 154: Employment and day time support services for people with a learning disability (consolidation of three budget lines: recruitability; day opportunities; and Links to Work.

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£104,000	£817,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 The savings will be achieved by a review of the employment and daytime support services for people with learning disabilities. There are just over 300 people using these services and the review will take their views into account and ensure that their eligible needs are met
- 1.2 This policy paper covers three separate budget lines of savings proposals: £104K from removal of recruitability payments to sheltered employment users, £517k from review and redesign of day opportunities; and £300K from Links To Work.
- 1.3 Specific savings targets are accredited to each service in each of the years 2015/16 and 2016/17. The review will encompass all three services and so the distribution of savings solutions in each year may be spread across all three services.

- 1.4 The review of these services will include options to increase the use of personal budgets, explore new ways of delivering services (e.g. social enterprise) and be conducted in partnership with other stakeholders. The review will explore ways in which those people currently attending these services will be able to access opportunities for training, apprenticeships, work placements, supported employment and so on.
2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**
- 2.1 **Corporate Plan**
The overall aim is to support people with learning disabilities to achieve as much independence as possible by meaningful activities, training and employment. This is line with the corporate aim of supporting people to maintain as much independence, health and well-being as they can.
- 2.2 **Customers**
Adults with eligible social care needs with learning disability who currently use employment support services and/or day time support services.
- 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**
The savings may mean a number of redundancies as follows:
 - Recruitability 3 FTEs
 - Day Services 20 FTEs
 - Links to Work 10 FTEs
- 2.4 **Partners**
These services are primarily provided by the Council, but there is some partnership working with voluntary agencies such as MENCAP. The review will be conducted in partnership with these agencies, colleges, user and carer groups, and other community organisations.
- 2.5 **Economic Implications**
The review will be conducted closely with businesses and colleges and aim to open up opportunities for training, apprenticeships, work placements, supported employment and so on.
- 2.6 **Environmental Implications**
There is no environmental impact.
- 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**
The aim of the review is to sustain the health and well-being of the people who are using these services by finding alternative ways in which they can receive support. A reshaping of the services will give service users and carers the opportunity to reflect up their packages of care, through a personal budget and direct payments system in order to get their life balances right.
- 2.8 **Other Council Services**
There is no direct impact upon other council services. It might be that there is less need for people to use transport provided by the council.

3. **Associated Risks**

Any changes that are proposed will have been developed in full consultation with service users and their families and all partners and stakeholders, and ensure that the health and well-being of eligible service users is maintained, keeping people safe. The statutory rights and duties of the Council will be fully met.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

A full consultation with all stakeholders including partner agencies, colleges, user and carer groups, and other community organisations will be conducted as part of the review process.

5. **Legal Implications**

Those people who are assessed as being eligible to receive social care support will continue to receive this in the form of a personal budget with which they will be able to choose how they are supported. This will include supported employment, work placements, training and other meaningful activities during the day.

6. **Equality Implications**

These services are targeted specifically upon people with disabilities, particularly learning disabilities. The full EQIA will be conducted as part of the review to ensure that equality issues are taken in to account.

Draft Proposal – reference 155: Review Community Alarm and Related services

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
-	£570,000	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 There will be a review of Community Alarm and related services which are linked to call handling and response services. The review will also consider related charging arrangements for these services.
- 1.2 It is planned that the review and any subsequent changes to practice and management will deliver savings of £570k in 2016/17.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

Community alarm and response services support people to retain their independence at home.

2.2 **Customers**

People who are using the council community alarm service.

2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

There is a call handling team and staff providing a rapid response to call outs and they may be affected by the outcome of this review.

2.4 **Partners**

This is a council run service.

2.5 **Economic Implications**

There no economic implications other than the impact on staff.

2.6 **Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications of this change.

2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

People access the community alarm service because of the extra sense of security associated with their being a rapid response to an incident in the home such as a fall. The review will ensure that access to a community alarm service is still available for those who wish to purchase it, and thus promote independence, health and well-being.

2.8 **Other Council Services**

These services are provided within the Social Care and Inclusion Directorate. There may be strong link in the future to other call handling arrangements within the council.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 A full risk analysis will be undertaken to ensure that a community alarm service is available to those who wish to purchase it.

4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 A full consultation with key user and carer representative groups will be undertaken as part of the review. All key partner agencies will be included.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 A full assessment of any risk arising out of legal duty and risk of challenge following implementation of this proposal will be undertaken as part of the review.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 An initial EqIA has been undertaken. A full EqIA will be conducted as part of the review.

Draft Proposal – reference 160: Cease the bus service that provides a mobile First Stop Shop

Estimated Net Saving		
2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	Implementation cost
£22,253	-	-

1. **Description of the Savings Proposal**

1.1 The proposal involves the decommissioning of the First Stop Shop Express. The bus currently visits limited locations, Willenhall and Darlaston on a regular basis giving residents and shoppers the opportunity to hop on board and enquire about council services. The bus has computers which enable customers to apply for bus passes, report fly tipping, report anti-social behaviour or access information about other council services.

2. **Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

2.1 **Corporate Plan**

The proposal may have a very minor impact upon the delivery of the following aspects of the Council's *priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy "the Walsall Plan"*:

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

The bus may be contributing towards promoting independence for some older people who access it when it stops within their community.

- **Creating safe sustainable and inclusive communities.**

The bus may be contributing towards making communities more inclusive by providing access to report issues such as anti-social behaviour reporting or fly tipping.

2.2 **Customers**

- Providing the bus service is not a statutory function.
- On average the bus is accessed by 14 customers per working day.
- Many services cannot be dealt with directly by the staff on the bus, benefit enquiries for example are redirected via a telephone number to staff at the civic centre.

2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

Two members of staff are required every time the bus is used. Removing this facility will allow a review of workloads and it is expected that this will allow a reduction of one member of staff.

- 2.4 **Partners**
No Implications.
- 2.5 **Economic Implications**
No Implications.
- 2.6 **Environmental Implications**
Reduction in fuel emissions.
- 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**
There could be an impact on wellbeing but this would be very limited, as all services are also offered in libraries and via the First Stop Shop at the Civic Centre.
- 2.8 **Other Council Services**
There may be a marginal increase in front-line demand within libraries or the first stop shop.
3. **Associated Risks**
No identified risk because the same services are available in the first stop shop and other locations.
4. **Consultation and customer feedback**
Consultation will be undertaken as part of the council's overall budget consultation. Additional face to face consultation will be taking place with customers that use the bus in November 2014.
5. **Legal Implications**
The legal implications are minimal as it is not a statutory service and service users can use other suitable routes to access the council services that they need.
6. **Equality Implications**
An equality impact assessment has been carried out which indicates that there will be limited impact on customers given the small number of people that access services via the bus and the existence of other access routes such as the First Stop Shop. The EqlA will be reviewed following the face to face consultation planned for November 2014.



Findings from Budget Consultation Phase One: Financial Year 2015/16

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1. Executive summary

Background

- 1.1. Between 21 August and 29 September 2014 over 4,600 responses to the council's initial 'phase one' of budget consultation were received. This level of response was achieved via a range of methods including face to face, online, in writing and over the phone, most of which has been gathered 'in house'.
- 1.2. However, Independent market research has been undertaken in the form of a random sample telephone survey commissioned to provide a statistically representative view of opinion. Importantly, the 620 random telephone surveys is representative of the population, whereas the non random approach used to collect all the other feedback (in writing, online or in face to face conversations with staff) is based on quantitative statistical evidence and hence is not statistically representative. The information gathered is based on a self selecting cross-section of people and should not be confused with statistical representativeness, nevertheless providing a rich and broad snapshot of opinion of those people who responded.
- 1.3. As phase one of consultation was conducted prior to draft budget proposals being available, the feedback sought was general in nature, though it has been designed to help inform detailed budget proposals. A second phase of consultation will be subsequently undertaken once draft budget proposals are published in late October and a third phase of communication will be undertaken once the budget is set in February 2015.
- 1.4. It should be noted that feedback from phase one consultation on its own would not constitute sufficient detail nor coverage to determine decisions regarding major service delivery changes. This is because it provides insufficient detail about the impact on residents and customers. Without additional and appropriate consultation on detailed proposals the council could be at risk of a judicial review. Hence we shortly will enter a critical phase in the consultation process whereby we seek feedback on the impact of individual budget saving proposals and the importance of getting this phase right is very important.
- 1.5. Findings summarised here should be considered in line with service specific consultation and feedback and other relevant data where available.

Key Findings

- 1.6. Across the research and when asked, residents are fairly well aware of the challenges faced with public sector budgets; though up to one fifth responding through the telephone survey are not aware. Residents often feel that all things are important and struggle with the concept of things needing to change. Based on the overall comments received they find it difficult to comprehend the scale of savings needed or the extent to which the council controls services within their area and hence the need for ongoing communication for the challenges ahead in order for the public to feel able to influence future decisions.
- 1.7. Regardless of the consultation mechanism and methodology involved, overall the feedback is generally consistent and the general messages are broadly similar.

- 1.8. People find it far easier to say what services they wish to see protected rather than ceased or reduced. Few call for ceasing services altogether, preferring to suggest reductions in services, possibly across services they do not directly use and perceive are underused, that they express a dislike or have a complaint about, are perceived to offer poor value for money or are seen to them as a waste of money.
- 1.9. As far as we can tell the feedback tends to come from service users seeking protection of the services they feel are important to them which tend to relate to the life stage they are at. For example parents calling for protection of services for children, youths seeking to protect youth provision, and older people seeking to protect social care services.
- 1.10. Additionally, there are calls for the protection of core universal services such as those that help keep the area looking cared for and helping people move around; hence allowing them to get about their daily lives and feeling safer i.e. cleanliness, household waste collection, road maintenance, community transport services, improving the image of town and district centres.
- 1.11. Residents expect the council to deliver value for money and will first and foremost look to itself to make savings rather than cut front facing services that are important to them. Achieving this through better housekeeping, efficient service delivery, streamlining staffing and political structures including pay.
- 1.12. Depending on the research method there are differing views about income generation through increases to fees and charges including Council Tax as discussed in section 4.8. For example when cold called about this without receiving an explanation of what the financial implications of any increases in council tax are, residents tend to be more vociferously against this approach. However, compared with more detailed research undertaken in 2013 and with feedback through other channels this year where people come forward to offer their views, there appears to be more of an appetite to paying 'a little' more to help protect services.
- 1.13. Regarding thoughts on out-sourcing the clear message is that residents do not want to see services outsourced to the private sector. There is however an appetite to share services with other councils on the assumption that there are savings to be made. Using the voluntary sector to deliver services is also seen as positive for both parties, with the sense that community based services would be more suited to this approach.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Walsall Council needs to save approximately £85 million over the next four years. In preparing its budget, each year Walsall Council undertakes public consultation, using the findings to inform the budget making process. Residents, businesses, staff and other key stakeholders were invited to have their say on how they think these savings could be achieved and what council services they would choose to protect, reduce or cease.
- 2.2. A wide programme of consultation was developed with the aim of engaging as many people as possible in the budget setting process. 38,000 comment postcards were distributed, face to face discussions were held at 14 special consultation sessions held in libraries, in the council's First Stop Shop and in Park Street Walsall, with all sessions advertised in the local press and on the website. Meetings were also held with specific groups in adult social care and children's services. Online surveys were available for residents, council staff, the business community, and for children and young people. In addition a budget hotline, email and postal address enabled people to make their comments to the council.
- 2.3. Information was posted on the council's website www.walsall.gov.uk/budgethaveyoursay and Intranet. Council staff played an important role in communicating and sharing the budget message, with over 300 being briefed prior to consultation starting. Social media, existing mailing lists and the communication channels of partners and local network groups was also utilised.
- 2.4. Between 21 August and 29 September 2014, feedback was collected via the following ways:

Method	Number of responses
Telephone survey (random sample)	620
Face to face	240
In writing (postcards, letters and emails)	385
Online survey (public)	515
Online survey (young people)	2700
Online survey (businesses)	7
Telephone call (to contact centre)	42
Staff	149
Total	4,658

- 2.5. In phase one consultation 4,658 individual responses were gathered comprising thousands of individual comments which have all been recorded, themed and analysed.

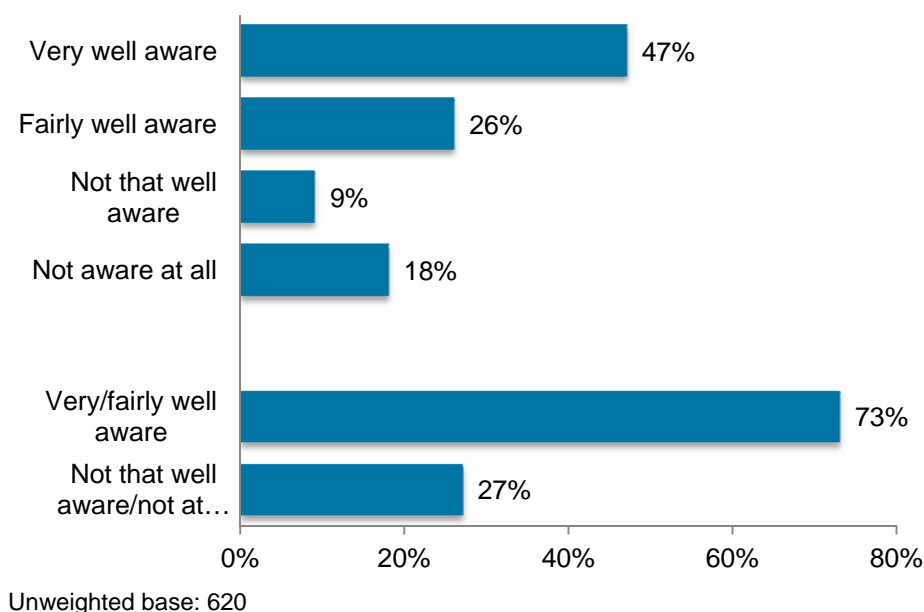
3. Telephone survey

- 3.1. Independent market research in the form of a random telephone survey was commissioned in order to gather the views of a representative sample of the borough's population. This research sought to understand residents' priorities in terms of service delivery and spending; measure awareness of the need to make savings; and test ideas for reducing expenditure and increasing revenues.
- 3.2. The research was carried out by telephone from 26th August to 14th September 2014 by Bostock Marketing Group (BMG). Telephone numbers were selected using Random Digit Dial (RDD) numbers, with quotas set to ensure that the interviewing was representative of the Borough by gender, age, and ward.
- 3.3. 620 interviews were completed in total and the data was weighted by gender, age, ward, and ethnic group to correct for any imbalances in the data collected and ensure that it was representative of the demographic make-up of Walsall.
- 3.4. Based on the Walsall population aged 16+ being 213,123 (according to the 2011 census), a survey sample of 620 has a maximum confidence interval of ± 3.93 at a 95% level of confidence. On this basis we can be 95% certain that the percentages derived from this sample will be no more or less than 3.93 percentage points different to those that would have been observed if all Walsall residents 16+ were interviewed.
- 3.5. A full report of results is available on request, key findings are summarised here.

Key findings from the telephone survey

- 3.6. Most residents are aware of the council's need to make savings. A total of 73% said they were aware of the situation, including 47% who were very well aware. However, almost a fifth of respondents (18%) were not aware of the situation at all. Younger age groups are more likely to say they are not aware of the financial challenges the council is facing.

Fig. 1 Awareness of the need for budget savings



Top council priorities

3.7. When asked about the council's corporate priorities the one most commonly selected by residents as most important to them i.e. their 'first priority', is "Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people", (32%). It is important to keep in mind that this does not mean that residents regard the other priorities as unimportant.

1. 32% ranked - *Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people* - as their top priority. Notably, younger respondents (those aged 16-44) are more likely to rank this as their first priority.

"Children are the future of society. Services in place to enhance this should be protected from any form of cuts."

"Benefit of education for future generations. Good education prevents problems that may arise later in life."

2. 27% ranked - *Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities – reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in* - as their top priority. Notably younger respondents and BME respondents are more likely to rank this as their first priority.

"No one wishes to be living in an unsafe environment where you feel threatened."

"Because living in a safe environment is crucial for the well being of society. Policing and community safety also."

3. 22% ranked - *Improving health and wellbeing, including independence for older people* - as their top priority. Notably, older respondents are more likely to select this as their first priority.

"Because of my age. I don't think help is there for the elderly and if it is, I have not been made aware of it."

"The elderly suffer the most and sometimes their needs are overlooked/ignored."

4. 18% ranked - *Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work* - as their top priority. There were no demographic differences indicated hence important to all sectors of the community.

"I am unemployed and there aren't enough job opportunities available at the moment."

"More work means more people paying council tax and not relying on the government for hand outs."

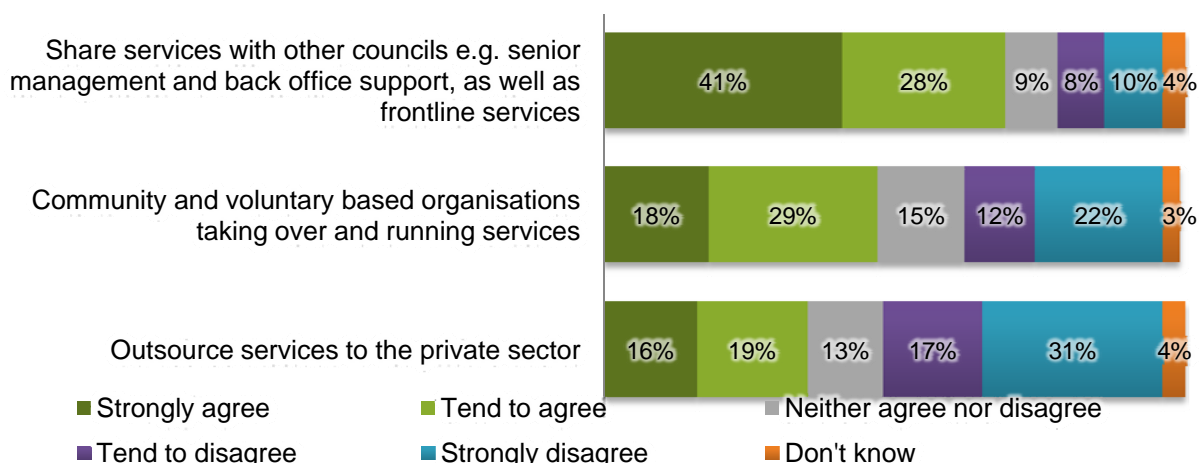
"Because people need to get jobs, because of which businesses need to survive so that jobs are available."

- 3.8. On the basis of these demographic variations mentioned it would appear that, generally speaking, the priorities given by residents at least in part appear to be derived from their life stage and associated with what their likely service needs are.

Sharing and outsourcing services

- 3.9. There is an appetite amongst residents for savings to be derived from delivering services differently. Residents broadly agree with sharing services with other councils with results showing a strong net agreement (+51%) with the idea, with 69% agreeing with this idea, including 41% who agree strongly, compared to 18% who disagree.
- 3.10. Agreement for community or voluntary based organisations taking over the running of services was the second most popular option with 47% agreeing with this idea and 34% disagreeing, a net agreement of (+13%).
- 3.11. Outsourcing to the private sector is the least popular option, with 35% of respondents agreeing and 48% of respondents disagreeing that the council should consider this strategy, a net disagreement of (-13%)

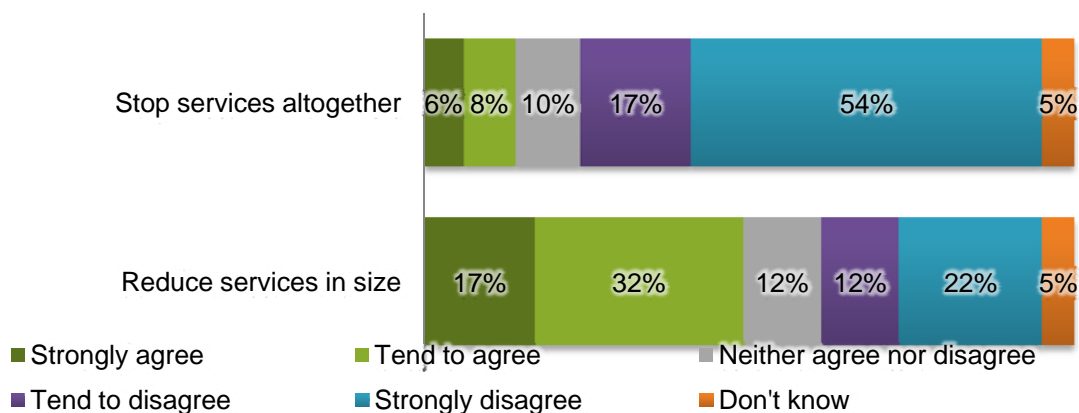
Fig. 2 Sharing or outsourcing services (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 620

- 3.12. Residents oppose stopping council services altogether, but agree in principle with reducing the size of services. Just 14% agreed to stopping services compared to 70% who disagreed (including 54% who disagreed strongly) a net result of (+56). By contrast, nearly half (49%) agreed in principle with the concept of reducing service size compared to 33% who disagreed, a net result of (+16).

Fig. 3 Agreement with stopping or reducing service size (All respondents agreeing with one or more of the options for sharing or outsourcing services)

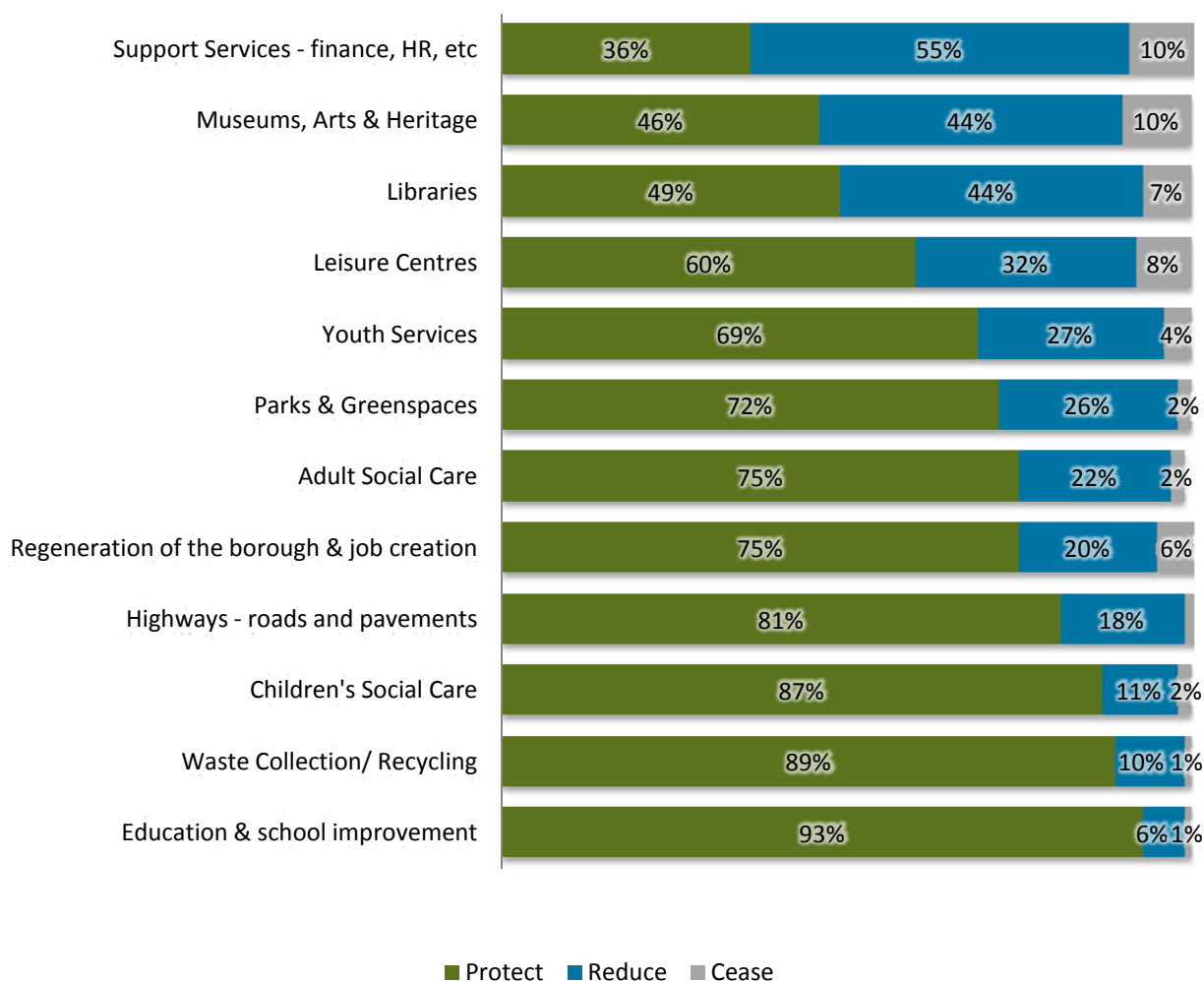


Unweighted sample base: 521

Protecting, reducing or stopping specific services

- 3.13. There are calls for many services to be protected with residents top three being; firstly; Education and school improvement (93%), followed by waste collection/recycling (89%) and then children's social care (87%).

Fig. 4 Protecting, reducing or stopping services – from list provided (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 620

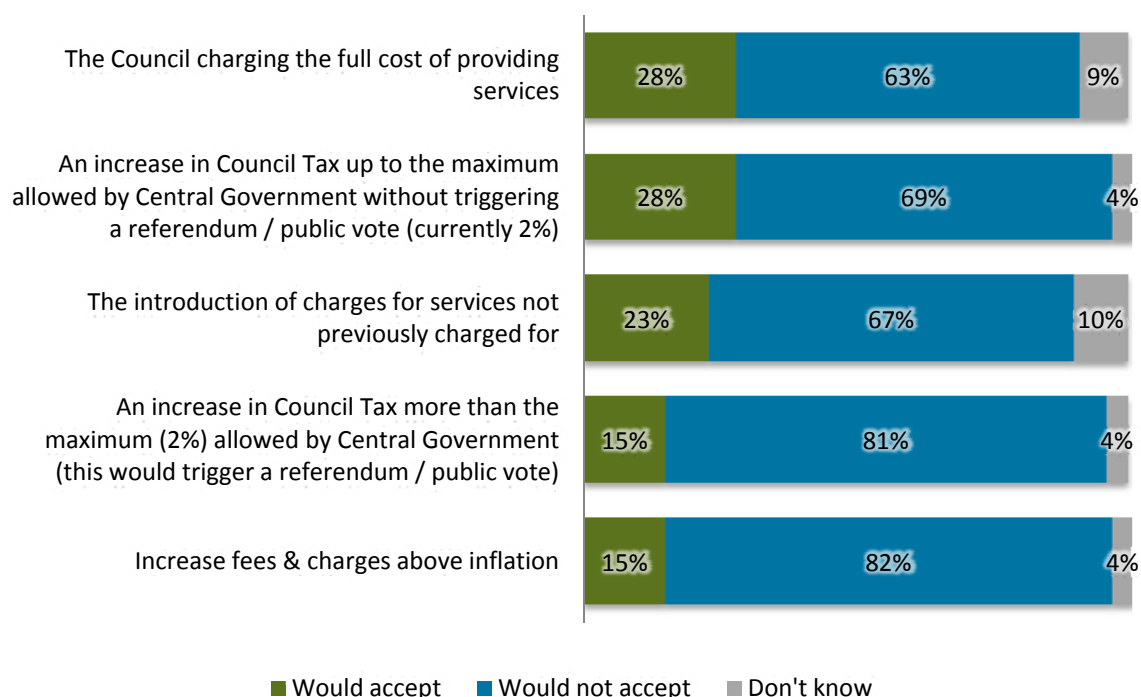
3.14. There was very little appetite for ceasing any of the service areas altogether – a maximum of 10% gave this response for any service. One in ten said they would cease support services (10%) and the same proportion said the same about museums, arts and heritage (10%). Indeed, support services appear bottom of the list of services to be protected, with 36% saying these services should be protected.

3.15. When asked what other services they wish to protect residents struggled to make suggestions, and where they could they included services outside of the councils control i.e. police services, NHS services, ambulance and fire services. Similarly residents found it difficult to say what they would reduce or cease, their first thoughts being reductions in staff, managers, councillors and salaries, bonuses and expenses.

Residents appear unaccepting of the concept of paying more for services, though this isn't necessarily an informed choice.

3.16. As fig 5. Shows, residents are unwilling to pay or pay more for council services, either by paying the full cost of services, paying for services that are currently free, increasing fees and charges above inflation or increases in council tax.

Fig 5. Views on paying for services or paying more



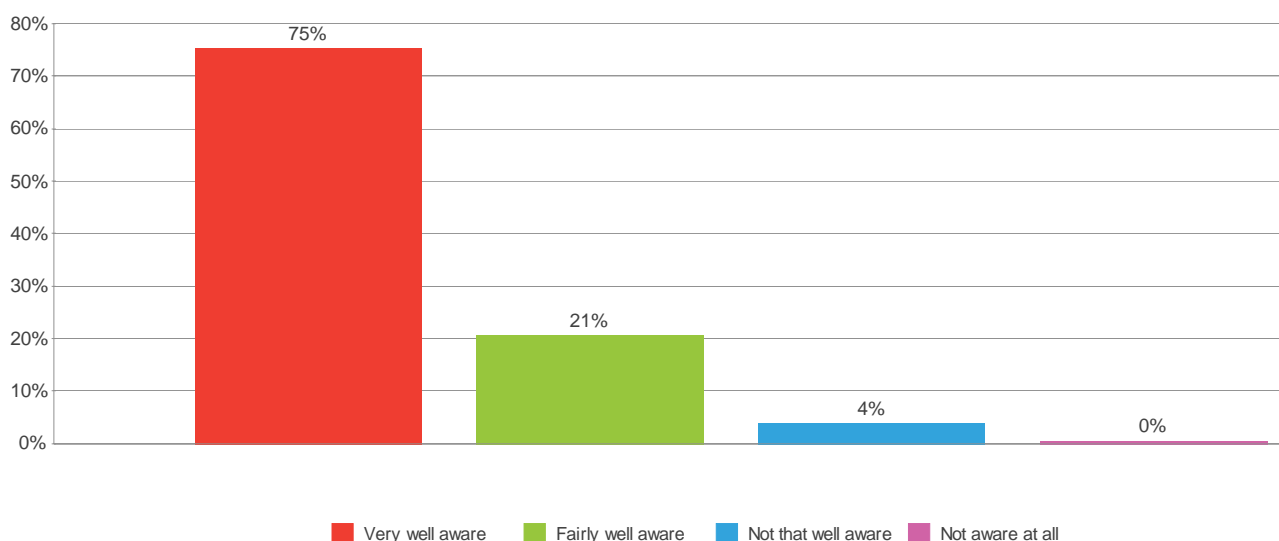
Unweighted base: 620

- 3.17. However, the response on increases in Council Tax seen here is quite different to that recorded in October 2013, which found that 58% would support a 2% increase. Unlike the 2013 survey, which employed the same methodology but worded and presented the question differently; the questions on council tax used in 2014 did not specify what a 2% increase in council tax would mean in terms of how much more the respondent would be required to pay. The likely natural reaction towards increases in fees and charges when asked without any background information is to reject them, however when those increases are explained in monetary terms, as in the 2013 research, the proportion of residents willing to accept an increase is significantly higher. Hence where they were able to make an informed choice about how an increase is likely to impact on their finances, the proportion willing to pay more is much higher.
- 3.18. Also views on increases in fees and charges and council tax are mixed across the range of feedback methods, and there appears to be a greater appetite to pay more amongst those people who say they are aware of the challenge the council faces and those who gave their feedback in writing, face to face and via the public online survey. Both of which are a reflection of their understanding of public sector austerity and probably the extent to which they use services that they are commenting on, the importance of those services to them and therefore their willingness to pay more to help retain them. Notably, based on telephone survey results the appetite for an increase in council tax rises to 32% amongst those who are aware of the impact of cuts on councils to 15% to those not aware of the impact.

4. Public Online Survey

- 4.1. A replica of the telephone survey was made available on the council website as an online survey for anyone who lives, works or does business in the borough to complete. At the time of analysis 515 people had responded online, the vast majority (92%) of which live in the borough.
- 4.2. As a self selecting survey the results are not directly representative of the population, reflecting only the views of those who responded rather than the population as a whole and therefore results may be biased. However the results do present an important perspective of those people who are perhaps more aware of and make use of a wider range of council services, and probably because they are more 'active citizens' likely to take part in consultation. This along with the fact it was an online survey, allowing people more time to think and maybe look up information, and having access to online mechanisms may explain some of the differences seen in the results gathered in the telephone survey and this survey.
- 4.3. Three quarters of respondents are very well aware of the council's need to make budget savings and a further 21% are aware (96% in total are aware). Just 21 (4%) of respondents said they were not aware.

Fig. 6 Awareness of the need to make budget savings (Public online survey)



Base: 515

- 4.4. When asked to rank the council's priorities in order of importance a slightly different ordering is seen compared to the telephone survey results. Whilst in both surveys improving health and wellbeing is ranked third and supporting businesses fourth (when looking at 1st order of importance ranking), a larger proportion of respondents to the public online survey rank creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities as their first priority making improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people their second top priority.

1. 43% ranked - *Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities* – as their top priority.

"Feeling safe and happy in your environment makes for a more stable society."

“Hopefully by ensuring a safe and sustainable environment will encourage local communities to take more interest and be proud of where they live. This could then bring interest from outside the area from businesses who wish to invest in a thriving community.”

“Because I want to be able for me and my family to walk the streets safely, and not worry about my house or property being damaged or burgled. to be able to travel to local places and not be intimidated by youths or anti social behaviour.”

2. 39% ranked - *Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people* – as their top priority.

“Children who get the best possible start stand more chance of making a positive contribution to our society. Or to be more direct, they won't grow up to be dysfunctional and a huge drain on resources.”

“It is important to have life chances for children as they are our future.”

“It is important that in the process of cutting budgets, we don't forget those without the power to vote or stand up and defend their own needs. Our young people are our future, our hope for prosperity and growth, the future job market - we neglect them at our peril.”

3. 24% ranked - *Improving health and wellbeing, including independence for older people* - as their top priority.

“Because we are an aging population and if you can give independence to older people by keeping them in their own homes as long as possible it will reduce the cost of keeping them in a home.”

“They are the most vulnerable in our society and many already have a difficult time accessing services.”

“As a pensioner, independence is the most important to me.”

4. 23% ranked - *Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work* - as their top priority.

“More businesses brings money into Walsall, which enables businesses to grow getting people into work, making Walsall more attractive to shoppers and visitors.”

“Without a successful business policy there will be no work in the area reducing people's ability to pay for themselves and creating yet another burden on the council.”

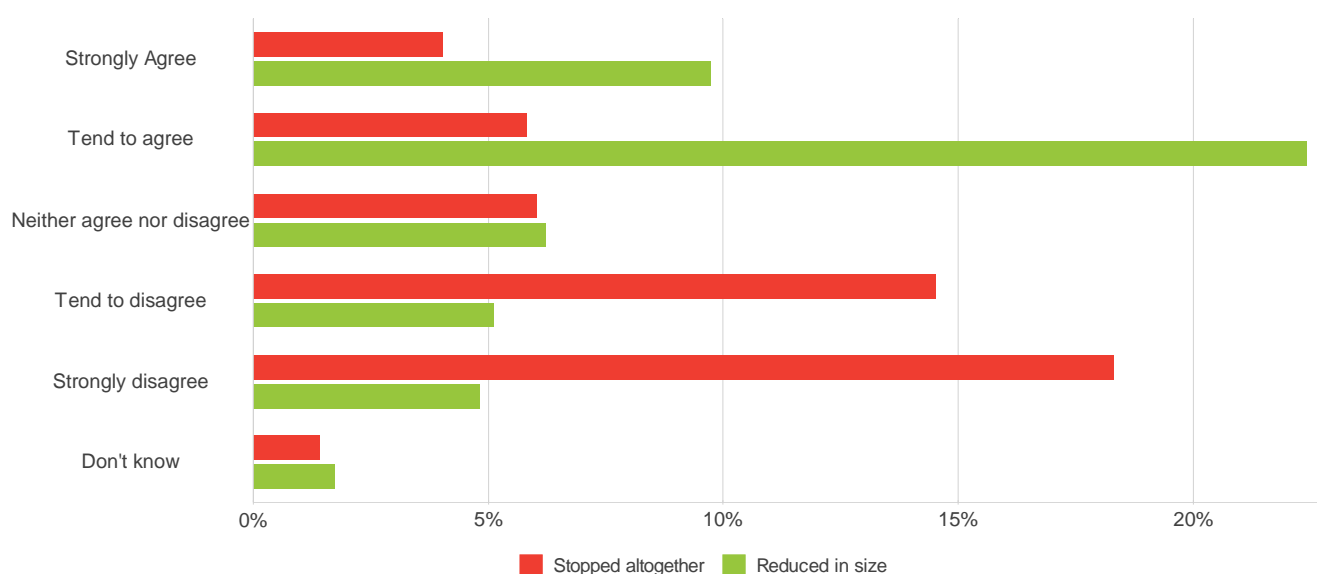
“By getting the greater the proportion of the working population in employment this will have impact on other services. If one has employment this gives a sense of pride, the ability to care for and provide for family, choices about lifestyles, more healthy eating, improved health, ability to pass on knowledge, advice, support to children.”

- 4.5. Mirroring the telephone survey, there is strong support amongst online respondents for council services being shared with other councils, 76% agreed with this compared to 12% who did not; on balance a net agreement of +64%. There was also general

support for council services to be taken over by community and voluntary based organisations, with 53% agreeing with this approach and 28% not; a net agreement of +25%

- 4.6. As also found in the telephone survey, people generally do not want to see council services outsourced to the private sector, with 57% disagreeing with this possible approach compared to 28% who agreed; on balance a net disagreement of -29%.
- 4.7. In terms of the option of reducing services in size and stopping council services altogether, as seen in the telephone survey, there is clear support for reducing services in size over stopping them altogether.

Fig. 7 Views on reducing or stopping services



- 4.8. As discussed in paragraph 3.17, compared to the telephone survey, online respondents have more of an appetite for paying towards council services. Over two fifths (43%) are willing to pay for services that are currently free, however this still leaves over a third (34%) that would not (+9 net).
- 4.9. Whilst a larger proportion of online respondents are willing to pay towards council services, almost three fifths (68%) would not want to see fees and charges rise above the rate of inflation and 58% do not want to see the council charge the full cost of providing services. Hence an appetite for smaller and more affordable contributions towards the cost of services.

Fig. 8 Willingness to pay for or pay more for council services

	Total	Would accept	Would not accept	Don't know
The introduction of charges for services not previously charged for	515	44%	34%	21%
The Council charging the full cost of providing services	515	23%	58%	19%
Increase fees & charges above inflation	515	21%	68%	11%
An increase in Council Tax up to the maximum allowed by Central Government without triggering a referendum / public vote (currently 2%)*	471	57%	35%	8%

Only those who live in the borough of Walsall were asked this question.

- 4.10. Almost three fifths of respondents (57%) would be willing to pay more in council tax, which is a very different view to that recorded in the telephone survey where just 15% said this. As explained previously this result is likely to be due to the range of people who have responded and reflects their specific use of council services, their importance and therefore their willingness to pay more to help retain them.

Services to protect, reduce or cease

- 4.11. Views on which services to protect, reduce or cease largely mirror those gathered in the telephone survey. The top four services to protect are the same in both surveys (although in a slightly different order). Likewise the top four services to reduce or cease also reflect those identified in the telephone survey. This gives a very clear message about the relative importance of specific services.

Fig. 8 Council services to protect, reduce or cease

	Protect	Reduce	Cease
Childrens Social Care	77%	21%	2%
Education & school improvement	73%	24%	4%
Highways - roads and pavements	70%	28%	1%
Waste Collection/ Recycling	67%	33%	0%
Adult Social Care	66%	32%	3%
Regeneration of the borough & job creation	54%	39%	6%
Youth Services	48%	47%	4%
Parks & Greenspaces	44%	52%	5%
Libraries	35%	52%	13%
Leisure Centres	34%	56%	10%
Museums, Arts & Heritage	21%	61%	18%
Support Services - finance, HR etc	9%	72%	19%

- 4.12. Services for children and young people are the top two services people want to see protected and mirrors the views of children and young people themselves (see section 5). Following this the universal services of highways and waste collection are identified as services people want protecting from the cuts, closely followed by adult social care.

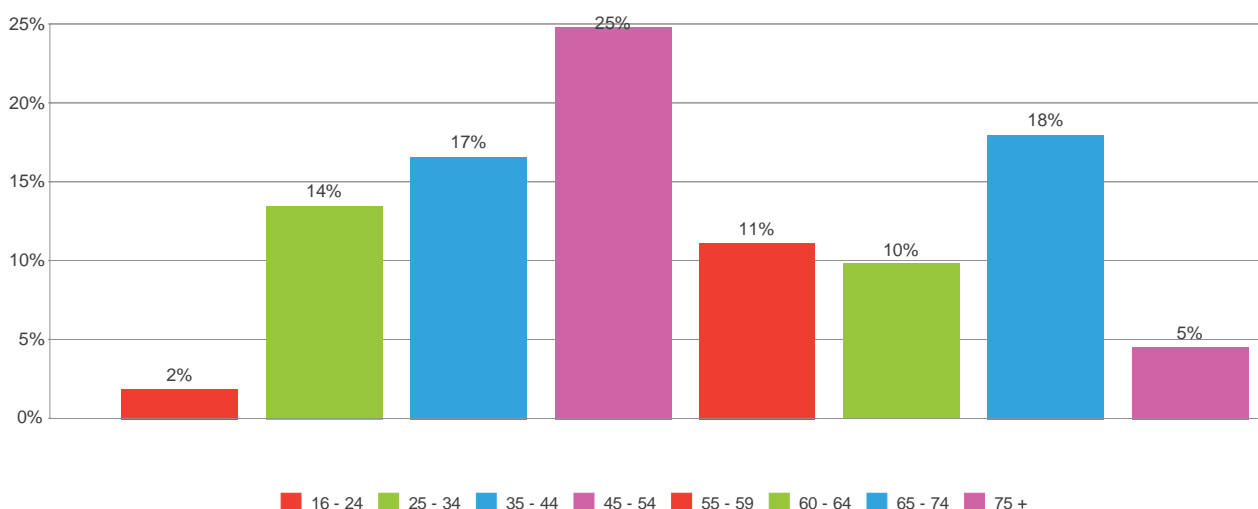
Demographics of public online respondents

4.13. Although not a random sample, and therefore not statistically representative, the demographics of respondents shows that a fairly broad range of people answered the questionnaire.

4.14. Responses by gender were pretty even (48% male and 51% female) and the age range of respondents fairly well spread.

Fig. 9 Respondent age group

What age group do you fall into?



4.15. 83% of responses were from people of a White background with the remaining 17% being BME or from another background.

4.16. 11% considered themselves disabled and 26% said they had children aged under 16 living with them.

5. Feedback from children and young people

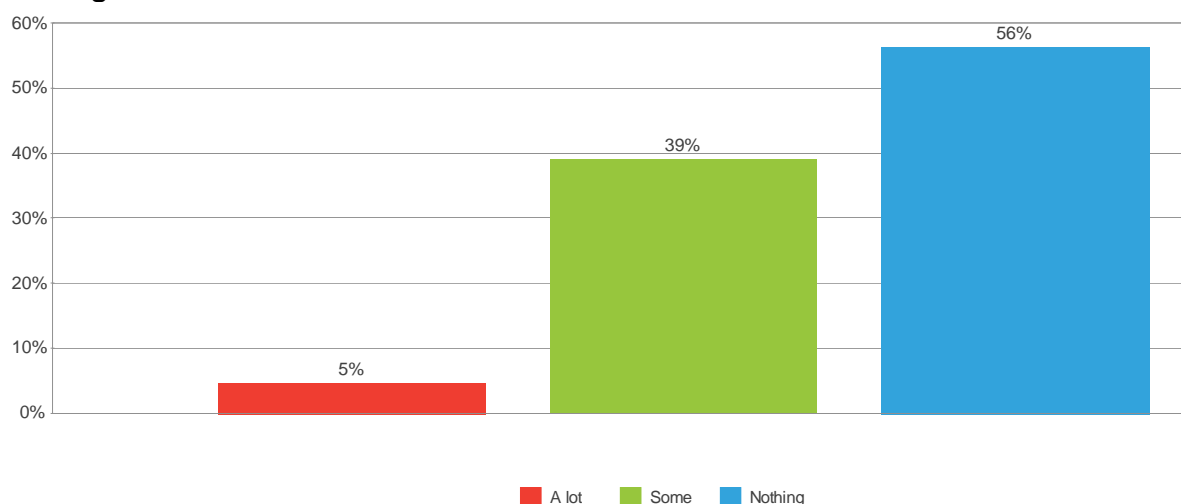
5.1. A version of the telephone survey was made available for children and young people to complete online and on paper. The language was adjusted and questions not relevant to the age group were removed. To assist understanding, background information, an overview of budget setting and a visual representation of council services, was provided and discussed.

- 5.2. Significant effort was put into gathering the views of children and young people and a range of approaches were used including working in schools and engaging children and young people accessing positive activities, the youth justice service, targeted youth support, the information advice and guidance service and many others.
- 5.3. At the time of analysis 2,823 surveys had been completed by children and young people aged 8 to 25. Equal proportions of respondents were male and female and 35% were from a BME background.

Most children and young people are unaware of the need for budget cuts

- 5.4. As might be expected over half (56%) of all young respondents said they knew nothing about the budget cuts that local councils like Walsall need to make. However almost two fifths (39%) said they knew a little and 5% a lot.

Fig.10 Awareness of the need to make cuts



Prioritising services for children and young people and improving the local area are seen as most important

- 5.5. Unsurprisingly children and young people rank 'improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people' top of their list of priorities, closely followed by 'creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities - reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in'.
1. Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people (29%)

"Because I am young and I want my life to be better."

"Improving safeguarding is the most important because some kids might not have a good life which could make a big impact on the rest of their life."

2. Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities - reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in (28%)

“You need to keep people safe around here and make them feel safe in their homes.”

“The area should first be safe for anything else to happen.”

“If you live in a world full of crime, people won’t feel safe and they will give up on life.”

3. Improving health and well being, including independence for older people (24%)

“Because people's health is the most important so everyone has a healthy future.”

“It’s very important factor to make sure that everyone should be healthy and make sure the older generation are well looked after since they can’t do much.”

“Within the whole country more and more people are obese therefore healthy living should be promoted more in order to help them.”

4. Supporting business to grow and supporting local people into work (20%)

“I would like to get a job in the future and I would like to see more businesses doing well as this will help me and others to get jobs.”

Introducing or increasing charges for services is not acceptable to children and young people

- 5.6. Given that children and young people generally have very limited access to money, charging or charging more for council services is not something children and young people are willing to accept. Over half (52%) would not accept the council charging the full cost of services and 55% would not accept an increase in fees and charges above inflation.

Fig. 11 Views on charging or charging more for services

	Would accept	Would not accept	Don't know
The introduction of charges for services the council has not charged for before	20%	47%	33%
The Council charging the full cost of providing services	16%	52%	32%
Increase fees and charges above the cost of living (inflation rate 1.6%)	13%	55%	32%

Above all else protect services for children and young people, however other services could be reduced

- 5.7. Children and young people want services that directly affect them to be protected, with the top three services to protect being education and schools (88%), children’s social care (86%) and youth support services (74%).

- 5.8. Waste collection and parks and green spaces are also highly valued with 69% and 68% of respondents saying that these services should be protected.

Fig.12 Service to protect, reduce or cease

	Protect	Reduce	Cease
Education & school improvement	88%	8%	4%
Childrens Social Care	86%	11%	3%
Youth Support Service	74%	21%	5%
Waste Collection/ Recycling	70%	24%	6%
Parks & Green spaces	69%	25%	5%
Adult Social Care	68%	26%	6%
Regeneration of the borough and job creation	67%	27%	7%
Leisure Centres	63%	30%	7%
Highways - roads and pavements	62%	32%	6%
Support Services - finance, HR etc	55%	35%	10%
Libraries	47%	41%	12%
Museums, Arts & Heritage	44%	39%	17%

- 5.9. Whilst more children and young people want to protect rather than reduce or cease services, around a quarter or more would be happy to see a number of services reduced, with over two fifths saying libraries (41%) and museums, arts and heritage (39%) could be reduced.

Other services children and young people would protect, reduce or cease

- 5.10. A wide range of suggestions are made for services to protect, reduce or cease, not all within the remit of the council. The following Word Clouds (www.wordle.net) show the most commonly mentioned words, with those most frequently mentioned appearing more prominently, giving a flavour for their comments.

Fig. 13 Services to protect



Fig. 14 Services to reduce

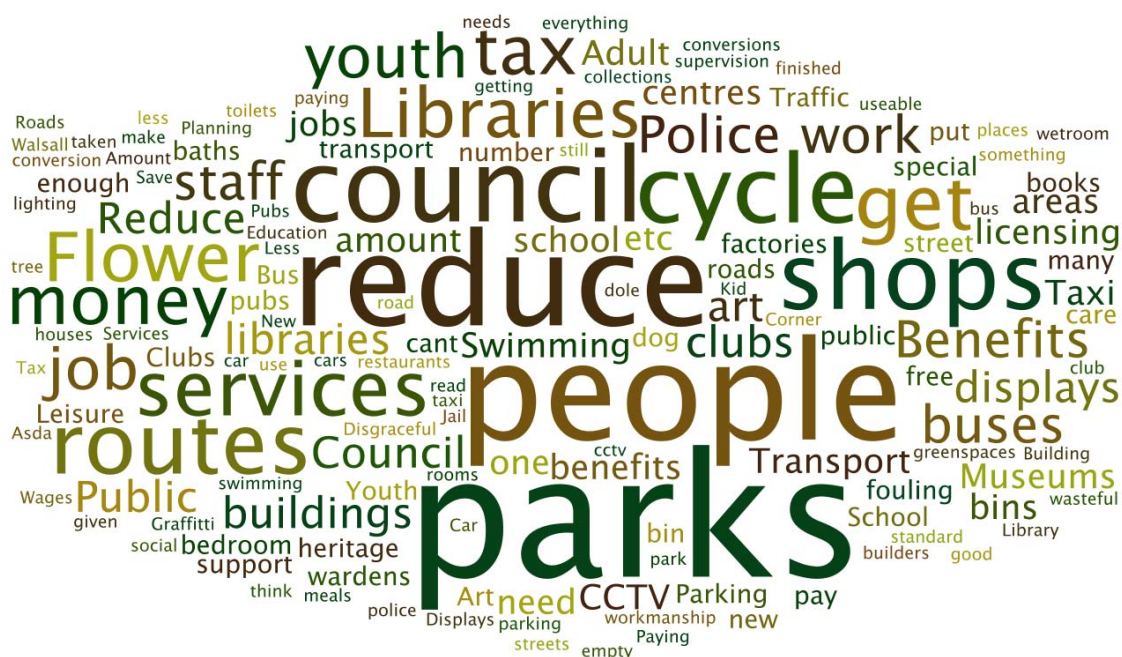


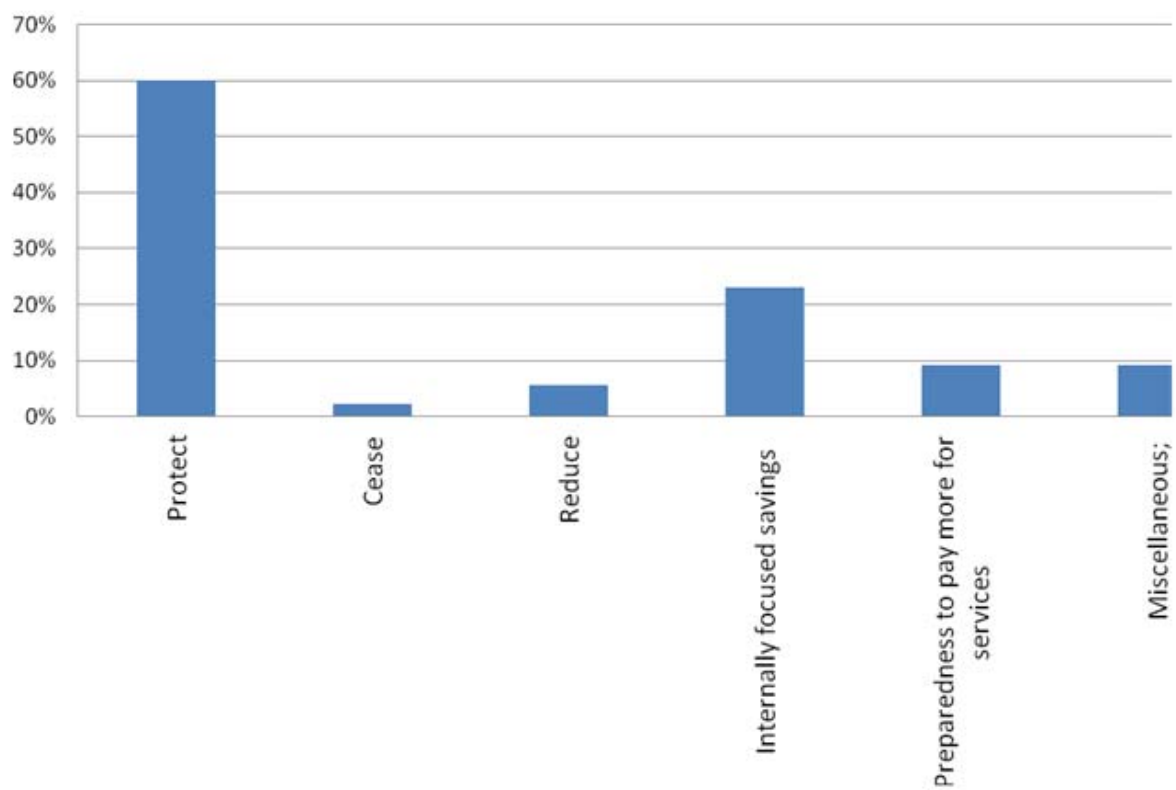
Fig. 15 Services to cease



6. General feedback from phase one (postcards, email, letters, face to face)

6.1. Phase one posed an open question ‘What council services would you choose to protect, reduce or cease?’ A vast array of comments were received, Fig. 16 shows the range of feedback from the public.

Fig. 16 The range of feedback from postcards, email, letters and face to face



6.2. When interpreting these particular results we need to bear in mind the fact that results have in some way been shaped through promoting the use of postcards within specific services and or by virtue of the venues used to gather the face to face feedback.

6.3. The following section summarises the public feedback provided through postcards, email, letters, phone calls and face to face sessions held across the borough.

What services do you want to Cease?

6.4. The overall volume of suggestions to cease ‘frontline’ services were very low and centred largely on cultural services and the ceasing of some library services, the latter feedback is covered under the section on service reductions. In terms of cultural services people mostly suggested closing the New Art Gallery with a few mentioning Walsall Museum because they perceive they are not well used.

“Art Gallery needs to go, it’s always empty.”
“Cease - Walsall museum it’s always empty”

- 6.5. Otherwise there were calls to cut an eclectic mix of services, for example heating allowance, occupational health, phone boxes and parks, free school meals, dog wardens, Area Partnerships, and community centres.

What services do you want to Reduce?

- 6.6. Calls to reduce services were also low in volume and where offered they tended to centre on three main areas; household waste collection, library services and street lighting.
- 6.7. The appetite for reducing household waste recycling centred largely on suggestions for fortnightly grey bin collections but through provision of a larger bin.

“Empty bins fortnightly on a rota green and grey”

“Reinstate large household waste bins with a 2 weekly collection.”

“Use larger bins and empty less frequent.”

- 6.8. Whilst libraries are still seen as important, there was an appetite for reduction in the number of libraries whether through closure of smaller libraries, and amalgamation together or with other services.

“Close some libraries and amalgamate them, do not close them all as they are a life saver for me.”

“Some branch libraries could close.”

“Council should have more mobile libraries instead, and sell library buildings. Can't libraries share accommodation with voluntary groups/charities?”

- 6.9. A number of respondents mentioned reductions in street lighting.

“Street lights switched off at midnight”

“Street lighting could be reduced, frequency of lamp posts, some authorities switch them off over night.”

- 6.10. Otherwise, there were a range of low frequency suggestions to reduce a number of services, including Childrens Centres, opening hours at New Art Gallery and Walsall Leather Museum, Services at Lantern House, school crossings where there are crossing facilities already in place, the number of traffic wardens, car parking charges because they think they are too high and they don't like the fines, reducing hospital charges and reducing foreign aid.

What services do you want to Protect?

- 6.11. Respondents were readily able to suggest services they wished to see protected. By volume, the largest volume of comments relates to the protection of libraries gathered through postcard feedback and also as a result of the nine face to face sessions held in libraries. However, within this mix comments range from asking for full protection of the Library Service, protection of specific

libraries or with elements of service provision within libraries; notably use of computers seen as an asset.

- 6.12. Where there were calls to save a particular library the following libraries were mentioned; Central library, Aldridge, Bloxwich, Darlaston, Pleck, and Streetly libraries.

“Don’t cut libraries.”

“The library is an asset to all ages and a learning environment for everybody, the library is awesome.”

“Please let us keep Streetly library, it is beautifully run and of great advantage from toddlers to octogenarians!!!”

“Please save Pleck library.”

“Libraries are very important particularly the computer access points.”

- 6.13. There were also large volumes of postcards seeking protection of specific facilities; postcards could be seen to be returned in spates including for Forest Arts Centre, Childrens Centres, New Art Gallery (with students in particular calling for its protection), and swimming facilities notably the Gala Baths. Face to Face sessions at Links to Work unsurprisingly prompted calls to protect that service including protection of the Ring and Ride.

“Forest Arts Centre should stay, it is vital for music and young people’s future activities.”

“Our Sure Start is a very good place for kids to play and learn.”

“Please protect the Gala Baths as an icon of Walsall.”

“Protect Links to Work - a good place to learn new things, Links to Work helped me to get a part time job about 7 years ago and I am still working there.”

“The Art Gallery is important to us students so that we can see artists work first hand and gives us inspiration of inspiring artists/ people that want to work in the art world.”

- 6.14. There were also a fair number of calls to protect Bus Pass concessions for the elderly. However, comments included suggestions about contributing towards costs, and means testing.

“I don’t mind contributing to the cost of my bus passes.”

“Need to keep bus pass as I would lose independence willing to pay nominal fee towards it.”

“Get free bus pass if needed but it should be means treated.”

- 6.15. More generally there were calls to protect services for the young and older people, however, most respondents did not specify which particular aspects of social care services they wanted to protect with many just stating ‘Protect Social Care’ except for some specific calls to protect mental health services especially Broadway North.

"No cuts to Mental Health Services at Broadway North Centre."

"Protect Social Services."

- 6.16. Similarly there were a number of general calls to protect Childrens services; 'No Cuts to Childrens Services', though with some reference to protecting the vulnerable, and more specific calls to protect youth service provision citing the need to offer diversion and as previously mentioned calls to protect Childrens Centres.

"We need more youth clubs to prevent anti social issues"

"Retain Blakenall Centre, the Summer programme has been brilliant this year."

"Save Youth Clubs"

"Spend more on youths in Chuckery aged 9-18 as they are hanging around the streets."

- 6.17. Calls for protection also extended to the need to protect household waste services, keeping the streets clean, leisure facilities, cultural services specifically museums, road maintenance, and services providing welfare support, and aiding people into employment.

"Can't stop bin collection." And "Protect refuse collection."

"Street cleaning should be protected from cuts" "litter services - must keep the streets clean."

"Save leisure centres, keeps people fit."

"Keep Museum & Art Gallery good for teaching children about art."

"The Leather Museum is great for children and young people."

"Road maintenance must keep - repair pot holes and maintain roads."

"Protect welfare advice and other assistance for people who need a bit of help to get back on track."

"Maintain support for the unemployed who are seeking work."

- 6.18. Alongside this were a wide range of other services mentioned for protection, often mentioned singularly and too many to mention individually but ranging for example from dog warden, rough sleepers, planning, emergency services and nursing homes.

- 6.19. However, there is a need to balance this feedback against other feedback received because often when people called for protection they also indicated appetite for service changes.

The council should look to itself to save money

- 6.20. As in previous years there were relatively large volumes of suggestions about how the council should look to itself to save money. These thoughts largely

centred on better housekeeping, service delivery efficiencies, management/staffing reductions and member related ideas.

- 6.21. Residents expect the council to be run efficiently and many comments point to suggestions about general housekeeping savings including for example thoughts on heating and lighting savings, use of buildings, stationary and printed material and spending money on unnecessary things.

"Turn off lights at offices - will save money - on during day and night"

"Sensor lights in the rooms, so lights switch off as they leave the meeting and Interview rooms."

"Solar panels to all public buildings, schools etc."

"What is happened with the Challenge Building, lights are on, heating's are on and only a hand full of staff work in there?"

"Reduce - Amount of paper and printing council does as a whole and recycle more"

"Close central library on a Sunday!!"

- 6.22. In terms of more efficient and effective service delivery, respondents expect the council to not waste money; on non essentials, and by getting things right first time and to also explore alternative options for service delivery.

"Do better road repairs first time instead of repeating lots of times this should save money." And "Stop wasting money on POOR pot holes and Road repairs."

"Can we transfer homeless services and advice to WHG?"

"Could New Art Gallery house the central library?"

"Museums should not be run directly by council but could be leased out and charges introduced for some things."

- 6.23. Streamlining management and cutting wages of higher paid earners as well as wages more generally was a common theme amongst staffing reduction suggestions.

"Too many highly paid managers."

"Cut very high paid wages."

"It would be better to cut wages or have a pay freeze rather than people losing their jobs."

- 6.24. Suggestions relating to members included a reduction in the number of ward councillors, councillor expenses, civic events and hospitality, paying for parking, and selling the mayoral car.

"Reduce the amount of councillors per ward."

"Get rid of Mayors car."

"Payment to Councillors needs to be reduced and we don't need that many Councillors."

Thoughts on out-sourcing

- 6.25. Unlike other elements of the budget consultation that directly sought views about out-sourcing services, as this feedback was open to general comments there were only a small number of comments about thoughts on out-sourcing services to others. Most suggestions about out-sourcing centred on possibilities for more volunteering often allied to the benefits of work experience, with some but hardly much about third sector partnerships or shared service delivery. There was little mention of private sector out-sourcing.

"...Should look at using voluntary services to assist."

"Can't local charities/voluntary groups deliver some other council services."

"Community volunteers to support various services, while giving people valuable work experience."

"Work together with other councils, hand over to private/voluntary sector or run by volunteers?"

Increase in fees and charges including council tax

- 6.26. Some people, unprompted, raised changes to council tax, and whilst views were mixed, overall there was some appetite for an increase. Those not in favour of change reflected that if services were reduced they expected to pay less council tax rather than more, others said not to increase it because they couldn't afford it.

"Pay for these services (libraries, Childrens & Adults) with an increase on council taxes."

"Put council tax up a bit."

"Don't increase the Council Tax, we can't afford it."

"Paying for less service should mean fewer rates?"

- 6.27. Elsewhere, there was also an appetite for the introduction and or a small increase in charges. Suggestions did not identify a key area for the increase but included a range of suggestions such as paying for lost/stolen waste bins, NAG entrance, using computers in libraries, library fines, garden waste, car parking charges, pest control and leisure centres.

"Start making a small charge for services"

"Charge for removal of garden rubbish"

"I would be happy to pay a little towards some services, e.g. pest control, but it needs to be reasonable"

Day Services focus Group (adult social care)

- 6.28. Based on discussions held with 27 residents attending Day Services, unsurprisingly they wanted to protect the services that they use and hence largely mentioned day services, community transport, advocacy services, social care service generally, Childrens services i.e. Childrens centres.

“Protect community bases, advocacy useful, protect me because I am a vulnerable adult and I need protection”

“Protect day base where I go every day because to benefit my needs”

“Protect transport i.e. community buses/bases, Ring & Ride, Advocacy. Because if I didn't have (these things) I would stay at home, lose my independence and it would not be good. “

- 6.29. In terms of how services could be delivered differently some expressed an appetite for the council working in partnership to deliver services, primarily thinking that shared services with other local authorities was a good idea, with a small number mentioning private sector collaboration assuming that services remained good and were cheaper, a few people didn't understand this question and or said 'no' to paying more for any council services they used..

“If Councils could work together and make services cheaper this would be a good idea, Saves money!”

“Good idea for council to seek private organisations if they can supply services cheaper.”

- 6.30. In addition, some thought that paying towards services was acceptable but largely only mentioned the services that they use already such as day centres, Ring & Ride, bus passes, respite, befriending, childcare. Some said it depended on the cost involved and some just said no they wouldn't be happy to pay for services as that was unaffordable or they pay enough already.

“Yes just a little extra for the use of Council transport”.

“Yes because I like going to the day centre.”

“No we pay enough at present”

7. Feedback from businesses

- 7.1. Feedback from businesses is often difficult to obtain, in addition due to a slight delay in the Business Survey going live online; at the time of writing there is limited feedback from the business community; 7 responses in total and hence care needs to be taken when interpreting this feedback whilst we await more responses. However, based on feedback received thus far respondents all appear to be well aware of the budgetary issues facing the council.

- 7.2. At this early stage in their feedback businesses equally rank 'Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work' as their first priority, alongside 'Improving safeguarding, learning and life chances for Childrens and young people'. Substantiating the importance of these priorities as the foundation

for a successful and financially secure borough and because the future starts with the young.

7.3. In terms of other priorities they cite the need to maintain local services like the Gala Baths that help enrich the community and review restrictive transport policies. They all agree with the concept of shared services favouring the sharing of support service, borough administrative and management, regeneration and neighbourhood services. Businesses have mixed views on private sector outsourcing though overall broad agreement to it, suggesting waste management services, parks, bereavement, all services not already for out-sourcing. Largely agreeing with third sector delivery though with some neutrality to it, with suggestions for specialised services that support local communities, self development including employment skills, recreational and residential property services.

7.4. Views on accepting increased to fees and charges were mixed and as many didn't know as wouldn't accept.

7.5. When asked about a range of relevant services they expressed mixed views. Businesses all said that education and skills and highways were important to them. Overall, they view Regeneration and access to markets and waste collection / recycling as important. On Planning Services, views were roughly split regarding it being important versus being neutral about it. For Building Control, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Health & Well-being, Business Support and Job creation services, views were split across important vs neutral vs not important.

7.6. When asked what they want to see protected they mentioned education and skills Gala Baths, social services, credit control. They suggest reducing administration and support services, executive management, reductions through shared services i.e. refuse collection. And in terms of ceasing, two said 'no', parking officers to allow for free parking to stimulate trade.

7.7. Overall comments showed that businesses worry about the skills shortage and that this needs to be tackled. Fears about raising income through business rates, and business being powerless without voting rights, and the need to create the conditions in which businesses can thrive without the council interfering or being overly controlling.

8. Staff feedback

8.1. In total 149 members of staff took part in the online staff survey, providing just under 350 individual comments. Based on where they said they worked the vast majority of responses (46%) were from staff working in Resources, followed by Neighbourhoods (26%), Children's (16%), Social Care and Inclusion (10%), and Regeneration (3%). Two fifths of comments related to the whole organisation, with the remaining comments spread fairly evenly across the directorates. The key question posed to staff was simply *'What are your ideas for savings and efficiencies?'*

8.2. Staff comments can be broadly summarised into the following themes;

- service design and delivery
- human resourcing
- staffing structures
- change activity and
- political structures.

8.3. As with all qualitative research summarising the complex range of comments is not easy, however, the following summary covers the main themes supported by a sample of comments. Comments are being shared back with directorates so that greater consideration can be given to all suggestions.

Service design and delivery

8.4. The majority, about two thirds, of staff comments included suggestions for service efficiency/design. Calls to directly cease services were very small in number, there were some customer facing services mentioned, suggesting that some staff were answering as a resident, with more targeting 'internal' back office functions which are perceived to be superfluous to requirements. Most comments offered were general suggestions regarding alternative ways of delivery including an appetite for shared service delivery and outsourcing, with only some specific calls for service protection.

"Share Services with Walsall Partnerships like WHG, Accord, Age Concern, Walsall NHS and other Walsall Businesses who deliver services to customers."

"Share services with Black Country- pull in budgets for certain areas like Regeneration, Libraries, Neighbourhoods, and HR services."

"Revisit shared services (again, but properly this time) for HR, payroll, ICT, procurement, finance i.e. back office support services"

8.5. Staff made lots of comments about the potential for service improvements; ranging from working more efficiently to exploiting potential for income maximisation.

"We have two different systems provided by Mayrise for example which might be better managed as an overall contract."

"Part of my job as an administrator entails procedures which, because of the software involved, involve me typing the same names out twice and then selecting them once again to input into the software. Thus the same names have to be dealt with in 3 different operations...."

"I understand that there are thousands of pounds uncollected on outstanding care charges, also SC&I have no facility to collect monies by direct debit which encourages prompt payment. Direct payments are not audited and also surely it would be simpler to take the contribution from the allowance and pay the balance, especially where bad payers are concerned."

Human Resourcing, staffing structures and change management

- 8.6. About 15% of comments relate to HR / personnel issues; notably concerning use of agency staff / consultants and employment terms and conditions (i.e. sick pay, bank holidays, allowances etc). Staff called for a review of the use of agency and consultancy staff from the perspective of reducing the need for redundancies by favouring existing employees and hence saving money and improving morale.

"With jobs at risk the recruitment of consultants is simply wrong."

"Walsall Council need to reduce agency costs and consultancy costs. Consultants should not be allowed to appoint other consultants and those who they know and have worked with in the past."

"Need to utilise existing staff instead of bringing in external people all the time - money would then certainly be saved. This is an issue that has been raised time and time again during the budget restraints and yet it continues to happen."

- 8.7. Amongst the comments made about employee terms and conditions staff suggested the sickness pay policy should be reviewed to consider payments for the first few days of sickness, not paying enhancements when off sick and reducing the period of full sick pay. With a suggestion about incentivising reduction in sick leave by payment of a reward for 0 Bradford factor scores.

"...not paying staff who are off sick for the first 1-7 days of their sickness..."

"When staff are off work sick why do we pay enhancements? Should just be basic rate."

"...Review sick pay provision e.g. 6 months full pay / then half pay. Reduce to three months full pay, three months half pay. Do not pay for first day of absence"

"Introduce a bonus clause for people who have a 0 Bradford factor score for no sickness days, doing this will see a huge improvement from people not taking sickness...."

- 8.8. Staff also called for a review of the car allowance scheme, feeling that it was already a generous scheme with potential for reductions in mileage allowances and for ceasing essential allowances, where there's evidence it is not appropriately provided.

"Reduce mileage allowances to staff - they are over generous."

"... stop all essential car users allowance; as many staff have it and rarely go out the office! It should be kept for staff who HAVE to go out regularly e.g. social workers/care assistants etc...."

- 8.9. There are also suggestions regarding a reduction in the standard working week, either permanently or time limited and taking unpaid leave to facilitate the closure of buildings during certain holiday periods.

“Employees could temporarily reduce their working hours from 37 hrs per week to 36 or 35 hrs per week for 3-6 months. This will save costs.”

“Over the Christmas period we should have a shutdown for an extra day or two (excluding bank holidays), individuals should be given the opportunity to use annual leave or take un-paid leave. This will save costs.”

- 8.10. A number of staff comments reflect an impact of the budget reductions on morale within the organisation. They are feeling the pressures of past staffing reductions where they feel that workload hasn't similarly reduced. They are cynical about the process of reorganisation and there's a sense of competitiveness of position leading to a lack of trust. Feeling also that they are paying the price through salary reductions.

“Too many staff leaving due to moral being so low and the fact that a lot of managers are doing the work of persons on a lower scale as there is not enough work to justify them being in that position.”

“Trust has disappeared in the council.... If you are close and friendly with your manager or somebody higher up, you will progress at the expense of others who are more hardworking then them. All future re-structures, job descriptions, interviews should be done by an external 3rd party to prevent the above..”

“Posts have been created which I feel are not needed and these staff have been taken away from their day to day work where there would be of more use, as other team members are having to try and do their own work as well as the work off their colleagues also they have been put on a higher grade?”

- 8.11. Just over 10% of comments included issues with management structures centering on the need to have a more strategically driven and organisation wide review of the number of managers at all levels. Staff perceive that there has been a disproportionate reduction in staffing at lower levels that has not being similarly reflected at higher 'management' levels; proposing the need for a review of directorates and senior management structures. Also that there are in discrepancies in structures within individual Directorates. The use of agency staff to back fill gaps in staffing is also raised as an issue.

“Reduce the number of executive directors (and/or other managers of high levels) to reflect the reducing numbers of staff.”

“When considering removing posts, please look from the top down. Senior management levels are far too high, whereas lower tiers of the council are disproportionately affected. Do not cut posts to such an extent that agency backfill is required to cover the workload.”

“Full council wide management review to ensure standard gradings and hierarchy. Scope to merge services to save on management costs.”

- 8.12. Staff are negative about change activity both recent and looking forward. They appear unclear about the outcomes, notably financial, that are being achieved

based on what they see involves significant investment especially involving senior management.

“Review the impact of initiatives such as working smarter and the more recent one, Shaping the Future, what savings have really been achieved, can we afford Executive Directors and Assistant Directors to be involved in such things?”

“Smarter working - what is this costing the council? In Clean & Green services staff have been working on projects supported by corporate team which must have cost the council circa £100K to £200K in salaries of staff working on initiatives to supposedly improve efficiencies and make financial savings. To date (over the past 18 months), it is questionable as to whether £1 has been delivered in efficiencies to services such as tree, grounds and waste management.”

“Need to look at exactly what "smarter working" is doing and achieved, if anything.”

Political structures

8.13 Staff also offered thoughts on savings associated with political structures largely regarding reducing the number of elected members per ward or through ward boundary review, but also a review of governance structures and election processes and resourcing. Other comments related to member allowances calling for the same pay pressures as staff i.e. pay freeze.

“Review number of wards, and thus reduce number of councillors.”

“Cut the number of Councillors by 1/3 from 60 down to 40.”

“Reduce number of scrutiny panels and admin support.”

“Reduce members allowances and responsibility allowances.”

“Elections should be held once every 4 years, not every year for 3 years. This would allow one political party to deliver on their longer term plans and not focus on 1 year and winning votes at the next election. Costs of hosting an election would also be reduced.”

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