



Walsall Council

Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 20th April, 2009, at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor T.G. Ansell (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor A.G. Clarke (Deputy Mayor)

“ K. Aftab
“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ D.A. Anson
“ M. Arif
“ C.M. Ault
“ J.M. Barton
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ P. Bott
“ R. Carpenter
“ B. Cassidy
“ K. Chambers
“ J. R. Cook
“ S.P. Coughlan
“ C.U. Creaney
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ M. D. Flower
“ A.E. Griffiths
“ A.D. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ E.F. Hughes
“ P.F. Hughes
“ H. Khan
“ M. Longhi

Councillor S.W. Madeley

“ Ms. R.A. Martin
“ Mrs. B.V. McCracken
“ M. Munir
“ Mushtaq Ahmed
“ M. Nazir
“ T.S.Oliver
“ A.J. Paul
“ G. Perry
“ K. Phillips
“ D.J. Pitt
“ Mrs. E.E. Pitt
“ I.C. Robertson
“ J. Rochelle
“ B. Sanders
“ H.S. Sarohi
“ K. Sears
“ Mrs. D.A. Shires
“ I. Shires
“ P.E. Smith
“ D.J. Turner
“ W.T. Tweddle
“ R.A. Walker
“ G. Wilkes
“ V.G. Woodruff
“ P.A. Young

86. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Beeley, Johnson, O'Hare, M.G. Pitt, Towe, Underhill, Yasin and Zahid Ali.

87. Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2009, copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed.

88. Declarations of interest

The following members declared their interest in the items indicated:

Councillor Longhi	Question 7(3) – Stress at Walsall Manor Hospital (personal and prejudicial)
Councillor Perry	Question 7(3) – Walsall Manor Hospital (personal and prejudicial)
Councillor Woodruff	Question 7(3) – Walsall Manor Hospital (personal and prejudicial)

89. Mayor's announcements

The Mayor invited members and officers to the parlour for a drink as this was the last meeting of the municipal year.

90. Petitions

The following petitions were submitted:

- (1) Councillor Ault – New parking restrictions - Highfield Road, Pelsall
- (2) Councillor Phillips – Making Harrison Street, Bloxwich one-way to High Street

91. Questions by members of the Council

(1) Hunter Crescent, Forest Estate brown bins

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Walker:

“Will the portfolio holder for the Environment inform me, this Council and the public why Hunter Crescent, Forest Estate, Walsall is the only street on the Forest Estate to have been excluded from the Brown Bin re-cycling scheme despite the Hunter Crescent properties having approximately the same sized gardens of the other properties in the surrounding streets on the estate that are included in the scheme?”

Councillor Walker replied that properties in Hunter Crescent, Forest Estate were scheduled to receive brown bins in the last brown bin roll-out, unfortunately due to a communication error with the distribution crew this did not happen. The situation has now been rectified and all properties in Hunter Crescent have been issued with a brown bin.

Councillor Smith thanked Councillor Walker and hoped that the brown bin service would be extended as soon as possible in the interest of fairness and equality.

Councillor Walker said that there was no provision in this year’s budget to roll out further.

(2) Home Care provision

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor McCracken:

“Will the appropriate portfolio holder give me, this Council and the public an outline of how the Council monitors both qualitatively and quantitatively the home care provision for those Walsall Borough residents receiving it and in particular, whether procedures in place are sufficiently robust enough to have identified in the past or be capable of identifying in the future, any examples of mismatch between the time periods being spent with those cared for and the time periods being paid to care providers for such care?”

Councillor McCracken replied that we have 1700 people in care and their needs vary widely, we aim to provide the best service. Service users receiving care funded by Walsall Council receive at least one review a year at which the home care package is discussed and evaluated with the agency providing the care, the Care Manager or Social Worker, the service user and any carers or family. This review includes checking that the service user and family, or carers, are satisfied with the service they are receiving and that it is meeting their expectations, as well as that of social care. The service user receives an updated care plan which is agreed at the review, as well as contact details for social care staff and information about the comment and complaints procedure.

Councillor McCracken said that in addition, the commissioners conduct an annual survey with a random selection of services which provides a broader picture.

We are working towards introducing an electronic monitoring system with all of our provider agencies, including in-house home care.

The contracts monitoring team also check the delivery of home care through two mechanisms: one related to performance and the other a contract compliance concern management procedure. The former is based on inspections and the process is included as additional information. The latter procedure responds to notices of concern, of which we had 127 between 1 October 2008 and 31 March 2009.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

In the light of your reply, can you assure us that we cannot have a situation where care visitors are going on a half-hour visit and only staying for 10 minutes. If this was across the borough, it would mean that a lot of money wasted.

Councillor McCracken said it would be serious and could not give an assurance, but if you or any members of the Council could provide proper evidence she promised that officers would investigate.

(3) Walsall Manor Hospital

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Oliver:

“Could the Chairman of the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel inform me, this Council and the public whether he is aware that the Health and Safety Executive or any other public body, has in the last 6 months, conducted a survey involving a representative number of Walsall Manor Hospital Staff and where the results pointed to high levels of stress amongst Manor Hospital workers? And whatever the answer, could the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel investigate the extent of such stress and any related absenteeism amongst the Hospital workers as well as the extent to which there is a correlation between stress levels, the cuts in staffing levels and the quality of services being provided by the Hospital to the citizens of our Borough?”

Councillor Oliver said that he understood that the Health and Safety Executive conducted an audit into work related stress at Walsall Hospitals Trust between 12 and 16 January 2009. The audit included information gathered from interviews with approximately 61 staff, including managers.

The Health and Safety audit report did not specifically identify a high level of stress within the trust, however the audit identified examples of good practice as well as scope for improvement. The Health and Safety Executive audit did not quantify the level of stress in the trust.

The 2008 Health Care Commission staff survey showed that 30% of staff reported suffering from work related stress in the last 12 months. This was a reduction from the figure in the 2007 survey (36%) and was similar to the stress levels reported in 60% of trusts nationally. At present the trust's absenteeism data does not differentiate between staff who are absent due to work related as opposed to other forms of stress. The Health and Safety Executive has recommended that the trust modified the methods of recording sickness to enable this differentiation to be carried out and this was underway.

The Health and Safety Executive report did comment on the fact the trust was undergoing a lot of change in a short space of time. The Health and Safety Executive did not highlight any issue of stress related specifically to cuts in staffing levels, although redeployment was one of the types of change mentioned in the report.

Councillor Oliver said that In relation to the second part of the question, health was a statutory role undertaken by the Health Sub-Panel and this would be passed on. There were two other issues, one the current PFI trust status and the issue at Mid Staffordshire Hospital. We are sceptical of PFI's but clearly there are some issues to look at over the next 12 months at the Manor Hospital. We also have to acknowledge that the new hospital has been kept in Walsall. With regard to the issues relating to Mid. Staffs what has been reported is dereliction of care and too much reliance has been paid to targets. He went on to say that he had asked how these things were monitored in Walsall and was told that the board received regular reports which showed no problems.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Can Councillor Oliver comment on the fact that the Health Sub-Committee is chaired by an employee of the Trust and does this not put the Sub-Committee in a difficult position with the chair declaring an interest but still continuing to chair the meeting and secondly what are the sources of the information given to Councillor Oliver, is it from the Trust with spin or from other sources.

Councillor Oliver replied that in respect of the chairing of the Sub-Committee this was a matter for the Chair to sort out. With regard to the second part of the supplementary question the response was from NHS Walsall which reflects the body of a confidential report.

92. Rushall-Shelfield Ward by-election

The Council noted the following result of the by-election for the Rushall-Shelfield Ward held on 26th February 2009:

Name of candidates	Votes cast	Candidate elected
Carpenter, Ronald Ernest George	809	Ronald Ernest George Carpenter
Jeavons, Lee David	411	
MacNaughton, Karl Raymond	61	
Melville, Timothy Neil	165	
Smith, Leslie Roy	178	

Percentage turnout – 18.09%

93. **State of Walsall debate**

Councillor Andrew, the Deputy Leader presented the following statement in the absence of Councillor O'Hare.

The last 12 months has been marked by the huge deterioration in the economic situation of the country, it has impacted on the finances of the Council and the recent budget.

There does not seem to be any sign of changes for the better and further pressures will impact on this borough. Commentators are predicting that the budget on Wednesday will do nothing to get this country out of the worst recession since World War 2.

Predictions of a £15 billion efficiency drive over the next few years, to be set out in the budget, will cost thousands of jobs across the public sector – but for any new government the challenges to keep jobs secure and taxes down will grow and grow.

In Walsall we have seen the effects of the recession at first hand. Hundreds of thousands of pounds wiped off Council income due to the reduced number of planning applications, land searches and use of leisure facilities despite over 1 million people visiting our leisure facilities because of local people feeling the national pinch.

It is estimated over 3500 jobs have been lost in Walsall with companies such as Wagon, Amtrak, George Carter Pressings, Payne Truck Bodies, Mazaks, Bolton Brass and Woolworths closing along with the other smaller businesses that do not hit the headlines. This in itself has put further pressure on the Benefits, Welfare Advice Team and the Economic Regeneration Team but we have succeeded, through strengthening these departments to support residents and businesses in this borough through these difficult times with the right advice and support. A successful example of this are the road shows that have started in Beechdale and are moving on to Brownhills and Walsall Town Centre to support people back into work or get them immediate advice following redundancy.

Despite the gloomy outlook we have still been able to achieve success for the people of Walsall:-

- The successful implementation of a new recycling system that increased resident capacity for recycling from 70 litres to 240 litres will see recycling rates in the borough jump to 42% despite the doom-mongers and scaremongers in this chamber and beyond who said it would never work. It seems that the only complaint at the moment is residents want their recycling collected every week – an issue that was illustrated to me by a Willenhall resident.
- In the last year we have delivered a New Library in Walsall Wood and fully remodelled Pleck Library. We have carried out improvements to Beechdale, Darlaston and Pheasey. We are still committed to a new Bentley Library, as part of the overall regeneration of Bentley, working with the local community and local ward Councillors to deliver the inspirational library that local people have been working towards. A joint scheme, which has again been driven by local ward members, with the NHS, Children's Centre and Library in Pelsall is making great progress with funds allocated as part of this year's capital programme. A lottery bid is due to commence in late summer to improve Bloxwich Library and Theatre with full local ward support.

We accept that we have taken the step in this year's budget to reduce the opening hours of libraries but it is easier to increase the opening hours of a library when the financial situation improves than it is to build or re-open a new library when it has closed. We have not ripped these facilities out of communities despite the poor number of visits to some of the libraries in this borough.

- Green Flag status has been retained in Palfrey Park and we have achieved Green Flag Status in Willenhall Park. These awards do not just fall in the lap of the Council they are gained through the hard work of the Council along with the very successful hard working Friends Groups in these parks – these are excellent examples of the Council working in partnership with local resident groups.
- Free under 17 swimming was introduced by this administration before the Government initiative and we welcome Government support for this in Walsall. The use of swimming pools has increased by 45% and incidentally the membership of the gyms in our five sports centres has increased to record levels.
- Our commitment to making services more accessible to local people has been enhanced by the launch of a new customer service mobile bus "The First Stop Express". This will provide access to information and advice at grassroots level coupled with this is the expansion of the telephone contact centre to respond more effectively to calls from local residents.
- The Ring Road is nearing completion and will improve access and traffic flow in and around town. I understand that there are concerns about the number of traffic lights along this route and I assure you it is not an attempt to create permanent illuminations in the town and we will see that the system will settle down over time as people get used to using it.

This project has raised some interesting issues with regard to the accountability of the utilities to local government, particularly when they are an intrinsic part of undertaking a huge project like this. It is interesting to note that the Utility Firms have been hit with over £8.5 million penalty charges over the last year for allowing thousands of road works to overrun – perhaps we should lead the way and consider how, as the elected body in this borough, we can scrutinise what other organisations are doing who deliver services in the Borough.

- Anti-social behaviour has been scrutinised by the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Panel, engaging with the Safer Walsall Partnership, Police, Housing Services and many others.

Alongside this great strides have been made to target troublesome areas and the setting up of a Borough Tasking Group has contributed to a targeted and co-ordinated response from partners. This has been rolled out to all local communities under the Community Action Tasking and should lead to further success in improving the effectiveness of agencies to respond to the concerns of local communities.

Walsall has been identified as a priority area for the Home Office National Crime and Justice programme, as a result the SWP has appointed a Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Co-ordinator who will focus on making sure partners deliver on pledges to reduce crime and ensure an expedient restorative justice programme.

- We continue to see the improvement in residential care for the elderly with significant progress on the new facilities in Mossley and Walsall Wood. This partnership with Housing 21 will result in £42 million capital investment in extra care housing at a time when we witness other authorities up and down the country closing elderly accommodation. This partnership and investment, that we have secured, demonstrates a commitment to the vulnerable elderly in this borough.
- Performance in Health and Social Care has improved steadily across the board in all service areas and significantly in others for example setting up care services and reviewing needs in a timely fashion. Older people's teams have completed 100% of their reviews to target and on time and continue to improve.
- The People First team is in the front line of implementing changes in accordance with national policy which will result in easier access to services and increased choice for the people of Walsall.
- Over the last year 200 properties have been adapted to meet the needs of vulnerable people and to keep people in their own homes, 1,162 additional packages of Telecare support for vulnerable households and 550 programmes of housing support to vulnerable adults represents a commitment by this administration to caring for vulnerable people in our Society.

Clearly this area is one of the largest demand led budget pressures facing not only this Council but many others up and down the country and new Government legislation that is imposed on local Councils, some of it is necessary always seems to be implemented without any thought for the financial burden on local government and the real impact on care. Whatever happens at the next General Election the Government will have to make this area a priority because as the 'Baby Boomers' are getting older and the younger, working population getting smaller the pressure will not only continue but will increase – this is not just an issue for local government but a cultural change on how we care for older and vulnerable people.

- In the last 12 months we have secured a long term partnership with SERCO to improve education attainment in the borough and we have seen in the recent results that the performance of the borough has improved well with an impressive 8.9% increase in A – C GCSE Grades compared to the year before and Primary School results have increased across the borough with 2 Primary Schools in the top 200 in the country.
- We have clearly seen some debate about how the delivery of Education in the borough is to change with the implementation of an Academy at Shelfield School and Darlaston Academy being debated at Cabinet on Friday. The issue of Sneyd has been key in the last few months and the recommendation from Cabinet, following a cross party scrutiny process, will to continue with Education provision on the Sneyd site and an exciting 14-19 Engineering Academy is recommended.
- Coupled with the contentious issues we have seen approval by this administration to rebuild Barcroft School, another massive investment in Primary Education in Willenhall; Trust Status for Pool Hayes School. We continue to see the improvements to Joseph Leckie School with the £6 million allocated by this Council providing the finance to build a new block. We have seen the completion and opening of a state of the art Mary Elliot School. We have seen a multi million pound programme approved to invest in school improvements and repairs across the borough.
- We have seen that The Joint Area Review inspection has judged that we have a 'good service with good capacity to improve'
- The regeneration of the Borough continues although at a slower pace due to the economic climate. The policy of district centre and neighbourhood regeneration continues in partnership with Walsall Housing Group (WHG) through the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF):-

We have seen regeneration projects across the borough that illustrate that we are focusing on the whole borough the SRF in partnership with WHG and through our corridors strategy. These policies have seen investment in district and neighbourhood centres to drive forward improvements. These areas include

Brownhills, Walsall Wood, Pleck, Bentley, Moxley, Goscote, Willenhall, Birchills and more recently Darlaston. The emphasis being on local people being involved in the regeneration of their communities.

The policy of District Centre Management has been mainstreamed in the budget and has a major impact in all District Centres, Aldridge has particularly benefited from this policy in terms of the events and specialist markets that have taken place in the town.

In the borough centre we continue to see the excellent progress of the Walsall First Project which includes the new College building, opening in September and the development of a new Tesco on the old college site along with associated development and the creation of a new Wisemore. The excellent work that the URC is undertaking in conjunction with the Council to develop the Gigaport, The Waterfront (north and south). The new hospital is making excellent progress. The Darlaston Strategic Development Area is moving forward with development of new infrastructure, this is illustrated by the recent announcement about work to start on replacing bridges on Bentley Road, this at the heart of the SDA to improve the infrastructure to attract investment.

In these challenging economic times the Council is also at the forefront of concerted efforts to tackle the impact of the worst recession since World War 2. The Council, working with our partners, will be investing £12 million of Working Neighbourhood Funds to help those at risk of redundancy, improve skills levels and support business to survive and grow. This will be a key challenge and focus over the coming year.

- The creation of a mobile administration team to reduce reliance on agency staff has been established and the collection of 91% of rolling 12 month debt has been achieved against a target of 85%.
- 15 business improvement projects have been completed across the Council generating over 500K of savings and efficiencies.
- Finance – 3.8% Council tax with results in a 50 - 90p a week increase to get the balance between protecting services and protecting the pound in peoples pocket and we have done this without extending our unsupported borrowing requirement this year.
- Finance has also increased the number of e-payments reducing administration costs and proactively contacted small businesses to maximise take up of small business rate relief.
- Welfare rights have delivered over 250 surgeries, an increase of 20% and increased benefit maximisation from £6 million to £8.5 million. They have also developed and provided a debt service – crucial in today's climate.

We continue with regional and partnership working with the Leader, sometimes the deputy, attending regular meetings of the West Midlands Joint Committee, the Regional Forum of Leaders, City Region Board, the Black Country Consortium of which the Leader is the Vice-Chairman and the recently established Association of Black Country Authorities; a strategic and regular meeting of the Leaders of the four Black Country authorities and Chief Executives.

The regional agenda is clearly important will not imminently change with a new government, whatever our individual views on regionalism, it is vitally important that Walsall is sitting around the table punching our weight, or above, in order to have influence on such regional working as the Multi Area Agreement on Skills and the proposals for an accelerated development zone which could result in millions being invested in Walsall.

The year has seen some great changes and challenges in the borough but with the stability after the first year of a new Chief Executive and I think you will agree we have chosen wisely.

The inspection regime continues to add pressure to the Council particularly the costs of the inspections and the fact that the CPA has become a more stringent process to retain our 3 stars was a great result and achievement for this Council. In the recent CPA the direction of travel described the extent of improvement compared to other Councils as good and the Council has effective leadership, tangible ambitions and clear achievement. We are confident that if the CPA remained in place we would be boking forward to a 4 star rating – we look forward to the challenges of the CAA.

The future year will be a challenge for this Council and this borough. With the worsening economic situation, the crisis in public sector finance I think it is incumbent to warn that next year's budget will be one of the most difficult faced by this Council. We are told that there is an expectation from government for £15 billion efficiency over the next few years, we are told that there are green shoots of recovery but it seems they will be taxed out of existence in Wednesdays budget, the impact alone of 0.5% increase in national insurance will cost this Council £520k, but we are an administration for the whole of the borough of Walsall making decisions, sometimes difficult, improving the lives and communities in every part of the borough and we will continue to work to ensure that the borough of Walsall has a bright future.

Finally, Mr. Mayor, I am told that you will have undertaken 471 engagements at today's date, this is a great achievement and as the first citizen you have represented the borough well.

I commend this statement to the Council.

Councillors Oliver and I. Shires responded to the statement made by the Deputy Leader.

94. **Recommendations of Cabinet**

(1) **Corporate Plan 2009/10**

The report of Cabinet was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Andrew, seconded by Councillor Harris and:

Resolved

That the Corporate Plan 2009/10 be adopted.

(2) **Proposed transfer of Almshouses to a Registered Social Landlord**

The report of Cabinet was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor McCracken, duly seconded and:

Resolved

- (a) That the Council as trustee apply to the Charities Commission for consent to transfer the trusteeship and the freehold interest in the 11 almshouses at 1-7 Heather Close and 80-83 Sandbank, Bloxwich to a Registered Social Landlord.
- (b) That the Council as trustee delegates authority to the Executive Director, Regeneration to negotiate the transfer to the Registered Social Landlord which can best meet the criteria set down by the Council and Charities Commission.

95. **Corporate risk management**

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Griffiths, duly seconded and:

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report and Appendix 1 setting out the range of activities that have embedded risk management in all Council activities be noted.
- (2) That the activity undertaken in further embedding risk management across the organisation in 2008/2009 be noted.
- (3) That the Council endorse the resolution of the Audit Committee and Cabinet that the Corporate Risk Management Strategy be accepted and support the application of the revised strategy and allied processes.

- (4) That the work undertaken by the Audit Committee and Cabinet in ensuring that risk is being actively managed within the organisation be acknowledged.

96. Annual scrutiny report 2008/2009

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor D. Pitt, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That the annual scrutiny report for 2008/2009 be noted and that this will inform further development of the Council's scrutiny function.

97. Annual report of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Ault, duly seconded and

Resolved

That the Annual Report of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education be received and noted.

At this point in the meeting, the Council sat as charitable trustees when considering the following two items when the normal Council procedure rules did not apply.

98. Walsall Wood Head Gear Sculpture

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Flower, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That the Council acting as trustees on behalf of Cannock Chase and Pelsall District Miners Charity, for the land approves the installation of the piece of public art to the site at Oak Park, Walsall Wood subject to planning permission being granted and consent being given for the long-term maintenance of the installations.

99. **Annual report of Barr Beacon Trust Management Committee**

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Clarke, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That the report be noted.

The Council resumed sitting as Council under Council procedures rules.

100. **Notice of motion – LABGI funding**

The report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Oliver and duly seconded:

“As the Council notes:

- (1) The decisions taken in relation to the Council’s 2009/2010 budget at the meeting on the 23rd February 2009.
- (2) The notification as 24th February 2009 of Local Authority Business Growth Initiative (LABGI) contingency funding from Government to a total of £314,800 in Walsall which is unringfenced grant.

This Council therefore resolves that Cabinet be requested to consider that this additional LABGI funding be used to replenish changes in the Council budget as follows:

- That the increase in charges for meals on wheels be pegged at 2.5% instead of the current 10.5% (cost: £20,248).
- That the cut to the highways maintenance budget be reinstated (cost: £75,000).
- That finance be resolved to be used for additional activities for young people, including provision through the voluntary sector and for sport (cost: £69,552).
- That the Ready Steady Summer scheme for young people be reinstated for 2009 (cost: £50,000).

- That a review be undertaken of respite care across older peoples services, learning disability services, mental health services and young adults disability services, with a view to increasing equity of access (cost: £100,000).

and that a report on this matter be submitted to the Council at its next meeting.”

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **lost** – the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:-

**For the motion -
22 members**

Cllr: Oliver
I. Shires
Anson
C. Bott
P. Bott
Cassidy
Chambers
Cook
Coughlan
Creaney
P. Hughes
Khan
Madeley
Nazir
Phillips
E.E. Pitt
Robertson
Sarohi
D.A. Shires
Smith
Wilkes
Woodruff

**Against the motion -
28 members**

Cllr: Aftab
Ahmed
Andrew
Ansell
Arif
Ault
Bird
Carpenter
Clarke
Douglas-Maul
Flower
Griffiths
Harris
Harrison
E. Hughes
Longhi
Martin
McCracken
Munir
Paul
Perry
D. Pitt
Rochelle
Sanders
Sears
Turner
Tweddle
Walker

At this point in the meeting the time being 8.55 p.m., it was **moved** by Councillor Oliver and duly seconded:

That Council procedure rule 9(a) be suspended for the remainder of the meeting in order to enable the business to be completed.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That Council procedure rule 9(a) be suspended for the remainder of the meeting in order to enable the business to be completed.

101. Notice of motion – Police service

The report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Coughlan and duly seconded:

“This Council:

- (1) Stresses the need for the Police Service to work closely with local Councils and other agencies, and commends the successful relationships being built up through the Safer Walsall Partnership and in many other Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships;
- (2) Notes that a significant proportion of Council tax is spent on policing.
- (3) Welcomes steps taken to increase the responsiveness of the service and keep the public informed e.g. by crime mapping, policing pledge, etc.
- (4) Recognises that greater transparency and accountability are required at neighbourhood basic command unit and force level but;
- (5) Rejects proposals for the direct election of Police Authority members or Police Commissioners and welcomes the Home Secretary’s decision not to proceed with such proposals.

This Council therefore calls upon the Local Government Association to enter into discussion with it and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) to seek to build a consensus on ways of achieving the objectives set out in paragraph (4) above, without establishing competing mandates with local Councils, but by means of, inter alia, greater support for all police authority members, training, peer review, closer scrutiny (involving independent members) to enhance the effectiveness of police authorities within the local democratic framework.”

Amendment moved by Councillor I. Shires and seconded by Councillor P. Hughes:

That paragraph (5) of the motion be deleted and replaced with the following:

- (5) Calls for 50 extra police on the streets of Walsall, paid for by the scrapping of identity cards.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried and became the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That this Council:

- (1) Stresses the need for the Police Service to work closely with local Councils and other agencies, and commends the successful relationships being built up through the Safer Walsall Partnership and in many other Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships;
- (2) Notes that a significant proportion of Council tax is spent on policing.
- (3) Welcomes steps taken to increase the responsiveness of the service and keep the public informed e.g. by crime mapping, policing pledge, etc.
- (4) Recognises that greater transparency and accountability are required at neighbourhood basic command unit and force level but;
- (5) Calls for 50 extra police on the streets of Walsall, paid for by the scrapping of identity cards.

This Council therefore calls upon the Local Government Association to enter into discussion with it and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) to seek to build a consensus on ways of achieving the objectives set out in paragraph (4) above, without establishing competing mandates with local Councils, but by means of, inter alia, greater support for all police authority members, training, peer review, closer scrutiny (involving independent members) to enhance the effectiveness of police authorities within the local democratic framework.

The meeting terminated at 9.20 p.m.