



Walsall Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY the 20TH day of SEPTEMBER 2021 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Town Hall, Walsall.

Public access via: <https://youtu.be/1E3FWktBW80>

Dated this 10th day of September 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:

1. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
2. Apologies.
3. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 26th May, 2021 (**pages 6 to 20**)
4. Declarations of interest.
5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
6. Mayor's announcements.

7. Appointment of Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021/2022.
8. To receive any petitions
9. To answer any questions in accordance with Council procedure rules:

(a) From the public:

The harvestime housing development is over 50 % complete in Raleigh Street Birchills Pleck ward. What progress has been made on traffic management plan for local area as approved in planning consent.

(b) From members of the Council:

Councillor Smith:-

Given that:

- a) at an Extra ordinary Meeting of Walsall Council, held in private, on 7th August 2017, Walsall Council agreed, after a named vote (27 for, 21 against) to support a Motion moved by the then Leader of the Council, Cllr S. Coughlan and seconded by Cllr. A Nawaz to *“approve an amendment to the 2017.18 Capital Programme to include a budget for the acquisition of the Saddlers Centre Shopping Centre and associated purchase costs of £13.802m”* , effectively buying a previously privately owned town centre shopping centre (the Saddlers Centre) that had made a loss of over £2.9m in the year before (2016), according to Topland (Saddlers, Walsall) Limited Financial Statement dated 31/5/16 and
- b) at the time Walsall Council was seeking to “save” £86m by 2020, including the closure of libraries, less grass cutting & street cleaning and other front line cuts,
- c) The Council at the time was receiving “due diligence” advice that supported the acquisition, from Cushman & Wakefield Investment Teams based in London & Birmingham whilst simultaneously a Cushman& Wakefield team based in Bristol was acting for the vendors (Topland), and furthermore, at that time, Cushman & Wakefield also had an interest in the near by Old Square Shopping Centre
- d) The then Leader of the Council, Cllr. S Coughlan was quoted in a statement published on 9/8/17 as saying “This is a very positive story for Walsall. This acquisition will provide the Council with an opportunity to add to its existing investment portfolio whilst the rental income generated will meet the aims and requirements of the Council’s four year financial plan.”

can the present Leader of the Council explain to what extent the 21- strong opposition in a named vote at the meeting of 7/8/17 to this purchase, has been

vindicated, with particular reference to the forecasted anticipated cash surplus based on the Asset Management Strategy for the property prepared by the Council's external property experts, Cushman & Wakefield which included both capital return on an assumption of sale at the end of a five year period (from 2017) plus rental income minus costs?

Councillor Smith:-

If as Leader of the Council, you accept, either wholly or partially that:

a) many people feel that it is time to get Walsall Council "back to normal", including the opening up of the Civic Centre to the public and so that face to face meetings can soon be held in Committee Rooms and the Council chamber without the need for laptops, headphones, masks, etc. for those who feel comfortable doing so and so that members of the public can once again have an opportunity to attend, observe and speak (where appropriate) in the interests of democratic accountability,

and

b) many people feel that there seems to be an apparent drive to make it easier (if not compulsory) for more and more Office Council employees to work from home, which is detrimental to good communications and accountability,

and

c) many people feel that the drive for more "working from home" will have a negative impact on the regeneration of the town centre and could also have a demotivating effect on much of the workforce,

Will you therefore, if this drive for more and more office-based workers to work from home becomes inevitable, **comment on the views that** these "remote employees" could become particularly vulnerable in any future drives to save money if looking to delete posts and that the financial viability of the Civic Centre itself could become questionable, thus leading to the call to "rent out" more units of the Civic Centre and/or even to consider it being put up for sale?

10. To confirm the following recommendation of **Cabinet**:

Treasury Management Annual Report (pages 21 – 48)

To note (in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017)), the annual position statement for treasury management activities 2020/21 including prudential and local indicators (Appendix A).

(Note: Report of Cabinet reproduced for this meeting)

11. To confirm the following recommendation of **Standards Committee**:
Code of Conduct for Elected Members (pages 49 – 74)
That the Code of Conduct for Councillors be approved.
(Note: Report of Standards reproduced for this meeting)
12. To confirm the following recommendation of **Licensing and Safety Committee**:
Statement of Licensing Policy and Cumulative Impact Assessment (pages 75 – 156)
That the Statement of Licensing Policy and Cumulative Impact Assessment be approved.
(Note: Report of Licensing and Safety Committee reproduced for this meeting)
13. **Annual report of Audit Committee 2020/21**. Report to Audit Committee on 8 July 2021 reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. **(pages 157 – 168)**
14. **Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-2021**. Report enclosed **(pages 169 – 191)**
15. **Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition of Antisemitism** - Report enclosed **(pages 192 – 196)**
16. **Portfolio holder briefing**. To receive a 5 minute presentation from the Leader of the Council. Report **to follow**.

(Note: A member of the Council may ask the portfolio holder any question and another associate question without notice upon each report. Questioning by members is limited to 10 minutes for each report presented.)
17. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors A. Nawaz, k. Hussain, N. Gultasib, R. Worrall, I. Roberston, S. Nasreen and H. Bashir**.

This Council recognises the £20 uplift in Universal Credit has been a significant help to the most poorest families in our country including families in Walsall; and

This Council calls upon the Government to make the £20 uplift in Universal Credit permanent and refrain from reversing the increase.

18. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors A. Nawaz, k. Hussain, N. Gultasib, R. Worrall, I. Roberston, S. Nasreen and H. Bashir.**

This Council accepts and adopts in full, with all examples therein, the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia, which is:-

'Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness'

And further resolves to act and combat robustly all forms of Islamaphobia through its internal and external policies.

19. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillor P. Smith:**

This Council:

notes the widespread public concern, bordering on anger by many residents across the Borough, at what is seen as a deterioration in the services of many GP Practices/Health Centres; Concerns about:

- Difficulty getting through on the phone to many of them.
- Difficulty getting a doctor' appointment within a reasonable time, especially a face to face appointment.
- Extra pressure put on A&E as a result of many patients being unable to obtain satisfactory responses from their GP Practices/Health centres, thus feeling the only alternatives being A&E or the Urgent Care Walk- In Centre, where patients could and often do, have a wait of several hours before being treated.
- Particular problems around inequality that the shift away from face to face meetings and towards more phone appointments and online appointments pose, especially for patients who may be profoundly deaf, unable to speak, have language barrier issues, be visually impaired, have serious mental health issues, have learning difficulties and those without the appropriate skills and/or access to computers and the internet.

and consequently this Council resolves to use the maximum influence that it has to engage with the appropriate organisations and bodies including its own Health and Well Being Board, Healthwatch Walsall, Walsall's Members of Parliament and the Department of Health and Social Care, in order to a) draw attention to this concern and b) call for a massive improvement in what is perceived by many to be an deteriorating and unacceptable service for so many.