

Cabinet – 8 February 2017

Corporate Budget Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20 and Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2017/18

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

Related Portfolios: All

Service: Finance – council wide

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary

1.1. This report contains two sections as follows:

Section A for Cabinet approval - Findings from Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2017/18+ and Cabinet Responses. This section is for Cabinet's consideration and approval:

- **Part 1** – Report on findings from Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Page 45).
- **Part 2** – Report on findings from budget consultation on policy proposals. (Page 48).
- **Part 3** – The redesign of the library service (Page 195)

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

- **Part 1** – The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan; comprising the final revenue and capital budget following consideration of the proposals by overview and scrutiny committees and public consultation (Page 293).
- **Part 2** - Treasury Management and Investment Strategy as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice. It includes details on the Prudential Code Indicators (PCIs) for the next three years and asks Cabinet to approve them and recommend adoption of these to full Council. The Strategy both complies with the Local Government Act 2003 and also provides an additional framework over and above the statutory minimum for monitoring performance (Page 346).

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to note:

- That at the time of despatch of this report, the precepting authorities (fire and police) had not formally notified the authority of their final council tax levels. (The council has been advised that they will both be approved following meetings scheduled for early February, final figures will therefore be provided prior to or at the Council meeting of 23 February 2017).
- That at the time of despatch of this report, the levy authorities (Environment Agency and West Midlands Combined Authority) had not formally notified the authority of their final demand. Current estimates have been used for Environment Agency and Transport Levy based on informal communication, but these are subject to formal approval. (The final levies are expected to be approved early February, and will be included within the final papers to Council).
- That the council tax base, set by the Chief Finance Officer, under his delegations is 69,074.69.
- The feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the revenue and capital proposals.
- That Members must have due regard to consultation feedback and the public sector equality duty (section 149 of the equality act 2010) when making budget decisions.

2.2 Cabinet is asked to approve:

- a) The attached report titled Section A: The Findings from Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2017/18+ (part 1, 2 and 3) and Cabinet Responses and that Members have had regard to their duties in relation to consultation, and in relation to the public sector equality duty, in forming their budget recommendations.
- b) Investment of £22.66m to cover demand, income shortfalls and cost pressures as follows;

• Adult Social Care	£9.78m
• Children's Services	£6.62m
• Other inflationary pressures	£0.34m
• Other services	£5.92m
- c) The revised budget for 2016/17 and the allocation of revenue resources for 2017/18 as set out in Section B: Part 1 "The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan", and delegate authority to the relevant executive directors to implement the 2017/18 savings.
- d) Policy service changes as set out in section 12.5 and table 1 of this report (Page 29-43), and instruct executive directors to implement these.

- e) Where, in accordance with table 1 of this report, further consultation is required on service change, that officers be instructed to begin consultation arrangements for next stage, and report back to a future Cabinet meeting on the outcomes of that consultation and equality impact assessments, where required.
- f) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to make any necessary amendments, in consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), to take account of the final levies and precepts; changes required arising from the final Settlement; final grant allocations and final technical guidance or legislation on the budget, and to make any necessary amendments to the statutory determinations and council tax bands to take account of those changes and the resulting final analysis of the budget and for these amendments to be submitted and therefore recommended to Council at its meeting on 23 February 2017.
- g) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to agree payments for the pensions triannual valuation for 2017/18 to 2019/20, and to make arrangements to cover cash flow requirements as appropriate.
- h) An allocation of £2m to support the transformation agenda, and delegate the allocation of such to the Chief Finance Officer, for revenue purposes only, in conjunction with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance).
- i) The leasing programme set out at 2.3.2 and delegate authority for approval of in year expenditure to the Head of Finance (up to a cumulative value of £500k) and the Chief Finance Officer (above £500k).

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

2.3.1 Revenue

- a) The revised revenue estimates for 2016/17 and the allocation of revenue resources for 2017/18 as set out in Section B: Part 1 "The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan".
- b) A Walsall Council net council tax requirement for 2017/18 of £108.47m – with a 4.99% increase in council tax, 3% of which is earmarked for Adult Social Care.
- c) That the recommendations of the S151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) in respect of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of reserves **be approved**, including the levels of central contingency and an opening general reserve of not less than £12.4m, as set out in **Annex 8** of the budget plan.
- d) The (estimated) levies below for outside bodies and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** for these provisional ones once they are available at the Council meeting on 23 February 2017. (An estimate has been used within

this report based on informal notification from the authorities).

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	11,843,851
Environment agency	77,207

e) The following statutory determinations (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 as amended), and subject to any final changes arising from receipt of final precepts and levies, receipt of the final Settlement, technical/legislative guidance and final specific grant allocations, **and Cabinet approve that these will be substituted** at the Council meeting on 23 February 2017 for the final figures once received:

- I. **£617,394,009** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act.
- II. **£508,922,570** being the aggregate income which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
- III. **£108,471,439** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (e) (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (e) (II), calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year.
- IV. **£1,570.35** being the amount at (e) (III) above, divided by the council tax base of **69,074.69**, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average council tax at band D).
- V. Valuation bands
Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) (iv) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Local Government Act 1992, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
1,046.90	1,221.38	1,395.86	1,570.35
E	F	G	H
1,919.31	2,268.28	2,617.25	3,140.70

f) The draft precept from the Fire and Rescue Authority and the precept for the Police and Crime Commissioner, issued to the council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** once they are available at the Council meeting on 23 February 2017.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
Police And Crime Commissioner	A	B	C	D
	77.69	90.65	103.59	116.55
	E	F	G	H
	142.45	168.35	194.24	223.10
Fire & Rescue	A	B	C	D
	38.09	44.44	50.79	57.14
	E	F	G	H
	69.84	82.53	95.23	114.28

- g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) (v) and (f) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2017/18 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** once the final precepts are available at the Council meeting on 23 February 2017.

A	B	C	D
1,162.68	1,356.47	1,550.24	1,744.04
E	F	G	H
2,131.60	2,519.16	2,906.72	3,478.08

- h) That notice **be given** of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the "Walsall Advertiser" newspaper circulating in the Authority's area.
- i) That the Chief Financial Officer **be instructed** to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.
- j) That the Chief Finance Officer **be given delegated authority** to make transfers to and from reserves in order to ensure that reserves are maintained as necessary and in particular, adjusted when reserves are no longer required, or need to be replenished.
- k) That, pursuant to Section 52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the relevant basic amount of council tax for the Council is not excessive in relation to determining whether a referendum is required.

2.3.2 Capital

- a) The allocation of capital expenditure plans as set out in Section B: Part 1 "The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan".
- b) That the capital and leasing programme set out in the following tables **be approved** bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place. Schemes funded from grant will commence when final allocations are published. Reserve list items will only commence

should funding become available during the financial year.

- c) That the Chief Finance Officer be **given delegated authority** to determine how each source of finance is used to fund the overall capital programme and to alter the overall mix of financing as necessary, to maximise the flexibility of capital resources used and minimise the ongoing costs of borrowing to the Council.
- d) That the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), **be given delegated authority** to release capital resources held back for any contingent items that may arise (earmarked capital receipts for essential or emergency spend), and also for any match funding requirements that may be required of the Council in order to secure additional external capital funding (e.g. bids for government or other funding).

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18	
MAINSTREAM (COUNCIL FUNDED) SCHEMES	Estimated Value £
<i>Prior Year Approvals</i>	
Hatherton Road multi-storey car park – development of demolition plan to address structural repair issues	200,000
Migration of existing Urban Traffic Control analogue communication network	185,000
Traffic signals – replacement of obsolete equipment	200,000
Highways maintenance DfT Challenge Fund local contribution	223,000
<i>Rolling Programme Schemes</i>	
Preventative / Aids and Adaptations and Supporting Independence	750,000
Health Through Warmth – Safety Net support	75,000
Highway Maintenance Programme	2,800,000
Funding to support essential works including Health & Safety	750,000
<i>New Capital Bids</i>	
Two year old provision placements funded from revenue contribution	1,097,642
Looked after children out of borough placements – building related works	150,000
Broadway West playing fields – improvement to car park	50,000
CCTV upgrade to equipment	250,000
Memorial Safety in Walsall cemeteries	40,000
Leisure management system	88,000
Essential refurbishment of the Council's digital data storage facilities	1,224,081
Essential maintenance, warranty extension and eventual replacement of council server	75,200
Essential investment to remove cyber attack vulnerabilities	98,000
Essential warranty extension and replacement of hardware for Council's financial systems	30,000
Procurement of system for Human Resources management and Oracle financials	719,000
Service improvement for single mobile device management solution	76,000
Essential Microsoft upgrades and foundation of Office 365	102,000
Essential maintenance for data storage	78,000
Redesign of school kitchens to meet health and safety, food and fire regulations	250,000
Council House building management system to control and monitor mechanical and electrical equipment	70,000
Civic Centre heating	600,000

MAINSTREAM (COUNCIL FUNDED) SCHEMES	Estimated Value £
Highways maintenance improvements to uneven cobble stones at High Street, Walsall	70,000
Provision of community dropped crossings for ease of use	20,000
Walsall Town Centre Public Realm improvements	100,000
Darlaston Strategic Development Area access project	200,000
Mosaic implementation phase 3 Social Care case management system	747,130
Mosaic mobile working – provision of mobile technology to aid work practices	634,076
Library redesign	2,160,000
Council House rewiring	1,000,000
Acquisition of Reservoir Place to support the Phoenix 10	775,000
Total	15,887,129

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18	
NON-MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME – SCHEMES FUNDED FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES 2017/18	Estimated Value £
Basic Need school allocation	4,101,269
Devolved Formula Capital school allocation	553,772
Capital Maintenance school allocation	2,222,387
Fibbersley School – rephased school expansion project	1,915,129
King Charles School – rephased school expansion project	967,500
New Art Gallery – contribution from HLF and WM&G Development Fund to upgrade of building management system and facilities	88,334
Highways Maintenance DfT Challenge Fund	1,800,000
Local Transport Plan - Highway Maintenance Programme	2,400,000
West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (STP)	1,283,000
Growth Deal – creation of skills, connections for manufacturing	18,440,070
Disabled Facilities Grant	2,895,213
Total	36,666,674

CAPITAL PROGRAMME RESERVE LIST ITEMS 2017/18	
MAINSTREAM (COUNCIL FUNDED) SCHEMES	Estimated Value £
Family Contact Centre provision	TBC
Shared heating system for EDC and Rushall JMI	TBC
Sneyd PRU / SEN project	TBC
Increased capacity in Special Schools	TBC
Promotion of Community Health & Safety	240,000
Further provision for Preventative / Aids and Adaptations and Supporting Independence	750,000
Further provision for Health Through Warmth – tackling fuel poverty	75,000
Total	1,065,000

LEASING PROGRAMME 2017/18	
	Expenditure £
Refuse vehicles	370,000
Light commercial vehicles	480,000
Tractors and agricultural machinery	190,000
Welfare vehicles	60,000
Community equipment	200,000
Total	1,300,000

2.3.3 Treasury Management

- a) Section B – Part 2 – The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2017/18, including the council's borrowing requirement, borrowing limits, and the adoption of the prudential indicators, **be approved**.
- b) That decisions to effect movements between conventional borrowing and other long term liabilities, such as leases, **be delegated** to the Chief Financial Officer.
- c) That decisions to use capital receipts or borrowing within the framework of approved prudential indicators **be delegated** to the Chief Financial Officer.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 The council's budget is a financial representation of the organisation's plans. It is constructed as an integral part of the council's planning processes and aligned to its priorities and objectives. The attached budget plan at **Section B** sets out the revenue and capital plans for service delivery for 2017/18 and beyond.
- 3.2 In order to redesign council services to deliver the required financial savings over the next few years, it is proposed for a transformation fund to be created to assist in future delivery plans. A £2m provision is made in the draft budget for a transformation fund, funded from use of reserves.

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. This budget has been prepared using the council's high level purpose and priorities as outlined in the Corporate Plan as approved by Council on 21 July 2016.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 Budget Plan: The council reviews corporate financial planning and budget principles in accordance with the medium term financial strategy (MTFS). The budget setting process includes a comprehensive financial risk assessment to determine key risks and their impact on the budget. Services undertake risk assessments of their budgets by identifying risk factors, potential changes to service delivery and funding streams. This ensures that adequate budgetary provision is available to cover unforeseen future events. This successful approach is now embedded and is used

to inform the level of earmarked and general reserves.

- 5.2 The identification of risks, and level of reserves, is referred to in the CFO statement at **Annex 8** of the budget plan. It is, however, unlikely that all risks identified will arise, however new risks may also emerge. Managers are required to deliver services within the available budget. Any known changes in service demand or costs arising from legislative or government demands are identified and dealt with, within the overall draft revenue budget, as growth items. The level of reserves should be sufficient to cover all but the most unusual of events. Any in-year use of general reserves may require replenishment to ensure the opening level of reserves is as required by the MTFS.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The council must set a balanced budget to meet its legal requirements as set out under legal implications.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The legal duty for a council's finances falls within s151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Arrangements for the proper administration of the council's affairs is secured by the s151 Officer (the Chief Finance Officer).
- 7.2 Cabinet recommend the revenue budget and draft capital programme to Council. Council are responsible for making a calculation in accordance with sections 31A to 37 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). This includes the statutory determinations (aggregate gross expenditure, gross income, council tax requirement for the year and setting the council tax for a financial year).
- 7.3 Under the Local Government Act 2003 (s25), an authority must set a council tax and balanced budget, giving 14 days' notice of the council tax level prior to the date of billing. The Council must set a budget before 11 March of each year. This will include the S151 Officer's report that deals with the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides, together with an assessment of risk. This is provided at **Annex 8** of the budget plan.
- 7.4 The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting Regulations require the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set prudential indicators for the next three years to ensure that the council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an annual investment strategy (as required by investment guidance issued subsequent to the Act); this sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. This is provided at **Part 2** of the budget plan.
- 7.5 In recent years central Government has capped the level of council tax rises. For 2017/18, the Government have announced that local authorities will again need to seek approval of their electorate via a local referendum if they propose to increase council tax levels by 5% or above as confirmed as part of the local government settlement on 15 December 2016, inclusive of the 3% ring-fenced for Adult Social Care (Further allowable increase of 1%, on the assumption that overall 6% is not exceeded over the three years from 2017/18 to 2019/20).

- 7.6 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed a general duty on every local authority in England to take such steps as it considers appropriate to secure that representatives of local persons (or of local persons of a particular description) are involved in the exercise of any of its functions, among other things by being consulted about the exercise of the function. The duty to consult that is imposed on Councils comes from two other sources:
- Specific legislation, such as the education act duties to consult on certain services etc., and,
 - The common law duty, which is well established in law.
- 7.7 Our approach to consultation was reported to Cabinet in October and December and is set out in section 10 of this report and in the attached document: Section A: The Findings from Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2017/18 and Cabinet Responses.
- 7.8 The 2010 Equality Act, whilst not imposing a specific duty to consult, lays a requirement to have due regard to the equality impact when exercising its function. As a public body, the Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as set out in the Equality Act, 2010. The PSED requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.
- 7.9 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the chosen procedure, by the Council, for checking the lawfulness of decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Further detail is provided in section 11 of this report.
- 7.10 Cabinet and Council members have been issued with guidance on their responsibilities in relation to setting a budget and also under the PSED. Each Member will receive a full copy of the Policy, Procedure and Services equality impact assessments undertaken to assist them in their decision making.
- 7.11 The drafting of saving proposals included consideration of legislative and other requirements, duties or obligations imposed by statute, secondary legislation or guidance upon the council, specifically in the context of proposals which involved reductions or cessation of service. Policy papers in October set out relevant duties. Proposals, which, after consultation and equality impact assessment, identified a negative impact on the Council being able to carry out its statutory duties, is proposed to be withdrawn from the final budget.

8. Property implications

- 8.1 Any direct property implications as a result of service redesign and revenue savings proposals are assessed as part of the budget process.

9. Staffing implications

- 9.1 Staffing implications are assessed and included as part of the budget process. There will be significant staffing implications arising from this report. There has

been positive and meaningful consultation with both employees and the trade unions. The contribution of the trade unions will be important in the council achieving its key aims and objectives particularly in these challenging times. Officers and members will continue to consult widely with them in all aspects of service design and delivery.

- 9.2 Staff affected by the proposals in this budget will be supported as appropriate throughout the process and the number of compulsory redundancies will be minimised wherever possible. Since the start of Rebalancing the Budget in October last year, redundancy headcount has reduced from 371 in October 2016, to 281 in January 2017 (full time equivalent posts are now down to 227 from 296. Work continues to reduce these further.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 For our services to meet the needs of local residents, and of the community at large, it is essential that our plans and policies take into account the views of local people and others who use our services. We use a broad range of consultation methods to ensure as far as possible that people have sufficient information to comment, as well as the time and any necessary support they require to have their say. All feedback gathered is collated and carefully considered as part of the decision making process.
- 10.2 Consultation was undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders (i.e. councillors via overview and scrutiny committees, residents, service users and potential service users as appropriate, national domestic rate payers and voluntary and community organisations, etc.).
- 10.3 Attached at **Section A - Part 2** is a separate report outlining the approach to consultation in more detail, along with findings from consultation and a response to each of the policy proposals, for Cabinet's consideration and approval. Equality impact assessment outcomes, where an assessment was required, are also contained within each proposal. Where a D (stop and rethink) outcome was demonstrated, Cabinet propose not to proceed with these.
- 10.4 Overview and Scrutiny committees received the draft revenue budget proposals in November 2016 and Cabinet received feedback in December. The report to overview and scrutiny included details on the draft budget proposals relating to the services within their individual remit along with a link to the full budget papers to allow wider comment to be made. The draft budget report to Cabinet on 14 December 2016, including the draft capital programme, was referred on to overview and scrutiny committees in January 2017.
- 10.5 Feedback from Scrutiny on the revenue and capital proposals is attached as **Section A – Part 1**, along with Cabinet's response.

11. Equality implications

- 11.1 EqlAs were undertaken on proposals as they developed. These assessments, along with required actions, were reported to Cabinet to allow them to consider any revisions required to the final budget for recommendation to Council. Following review of the proposals and consideration of consultation and EqlAs, a number of

changes have been made to the final proposals by Cabinet, as highlighted in the following paragraphs and section 12 of this report. A copy of each of the full EqlAs have been provided to Cabinet members and will be placed in each of the political group rooms prior to Council meeting on 23 February 2017.

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

11.3 Failure to meet the requirements in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the chosen procedure for checking lawfulness of decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

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

11.4 **Information required in the EqIA**

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

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

11.5 **What course of action does the EqIA suggest?**

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

A. No major change required.

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

- B. Adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality.
A plan is required which must include specific deadlines for actions to be completed in order for the decision to be implemented, e.g. alternative ways of providing the service, signposting to other providers and ongoing monitoring of the impact. If there are further concerns following adjustments, the decision must be reviewed and action taken.
- C. Continue despite possible adverse impact.
Compelling reasons will be needed and mitigating actions are required to minimise adverse impact. An action plan is required which must include specific deadlines by which mitigating actions need to be completed in order for the decision to be implemented, e.g. alternative ways of providing the service, signposting to other providers and ongoing monitoring of the impact. If there are further concerns following adjustments, the decision must be reviewed and action taken.
- D. Stop and rethink the proposal.
When an EqlA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination and needs to be reviewed immediately.

11.6 Evaluation of Equality Impact Assessments

All managers responsible for policy proposals, and operational proposals with the confirmed requirement for an EqlA, have been requested to carry out EqlAs, where appropriate. This assessment would take into account feedback from people with protected characteristics, whether they were service users or respondents to the general budget consultation.

- 11.7 Ongoing support was provided to managers, particularly in relation to identifying outcomes from the EqlAs. Cabinet, on 26 October 2016, agreed a summary of revenue policy savings for consultation. 82 policy proposals were considered for their impact on protected characteristic groups. Each of the proposals had an equality screening and 34 proposals have undergone Policies, Procedures and Services (PPS) Equality Impact Assessment (EqlA). This included all 2017/18 where an EqlA was required, and some year 2 (2018/19) proposals. For some year 2 proposals and all year 3 (2019/20) proposals, no policy document was required, as these options require further workup prior to formal consideration. The table below shows the outcomes for the 82 proposals.
- 11.8 Proposal number 77, "Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services", contains several proposals, each resulting in a different EqlA outcome, for example A,B,C or D.* The outcomes are identified within the consultation summaries, along with mitigating action, where relevant, in **Section A – Part 2**.

Ref	Decision	Number of EqlAs
A	No major change required (1,9,10,11,14,39,40,50,52,53,80,81,82)	13
B	Adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality (4,13,21,30,32,33,34,47,51,75,76,79)	12
C	Continue despite possible adverse impact (saving 29,31,41,46,78)	5
D	Stop and rethink the proposal (5,7,8)	3
	Other decisions (e.g. sub-proposals) - 77	1
	Not Applicable as decision to implement was made in previous years (15,42,43,44)	4
	Not yet due - Year 2 or Year 3 proposal (2, 6, 19, 24, 28, 45, 48, 49, 66, 67,71,72)	12
	No EqlA required (3, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 35, 36, 37, 38,54,55,56,57,58,59,60,61,62,63,64,65,68,69,70,73,74)	32
	Total	82

11.9 Where the outcomes showed B: adjustments were needed to mitigate adverse impact to better promote equality or C: continue despite possible adverse impact, the action plan had to show the adjustments needed, how to reduce the impact or justify why it should continue despite the impact. Where the outcomes showed D: stop and rethink the proposal, these proposals were immediately put on hold. All EqlAs that have resulted in B or C outcomes were further reviewed by the Equality and Diversity team. B and C outcomes have been considered by Cabinet members, giving opportunity to comment and, where applicable, amend the budget in terms of its fairness, equality duties and objectives, as well as future shaping of the services. As a result of this, changes were made between the draft and final budget, and these are identified in the attached report, Section A – Part 2 - Report on findings from budget consultation on policy proposals, subject to Cabinet's approval.

For proposals where adjustments were needed to remove barriers, these have been identified and will be monitored and managed following implementation. For proposals that identified possible adverse impact, these, and actions to mitigate adverse impact, will also be monitored and managed following implementation.

11.10 Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment

The Council recognises that, in determining the saving proposals, account is taken of relevant knowledge and information within the relevant area or directorate, as well as from service users or potential users. It is possible that there will be people that will be impacted on by more than one reduction or service change outside the managers' areas of influence. This is referred to as 'cumulative impact' and the council has sought to understand such an impact, particularly in relation to people with protected characteristics.

11.11 The Equality and Diversity team has analysed outcomes of the EqlAs, particularly where adjustments or potential adverse impacts were identified. The aim was to consider how different budget changes may affect people of a given group and to ascertain if people of that particular group may be affected by more than one

proposal. Demographic information from *Walsall: an Equality & Diversity Profile 2014*, based on the Walsall census, was also considered in order to establish implications for wider social trends in Walsall.

11.12 Walsall Equality and Diversity Profile – key issues

For those protected characteristic groups identified as having potential cumulative impact, *Walsall: Equality & Diversity Profile 2014* has identified the following:

- Walsall has an estimated resident population of 274,173, of whom 49.1% are male and 50.9% are female;
- The number of residents in the borough has increased over the past decade, reversing the periods of population decline seen through the 1980s and 90s;
- In comparison to England, Walsall has a lower proportion of working age people and more children and older people. The borough's total population is projected to exceed 300,000 for the first time by 2035;
- Walsall has a greater proportion of children than England as a whole. Walsall did not experience the same fall in numbers of children as England, and still has a greater proportion of very young children. One factor may be Walsall's higher proportion of minority ethnic groups – who tend to have higher than average birth rates;
- Walsall has a higher proportion of people above retirement age than nationally (but only up to the ages of around 80, when this pattern reverses). This has implications for local services and the caring responsibilities on the rest of the population;
- The majority of residents in Walsall do not find their day-to-day activities affected by illness or disability over the long-term. However, around one in ten Walsall residents suffer from a long-term health problem or disability that substantially limits their day-to-day activities. This affects 28,100 people, and at 10.4% of the borough's population is above the national average of 8.3%. A similar number of Walsall residents (10.3%) find their day-to-day activities limited a little – again higher than the national average (9.3%). Overall, health problems and disabilities limit the daily lives of one in every five people in Walsall;
- The General Fertility Rate (GFR) of an area is the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44, and it provides a measure of current fertility levels. For every 1,000 Walsall women of child bearing age there were 71.2 live births in 2013 – which gives the borough a higher fertility level than the national average of 62.2;
- There has been a significant increase in the level of ethnic diversity in Walsall over the past decade. While 'White British' remains the largest single group at 76.9%, the number of residents from a minority ethnic group has risen to almost one in four. This figure of 23.1% residents is an increase from 2001 when only around 14.8%, or one in six residents, were from an ethnic minority. It is also above the 20.2% minority ethnic proportion of England as a whole in 2011;
- Nine out of ten Walsall residents (90.1%) were born in the UK. Walsall's minority ethnic population is not equally distributed but is instead largely concentrated into a few areas of the borough, primarily south of Walsall town centre: Pelsall ward has a non-white population of around 2%, while in Palfrey it is almost 65%. In some neighbourhoods, minority ethnic groups account for over 90% of residents. It is estimated that Walsall has between 5-7% of

residents from new EU member states and the most widely spoken languages in this group are Polish, Slovak, Czech, Hungarian and Romanian. Amongst these communities are Eastern European Roma, who tend to have a distinct culture and language;

- People in Walsall have a greater level of religious affiliation than in England overall, with three quarters (74.0%) identifying with a religion compared with two thirds (68.1%) nationally. However, in the past decade the proportion of residents who have no current religion has doubled, to one in five;
- While a majority of Walsall residents still view themselves as Christian, this has fallen substantially in the past 10 years (down from 72.1% in 2001), as it has nationally. In contrast, the number of Muslims in Walsall has increased from 5.4% to 8.2%.

11.13 Impact – Findings and Mitigating Actions

All 9 equality characteristics defined by the Equality Act were considered in individual EqlAs and subsequent analysis of the findings from these assessments was carried out. A number of areas of cumulative impact have been identified that required further mitigating actions in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Age: Children under 5
- Age: Young Children and Youth (under 16 + early 20s)
- Age: Older People
- Disabled people and children
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race, religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Sex

11.14 Proposals with complex and adverse impact

Equality analysis showed that there were a number of proposals with a potential to impact cumulatively on certain groups of people and service users with equality characteristics. These proposals were subject to in-depth analysis and critical challenge from Equality advisors and include:

- Proposals numbers 5,7 and 8, involving a range of reviews of services aimed at children with special educational needs (transport, short breaks, demand and out of borough short breaks) were removed due to a potentially adverse cumulative impact on affected children and families that could not be sufficiently mitigated;
- Proposal number 12, to reduce or identify alternative contributions towards children safeguarding board, was also withdrawn;
- Proposal number 21, to consider cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision, was also removed;
- A number of proposals from the Communities and Partnership areas, including 29 – cease funding to Relate Walsall and First Base Walsall, 30 – consider withdrawing funding to community associations and 31 – remove Cohesion non-staffing budget were all withdrawn due to their potential to affect people

with different characteristics, particularly different age groups, vulnerable people in receipt of counselling and ethnic and religious groups benefiting from the community cohesion activity;

- Saving 76 – reduction in grants to citizen’s advice bureau has been reduced, so the core grant to CAB remains unchanged;
- Three proposals from the Economy and Environment area, 35 - removal of the Council’s revenue subsidy to the Forest Arts Centre, 68 – stop cleansing after markets and 69 – increase district centres markets’ fees were also withdrawn, although they did not require a full equality impact assessment after initial screening.
- Proposal 77 – Consider cessation of adult social care universal services, has been considered in depth and revised and will be covered separately in the next section.

11.15 Impact of Adult Social Care – Consider cessation of adult social care universal services (77) – impact on all equality characteristics

Adult Social Care Universal Services consist of a range of provision, both internally and externally delivered, that are together combined. It was clear, following the consultation, that different parts of the Universal Services would have varied potential impact on groups with protected characteristics. The following judgement has been made on the specific parts of Universal Services:

1. Review of Assistive Technology, (Telecare /Telehealth) CAS and Response - B
2. Community Alarms Response Service – B
3. Welfare Benefits and Employment Advice - B
4. Broadway North Recovery College - C
5. Neighbourhood Community Officers – B
6. Independent Living Centre (ILC) – B
7. Sensory Support Team – B
8. Sons and Daughters of Rest – C
9. Wilbraham Court – D
10. Bereavement Support – B
11. Luncheon Club Support – A
12. Empowerment, Engagement and Decision-making Learning Disabilities - B
13. Empowerment, Engagement and Decision-making physical and sensory impairment – B
14. Empowerment, Engagement and Decision-making autism – B
15. Short-term and crisis advocacy learning disabilities – B
16. Short-term crisis and advocacy, physical and sensory impairment service level agreements – B
17. Midland Mencap SC – D
18. Mary Elliot SC – D
19. OP Project – D
20. Gateway SC – D
21. Gateway NW – D
22. Befriending Service Autism – B
23. Pilot Community Outreach – Breakthrough Service – D
24. Eye Clinic and Liaison Officer & Registration Information Liaison Service – B
25. Befriending Service – B
26. Concessionary Travel – D
27. Disability Hub – D

- 28. Supporting Employment – D
- 29. Summer Scheme – D
- 30. Parents Project – D
- 31. Lease Agreement Walsall Society for Blind – C
- 32. Seed Money – B
- 33. Housing Support - C

The proposals that resulted in a D judgement will not be further considered as viable options and will be withdrawn. With regards to those that resulted in a B or a C judgement, the following actions have been put in place by Adult Social Care to mitigate the adverse impacts:

- a) Further evaluate the equality analysis information to ensure that there is no adverse effects on people with protected characteristics;
- b) Monitor all the proposals and identify any adverse impacts that haven't been identified through consultations;
- c) There will be no loss of service for eligible service users who are in receipt of a statutory service, however the provider may change;
- d) The Blue badge service currently provided at the ILC can be offered from other parts of the council – specifically front of house;
- e) The Short term wheelchair loans and Shop mobility currently provided at the ILC are available in borough from other providers;
- f) In respect of Empowerment/Engagement/Advocacy and befriending services, commissioners are intended to amalgamate the current contracts. This will result in a single contract that provides a service to people with learning disabilities, physical and sensory impairments and people with Autism;
- g) Further consultation to take place in order to ascertain which services could be retained through a contribution scheme and whether this would be at full or subsidised cost. For example the Community Alarm Service as part of the Assistive technology programmes;
- h) As part of the Walsall Together programme, the Access project will provide a single point of access for care coordination and navigation for all health, care and prevention services. This will be for all client groups including people with learning disabilities and physical and sensory impairments, and mental health issues;
- i) As part of the Walsall Together programme one of the aims for the Resilient Communities project is to provide early intervention and prevention to support people and communities to live independently and to have active, prosperous and healthy lives. This will be for all client groups including people with learning disabilities and physical and sensory impairments, and mental health issues;
- j) As part of the Walsall Together programme the Integrated health and care locality teams will provide is more coordinated across care settings and over time, particularly for patients with long-term chronic and medically complex conditions. For example people registered with GPs in Walsall will be supported by a team that is made up of GPs, community nursing, social care, mental health and the voluntary sector, providing accessible, high quality coordinated care in people's homes and communities. This will be for all client groups including people with learning disabilities and physical and sensory impairments, and mental health issues.

11.16 Impact of Public Health Proposals – all equality characteristics

It has been recognised that reduction of investment in Public Health services is likely to impact on people with a variety of equality characteristics. Therefore, these proposals have been summarised under one heading and considered for their cumulative effect. These include:

- Reduction in Public Health Investment in drug and alcohol treatment services (41)
- Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes (46)
- Reduction of Public Health Stop Smoking services (47)
- Reduction in the Public Health Transformation Fund investment in domestic abuse services (51)

As these EqlAs were extremely complex, taking into account different research and service user data, some of the key actions identified have been listed below. For full EqlAs please contact Public Health at publichealth@walsall.gov.uk.

Drug and Alcohol

- (a) Specialist maternity service for pregnant women and targeted provision for most vulnerable service users, including those with mental health and learning disabilities and the homeless, will be retained;
- (b) BME communities and steroid users needs will be factored into the new service remodelling;
- (c) Targeted work with street drinkers from different European communities will take place through the locality working model.

Weight Management

- (a) Negative impact on people with protected characteristics will be monitored and captured in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
- (b) People will be signposted to other organisations who can help with weight management and be directed to the wide range of physical activity provision across the borough;
- (c) Healthy lifestyle messages and self-help tools in relation to diet and physical activity, through the borough's current lifestyle service 'One You Walsall', will be promoted.

Stop Smoking

- (a) Impact on targeted groups such as children at age 15, young people, people with long-term conditions, black and minority ethnic groups, migrant communities and men will be monitored and captured by reference to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
- (b) Practical ideas have been offered including online support and looking for alternative sources of funding for the support services.

Domestic Abuse Services

- (a) Support the refuge provider to identify alternative sources of external funding

- to fund a children's and young person's worker to align with the contract extension;
- (b) Monitor the Children's Services commissioned Children and Young People Independent Domestic Violence Advisor workers' service to families residing at Accord Housing Refuge;
- (c) The commissioner to closely monitor referrals to ensure priority is being given to Walsall referrers and then, priority given to our Black Country Councils to improve access to refuge placements.

11.17 Children and Under 5

The following proposals, some of which have been ongoing from 2016/17, may, in some way, change our offer to 0-5 children, so resulting in a potentially negative impact:

- Reduction in grant to CAB (76) – this proposal has been subsequently adjusted, so the core grant to CAB remains unchanged;
- Libraries redesign and relocation of the Leather Museum and Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library (32, 33, 34), however this proposal has been subsequently revised;
- Reduction in the Public Health transformation Fund investment in domestic abuse services (51) and cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes (46)

Mitigating actions identified include:

- a) Assisting residents to become more self-reliant and sign-posting them to different agencies offering welfare advice and support and identifying alternative sources of funding for welfare advice;
- b) Library Services will work with schools and other organisations to give children access to books, encourage reading and improve literacy;
- c) A refuge provider will be supported and external funding identified to fund a children's and young person's worker and referral will be monitored for prioritisation of cases across Walsall and Black Country. Healthy lifestyle messages and self-help tools in relation to diet and physical activity will be advertised through '*One You Walsall*' and people will be signposted to other weight management organisations;
- d) Library Services will work with schools and other organisations to give children access to books, encourage reading and improve literacy. In particular, working with communities in addressing homework help and mother's and toddlers support, as identified in consultation.

11.18 Youth and Young Adults (including those with disabilities)

Young Adults are likely to be affected by the following proposals:

- Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services (77) – covered in a separate section above;
- Review of respite and day services (78);
- Improving demand management for Adult Social Care (79);
- Reduction in grant to CAB (76) – this proposal was subsequently adjusted so the core grant remains unchanged;
- Housing and Care 21 Contract Budget Saving 2017/18 (80);

- Introduce an interim charge for community based services (82);
- Review of tax reduction scheme for second adult rebate (continuation from 2016/17);
- Review and develop children centre service and review and reduce youth services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model (4 and 13 merged);
- Libraries redesign and relocation of the Leather Museum and Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library (32, 33, 34), however this proposal has been subsequently revised;
- Every other week bin collections (15);
- Reduction in Public Health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services (41);
- Reduction in the Public investment in domestic abuse services (51)
- Adult weight management programmes (46); and
- Stop smoking services (47);

As a result of the cumulative impact analysis the following actions have been agreed:

- a) Young people affected will be signposted to alternative respite options and community services if they are no longer eligible for respite and day care services;
- b) Further work will be undertaken in order to evaluate how these proposals affect each protected characteristic or groups;
- c) Providers affected by the changes to Housing and Care 21 contract will be engaged with to ensure sufficient respite provision is made available;
- d) Young people currently relying on CAB will be encouraged to become more self-reliant and signposted to different agencies offering welfare advice and support. Alternative sources of funding for welfare advice will be identified;
- e) Young people who will be affected by interim charges for community based services (now replaced with improved charging and collection arrangements) will be supported with money management and debt advice;
- f) The Hardship Fund will be reviewed and targeted to ensure that larger families and those in financial difficulties, including BME households with young people, are not disproportionately affected. Discretionary Housing Payments will be used and promoted to support households at greatest risk of financial deprivation, based on data profiling;
- g) Further work will be undertaken with Walsall Voluntary Action to identify and secure alternative funding opportunities to secure continuation of youth provision;
- h) Library Services will work with schools and other organisations to give children access to books, encourage reading and improve literacy.
- i) As a minimum, ensure that Town Centre and District libraries will still be open.
- j) There will be a library service point within approximately 2 miles of every household in the Borough
- k) Effective communication with residents and people with protected characteristics during the implementation of the new delivery model;
- l) Effective communication with residents and people with protected characteristics during the implementation of the new delivery model;
- m) Mobile Library Service has appropriate coverage to support the new delivery model.

11.19 Older People and Disabled People

The cumulative assessment showed that people with disabilities will be impacted on by the greatest number of proposals specified as follows:

- Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services (77);
- Review of respite and day services (78);
- Improving demand management for Adult Social Care (79);
- Introduce interim charge for community based services (82);
- Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens (53);
- Closure of Banking Hall in Civic Centre (75);
- Reduction in grant to Citizen Advice Bureau (76);
- Review of council tax reduction scheme for second adult rebate (continuation from 2016/17, page 239 of the equality Impact assessment pack for cumulative consideration);
- Every other week bin collections (15);
- Libraries redesign and relocation of the Leather Museum and Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library (32, 33, 34), however this proposal has been subsequently revised;
- Review of the operation of the Council's pest and animal control service to control demand, target resources and more effectively and increase income (40);

The following actions were agreed in order to mitigate the potential adverse impact in these areas:

- a) Each person attending day opportunities at Goscote and Fallings Heath will have a social care assessment to ensure that they are eligible for social care services. For those who not eligible, independent services will be identified within their community;
- b) For those people that access Falling Heath Respite alternative respite options identified or direct payments will be utilised (where eligible) to access chosen services;
- c) Carers and users will be made clear of the alternatives offered through guidance and advice';
- d) Impact of service users' reviews will be monitored and evaluated by each protected characteristic/group;
- e) People who will be paying more than previously will receive support with money management and debt advice;
- f) There was no adverse impact identified from the proposed closure of the Banking Hall, however, existing users will be directed to different methods of payment in alternative formats and prevent any communication issues;
- g) Residents potentially affected by CAB grant reduction will be signposted to alternative services, including self-directed help. Alternative sources of funding for welfare and benefit advice will also be identified;
- h) The Council will commission Policy in Practice to undertake research of the welfare reforms impact on people within particular equality groups, including those with disabilities. Where it is identified that they are in greatest need, the Hardship Fund or Discretionary Housing Payments Fund will be used to support them;
- i) Additional capacity has been made available to elderly and disabled residents who produce large amounts of waste related to medical conditions. Any other

residents who have difficulty in moving bins due to mobility constraints will also receive assistance. An assisted collection service is currently available to anyone with a mobility problem and where no-one in the household is able to take the bins to the normal collection point. The collection team will collect the waste or recycling from an agreed location, empty the bin and return it back to the agreed location. This service will remain as part of the alternate weekly collection service;

- j) Mobile Library Service has appropriate coverage to support the new delivery model. In addition, this will assist in supporting those people who are housebound to receive a service from the Housebound Library Service. The library services should be available online, (including access to e-book downloads, reservation and renewal facilities, the catalogue of stock, library addresses and opening times, events and activities and the facility to make enquiries). Impact will be monitored to assess any reductions in the service and seek to implement appropriate mitigating actions;
- k) Managers have the discretion to authorise the free treatment of pests where financial hardship, which would prevent the resolution of a matter of Public Health concern, has been demonstrated. Additionally, the proposals include the provision of a free targeted service, where there are infestations of rats, mice, bedbugs and cockroaches in multiple neighbouring properties/gardens. This offers mitigation in that the service is likely to be mainly directed at deprived areas. The publication of appropriate criteria on which discretionary decisions will be made will also be introduced.
- l) Provide accessible information and signposting at the retained libraries for learning opportunities, meeting places and activities - particularly for people identified as negatively impacted.

11.20 Sex, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, marriage, sexual orientation

Some of the proposals impacting on disability also showed potential impact on the above equality characteristics. They include:

- Cease funding to Relate Walsall and First Base Walsall (29);
- Consider withdrawing funding to community associations (30);
- Review council tax reduction scheme for second adult rebate (continuation from 2016/17);
- Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens (53);
- Libraries redesign and relocation of the Leather Museum and Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library (32, 33, 34), however this proposal has been subsequently revised;

The following actions were identified to mitigate the impact:

- (a) Residents will be assisted to become self-reliant and able to gain appropriate advice through different channels;
- (b) Alternative sources of funding will need to be found to offset the reduction in funding;
- (c) Meeting with community associations to discuss the requirements for more detailed data collection and to start collecting improved equalities data;
- (d) Residents will be signposted to other agencies in the borough which provide debt advice and welfare advice;

- (e) The Hardship Fund will be proactively targeted to ensure that larger families in financial difficulties are supported and discretionary housing payments will be promoted to support households at greatest risk of deprivation;
- (f) Monitor the impact of any service remodelling and prioritise drug and alcohol prevention services for vulnerable young people. Encourage the specialist drug and alcohol service to utilise, where appropriate, local voluntary sector agencies to deliver elements of the service;
- (g) There will be a library service point within approximately 2 miles of every household in the Borough;
- (h) Relocation of any LGBT specific materials from any proposed closed libraries to those that remain open.

11.21 **Race or Minority Ethnicity and Religion and Belief**

Initially there were a number of proposals that had a potential adverse effect on race, ethnicity and religion and belief, particularly those affecting funding for voluntary and community sector and community cohesion. After more detailed equality analysis these proposals were removed from the budget options. Their details are mentioned in the section **Proposals with complex and adverse impact** above.

However, there are these remaining proposals that have the potential to impact upon these characteristics and which will require mitigating actions:

- Review council tax reduction scheme for second adult rebate (continuation from 2016/17);
- Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens (53);
- Libraries redesign and relocation of the Leather Museum and Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library (32, 33, 34), however this proposal has been subsequently revised;

The following actions were developed in relation to race, ethnicity, religion and belief:

- a) Ethnic minority residents that perceive barriers to services due to their language or immigration status will be signposted to appropriate agencies in the borough which provide debt advice and welfare advice. Alternative support will be identified to support newly settled residents who may experience complex issues of residency status, immigration or repatriation, in addition to traditional welfare advice offer;
- b) Work with area managers and locality teams, where resources allow, supporting targeted work with street drinkers from Eastern European communities;
- c) Provide accessible information and signposting at the retained libraries for learning opportunities, meeting places and activities - particularly for people identified as negatively impacted;
- d) Ensure that library services are available online: including access to e-book downloads, reservation and renewal facilities, the catalogue of stock, library addresses and opening times; events and activities and the facility to make enquiries;
- e) There will be a library service point within approximately 2 miles of every household in the Borough;

- f) Monitor the impact of reductions in the service and seek to implement appropriate mitigating actions. Investigate partnerships with local community organisations to provide local “book exchange” facilities based either in a community building or the old library and managed by the community;
- g) The Local History Centre & Archive will have moved the majority of its service from Essex Street to the town centre “Hub”;
- h) The Leather Museum will refocus its attention on becoming more commercially minded along with the sale of more leather goods.

11.22 Positive actions

It is worth noting that not all EqlA actions resulted in a negative impact. There were a number of proposals that demonstrated how a redesign of a service or activity can result in positive impact on people with protected characteristics. For example, proposal numbers 9 and 10 (**review of looked after children costs and out of borough placements**) resulted in positive actions, such as the agreed plan to recruit a project lead for looked after children placements, so being responsible for the progress and quality of placements both inside and outside of the borough as well as a focus on revising foster care training to make it relevant to the proposal’s aspirations. This will enhance service provision to those service users affected by this proposal.

Likewise, proposal numbers 4 and 13, (**Review and develop children centre service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model and Review and reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model**), proposes that a review of traded services income will look to generate an increase in income, so enhancing current service provision. For example, actions will mitigate the negative impact on children as a result parents’ separation, and there will be continued focus on support for teenage parents.

The **Change to provision of out of hours for Community Protection service** proposal (number 39), whilst graded as an A, also demonstrated positive actions, through the development of a more targeted service that will be responsive to all callers’ needs. Another proposal considered an A, **Charging for deputyships**, (number 1), also demonstrated improved service provision for older people and adults with disabilities, as it is more reliable and robust.

Finally, the Public Health proposal **Reduction of Public Health stop smoking services** (number 47), provides a positive action whereby the re-modelled service will retain a targeted service for pregnant women.

Proposal 79 – **Demand management in adult social care** – older people and people with disabilities would move away from institutional services to community based services and this will further support them in their own homes.

11.23 Quality of equality data - further considerations

Sexual orientation data and monitoring of transgender people are not, as yet, legal requirements. Comprehensive data is currently unavailable at local authority level. Data is only available down to regional level for the proportion of adults who said they were gay, lesbian or bisexual, with the West Midlands recording 1.2%. In service redesigns and changes we recognised that there is likely to be an impact on

all the characteristics particularly in the areas of public health and social care. The Council is committed to improving service user monitoring across all equality characteristics as well as raising awareness of the rationale for monitoring amongst our service users and residents.

11.24 Equalities Monitoring Process

The Council has carefully considered the EqlAs where the outcome was to go ahead with the reductions despite potential adverse impact (option C on the form). Great emphasis was put on managing and mitigating this adverse impact to the services' best ability, within available budgets, and in consultation with their service users with protected characteristics.

Managers implementing the service changes where potential cumulative impact has been identified will be responsible for the mitigating actions outlined in this section. Progress will be tracked quarterly by the Corporate Equality Group and reports will be provided to Cabinet/CMT as required. Members of the public will be able to track progress in the Public Sector Equality Duty report that Walsall Council releases annually on 31 January.

12. Amendments to the Revenue Plans and Capital Programme

Revenue Proposals

- 12.1 On 26 October 2016 Cabinet presented 'Rebalancing the budget: options for consultation', which set out the financial challenge facing the council: an updated medium term financial outlook for the four-year period 2016/17 to 2019/20; and an outline to the council's approach to delivering against much reduced resources, with a list of budget savings options for consultation.
- 12.2 The draft budget report was presented to Cabinet on 14 December 2016, including an update on the current financial position and medium term financial outlook; reference to the options previously reported; indicative revenue cash limits by portfolio; along with the draft capital programme for 2017/18 to 2019/20.
- 12.3 Since the draft budget was reported to Cabinet in December, the council has received confirmation of its draft government settlement for 2017/18, together with a change in the referendum principles on council tax rises for social care. Additionally, during that period, the Chief Finance Officer has reviewed the assumptions within the medium term financial plan, and made some amendments. This, along with a review of the council tax base of chargeable dwellings for council tax purposes, and advance payment for pension liabilities, has given additional financial flexibility for Cabinet to consider against current savings and growth proposals.
- 12.4 The list of revenue savings proposals requiring an executive (Cabinet) decision to proceed were reported to Cabinet on 14 December 2016. Changes arising from Cabinet's review of the developing proposals, extensive public consultation feedback (as identified in Section A of the attached report - Findings from Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2017/18 and Cabinet Responses), and equality impact assessment reviews (as identified in the previous section of this report) are set out below.

- 12.5 The resulting recommendations in respect of policy proposals and revised savings figures are set out in **table 1** against each proposal, and Cabinet are asked to approve the decision as set out (under the heading Executive (Cabinet) decision) and instruct executive directors to implement the resulting decision.
- 12.6 26 of 82 policy proposals have been revised, reduced, re-profiled or withdrawn, as follows:
- Saving 5 - Transport for children with special educational needs - £100k in 2017/18 withdrawn
 - Saving 7 - Review demand of out of borough children short breaks – £130k in 2017/18 withdrawn and part replaced by £102k operational savings
 - Saving 8 – Review and reduce short breaks - £100k in 2017/18 and £100k in 2018/19 - withdrawn and replaced with operational savings from efficiencies and commissioning
 - Saving 12 – Children’s Safeguarding Board - £58k withdrawn in both 2018/19 and 2019/20
 - Saving 16 – Public Health lifestyle services - £60k brought forward from 2019/20
 - Saving 21 – Cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision - £58k in 2017/18 withdrawn and replaced by operational saving
 - Saving 23b – Reduction in Street Cleansing – reduced by £175k in 2017/18 to reflect the reinstatement of 7 environmental operatives and replaced by an operational saving
 - Saving 26 – Green waste collection - £30k deferred from 2017/18 to be considered as part of green waste review
 - Saving 27 – Reduction in one tree gang - £60k in 2017/18 withdrawn
 - Saving 29 - Cease funding to Relate - £7.5k in 2017/18 and £22,500 in 2018/19 withdrawn
 - Saving 30 – Community Associations - £247.9k in 2017/18 withdrawn
 - Saving 31 – Cohesion non staffing - £74k in 2017/18 withdrawn
 - Saving 32 – Library redesign – Reduced by £1.1m in 2017/18
 - Saving 33 – Leather Museum relocation - £85k removed in both 2017/18 and 2018/19
 - Saving 35 – Subsidy to Forest Arts - £100k in 2017/18 withdrawn
 - Saving 36 – New Art Gallery reduced by £340k in 2019/20
 - Saving 38 – Create a Local Authority Trading Company (LACTO) to manage Active Living Centres - £175k removed in both 2017/18 and 2018/19, as recent legal finding suggests VAT saving can be made without the need for a LATCO
 - Saving 66 – Planning merger - £100k in 2018/19 withdrawn
 - Saving 67 – Reduction in Economic Development - £244k in 2019/20 withdrawn
 - Saving 68 – Markets cleansing - £175k in 2017/18 withdrawn
 - Saving 69 – District market fees - £35k in 2017/18 withdrawn
 - Saving 71 – Economic Intelligence - £60k in 2019/20 withdrawn
 - Saving 72 – Further Reduction in Economic Development - £100k in 2019/20 withdrawn
 - Saving 76 – CAB funding – reduced by £57.5k in 2017/18 and future years rephased

- Saving 77 – Universal Services - £353.6k reduced in 2017/18 including Wilbraham Court, £67k in 2018/19 and £30k in 2019/20
 - Saving 78 – Respite and day services - £400k rephased into 2018/19
- 12.7 Additionally, the following changes have been made to operational savings, and will be implemented under officer delegations:
- Saving 106 (Operational) – Waste collection 4 day working week - £63k reprofiled into 2018/19
 - Saving 130 (Operational) – Trade union facility time – reduced by £54k in 2017/18
 - Saving 132 (Operational) – Human Resources contracts - £5,250 rephased into 2018/19 following a delay in implementation
 - Saving 133 (Operational) – ICT – reduced by £60k in 2017/18 to remove Tamworth facility
- 12.8 In total, £3,647,429 of savings proposals have been removed in 2017/18, £596,526 in 2018/19 and £852,720 in 2019/20 - this has been funded as follows:
- Substitute operational proposals (as set out above) - £448,180 in 2017/18 and £100,000 in 2018/19
 - Brought forward of £60,000 from 2019/20 to 2017/18
 - Remaining £3,139,249 in 2017/18 funded from resources as referred to in 12.3 above.

Capital Proposals

- 12.9 The draft capital programme for 2017/18 to 2019/20 was reported to Cabinet on 14 December 2016 and subsequently forwarded to Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 12.10 Following review, a number of changes have been made to the draft capital programme for 2017/18 which are summarised as follows:
- Looked after children out of borough placements - £150k added in 2017/18 to bring buildings up to a required standard
 - Library design - £2.16m added in 2017/18 plus £2.2m in 2018/19 for the redesign and refurbishment subject to Cabinet's approval of the redesigned library service
 - Essential works on council house rewiring – £1m added in 2017/18 to be funded from the carry forward of underspends on specific building related projects from 2016/17.
 - Darlaston strategic Development Area reduced by £100k in 2017/18
 - Acquisition of Reservoir Place of £775k added in 2017/18 to support the Phoenix 10 project (as approved by Cabinet on 14 December 2016), to be funded from future business rates as part of the enterprise zone

Table 1 : Summary of Revised Savings and the Executive (Cabinet) decision					
Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
Leader of the Council Portfolio					
1	Charging for Deputyships	30,000			Approve a charge for Deputyships in accordance with Part 19 of the Court of Protection Rules 2007(Practice Direction B – Fixed Costs in the Court of Protection – Remuneration of public authority deputies)
2	Charging for Appointeeships		15,000		Approve further consultation and report back to Cabinet
3	Apply decrease to Members allowances at same level as decrease in staff pay.	7,055			Approve, recognising this requires a Council decision to implement
52	Cease retirement awards	26,000			Approve
Total Leader of the Council Portfolio		63,055	15,000	0	
Children's Services and Education Portfolio					
4	Review and develop children centre service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model	208,126			Approve, subject to decision by Cabinet 8 February (see reported on Children's Centres)
5	Review demand for transport from children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND)				Withdraw this proposal (£100,000 in 2017/18)
6	Review demand for SEN transport. More provision of Special School Places will reduce transport & travel costs			200,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
7	Review demand for Out of Borough SEN short breaks				Withdraw this proposal (£130,000) and replace with a reduced operational saving of £102,000 arising from improved commissioning and young adults coming of age.

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
8	Review and reduce short breaks				Withdraw this proposal and replace with operational savings in 2017/18 of £100,000 and 2018/19 of £100,000, arising from efficiencies and improved commissioning arrangements
9	Reduction of spend on Looked after Children including those in Out of Borough Placements		300,000	600,000	Approve
10	Review and reduce Looked after Children numbers and associated costs	680,044	462,044	1,223,044	Approve
11	Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service	64,000	64,000		Approve
12	Reduce or identify alternative contribution for Children's Safeguarding Board				Withdraw this proposal (£58,035 in 2017/18 and £58,035 in 2018/19)
13	Review and reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model	266,500	421,301	110,572	Approve and instruct officers to continue to work with the Voluntary Sector to identify and secure alternative external funding to continue to deliver youth work across the localities
14	Aim to identify alternative funding to support School Improvement Services	235,599	271,198	135,599	Approve
Total Children's Services and Education Portfolio		1,454,269	1,518,543	2,269,215	
Clean and Green Portfolio					
15	Every other week bin collections	460,500			None required (Decision approved by Cabinet 16 December 2015)
16	Reduction in Public Health investment to lifestyle services	105,000		145,000	Approve revised proposal (Additional £60,000 brought forward from 2019/20 to 2017/18)

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
17	Introduce charging for garden waste collections		300,000		Approve that further consultation and equality impact assessment takes place on this proposal
18	Reconfigure recycling collections to introduce 'Twin stream' collections		150,000		Approve that further consultation and equality impact assessment takes place on this proposal
19	Review HWRC site and Transfer Station provision			137,772	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
20	Reduction in grass cutting - large areas	27,312			Approve
21	Consider cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision				Withdraw this proposal (£58,464 in 2017/18, replaced by an operational saving)
22	Reduction in herbicidal weed spraying of highways	23,750			Approve
23a/b	Reduction in Street Cleansing service	257,907			Approve the revised saving (reduced by £175,000 for reinstatement of 7 environmental operatives, and replaced by an operational saving), and that these 7 environmental operatives target areas of most need in the Borough
24	Further review of waste collection arrangements			500,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
25	Reduce grass cutting on highway verges in rural areas	49,702			Approve
26	Reducing green waste collection season by 1 month				Defer this proposal (£30,000 in 2017/18, replaced by an operational saving) and review the collection season alongside the proposal to introduce charging for green waste collections (saving reference 17)

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
27	Reduction of one tree gang				Withdraw this proposal (£60,000 in 2017/18, replaced by an operational saving)
Total Clean and Green Portfolio		924,171	450,000	782,772	
Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio					
28	Consider withdrawal of contract with Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA)			168,795	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
29	Cease funding to Relate Walsall and First Base Walsall				Withdraw this proposal (£7,500 in 2017/18 and £22,500 in year 2) and instruct officers to liaise with these charities to discuss ways in which they might be able to reduce the need for Walsall Council funding support in the future
30	Consider withdrawing funding to Community Associations				Withdraw this proposal (£247,900 in 2017/18)
31	Remove Cohesion non staffing budget				Withdraw this proposal (£74,356 in 2017/18)
32	Redesign of Library service	1,800,000			<p>Cabinet approve a redesigned library service (saving amended from £2.9m to £1.8m) that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walsall Town Centre “Hub” (including the Local History Centre & Archive) • The Leather Museum will remain “as is” at the Wisemore factory • Five District libraries (Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall) • One Mobile Library and a Home Delivery Service, the mobile service route to be redesigned to meet Marmot objectives and greatest need, and • A Community Library at Streetly, augmented with community volunteer support.

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
32	Redesign of Library service (continued)	See above			<p>Cabinet approve that the following sites do not form part of the Council's redesigned statutory library service, and therefore that the statutory Library Service on these sites will cease from 30 June 2017; Beechdale, Blakenall, New Invention, Pelsall, Pleck, Pheasey, Rushall, South Walsall, and Walsall Wood</p> <p>Cabinet authorises the Executive Director, in consultation with the portfolio holder for community, leisure and culture, to enter into discussions with the community in the areas where there will no longer be a statutory library service on site, for the community to take on these sites as local book exchanges or venues for community centres, run by volunteers</p> <p>Cabinet approves that, subject to the above, if no alternative use is agreed for individual sites, that these sites be designated as surplus to requirements, and considered for disposal.</p>
33	Relocate Leather Museum into Lichfield Street Central Library with Local History Centre				Withdraw this proposal (£85,720 in 2017/18 and £85,715 in 2018/19)
34	Relocate Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library	93,405	93,405		Approve
35	Removal of the council's revenue subsidy to the Forest Arts		100,000	185,000	Approve, with amendment (£100,000 removed in 2017/18)
36	Remove the council's revenue subsidy to New Art Gallery	100,000	(20,000)	50,000	Approve, with amendment (£390,000 in 2019/20 reduced to £50,000)

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
37	Additional income from Active Living to fully recover costs of Darlaston Pool and Walsall Gala baths		519,383	783,559	Approve
38	Create a Local Authority Trading company, initially to manage Active Living sports sport and leisure services				Withdraw proposal (£175,000 removed in both 2017/18 and 2018/19 due to recent European legal ruling)
39	Change to provision of out of hours for Community Protection service	22,370			Approve
40	Review of the operation of the council's pest and animal control service to control demand, target resources more effectively and increase income	20,000			Approve
Total Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio		2,035,775	692,788	1,187,354	
Health Portfolio					
41	Reduction in Public Health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services	143,000	250,000	500,000	Approve 2017/18 and 2018/19 proposals, consult further on the 2019/20 proposal
42	Re-procurement of lifestyle services	260,000			None required (Decision approved by Cabinet 27 April 2016)
43	Reduction in Healthy Child 5-19 in school services	125,000		100,000	Approve, subject to contract award
44	Re-commissioning of 0-5 services	100,000		400,000	None required (Decision approved by Cabinet 14 December 2016)
45	Reduce scope of healthy lifestyles services			250,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to review of the contract, consultation and equality impact assessment as appropriate)

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
46	Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes	175,152			Approve
47	Reduction of Public Health Stop Smoking services	200,000	200,000		Approve
48	Cease falls prevention service			295,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
49	Reduce capacity in sexual health services			500,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
50	Reduce scope of infection control services		20,000	20,000	Approve
51	Reduction in the Public Health investment in domestic abuse services	50,000			Approve, subject to decision by Cabinet 8 February (see reported on Domestic Abuse Service tender)
76 pt	Reduction in Public Health grant to Citizens Advice Bureau	75,000			Approve
Total Health Portfolio		1,128,152	470,000	2,065,000	
Personnel and Business Support Portfolio					
53	Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens	85,000			<p>Approve saving of £85,000, amended as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete vacant category 2 school crossing patrol posts that have been vacant for more than six months • Instruct officers to work with the remaining Schools which have a Category 2 crossing patrol on risk assessing their crossings and identifying alternative funding sources, seeking to reduce the cost to the Council by 50%, including opportunities for sponsorship

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
Total Personnel and Business Support Portfolio		85,000	0	0	
Regeneration Portfolio					
54	Energy saving from major street lighting invest to save		50,000	450,000	None required (A separate options appraisal on this proposal will be reported to Cabinet during 2017)
55	Reduction in the mtce of road signs	15,000		64,000	Approve 2017/18 saving of £15,000, consult further on 2019/20 proposal
56	Reduced maintenance of road drainage following pilot on drainage and streams			72,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
57	Reduced maintenance road markings			31,500	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
58	Reduction in highways maintenance resulting from the re-procurement of the Highway Maintenance contract	150,000			Approve
59	Additional reduction in Highways maintenance revenue budgets		100,000		Approve
60	Increase cost of parking permits	6,000	6,000	6,000	Approve an increase in charges by £1 per month
61	Increasing Town Centre off street Parking Charges	15,000			Approve an increase in charges by 10p per parking charge band
62	Introduction of an additional charge for vehicle dropped crossings to cover the costs of preparing quotations	10,000			Approve a charge of £110 for vehicle dropped crossings
63	Introduction of a street and roadworks permit scheme		100,000		Officers are instructed to undertake the necessary consultation and equality impact assessment and Cabinet will review this prior to any decision on implementation.

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
64	Redesign and reduce the traffic management function		75,000		Approve
65	Reduction in the reactive Highways maintenance budget	50,000			Approve
66	Merge Strategic Planning team with other Councils				Withdraw proposal (£100,000 in 2018/19)
67	Reduction in Economic Development				Withdraw proposal (£243,644 in 2019/20)
68	Stop cleansing after markets / collecting and disposing of market traders waste				Withdraw proposal (£175,000 in 2017/18)
69	Increase district centres market fees				Withdraw proposal (£35,000 in 2017/18)
70	Cessation of landscape service	40,000			Approve
71	Removal of all economic intelligence services				Withdraw proposal (£60,000 in 2019/20)
72	Reduction in Economic Development capacity				Withdraw proposal (£100,000 in 2019/20)
73	Review of investment portfolio			500,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
Total Regeneration Portfolio		286,000	331,000	1,123,500	
Social Care Portfolio					
74	Combined Welfare Rights service, Housing Advice and Crisis Support	200,000			Approve
75	Closure of banking hall in Civic Centre	100,000			Approve

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
76 pt	Reduction in grant to Citizens Advice Bureau		57,458	45,966	Withdraw the 2017/18 proposal and retain the core grant funding of £57,458 in 2017/18. Instruct Officers to liaise with the CAB to explore the potential for cost efficiencies of £57,458 in 2018/19 and £45,966 in 2019/20 to enable the Council's contribution to the CAB's funding to be further reduced in the future
77	Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services	757,843	1,032,729		<p>1. <u>Review of Assistive technology (Telecare / Telehealth / Call Handlers and Fitting) and the Responder element.</u> Cabinet approve the re-tender of the service and re-consult on the charging process, with a view to saving £110,000 in 2018/19.</p> <p>2. <u>Response Services</u> Cabinet approve the re-tender of the service and re-consult on the charging process, with a view to saving £190,000 in 2017/18 and £267,000 in 2018/19.</p> <p>3. <u>Mental Health Staffing (Access and Welfare Rights)</u> Cabinet approve the proposal to delete these posts, saving £39,000 in 2017/18 and £54,000 in 2018/19.</p> <p>4. <u>Broadway North Recovery College</u> Cabinet approve the ceasing of this service, with support given to service users to set up their own support group and help to access other activities elsewhere, saving £75,000 in 217/18 and £78,000 in 2018/19.</p>

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
77	Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services (Continued)	See above	See above		<p>5. <u>Neighbourhood Community Officers</u></p> <p>Cabinet approve a reduction in posts from 13 to 8, saving £99,000 in 2017/18 and £139,000 in 2018/19, the remaining posts to be focussed on the locality element of Walsall Together.</p> <p>6. <u>Independent Living Centre</u></p> <p>Cabinet approve permission to end the lease, cease Shop mobility and short term wheelchair loans service and to relocate the blue badge service to the Money, Home, Job service, saving £30,000 in 2017/18 and £61,000 in 2018/19.</p> <p>7. <u>Sensory Support Social Work Team</u></p> <p>Cabinet approve permission to reduce the team to the statutory minimum to support sensory impaired adults, saving £154,000 in 2017/18 and £216,000 in 2018/19.</p> <p>8. <u>Sons and Daughters of Rest Rates Subsidy</u></p> <p>Cabinet approve the ending of the rates subsidy, saving £21,000 in 2017/18.</p> <p>9. <u>Wilbraham Court</u></p> <p>Cabinet withdraw the proposal to cease support (saving of £180,000 in 2017/18).</p>

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
77	Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services (Continued)	See above	See above		<p>12. & 13. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Physical Disabilities (Contract numbers 1241, 1242), and 14. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Autism (Contract 1243)</p> <p>Cabinet approve the ending of these contracts and approve that the Executive Director of Adult Social Care retenders one empowerment, engagement and decision making contract, in line with the Care Act statutory duty, at a saving of £25,000 in 2017/18.</p> <p>15. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Learning Disabilities (Contract 1221), and 16. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Physical and Sensory Disabilities (Contract 1224)</p> <p>Cabinet approve the ending of these contracts and approve that the Executive Director of Adult Social Care retenders one short term crisis and advocacy contract, in line with the Care Act statutory duty, at a saving of £27,000 in 2017/18.</p> <p>17. Midland Mencap Social Club (Contract 1154), and 18. Mary Elliott social Club (1156), and 19. Older People's Project (Contract 4411), and 20. Gateway SE Social Club (Contract 1157), and 21. Gateway NW Social Club (Contract 1155)</p> <p>Cabinet withdraw the proposal to cease funding the above services. (saving of ££9,792 in 2017/18 and £9,792 in 2018/19).</p>

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
77	Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services (Continued)	See above	See above		<p>22. <u>Befriending Autism</u></p> <p>Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal (saving of £43,333 in 2017/18 withdrawn).</p> <p>23. <u>Community Outreach – Breakthrough Service (Contract 1252)</u></p> <p>Cabinet withdraw the proposal to cease support (saving of £50,000 in 2017/18 withdrawn).</p> <p>24. Eye Clinic Liaison and Register for the Blind (ECALO and RILs) (Contract 1239), and</p> <p>25. Befriending Service (physical and sensory impairment) (Contract 1220)</p> <p>Cabinet approve the reconfiguring of these services to meet statutory guidance around eligibility, saving £24,000 (contract 1239) and £43,250 (contract 1220) in 2017/18.</p> <p>26. Concessionary Travel, and</p> <p>27. Disability Hub (Contract 1215), and</p> <p>28. Supporting Employment, and</p> <p>29. Summer Scheme (Contract 1214), and</p> <p>30. Parents Project (70LD)</p> <p>Cabinet withdraw these proposals (saving of £33,000 in 2017/18 and £57,000 in 2018/19 for disability hub; £25,5128 for concessionary travel in 2017/18; £30,000 in 2019/20 for supporting employment; £22,500 in 2018/19 and £32,303 in in 2017/18 for Parent's project are withdrawn).</p>

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
77	Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services (Continued)	See above	See above		<p>31. Walsall Society for the Blind – Lease payment arrangement Cabinet instruct officers to review the lease arrangements and report back to Cabinet on options to save £24,000 in 2018/19.</p> <p>32. Seed Money for low level services, and</p> <p>33. Housing Support Services. Cabinet approve the ending of these contracts, saving £75,000 (seed money) in 2017/18 and £20,000 (housing support service) in 2018/19.</p>
78	Review of respite and day services	400,024	400,024		<p>Cabinet approve that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respite services at Fallings Heath cease as soon as is practicable, and that those people who access respite should be supported to transfer to other providers. 2. All respite users will be subject to a formal review process to decide upon their eligibility (in terms of short breaks), or their carers need based upon a carers assessment (If it is replacement care) under the Care Act, to determine their level of respite going forwards. 3. Consultation on Day Opportunities will be carried out during February to August 2017 with a final decision about eligibility, choice and location to close, based upon that further process, to be brought back to Cabinet. <p>In light of the above, the saving has been reprofiled.</p>

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
79a	Improving demand management for Adult Social Care	1,718,750	3,062,500	1,218,750	Approve
79b	Improving demand management for Adult Social Care		1,145,833	2,854,167	Approve
80	Housing and Care 21	137,000	295,000	590,000	Approve 2017/18 proposal of £137,000. Year 2 & 3 proposals will be subject to further consultation
81	Removal of jointly funded vacant posts	826,627			Approve
82	Improved charging and collection arrangements for community based services (Previously was “ <i>introduce an interim charge for community based services</i> ”)	474,894			Approve, subject to a re-designed charging policy to be presented to Cabinet in March 2017
Total Social Care Portfolio		4,615,138	5,993,544	4,708,883	
Central savings					
	Terms and Conditions	2,000,000			None required (Approved by Personnel Committee 28 June 2016)
	Channel Shift – roll out of digital solutions for contacting the council			5,000,000	None at this stage (this is a year 3 proposal, and therefore subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment)
Total Central		2,000,000	0	5,000,000	
Total Policy Savings		12,591,560	9,470,875	17,136,724	

Background papers

- Various financial working papers.
- Rebalancing the Budget: Options for Consultation - Cabinet 26 October 2016
- Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2019/20 - Cabinet 14 December 2016
- Equality Impact Assessments

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James Walsh
Assistant Director - Finance (CFO)
31 January 2017



Councillor S. Coughlan
Leader of the Council
31 January 2017

Section A - Part 1 - Report on findings from Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Overview and Scrutiny received the draft revenue proposals in November and December 2016 and the draft capital programme and draft revenue budget in December & January. The Committees reviewed the proposals and raised a number of questions and queries, which were responded to by officers and portfolio holders at each meeting.

This section summarises the recommendations from the panels and, where applicable, Cabinet's consideration of these.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Revenue Saving reference 41 – Reduction in the Public Health investment in Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services

Concern was expressed that this should be a priority for the Local Authority. It was noted that this proposal was for the programme which delivers drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services and this should be protected. Committee members highlighted the wide ranging impact and devastating effects that drugs and alcohol have not just on the individual but their families and, sometimes, local neighbourhood. Committee recommended that Cabinet reconsider this proposal.

Further, at their second meeting on 19 January 2017, the Committee requested Cabinet to reconsider the proposed reduction in investment for Wilbraham Court (savings reference 77 'Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services').

Response:

Following consideration of all consultation feedback and equality impact assessment, Cabinet intend to withdraw the proposal to cease investment in Wilbraham Court.

In relation to 41, Cabinet intend to proceed with the proposal in 2017/18 (£143k) and 2018/19 (£250k), but consult further in relation to the 2019/20 proposed reduction of £500k. In addition, a number of mitigating actions have been put in place, as follows, which will be kept under review:

- (a) Specialist maternity service for pregnant women and targeted provision for most vulnerable service users, including those with mental health and learning disabilities and the homeless, will be retained;
- (b) BME communities and steroid users needs will be factored into the new service remodelling;
- (c) Targeted work with street drinkers from different European communities will take place through the locality working model.

Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Whilst concerns were expressed concerns about a number of saving proposals, no recommendations were made and the Committee approved that saving proposals were noted.

Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 24 November 2016

Revenue Saving 32, 32a, 32b, 32c – proposals for a redesigned library service

As part of their considerations of this item the Committee heard representations from the 'Save Streetly Library' campaign.

Members were concerned about the potential impact this saving could have on local communities. Members felt that proactive engagement work with local community groups should be taking place in order to develop alternative provision should local libraries have to close. The Library Service was highly valued by the local community. The future role of libraries was discussed. It was felt more could be done to modernise the service, such as increasing electronic book loans.

The Panel recommended that Cabinet explore opportunities to work with local residents to establish community libraries.

Response:

Cabinet have received extensive feedback from a range of stakeholders in relation to libraries and have amended their proposal. There is an option for community libraries to be explored further as part of the redesigned library service.

Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny – 3 January 2017

The Committee received a short report from each relevant portfolio holder on the proposals contained within the draft capital programme. Below is a summary of feedback by portfolio.

- **Community, leisure and culture**

CCTV upgrade to equipment

Members sought assurances that the quality of the new CCTV equipment was of a high quality suitable to support prosecutions. Encouragement was also provided to seek to develop a partnership with Centro on this issue.

- **Personnel and business support**

Redesign of school kitchens to meet health and safety, food and fire regulations. Following questions, the portfolio holder explained that this would see 31 schools benefit in total with investment in new machinery. Small works would be undertaken in 12 schools.

- **Regeneration**

Hatherton Road multi-storey car park – development of demolition plan. Due to the significant costs of this scheme it was suggested that the Council should consider returning the lease on these premises rather than undertake this work on behalf of the property owner.

Walsall Town Centre Public Realm - Following a question Members were informed that this would ensure one uniform surface throughout the town centre. It was

suggested that a tiled passageway in the town centre should be improved to prevent slippery conditions in wet weather.

Provision of dropped crossings along footpaths - This investment would provide approximately 20 new crossing points.

- **Social Care**

Willenhall Lane traveller's site redesign and refurbishment of plots - Following questions it was confirmed that this investment would provide two additional plots at the site.

Aids and adaptations, preventative adaptations and supporting independence - Investing in this area would assist older people in living independently for longer.

Mosaic implementation phase 3 - The intention of this phase of the project was to assist in streamlining administrative functions.

Further to the budget report the Committee heard a petition regarding the budget proposal to withdraw **school crossing patrol (SCP) services at category 2 crossings**. The Committee recommended that Cabinet consider retaining funding for those category 2 crossings that were currently staffed and that discussions took place with schools about potential alternative methods of funding the crossings.

Cabinet have reviewed saving 53 – school crossing patrols:

Having considered the feedback from consultation and following discussions with schools it is accepted that further time is required to assess the impact of the withdrawal of funding for category 2 crossings that have not been vacant for at least six months.

Cabinet therefore intend to support an amended proposal that deletes vacant category 2 school crossing patrol posts that have been vacant for more than six months.

Officers will work with the remaining Schools which have a Category 2 crossing patrol on risk assessing their crossings and identifying alternative funding sources seeking to reduce the cost to the Council by 50%, including opportunities for sponsorship.

The full saving of £85,000 will still be achieved.

Section A - Part 2 – Findings from Service Specific Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2017/18+ and Cabinet Responses

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Budget consultation took place between 27 October and 9 December 2016, with some consultation extending into late December.
- 1.2 Anyone who lives, works, studies, visits or does business in the borough was encouraged to have their say on draft policy proposals via questionnaires, online surveys and at face to face meetings, focus groups, drop in sessions and by phone or in writing / email. Whilst anyone could comment on draft operational proposals, the focus for consultation on was largely internally focused within the organisation.
- 1.3 Information presented in this report should be considered alongside equality impact assessments and other supporting information. Methodological considerations, including limitations of the data gathered are detailed in section 2.3 to 2.9.
- 1.4 The proposals may be broken down as follows;
- 1.5 The following policy proposals are either year two or three proposals for which consultation, where applicable, will take place as necessary;
 - **Policy proposal Ref 6:** Review demand for SEN transport. More provision of Special School Places will reduce transport and existing travel costs.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 19:** Review HWRC site and Transfer Station provision.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 24:** Further review of waste collection arrangements.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 28:** Consider withdrawal of contract with Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA).
 - **Policy Proposal Ref 41:** Reduction in public health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services (year 3 element only).
 - **Policy Proposal Ref 45:** Reduce scope of healthy lifestyles service.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 48:** Cease falls prevention service.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 49:** Reduce capacity in sexual health services.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 56:** Reduced maintenance of road drainage following pilot on drainage and streams.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 57:** Reduced maintenance road markings.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 66:** Merge Strategic Planning team with those of other Councils.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 67:** Reduction in Economic Development.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 71:** Removal of all economic intelligence services.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 72:** Significant reduction in Economic Development Capacity.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 73:** Review of investment portfolio.
- 1.6 The following policy proposal relates to 2018/19 and 2019/20, for which consultation is not required, and reflect anticipated additional income arising from the new Leisure sites at Bloxwich and Oak Park which opened August 2016. The level of income will be reviewed once the Centres have been operating for 12 months.

- **Policy proposal 37:** Additional income from Active Living to fully recover costs of Darlaston Pool and Walsall Gala baths.
- 1.7 The following proposals relate to applying existing legislation / ways of working and will involve consultation on an individual basis during 2017/18 and 2018/19;
- **Policy proposal Ref 2:** Charging for Appointeeships.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 79a and 79b:** Improving demand management for Adult Social Care
- 1.8 The following proposal relates to the transformation of Intermediate Care Services in Walsall. There is currently a health and care system project that is developing a new model for Intermediate care (hospital discharge services), the outcome of this project will be the reconfiguration of the staff profile currently engaged in Intermediate Care activity which will result in some redundancies and will generate this saving. Cabinet intend to approve this.
- **Policy proposal Ref 81:** Removal of jointly funded vacant posts
- 1.9 The following proposal requires a Council decision to implement;
- **Policy proposal Ref 3:** Apply decrease to Members allowances at same level as decrease in staff pay.
- 1.10 The following policy proposal will involve a separate options appraisal for Cabinet consideration in 2017/18;
- **Policy proposal Ref 54:** Energy saving from major street lighting invest to save.
- 1.11 The following proposal has already been implemented;
- **Policy proposal Ref 15:** Every other week bin collections
- 1.12 The following proposals have already undergone a procurement process and the contract has been awarded / will be presented to Cabinet;
- **Policy proposal Ref 42:** Re-procurement of lifestyle services. Contract award was agreed at Cabinet on 27th April 2016.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 43:** Reduction in Healthy Child 5-19 in school services. Procurement, including consultation, has been concluded. Alternative provision to be considered before being presented to Cabinet to award the contract.
 - **Policy proposal Ref 44:** Re-commissioning of 0-5 services. Contract award was agreed at Cabinet on 14 December 2016.
- 1.13 The following proposal seeks to reduce investment in preventative or universal services let via Service Level Agreements in the voluntary sector or managed within the council. The proposal involves 33 services, each of which has been individually reviewed. Please see section 3 for more detail.
- **Policy proposal Ref 77:** Cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services.

1.14 The following proposals have been amended (or withdrawn and replaced with alternative savings;

- **Policy proposal Ref 7:** Review demand for Out of Borough short breaks. There was a strong resistance from parents/carers to reducing short breaks provision. There is a risk that parents will resist to any proposals put forward to move their children to Bluebells which would mean costs continue at the current rate for out of borough overnight stays.

In light of the feedback received, equalities analysis and additional work to identify alternative cost reductions and savings within the service, Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal (£130k in 2017/18) and replace it with a reduced operational saving of £102k (delivered through operational savings of improved commissioning and young adults coming of age).

- **Policy proposal Ref 8:** Review and reduce short breaks. Feedback from consultation showed there was strong resistance against this proposal.

For 2017/18, the saving of £100k will be delivered through efficiencies and improved commissioning arrangements. For 2018/19, it is now proposed to implement the £100k saving by reducing the number of places by 6% which equates to approximately 108 places across the year, through further efficiencies and improved commissioning rather than through implementing the original proposal (i.e. social work-assessed children who already receive assessed short break provision will no longer be eligible for the term-time and holiday universal short breaks commissioned by Children's Services). This is also mitigated by the expectation of an historical average 8-10% non-attendance / cancellation rate. Cabinet therefore intend to approve the proposal with the above revision.

- **Policy proposal Ref 16:** Reduction on Public Health investment in lifestyles services. Alternative operational savings relating to contract and other services efficiencies have been identified, therefore the original proposal as set out will be amended accordingly.
- **Policy proposal Ref 23a and 23b:** Reduction in street cleansing service. Following a review of the operational implications arising from the original proposal Cabinet intend to amend the original proposal and reinstate seven Environmental Officer (£175k) posts, which would reduce the environmental implications of this saving.
- **Policy proposal Ref 32 a-c, 33 & 34:** Option for redesign of Library Service, Local History centre and Leather Museum. Feedback indicated a preference for both a town centre and local library service delivery model overall. Hence, Option 1, whilst retaining the Leather Museum in its current location and with a local library service (Option 2/3). Cabinet are therefore minded to reduce the saving allocation and develop a town centre and district centre library model. For the detail of this proposal please refer to Section A - Part 3 of this report; Library redesign.
- **Policy proposal Ref 36:** Removal of the council's revenue subsidy to the New Art Gallery. The 2017/18 and 2018/19 savings are to be approved. The 2019/20 saving of £390,000 has been revised to £50,000.

- **Policy proposal Ref 38:** Create a Local Authority Trading company (LATCO), initially to manage Active Living sports and leisure services. A recent European ruling suggests that the VAT savings can be generated without the need for a LATCO. As such, this proposal is withdrawn for budget purposes and replaced with an equivalent base budget adjustment, reflecting the additional income to be generated as a result of the ruling.
- **Policy proposal Ref 53:** Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens. Cabinet intends to implement this with some modifications.
- **Policy proposal Ref 82:** Introduce an interim charge for community based services – a review of charging has indicated that improvements in charging and collection processes will generate the additional income, without the need for an interim charge. A reviewed charging policy will be represented to Cabinet in March.

1.15 The following proposals have been withdrawn;

- **Policy proposal Ref 5:** Following the outcome of consultation, as detailed in the 14 Dec 2016 Cabinet report, 'Home to School Transport Consultation', it was approved that a revised draft home to school transport policy be issued for further consultation in the spring 2017. It was recommended within the report that post 16 transport support remain instead of being removed. As this is no longer to be supported, a large proportion of the current level of savings identified cannot be delivered.

The transport service has considered if other cost reductions could be delivered to offset this potential budget shortfall, this is unlikely and therefore the proposed 2017/18 budget saving of £100k is deemed undeliverable. The draft home school transport policy will be issued for consultation in the spring, however the proposal to cease post 16 transport support will be withdrawn.

- **Policy proposal Ref 12:** Reduce or identify alternative contribution for Children's Safeguarding Board. Following feedback from key partners and considering the impact the proposal may have on Walsall Safeguarding Children Board being able to deliver its statutory responsibilities, Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal and not reduce the Council's contribution in 2018/19 and 2019/20. It further proposes to enter negotiations with all partners to review existing contribution levels.
- **Policy proposal Ref 21:** Consider cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision. There is considerable public opinion against this proposal including a petition that went to Council on the 9 January. Additionally, during the consultation process issues have come to light with regards to land ownership, trustee obligations, hire agreements and occupancy arrangements. Cabinet have considered the consultation feedback and other issues and have chosen not to proceed with this proposal.
- **Policy proposal Ref 27:** Reduction of one tree gang. Due to operational reasons this proposal has been withdrawn.

- **Policy proposal 29:** Cease funding to Relate Walsall and First Base Walsall. Having considered the feedback and equalities analysis Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal.
- **Policy proposal Ref 30:** Consider withdrawing funding to Community Associations. Feedback from consultation showed that withdrawing funding to Community Association's will put some at risk of closure and lead to greater social isolation. As a result, there is a need for a more strategic review of the sector and therefore savings should be phased to allow time for this review to take place. Cabinet therefore intend to withdraw this proposal to allow time to review the sector and build capacity.
- **Policy proposal Ref 31:** Remove cohesion non staffing budget. Following feedback from consultation and consideration of equalities, Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal.
- **Policy proposal Ref 35:** Removal of the council's revenue subsidy to the Forest Arts. Cabinet are minded to withdraw the year 1 (2017/18) budget saving however Forest's management would be expected to work with staff to redesign the Forest Arts Centre business operation and model over the new few years. Cabinet intend to support the proposed gradual reduction in financial support given to the Forest Arts Centre, but from year 2 onwards.
- **Policy proposal Ref 68:** Stop cleansing after markets / collecting and disposing of market traders waste. Given the opposing feedback to this proposal and the range of concerns raised by traders Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal.
- **Policy proposal Ref 69:** Increase district centre market fees. Given the negative feedback received from market traders, Cabinet intend to withdraw the proposal.
- **Policy proposal Ref 76:** Reduction in Grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau. Having considered the feedback from consultation and following detailed discussions with Walsall CAB, it is accepted that further time is required to assess the impact of the withdrawal of the Money, Home, Job element of the funding of £57,458. Cabinet therefore intend to withdraw this element of the proposal, but have asked officers to liaise with the CAB to explore the potential for cost efficiencies to be made to enable the Council's contribution to the CAB's funding to be further reduced in the future.
- **Policy proposal Ref 77:** A number of changes have been made to this proposal, including a number of withdrawals.

1.16 Cabinet are minded to support the following, subject to further consultation:

- **Policy Proposal Ref 17:** Introduce charging for garden waste collections.
- **Policy Proposal Ref 18:** Reconfigure recycling collections to introduce 'Twin stream' collections
- **Policy Proposal Ref 78:** Review of Respite and Day services. Cabinet intend to continue with the proposal, subject to additional consultation on the Day Opportunities element of this saving only. A final decision will be brought back to Cabinet on this matter following close of consultation.

1.17 A decision on proposal Ref 26 is deferred for consideration alongside Policy Proposal Ref 17: Introduction of charging for garden waste collections.

- **Policy Proposal Ref 26:** Reducing Green Waste Collection Season by 1 month. A review of the collection season will be undertaken alongside the proposal to introduce charging for green waste collections (Ref 17) which will be subject to further detailed consultation and equality impact assessment.

1.18 The remaining policy proposals are to be approved as originally set out.

Proposal Ref 1: Charging for Deputyships. Agree to charge for Deputyships in accordance with Part 19 of the Court of Protection Rules 2007 – Practice Direction B – Fixed Costs in the court of Protection – Remuneration of public authority deputies has been subject to consultation with the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, in her Public Guardian role for these individuals.

Policy Proposal Ref 4: Review and develop children centre service as part of 0-19 Early Help Model

Policy Proposal Ref 9: Reduction of spend on Looked after Children including those in Out of Borough Placements.

Policy Proposal Ref 10: Review and reduce Looked after Children numbers and associated costs.

Policy Proposal Ref 11: Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service.

Policy Proposal Ref 13: Review and Reduce Children's Youth Services

Policy Proposal Ref 14: Aim to identify alternative funding to support school improvement service.

Policy Proposal Ref 20: Reduction in grass cutting - large areas.

Policy Proposal Ref 22: Reduction in herbicidal weed spraying of highways.

Policy Proposal Ref 25: Reduce grass cutting on highway verges in rural areas.

Policy Proposal Ref 39: Change to provision of out of hours for Community Protection service.

Policy Proposal Ref 40: Review of the operation of the council's pest and animal control service to control demand, target resources more effectively and increase income.

Policy Proposal Ref 41: Reduction in Public Health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services. Year 1 and 2 approved, year 3 will be subject to further consultation.

Policy Proposal Ref 46: Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes

Policy Proposal Ref 47: Reduction of Public Health Stop Smoking services.

Policy Proposal Ref 50: Reduce scope of infection control services.

Policy Proposal Ref 51: Reduction in the Public Health Transformation Fund investment in domestic abuse services.

Policy Proposal Ref 52: Cease retirement awards.

Policy Proposal Ref 55: Reduction in the maintenance of road signs, 2017/18 only, consult further on 2019/20 proposal.

Policy Proposal Ref 58: Reduction in highways maintenance resulting from the re-procurement of the Highway Maintenance contract.

Policy Proposal Ref 59: Additional reduction in Highways maintenance revenue budgets.

Policy Proposal Ref 60: Increase cost of parking permits.

Policy Proposal Ref 61: Increasing Town Centre off street Parking Charges.

Policy Proposal Ref 62: Introduction of an additional charge for vehicle dropped crossings to cover the costs of preparing quotations.

Policy Proposal Ref 63: Introduction of a street and roadworks permit scheme.

Policy Proposal Ref 64: Redesign and reduce the traffic management function

Policy Proposal Ref 65: Reduction in the reactive Highways.

Policy Proposal Ref 70: Cessation of landscape service.

Policy Proposal Ref 74: Combined Welfare Rights service, Housing Advice and Crisis Support.

Policy Proposal Ref 75: Closure of banking hall in Civic Centre.

Policy proposal Ref 76: Reduce public health element of funding (not core grant)

Policy proposal Ref 79a/b: Improving demand management for adult social care subject to individual care assessments)

Policy Proposal Ref 80: Housing and Care 21, approve 2017/18 only.

Policy proposal Ref 81: Removal of jointly funded vacant post (see 1.8 above)

- 1.19 Please refer to **section 3** of this report for summaries of consultation and EqlAs, available as applicable.
- 1.20 Table 1 on the following pages provides a quick reference list of all policy proposals, the overall opinion following consultation, outcomes from EqlAs where completed and Cabinet's decision.
- 1.21 Single statements indicate the general overall opinion on each proposal whether: 'Support', 'Against' or 'Inconclusive / opinion divided'.
- 1.22 Some proposals involve savings that commence in 2017/18 for which further consultation activity will take place in 2017/18 and are therefore referenced NA (Not Applicable). Some proposals did not require an EqlA and are also referenced NA. See from section 1.4 of this annex for a breakdown of proposals and their status.
- 1.23 The summaries provided in section 3 outline in more detail the findings from consultation and EqlAs for policy proposals that involved consultation. The summaries include a concluding statement from the council along with the overall decision.

Table 1. Draft Budget Policy Proposals 2017/18 to 2019/20 - Quick reference table

Saving ref number	Savings option	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19	Year 3 2019/20	EqlA decision A-D or not required (N/A)	Overall opinion following consultation	Page number
1	Charging for Deputyships	£30,000			A	Consultation undertaken with Public Guardian	N/A
2	Charging for Appointeeships		£15,000		N/A	Consultation to be undertaken in 2017/18	N/A
3	Apply decrease to Members allowances at same level as decrease in staff pay.	£7,055			Consultation with individuals. Requires a Council decision to implement. No EqlA required.		
4	Review and develop children centre service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model	£208,126			B	Divided	See Page 67
5	Review demand for transport from children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND)	£100,000			D	Against	See Page 73
6	Review demand for SEN transport. More provision of Special School Places will reduce transport and existing travel costs			£200,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
7	Review demand for Out of Borough SEN short breaks	£130,000			D	Against	See Page 75
8	Review and reduce short breaks	£100,000	£100,000		D	Against	See Page 78
9	Reduction of spend on Looked after Children including those in Out of Borough Placements		£300,000	£600,000	A	Support	See Page 82
10	Review and reduce Looked after Children numbers and associated costs	£680,044	£462,044	£1,223,044	A	Support	See Page 84
11	Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service	£64,000	£64,000		A	Support	See Page 87
12	Reduce or identify alternative contribution for Children's Safeguarding Board		£58,035	£58,035	NA	Against	See Page 89
13	Review and Reduce Children's Youth Services	£266,500	£421,301	£110,572	B	Support (Hubs) Divided (Youth allocation)	See Page 92
14	Aim to identify alternative funding to support school improvement service	£235,599	£271,198	£135,599	A	Support	See Page 96
15	Every other week bin collections	£460,500			Already implemented		
16	Reduction in Public Health investment to lifestyle services	£45,000		£205,000	NA	Support	See Page 99
17	Introduce charging for garden waste collections		£300,000		NA	Inconclusive #	See Page 101
18	Reconfigure recycling collections to introduce 'Twin stream' collections		£150,000		NA	Against #	See Page 103

Table 1. Draft Budget Policy Proposals 2017/18 to 2019/20 - Quick reference table

Saving ref number	Savings option	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19	Year 3 2019/20	EqIA decision A-D or not required (N/A)	Overall opinion following consultation	Page number
19	Review HWRC site and Transfer Station provision			£137,772	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
20	Reduction in grass cutting - large areas	£27,312			NA	Divided	See Page 105
21	Consider cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision	£58,464			B	Against	See Page 107
22	Reduction in herbicidal weed spraying of highways	£23,750			NA	Divided	See Page 112
23a & b	Reduction in Street Cleansing service	£432,907			NA	Against	See Page 114
24	Further review of waste collection arrangements			£500,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
25	Reduce grass cutting on highway verges in rural areas	£49,702			NA	Divided	See Page 116
26	Reducing green waste collection season by 1 month	£30,000			NA	Divided #	See Page 118
27	Reduction of one tree gang	£60,000			NA	Support #	See Page 120
28	Consider withdrawal of contract with Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA)			£168,795	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
29	Cease funding to Relate Walsall and First Base Walsall	£7,500	£22,500		C	Against	See Page 121
30	Consider withdrawing funding to Community Associations	£247,900			B	Against	See Page 124
31	Remove Cohesion non staffing budget	£74,356			C	Against	See Page 127
32	Option for redesign of Library service	£2,900,000			B	Support for hub approach but with local libraries too (Town centre & local library option)	See Section A Part B Page 195
32a	Option 1 – move to a single library, home delivery and mobile service, combined with Leather Museum and Local History Centre on a single site				See 32		
32b	Option 2 – invite options for a number of libraries based on viability (cost, access, usage, social and economic need) to include home and mobile				See 32		
32c	Option 3 – alternative solution within available budget				See 32		
33	Relocate Leather Museum into Lichfield Street Central Library with Local History Centre	£85,720	£85,715		See 32		

Table 1. Draft Budget Policy Proposals 2017/18 to 2019/20 - Quick reference table

Saving ref number	Savings option	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19	Year 3 2019/20	EqIA decision A-D or not required (N/A)	Overall opinion following consultation	Page number
34	Relocate Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library with Leather Museum	£93,405	£93,405		See 32		
35	Removal of the council's revenue subsidy to the Forest Arts	£100,000	£100,000	£185,000	NA	Inconclusive #	See Page 129
36	Removal of the council's revenue subsidy to the New Art Gallery	£100,000	-£20,000	£390,000	NA	Against	See Page 130
37	Additional income from Active Living to fully recover costs of Darlaston Pool and Walsall Gala baths		£519,383	£783,559	NA	NA	N/A
38	Create a Local Authority Trading company, initially to manage Active Living sports sport and leisure services	£175,000	£175,000		To involve a separate options appraisal on a LATCO will be considered in 2017/18. The £350,000 saving can now be achieved by the council without entering into a LATCO. No EqIA required.		
39	Change to provision of out of hours for Community Protection service	£22,370			A	Support	See Page 133
40	Review of the operation of the council's pest and animal control service to control demand, target resources more effectively and increase income	£20,000			A	Support	See Page 135
41	Reduction in Public Health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services	143,000	£250,000	£500,000	Yr 1&2 - C Yr 3 - D	Against	See Page 138
42	Re-procurement of lifestyle services	260,000			The procurement process, including consultation, has been concluded and the contract award was agreed at Cabinet on 27th April 2016		
43	Reduction in Healthy Child 5-19 in school services	£125,000		£100,000	The procurement process, including consultation, has been concluded but CMT have asked for alternative provision to be considered before it is presented to Cabinet to award the contract		
44	Re-commissioning of 0-5 services	£100,000		£400,000	The procurement process, including consultation, has been concluded and contract award will be presented to the Cabinet meeting on 14th December 2016.		
45	Reduce scope of healthy lifestyles services			£250,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
46	Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes	£175,152			C	Against	See Page 141
47	Reduction of Public Health Stop Smoking services	£200,000	£200,000		B	Against	See Page 144
48	Cease falls prevention service			£295,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
49	Reduce capacity in sexual health services			£500,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
50	Reduce scope of infection control services		£20,000	£20,000	A	Against	See Page 146
51	Reduction in the Public Health Transformation Fund investment in domestic abuse services	£50,000			B	Against	See Page 149

Table 1. Draft Budget Policy Proposals 2017/18 to 2019/20 - Quick reference table

Saving ref number	Savings option	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19	Year 3 2019/20	EqlA decision A-D or not required (N/A)	Overall opinion following consultation	Page number
52	Cease retirement awards	£26,000			A	Divided	See Page 152
53	Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens	£85,000			A	Against	See Page 154
54	Energy saving from major street lighting invest to save		£50,000	£450,000	To involve a separate options appraisal for consideration in 2017/18. No EqlA required.		
55	Reduction in the maintenance of road signs	£15,000		£64,000	NA	Divided #	See Page 157
56	Reduced maintenance of road drainage following pilot on drainage and streams			£72,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date. No EqlA required.		
57	Reduced maintenance road markings			£31,500	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date. No EqlA required.		
58	Reduction in highways maintenance resulting from the re-procurement of the Highway Maintenance contract	£150,000			NA	Inconclusive	See Page 158
59	Additional reduction in Highways maintenance revenue budgets		£100,000		NA	Inconclusive	
60	Increase cost of parking permits	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	NA	Inconclusive #	See Page 160
61	Increasing Town Centre off street Parking Charges	£15,000			NA	Support #	See Page 162
62	Introduction of an additional charge for vehicle dropped crossings to cover the costs of preparing quotations	£10,000			NA	Support	See Page 163
63	Introduction of a street and roadworks permit scheme		£100,000		NA	Support #	See Page 164
64	Redesign and reduce the traffic management function		£75,000		NA	Against #	See Page 165
65	Reduction in the reactive Highways maintenance budget	£50,000			NA	Against	See Page 166
66	Merge Strategic Planning team with those of other Councils		£100,000		Year 2 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
67	Reduction in Economic Development			£243,644	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
68	Stop cleansing after markets / collecting and disposing of market traders waste	£175,000			NA	Against	See Page 167
69	Increase district centres market fees	£35,000			NA	Against	See Page 169
70	Cessation of landscape service	£40,000			NA	Support	See Page 171

Table 1. Draft Budget Policy Proposals 2017/18 to 2019/20 - Quick reference table

Saving ref number	Savings option	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19	Year 3 2019/20	EqIA decision A-D or not required (N/A)	Overall opinion following consultation	Page number
71	Removal of all economic intelligence services			£60,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
72	Significant reduction in Economic Development capacity			£100,000	Year 3 proposal consultation to take place at a later date		
73	Review of investment portfolio			£500,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
74	Combined Welfare Rights service, Housing Advice and Crisis Support	£200,000			NA	NA	See Page 172
75	Closure of banking hall in Civic Centre	£100,000			B	Divided	See Page 174
76	Reduction in grant to Citizens Advice Bureau	£132,458	£45,966	£66,191	B	Against	See Page 176
77	Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services	£1,111,505	£1,099,521	£30,000	Various* A,B,C,D	Divided	See Page 179
		*This proposal relates to 32 separate services; please see Ref 77 Evidence, Engagement and consultation summary for individual EQIA and cabinet decisions.					
78	Review of respite and day services	£400,024	£400,024		C	Divided	See Page 191
79a	Improving demand management for Adult Social Care	£1,718,750	£3,062,500	£1,218,750	B	NA	N/A
79b	Improving demand management for Adult Social Care		£1,145,833	£2,854,167	B	NA	N/A
80	Housing and Care 21	£137,000	£295,000	£590,000	A	NA	N/A
81	Removal of jointly funded vacant posts	£826,627			A	NA	N/A
82	Introduce an interim charge for community based services	£474,894			A	NA	N/A

EqIA decision

A - No major change required, B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality, C - Continue despite possible adverse impact

D - Stop and rethink your proposal, N/A - Not applicable

indicates feedback on this proposal was low in volume

2.0 Background

- 2.1 There is the need to deliver revenue savings of approximately £31m in 2017/18. Draft revenue proposals of around £9m are considered to have minimal impact on front line service provision, and cover the following:
- Review of senior management and administration
 - Review and reduction of back office and support functions
 - Use of a reduced number of agency staff
 - Reduction in general operational costs
 - Review of building related costs including energy consumption
 - General efficiencies
 - Grant funding and income opportunities
 - Rescheduling of existing borrowing
 - Review of procurement of council expenditure and contracted services.
- 2.2 Draft policy savings proposals of £16m have a direct impact on services and were referred for public/stakeholder consultation, with a further £7.48m from changes in council tax funding.

Approach to consultation

- 2.3 Each year Walsall Council undertakes public consultation in preparation for the budget setting process. Residents, partners and other key stakeholders were invited to have their say on service change related draft budget policy proposals for 2017/18 and 2018/19 where applicable.
- 2.4 On 27 October 2016 Cabinet published its draft budget proposals for 2017/18 and 2018/19 with consultation taking place from 27 October to the end of the year. Consultation focussed on the draft policy proposals as these had a potential or actual impact on customers or service users. Information on the draft proposals was made available in the 26 October 2016 Cabinet report and on the council's website www.walsall.gov.uk/budgethaveyoursay as well as directly through service led consultation.
- 2.5 Our approach to consultation has involved a wide range of methods involving the collection of both quantitative data via surveys (providing numbers and %s) and qualitative data via dialogue (providing rich detailed information). Through this approach a rich understanding of views has been possible. Services themselves developed and followed detailed consultation plans.
- 2.6 Specific groups or communities were directly targeted in the consultation, where relevant, e.g. disabled groups and service users. Some research was conducted using random sampling (libraries postal questionnaire) or a census (letter to users of certain adult social care services). Other research was self-selecting i.e. respondents picked up information / questionnaires.
- 2.7 Whilst this inclusive approach gives everyone and anyone the opportunity to respond, the lack of control over who responds / participates has the potential to introduce an element of bias. We are able to reduce this bias by using a wide range of mechanisms, methods and channels to gather feedback and through achieving as large a response as possible. Overall, in excess of 3,500 people have responded to the consultation.

- 2.8 The findings therefore provide a broad view of opinion of *those people who responded*. It is not intended to be statistically representative. Because random sampling was not used, the results (apart from those gathered in the libraries postal survey), cannot be generalised to the wider population. This should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings.
- 2.9 All feedback received has been collated, analysed and considered as part of the consultation process and used to inform equality impact assessments with findings being used to inform the decision making process.

Petitions received

2.10 The Constitution sets out the process for the receipt of petitions and how they will be dealt with. In summary, petitions with:

- Less than 500 signatures – a copy is sent to the relevant Executive Director who has to respond to the petitioner organiser.
- At least 500 signatures – a debate will take place at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- At least 1500 signatures – a debate will take place at Council.

2.11 A number of petitions have also been received, specifically:

Ref 21: Cessation of bowling greens and cricket pitches.

- Containing 1700+ signatures. Reported to Council on 9 January 2017.

Ref 68: Stop cleansing after markets / collecting and disposing of market traders waste and **Ref 69:** Increase district centres market fees.

- Petition containing 54 signatures. Submitted on 2/12/16 on behalf of Walsall Market Traders. Considered and responded to by Executive Director for Economy and Environment on 13 January 2017.

Ref 53: Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens.

- 'Save our School Crossing Patrol Service' 569 signatures, submitted online on 9 December 2016. Reported to Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 January 2017.
- Petition Springhill Road crossing patrol service, containing approximately 340 signatures. Reported to Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 January 2017.

Ref 32: Option for redesign of library service.

- 'Save Bloxwich library' containing 544 signatures Submitted online on 11/11/16. A further petition was submitted to Council at its meeting held on 9th January, 2017. The total number of signatures has triggered a debate at a future meeting of the Corporate and Public Services Scrutiny Committee.
- 'Save Streetly Library' containing approximately 1,800 signatures. Reported to Council on 9 January 2017.

- Petition 'Save Darlaston Library' containing 401 signatures. Submitted on 09/12/16. This will be responded to by the Executive Director (Economy and Environment).
- 'Save Rushall Library' containing 532 signatures. Submitted on 22 December by Cllr Rattigan on behalf of Rushall Development Committee. This will be debated at a future meeting of the Corporate and Public Services Scrutiny Committee.
- Save Aldridge Library containing 1540 signatures was submitted to Council on 9 January, 2017. This will be considered at Council on 23rd February, 2017.
- Save Pheasey Library containing 660 signatures was submitted to Council on 9 January, 2017. This will be debated at a future meeting of the Corporate and Public Services Scrutiny Committee.

Ref: 76 Reduction in grant to Citizens Advice Bureau.

- Petition Save 'Walsall Citizens Advice Bureau'. Closing date is 30 April 2017 and currently (as of 12.01.17) 159 signatures.

Ref: 33 Leather Museum.

- Save Walsall Leather Museum containing approximately 2530 signatures was submitted to Council on 9 January, 2017 and will be considered at Council on 23rd February, 2017.

Ref: 30 Consider withdrawing funding to Community Associations.

- Community Support Budget/Collingwood Community Centre submitted to Council on 9th January, 2017. This will be responded to by the Executive Director (Economy and Environment).

Other feedback

- 2.12 Feedback provided in letters and emails has been incorporated into the consultation process for the relevant proposals.

Summary of general feedback on the budget

Knock on effect

- 2.13 Many people made general comments on the budget and the need to make savings. Concern exists around the size of the savings required and the potential knock on effect the proposals may have.

"Withdrawal of youth, sports, and library services might well increase vandalism and crime with significant police, court, and social work costs... And any further failure to repair potholes and renew white lines must cost millions of pounds in knock-on costs for damaged vehicles and accidents." Resident.

"Should your proposals come to fruition I foresee an increase in crime both to and by people with special needs - be it mentally ill, children, aged or otherwise impaired citizens." Resident

"Many of the cuts seem to be in danger of storing up expensive trouble for the future." Resident

- 2.14 Walsall Police highlight a number of proposals where they feel the proposed budget saving will have a knock on effect and increase demand in other areas.

"Any reduction in the ability to support families has the potential to increase demand to public services in the future." Walsall Police

- 2.15 Walsall CCG raise a number of concerns about the knock on effect of the proposals within social care, public health and children's services may have.

"...the range and scale of the proposed reductions is such that the impact could have a significant knock-on to other services, particularly general practice."

Council Tax

- 2.16 Some respondents want to see the council maximising income through reducing the amount of uncollected council tax.

"...the council failed to collect £1m [council tax] off certain low income residents." Resident.

"Pursue more vigorously those people living within the borough who do not pay their council tax." Resident

- 2.17 Possible increases in council tax concern those on low / limited incomes, particularly older people.

"I being a 78-year-old pensioner, like many thousands living in the borough, do not have income to pay any extra increases in council tax...an excessive rate rise would probably see me on the street." Resident.

"I really can't afford to pay an increase in council tax as I'm already going without food when my benefit money runs out because of household utility bills, rent, council tax, food and clothing."

"...the council tax rate should not be raised any higher for those on a low income or on benefits. It would be disgusting to do this; it would further put people's lives at risk."

Volunteering

- 2.18 One person highlights the effective use of volunteers but feels that more needs to be done to encourage volunteering in the community to help plug the gaps.

"...a more determined drive needs to be made to encourage new volunteers to get involved and make current ones feel valued." Resident

Streamline

- 2.19 Amid the need to save £86m, many residents are unhappy to read about new senior appointments on “very high salaries”. Some feel that streamlining management and cutting down the number of councillors would help make savings.

“I was astounded to learn that two extra persons, with very high salaries, had been appointed in October, despite the fact that the council were fully aware of their financial position...” Resident.

“Why have we appointed a consultant on £200k per annum?” Resident

“I read with increasing horror of the proposed budget cuts and was further disgusted by the appointment of a Council Director on a salary of £200,000 a year.” Resident

“Cutting down the number of Councillors and spreading their duties among the remaining ones with bigger [ward] areas could save money.” Resident.

“I suggest that the number of Councillors within the borough be reduced, I understand the average is three councillors per ward, this seems excessive and a reduction in the numbers would save money in councillor remuneration and expenses.” Resident

“Perhaps we have too many Councillors and staff working for Walsall Council and this could be streamlined to reduce salary costs and expenses?” Resident.

“Flatten your management structure and adopt a lean approach.” Resident

Partnership working

- 2.20 Working in partnership is seen to bring many benefits. Partner organisations highlighted the need to continue to tackle issues together, focussing on prevention, sharing knowledge and skills.

“It has been acknowledged that as a partnership if we intervene earlier we not only improve life chances for children and families, but also reduce demand to all public services.” Walsall Police.

“...the process for developing and undertaking services, and securing funding and service delivery, will need to consider methods that generate value for money and added value. This can be through partnership working and using the skills and expertise of the third sector...The Trust would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council in relation to providing advice or discussing potential projects...” Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust

- 2.21 Working in partnership may help mitigate the impact of the cuts.

“The [Walsall] CCG would wish to work with the council to minimise the negative impact of any reduction in spending on these important public health priorities, including working with the council to support self-care and community resilience, and making sure that council funded health services work effectively with other local health and care partners.”

Cut out waste and work efficiently

- 2.22 Cutting out waste, spending wisely, maximising income from council tax, streamlining management and working in new ways to maximise efficiency as all things people have mentioned they want the council to be doing.

"...how major services can be delivered differently, perhaps using shared services models with other Councils and other well tried management approaches." Resident

"Explore the use of technology to send out bills, etc...speaking personally I still get, every month a paper bill for the contribution I make to my son's use of a day care centre and also a letter telling me I pay by Direct Debit. With respect I know that and all I need is notifying of any changes in the amount of the contribution. Every other large organisation I deal with in my daily life contacts me by e-mail and all my household bills are "paperless" why can't Walsall Council do that?" Resident

Other comments

- 2.23 One person explains that the cuts damage their feeling of pride in the area, while another urges the council to...

"...put people not places at the forefront of their decision making." Resident

"I used to be proud of Walsall but with so many service cuts proposed there is less and less in which to be proud." Previous resident.

Statutory consultation on the draft budget and council tax

- 2.24 In the Government's Autumn spending review in November 2015, it was announced that Councils will be allowed to increase council tax by up to 2% in order meet shortfalls in adult social care from 2016/17. This increase is in addition to any general increases in council tax the authority may also apply.
- 2.25 The draft budget for 2017/18 proposes a general increase in council tax of 1.99% plus the 2% precept for social care, a total increase of 3.99% (c£4m, including £2m for adult social care).
- 2.26 On 15 December 2016 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, made a statement in the House of Commons on the local government finance settlement and announced additional flexibility with regard to increases in council tax. Current rules allow a 2% increase in each of the three years from 2017/18 to 2019/20, a total of 6% overall. The additional flexibility announced allows this 6% to be spread differently, for example, 3%, 3%, followed by 0%.
- 2.27 This is the level allowed by statute before the authority would be required to hold a referendum.

- 2.28 The additional increase is ring-fenced and can only be used to fund additional adult social care costs. Due to increased demand and changes in demographics, adult social care continues to face on-going budget pressures, £9.8m of which is included in the draft budget for 2017/18. Any increase in council tax from the adult social care precept would be utilised to fund some of these on-going pressures.
- 2.29 As part of the council's statutory duty to consult¹ with representatives of local non-domestic ratepayers (NDRP), businesses and community and voluntary organisations were consulted on the current and preceding years' expenditure proposals, as well as options for a council tax precept for adult social care.
- 2.30 On 20 December an email, which outlined the draft budget and explained the adult social care precept, was distributed electronically to c3,000 businesses and c600 community and voluntary organisations throughout the borough. As well as providing a link where further information could be found the email invited people to have their say.
- 2.31 By the closing date of 6 January 2017, no responses had been received.

3 Findings from consultation and EqlAs

- 3.1 The summaries provided in this section outline in more detail the findings from consultation and EqlAs for each draft policy proposal, together with Cabinet's response and intended decision, where they are required. This information should be reviewed alongside the detailed EqlAs and other supporting information. Table 1 of this annex provides a quick reference list of policy proposals, headline results and decision.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/section/65>

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	4	Title	To Review and Develop Children Centre Service as part of a 0 - 19 Early Help Locality Model
Description of proposal			
<p>Walsall is committed to providing services that enable 'Walsall Children to be: 'Safe, Happy and Learning Well' and following a recent review of the services and support that we offer to families who need 'Early help' (to prevent problems and risks escalating) we propose that our Children's Centres develop into Hubs, that integrate with targeted Youth Services (see proposal Ref 13 – Review and Reduce Children's Youth Services) to offer support to families, young people and children of all ages.</p> <p>This proposal links to a wider aspiration to deliver a whole family targeted approach and consultation is planned with service users of Children's Centres and retained Youth Services to consider the impact of the following recommended changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Children's Centre staff into 0-19 Early Help Locality Family Support to maximise skills and resources to meet needs of wider age range. • Redefine current reach areas of Children Centres to better align with 0 - 19 partnership locality areas and school cluster arrangements so that professionals can work better together to offer a whole family offer. • Reduce the number of buildings in the newly defined Central and South area from three (Palfrey, Birchills and Alumwell) to one. This will offer opportunity for Birchills to be developed to increase childcare provision in the entire building which will help meet a shortage of early learning places and childcare in the surrounding area. As private provision is supported to develop to meet the childcare needs in the Alumwell / Pleck area, it is proposed to close the Alumwell building, ceasing delivery from this site from July 2017. Also need to consider future use of 'My Place' as part of 0 -19 integrated approach. • Consider how we deliver services in the East of the borough, focusing on services not buildings. It is proposed that Children Centre staff as part of Locality Teams could be based in existing council offices, whilst outreaching across the East of the borough, via home visits and use of community buildings to offer group support. This will save building costs and give greater flexibility and access to services across a large geographical patch; and the majority of current delivery is accessed via outreach and home visits. • Review existing provision of Play and Stay across the borough and opportunities to further develop groups in partnership with schools and voluntary groups. A further cost saving of £110,000 could be achieved by ceasing to fund schools for 'Play and Stay'. Not affected by this proposal are the 90 Play and Stay groups currently being delivered by partner organisations across the borough at no cost to the Council. <p>There are still legal responsibilities for local authorities in relation to Children's Centres. However in July 2016, the Childcare Minister announced he would be consulting on the future of Children's Centres and they are not currently being Ofsted inspected. The Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009 sets out the existing duties summarised by the DfE in 'Sure Start CC's Statutory Guidance (2013):to ensure that there are</p>			

sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need and to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision.

Estimated Net Saving

2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
208,126	0	0	0

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

Consultation incorporated proposals Ref: 4 and Ref: 13.

The consultation included:

Data analysis of current service users engagement in programmes.

Detailed paper and online questionnaires were completed by 119 people, including 88 users of children's centres, 1 user of youth service, 33 parent/carer of someone who uses a Children's centre or Youth Services. 9 responses were received via the council's generic online survey.

11 public consultation meetings were held at a range of venues. A total of 23 parents and 18 young people attended and gave their views to council officers.

2 stakeholder events were held which were attended by youth work providers (7), Health Visitors (1), police (2) and family support (1).

Further comments on the proposal were contained in a written response from Walsall Police which covered all draft budget proposals.

1. Creating of a integrated 0-19 Locality Teams/hubs

69% of respondents completing the detailed questionnaire agreed that the creation of the 0-19 family support teams will improve the support that families receive. Most felt that it would provide for a seamless service, provide more opportunities for flexible support and reaching out to families. It was also felt that parents with children of different ages will find it easier to get support and that local hubs will better meet the needs of local communities.

"My family didn't come with all under 5's, you don't want to have to go to 1 place for 1 thing and somewhere else for other things"

16% didn't agree that the 0-19 locality model would improve the support to families. Concerns included the feeling that resources are being stretched too far and would mean that the teams may be unable to meet the demand. Some felt that the mixing of younger and older age groups was inappropriate and that this may become a barrier to accessing services. Some parents also raised that as they would not be classed as vulnerable they may not have access.

A large proportion of the questionnaires were completed by service users at Palfrey Children's Centre. Responses identified concerns around the uncertainty of provision at Palfrey Children's Centre as most service users stated this provided a valuable service.

The three most popular programmes to be delivered as part of the 0-19 locality working were;

1. Parenting Programmes,
2. Child interventions including play and speech and language support and
3. Workshops.

Parents and young people who gave their views at focus groups welcomed the involvement of parents and young people in the planning and delivery of service provision like parenting programmes and peer mentoring programmes.

Young people were generally in support of the principle of designing a 0-19 Hub, as long as the programme of activities met the needs of young people their age (14-21). Young people wanted to see a continued menu of activities which included music as part of the 0-19 programme which they say has helped build their confidence, improved their mental health, education and social skills. They felt it was important to have a building as a meeting point and the name of the Hub needed to be inclusive of all ages. Young people thought that the development of an online/'virtual hub' would be well worth exploring, but needed to be balanced by still having access to face to face delivery as well as on the phone.

Young people were concerned that bringing all the activities together may dilute the programme available for young people or that it may mean it is no longer delivered by staff skilled in working with young people. They felt that proposals needed to ensure specific programmes were designed for specific groups – and are age appropriate.

Stakeholders were positive about the 0–19 'whole family' model, working together during the transition of services and taking part in 0-19 locality meetings. However, they also felt it was still based on a deficit model looking at problems rather than solutions. Some voluntary sector providers were keen on exploring being part of the integration of the 0-19 locality model.

2. Alignment of reach area boundaries for children's Centres

64% of people completing the detailed questionnaires agreed with the proposal to align the reach boundaries. Most respondents saw this as positive change which would help improve partnership work and reduce barriers in accessing services.

24% didn't agree with this proposal. Concerns raised were mainly about not being sure where they would access services from.

Although many felt that the proposed boundary change would enhance partnership working, feedback highlighted the need to ensure flexibility and choice of which locality hub people could access. Some felt that better communication on the programmes and services available from each locality is needed.

Young people, parents and Stakeholder engaged in focus groups were generally in support of this proposal but raised the need to keep a flexible approach as to where people can access services from if they are willing to travel and improve the way we communicate the offer of the services available and how to access them.

'You can work better with everyone, "why have different areas, it's so much harder to do things."

3. Changes to the use of buildings

90% of respondents to the detailed questionnaire thought it was important to have a building as a hub in each of the 4 localities, this was reiterated through the focus groups with young people and parents. Comments supporting this view included having access

to immediate as well as face to face support. Being able to network with other people was also felt to be important. As home visits are not always appropriate having somewhere to go that is quick and easy to access, without the need for making an appointment was for many important.

The top three most important factors when accessing groups, activities and workshops were 1) friendly staff, 2) skilled and knowledgeable staff and 3) free / low cost.

Results from the detailed questionnaire identified that the most popular model of delivery of family support was through delivery in the community (87%) followed by home visits (76%). The least preferred method is telephone contact (63%). This suggests that family support needs to keep a flexible approach using a combination of all three methods depending on the needs of the family needing support.

Other ideas for ways family support could be offered were: electronic information, online chats, leaflets, peer support groups and at GP surgeries.

Overall opinion on the change of Birchills Childrens' Centre (CC) into 'Childcare/Early Years' provision is divided. 50% of respondents agreed that Birchills Children's Centre should only provide childcare and early learning while 38% disagreed.

Concerns regarding this proposal included: where parents would be able to go for support other than child care, Birchills being too far to access or not easy to access for some parents, the loss of groups and services delivered in Birchills CC and how the local authority would ensure that the quality of child care provision would be maintained if an external provider takes over the running of the child care provision.

Only 11% of respondents completing the detailed questionnaire stated that Birchills Childrens' Centre was their preferred building for the provision of a locality Hub.

Palfrey Children's Centre was the most popular choice (63%) of Children's centre for the Central and South, however as most of the questionnaires were completed by current Palfrey Children's Centre services users this is not surprising and should be borne in mind.

Current service user data shows that a large proportion of services users don't just access their local Children's Centre but travel from across the Borough to access provision at the 4 children's centres.

Feedback gathered via focus groups with parents accessing play and stay and child care at Birchills, revealed that in the main parents were in support of the developing the building into a provider of Child Care. Parents identified that a provider may be able to provide more flexibility or develop the childcare further. Some would like to see the development of a before and after school wrap around service which would help working parents. Some concerns were raised around the continuation of quality child care provision if delivered by a external provider.

Feedback gathered from users of Alumwell were minimal, with only 1-3 users play and stay provision responded. Service user data shows low engagement in programmes at Alumwell. All children at Alumwell childcare are due to start reception or school based nursery provision as of September 2017 and therefore would not be impacted by the proposal.

Most respondents completing the detailed questionnaire said they liked 'Children and family hub' best as a name for the 0-19 locality hubs. The focus groups raised the need to consider the name carefully to ensure inclusion and accessibility for all. The focus

group with young people highlighted that the name 'Children and family hubs' would be off putting for them and may be a barrier for young people (based on a low number of young people).

4. End the financial help to schools, community and voluntary sector organisations to set up stay and play groups

57% of respondents to the questionnaire were against the proposal. However feedback gathered in the questionnaires and via the parent and stakeholder focus groups indicates that this part of the proposal was being wrongly interpreted as ceasing all play and stay.

The main reason for being against the proposal was identified as not wanting to lose play and stay as part of the menu of services delivered as part of the Children's Centres and continued access to this provision by parents who may not be classed as vulnerable. Parents identified that play and stay helped with building friendships, tackle isolation and low level mental health issues and kicked started their children's school readiness.

36% of respondents didn't think there are enough play and stay groups available across the Borough. The focus groups identified that parents and professionals are not aware of the full range of play and stay sessions that are currently available across the borough e.g. participants in the Birchills focus group were not aware of the play and stay recently started at the primary school next door. Thus better communication and promotion of play and stay sessions may be needed.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Summary of opinion linked to the proposed changes:

1. Creating of a integrated 0-19 Locality Teams/hubs –

Respondents generally support this proposal

2. Alignment of reach area boundaries for children's Centres -

Respondents generally support this proposal

3. Changes of Buildings -

Respondents generally support this proposal

4. Stop the financial help to schools, community and voluntary sector organisations to set up stay and play groups –

Overall opinion on this proposal is divided.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

1. To continue to monitor the level of engagement of service users with protected characteristics as part of the Early Help Performance Framework and report on this quarterly. If there is a reduction in expected/projected engagement in particular with Teenage parents, Ethnic minority groups, Children with Disabilities and young carers, than action will need to be taken to understand and remove barriers.

2. 0-19 locality to develop and maintain a programme of delivery focussed on supporting children and young people with a disability through maintaining 'specialised SEN family support case workers, increase the delivery of cygnet (specialised SEND) parenting programme and delivery of at least one group work programme for children with disability per locality. Develop an effective communication of programmes available through the website, partners and disability register.

3. Play and stay to remain part of the Early Help offer within each locality.

Publicise through the website and partnership including schools, health visitors, GP surgeries, etc play and stay sessions available across the area.

Continue to promote through the Early Years team the positive impact of Play and Stay delivered by schools to improve school readiness in children and building early partnership relationships with parents.

Develop in partnership with One Walsall opportunities for parents to volunteer to run play and stay sessions to reduce the reliance of professionals and extend play and stay session as part of the 'universal offer'.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Reduced resources will mean that there will be less access to universal programmes within the 0-19 family support teams and therefore parents with low level needs may have access to less provision.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 4

Taking into account public feedback Cabinet intend to approve this proposal as follows:

1. The creation of the 0-19 Locality Teams to deliver programmes, engage with parents and young people and develop a communication plan of services
2. Implement the alignment of the new reach area boundaries for children's centres
3. Change the use of Birchills Children's Centre into a childcare provision to include Alumwell and Birchills as a reach area. Include parents in the procurement process to ensure reassurance in maintaining quality of child care provision. Although opinions on developing Birchills as a child care provision was divided there was only a small % of people who preferred Birchills as the Building for a 0-19 Hub.
4. Closure of Alumwell as a delivery site due to low engagement of parents and all children will be moving on from the current child care provision.
5. Work with partners and parents to develop the tender and commissioning process for the 0-19 locality provision in the Central and South
6. To end the financial help to schools, community and voluntary sector organisations to set up stay and play groups. Not affected by this proposal are the 90 Play and Stay groups currently being delivered by partner organisations across the borough at no cost to the Council Robust communication plan to be put in place on communicating all play and stay provision to increase accessibility.

Further consultation to be held on the name for the 'locality hubs' to ensure they are inclusive of all ages.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	5	Title	Review Demand for Transport from Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	
Description of proposal				
<p>The proposed savings for 2017/18 are linked with the December 14 Home School Transport Policy Consultation Cabinet Report.</p> <p>It is proposed to deliver savings of £100k from the school Transport Budget in 2017/18 by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The implementation of a revised transport policy.2. Efficiencies through alternative transport arrangements with Personal Transport budgets, Independent Travel Training				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
100,000	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>On 7 September 2016, Cabinet approved a previous consultation on the home to school policy in Walsall. A number of options were put forward on which the public and stakeholders were able to give their views. There are two themes: what do people think about the Council reducing its provision to the statutory minimum. Second, what do people think about ‘doing’ SEN transport differently – developing Personal Travel Budgets, Independent Travel training, charging for services where this is permitted?</p> <p>The findings of that consultation is the basis of a report to Cabinet on 14 December 2016, resulting in their decision that a new draft policy will be brought forward in the new year for further consultation and implementation from September 2017.</p>				
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation				
	Respondents are generally against this proposal			
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.				
	D - Stop and rethink the proposal			
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved				
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All eligible disabled children will be encouraged to obtain free bus pass from WM Travel.2. Should transport be subsidized by families then it will be acquired at most appropriate and cost-effective.3. Transport requirements when arranging foster care will be confirmed prior to placement to allow carer time to make provision.				

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

If proposal is approved, potentially out of the 715 children receiving transport to school:

- a. up to 150 children currently transported who are under national mileage criteria. Being negatively affected will be determined by review of whether child can reasonably be escorted to school by parent / carer.
- b. up to 32 children post-16 yr. olds could be responsible to contribute to some or all travel costs
- c. up to 42 post-18 yr. olds could be responsible to contribute to some or all travel costs
- d. There is a cumulative affect with the proposed savings in 'SEN 'Short Breaks'. Some parents voiced in meetings and in writing that the Council's proposals on home to school transport were 'attacking disabled children who are a vulnerable and a minority group. It did not affect voting; it happened every year. It broke human rights and equalities.'
- e. There are 36 children at potential risk of a cumulative impact from both this transport proposal and proposals 7 & 8 (SEN Short Breaks). This means they could lose school transport and also one or more short breaks.
- f. Should any child who lose school transport as result of this proposal, they will not lose all short breaks. They will still access at least one form of regularly scheduled short break (i.e. groups, buddy, overnights, respite foster, 1:1 support at home, etc.).
- g. Of the 36 children identified:
 - 27 male, 9 female
 - 29 White British, 3 Asian, 3 Pakistani, 1 'other ethnicity'.
- h. The largest age group potentially affected by transport and short break proposals are young teenagers:
 - 2 children aged 0 – 7 yrs.
 - 4 children aged 8 – 12 yrs.
 - 28 children aged 13 - 17 yrs.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref: 5

Following the outcome of consultation, as detailed in the 14 Dec 2016 Cabinet report, 'Home to School Transport Consultation', it was approved that a revised draft home to school transport policy be issued for further consultation in the spring 2017. It was recommended within the report that post 16 transport support remain instead of it being removed. The proposal of this consultation is therefore no longer to be supported and a large proportion of the current level of savings identified cannot be delivered. The Children's Services transport service has considered if other cost reductions could be delivered to offset this potential budget shortfall, this is unlikely and therefore the proposed 2017/18 budget saving of £100k is deemed undeliverable.

The draft home school transport policy will be issued for consultation in the Spring and the proposal to cease post 16 transport support will be withdrawn.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	7	Title	Review Demand for Out of Borough Special Education Needs Short Breaks
Description of proposal			
<p>The proposal is to review and reduce costs via a focus on demand for Out of Borough (OoB) commissioned respite and short break support with private providers with an emphasis on increasing the use of existing in-house respite (Bluebells) more effectively.</p> <p>There are 40 children who access overnight short breaks following an assessment of need. The destination for overnight stays is normally at Bluebells but approximately 27% of children go to private providers. The cost varies according to the number of nights and if there is a contribution from the CCG, but the average cost to the authority is £20,000 per child per annum.</p> <p>The saving of £130,000 can be achieved by April 2017 in part through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £50,000: 3 young people coming of age prior to April 2017. • £80,000: revising the local offer to parents of the remaining children accessing respite from private providers for April 2017, to introduce a transfer to into Bluebells and out of their current external provider. <p>All proposed savings can be made in April 2017 if parental agreement to new offer to transfer into Bluebells is secured. There is also a proposal to save a further £50,000 in April 2018. Overnight residential breaks are one of a number of services the council provides.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
130,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>There are 7 children and Young People in out of borough short breaks placements, of which 2 will be coming of age prior to April 2017. 41 children and young people access social work-assessed short breaks schemes and 200 children and Young People receive term-time/school holiday short breaks.</p> <p>All of the c.200 children & young people families were sent a letter outlining the proposals and inviting them to have their say by visiting the website, sending in written responses or attending one of five drop-in sessions across the borough. In addition to this social media sign posted service users to the consultation meetings, websites and contacts for sending views in writing.</p> <p>Parents (4) attending the parent participation group felt they had not received the letter, following this meeting the letter was resent to all parents with an additional consultation date (total of six drop-in sessions) at a time and venue preferred by parents. At this consultation 8 people attended</p>			

There have been 125 views on social media and a 13% response to this consultation. 21 individuals, plus 5 responses to the online consultation. It is unknown whether individuals may have produced written responses and attended the drop in sessions.

Of the 5 who responded via the on line consultation, one was a service user who was in support of the proposal but with concerns. Overall 1 fully supported the proposal, 3 were in support with concerns/amendments and 1 did not support the proposal.

It has been highlighted by all consultees at the meetings that the proposals themselves might seem to be minimal (one affecting 7 families with out of borough placements; the other – if you get overnight care, you don't get to access holiday or after school care). But the argument is that for those families, the potential effects are “devastating”.

“The proposals on the surface look fairly minimal. However, to the families affected they are devastating.”

“If proposal goes ahead there will be nothing for my child in Walsall, nowhere for him to go. The only way for him to socialise with peers is through the current clubs he attends”

“We are exhausted by trying to support our children and need all the help we can get. Life is constantly very challenging which impacts on the parents and other children in the family.”

Consultation has been carried out across a wide variety of media. This has included face to face, letters, on line and face book. Though the response rate appears low it has become apparent during the consultation process that this group of parent carers and young people have become weary of consultations as one parent stated;

“We're sick to death with it and don't have the energy to go to meetings and consultations”

All responses received have pointed to how important the current level of provision is for the children and young people concerned and their families and to the impact a reduced level of service would have. Connections are made with the proposed budget reductions to 'SEN transport' and the combined impact of both on children with disabilities. Parents acknowledged that out of borough placements are expensive and recognised that Bluebells could support more short breaks if suitable.

Alternative suggestions:

The support that there was for the proposal from the generic responses was in terms of people should pay for these services or make contributions to the costs and that the need for such services should be re-assessed.

The one 'stakeholder response to the Councils' budget proposals received from Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group refers to the proposed reductions in the Children's Service and Education portfolio raised concerns;

“There are a number of proposed reductions in services which provide support to children and young people in Walsall; these include reductions to the Youth Service, reduction in Short Breaks and reallocation of Out of Area SEND placements . We are concerned that with less diversionary activities children and young people from the most deprived areas in Walsall could potentially be less active, increasing health associated risks.”

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents are generally against this proposal
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	D - Stop and rethink the proposal
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<p>If the proposals are approved actions will need to be taken to ensure that Bluebells is able to meet the needs of the CYP who access the OOB Short Break provision as all these young people have been assessed as having needs which Bluebells cannot meet. This will include needing a skills audit of staff, any training requirements identified and appropriate training sourced, an audit of the suitability of the building and risk assessments will be required, a clear training plan and a review of staffing levels will be needed. As has been clearly stated in the EQIA the existing CYP and parents/carers of those accessing OOB provision have already deemed Bluebells as not assessed appropriate provision so much work will need to occur to ensure parental and young people's confidence is raised so they are assured that needs can be met, this may take a significant period of time.</p> <p>The cumulative impact of both shortbreaks proposals on a number of CYP will mean that a small group may see a significant reduction in provision.</p>	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Children, Young People with disabilities. Parents and Carers of Young People with disabilities.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 7	
<p>There was a strong resistance from parents/carers to reducing short breaks provision. There is a risk that parents will resist any proposals put forward to move their children to Bluebells which would mean costs continue at the current rate for out of borough overnight stays.</p> <p>In light of the feedback received, equalities analysis and additional work to identify alternative cost reductions and savings within the service, Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal (£130k in 2017/18) and replace it with a reduced operational saving of £102k (delivered through operational savings of improved commissioning and young adults coming of age).</p> <p>Cabinet therefore intend to approve the amended proposal as outlined above.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	8	Title	Review and Reduce Short Breaks
Description of proposal			
<p>This proposal seeks to review short break support through changes with access to term-time after school clubs and school holiday clubs.</p> <p>The council provides term-time after school groups for disabled children during the school year (Sept. – July). The council also provides School holiday play schemes during October, February and May ½ term weeks and in the 6 week summer holiday. These are activity-based groups and commissioned from a range of council-run and private providers.</p> <p>These services provide respite from caring and offers socially inclusive opportunities. Both these services are available as universal access where children are allocated a number of places dependent on availability. They do not require a social work assessment.</p> <p>Only disabled children who have been assessed by a social worker can access a more complex and targeted range of assessed short break provision (overnights, direct payments, commissioned care, buddies and short break fostering, etc). They are also able to access the universal term-time and holiday groups alongside the non-assessed children.</p> <p>The proposal is that the social work-assessed children who receive assessed short break provision will no longer be eligible for the term-time and holiday universal short breaks commissioned by Children's Services (except those that may be delivered separately by leisure or youth services, etc).</p> <p>By amending access to these groups, 41 social work-assessed children will cease participation but will continue to receive the other forms of support (direct payments, overnights, etc.).</p> <p>200 disabled children will continue uninterrupted to receive their term-time / school holiday groups as they do not receive social work-assessed short breaks.</p> <p>Social work-assessed children eligibility for holiday play schemes would cease from 1 April 2017.</p> <p>Social work-assessed children eligibility for term time short break groups will cease the end of the academic year 2017.</p> <p>In 2017, some short breaks will be commissioned under a new framework and better value will be achieved through reduced provider costs.</p> <p>By separating eligibility to these services by assessed and non-assessed short breaks, disabled children will still have access to a reasonable range of services where need is identified either by social work assessment or self referral.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
100,000	100,000	0	0

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

There are 7 children and Young People in out of borough short breaks placements, of which 2 will be coming of age prior to April 2017. 41 children and young people access social work-assessed short breaks schemes and 200 children and Young People receive term-time/school holiday short breaks.

All of the c.200 children & young people families were sent a letter outlining the proposals and inviting them to have their say by visiting the website, sending in written responses or attending one of five drop-in sessions across the borough. In addition to this social media sign posted service users to the consultation meetings, websites and contacts for sending views in writing.

Parents (4) attending the parent participation group felt they had not received the letter, following this meeting the letter was resent to all parents with an additional consultation date (total of six drop-in sessions) at a time and venue preferred by parents. At this consultation 8 people attended

There have been 125 views on social media and a 13% response to this consultation. 21 individuals, plus 5 responses to the online consultation. It is unknown whether individuals may have produced written responses and attended the drop in sessions.

Of the 5 who responded via the on line consultation, one was a service user who was in support of the proposal but with concerns. Overall 1 fully supported the proposal, 3 were in support with concerns/amendments and 1 did not support the proposal.

It has been highlighted by all consultees at the meetings that the proposals themselves might seem to be minimal (one affecting 7 families with out of borough placements; the other – if you get overnight care, you don't get to access holiday or after school care). But the argument is that for those families, the potential effects are “devastating”.

“The proposals on the surface look fairly minimal. However, to the families affected they are devastating.”

“If proposal goes ahead there will be nothing for my child in Walsall, nowhere for him to go. The only way for him to socialise with peers is through the current clubs he attends”

“We are exhausted by trying to support our children and need all the help we can get. Life is constantly very challenging which impacts on the parents and other children in the family.”

Consultation has been carried out across a wide variety of media. This has included face to face, letters, on line and face book. Though the response rate appears low it has become apparent during the consultation process that this group of parent carers and young people have become weary of consultations as one parent stated;

“We're sick to death with it and don't have the energy to go to meetings and consultations”

All responses received have pointed to how important the current level of provision is for the children and young people concerned and their families and to the impact a reduced level of service would have. Connections are made with the proposed budget reductions to

‘SEN transport’ and the combined impact of both on children with disabilities. Parents acknowledged that out of borough placements are expensive and recognised that Bluebells could support more short breaks if suitable.

Alternative suggestions:

The support that there was for the proposal from the generic responses was in terms of people should pay for these services or make contributions to the costs and that the need for such services should be re-assessed.

The one ‘stakeholder response to the Councils’ budget proposals received from Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group refers to the proposed reductions in the Children’s Service and Education portfolio raised concerns;

“There are a number of proposed reductions in services which provide support to children and young people in Walsall; these include reductions to the Youth Service, reduction in Short Breaks and reallocation of Out of Area SEND placements . We are concerned that with less diversionary activities children and young people from the most deprived areas in Walsall could potentially be less active, increasing health associated risks.”

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

	Respondents are generally against this proposal
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Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

	D - Stop and rethink the proposal
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Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

If the proposals are approved actions will need to be taken to ensure that Bluebells and other short break providers are able to meet the needs of the CYP who access Short Break provision as all these young people have been assessed as having needs which require this service. Within this proposal there is a larger cohort who is affected and the range of short breaks received will be reduced. As a consequence of implementing this proposal it may mean that there is a significant increase in requests for social work assessment. The cumulative impact of both short breaks proposals on a number of CYP will mean that a small group may see a significant reduction in provision.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Children, Young People with disabilities.

Parents and Carers of Young People with disabilities.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 8

The outcome of consultation was a strong resistance from parents/carers to reducing short break term-time / group provision.

For 2017/18, the saving of £100k will be delivered through efficiencies and improved commissioning arrangements.

For 2018/19, it is now proposed to implement the £100k saving by reducing the number of annual places available for families to apply for by 6% which equates to approximately 108 places across the year, through further efficiencies and improved commissioning rather than through implementing the original proposal (i.e. social work-assessed children who already receive assessed short break provision will no longer be eligible for the term-time and holiday universal short breaks commissioned by Children's Services). This is also mitigated by the expectation of an historical average 8-10% non-attendance / cancelation rate.

Cabinet therefore intend to approve the revised proposal as set out above.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	9	Title	Reduction of spend on Looked After Children, including those in Out of Borough Placements
Description of proposal			
<p>Children's Social Care spends circa £16m on 639 Looked After Children (LAC) placements, made up of a combination of internal foster and residential care, independent fostering and external residential placements. A small cohort of these children (circa 36) are placed in high cost out of borough (OoB) placements due to their complex needs and cost circa £4.3m of the total LAC costs.</p> <p>This proposal aims to:</p> <p>Reduce the number of LAC placed OoB from 36 children to a maximum of 24 over the medium term at a rate of 4 from 2018/19 and 8 thereafter. This will allow time to develop sufficient internal provision and ensure the right level of wrap around social care support is in place (such as therapeutic services) as children are brought back in borough. Investment has been identified to support additional social care support.</p> <p>A safe reduction in the numbers placed OoB and the achievement of the savings profiled will require a systemic approach to LAC with sustained targeted working with teenagers based on new evidence based models that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevent children and young people coming into care and keep them safely supported living with their families where it is safe to do so • stabilise placements when young people come into care ensuring there is good support to placements and minimise breakdown and the need for OoB placements • extend / broaden the range of internal placement options • support children and young people effectively when they leave care to prevent re-entry to care at a later date <p>We will adopt working practices that promote relationship based social work and enable more intensive work to take place with children who are looked after to support to return home where it is safe to do so and promote placement stability when they are looked after.</p> <p>The proposed implementation of the new model is from 1st April 2017 to enable predicted savings from April 2018 to be achieved.</p> <p>There is a clear legal and regulatory framework for Looked After Children and the aim is to work clearly within this legal and regulatory framework with more emphasis on section 17 of the Children Act which focuses on prevention of the need for care and family reunification where this is safe. The service redesign proposal will be informed by the LAC sufficiency strategy.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
0	300,000	600,000	Revenue £150,000 Capital £150,000
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			

<p>Based on feedback gathered from 118+ people including social workers, social care, managers, Independent Review Officers, foster carers , residential staff, local residents and 2 care leavers. Overall feedback in relation to both proposals was generally positive with some limited opposition. However there was no demonstration of how these proposals would impact on those (2 local residents) who opposed the proposals.</p> <p>Social workers, managers, Independent Review Officers and residential staff all supported the proposal and felt by having Looked After Children closer to Walsall it would be easier to keep in touch and would improve their relationships with the children supporting the move to a more relationship based social work model.</p> <p>Although feedback from care leavers was limited the 2 who gave feedback were in support of the proposals as long as they were delivered and made a difference:</p> <p><i>“ it all sounds really great as long as the proposal takes place and we would like to hear in a few months time whether the looked after children have found a difference with this new way of doing things”.</i></p> <p>Feedback highlighted that some challenges exist and these can be addressed by ensuring that effective therapeutic and educational support is available for looked after children, training for foster carers and a more responsive residential and foster care service is provided locally.</p>	
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents generally support this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	A - No major change required.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<p>Recruit project lead to take responsibility for overseeing tracking of Looked After children and Out of Borough Placements.</p> <p>Review progress of plans to return children from OoB on more regular basis to ensure that savings are achieved.</p> <p>Explore alternative in house provision to prevent need for children to be placed out of Borough. Actively review progress of proposals.</p>	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not Applicable.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 9	
<p>The general consensus was that it is better to have looked after children closer to Walsall. This should always be our aim and reduced social worker caseloads would ensure that looked after children and foster carers get the necessary help and support they need.</p> <p>Taking this into account it is intended that the proposed reduction of spend on Looked After Children, including those in Out of Borough placements be approved.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	10	Title	Review and Reduce Looked After Children Numbers and Associated Costs
Description of proposal			
<p>Children's Social Care spends circa £16m on 639 Looked After Children (LAC) placements, made up of a combination of internal foster and residential care, independent fostering and external residential placements. It is an aspiration over the medium term to reduce this number by 100 in line with the benchmarked authorities and the national picture. This will require a corporate and partnership response in order to bring down this number and will require investment in order to build in borough capacity and wrap around support costs to improve preventive services and transition leaving care arrangements.</p> <p>A further £405k over the period is anticipated through successfully recruiting an additional 7 Foster Carers per annum to reduce the higher cost LAC packages such as Independent Foster Agencies. One off investment has been identified to support material recruitment/advertising campaign for Foster Care recruitment. Further one-off investment is planned to support delivering of the year 1 saving.</p> <p>Additionally, further significant investment is planned of approximately £4m over the three years to support delivery of the savings identified:</p> <p>a) Implement a revised Children's Social Care structure to ensure robust supervision and management oversight</p> <p>b) Implement a caseload threshold guarantee (of 15 cases per social worker and 12 cases per newly qualified social worker).</p> <p>A corporate response will be required in order to bring down this number safely. In addition there needs to be a strategic development of a more systemic approach to working with teenagers based on new models to mitigate negative impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent children and young people coming into care • When they are in care to stabilise placements and minimise the need for Out of Borough placements • Provide a broader range of internal placement options • To support children and young people more effectively when they leave care to stop them re-entering care • To deliver this proposal will require a new approach to agency working. <p>Alongside this there is a proposed reduction in social workers case loads that would enable them to work more intensively with children who are looked after to support maintaining them safely at home and promoting placement stability when they are looked after. This will also include adopting a bespoke methodology of working with families and carers e.g restorative practice and reunification methodology.</p> <p>Increased investment to enhance marketing and recruitment for additional foster carers along with officers to support new foster cares. This assumes an additional 7 foster carers per annum can be successfully recruited as a result.</p> <p>These proposals will be delivered by robust project management and oversight and</p>			

will ensure that children are supported to remain at home or returned home from care only when it is safe to do so and in house placements are maximised.

Capital investment to increase 'in borough' capacity, strengthen wrap around support, including therapeutic support, to children and young people and a reduction in social work caseloads will be required to achieve these savings.

The proposed implementation of new model is from 1st April 2017 to enable predicted savings from April 2018 to be achieved.

There is clear legal and regulatory framework for Looked After Children and the aim would be to work clearly within this legal and regulatory framework with more emphasis on section 17 of the Children Act which focuses on prevention of the need for care and family reunification where this is safe. The service redesign proposal will be informed by the LAC sufficiency strategy.

Estimated Net Saving

2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
680,044	462,044	1,223,044	See text

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

Based on feedback gathered from 118 people including social workers, social care, managers, IROs, foster carers, residential staff, local residents and two care leavers. The overall feedback in relation to both proposals was generally positive with some limited opposition. However, there was no demonstration of how these proposals would impact on those (2 local residents) who opposed the proposals.

This proposal was very well supported by social workers, managers, residential staff who all felt that by reducing social worker caseloads, improving the flexibility of edge of care service, effective use of early help, more effective support from partners such as CAMHs and education and having a more responsive residential and foster care service, would ensure children and young people received the necessary help and supported they needed.

Foster carers are in support of the proposals as long as support from the child's social worker and training is provided.

Although feedback from care leavers was limited the two who gave feedback were in support of the proposals as long as they were delivered and made a difference:

"It all sounds really great as long as the proposal takes place and they would like to hear in a few months time whether the looked after children have found a difference with this new way of doing things".

Feedback highlighted that some challenges exist and these can be addressed by ensuring that effective therapeutic and educational support is available for looked after children, training for foster carers and a more responsive residential and foster care service is provided locally.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents generally support this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	A - No major change required.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<p>Establish project group to scope partnership model of working with vulnerable children to safely reduce need for LAC.</p> <p>Recruit and retain sufficient social workers to achieve case load promise.</p> <p>Review training.</p> <p>Actively review progress of proposals.</p>	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not Applicable	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 10	
<p>In view of these considerations and ensuring that effective support from partners, recruitment, support and training is provided to social workers and foster carers it is intended that the proposed review and reduced Looked After Children numbers and associated costs be approved.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	11	Title	Review & Reduce Children's Social Care Contact Services
Description of proposal			
<p>Review and redesign contact arrangements for Looked After Children and deliver savings by managing demand, contact and contract arrangements, and restructuring as appropriate.</p> <p>34,000 hours of supervised contact is currently provided at a cost of £420,000 per annum. This proposal seeks to embed a contact procedure and toolkit that provides clear parameters about the frequency and level of context to social workers when assessing and arranging contact for Looked after Children going through the court process. It is proposed that a safe reduction in the levels of supervised contact hours and a review of existing contact arrangements for children who have been through the court process and in stable and long term placements will realise a saving of £64,000 by April 2017. Year two savings will be achieved through focused work on reducing the number of children being admitted into care.</p> <p>In addition, the delivery of contact will be reshaped through the implementation of a new commissioning framework. This will be a mixed economy of delivery including a small percentage of supervised contact delivered by council employed contact workers and a larger percentage by external providers contracted by the local authority.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
64,000	64,000	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>This was consulted on through the Performance Improvement Forum, a Foster Carer consultation event and a meeting with social work staff. Care leavers from the New Belongings Group were also consulted.</p> <p>There have been additional opportunities to comment on this proposal through the council website and via the council's generic survey in which one response has been received by a Walsall resident in full support of the proposal.</p> <p>Based on feedback gathered from 96 people including social workers, managers, foster carers and 2 care leavers, the overall response has been positive and in support of the development and the implementation of a policy that encourages the robust assessment and review of contact arrangements for Looked After Children, as well as the move towards enabling carers to feel able and skilled to undertake contact arrangements.</p> <p>Social workers and managers were particularly in support of carers undertaking a more active role in facilitating the transport of the children they cared for to and from</p>			

contact sessions and the implementation of contact set up meetings along with regular monitoring of contact to ensure needs were being appropriately assessed.

Managers were positive about having a robust policy which gave clarity about roles and planning that provided consistency for children. They were generally in favour of a mixed economy of contact providers as long as there was a clear service specification. However, they were concerned that chairing of regular reviews would add pressures onto management time.

Foster carers feedback echoed the views of social workers and managers about them needing training along with being involved in assessments and having clear risk assessments as they were more aware of what worked best for them and their children.

Although, there was a limited response from care leavers, the two who provided feedback were in support of this saying;

"It all sounds really great as long as the proposal takes place and we would like to hear in a few months time whether the Looked After Children have found a difference with this new way of doing things"

The feedback highlighted some challenges which can be addressed by prioritising training for carers to ensure consistency in application of the policy, the same quality of training for internal and external providers. Contact arrangements should feature clearly as part of the child's review and social workers supervision and whilst a mix economy of care was generally felt to be useful, this would require a clear service specification.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents generally support this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

A - No major change required.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Development and facilitation of a contact training programme for carers and contact supervisors.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

None.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 11

The overall opinion is in support of the development and implementation of a policy that encourages the robust assessment and review of contact arrangements for Looked After Children as well as the move towards enabling carers to feel able and skilled to undertake contact arrangements. In view of these considerations it is intended that the proposal be approved.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	12	Title	Reduce or identify alternative contribution for Children's Safeguarding Board
Description of proposal			
<p>To reduce or identify alternative Council contribution from £141k to £25k by 2019/20 towards the running of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) in line with the contributions of other local partners. The local authority has historically contributed the largest proportion of funding to the LSCB.</p> <p>Statutory partners include the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), health care providers, West Midlands Police, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCAS) and both parts of the Probation Service.</p> <p>The financial contributions for CAFCAS, the police and the probation service to LSCB are established via a national formula. The contributions made by the CCG and local health providers are determined by those agencies locally.</p> <p>Attempts over the previous 12 months to increase partner contributions or seek additional partners have not been successful.</p> <p>The Children Act 2004 requires the local authority to establish a LSCB which is independently chaired. The statutory guidance subsequently issued states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each local authority is required to establish a LSCB with a range of specified organisations addition to the local authority who must be represented (sec13 Children Act 2004) and • Outlines the objectives of the LSCB to co-ordinate activity in order to promote safeguarding and the welfare of children in the area and ensure effectiveness (Section14 Children Act 2004). <p>Neither the legislation nor the guidance is prescriptive as to how the functions listed above are carried out; however, the effectiveness of the LSCB is subject to external regulatory inspection by Ofsted; the outcome of which is published nationally.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
0	58,035	58,035	0

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

Walsall Safeguarding Children's Board holds a regular Assurance meeting, chaired by WMBC Chief Executive. The meeting is attended by the independent Chair and the primary funding partners of the LSCB (West Midlands Police and the CCG). The budget situation of the LSCB was discussed at the meeting held on 10/11/16. It was recognised at this meeting that the LSCB had an insufficient budget at current levels and resolving this issue had remained a challenge for some years.

Recent benchmarking across the West Midlands evidences that the Walsall LSCB is the least funded safeguarding board in the region. This was felt to be a significant risk to meeting its statutory requirements, one that is held across all partners including the local authority in any future inspection.

Following discussion at the Assurance Board the following were agreed as actions:

- The local authority would seek to increase its contribution to the LSCB.
- The LSCB will formally write to the CCG regarding its contribution and seeking an increase

3 people responded to the generic online survey and were not in support of the proposal.

Police provided a written response to a number of proposals, highlighting an elevated concern for this proposal, they felt;

"The current level of funding is below similar sized Board's and is presenting a risk to the Partnership's ability to meet its statutory duties. Reductions would further exacerbate the problem and present risk in the ability to scrutinise and ensure appropriate safeguarding of children within the Borough".

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Not applicable

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Not applicable.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Not applicable.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 12

The response received from the wider public has been minimal; however key partners have raised significant concerns regarding the increased risk if funding is further reduced.

Police, CAFCASS and the Probation Service are constrained by a national funding formula in terms of financial contribution; whereas the local authority has freedoms that enable it to fund according to need.

Further work through a partnership approach is required to seek additional funding contributions via other agencies where appropriate, in a bid to help support the Boards statutory duties and increase its budget in line with other West Midland LSCBs. This work is planned through the Partnership Strategic Leadership Group and up to Borough Management Team.

A reduction to the budget as outlined in this proposal could result in the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board potentially failing to deliver its statutory responsibilities and therefore the work of the Board not adequately safeguarding and protecting children and young people. Cabinet therefore intend to withdraw this proposal and not reduce the Council's contribution in 2018/19 and 2019/20. It further proposes to enter negotiations with all partners to review existing contribution levels, including the CCG and Police as the largest statutory partners.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	13	Title	Review and Reduce Childrens Youth Services
Description of proposal			
<p>Walsall is committed to providing services that enable <i>‘Walsall Children to be: ‘Safe, Happy and Learning Well’</i> and following a recent review of the services and support that we offer to families who need ‘Early help’ (to prevent problems and risks escalating) we propose that our targeted Youth Services develop into Hubs, that integrate with Children’s Centres (see proposal ref 4 - To Review and Develop Children Centre Service as part of a 0 - 19 Early Help Locality Model) to offer support to families, young people and children of all ages.</p> <p>This proposal links to a wider aspiration to deliver a whole family targeted approach.</p> <p>Proposal includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating youth work activities and provision currently delivered by Children’s services Targeted Youth Work team within the 0-19 Family Support locality teams. The current work is focused on supporting vulnerable young people and the programmes of activity, which are targeted at reducing anti social behaviour aligns closely with the work undertaken by the recently developed 0-19 Family Support. Purposefully bring together and integrate this work strand (although with a reduced resource) to strengthen effective and timely whole family/whole community working and to ensure evidence informed help continues to be available to those young people and families who need it most. Cease all commissioned targeted youth work (TYW) activity over two years. This is a proposed reduction of 50% by April 2017 and end of provision by 1st April 2018 (already agreed as part of 2016/17 budget consultation). It is proposed that the way the funding is allocated in 2017/18 is changed so that it is targeted in areas of greatest need (at the moment half of the funding is allocated equally across all wards and half on the basis of need). <p>Under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, the Council has a duty to secure for young people aged 13-19 and those aged 20-24 with a learning difficulty or disability, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer of access to sufficient educational or recreational leisure-time activities and facilities that is sufficient to meet local needs and improve young people’s well-being and personal and social development. There are also responsibilities to effectively publicise the overall local offer of all services and activities available to young people and their families and to involve young people in the decision making about, and monitoring of, the relevance and effectiveness of services.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
266,500	421,301	110,572	0

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

Consultation incorporated proposals Ref:13 and Ref:4.

Detailed paper and online questionnaires were completed by 119 people, including 88 users of children's centres, 1 user of youth service, 33 parent/carer of someone who uses a Children's centre or Youth Services. 9 responses were received via the council's generic online survey.

11 public consultation meetings were held at a range of venues. A total of 23 parents and 18 young people attended and gave their views to council officers.

2 stakeholder events were held which were attended by youth work providers (7), Health Visitors (1), police (2) and family support (1).

Further comments on the proposal were contained in a written response from Walsall Police which covered all draft budget proposals.

1. Creating of a integrated 0-19 Locality Teams/hubs

Questionnaires (mainly completed by parents)– 70% of people completing the questionnaire agreed that the creation of the 0-19 family support teams will improve the support that families receive (See proposal Ref: 4 – To Review and Develop Children Centre Service as part of a 0-19 Early Help Locality Model). Positive comments included that it will provide for a seamless service, more opportunities to provide flexible support and reaching out to families, parents with children with different ages will find it easier to get support, local hubs will provide to the needs of local communities.

"My family didn't come with all under 5's, you don't want to have to go to 1 place for 1 thing and somewhere else for other things"

16% disagreed that the 0-19 locality model would improve the support to families, concerns raised included too much stretching of the resources would mean that the teams could meet the demand, younger and older age groups mixing and this not being seen as appropriate, providing a barrier to access services and exclusion of parents who are not vulnerable but would still like to access support.

Parents and young people engaged through focus group consultation welcomed the engagement of parents and young people in delivery of services provision like parenting programmes and peer mentoring programmes.

Young people were generally in support of the principle of designing a 0-19 Hub as long as the programme of activities met the needs of young people their age (14-21). Young people wanted to see a continued menu of activities which included music as part of the 0-19 programme which has helped build confidence, improved their mental health, education and social skills. They felt it was important to have a physical building as a meeting point and the name of the Hub needed to be inclusive of all ages.

Young people were concerned that bringing all the activities together may dilute the programme available for young people or that it may no longer be delivered by staff skilled in working with young people. They felt that proposals needed to ensure specific programmes to specific groups that are age appropriate.

Stakeholders were positive about 0 – 19 'whole family' model and working together during transition of services and taking part in 0-19 locality meetings. However, they

also felt it was still based on deficit model looking at problems rather than solutions. Some voluntary sector providers were keen on exploring being part of the integration of the 0-19 locality model.

2. Allocation of Youth Services

44% of people completing the questionnaire, mainly completed by parents, indicated they would prefer for youth work funding to be allocated half equally across all wards and half on basis of needs and 31% indicated a preference of allocating the funding based in the basis of greatest need.

Concerns raised about allocation just based on needs included that this would mean no preventative work, not wanting anyone to miss out and need to identify and address issues early and prevent issues later on.

Stakeholders acknowledged that Walsall needed a youth service and funding should be allocated based on need.

“There’s less money and it makes sense to put it where it’s needed.”

Police expressed concern in the reduction of youth workers which could potentially mean an increase in anti- social behaviour, but were reassured to hear that some of the youth work functions would continue to be delivered through the 0—19 locality teams.

Other concerns raised included:

- cuts in funding may adversely affect grant applications already made where details on Walsall Council funding has been provided
- previously young people will become more disengaged as they have previously given their views and felt that were not listened to
- potential increase in anti social behaviour as they were directly responding to requests to deal with ASB which were not going through existing procedures and therefore may affect reporting figures
- needing transition time to plan for changes

Young people were positive about the proposal saying it made sense and would mean there would be more support where there is a need. They agreed that resources should be allocated on a needs basis as they felt that this was going to help tackle the problems better, but felt that all areas should get some money and any unallocated funding should be reallocated to young people who need it the most.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

1. Creating of a integrated 0-19 Locality Teams/hubs

Respondents generally support this proposal

2. Allocation of Youth Services

Overall opinion on this proposal is divided

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

1. To continue to monitor the level of engagement of service users with protected characteristics. As part of the Early Help Performance Framework and report on this Quarterly. If there is a reduction in expected/projected engagement in particular of teenage parents, ethnic minority groups, children with disabilities and young carers than action will need to be taken to understand and remove barriers.
 2. Work with partners to understand ASB hotspot areas and times and address (projected demand) and address through a partnership action plan.
 3. 0-19 locality to develop and maintain a programme of delivery focussed on supporting children and young people with a disability through maintaining 'specialised SEN family support case workers' increase the delivery of cygnet (specialised SEND)
 4. Work with WVA (one Walsall) to identify and secure alternative funding opportunities to secure continuation of youth provision across all areas.
- A meeting with WVA is planned in January to explore different funding opportunities including the Big Lottery funding and The community's fund. WVA has requested support around data submission and endorsement to secure a higher success rate.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Reduced resources will mean that there will be less access to universal programmes within the 0-19 family support teams and therefore young people with low level needs may have access to less provision.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 13

Taking into account feedback Cabinet intend to approve this proposal as follows:

1. The creation of the 0-19 Locality Teams to deliver programmes, engage with parents and young people and develop a communication plan of services available.
2. Overall feedback via questionnaires showed divided opinion. However because young people and stakeholders engaged through focus groups were more in support of the allocation of funding fully based on need, Cabinet intend to support this proposal and allocate the remaining funding to youth services fully based on need.

To continue to work with the Voluntary Sector to identify and secure alternative external funding to continue to deliver youth work across the localities.

Further consultation to be held on the name for the 'locality hubs' to ensure they are inclusive of all ages.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	14	Title	Aim to identify alternative funding to support the School Improvement Service	
Description of proposal				
<p>Implement a revised model of delivery in future years based on a locality School Improvement model, with Teaching Schools taking the lead on sector-led developments to secure high quality teaching, learning and leadership. There are currently 5 Teaching Schools in Walsall – 3 primary and 2 secondary.</p> <p>To move to a self-sustaining and high quality model of School Improvement by 2020, when funding for non-statutory School Improvement services is likely to cease, it is necessary to reduce centrally delivered services and develop a mechanism for sector-led delivery.</p> <p>Consultation will start on the setting up of a School Improvement Commissioning Group (or similar) to plan and evaluate the impact of sector-led support to schools in most need.</p> <p>The year 1 saving will be made through a combination of voluntary reductions in staffing and an increase in traded income.</p> <p>Current DfE legislation requires local authorities to perform a number of statutory functions related to School Improvement. Pending any changes to DfE guidance, it is envisaged that the statutory functions would be performed by a centrally retained School Improvement Team, whilst the non-statutory function would be carried out by the School Improvement Commissioning Group.</p>				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost	
235,559	271,198	135,599	£0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>Consultation included opportunities for Head Teachers and governors to engage at different times and in different venues:</p> <p>Letter and proposals attachment to Head teachers and Chair of Governors of all 119 Schools. No feedback from governors. Verbal comments from Headteachers – worried about their own decreasing budgets – that this is a result of national policy in moving towards a fully academised system and not necessarily what will drive up standards in schools.</p> <p>Meeting with 12 Headteachers and their ‘links’: Questions regarding the future of statutory services (especially assessment) and who will challenge underperforming schools if the central school improvement function is withdrawn. A strong view that Teaching Schools do not have the capacity to support all schools in Walsall and there is a need for central co-ordination of brokering of support. Comments about the</p>				

government's policy of full academisation and the lack of funding for school improvement services being a vehicle to force unsuccessful schools to become academies.

Meeting with 5 School Improvement Partners:

Meeting with 1 Chair of Schools Forum:

- Overwhelmingly supportive of the proposal, given the financial constraints, and totally against the cessation of a central school improvement service, which has clear impact in itself and also in brokering support for schools that need it.
- View that Teaching Schools do not have the capacity to deliver all services – especially the challenge role, which would be difficult for them.
- Important to involve Headteachers (and not just those from good or outstanding schools) on the proposed board. Would help with transparency and acknowledgement that schools sometimes need to be challenged (speaking from direct experience)

Meeting with 8 Governors - In summary, governors were unhappy with national policy that has led to such hard decisions having to be made, at a time when their own school budgets are being cut. They acknowledged and hoped for continued strong leadership in addressing the need for standards to rise in schools across Walsall, whatever solution is found. They saw the value of seeking ways to make the best use of limited resources and were generally in agreement with the proposal, given that they saw this national situation as 'academisation by the back door'.

Overall Heads and governors acknowledge that we have to find a way forward that will continue to raise standards by working together, using expertise from the central team, clusters and Teaching Schools. Particular strengths of the central team were cited as the ability to provide bespoke support, quality assurance and challenge to underperformance.

They see the risk associated with not attracting the alternative funding as proposed and would be against cessation of the service.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents generally support this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

A - No major change required.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Not Appropriate

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Head teachers, governors and pupils in Walsall schools – especially those in maintained primaries.

School improvement Partners.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 14:

The consultation highlighted a need for a centrally retained School Improvement Service to sustain the current pattern of improvement seen in Ofsted inspection outcomes and to drive forward a sector-led model of partnership working where good practice can be identified and shared. Finding alternative funding solutions was therefore seen as a positive step. The risks to school performance and outcomes for Walsall children if School Improvement Services are withdrawn were a major concern, and these risks would be likely to have most impact on maintained primary schools.

Respondents welcomed the suggestion of setting up a Board comprising Head Teachers and Local Authority representatives to co-ordinate the support being provided to schools needing to improve. They recognised that our five Teaching Schools have expertise to offer, but agreed that they do not have the capacity to provide all the support required across all schools in Walsall.

There was a strong view that underperformance in schools needs to be challenged, and that the Local Authority is best placed to do this, with officers experienced in this line of work. This challenge relates equally to maintained schools and sponsored academies.

All agreed that statutory services, for example concerning moderation and assessment across schools, are effectively delivered at present by experienced officers in the school improvement team working with in-school / LA trained colleagues. Respondents do not wish to lose this expertise.

Since initiating the consultation, notification has been received from central government of additional funding following the ending of the Education Services Grant in August 2017. It is as yet unclear what impact this will have on the scale of the savings needed.

Bearing in mind responses from the consultation, Cabinet intends to proceed with the proposal to find alternative funding to secure the future of school improvement services.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	16	Title	Reduction in Public Health investment to lifestyle services
Description of proposal			
The proposed saving of £250,000 will be achieved through releasing funds from the Lifestyle Services contracts and management / maintenance of green space resources. The changes required to the Lifestyle's Service will be offset by the development of parks and green spaces and a more joined up approach to health improvement (e.g. physical activity) across council and external partners, particularly the community and voluntary sector.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
45,000	0	205,000	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process. Service users were also invited to contribute by writing in via post or email. Only one generic online survey was completed which fully supported the proposal. No additional comments or suggestions were provided. No additional written correspondence has been received.			
Screening suggests there are no or minimal equalities implications and therefore a full impact assessment is not required. The issue has no relevance to equality and it is disproportionate to carry out an EqIA.			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Respondents supported this proposal.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 16

Following a review of the proposal it is anticipated that a further £60,000 can be delivered earlier than planned, hence the saving has been re-profiled accordingly. Therefore £105,000 year 1 and £145,000 in year 3.

Cabinet intend to approve this revised proposal.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	17	Title	Introduce Charging for Green Waste Collections
Description of proposal			
The saving of £300,000 is based on 20% participation and an annual charge of £30 if booked before the 1 December for commencement of an alternate weekly collection service from 1 February in the following year. The cost will be £35 if booked after the 1 December. There will be an initial “one off” cost of £18.00 (paid by the resident) for purchasing a new wheeled bin. Replacement bins will be £22.50 thereafter for any lost/stolen as per the waste policy. Collections will operate for 10 months between 1 February and 30 November each year.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
0	300,000	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>11 generic online surveys have been completed and additional written correspondence has also been received.</p> <p>2 responses fully support the proposal, 2 responses support the proposal with concerns / amendments and 7 responses do not support the proposal.</p> <p>Comments and suggestions include;</p> <p><i>“Would incur a charge , but this outweighs not having the service at all or such a reduced service is not worth having”</i></p> <p><i>“I think it would see a rise in fly tipping”</i></p> <p><i>“Already struggle to pay to meet all household bills, and as a house holder that pays council tax the emptying of bins should be free”</i></p>			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Respondents are generally against this proposal (although few responses received)		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved
Not Applicable.
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved
Not applicable.
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 17 Cabinet are minded to support introducing charging for green waste collections subject to further detailed consultation and equality impact assessment.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	18	Title	Reconfigure Recycling Collections to Introduce 'Twin Stream' Collections	
Description of proposal				
Under this proposal the existing brown bins will be used to facilitate the introduction of a 'twin stream' recycling collection scheme. Residents will be required to place glass, cans and plastics into green bins and paper and card into brown bins. Paper and card will be collected in week 1, then plastic, glass and can in week 3. The recycling bins (green or brown) would be emptied first and the grey residual waste bins emptied later in the day. There is no overall reduction in the capacity residents have to dispose of recyclable waste.				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
0	150,000	0	2018/19	90,000
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.				
6 generic online surveys have been completed, and one piece of additional written correspondence has been received.				
1 response fully supports the proposal and 5 responses do not support the proposal.				
Comments and suggestions include;				
<i>"The argument that there is not a reduction in the recycling collections is flawed, as few households will have an exact 50-50 split between the types of recyclable waste you are separating out. This will cause great difficulties in disposing of waste. If a householder goes on holiday, is in hospital or has to stay away from home for any reason on collection day they will have 8 week's worth of rubbish stockpiled."</i> and				
<i>"I will find it difficult to store four bins therefore less likely to use all of them leading to more recyclable waste being placed in the grey bin. I already have a problem deciding what waste to put in which bin and an extra bin will make that more complicated. The volume of non cardboard material is much higher than our cardboard waste so we might run of space over a four week period."</i>				
<i>"This proposal will make recycling even more difficult. People are already confused at what can and can't be put in to recycle. if this is split between two bins it will result in more confusion, bins will be contaminated with the wrong recycled goods and therefore will go un-emptied resulting in the loss of what is perfectly good material but condemned because it was placed in the wrong bin. also if people elect to pay for garden waste collection this will result in yet another bin blighting the streets and front gardens of people who cannot store the bins at the rear of the property or choose not too."</i>				

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents are generally against this proposal (although few responses received).
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	Not applicable.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 18	
Cabinet are minded to support reconfiguring recycling collections to Introduce 'Twin Stream' collections, subject to further detailed consultation and equality impact assessment.	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	20	Title	Reduction in Grass Cutting – Large Areas
Description of proposal			
This proposal is to cease grass cutting on large areas with low amenity value which are currently cut by tractor with a gang unit. Areas that are currently cut on a fortnightly basis will cease for environmental reasons. Grass pathways will be cut to enable access across the sites for recreational use such as dog walking and smaller areas will be cut for recreational play.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
27,312	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>Only one generic online survey was completed which did not support the proposal and comments included;</p> <p><i>“..... if this ceases then the area will look awful and accompanied with potential fly tipping will lead to rodents and reduction in community pride and increase the local residents to not take care of their own gardens with the loss of pride in the area.”</i></p> <p>Two pieces of written correspondence have also been received from Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and Friends of the Earth. Friends of the Earth stated;</p> <p><i>“.....We support Proposal 20 which reduces grass cutting in low used areas as this will help create meadow land and encourage biodiversity. It is important that the benefits of this are explained as well as the cost savings.”</i></p>			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Responses are mixed with regards to this proposal (although few responses received)		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 20

Cabinet intend to support the proposed reduction of grass cutting to large areas.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	21	Title	Consider cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision
Description of proposal			
<p>Cessation of provision of bowling greens and cricket wickets across the borough outside of the Arboretum. The council has bowling green provision at: Anchor Meadow, Walsall Arboretum, Leamore Park, Oak Park, Palfrey Park, Pelsall, Pleck Park, and Rushall.</p> <p>There are currently 10 bowling clubs who hire bowling green's from the council, generating approximately £6,564 of income per year. The cost of maintaining the bowling green's is circa £40,000.</p> <p>The council has cricket wicket provision at: King George V Playing Fields, Broadway West Playing Fields, Pleck Park, and Walsall Arboretum. One cricket team hires a cricket wicket from the council but no income is received. The cost of maintaining the cricket wickets is circa £20,000.</p> <p>Bowling greens and cricket wickets will continue to be maintained for the Arboretum with alternative resources but all other grass will be cut at a minimum of once per fortnight to fit in with the other areas on the sites.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
58,464	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through generic consultation processes and clubs were also written to inviting them to have their say. All affected clubs were requested to complete the online consultation process to express their view and opinions in reference to the proposed £58,464 saving for financial year 2017/2018.</p> <p>Ten responses were received, two fully supported the proposal, eight did not support the proposal.</p> <p>One petition has been received from Walsall Community Bowls League in reference to the cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision. The petition contains 1700 names of people who are concerned about the proposal.</p> <p>Bloxwich Cricket Club and Staffordshire Cricket Club said;</p> <p><i>"if the cricket pitch on King Georges ceased to exist it would have a massively detrimental effect on our club and its future."</i></p> <p>Comments from those who do not support the proposal (12):</p> <p>Respondents commented on the Council's financial position</p> <p><i>"We fully understand that the council is under severe pressure from the Government to reduce spending and we would accept any large increase in our</i></p>			

fees and as ratepayers accept an increase in council tax”.

The majority of clubs commented about the feasibility of self management of the bowling green.

“If the final decision is to close, the answer could be to maintain the green ourselves...”

“Members of the bowling club require information regarding the potential for managing the site [themselves]”.

“We [Staffordshire County Bowling Association] are prepared to discuss possible Community Trusts to help manage the greens and take over the green cutting to enable these greens to continue in use for many years to come. We are prepared to arrange Green Keeper courses for any club that requires this.

Respondents commented on the health and social benefits of bowling

“People are encouraged to get out and take more exercise for social and health reasons and then cutting facilities (bowling greens) in this area is contradictory.... What alternatives will be offered for people to get the social and exercise aspects they will now be missing”

“[As a local GP] I feel strongly for health & well-being reasons of our aging community, it would be detrimental and short sighted to implement such consideration as this is the only recreation and an opportunity to socialise for some people who live on their own and sole reason to get out of the house to conquer loneliness. ...I feel strongly the potential financial savings is disproportionate to the adverse effects this action is likely to cause our aging population and would urge to consider the health benefits of our aging population.”

“The bowling clubs in Walsall provide regular exercise and social wellbeing to the over 55's as required by government.”

“Most bowlers use their greens 4 or 5 times a week for up to 3 hours per session; this gives them the chance to socialise as well as keeping them fit and healthy. Exercise helps to keep blood pressure problems at bay and helps keeping them fit and healthy. Exercise helps keep the core muscles strong to help balance; the socialising helps reduce loneliness and mental health issues. Problems such as these will increase if the greens are not available.”

Respondents commented on the inconsistency of charging and fees

“Clubs using the greens paid a total of £6,564 in 2016 in hire fees with Maintenance costs of £40,000. Of the £6,564 in fees 2 Clubs, Anchor Meadow and Pelsall paid £1,858 each, 56% of the total, however, Palfrey, Pleck, Leamore and Leckie do not pay anything due to historic Covenants although they receive the same amount of maintenance on their greens.”

“This cannot continue when the Council is looking to save money. Had all clubs paid the same fees, for the same amount of maintenance, the losses would be much less. This year, low fees from others and no fees from some, shows a very poor income overall against expenditure. This feels we are being penalised.”

Comments from the Staffordshire County Bowling Association

“Currently there are 8 active clubs within the Walsall Borough. These clubs have

over 300 active members playing in Leagues along with non-competitive bowlers using the clubs managed within the County. Three of the leagues would potentially close if the clubs within Walsall were to close.

“We appreciate that the Council is under pressure with Budgets, but imposing a removal of funding at short notice (Clubs have to commit to playing in a league by December 31st) we are facing a season of unprecedented disruption, to club league and County we would lose 10% of our active clubs and funding to support the County teams that promote the sport to Juniors Seniors and Veteran players.”

“We are keen to work with the Council to find an appropriate way forward to enable these valuable Community Clubs to remain and thrive.”

“Surely some arrangement can be made so that we do not lose our greens? Walsall Community Bowls League asks Walsall Council to re-think the cessation of the greens.” Walsall Council Bowls League

The consultation process has provided a considerable amount of qualitative feedback, and the following bullet points summarises the general feeling of those consulted:

1. There was a consensus view from the consultation that respondents appreciate that the council has to make budget cut decisions following Government cuts, however alternative options\solutions should be made available for further consideration and consultation.
2. It was identified by some respondents that a lack of information has been provided in reference to the council’s future plans for bowling greens if they are no longer maintained.
3. Respondents have raised concerns in relation to a number of inconsistent approaches adopted by the council particularly relating to charging certain bowling clubs maintenance and hire fees, while other bowling clubs are exempt from paying any form of financial contribution.
4. Respondents have identified a number of positive health benefits associated with participation in bowling some of which are summarised below:
 - Improved coordination and skill development
 - Increased confidence and self-esteem
 - Enhanced mental wellbeing
 - Low risk physical activity given that it is low impact
 - Social contact
 - Community connectedness and support
 - Bereavement support
 - Recuperative

Potential Impact

Respondents advised of the personal impact on the ‘end user’ (club members), should the council follow through with the proposal, particularly in relation to;

1. Reduction in social interactions
2. Loss of activities and social opportunities;
3. The impact on health to members with disabilities and health issues

4. Increase burden on the NHS
5. Lack of community connectedness

Respondents also noted that the cessation of maintenance may increase the risk of vandalism and anti-social behavior at the sites concerned.

Suggestions for alternatives to the saving include:

Respondents have identified the below alternatives to the proposed budget savings;

1. The council consider self management of bowling greens, where bowling clubs take over the management and maintenance of bowling greens through a formal lease or occupancy agreement with the council.
2. The council considers charging peppercorn rent to bowling clubs with the agreement that the bowling clubs management team be responsible for the continued management and maintenance of the green.
3. All bowling green users pay a contribution towards maintenance costs and hire fees to the council regardless of covenant agreements; this will help the council retain some income whilst cutting the expenditure bill.
4. The council considers increasing and restructuring hire fees, whilst ensuring fees are set at a comparatively affordable level to help subsidise shortfalls in maintenance costs.
5. The council may wish to consider undertaking minimum maintenance to ensure basic playable conditions are met; the clubs can themselves seek a higher level of maintenance if desired.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

1. Further engagement and consultation would be required – the clubs affected would need to know in detail what to expect, what their options are and clubs will also require time to plan and debate alternative options with their own club members.
2. Covenants and Trust agreements will need to be reviewed and investigated in advance of any formal discussions with clubs to understand any specific stipulations or conditions associated with the Council's role as trustee.
3. It is possible that there are club members who could feasibly take on self-management and thereby continue the club without a significant disruption.
4. If self management of bowling greens is approved as an alternative option, council officers will assist as best they can to ensure that the transition to self-management is smooth and will explain to those volunteering what is involved prior to commitment to ensure the greatest chance for success.
5. Support would need to be provided to clubs to identify external grant funding if

self management is a considered viable option.

6. If bowling clubs are not interested/able to undertake self management of the bowling green, the council can signpost bowling club members to clubs with low numbers of membership or private bowling clubs who are interested in increasing their membership levels. There are currently 29 crown green bowling greens in Walsall provided across 26 sites. There are 36 clubs using bowling greens in Walsall. This figure includes private clubs.

Table 1: Summary of number of greens by area

Area	Number of greens
Area 1 – Brownhills/Pelsall/Rushall/Shelfield	2
Area 2 – Aldridge & Beacon, Pheasey, Streetly, Walsall Wood	7
Area 3 – North Walsall, Bloxwich, Blakenall, Birchills, Leamore	3
Area 4 – Walsall South, St Matthew's, Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck	6
Area 5 – Darlaston & Bentley	4
Area 6 – Willenhall & Short Heath	7
Walsall	29

Source: Walsall Council Playing Pitch Assessment, March 2016

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Bowling is seen as a useful activity for older people and those with a range of disabilities, and as this group may have a limited choice of other sports they can participate in, there maybe disproportionate impact upon the elderly and disabled. This option could result in limiting the chance for healthy physical activity with groups of people with similar situations, and this is likely to have wider impacts as it limits their social network and all the other psychological benefits from taking part in a competitive team activity.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 21

There is considerable public opinion against this proposal including a petition that went to Council on the 9 January. Additionally during the consultation process issues have come to light with regards to land ownership, trustee obligations, hire agreements and occupancy arrangements.

Cabinet have considered the consultation feedback and other issues and have chosen not to proceed with this proposal at this point and will defer further consideration of this saving until 2018/19 to appraise the issues raised further.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	22	Title	Reduction in Herbicidal Weed Spraying of Highways
Description of proposal			
Reduction of herbicidal weed treatment to highway footpaths from twice per year to once per year. Areas that are currently treated twice per year in late spring and early autumn will be treated once per year in late spring / early summer. Priority will be given to strategic routes into the town and district centres.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
23,750	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.			
Only one generic online survey was completed which did not support the proposal. The resident felt;			
<i>“Walsall already gets enough negative press for being a dump - it would be nice to have a town to be proud of. More weeds will further discourage people to be proud of the area they live in and give the wrong impression to visitors to the area.”</i>			
Additional feedback was received from Friends of the Earth who supported this proposal stating;			
<i>“We support Proposal 22 to reduce weed spraying from twice to once a year. Our members have raised concerns about the use of these chemical sprays, including potential impacts on health, over many years. We would welcome the council moving to a position where it could avoid spraying in as many areas as possible.”</i>			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Responses are mixed with regards to this proposal.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved
Not applicable.
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 22
Cabinet intend to support the reduction in herbicidal weed spraying on highways.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	23a & 23b	Title	Reduction in Street Cleansing Service
Description of proposal			
<p>These proposals are a reduction in the street cleansing service, impacting 10 Environmental Operatives (Saving 1 £250,000) and potentially a further 7 Environmental Operatives (Saving 2 £182,907.00). 17 Environmental Operatives are currently deployed with each waste collection crew on a daily basis, deployed litter picking and supporting crews with recycling education and minimising contamination.</p> <p>Saving 1 - would leave a more reactive street cleansing, litter picking service for most areas of the borough. The remaining Environmental Operatives carrying out routine litter picking would be deployed in areas prone to litter accumulation and faster deterioration.</p> <p>Saving 2 - A total reduction of 17 Environmental Operatives would leave a more reactive litter picking service with no routine litter picking carried out in residential housing estates.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
432,907	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>Only two generic online surveys have been completed, both responses did not support the proposal. Additional written correspondence has also been received, comments include;</p> <p><i>"It would result in the area becoming a litter strewn tip."</i></p> <p><i>"Walsall needs no additional negative press for being a dump. The litter picking is essential to retain pride in our town."</i></p> <p><i>"We are very concerned about fly tipping and litter collection which is a huge problem in the area where we live. We are concerned that there might be no street cleansing apart from reactive removal of fly tipping. We suspect this will only increase the amount of rubbish with all the detrimental effects to amenity and health. I also think it would be bad for the borough's reputation. We would urge the Council not to reduce its operations to reduce litter and fly tipping."</i></p>			

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents are against this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	Not applicable.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not Applicable.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 23A and 23B	
<p>Following a review of the operational implications arising from the original proposal Cabinet intend to amend the original proposal and reinstate seven Environmental Officer (£175k) posts, which would reduce the environmental implications of this saving. These posts shall be targeted at areas of most need in the Borough.</p> <p>Cabinet intend to implement the revised saving of £257,907.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	25	Title	Reduce Grass Cutting on Highway Verges in rural Areas	
Description of proposal				
<p>This proposal is for a reduction of grass cutting on highway verges in rural areas. Rural grass verges are currently cut, full width, on a 2 – 3 week cycle during the growing season.</p> <p>The first 1m from the edge of the carriageway will continue to be cut on a 2 – 3 week cycle to maintain vehicle and pedestrian sight lines, access for the public / dog walking and for health and safety reasons. The remaining areas will be allowed to grow to support and improve the environmental biodiversity (flora, fauna, wildlife).</p>				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
49,702	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>One online survey was completed which fully supported the proposal.</p> <p>Additional written correspondence has also been received from the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust who do not support the proposal and would like to work in partnership with the council to discuss how they can assist in the relevant areas of service delivery to help Walsall achieve its' purpose, meet its' priorities and generate significant added value.</p> <p>Screening suggests there are no or minimal equalities implications and therefore a full impact assessment is not required.</p>				
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation				
	Responses are mixed with regards to this proposal.			
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.				
	Not applicable.			

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved
Not applicable.
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved
Not applicable.
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 25 Cabinet intend to approve the proposed reduction of grass cutting on highway verges in rural areas and will take up the offer from Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust to discuss how they can assist the council in relevant areas of service delivery.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	26	Title	Reducing Green Waste Collection Season by 1 month
Description of proposal			
The proposal is to reduce green the waste collection season by one month.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
30,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>Three generic online surveys have been completed. 2 fully support the proposal and 1 does not support the proposal.</p> <p>Comments and suggestions included;</p> <p><i>"The effect should be small as long as we can still take garden waste to the recycling depots [tips] outside of collection months."</i></p> <p><i>"I would rather pay a bit more to keep the present services."</i></p> <p>Additionally, 4 written responses have been received and included comments;</p> <p><i>"In addition we would say we are particularly personally concerned about any loss of brown bin services and would prefer to pay to have the collections kept on longer when they are most useful in October and November."</i></p> <p><i>"We are concerned about a reduction in Green Waste collections. We oppose Proposal 26 which reduces green waste collection by a month so it ends at the end of September but remains free. This seems to us to create the worst of all possible worlds because the green waste would be stopped just when people need it in the Autumn and it also does not help with the recycling contamination issue."</i></p> <p><i>"The current cut off at the end of October already creates problems by removing the brown bin collection just when people need it most and starting before it is really required. This has the knock on effect of adding to fly tipping and making the bins very heavy to collect in the Spring for operatives."</i></p>			

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Overall opinion on this proposal is divided, although feedback numbers were very limited.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	Not applicable.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 26	
<p>Cabinet intend to defer this proposal. A review of the green waste collection season will then be undertaken alongside the proposal to introduce charging for green waste collections (saving reference 17) which will be subject to further detailed consultation and equality impact assessment.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	27	Title	Reduction of One Tree Gang	
Description of proposal				
The proposal is to reduce tree operations by 23% by reducing the number of frontline staff from 7 to 5. A primarily reactive service only would be provided.				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
60,000	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.				
Only one generic online survey has been completed which fully supported the proposal.				
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation				
	One response generally supported this proposal.			
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.				
	Not applicable.			
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 27				
Due to operational reasons this proposal has been withdrawn.				

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	29	Title	Cease funding to Relate Walsall and First Base Walsall
Description of proposal			
<p>This proposal is to reduce funding by 25% in 2017/18 and allow the organisations time to seek alternative funding before removing funding completely in 2018/19.</p> <p>Relate and First Base receive £15K funding per year.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
7,500	22,500	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>There were five respondents to the generic online questionnaire.</p> <p>Nobody fully supported the proposal, one person supported but with some concerns/amendments and four people did not support. The four that did not support only mentioned Relate in their response. The responses mainly focus on the potential risks of removing the funding and suggest;</p> <p><i>“At worst I would suggest moving the saving by 1 year, to provide the charity with enough time to replace the lost income”.</i></p> <p>In addition consultation feedback was received from Relate. In relation to Relate the organisation draws attention to the fact that it already operates a minimum contribution from its service users of £10.00. It believes that not many of its users could afford an increase in that contribution. It costs Relate £45 to provide each counselling hour. In 2015/16 there were 421 counselling hours delivered by Relate in Walsall. If the facility was not available in Walsall then the alternatives would be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to Relate in Birmingham • Travel to Relate in Wolverhampton • Private Counselling (cost approx £40per hour) • Seek a referral from their GP to NHS counselling <p>Relate point out that based on usage numbers between April and September 2016 when they worked on 192 cases, 55% have children under 16 and of these children on average 24% live in a household where no adults are working, 35% live in a lone parent or separated or divorced household and 24% are living in a household where there are issues of domestic violence or abuse.</p> <p>Relate</p> <p>Relate Birmingham is a local, independent charity working to help couples, individuals, and families build better relationships and limit the damage caused by relationship breakdown, especially to children, through the provision of counselling services and</p>			

education and training.

They believe their services should be available to all, regardless of ability to pay. They ask for a minimum contribution of £10 for relationship and family counselling, but many of their clients find it difficult to contribute at all and so they fundraise for a full bursary. Last year the cost of a counselling hour was £45 but their average client contribution was £27. The funding they receive from Walsall Council is vital to help them bridge this gap, which is particularly important as work and the economic climate continues to cause increased strain on families and relationships and those that need them the most may be unable to afford our counselling services.

Relate Birmingham delivers and manages services in Walsall and they offer relationship counselling, family counselling and psychosexual therapy services. In March 2016 they moved to new premises at the Hub in Walsall College. They provide professional relationship support to any resident of the Walsall borough who is experiencing distress or anxiety in their marriage, relationships or family situation.

They provide appointments at a range of times - Tuesday daytime and evening and Wednesday evening in Walsall – and can also offer telephone counselling if clients have mobility issues or caring responsibilities. They have flexibility to offer clients a choice of appointment times or locations including Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Cannock and Sutton Coldfield.

Clients who have used Relate services report improvements in relationships, growth in confidence and self-esteem, improved parenting skills, reduced conflict and children who are happier, have fewer behavioural problems and are doing better at school.

They also report positive results in dealing with difficulties caused by issues such as employment, health and housing. Clients report reduced levels of alcohol and prescribed medication and reduced absenteeism. They feel better able to concentrate and manage conflict at work.

First Base Walsall

First Base Walsall is a local charity established in 1997 to support vulnerable young people and the economically disadvantaged community of Caldmere, Palfrey and Pleck accessing the services of The Small Street Centre.

The Small Street Centre provides employment support, education classes, and advice and guidance access to the charity's homeless services, health and wellbeing services including counselling and substance misuse recovery services.

Walsall Council funding enables the charity to provide free internet access, job searching and accredited qualifications in basic skills. This supports the local communities who are economically disadvantaged, providing access to public service information and education facilities. The organisation offers internet access three times a week to the local community, along with printing services. As they have seen an increase of computer users accessing the internet for job searching purposes, they also offer a service for computer support, as the majority of the clients who access the Centre need help in using the computers/internet. They also provide a 12 week education course for clients; this will be an accredited course to further their education. As they work with the CAB and the Black Country Food Bank they are able to sign post clients into internal agencies that work in partnership with the organisation these include, Rethink Mental Illness, J10 Counselling services, Remploy, Mencap, Changing Ur Heath 4 Life and the Talent Match Programme.

We have received no formal consultation feedback from First Base	
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents are generally against this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	C - Continue despite possible adverse impact.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative sources of funding or efficiencies in service delivery need to be found to offset the reduction in funding 	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015/16 relate received 219 enquiries with 106 new cases and 421 counselling hours. The people impacted are people in relationship difficulties and their extended families. In 2015/16 First Base Walsall provided ICT/Internet support to 1455 community members. 	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 29	
<p>Having considered the feedback and equalities analysis Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal. However they would like officers to liaise with these charities to discuss ways in which they might be able to reduce the need for Walsall council funding support in the future.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	30	Title	Consider withdrawing funding to Community Associations	
Description of proposal				
<p>Consider withdrawing funding of Community Associations fully in 2017/18. Some Community Associations within the borough receive grants from the Partnerships team. These Grants are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Development Sustainability Funding• Community Development New Initiatives/Schemes Funding• Building Management Funding• Luncheon/Breakfast Club Funding				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
247,900	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>There has been consultation with a wide range of voluntary sector organisations either directly or through umbrella organisations. In total over 500 Voluntary and Community sector organisations were contacted seeking feedback on the budget proposals. We also had a response from Walsall Voluntary Action. There was limited feedback from groups directly.</p> <p>There were 3 respondents to the generic online consultation questionnaire. One fully supported the proposal and two supported the proposal but with concerns / amendments</p> <p>Comments received from the two respondents to the generic online consultation questionnaire who supported the proposal but with concerns were:</p> <p><i>“I don't use these services and don't know anyone that does however I am sure that there will be service users who this type of support is invaluable.”</i></p> <p><i>“Community Associations play a very active part in their communities. They all provide a variety of activities for the local neighbourhood and are generally well supported.”</i></p> <p><i>“I would consider a reduction; say 10%, in funding as the service needs to continue.”</i></p> <p>Further consultation was undertaken with the sector through WVA and the Community Network. They carried out a detailed consultation including borough wide survey of organisations, one to one discussions with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), stakeholders and commissioners and discussions at relevant VCS forums and groups. The outcome of this consultation is a document titled “Response to Walsall Council Budget Consultation 2016. Impact of proposals on Walsall’s VCS”. In total there were</p>				

43 responses to their on-line questionnaire including responses from CA's and a range of other community organisations.

Concerns were raised about the impact the proposal would have on the future viability of Community Associations.

"The proposed cuts in their current form are going to threaten the very existence of the VCS at a time when the services the sector provides are needed more than ever."

There are three recommendations identified in the WVA consultation response, these are:

- Cuts to VCSE providers should be phased over a number of years.
- A strategic review of the wider social return on investment delivered by the VCS is undertaken.
- A strategic approach is taken to identifying opportunities for generating efficiencies within VCSE and greater sharing of resources for the future.

The Council met with the Community Network, a group of Community Associations which meet on a regular basis to discuss matters of mutual interest and opportunities, at its meeting on the 10th November 2016. Eight Community Associations were represented.

Concerns were expressed about the proposals, in particular the proposal was seen as "too harsh".

The Aldridge and Beacon Area Panel felt that;

"Cabinet be recommended to take on board the increase in social isolation across the borough which would be caused if funding is withdrawn from the Community Associations budgets which may also result in a number of them closing".

In summary the feedback from consultation was that withdrawing funding to CA's will put some at risk of closure and lead to greater social isolation. There is a need for a more strategic review of the sector and therefore savings should be phased to allow time for this review to take place.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

- Phasing the savings will allow for a strategic review to be undertaken
- Alternative sources of funding or efficiencies in service delivery need to be found to offset the reduction in funding.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

- Monthly footfall within funded CA's is over 78,000 including people of all ages and backgrounds. The impact of removing funding would be that some CA's may not survive when there is little alternative service delivery in the area.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 30

Feedback from consultation suggested that withdrawing funding to Community Associations could put some at risk of closure and lead to greater social isolation. As a result, there is a need for a more strategic review of the sector and therefore savings should be phased to allow time for this review to take place.

Cabinet therefore intend to withdraw this proposal to allow time to review the sector and build capacity. Officers will be instructed to carry out such a review, working closely with voluntary and community sector partners, with a view to bringing back proposals for how we can maximise the benefit to the community from the voluntary and community sector, whilst optimising the council's funding and maximising the receipt of other sources of funding, such as grants and commercial income.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	31	Title	Remove Cohesion non staffing budget.
Description of proposal			
The removal of the non staffing cohesion budget which would result in no grants being allocated by the Council through a cohesion budget for events and activities.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
74,356	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>There was one response to the generic online consultation questionnaire which was fully supportive of the proposal.</p> <p><i>“If local areas want these kind of events they will continue to arrange them without the council input.”</i></p> <p>In addition all recipients of grants from the cohesion budget were asked for their views. We have received four responses, all negative. The responses criticised the proposal on two levels. First the message the budget reduction sends and secondly the inability of organisations to replace the funding. Comments included;</p> <p><i>“This world is not a nice place at the moment and withdrawing funding like this will just add to the tension and disunity that already exists.”</i></p> <p><i>“I do hope that this is only a suggestion to cut all funding as failure to secure funding may even result in our event and services being cut back or even being cancelled.”</i></p>			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Respondents are generally against this proposal.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	C - Continue despite possible adverse impact.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Alternative sources of funding could to be found to offset the reduction in funding.Organisations who previously received grants would be signposted to other sources of funding.			

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

This proposal could have a borough wide impact with many cohesion events potentially not finding replacement funding and therefore not taking place such as:

- Pride events in the Town Centre.
- Caldmore Village Festival
- Shaheedee Sports Weekend
- Beechdale Community Residents Association day away

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 31

Following feedback from consultation Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal as Cohesion is a high priority for the Council and Cabinet wants to ensure events that support its priorities in this area can continue.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	35	Title	Removal of the Council's Revenue Subsidy to the Forest Arts Centre	
Description of proposal				
This will see a gradual reduction in the financial support that the council gives to the operational costs of the centre over the next few years. It is anticipated that the centre will have to operate on a more commercial basis and become self-sustaining.				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017 / 2018 £	2018 / 2019 £	2019 / 2020 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
100,000	100,000	185,000	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>Two comments were fed back. One was in favour of the proposal, the other was not.</p> <p>The negative feedback was due to a fear that if the Centre were to close, then their family would be unable to use the service. The proposal is not however to close the Forest Arts Centre.</p> <p>As there was no further comment / feedback to the proposal, it would be reasonable to conclude that people are either a) in favour of the proposal, or b) indifferent to it.</p>				
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation				
	Overall opinion on this proposal is inconclusive			
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.				
	Not applicable.			
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 35				
<p>Cabinet are minded to withdraw the year 1 (2017/18) budget saving however Forest's management would be expected to work with staff to redesign the Forest Arts Centre business operation and model over the new few years. This proposal would involve considering a different staff structure, reduction in costs, attracting new business and additional income. The new A3 Arena would help drive this business model and should be able to earn a further £100k of additional income by 2018/19 (year 2). This would leave the remaining £185k subsidy but it is expected that a commercialisation of the centre and its operation ought to be able to reduce this further.</p> <p>Cabinet intend to support the proposed gradual reduction in financial support given to the Forest Arts Centre, but from year 2 onwards.</p>				

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	36	Title	Removal of the Council's Revenue Subsidy to the New Art Gallery	
Description of proposal				
This will see a reduction in the financial support that the council gives to the operational costs of the centre. It is anticipated that the Gallery will have to operate on a more commercial basis and become self-sustaining over the period of the medium term financial outlook, or may close.				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	Implementation / Investment cost	
100,000	(20,000)	390,000	£0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
Summary <p>Consultation on budget saving proposal ref 36 was conducted as part of the council's generic budget consultation along with all other proposals. Although clarification of the proposal was given on several occasions, it was clear from responses that many people believed the proposal was to close the NAG.</p> <p>Following a degree of national interest (The Guardian, Sunday Times Magazine, BBC R4 and BBC WM) additional correspondence was received by e-mail and some postal responses. The feedback is therefore split between "generic consultation feedback" and "other feedback" as below:-</p>				
Consultation <p>Generic consultation feedback: By the closing date of the 312 responses to the council's process, 73 (23%) were about the New Art Gallery, notably just 8 of the 73 responses (11%) were from Walsall residents. A number of responses were from academic institutions.</p> <p>A summary of the feedback showed:-</p> <p>Many respondents highlighted the economic and cultural benefit they feel the NAG brings to Walsall and the region. The general view was "Do not close NAG" (although this was not actually being proposed).</p> <p>Very few responses put forward alternative suggestions, of those that did suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage business and individual investment• Develop commercial ventures and sponsorship• Charge an admission fee of £1• One person offered to pay but lived in Birmingham <p>In additional, none offered funding or donations. Some felt that the NAG needed time to develop a new plan. One respondent felt that closing NAG was a good idea.</p> <p>Other feedback: Following national media interest and potential lobbying, a further 115 items of correspondence were received from 112 respondents by e-mail and</p>				

post. A number of these responses were duplications from the generic feedback. A summary of the feedback showed:-

- 19 responses were from Walsall residents
- 40 responses were from inside the WM region (<25miles)
- 49 responses were from outside of the regions (75+miles)
- 5 responses were international (Israel, Germany, France, Belgium)

Few respondents put forward alternative suggestions for how the savings could be made. Of those that did suggestions included;

- Give the NAG time to develop a plan
- Charge a small fee for entry
- Find a sponsor
- Move the library and Leather Museum into NAG
- Establish a charitable trust

Other suggestions included encouraging children and young people to visit the NAG by using the space for other purposes that interest them, e.g. by hosting IT, computer and gaming events.

The general view was “not to close the NAG” although this was not actually being proposed. None offered funding, however two current suppliers to the NAG offered to negotiate better rates for their services which will be followed up

Many respondents spoke of ‘dismay’, ‘deep concern’, ‘alarm’, ‘shock’, ‘tragedy’, ‘jeopardy’, ‘devastating’, ‘barbarism’ etc

3 respondents recommended that the council close the NAG.

Feedback being gathered in relation to proposal 32, 33 and 34 (libraries, Leather Museum, Local History Centre & Archive) has shown that many people think the NAG could be a suitable alternative location for some of these services.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Not applicable.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

The proposal was not to close the NAG but to seek for it to operate on a more commercial basis and become self-sustaining over the period of the medium term financial outlook. Mitigating action has involved a review of the delivery of the savings profile as detailed below.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

No people are negatively affected by the proposal.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 36

Most of the consultation feedback was in opposition to perceptions that: the Gallery was closing, a decision had been made to close, or that there was a threat of closure; none of which were correct.

Other feedback was against the proposed reduction in revenue funding as respondents felt that this would ultimately lead to the NAG closing.

The council's proposition to gradually reduce the revenue budget in year 1 to year 3 will give the NAG the opportunity to look at other funding and governance models. Efficiencies and income generation, along with support from the NAG Development Trust and Arts Council England, will form the basis for developing a new operational model whilst giving the NAG time required to then implement it.

Cabinet therefore intend to approve the revised proposal as follows.

A revision of the profiling of the savings:

The plan for delivering the year 1 (2017/18) and year 2 remains the same.

£50k ACE reserve

£20k Turner reserve

£70k A one-off saving – therefore there is no ongoing reduction in the budget, this is a one-off reduction in the budget for 2017/18 alone.

£ 7k Programme

£23k Delete vacant post

£30k budget reduction – this is an ongoing reduction

£100k TOTAL for 2017/18

Year 2 (2018/19) will see a further £50,000 ongoing reduction. This is partly offset by the £70,000 one-off being returned, leading to a £20,000 overall increase in the net budget. The £70,000 will be adjusted automatically, therefore the requirement of the NAG is to identify a £50,000 ongoing saving in 2018/19.

Year 3 will see a further saving of £50,000 as opposed to £390,000.

This proposal will allow the New Art Gallery to develop its new business model alongside existing and new partners and stakeholders.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	39	Title	Change to Community Protection Out of Hours Service
Description of proposal			
<p>There has been a routine out of hours (OOH) noise service for many years. This is provided every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night (with a few exceptions). With a service redesign in April 2016, the service also covers other aspects of the work that is within the remit of the Community Protection Team.</p> <p>Historically there was a very limited service for residents outside these hours. The proposed change would give a more consistent service to residents who suffer from relevant issues regardless of the time when the issues are experienced.</p> <p>The proposal is to change how the out of hours service is delivered. Rather than a routine service with officers at work every weekend at set hours, the service will be provided in a more targeted manner. Complaints and intelligence will be analysed and the service prioritised to target hot spot locations or to assist particularly vulnerable residents.</p> <p>This can be delivered by analysis of complaints and intelligence and targeting work to geographic area or at times specific to the identified and evidenced problem and to meet the needs of vulnerable residents. This is a change in working practice and can be implemented relatively easily. When the service was redesigned for 2017/18, the new job descriptions contained a provision about modifications to this service and the fact that the service would be reviewed was clearly communicated to staff.</p> <p>The Authority has a statutory duty to investigate breaches of certain legislative requirements, including but not limited to statutory nuisance. In the case of the latter, there is a duty to issue an abatement notice. However, there is no requirement to provide an out of hours service of the nature currently provided.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
22,370	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>This proposal was part of the corporate consultation feedback web form. No responses have been received from this source.</p> <p>Officers have individually contacted a number of partners, other council departments and service users. These consultation responses are summarised here:</p> <p>The Police felt that there is a need to still provide some out of hours provision, particularly where partnership working is required and that there is a need for calls to be taken within the council to mitigate against an increase in calls to the police on a matter they do not routinely deal with. They raised the fact that communication to the</p>			

public of the change to the service would be essential.

Registered Social Landlords overall were supportive of the proposal. Walsall Housing Group are moving to a similar approach and some of the smaller RSLs took the opportunity to seek more engagement and partnership working with the service.

Adult Social Care could not see a problem with the proposal as vulnerable adult would still be picked up and an appropriate plan put in place to deal with any problems they had. The removal of the on call service at weekends leaves the position the same as it is on other nights.

Service Users. Officers attempted to re-contact 27 people who had used any of the services of the Community Protection team over the last 2 months, not just those who had used the OOH service. 8 service users were consulted over the phone. Of these 2 were against the proposed changes, 5 were in favour of the proposals and 1 person didn't see the need for OOH service at all.

There is no information on the demographics of service users. A limited look at the complaint records indicate that some service users identify themselves as vulnerable in some respect. Usually due to a disability, age or health issue.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents generally support this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

A - No major change required.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Mitigating actions with respect to residents and service users are incorporated into the proposal to include a more proactive approach based on partnership working informed by local intelligence to better target resources.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Whilst some residents who are accustomed to using the out of hours service as it is currently provided may be adversely affected, other residents will benefit by virtue of the new emphasis on targeted proactive work at a wider range of times.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 39

Cabinet intend to proceed with the proposal.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	40	Title	A Review of the Operation of the Councils Pest and Animal Control Service to Control Demand, Target Resources more effectively and Increase Income. Generation
Description of proposal			
<p>Walsall Council provides a pest control service which gives priority to public health pests such as rats, mice, cockroaches and bedbugs. The treatment of these pests is provided free of charge or in the case of mice at a reduced cost. The service also provides a chargeable service for non public health pests such as wasps, fleas, ants etc. The chargeable service has an element of protection for certain residents in that the full cost of treatment is discounted for those on benefits.</p> <p>The current system of booking appointments daily, in any part of the borough, places a practical and administrative burden on the service as well as not concentrating effort in any one location to resolve infestations affecting groups of premises. The variety of charges for different pests and the difficulty in proving all persons claiming the discounted rates are in fact entitled to it requires simplifying. Consequently, a service review seeks to establish ways of controlling demand, targeting resources more effectively and increasing income generation.</p> <p>The review will consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Staffing of the service.2 Application of charges for all services.3 The true cost of an appointment4 Whether discounted or free treatments ought to be stopped other than where proactive area based treatments are undertaken.5 Whether missed appointments where the fault is with the resident will be charged at the full rate or call out charge less than the full rate.6 How to effectively operate an area based, proactive project to treat pests in a defined area known to have a large demand. <p>It would be beneficial to implement proposals stemming from the review by 1st April 2017 to coincide with the insect season when income generation begins in earnest.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
20,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Proposal to introduce a flat fee of £20 for the treatment of rats, mice, bedbugs and cockroaches: Thirty three service users were consulted by telephone. The majority (85% 28 people) agreed with the proposal. 15% (5) disagreed with it.</p> <p>Views expressed by those in agreement with the proposal included:</p>			

- 1 The charge is fair
- 2 Pensioners and a single parent stated that they would be able to afford to pay for the service if they required it
- 3 Surprise that the current service is provided free of charge
- 4 The proposals would not have a negative impact on them
- 5 The proposed charges are less than those charged by private companies and that it is not possible to "self treat" an infestation yourself more cheaply.

Views expressed by those who disagreed with the proposal included:

- 1 Those on low income should be entitled to a free service.
- 2 They cannot afford to pay £20 for the service.
- 3 Complaints about the Council including "I am already hit by Council cuts" and "low income families should not subsidise expensive consultants employed by the Council".

Proposal to introduce a flat fee of £35 for the treatment of other pests including wasps, ants and fleas instead of the current charges of £27 for those on low income/benefits and £48 for everyone else: Thirty three service users were consulted by telephone. 88% (29) agreed with the proposal, 9% (3) disagreed with and 3% (1) were unsure about the proposal.

Views expressed by those who agreed with the proposal included:

- 1 The proposed charge would have no impact on them
- 2 The proposed charge is still cheaper than charged by private contractors
- 3 If the infestation is sorted out there is no problem with paying this charge
- 4 Compliments about the value of the service that has been delivered.

Views expressed by those who disagreed with the proposal included:

- 1 The charge of £35 is too expensive
- 2 Further costs would not be welcome because of health problems and the need to provide for their family
- 3 Inflated salaries of higher council management could be redirected to this service.

Proposal to provide a free service which involves working in a more targeted and joined up way with partners, in cases where there are infestations of mice, rats, bedbugs and cockroaches in multiple neighbouring properties/gardens: Thirty three service users were consulted by telephone. 91% (30) agreed with the proposal, 6% (2) disagreed with and 3% (1) were unsure about the proposal.

Views expressed by those who agreed with the proposal included:

- 1 It is a good approach because it reduces problems in neighbouring properties and prevents the recurrence of long-term problems
- 2 The approach is a good way of resolving infestations which are due to somebody else who is not prepared to pay
- 3 It is pointless treating an individual property when the whole block is affected
- 4 Education should be incorporated into the proposal to prevent problems
- 5 It is more cost effective for the council and saves money.

<p>Views expressed by those who disagreed with the proposal included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Adopting this approach could cause long waiting times for other pest control services. 2 Commercial premises should be entitled to a free service. 3 Areas outside of targets should also be “blanket” treated and appropriate charges made. <p>Four major Registered Social Landlords were consulted in writing about the above proposals. Only one response has been received which expressed concerns that the introduction of flat rate charges for those on benefits would have an impact on their tenants, particularly around rats and mice, as their tenants live in a deprived area. However, the responding RSL also welcomed the opportunity to work in conjunction with the Council on such issues.</p>	
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents generally support this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	A – No major change required
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<p>Managers would retain the discretion to authorise the free treatment of pests where financial hardship, which would prevent the resolution of a matter of public health concern, has been demonstrated.</p> <p>The proposal to provide a free targeted service where there are infestations of rats, mice, bedbugs and cockroaches in multiple neighbouring properties/gardens offers mitigation in that the service is likely to be mainly directed at deprived areas.</p>	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Persons on low income or in receipt of benefits.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 40	
<p>The consultation indicated that there was widespread agreement with the proposals. However, it is recognised that persons in financial hardship should not be precluded from the service to treat pests of public health concern. This can be mitigated by managers retaining discretion to authorise the free treatment of such pests in cases of demonstrable financial hardship to secure the resolution of infestations.</p> <p>Prior to the completion of the proposals a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to compare the charges made by other neighbouring local authorities in respect of pest control. The new charges proposed by Walsall council were generally less than those charged by neighbouring local authorities.</p> <p>In view of the above Cabinet intend to approve this proposal.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	41	Title	Reduce Drug and Alcohol services
Description of proposal			
<p>Public Health commissions the Walsall drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services from the national Public Health ring-fenced grant.</p> <p>The programme is delivered through a range of voluntary sector and statutory service contracts; the core contract being specialist drug and alcohol recovery treatment which is delivered by national charity 'Change, Grow, Live' (CGL). Other service elements include Black Country YMCA (Glebe Centre homeless services) and primary care services (GPs and Pharmacists)</p> <p>A saving of £460,000 was realised when services were re-commissioned in 2014. This was achieved by integrating Walsall's four previous delivery agencies into a single main provider, (CGL) with a new contract start date in July 2015 for a three year period, ending in March 2018, with options to extend by two further twelve month periods. This contract represents 90% of the overall investment.</p> <p>The proposed cumulative three year savings of £893,000 represents a 25% reduction to the programme budget. The magnitude of these savings means they can only be achieved by significantly reducing the scope and range of services offered through the main contract. Accepting that any reduction in other smaller contracts could impact disproportionately on the service provision.</p> <p>Drug and alcohol service offer mandated court imposed community treatment orders in partnership with the CRC (probation services). Also under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), local authorities have a duty to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of the local population by ensuring that there are services to reduce the misuse of drug and alcohol services. In addition the Public Health grant specifies local authorities "requirement to improve the take up, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services"¹ when setting it's spending priorities.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
143,000	250,000	500,000	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Partner agencies and stakeholders were invited to have their say via the council website.</p> <p>The main provider agency, CGL, consulted with partners, staff and service users on the council's behalf.</p> <p>Public health commissioners interviewed 20 randomly selected service users.</p>			

¹ 'Guidance on the Ring-fenced Public Health Grant Conditions and Mandated Functions In England' PHE (2016)

Partner Agency/Stakeholder responses;

1 **Council Social Care and Health Scrutiny and Overview Committee** Concern was expressed that this should be a priority for the Local Authority. It was noted that this proposal was for the programme which delivers drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services and this should be protected. Committee members highlighted the wide ranging impact and devastating effects that drugs and alcohol have not just on the individual but their families and, sometimes, local neighbourhood (Draft Minutes 16th November 2016).

“The Committee expresses concern in relation to saving reference 41 and strongly recommends that Cabinet reconsider this proposal”.

2. **Walsall CCG Governance Group and CCG Accountable Officer** have raised concerns about the potential additional demand on primary care and hospital services as a direct result of the cuts.

3. **Community Rehabilitation Company (Probation Service)** have expressed concern that the range of services available to offenders on court mandated treatment orders will be reduced and will lead to increased offending and create a demand on related support services in mental health and housing.

4. **West Midlands Police Walsall Local Policing Unit** have expressed concerns how the reduced drug and alcohol support services will impact upon access to services, coordination at the critical stages in the criminal justice system of arrest, court and prison potentially increasing offending and future demand on public services in Walsall.

5. **YMCA Black Country Group and Nash Dom**, voluntary sector organisations, wrote letters opposing the proposed cuts.

6. **CGL**, the specialist drug and alcohol provider agency, summarised the feedback from 9 other provider agencies. The aspects that were highlighted as most critical were the retention of specialist drug and alcohol services to resolve community issues and the retention of specialist drug and alcohol liaison services.

7. **CGL** consulted with 18 members of staff who identified the following services as critical; clinical prescribing services, detoxification services and needle exchange services.

8. **Peer Mentor** consultation with 17 service users elicited the following services for prioritisation if the proposed cuts are made; easy access to the service with no wait, group work, contact with a recovery coordinator and detoxification services.

Council Corporate Process;

43 valid responses were received, which included a number of specific references to the services delivered from The Glebe Centre. 41 of the responses do not support the proposal with 2 supporting it with concerns. The themes of the comments were about the negative social and economic impact of the proposed savings would have for Walsall with clear concerns raised about the consequence of increased crime.

Public Health Commissioners consulted with 20 service users to ask what they most valued from the specialist service, their comments may be summarised as follows;

1. The prescribing of medication and support from key workers were the most valued services.

2. Easy access with no waiting times was critically important
3. Suggestions of additional help were in areas of mental health counselling, benefits and housing advice.
4. The consequences of a reduced service or a service that had involved a waiting time was almost always associated with the risk of increased offending and crime.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

C - Year 1 and 2
D – Year 3

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

- Prioritise prescribing services
- Prioritise easy and swift access to services
- Protect targeted services for the most vulnerable service users with mental health and learning disabilities and those experiencing homelessness
- Safeguard service users, their children, families and the wider public from harm
- Prioritise the coordination of service entry from critical stages in the criminal justice system (arrest, courts and prisons)

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

- Service users quality of life and life chances for themselves and their families
- General public's safety and fear of crime
- Higher demand on a specialist drug and alcohol service due to reduced capacity
- Higher demand on all public services, police and other criminal justice agencies
- Local businesses and town centre management
- Hospital admissions and A&E demand
- Housing services as tenancies are lost as a result of short prison sentences
- Increased safeguarding risks for children of service users

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 41

Cabinet intend to continue with the proposal despite the possible adverse impact.

The impact that year 1 and 2 savings may have upon the service's capacity to contribute to the partnership's priorities will be closely monitored. A review of year 3 reductions will be completed in dialogue with the service provider and strategic partner agencies.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	46	Title	Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes	
Description of proposal				
<p>The Walsall's adult weight management a service is commissioned through the Public Health ring fenced grant. The weight management service delivers two elements; general and advanced. A 12 week programme supported through groups and an advanced 24 week programme supported by a team of specialists. These programmes help residents to lose up to 10% of their body weight thus reducing their risk of long term conditions and dependence on local services. Estimated annual Social Care costs of obesity to the council are £1,702,620. This proposal is to cease all adult weight management programmes. These services were re-commissioned in 2014 releasing a recurrent saving to the council of £127,817 per year.</p> <p>Whilst adult weight management services are not mandated, Local Authorities do have a duty (under the Health and Social Care Act (2012)) to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of the local population.</p>				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
175,152	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>Consultation has been undertaken with targeted members of the public through face to face interviews at Walsall Manor Hospital and Weight Management Clinics. Additional consultation has been done online with existing providers, Walsall Healthcare Trust and Heartcare and with key stakeholders including the Clinical Commissioning Group, Walsall Disability Forum and GP's, service users and targeted members of the public. We received a total of 345 responses.</p> <p>Consultation with existing providers, service users, public and key stakeholders collated 317 responses of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 63 (20%) were service users• 5 (2%) represented existing providers• 2 (1%) represented key stakeholders• 247 (78%) were from the public• 25 (8%) respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the proposal• 44 (15%) neither agreed nor disagreed• 248 (78%) somewhat or strongly disagreed with the proposal <p>Respondents were also asked to what extent would the removal of weight management service impact on them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 186 (62%) stated it would have a big or some impact				

- 21 (7%) little impact
- 95 (32%) no impact

Of the 183 respondents with a longstanding illness or disability 63% either stated the proposal would have some or a big impact on them. Of the 18 respondents with a mental health illness over 89 % said it would have a big or some impact on them.

Of the 178 female respondents 80% stated the proposal would have a big or some impact on them. Respondents were asked how they would get support to lose weight if this service was unavailable:

- 59 (20%) Talk to GP
- 51 (17%) I don't want/need to lose weight
- 47 (16%) Join a gym or leisure centre
- 34 (11%) Join diet group (slimming world, weight watchers)
- 31 (10%) Don't know
- 27 (9%) Join exercise / walking groups
- 17 (6%) Talk to Nurse
- 15 (5%) Do nothing
- 9 (3%) Talk to Health visitor
- 88 (29%) Other

Lastly they were asked is there anything that keeps you from accessing other services, such as talking to a health professional or joining a group.

- 66 (26%) Not interested
- 59 (24%) Cost/Money
- 24 (10%) Not enough time
- 5 (2%) no childcare
- 127 (51%) other

Additionally through the council's corporate consultation process 9 responses were received 8 stated they did not agree with the proposal and 1 agreed with some concerns.

A further 18 respondents from Walsall's Disability Forum stated they did not agree with the proposal.

Service users comments include:

"I was at this time a Blue Badge holder. After I ended the course I was able to walk greater distances without getting out of breath (the furthest being 7 miles!) and I consequently do not need the Blue Badge any more. My whole diet has changed and I eat more healthily than ever."

"I have not only worked for over 25 years in the NHS but now find myself a patient with the Manor Hospital Weight Management clinic. I have now lost over 2.5 stones with this clinic. Making full use of the expert advice and the excellent exercise and support on offer has made all the difference in my battle"

Key stakeholder's responses include from DR A K Singal at North Gate Practice:

"This has been an excellent service that we have used as a practice to great effect. The cessation of this service will mean the remaining option for a lot of

these patients in the future will be bypass surgery. This is indeed a much more expensive prospect.”

Heartcare an existing provider's response:

- 50% of patients referred to the programme have originally been referred to the cardiac rehabilitation programme
- Average weight loss is 6.4 kg
- Our performance indicators for 2016/17 show that we have exceeded or were near all of the targets set, with the majority of patients having improved physical activity and dietary patterns with some showing improvements in secondary health outcomes such as blood pressure and cholesterol and psychosocial health. This can only reduce the impact on the NHS.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

C - Continue despite possible adverse impact

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

The proposal means no targeted Public Health commissioned services will be available for Walsall residents. To mitigate the impact of this, we will promote healthy lifestyle messages and self help tools in relation to diet and physical activity through our current lifestyle service “One You Walsall”. This will assist residents to lose and maintain their weight independently, sign post them to other organisations who can help with weight management and direct them to the range of physical activity provision across the borough. In addition annually monitor any health trend changes in the protected groups through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Obesity does not affect all groups equally and people in deprived areas, older people, some black and minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities are more at risk of becoming overweight or obese.

Ceasing adult weight management services will also impact on children due to the strong link between parental obesity and childhood obesity.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 46

The intention is to continue with the saving despite the possible adverse impact. The mitigating actions outlined above will minimise the negative impact.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	47	Title	Reduction of public Health Stop Smoking Services
Description of proposal			
<p>Walsall Stop Smoking Services are commissioned by Public Health. The purpose of stop smoking services are to reduce the number of smokers by providing evidence-based treatment and behavioural support to smokers making quit attempts. The services support people to successfully quit smoking for 4 and up to 12 weeks anticipating that many of these service users will permanently stop smoking and as a result, will have reduced levels of smoking-related illness, disability, premature death, health inequality and protect their families from the effects of second hand smoke. This proposal is to reduce the Stop Smoking Support available.</p> <p>The proposed savings of £200,000 in 2017/18, followed by a further saving of £200,000 in 2018/2019 will be achieved by reducing the stop smoking support available. This equates to a 50% reduction. The current contracts end March 31st 2017 however, there is the option to extend for a further year. A reduced service will require a re-configuration which may be achieved as part of the extension discussions or may require a re-tendering. If re-tendering is required this will result in the stop smoking services ceasing until this re-procurement is completed.</p> <p>Whilst Stop Services are not mandated, Local Authorities have a duty (under the Health and Social Care Act (2012)) to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of the local population.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
200,000	200,000	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Consultation has been undertaken through the council's corporate consultation, as well as through individual discussions with the smoking cessation service providers. In addition, stakeholder organisations across Walsall have been invited to participate in the LA consultation process. There has been a total of 12 responses.</p> <p>All respondents disagreed with the proposal.</p> <p>Many considered that it was short sighted to save money now in this service as there could be long term costs to the NHS and Social Care. Respondents suggested that it was important to retain a quality service which delivers the outcomes required for Walsall. Other comments were that reducing these services would have a hugely negative impact on the health of Walsall residents.</p>			

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents are generally against this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<p>Some practical ideas were offered, for example, introducing online support for those wishing to quit smoking, reducing the tariff paid for achieving quits.</p> <p>Although group sessions have been mentioned, these are not popular with people in Walsall.</p> <p>Suggestion to find external sources of funding in order to keep the stop smoking services. This included asking primary care organisations to pay for nicotine replacement therapy and other costs.</p> <p>Suggesting finding other organisations to pay for stop smoking services.</p>	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with long terms conditions, children of people that smoke, those from BME communities and those with mental health conditions. • The wider public and business community that benefit from the positive outcomes of a reduction in those smoking 	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 47	
<p>Cabinet intend to approve the proposal despite possible adverse impacts. The service will continue to target pregnant women and utilise all corporate options to discourage smoking through the work of the Tobacco Alliance and social media, as well as non clinical options.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	50	Title	Reduce scope of infection control services
Description of proposal			
<p>Public Health currently commissions an infection prevention service which is provided free to all Walsall independent healthcare providers e.g. Care Homes, General Practices and Dentists. The infection prevention service visits each provider at least once a year and this provides some assurance that infection prevention standards are being met and the service user is not being put at risk through poor practices or unclean environments. The Infection prevention service is an essential part of care provision to ensure that service users receive quality care and are not put at risk of avoidable infection¹. More care is being undertaken in the community and “nearer to home” which means that more and more invasive and higher risk treatments are being undertaken in general practices, dentists and care homes meaning that infection prevention standards need to be of the highest standards in order to protect service users.</p> <p>The service includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit • Education and training • Ongoing advice and answering specific questions to ensure safe management of patients in the community • Outbreak management • Investigation and Root Cause Analysis of specific avoidable infections e.g. MRSA, <i>Clostridium difficile</i>, <i>E.coli</i> blood stream infections, organisms that are highly resistant to antibiotics • Surge capacity in the case of major outbreaks/incidents pandemic flu etc. <p>This saving could be delivered by a reduction in contract in year 2018/19 and a further cut in year 2019/2020. It is anticipated that there may be a reduction in the scope of services offered, subject to negotiation with the current provider.</p> <p>The Director of Public Health is a statutory appointment. Acting as a chief officer of the Local Authority and principle adviser to elected members and officers on all three domains of Public Health: Health Improvement; Healthcare Public Health and Health Protection which includes Infection Prevention and Control, outbreaks of disease and emergency preparedness^{2,3,4}. The DPH on behalf of their local authority should be absolutely assured that the arrangements to protect the health of the communities they serve are robust.</p>			

¹ Avoidable infections (health and social care associated infections) cause further illness and further requirements for treatment, avoidable hospital admissions, additional length of stay, poor patient experience and financial impacts and emotional worries to the affected individual and their family.

² Health and Social Care Act 2012

³ Department of Health (2012): Directors of Public Health in Local Government: *i) Roles, responsibilities and context*

⁴ Department of Health (2012): Health protection and local government

Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
0	20,000	20,000	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Partner agencies and stakeholders were invited to have their say on the council corporate website.</p> <p>In addition the views of dental surgeries and General Practices, Care Quality Commission and Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group were sought, in particular their views on what elements of the service they most value and whether there was a willingness to contribute to the service in future.</p> <p>The current service provider, Walsall Healthcare Trust infection prevention team were also asked for their views on what impact the cuts would have on the service they were able to provide.</p> <p>Partner agency responses:</p> <p>General practitioners</p> <p>While the service is highly valued by general practices, challenging financial pressures within primary care has meant that general practices are unwilling to contribute financially to receive this service and are against the proposal.</p> <p>Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group</p> <p>The findings of the audits are provided for the Primary care commissioning Board at the CCG and included in the individual GP dashboards. They provide an overview of the quality of infection prevention within GP surgeries in Walsall. The CCG have concerns about changes to this service and the assurance process it provides.</p> <p>CQC</p> <p>The annual audit results are always very useful to look at prior to their visits to general practices. As far as they are aware this service is provided free to GPs in other areas in the West Midlands so would seek assurance of how this will be done in the future with the proposed reduced funding.</p> <p>Dentists</p> <p>Dental practices find this service very helpful but there is a reluctance to pay for the service.</p> <p>Walsall Healthcare Trust</p> <p>As the provider of the service they have expressed concerns about being able to deliver a service of equivalent quality with less money.</p> <p>Comments may be summarised as follows;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The infection prevention and control service is valued 2. There is a reluctance to pay for the service due to other recent financial demands on providers 3. The health economy overview of infection prevention standards within Walsall may be lost if the service becomes fragmented and providers seek infection 			

prevention input from other providers.	
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents are generally against this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	A - No major change required, continue but monitor impact
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<p>Monitor the impact of the reduction in service on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infection rates attributed to General Practice and Dental Practice • CQC inspection results 	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All users of healthcare services in independent healthcare providers premises if poor infection prevention practice goes undetected. 	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 50	
Cabinet intend to continue with the proposal.	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	51	Title	Reduction in the Public Health Transformation Fund Investment in Domestic Abuse Services	
Description of proposal				
<p>In 2014/15 a Transformation Fund was identified from the Public Health ring fenced budget to support council Directorates to identify services which could enhance health and wellbeing outcomes in line with the grant as a means of embedding improved public health outcomes across Walsall Council services.</p> <p>Adult Social Care identified the funding of the Domestic Abuse Emergency accommodation and floating support provision, provided by Accord Housing, at a value of £275,384 to be funded from the Public Health Transformation Fund.</p> <p>The 3 year contract allowed for an extension to the service, which was utilised, meaning the service entered into its final year from 1st April 2016 with a contract end date of 31st March 2017. The final year was also agreed at a reduced contract value of £238,886.</p> <p>Adult Social Care commissioners are presently engaging with stakeholders and provider agencies to consider what new model of service will be required to deliver the required outcomes. As part of the review of the services moving forward a £50,000 cost saving has been identified reducing the available budget in 2017/18 of £188,886.</p>				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £	
50,000	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>Consultation as part of contract negotiations and future retender has taken place with Accord Housing Association (Accord HA).</p> <p>This contracted service ends on 31st March 2017 and will be retendered during 2017/18. Due to the timescales involved the council intends to issue a 6 month transitional contract for the period 1.4.17 to 30.9.17 on the reduced contract value £188,886 per annum.</p> <p>Accord HA has stated that they can only deliver an emergency accommodation service for this value if they removed the floating support service and remove the children & young person's worker.</p> <p>Accord HA will continue to deliver the emergency accommodation service during the transitional contract period but have stated that they will only bid for the service if they feel that they can deliver a 'safe' service which will realistically mean reducing the number of units currently provided and that the tender is completed within the 6 month time frame.</p> <p>Accord HA like neighbouring DA refuge providers are taking more referrals that are</p>				

presenting with complex needs (mental health and substance misuse issues which account for 51% of referrals).

Walsall removed sleeping night staff in April 2014 which released a £50k saving but with the complexity of referrals increasing it presents the provider with management issues resulting in some referrals being refused if referrals cannot be managed safely. During 2015/16 140 victims were placed in the Walsall refuge/safe house, 52 (37% were in borough referrals) 88 (63% out of borough referrals).

The newly commissioned service will require the provider to prioritise accepting referrals from Walsall referrers then our Black Country Councils to improve access to refuge placements across the Black Country. However, dedicated support to children and young people may be lost.

Children's Services Commissioned an IDVA service in April 2016, this should be used to support move on from the refuge/safe houses once the Floating Support service with Accord ends on 31.3.17. This will promote closer working arrangements between the two DA providers in Walsall streamline the DA pathway.

Direct service user consultation was not conducted but the provider was encouraged to use the corporate consultation link and encourage service users to express their view on the proposed change.

However, from a self advocacy meeting conducted on 24.11.16 at Goscote Greenacres, a member of Walsall Disability Forum stated they would not be in favour of the proposal they knew someone that had worked in a DA women's refuge and were aware of the effect DA has on children and future generations. Stating the council, 'won't know the effect on them for year yet'.

Walsall Police state that they were concerned that a reduction in funding will result in a reduction in provision, thus increasing the risk to victims of domestic abuse and their families. Domestic abuse is an ACE factor and if not appropriately addressed, reduces the life chances of families and increases demand on public services.

In early November 2016 discussions took place with Children Services senior managers and the Toxic Trio Strategic Group with regards the interim plans and to inform the future service model.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B – Adjustments needed to remove barriers or better promote equality.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. For the commissioner to closely monitor referrals to ensure priority is being given to Walsall referrers then our Black Country Councils to improve access to refuge placements across the Black Country.2. For the commissioner to monitor the working relationship between the refuge provider and Children's IDVA provider to ensure move on support is provided to improve flow from the refuge.3. Support the refuge provider to identify alternative sources of external funding to fund a Children's & Young Persons Worker
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved
Dedicated support to children and young people may be lost unless alternative sources of external funding identified.
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 51
Taking into account the mitigating actions Cabinet intends to proceed as proposed.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	52	Title	Cessation of Retirement Awards
Description of proposal			
<p>To cease the Council's Retirement Awards scheme with effect from 1st April 2017.</p> <p>The Council's Retirement Award Procedure states that the Retirement Awards scheme is payable to all Council employees, including those employed at schools, upon retirement who have a minimum of 10 years aggregated Walsall Council service.</p> <p>The Award scheme pays £12.50 for each year of Walsall Service subject to a minimum of 10 years aggregated service. The payment is pro rata for part time staff.</p> <p>The Award scheme is not a long service award it is based purely on retirement from the service.</p> <p>This is a non-contractual payment.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
26,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Cabinet approved proposed budget savings to go out to consultation.</p> <p>The proposal was discussed at Change & Governance JNCC dated on 9/12/16</p> <p>Unite said; <i>"This is a poor thing to be doing, seems to be a petty and for the amount of savings it will actually deliver can it be put back to years 2 or 3 savings. It would seem that anything positive that recognizes employees service is being removed."</i></p> <p>Unison also described the proposal as <i>"petty"</i>.</p> <p>The proposal was further discussed at Schools Forum on 6/12/16</p> <p>Attendees at the schools forum accepted the proposal. They also commented that although the saving was not a very large amount, it could potentially equate to the saving of a post.</p> <p>The Council's Children's Departmental Management Team were also consulted and in support of the proposal.</p> <p>The entire Council's Adult's Departmental Management Team unilaterally, felt that the retirement award scheme should be ceased with immediacy and supported the proposal in its entirety.</p> <p>To be discussed at Economy & Environment DMT 13/1/17.</p>			

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	<p>Respondents generally support this proposal (Management groups including schools)</p> <p>Respondents are generally against this proposal (Unions)</p>
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	A - No major change required
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
Not applicable	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not applicable	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 52	
<p>Although it is recognised that such a cessation may for some staff have a negative impact on their motivation and morale, it should also be recognised that such an award only applies to a relatively small number of staff each year (less than a hundred in 2015/2016) who by being eligible to receive such an award will already be in receipt of monies linked to their retirement.</p> <p>Such an additional award is viewed as non-essential particularly recognising the difficult financial climate the Council faces.</p> <p>In view of these considerations it is intended that the proposed cessation of Retirement Awards be approved.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	53	Title	Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens.	
Description of proposal				
<p>There are two categories of school crossing patrols. Category 1 is for a school crossing patrol warden to be on duty at specific times during school opening hours because of the potential road safety risks and is not supported by secondary crossing facilities i.e. pelican, zebra crossings etc. Category 2 is for a school crossing patrol warden supported by secondary crossing facilities i.e. pelican, zebra crossings. Therefore these are risk-scored lower than a category 1 crossing.</p> <p>School crossing patrols are not a statutory service and, if staff are not available and the relief staff are already committed, crossings are left without a school crossing patrol. This issue is managed on a risk basis with an emphasis on ensuring the high risk crossings are covered.</p>				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost	
85,000	0	0	£0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
<p>The council has undergone a public consultation on the proposal to consider alternative funding for Category 2 school crossing patrol wardens. The council has received six replies. In addition, there have been two petitions received. The first is the on-line petition:</p> <p>“Walsall Council must not remove the School Crossing Patrol Service from Category 2 Crossings. Whilst we understand the increasingly difficult decisions the council are faced with to save £86million in the next 3 years. Compare the cost of one accident against the cost of one SCP warden (£4,709.02 p.a.) Ambulance, police, hospital admissions, ongoing care, rehabilitation, loss of earnings, legal prosecution costs, defence costs and courts costs. These far outweigh the cost of one SCP wage”.</p> <p>The government’s own national statistics show a dramatic fall in the number of casualties and deaths at crossings with human control (see Department for Transport statistics at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2015)</p> <p>This essential service saves lives, saves injury, saves families and saves money.</p> <p>The second is a petition from Blue Coat schools. It contains over three hundred signatures and states that the petitioners believe that the Springhill Road crossing patrols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a vital service which keeps safe thousands of users of Walsall’s transport infrastructure (pedestrians, motorists, children travelling to many different schools in the area)				

- Must be coordinated and maintained by the local authority to ensure the safe movement of the population around an extremely busy area.

The feedback from the generic consultation, six responses, were all negative. Comments included:

- *"I regard the crossing warden as essential to support families when they cross the road but also to support individual pupils who are often not accompanied by their parents and carers".*
- *"It is our strong view that a Council co-ordinated and funded approach to ensuring that all elements of the community (pedestrians and motorists) can move around safely and efficiently has to be maintained".*

Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny discussed the petition and the following resolution was passed

Resolved:

That:

- 1. Cabinet considers maintaining funding for category 2 school crossing patrol posts that are currently occupied;**
- 2. Cabinet undertakes immediate discussions with schools on alternative sources of funding for category 2 school crossing patrols;**
- 3. Cabinet undertakes a review of all school crossing patrols on trunk roads.**

Council officers have since the Scrutiny panel contacted schools to see what opportunities there were for the school to fund School Crossing Patrols. Generally, the feedback was negative with 15 schools did not want to provide part funding for the School Crossing Patrol attached to their school. 4 schools did suggest they may be prepared to pay a contribution if there was a consistent approach by the Council. Comments from schools included:

- *"Finances would not allow, we have no money".*
- *"No, asked governors last time it was proposed. Budgets are tighter now than last time".*
- *We would if we had to. Really busy road".*
- *"No money".*

Council officers are also seeking sponsorship opportunities for school crossing patrols.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposition.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

A- No major change required.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

- Only remove vacant category 2 school crossing patrols that have been vacant for more than six months.
- Work with the remaining Schools impacted by the reduction of Category 2 crossing patrols on risk assessing their crossings and identifying alternative funding sources seeking to reduce the cost to the Council by 50%.
- Seek to find sponsorship opportunities.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

- Parents and children that use school crossing patrols.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 53

Having considered the feedback from consultation and following discussions with schools it is accepted that further time is required to assess the impact of the withdrawal of funding for category 2 crossings that have not been vacant for at least six months.

Cabinet therefore intend to support an amended proposal that deletes vacant category 2 school crossing patrol posts that have been vacant for more than six months.

Officers will work with the remaining Schools which have a Category 2 crossing patrol on risk assessing their crossings and identifying alternative funding sources seeking to reduce the cost to the Council by 50% including opportunities for sponsorship.

The full saving of £85,000 will still be achieved.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	55	Title	Reduction in the maintenance of road signs
Description of proposal			
Following a pilot project in 2015/16 it was demonstrated that a small reduction in budget would have a negligible impact on our ability to satisfy our statutory duties as Highway Authority. In line with our agenda to de-clutter the highway (hence reducing maintenance liabilities) this proposal aims to introduce this small maintenance budget reduction. The year 3 proposal will be subject to the review of the success of the year 1 proposal.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
15,000	0	64,000	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email. One on line survey response was received which fully supports the proposal as the respondent felt that it would not affect them at this time. No further comments were made.			
West Midlands police raised concerns; <i>“If the reduction in maintenance results in inadequate road signage there is the risk of increased road traffic collisions with increased risk of injury and demand on the police.”</i>			
An initial screening has been undertaken and a full EqIA assessment is not needed for this proposal.			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Overall opinion on this proposal is divided.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 55			
Cabinet intend to support the proposed reduction in the maintenance of road signs.			

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	58 & 59	Title	58 - Reduction in Highway Maintenance revenue budgets resulting from the re-procurement of the Highway Maintenance Contract 59 - Additional reduction in Highway Maintenance revenue budgets resulting from the re-procurement of the Highway Maintenance Contract
Description of proposal			
<p>Highways Maintenance Partnering contract currently runs until April 2017. These savings proposals reduce the highway maintenance budgets by a total of £250,000 over 2 years to be delivered through the re-procurement of the Highway Maintenance term contract and will result in the reduction of services, and quality of highway maintenance.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
150,000	100,000	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>2 surveys were completed for this option from a total of 309 responses, opinion was divided to; not support the proposal and support but with concerns.</p> <p>Respondents commented that they thought the roads are in a poor condition and the costs should be covered by road taxes paid to central government, further comments:-</p> <p><i>"I thought council tax was to provide a service, I fail to see what services you provide for the amount you already charge"</i></p> <p><i>"The amount of speed bumps just add to the pothole damage to vehicles. Stop wasting money on humps and repair the road surface first".</i></p> <p>West midlands Police have also raised the concern; "there is the risk of increased cost to WMP fleet from vehicle damage due to poor roads."</p> <p>An initial screening has been undertaken and a full EqIA assessment is not needed for this proposal.</p>			

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Inconclusive.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	Not applicable.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 58 and 59	
Cabinet intend to approve these proposals.	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	60	Title	Increase cost of parking permits (staff, town centre employees, Councillors, business Parking permits and partner agencies)
Description of proposal			
Increase cost of parking permits by £1 per month.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
6,000	6,000	6,000	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>There were five surveys completed for this option, with opinion divided.</p> <p>One employee felt that the increase was counterproductive because staff using their cars for work would find cheaper alternatives and increase the amount of work time walking to and from their cars between site visits. Other comments:-</p> <p><i>“Went up last year - You can’t keep doing this I go to work to make money not to spend it”</i></p> <p><i>“An increase of £1 a month would cost me and my husband an extra £24 per year on the not already insubstantial cost we already have to pay to be allowed to park in the street where we live. We already pay full council tax and all other costs of being motorists”</i></p> <p><i>“I feel it is unjust that if you are required to work in the town centre you have to pay to park. However, if you work in a remote location and park on a council provided space, you park for free. It is more just that all staff who use council provided spaces should pay for parking”</i></p> <p>Suggestions include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make further savings by charging an extra 1.00 pound per week not month • Increase enforcement to raise more revenue. <p><i>“Where I live the parking wardens go in to the local shops and politely ask people parked without permits to move their cars and then allow them 10 minutes to do so. Give parking tickets to those parked in residents bays without permits and raise lots more cash without making the residents have to pay even more”</i></p> <p>Initial screening suggests there are no or minimal equalities implications and therefore a full impact assessment is not required.</p>			

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Overall opinion on this proposal is inconclusive.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	Not applicable.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 60	
Cabinet intend to approve an Increase cost of parking permits.	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	61	Title	Increasing Town Centre off Street Parking Charges	
Description of proposal				
Increase cost of town centre off street parking charges by 10p per parking charge band.				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost	
15,000	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.				
There were three online responses, the proposal was either supported or supported with concerns.				
One respondent suggested that we charge more for car parking as bus fare is more expensive and car users should be discouraged from driving so that they use public transport as a cheaper option.				
Initial screening suggests there are no or minimal equalities implications and therefore a full impact assessment is not required.				
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation				
	Respondents generally support this proposal.			
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.				
	Not applicable.			
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 61				
Cabinet intend to support an increase in Town Centre off Street Parking Charges.				

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	62	Title	Introduction of an additional charge for vehicle dropped crossings
Description of proposal			
Introduce a £110 charge to cover the cost of work involved in producing the quotation.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
10,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.			
There were 3 responses to this survey that either support or support the proposal with concerns, one suggestion received as follows.			
<i>“You don't have to provide this service at all, do you? So why not just stop doing it?”</i>			
Written correspondence has also been received suggesting that should the cost of obtaining a vehicular crossing be increased, there is a risk that more residents will illegally cross the pavement, which has other implications.			
An initial screening has been undertaken and an equality impact assessment is not needed for this proposal.			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Respondents generally support this proposal.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 62			
Cabinet intend to approve the introduction of an additional charge for vehicle dropped crossings.			

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	63	Title	Introduction of a street and roadworks permit scheme
Description of proposal			
This proposal relates to the introduction of a permit scheme to control and regulate street and road works whilst offsetting the costs to the council through the application of statutory permit fees.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
0	100,000	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.			
Two responses to the survey fully support the proposal. One respondent commented; <i>“I think it is worth paying a bit more to keep Walsall people safe, educated and to keep the town clean. The amount of public money to pull Walsall people out of poverty is vastly underestimated”</i>			
Initial screening suggests there are no or minimal equalities implications and therefore a full impact assessment is not required.			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Respondents generally support this proposal.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 63			
Cabinet intend to instruct officers to undertake the necessary consultation and equalities impact assessment and will review this prior to any decision on implementation.			

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	64	Title	Redesign and reduce the traffic management function
Description of proposal			
This proposal is to review the traffic management function as part of the introduction of a street and roadwork permit scheme. The proposal would include the loss of 1 staff member and a small reduction in associated works budgets. This saving will reduce the overall capacity to manage planned and unplanned issues impacting on the operation of the public highway.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
0	75,000	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.			
One response was received which did not support the proposal, no further comments or suggestions were made.			
The issue has no relevance to equality and it is disproportionate to carry out an EqlA.			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Respondents are generally against this proposal.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 64			
Cabinet intend to approve the redesign and reduce the traffic management function.			

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	65	Title	Reduction in the reactive Highway Maintenance Budget	
Description of proposal				
This saving reduces the reactive highway maintenance budget by £50,000, leaving a total annual budget of £834,000. This money is used to pay for reactive and emergency repairs to the highway including damage to guardrails, potholes and tripping hazards on footways.				
Estimated Net Saving				
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost	
50,000	0	0	0	
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation				
Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.				
From 309 online respondents two completed surveys for this proposal. Neither were in favour and raised concerns about damage to vehicles and potential increased costs of repair claims levied against the council.				
An initial screening has been undertaken and an equality impact assessment is not needed for this proposal.				
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation				
	Respondents are generally against this proposal.			
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.				
	Not applicable.			
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved				
Not applicable.				
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 65				
Cabinet intend to approve the reduction in the reactive highway maintenance budget.				

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	68	Title	Stop Cleansing after Markets
Description of proposal			
Stop Collecting and Disposing of Market Traders Waste. From 1 April 2017, market traders would be responsible for the removal of their own waste unless they paid for a trade waste service.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
175,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>Only two generic online surveys have been completed which did not support the proposal suggesting that waste left by the market traders would pile up in the street. One respondent suggested :</p> <p><i>“Consult the market traders as to their willingness to clean up themselves or to pay for a contractor to remove the waste. A slight increase in stall rental charges towards the cost of a contractor may also be an option”</i></p> <p>Additional written correspondence has also been received from West Midlands Police who commented in general on the reduction in street cleansing;</p> <p><i>“The ‘broken window syndrome’ – if an area is perceived, through its appearance, to be neglected, this can prompt local communities to care even less and results in an increase in ASB [anti social behaviour] and trigger crime. A decrease in environmental standards may contribute to increased police demand from signal crime, hate crime graffiti, ASB in areas which show signs of environmental neglect. Mitigation could be achieved through activation of citizens and voluntary sector to fill in service provision gaps prior to those reductions in service taking effect”</i></p> <p>All Borough Market traders were written to and invited to have their say on this proposal. Walsall Market Trader’s Association wrote:</p> <p><i>“We are totally shocked that Walsall council are paying £175,000 for this service and politely request that their first issue should be with whoever is charging such an outrageous sum this cannot be best practice and alternative quotes should be sourced immediately”.</i></p> <p>Face to face engagement was conducted with district centre market traders on market day and made the following comments on this proposal;-</p>			

“Some traders will dump waste around the centre which will increase fly tipping”.

“In Lichfield traders pay £1.20 per stall for waste disposal which is put into a nearby skip – why can’t something similar happen in Willenhall?”.

“Traders who have a lot of waste and cardboard will struggle to remove waste throughout the day – they cannot bring their vans on to take it away and so there will be piles of waste on the market all day and the town centre will look a mess and people will stop coming”

A petition has been received from Walsall Traders with 54 signatures opposing the proposal.

Most people did not support the proposal, their main concern being they have no other means to manage their waste and the knock on effect of some traders not taking waste would result in messy town and district centres through fly tipping.

Some traders felt more able to manage without the service mainly because they do not produce a lot of waste and the waste they do produce is manageable.

“I don’t have much trade waste. It would be better if the rent stays the same with market traders taking away their own waste”

An initial screening has been undertaken and an equality impact assessment is not needed for this proposal.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Not applicable.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Not applicable.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Not applicable.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 68

Given the opposing feedback to this proposal and the range of concerns raised by traders Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	69	Title	Increase District Centre Market Fees
Description of proposal			
To increase fees in the district centre markets (Bloxwich and Willenhall) by £5 a stall. This is expected to increase income to the council by £35,000 a year. Fees have been frozen since 2005.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
35,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Feedback was gathered through the generic consultation process which included online survey in writing or via email.</p> <p>Only three generic online surveys have been completed, with divided opinion. One respondent fully supported the increase however stated; “We have always left our rubbish at market & dustman dispose of it we wish to carry on doing this”.</p> <p>“Offer running of the markets to a private contractor. The financial risk would be theirs and the benefits would be felt by local communities.”</p> <p><i>“A much more proactive approach needs to be taken to encourage more traders to take up the empty stalls, the council cannot afford to sit back and wait for traders to come to them anymore there is too much competition from other Markets offering lower rents and more amenities (i.e. toilets. hot water supply, good storage facilities, regular advertising/social media)”</i></p> <p>Face to face engagement was undertaken with district centre traders on market days. Comments included;</p> <p><i>“I cannot push the additional rent onto customers as I have to compete with supermarkets and other competitors”</i></p> <p><i>“Increase in rent may result in me leaving the market”</i></p> <p><i>“Cheaper rents attract more traders and so increasing the rents will reduce the Council’s income”</i></p> <p>An initial screening has been undertaken and an equality impact assessment is not needed for this proposal.</p>			

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation	
	Respondents are generally against this proposal.
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.	
	Not applicable.
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Not applicable.	
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 69	
<p>Cabinet have considered the proposal and wish to remove the rent rise to protect district centre markets, reflecting their importance to the economic offer of district centres where they operate. Cabinet therefore withdraw this proposal.</p>	

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	70	Title	Cessation of Landscape Service
Description of proposal			
This proposal involves the cessation of the landscape service as there is insufficient design work to sustain the service. The council will no longer have an in house landscape design and project management service and will be unable to provide professional advice on landscape matters.			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
40,000	0	0	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
This proposal was offered for comment via the generic online consultation survey. Service users were also invited to contribute by writing in via post or email. Only one generic online survey has been completed which fully supported the proposal. No comments were provided.			
Additional written correspondence has been received offering collaborative working on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis commenting;			
<i>“The Wildlife Trust could assist Walsall Council. The Trust has ecological and landscape skills and expertise which could assist the Council on an ad hoc or arranged service basis and implemented in an innovative way.”</i>			
An EqlA has been completed as this proposal involves organisational changes			
Overall opinion from engagement and consultation			
	Respondents generally support this proposal.		
Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.			
	Not applicable.		
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved			
Not applicable.			
Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 70			
Cabinet intend to approve the cessation of the Landscape Service.			

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	74	Title	Combined Welfare Rights service, Housing Advice & Crisis Support
Description of proposal			
<p>It is proposed that funding to support Welfare Rights provision to local residents is reduced. A restructure of housing advice, crisis support and welfare and debt advice services would be undertaken. Analysis has revealed that a significant volume of the demand for housing advice, crisis support and from homeless households includes those with financial issues (where debt advice and related support can be key to helping them achieve a sustainable future). The services will therefore be merged to deliver £200,000 of savings.</p> <p>The service is non-statutory (with the exception of the statutory duties owed towards homeless households currently carried out by the Housing Support Team). The statutory obligations towards homeless households are contained within the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Under this legislation the council is required to offer advice and assistance to all household's that are homeless or at risk of homelessness and provide alternative accommodation to vulnerable households deemed to owe the full statutory duty under the legislation.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
200,000	0	0	£0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>The original proposal was to put all officers working within the Welfare Rights Service, Housing Advice and Crisis Support Teams, at risk of redundancy. This potentially would have impacted on the delivery of front line services to vulnerable service users.</p> <p>Since the original proposal was put forward, only officers in managerial positions in those teams will be put at risk. This means that officers delivering front line services will be unaffected by this proposal.</p> <p>The merging of housing, crisis support and welfare advice will reduce duplication in effort and improve efficiency. Customers capable of helping themselves will have access to "self- help" tools building their capacity and giving them greater control over their finances.</p> <p>Based on the above, there is no unforeseen adverse impact on the service delivered to customers, although there will be a greater push for customers who are able, to become more resilient and gain independence through self help tools.</p> <p>Generic Consultation Process (2 responses). One respondent fully supports the proposal but with concerns said;</p> <p><i>"Too many tiers of management in this cluster, senior officers doing the same job as</i></p>			

normal officers”

“If people cannot get the help they need with their benefits and finances they are more likely to get to crisis point and need more support from social services and health. There is also the extreme stress and despair that people will face as a result”.

No further consultation activity was undertaken, due to no impact on service users as front line officers not affected by this proposal.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Not Applicable.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Not Applicable.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Not applicable.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

None

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 74

Cabinet intend to proceed with this proposal.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	75	Title	Closure of Banking Hall in Civic Centre
Description of proposal			
<p>This proposal is to consider closure of the banking hall in the civic centre, which is a non-statutory service. This would be delivered by the giving of notice to all internal and external stakeholders who currently use the facilities to make payments or collect cash.</p> <p>A minimum of six months notice for third party contractual purposes will be needed. Internal stakeholders using the service will need to promote alternative arrangements for collecting funds from customers (such as direct debits, bank transfers, card payments via telephones, Paypoint or Payzone in shops).</p> <p>It is anticipated that if the proposal is approved, the Banking Hall would close in October 2017. It may be possible to reduce this timescale subject to negotiation with WATMOS. Proposal to undertake a range of low cost marketing approaches to advise residents of the ceasing of the service and advice about shifting to alternative payment options.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost
100,000	0	0	£0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Approx 50 questionnaires were given out to service users in the Banking Hall (with a self addressed envelope) 21 of these were returned (this is a 42% response to the questionnaire).</p> <p>Partner organisations (WATMOS and South Staffordshire Water) were also written to regarding their views on the proposal.</p> <p>WATMOS said they do not envisage any issues with the council ceasing operations of the banking hall as they have less than 20 customers that use this service. WATMOS offered to communicate with to each of these customers individually highlighting to them other methods of payment including via their own office.</p> <p>No response was received from South Staffordshire Water.</p> <p>Of the 21 respondents to the questionnaire the average age was 58, with the oldest being 86 and youngest being 26. 19 out of 21 respondents used the banking hall to pay their council tax.</p> <p>If the Banking Hall were to close 9 respondents said they would pay via either Paypoint / Payzone or at the Post Office.</p> <p>5 respondents didn't know how they would pay comments included;</p>			

"I wouldn't know how to pay my council tax"

"Well, I wouldn't know where to pay council tax if it was shut down"

"I can't use computers, don't trust banks and don't have a phone. Without it I wouldn't be able to pay bills"

"I wouldn't be able to pay my bills, I don't trust banks and don't have a phone"

Respondents made the following comments about alternative proposals;

"Combine Banking Hall services with the First Stop Shop"

"Get rid of 3 top jobs"

The following general comments were made;

"I like going to the banking Hall, very friendly people and very helpful"

"Won't be as quick and convenient"

"I pay council tax when I go shopping in Walsall, so it would mean an extra journey".

"My carer pays cash every month for me at the banking hall for my council tax as I'm a disabled person".

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Opinion is divided

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Respondents are generally divided about this proposal, but alternative methods of payment are available to them. Some respondents have indicated that they would not know how to pay if the Banking Hall closed and so promotional work needs to be done to advertise all the available methods of payment. This will ensure customers can choose the method of payment which best suits their requirements.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Neutral, as viable alternatives are available, such as the post Office which offers the same facilities as the Banking Hall.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 75

Cabinet intend to proceed with this proposal.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	76	Title	Reduction in Grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau
Description of proposal			
<p>The proposal is to reduce the funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The CAB provides a valuable service to support the population of Walsall delivering a variety of services ranging from welfare advice to employment law advice. This proposal reduces the contribution from the council in 2017/18 by £75,000 from Public Health. From 2018/19 the service will be commissioned rather than grant funded and efficiency saving will be built into the contract of any future supplier, of £57,458 in 2018/19 and £45,966 in 2019/20. The focus on any re-design will be on providing help and advice on-line and building more resilient residents and communities. This service is non-statutory.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
132,458	45,966	66,191	0
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>There were 3 respondents to the generic online consultation questionnaire and all 3 did not support the proposal. Comments were:</p> <p><i>"This proposal will negatively affect all residents of Walsall, Citizens Advice is a key service especially in deprived boroughs. Given that Walsall is one of the most deprived boroughs in the country cutting the essential support of Citizens Advice will only make this worse".</i></p> <p><i>"I understand you need to make cuts but look at in house cuts, which I believe there is a away specially in Councillors, do we need so many"</i></p> <p><i>"This service is greatly needed, what happened to vote for labour and there will not be any funding cuts to CAB".</i></p> <p>Face to face consultation was also conducted with visitors to the First Stop Shop who were visiting Money Home Job. We received 32 responses to the questionnaire. Nearly half 47% (15) of respondents had used the CAB in the past.</p> <p>The top reasons for contacting the service were as follows;</p> <p>67% (10) Debt /money advice 33% (5) Welfare and benefit advice 27% (4) Housing advice 20% (3) Other 13% (2) Law and Rights 7% (1) Employment</p> <p>17 (52%) Do not support the proposal to cease funding and some of the comments were</p>			

"We need the CAB, without it people can't find out important things such as benefits etc"

"people need this service"

"It's needed a lot"

"the CAB help a lot of people and need funding to do this"

10 (30%) Fully support the proposal to cease funding, some comments were as follows:

"Money can be better spent elsewhere. Although some people need help and advice, a lot of people need to learn to help themselves".

EWA CIC/Nash DOM "agrees with the proposal to consider reducing grant to CAB. Whilst CAB offers a universal advice relating to benefits and rights of UK citizens, its name and branding is not always understood by people with different immigration status"

"It would be a much more effective use of public money if there was better partnership with voluntary sector that understand these clients " They could thus help with cross-border and transnational issues, communication with embassies and other complex issues which are currently not fulfilled by CAB".

"it will help save money so may protect other services that I use"

6 (18%) Support but with concerns / amendments. Some comments were as follows:

"CAB is a useful service but some people need to help themselves"

Slovak and Czech Club feel that "CAB services are suitable for people who speak good English but support for people with little English is poor. Our contacts found that there are no volunteers/staff speaking European languages and advice is not taking into account transnational connections and EU law".

When asked how the proposal might impact on them, comments included;

"It won't as I will not need to use this service"

"I may need help in the future and if the CAB isn't there to help. What will happen to us?"

Respondents suggested the following in response to how else savings be made;

"This is the only way, not to do any cuts to this funding, a lot people would be affected"

"The high rates of pay of senior WBC employees and the index linked pensions and to be efficient, the council is very lack and slow"

"Cut amount of councillors"

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents are generally against this proposal

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B - Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

- Residents and communities will be assisted to become more self-reliant in order to ensure they gain appropriate support and advice through different channels
- Alternative sources of funding or efficiencies in service delivery need to be found to offset the reduction in funding.
- Residents will signposted to the other agencies in the borough, which also provide welfare and debt advice.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

- Service users in need of welfare, debt and general advice, although other sources of help are available either on line or via other agencies.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 76

Having considered the feedback from consultation and following detailed discussions with Walsall CAB, it is accepted that further time is required to assess the impact of the withdrawal of the Money, Home, Job element of the funding of £57,458.

Therefore cabinet intend to withdraw year 1 £75,000 public health funding as originally proposed. But to retain the core grant funding of £57,458 in 2017/18. In relation to 2018/19 and 2019/20 cabinet intend to ask officers to liaise with the CAB to explore the potential for cost efficiencies of £57,458 in 2018/19 and £45,966 in 2019/20 to be made to enable the Council's contribution to the CAB's funding to be further reduced in the future.

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	77	Title	Cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services
Description of proposal			
<p>This proposal seeks to reduce investment in preventative or universal services let via Service Level Agreements (SLA's) in the voluntary sector or managed within the council. It includes the following services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Assistive technology (Telecare/Telehealth/Call Handlers and Fitting) and the Responder element. The proposal was to retain equipment, fitting and call handling, re-procure the service, cease the community alarms responder service. 2. Response Services - See Number 1 Above 3. Mental Health Staffing (Access and Welfare Rights) – to cease 4. Broadway North Recovery College – to cease 5. Neighbourhood Community Officers (NCO's) to reduce to 5 posts to retain statutory services 6. Independent Living Centre (ILC) – to cease 7. Sensory Support Social Work Team – to provide a statutory service 8. Sons and Daughters of Rest Subsidy – to review and move to a model that is not subsidised by the council during 2017 9. Wilbraham Court - to cease former supporting people arrangements 10. Bereavement Support – to cease contract 11. Luncheon Club Subsidy – to cease <p>To reduce funding to the following, review contracts, whilst retaining all statutory elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Learning Disabilities (Contract number 1241) 13. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Physical and Sensory Impairment (Contract number 1242) 14. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Autism (Contract 1243) 15. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Learning Disabilities (Contract 1221) 16. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Physical and Sensory Disabilities (Contract 1224) <p>To reduce/cease funding to the following, whilst retaining all statutory elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Midland Mencap Social Club (Contract 1154) 18. Mary Elliot Social Club (Contract 1156) 19. Older People's Project (Contract 4411) 20. Gateway SE Social Club (Contract 1157) 21. Gateway NW Social Club (Contract 1155) 22. Befriending Autism (Contract 1219) 23. Community Outreach – Breakthrough Service (Contract 1252) 24. Eye Clinic Liaison and Register for the Blind (ECALO and RILs) (Contract 1239) 25. Befriending Service – physical and Sensory (1220) 26. Concessionary Travel 27. Disability Hub (Contract 1215) 			

- 28. Supporting Employment
- 29. Summer Scheme(Contract 1214)
- 30. Parents Project (70LD)
- 31. Walsall Society for the Blind – Lease Payment arrangement
- 32. Seed Money for low level services
- 33. Housing Support Services

If approved the suggested proposals would be implemented in full by 1/11/17, with full year savings in-effect from 2018/19.

A majority of the services in the list above are non-statutory with the following exceptions:-

- Local Authority must maintain a registered list of the partial sighted
- Ensuring there is an Advocacy, Befriending, Empowerment and Engagement service for users and carers; as per the Care Act.

Estimated Net Saving

2017/2018 £	2018/19 £	2019/2020 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
1,111,505	1,099,521	30,000	0

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

1. Review of Assistive technology (Telecare/Telehealth/Call Handlers and Fitting) and the Responder element.
2. Response Services

Letters were sent to people currently receiving the service, explaining the proposal and inviting comment. Anyone could respond via the council's online questionnaire and via email. In total 731 responses were received (11%).

Summary of feedback

Although the proposal was explained in the letter, many respondents wrongly assumed that this proposal was to cease the whole of the community alarm service, not just the council response service.

Nearly all respondents expressed the importance of the service to them and their families. Many spoke of the service being a 'life line', giving them confidence knowing someone is there should they need help and allowing them to remain living in their own homes independently.

"It give me piece of mind" Helps me to live independently" (Service User)

"Makes me feel safe at home" (Service User)

Some users of the service explain that they have no one nearby should there be an emergency, the response service is therefore very important to them. Next of kin, particularly those who do not live locally, explain that the service gives them 'peace of mind'.

"None of my family live close to me anymore on the borders of Wales" (Service User)

"It would leave my parents in a more vulnerable position" (Service User)

Many comments reflect concerns about the need to maintain a speedy response should the council's response service not exist. Some felt that, in times of an emergency, as long as a speedy response could be continued, who provides the response service is irrelevant.

"If the service changed it would mean possible delays in getting help" (Service User)

A high number of respondents express concerns that the withdrawal of the response service would put additional pressure on other public services.

Many respondents say that to ensure the service continued they would be happy to pay for it.

"Willing to pay a reasonable fee in the future" (Service User)

3. Mental Health Staffing (Access and Welfare Rights)

4. Broadway North Recovery College

Two informal group's discussions with service users were held. Facilitated by council officers, 35 people attended and gave their views on the proposal. In addition anyone could have their say via the council's online questionnaire; via email or letter (6 responses were received). Opportunities to discuss the proposal were also available via the four focus groups facilitated by advocacy and empowerment services.

Summary of feedback

Unanimously no one supported the Broadway North proposal. Respondents value the service it provides, in particular the safe environment it provides for people who find it difficult to socialise. The 'step up and step down' support service it provides people with mental health issues is also highly valued.

"I have only been going to Broadway for 5mths and have had got more help and support than I have had in 6 years of being in Mental Health services" (Service User)

"My husband was a virtual recluse before being introduced to BNRC; he has made many friends there and attended the art and computer courses there. This has led to forming a peer led art group and they have small exhibitions"(Carer)

"The service has saved my life"

"I have had problems since 1998, scrabbling for a service for years and now that I have found it you are taking it away"

"This service has helped me to engage with other services."

Some comments highlight the importance of having somewhere to go that is familiar and feels welcoming to them.

"Just seeing the same faces makes this a comfortable place to be and you are taking it away"

"Not easy to go somewhere else because of confidence levels."

Some service users explain how the service has helped them directly and the concerns

they have should the service cease.

"I had social anxiety and then secondary mental health needs – crisis intervention referred me into college. I only managed once a fortnight engagement and built up to more. I'm starting to live a life again not stuck in a room. Familiar faces/staff gives hope, its made big difference, it has alleviated depression."

"I'll slide back and spend all my time alone – this place hasn't got me back on feet yet but is working towards it. I've only just found this service, this is the first positive in 24 years!"

Some service users explain that change for them is very difficult to cope with.

"It's took me months with support from staff and my care co-ordinator to even stand outside on the doorstep trying to build up to coming into the building it took longer for me to eventually – a mentally ill person can't just switch focus and go to a new place."

In terms of what impact the proposal may have on service users, some express concern that it would mean the end of them attending courses they enjoy.

"I would not be able to attend courses"

"There would be nowhere to do activities; I would probably get depressed, as I would stay at home more"

Others feel the closure would impact on their mental health as well as the potential knock on effect the proposal may have.

"I am worried it could affect my mental health"

"My condition would get worse..."

"This proposal will cause degradation of mental health – people will deteriorate."

"These proposals regarding mental health are of significant concern. Articulated previously, mental health is an ACE factor. If citizens are not supported through treatment, this ultimately results in reduced life chances for them and their families. It also increases demand across all public services" (West Midlands Police)

Following a meeting between service users and Cllr Coughlan on the 16th January (a follow up to the earlier consultation) it was recognised that whilst the group had sentimental attachment to Broadway as a building in its historic context, their support network was more important as well as access to the sessions they pay for themselves. The group were asked to decide whether they would like to set up an association.

5. Neighbourhood Community Officers (NCOs)

Letters explaining the proposal and inviting comment were sent to people currently accessing the NCO service. In addition anyone could respond via the council's online questionnaire as well as via email and phone. In response 14 responses were received.

Summary of feedback

General feedback from people accessing the service highlights how valuable people find it, in particular how the service has supported them to stay within their own homes,

and supporting them when returning home from hospital.

"The service I received off these people have helped me keep my husband at home" (Carer)

"The equipment they provided me with was very useful and in fact I could have been marooned in my own house if I did not have these items to support me" (Service User)

"Should this service be reduced it would affect me a lot, as I feel better and can relay information and support on a one to one basis in my own home" (Service User)

There is a view that by withdrawing this service it would impact on the overall cost to the Council and would put pressure on hospital admissions.

"If this service was to finish I am sure that it would cost the Council more money" (Service User)

"It is important to keep as many people in their own homes as possible" (Service Users)

6. Independent Living Centre (ILC)

The views of individuals accessing services at the ILC were gathered face to face by council officers (16 people). Letters to people accessing short term wheel chair loans and shop mobility were also sent. Anyone could comment via the council's online questionnaire via letter and email. 20 responses via letter / email were received.

Summary of feedback

Overall feedback revealed that service users feel that the ILC offers a good service in regards to Blue Badge, Short Term Wheelchair Loan, Shop Mobility & Equipment. People are concerned that alternative services do not exist there for short term wheelchair loan & Shop Mobility. Some say that not being able to access these services this would make them feel isolated and forced to stay at home.

"I don't want this to close I want it to stay open" (Service User)

"Could the ILC be turned into a community enterprise?" (Service User)

"Could the ILC be set up so that other organisations could rent space from them to provide services and one stop shop the same as in Sandwell" (Service User)

7. Sensory Support Social Work Team

Letters explaining the proposal and inviting comment were sent to people who are currently supported by the Council's Sensory Support Team. People were contacted by the team top support with responses. Anyone could also respond via the council's online questionnaire via email or letter (69 responses received). The proposal was also available for discussion at four focus groups facilitated by advocacy and empowerment services.

Summary of feedback

Respondents value the service the sensory team provides and want to see them continue.

"The service we have received over the last few years has been extremely valuable and has helped a lot in making life as easy as possible for my mom who

lives alone” (Carer)

“Can sensory services in whole West Midlands pool their money to ensure we keep essential services in each borough” (Focus Group)

Most people who responded to the letter expressed concern about the potential closure of the ILC (see below separate feedback about the ILC). In particular that its closure would result in the ceasing of a drop in service for people with sensory loss. Most concerns centred on the lack of provision for this service in the borough which includes letter translation, support with telephone calls and access to officers that are BSL trained.

“The impact that this can have should not be underestimated, RNIB hears from people who report feeling of social isolation, frustration, depression and fear over the future” (RNIB)

Older People Service Level Agreement'

8. Sons and Daughters of Rest

Adult Social Care are in discussion with other directorates regarding the delivery model for this option.

9. Wilbraham Court

A group meeting was held with people accessing Beswick House (facilitated by Council officers). 13 people attended, which included core and cluster projects. Anyone could respond via the council's online questionnaire and email / letter. 29 letters / emails were received.

Unanimously no one from both the core and cluster projects supports this proposal.

People who access this service feel that there are limited services for people suffering from substance misuse, mental health and persistent offenders. Many felt that without this service they would suffer a relapse into previous patterns of behaviours.

There is a feeling that the service builds life skills, reintegrates people into the community, reduces self neglect with health issues and builds independence. Very few people who access this service have close family connections or a positive social influence.

10. Bereavement Support Services

All of the responders expressed concern about this service ending. The majority of which has found it of great comfort and support following a period of loss, helping them to regain confidence. The majority was concerned that this would put additional pressure on NHS services and delay people receiving support.

11. Luncheon Clubs:

Adult Social care ceased the subsidy of luncheon clubs in 2011. This subsidy was as part of the corporate contribution scheme and therefore the consultation was carried out corporately.

Complex Needs Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

12. & 13. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Learning disabilities and Physical and sensory impairments (Contract numbers 1241,1242)

14. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Autism (Contract 1243)

Unanimously no one supports the proposals. Overall people feel that this service gives people with a learning disability the opportunity to speak up for themselves and have a voice.

Many explain that it has helped them build their confidence to make decisions and influence other organisations about supporting the needs of people with a learning disability. Without this they feel that people with a learning disability would not be heard and decisions would be made without their representation.

“Get rid of the mayors car, that would save money” (Service User)

“If this group didn’t exist people with learning disabilities would be second rate citizens again” (Service User)

“Without this group people with learning disabilities would not be involved in decision making” (Service User)

“In your own words, “Walsall Council exists to serve the people... and protect those who experience discrimination or exclusion...” This statement is completely ignored when I see that your proposals include ceasing or drastically cutting back the very same services which work to eradicate discrimination and exclusion” (Treck Uk)

“There are more people with a learning disability than ever living in the community with no support at all. Without self advocacy groups are more at risk of abuse and have nowhere to turn for help. Lots of people don’t trust paid staff or the police because they have had bad experience in the past. We have seen what can happen to people with no self advocacy support at Winterbourne View and Southern Healthcare” (West Midlands Regional Forum for people with Learning Disabilities)

15. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Learning Disabilities (Contract 1221)

16. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Physical and Sensory Disabilities (Contract 1224)

17. Midland Mencap Social Club (Contract 1154)

18. Mary Elliott Social Club (Contract 1156)

19. Older People’s Project (Contract 441)

20. Gateway SE Social Club (Contract 1157)

21. Gateway NW Social Club (Contract 1155)

22. Befriending Autism (Contract 1219)

23. Community Outreach – Breakthrough Service (Contract 1252)

For all the above Council officers attended existing meetings with people accessing affected services. Anyone could comment via the council’s online questionnaire via email and letter.

Feedback was also gathered via discussions with service users facilitated by advocacy and empowerment services.

Summary of feedback

Feedback gathered from borough wide LD social groups revealed that unanimously no one supports the proposals.

The overall feeling is that the groups (and projects) provide people with a learning disability the opportunity to meet friends in a safe and supportive environment.

Assisting them to participate in a range of social and recreational activities.

"Lots of places are closing like Service user Empowerment (SUE) " (Focus Group)

"Closing groups along with other don't have anywhere to go" (Focus Group)

"Feel upset, there is no links to work and fallings heath is supposed to be closing. I won't see anybody that I know, I will miss them" (Service User)

"It's hard to meet up without a club" (Service User)

"It gives my mom a break" (Service User)

"Will not see friends or staff "(Service User)

Services for People with Physical & Sensory Impairment

24. Eye Clinic Liaison and Register for the Blind (ECALO and RILs) (Contract 1239)

No feedback relating to this service was received.

Autism:

This group provides a social element for adults with Autism whom are often very socially isolated. Unanimously no one supports this proposal. Especially as it was felt that there are very few services for people with Autism in Walsall and that this could have a direct impact on services and other partner organisations.

"His confidence has grown significantly over the last six months and he has recently secured a volunteer placement at a local newspaper. This has been an enormous step for this young man and he now feels ready to access the job market" (Autism West Midlands – Case study)

"The cessation of prevention services for Autism gives us cause for concern and the potential impact on mental health and primary care as well as social care packages, as individuals 'well being is impacted. This has a direct impact on the CCGs diagnostic pathway" (CCG)

"I have found the advice befriending group a great use, it has been the only group to have been available to adults on the autism spectrum in the Walsall area ever to date it has been a great help for me" (Service User)

"Befriending/Advice services provided by Autism West Midlands I feel it is important to say that users of these services are a group of some of the most vulnerable, isolated and generally forgotten adults in the borough for whom very little is specifically provided in terms of social care, facilities or in fact any opportunities in life" (Autism West Midlands)

25. Befriending Service Autism (1220)

"I have found the advice befriending group a great use, it has been the only group to have been available to adults on the autism spectrum in the Walsall area ever to date it has been a great help for me" (Service User)

"Befriending/Advice services provided by Autism West Midlands I feel it is important to say that users of these services are a group of some of the most vulnerable, isolated and generally forgotten adults in the borough for whom very little is specifically provided in terms of social care, facilities or in fact any opportunities in life" (Autism West Midlands)

26. Concessionary Travel

Currently the council provides funding which allows concessionary bus pass holders to use their bus pass before 09.30am. A small number of respondents replied to say that they use their bus pass before 09.30am to travel to health appointments (four respondents) or to travel to work (two respondents).

Two respondents said that removing the top up that allows travel before 09.30am may force them to give up work. Others saying that they would be happy to contribute towards the cost.

"Personally I do not really use bus pass before 9.30am, so I go without that benefit" (Service User)

"It would mean that I would have to pay on the buses and ring and ride" (Service User)

"I would have to pay myself or walk there" (Service User)

"I may have to give up work, because start time is before 9.30am" (Service User)

Whilst users and carers are against individual elements of this proposal, there are areas where they understand that services have to change. In some areas respondents have said they would rather contribute than lose the services (for example bus pass top ups and community alarms). In other areas the response has been more about maintaining the quality of the services if they are provided elsewhere.

27. Disability Hub (Contract 1215)

28. Supporting Employment

29. Summer Scheme(Contract 1214)

30. Parents Project (70LD)

31. Walsall Society for the Blind – Lease Payment arrangement

32. Seed Money for low level services

33. Housing Support Services

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Overall opinion on this proposal is divided with the detail informing the decisions in the last section of this document.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

1. Review of Assistive technology (Telecare/Telehealth/Call Handlers and Fitting) and the Responder element. **B**
2. Response Services (See Number 1 Above) **B**
3. Mental Health Staffing (Access and Welfare Rights) **B**
4. Broadway North Recovery College **C**
5. Neighbourhood Community Officers **B**
6. Independent Living Centre **B**
7. Sensory Support Social Work Team **B**
8. Sons and Daughters of Rest Subsidy **C**
9. Wilbraham Court **D**
10. Bereavement Support **B**

	<p>11. Luncheon Club Subsidy A</p> <p>12. & 13. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Learning disabilities and Physical and sensory impairment (Contract numbers 1241,1242) B</p> <p>14. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Autism (Contract 1243) B</p> <p>15. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Learning Disabilities (Contract 1221) B</p> <p>16. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Physical and Sensory Disabilities B (Contract 1224)</p> <p>17. Midland Mencap Social Club (Contract 1154) D</p> <p>18. Mary Elliott Social Club (Contract 1156) D</p> <p>19. Older People’s Project (Contract 441) D</p> <p>20. Gateway SE Social Club (Contract 1157) D</p> <p>21. Gateway NW Social Club (Contract 1155) D</p> <p>22. Befriending Autism B</p> <p>23. Community Outreach – Breakthrough Service (Contract 1252) D</p> <p>24. Eye Clinic Liaison and Register for the Blind (ECALO and RILs) (Contract 1239) B</p> <p>25. Befriending Service (LD) (1220) B</p> <p>26. Concessionary Travel D</p> <p>27. Disability Hub (Contract 1215) D</p> <p>28. Supporting Employment D</p> <p>29. Summer Scheme (Contract 1214) D</p> <p>30. Parents Project (70LD) D</p> <p>31. Walsall Society for the Blind – Lease Payment arrangement C</p> <p>32. Seed Money for low level services B</p> <p>33. Housing Support Services C</p>
Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be no loss of service for eligible service users who are in receipt of a statutory service, however the provider may change. 2. Blue badge services can be offered from other parts of the council – specifically front of house 3. Wheelchair and Shop mobility service are available in borough from other providers. 4. In respect of Empowerment/Engagement/Advocacy and befriending commissioners have already looked at consolidating contracts to support all user groups rather than having separate contracts for LP/OP/MH etc. 5. Further consultation could take place in order to ascertain which services could be retained through a contribution scheme and whether this would be at full or subsidised cost. 6. Further work and consultation should take place to ascertain the role of the Voluntary sector in meeting peoples universal needs through use of charitable income 	
People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved	
Service users with Learning Disabilities & Carers	

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 77

1. Review of Assistive technology (Telecare/Telehealth/Call Handlers and Fitting) and the Responder element.
 - Cabinet to approve re-tender of the service and re-consultation on the charging process.
2. Response Services (See Number 1 Above)
 - As above as part of the tender process.
3. Mental Health Staffing (Access and Welfare Rights)
 - Cabinet intend to approve the proposal to delete these posts.
4. Broadway North Recovery College.
 - Cabinet intend to approve the ceasing of this service with support given to service users to set up their own support group and help to access other activities elsewhere.
5. Neighbourhood Community Officers.
 - Cabinet intend to implement this proposal.
6. Independent Living Centre.
 - Cabinet intend to give permission to end lease, cease Shop mobility and short term wheelchair loans service and relocate the blue badge service.
7. Sensory Support Social Work Team.
 - Cabinet to give permission to reduce the team to the statutory minimum to support sensory impaired adults.
8. Sons and Daughters of Rest Subsidy.
 - Cabinet intend to give permission to end the subsidy.
9. Wilbraham Court.
 - Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal.
10. Bereavement Support.
11. Luncheon Club Subsidy.
 - Cabinet intend to support ending the above subsidies.
12. & 13. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Physical Disabilities (Contract numbers 1241, 1242).
14. Empowerment Engagement and Decision Making – Autism (Contract 1243).
15. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Learning Disabilities (Contract 1221).
16. Short Term Crisis and Advocacy – Physical and Sensory Disabilities (Contract

1224).

- Cabinet intend to approve the ending of these specific contracts and for adult social care to let more generic contracts in line with the Care Act statutory duty.

17. Midland Mencap Social Club (Contract 1154).

18. Mary Elliott social Club (1156)

19. Older People's Project (Contract 4411).

20. Gateway SE Social Club (Contract 1157).

21. Gateway NW Social Club (Contract 1155).

- Following the consultation process, Cabinet intend to remove these proposals.

22. Befriending Autism.

- Following review, Cabinet intend to withdraw this proposal.

23. Community Outreach – Breakthrough Service (Contract 1252).

- Following the consultation process, Cabinet are minded to remove this proposal.

24. Eye Clinic Liaison and Register for the Blind (ECALO and RILs) (Contract 1239).

25. Befriending Service (LD) (1220).

- Cabinet intend to approve the reconfiguring of these services to meet statutory guidance.

26. Concessionary Travel.

27. Disability Hub (Contract 1215).

28. Supporting Employment.

29. Summer Scheme (Contract 1214).

30. Parents Project (70LD).

- Following the consultation process, Cabinet intend to remove these proposals.

31. Walsall Society for the Blind – Lease Payment arrangement.

- Cabinet intend to request officers to conduct a further review of this proposal.

32. Seed Money for low level services.

33. Housing Support Services.

- Cabinet intend to approve the ending of these contracts

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	78	Title	Review of Respite and Day Services
Description of proposal			
<p>It is proposed that Adult Social Care (ASC) will cease delivering learning disability day opportunities at one of its current sites: either Goscote or Fallings Heath House.</p> <p>It is also proposed that respite provision at Fallings Heath should cease and be re-procured from the external market. Despite best efforts the occupancy remains at only 39%, and reflects habitual use at weekends rather than any other time.</p> <p>In addition, all service users (at both Goscote and Fallings) will be reviewed against Care Act criteria and those found non-eligible for a care service will be supported to leave the service and to access community activities. It is estimated that over a third of service users (55) could be non-eligible or could benefit from an alternative placement.</p> <p>The rehabilitation service operating at Goscote for ongoing health need would also need to cease, with long term rehabilitation need being addressed by the clinical commissioning group (CCG). This service currently occupies a lot of space for a service that is appointment based and sporadic. Social Care should not be funding health services. The CCG have declined to invest in this service, although ASC will work in partnership to re-provide this service. The space this service occupies will be needed if Goscote continues as a day service location.</p> <p>If approved the suggested proposals would be implemented in full by 1/11/17, with full year savings in-effect from 2018/19.</p> <p>There is a small amount of reinvestment £85,280 to fund the commissioning of demand from the external market.</p> <p>Whilst there is a statutory need to meet users assessed need there is evidence to suggest that some users at Fallings Heath and Goscote are either a) non-eligible or b) inappropriately placed. The exercise will not exclude those with an assessed need; rather it will identify the best way to support those eligible. These services no longer have young people referred to them and cater for people with disabilities in their middle and older age. As such, attendance is waning. In the recent exercise to close down Links to Work many service users felt they would rather access the community or exit services rather than go into day opportunities.</p>			
Revised Estimated Net Saving			
2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
400,024	400,024	0	85,280

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

Day Services (Goscote and Fallings)

Letters explaining the proposal and inviting comment were sent to people accessing the affected services. In addition anyone could have their say via the council's online questionnaire or via email / letter. Focus groups / discussions facilitated by advocacy and empowerment services were also held with service users where a range of proposals, including number 78, were explained and discussed.

Of the 160 letters sent to service users 46 responses were received. A total of 133 people were consulted via the focus groups / discussions on a range of ASC proposals. Each focus group discussed this proposal and collective responses were submitted to the council.

Fallings Heath Respite

Of 38 letters sent to service users accessing respite at Fallings Heath 15 responses were received. A total of 133 people were consulted via the focus groups / discussions on a range of ASC proposals. Each focus group discussed this proposal and collective responses were submitted to the council.

Summary of feedback

Most respondents who attend Fallings Heath and Goscote said that the service they receive at these centres is invaluable and excellent. Many say that if there was a change to the service they would like this standard of service replicated by external providers.

"Because of my sisters complex needs I would have had to put her a permanent nursing home, if it had not have been for this service" (Carer)

"Without Goscote my son would have no social life" (Carer)

"It has enabled me to integrate into the community and socialise with friends" (Service User)

"Goscote has helped us in a big way, as we are able to go to work without the worry where our son is knowing he is somewhere safe" (Carer)

"It is an excellent service and our only service" (Carer)

"My daughter thrives on routine and is happy 100% when they she is at Fallings Heath" (Carer)

Carers particularly value the service for the respite it gives them.

"Without this service as a carer for 2 disabled daughters I would not be able to cope" (Carer)

"This allows me as her primary carer much time to relax" (Carer)

"My son is 47 years old and has serve learning difficulty I look after him, but I need respite due to my age, otherwise I would have to consider him leaving home, institutionalised" (Carer)

In addition carers like the familiar, local setting of the centres.

"Comfortable home from home" (Carer)

“Fallings Heath is local” (Carer)

Some express concerns regarding the changes that have happened to day care provision over the years and feel that savings should be found elsewhere.

“You have closed enough day centres – now pick on others” (Carer)

“Find alternatives yourselves, Cut down on Council perks, sell the mayors car and buy a cheaper one” (Carer)

The proposed option of the closure of one of the centres has raised numerous concerns about potential overcrowding at the remaining site. Many are worried about the potential impact the changes may have on people's routine and how this will impact on people's ability to maintain friendships.

Much of the feedback is in support of the existing services and against their closure. Maintaining a quality service is a top priority for service users and their carers. Full awareness of alternative options following individual service user review will give a clear indication of whether the services are required or not.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Overall opinion on this proposal is divided.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

C - Continue despite possible adverse impact.

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

1. There will be no loss of service for eligible service users – only one formal complaint was received after the last closure programme on 2015/16
2. Users and Carers are unclear of alternatives – hence the opportunity in January and February to give advice and guidance around commissioned alternatives
3. All Service Users affected will receive a Care Act Review to assess their need and the appropriate services for them. Despite the appreciation of the services, some are not eligible for them under the national care act eligibility.
4. Ongoing Steering group to look at potential changes.
5. Each person that attends day Opportunities at Goscote and Falling Heath will have a social care assessment to ensure that they are eligible for social care services. For those people that do not meet the national eligibility criteria (Care Act 2014) work will be undertaken to identify services within their community that can be accessed independently of Adult Social Care.
6. For those people that access Falling Heath Respite work will be undertaken to identify alternative respite options that are commissioned by Adult Social Care. Alternatively a direct payment can be utilised, if eligible, to access services of their choice.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Service users with Learning Disabilities & Carers.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 78

Following the first round of consultation, respite services at Fallings Heath will cease, due to the poor usage (39%), and those people who access respite should be supported to transfer to other providers. All respite users will be subject to a formal review process to decide upon their eligibility (in terms of short breaks), or their carers need based upon a carers assessment (If it is replacement care) under the Care Act, to determine their level of respite going forwards.

Consultation on Day Opportunities will be carried out during February to August 2017 with a final decision about eligibility, choice and location to close based upon that further process. However this decision is impacted upon by the following:

- Should Cabinet decide that respite services should close at Fallings Heath it will need to consider which building to retain and which to remove.
- Some people will not be eligible.
- Some people would be better served, if eligible, by commissioned services elsewhere.
- The re-hab service is a health service but funded by Adult Social Care, it would need to end and Health will be asked to relinquish the space at Goscote for the additional service users.

Each person affected will, however, have a formal multi-disciplinary review chaired by a senior Adult Social Care Officer, with their lead social worker acting as the link between family and other stakeholders.

In view of the above, Cabinet intend to continue with the proposal, subject to additional consultation on Day Opportunities. A final decision will be brought back to Cabinet on this matter following close of consultation.

Section A - Part 3 – Redesign of the Library Service

BUDGET SAVING REFERENCE 32 – A redesigned Library Service for Walsall

The Cabinet's preferred model (Option 1) to have the Lichfield Street "Hub" (including Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive) along with one mobile and the Home Delivery Service, on its own, does not meet the feedback from the council's consultation exercise.

The council has now finalised its budget spending and income assumptions, and as a result, has been able to release further funds which members have chosen to prioritise to allow a "Hub" plus local library offer. Through Members making a variety of choices across the whole breadth of the council's budget, additional funding has been identified which allows a total budget of £2.5m to be allocated to the Library Service, Local History Centre and Leather Museum to deliver a service which is in-line with residents' feedback.

As a result, the Cabinet is now minded to consider the following model to cover the borough: -

- Walsall Town Centre "Hub" (including the Local History Centre & Archive),
- The Leather Museum remaining "as is" at the Wisemore factory,
- A service of local libraries that covered the whole borough,
- One Mobile Library and a Home Delivery Service
- A community library, augmented with local volunteers

CONTENTS

1. Narrative of the findings and the proposition for full borough coverage
2. Maps
3. Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary
4. Equality Impact Assessment

Consultation reports

5. Postal Survey of Households
6. On-line survey
7. Face-to-face survey

BUDGET SAVING REFERENCE 32 – A redesigned Library Service for Walsall

Findings and the Proposition for full Borough coverage

Background

Budget saving reference 32 is to redesign the Borough's statutory library service.

The aim is two-fold, to:-

1. Ensure that the service continues to meet the requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons, and make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available;

Adequate stocks should be maintained (potentially through arrangements with other library authorities) and also that facilities are made available for the borrowing, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials;

Encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice,

and

2. Deliver a service a library at less cost than the current £4.3m net cost. A target net budget of c.£2.5m has been indicated.

Advice was been taken from the Consultation Institute on how to facilitate the best possible, objective and statistically significant responses, thereby giving the Cabinet accurate feedback and from which they can then consider proposals for a newly designed service.

Extensive consultation was undertaken between 27 October and 31 December 2016 including an 11,600 questionnaire postal survey (1,212 returns), on-line survey, written replies (e-mails and letters) and face-to-face interviews.

Petitions expressing a wish to save their local library have been received, these being: Streetly (1,600 signatures), Aldridge (1,540), Bloxwich (544), Pheasey (660) and also one for the Leather Museum (2,534).

Gunning Principles

It is worth noting the four Gunning principles for successful consultation, these being that:-

1. No decision should have already been made (referred to as *predetermination*)
2. *Sufficient information* should be made available

3. *Adequate time* should be given to consider this and respond
4. *Conscientious consideration* should be given to the results

Feedback from the Consultation Institute confirms that Walsall's approach to the 2016 consultation exercise has met all four of the Gunning principles.

Findings

The responses gave a very good case (from users & non users, library users and non users) that the council could pursue the Lichfield Street "Hub" (Map 1). This proposal currently comprises a library service along with a consolidated Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum from within a single building.

Whilst there was therefore a mandate to deliver just this option, concern was expressed by residents that the elderly, disabled and children would be disadvantaged through the borough only having a single site. Feedback clearly supported a town centre hub, supported by a network of other "district" provision.

Residents were asked to list their preferred libraries (Option 2) with the assumption that the service would also retain one Mobile Library and the Home Delivery Service. The (statistically significant) postal survey ranked the libraries to retain as: Aldridge, Bloxwich, Pelsall, Walsall Wood and Streetly, followed by Darlaston (Map 2).

Residents were also asked to list their preferred services from a full list of all 16 libraries, mobiles, home delivery, Leather Museum and Local History Centre (Option 3). Under this option a Mobile Library and the Home Delivery Service did not have to be included. The postal survey ranked services to retain as: Aldridge, Leather Museum, Bloxwich and Streetly (Map 3).

If only libraries were considered (other services such as the Leather Museum and Local History Centre were excluded from the options list) then the consultation suggested a mix of Aldridge, Blakenhall, Streetly, Walsall Central and Walsall Wood (Map 4). What maps 2, 3 and 4 show is that there would be large gaps in borough provision. This would make it difficult for the council to meet the 1964 Act to have a *comprehensive* library service but also in meeting local *demand*.

The feedback also concluded that the Leather Museum ought to remain within its existing Wisemore factory building. It was felt that space would be an issue and that whilst the displays were essential to the museum, the fact that it was contained within an old leather factory building was very important. Comments clearly referred to a concern by residents of losing part of Walsall's heritage (Map 5).

Cabinet asked that the Marmot libraries should be mapped and costed, these being: Beechdale, Blakenall, Bloxwich, Darlaston, Pleck, South Walsall, Willenhall and Central (Map 6). The map shows that there would be no library provision with the north and eastern side of the borough.

Taking into account all of the consultation responses and also the need to continue to deliver a comprehensive library service in-line with the 1964 Act, a district model of service delivery that would best meet the needs of the borough would appear to include

the Walsall Central site in addition to the five District centres: Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall (Map 7); a “Hub and spoke” model. These locations have good public transport links and would allow residents to make a single visit to their district centre, visit the library, pay bills and go shopping, without having to go into Walsall town centre. The Districts are the economic centres within the borough and are clearly identified within the relevant Planning Policy documents.

The “Hub and spoke” model is predicated around the aspiration to focus on training, development, business skills, CV writing, job applications, knowledge, skills, business start-up and development. The new model would also aim to increase the number of hours available to users each week, potentially through the installation of (unstaffed or lower staffing) access control. Any District Library Service model will follow a similar framework, essentially to support Walsall residents’ become more financially independent.

Map 7 clearly shows however that the south-eastern corner of the borough would not however be covered by the service.

The Consultation Institute states that the council does have sufficient information on which to make a decision, as long as that decision is based on sound rationale, e.g. utilising the “Hub” and district centre model as economic centres with good transport links.

Consideration does need to be given to how the south-eastern corner is provided for. A sensible proposition would be to support a Community Library, managed jointly with the “Save Streetly Library” Campaign Group, in conjunction with the council’s Library Service (Map 8).

This then leaves a relatively small area of the borough which is not covered by a two-mile radius of provision from any library. Extending the radius slightly to 2.5 miles does allow greater coverage, plus it is reasonable to consider that residents in this area (Pheasey) could make easier use of Birmingham’s Kingstanding Library than any of Walsall’s own sites (Map 9).

Overall, it is considered that this spread of library provision is appropriate to meet the requirements of a comprehensive library service whilst at the same time being within the council’s available budget.

Mobile Library and the Home Delivery Service

When going out to consultation it was recognised that there was a clear equalities need to protect a service to the most vulnerable in Walsall.

Those who are physically unable to visit even a local library or are already house-bound, rely heavily on the Mobile and Home Delivery Service. In terms of *social care* to these people, the service is deemed essential and therefore ought to remain in any future service delivery model.

Interestingly, the postal survey results (Option 3, preferred services) showed that residents ranked the Home Delivery Service at no. 6 and retaining one Mobile Library at no.10 from a list of 22.

Subject to a new delivery model of the “Hub” and Districts being agreed, the route of the Mobile Library will be reviewed to meet the areas of need not provided for by easy access to a local static library.

Marmot Library model

The Marmot model utilises the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), to measure multiple aspects of deprivation across seven different dimensions (known as *domains*) these being: income; employment; health and disability; education, skills and training; crime; barriers to housing and services; and living environment. Deprivation indices across all seven domains are combined to produce an overall measure of relative deprivation known as the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Using the Index, it is possible to show the following libraries as being those in the areas of greatest *need*: Beechdale, Blakenall, Bloxwich, Darlaston, Pleck, South Walsall, Willenhall and Central (Map 6). This model would cost in the region of £2.4m.

Whilst this would cater for the areas of the borough deemed most in *need*, there is clearly no service in the areas of existing greatest *demand*. The Consultation Institute advises that this model would be open to possible challenge through judicial review and ought not to be pursued.

The Consultation Institute suggested that consideration could be made to a “half Marmot / half non-Marmot” model although it is worth noting that Option 1 below already includes four of the Marmot libraries, these being Bloxwich, Central, Darlaston and Willenhall. This is in effect already reflects the “half and half” model.

Staffing

There are various elements of staffing to be considered: the “Hub” (Library and Local History Centre) / District libraries / Community Library / other book exchanges / Mobile Library / Home Delivery Service. The Leather Museum and School Library Support Service would be unaffected.

Business model

It is quite apparent that there is a need to generate additional income whilst also tightly controlling costs within any new service model. As with other front-line operational services; (e.g. Sport & Leisure, New Art Gallery and Forest Arts), a focus on commercial opportunities will be essential to ensure that the council can continue to afford them.

Whilst in future any realistic and achievable opportunity will be considered, some of the possible options will include; more events, room hire, Amazon drop-off point, training courses, business training, jobs & skills workshops etc.

It is anticipated that if the borough's Library Service is to include a Community Library offer too (see below), then the opportunity for a similar commercial model and range of services will also be utilised at this site.

Community Library

It is proposed that the borough's Library Service should also now include a Community Library at Streetly. The rationale is that the Town Centre and 5 District Centre model does not wholly provide suitable "in borough" library provision for Streetly, although Birmingham's Kingstanding library is close by.

A Community Library would be a part of the borough's statutory library service but would be augmented with volunteer staff, sought and co-ordinated by the "Save Streetly Library" campaign group. Volunteers would come under the direction of Library Manager. It is anticipated that an access control system could also be installed.

The "Save Streetly Library" campaign group have indicated a willingness to continue to operate Streetly Library "at a lower cost ... as a joint enterprise between the Council and the Streetly community". They quote a model of a library: -

Community run with local authority support: for example, the council provides the IT equipment and book stock; some funding; and some input from paid staff who visit (but on a limited basis), liaise and provide professional input.

Such a model would therefore involve a mix of paid staff and local volunteers, a change in opening hours, fewer staffed hours, change of layout for more (paid) activities and to develop the garden. Commercialisation is clearly on the agenda and business model. They were however clear that they were not interested in an "inadequate book exchange".

Other libraries

On the assumption that some libraries will then cease to be a part of the council's statutory service and could close, an offer would be made to the community to take these sites on as locally run community libraries or book exchanges, run by volunteers. This would apply to: Beechdale, Blakenall, New Invention, Pelsall, Pleck, Pheasey, Rushall, South Walsall and Walsall Wood.

Any community that wishes to take over the operation of their local library would have to understand that taking on a library would be entirely at their own cost and risk. The basic offer would be for a 21-year lease, the keys to the building and all of its contents including shelving, furniture, PCs and existing book stock. Community groups would be liable for all operating costs and building maintenance obligations / costs. Such sites would be outside of the council's strategic library service.

Where no community management or support is forthcoming, these sites would be surplus to requirement and would be considered for disposal.



The availability of the buildings ought to be advertised initially as Community Asset Transfer sites and local community groups would have the opportunity to step forward on a "use it or lose it" basis.

An option for Members to consider, subject to feedback from communities, is whether to facilitate the delivery and support of any such community libraries or book exchanges. It may be appropriate that a Librarian offers support to these sites on a half day a week basis.

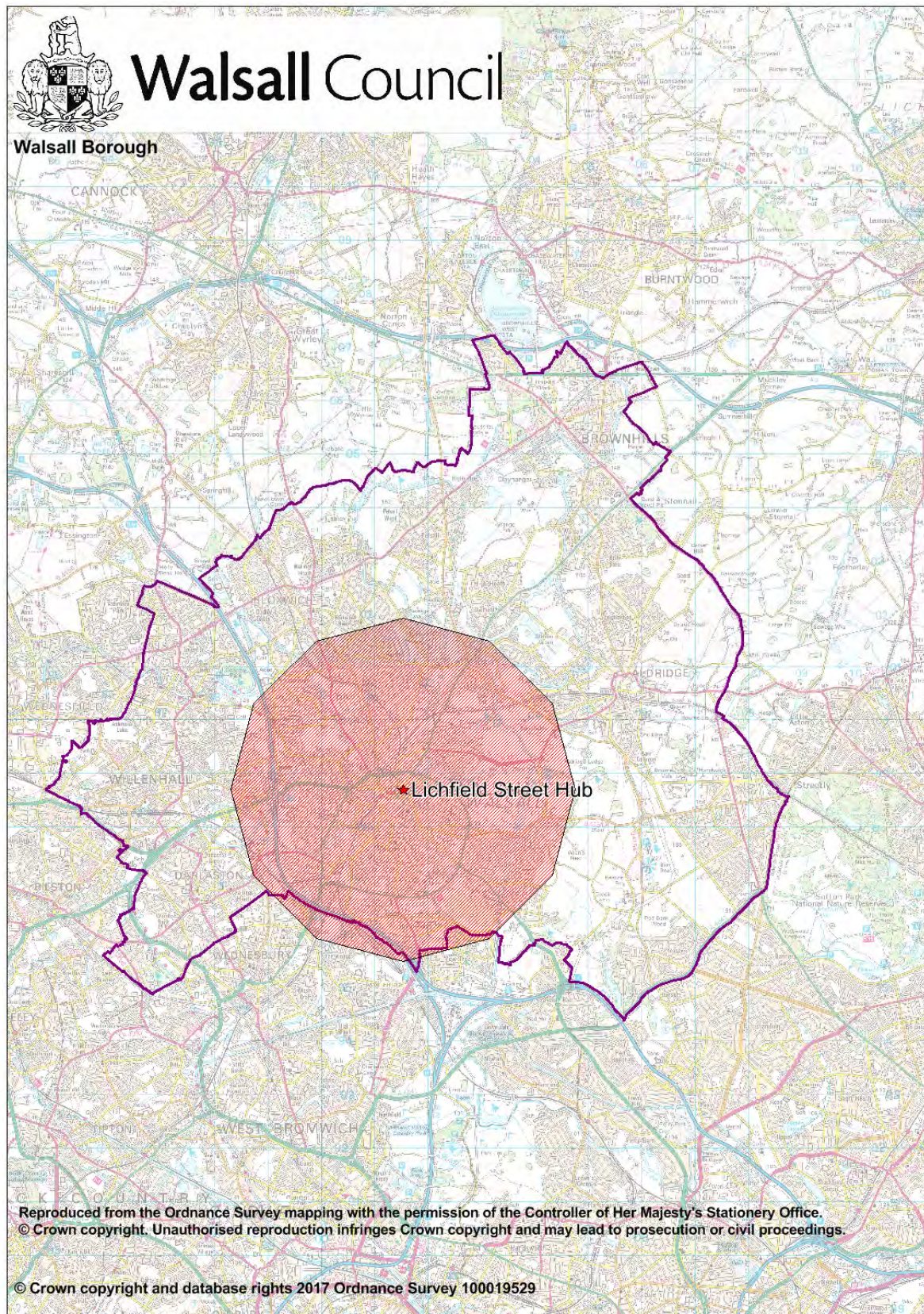
Although time is limited, there may also be the possibility for discussions with local Community Associations to consider whether any library that is ear-marked for closure could be relocated into the CA's existing building and operation. Such an arrangement would be outside of the council's strategic library service.

Finance

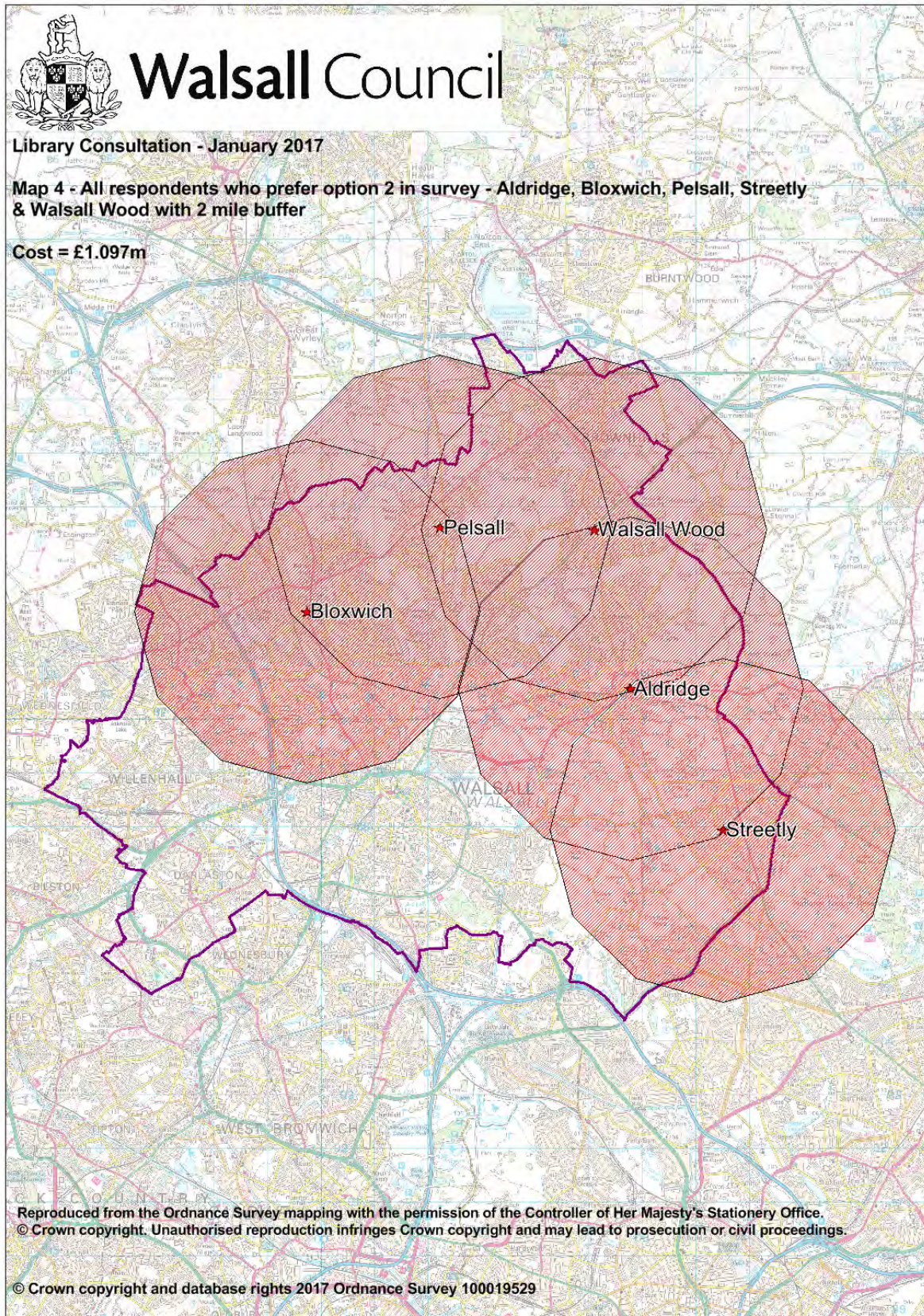
Following due consideration of all budget saving proposals, the available budget and other funding commitments and assessment of the available headroom, it is considered that the council can now afford a library service costing c.£2.5m.

Chris Holliday
Head of Leisure, Culture & Operations
 01922 650339
 chris.holliday@walsall.gov.uk

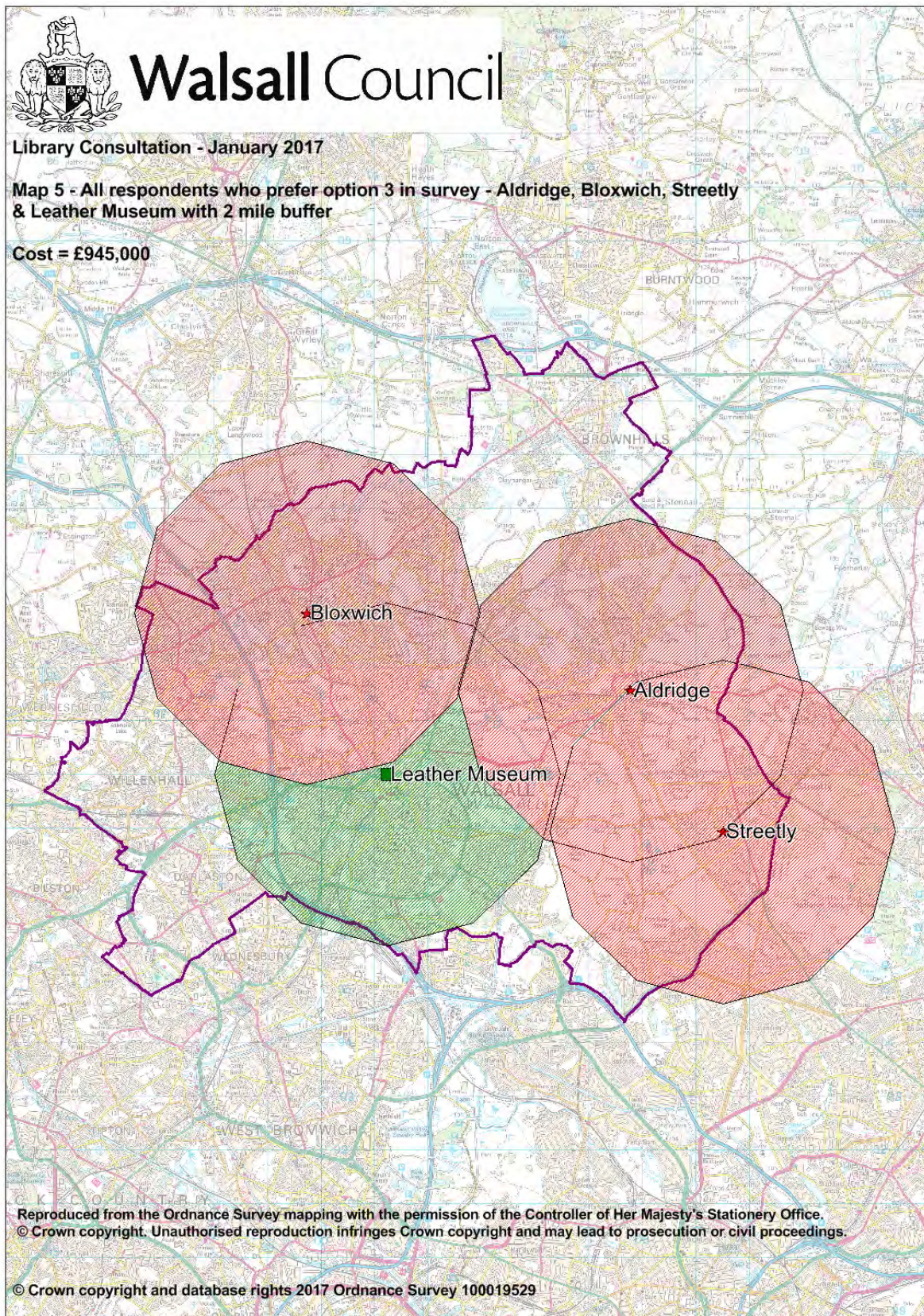
Map 1 – Lichfield Street Hub



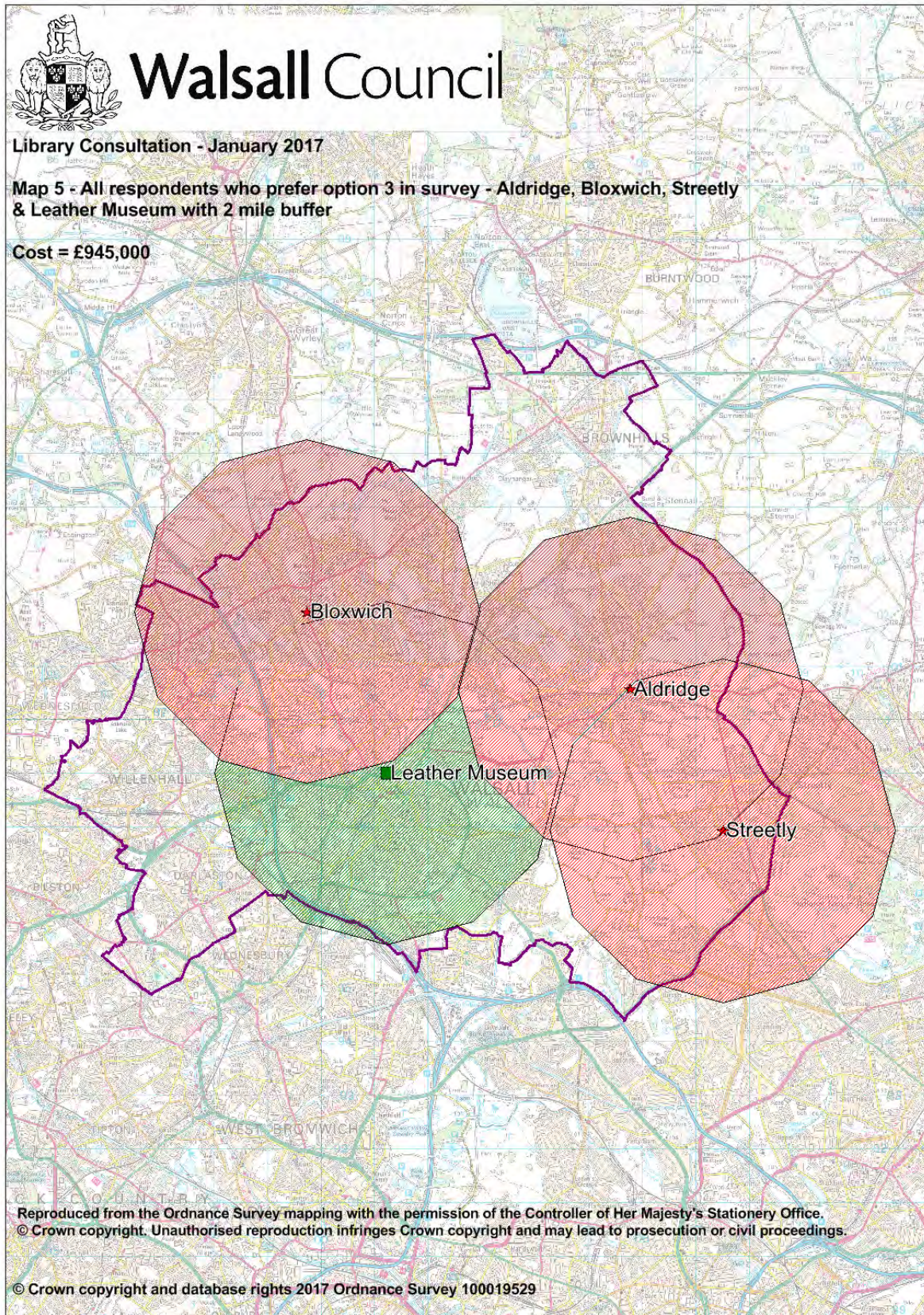
Map 2 – All respondents who prefer option 2 in survey



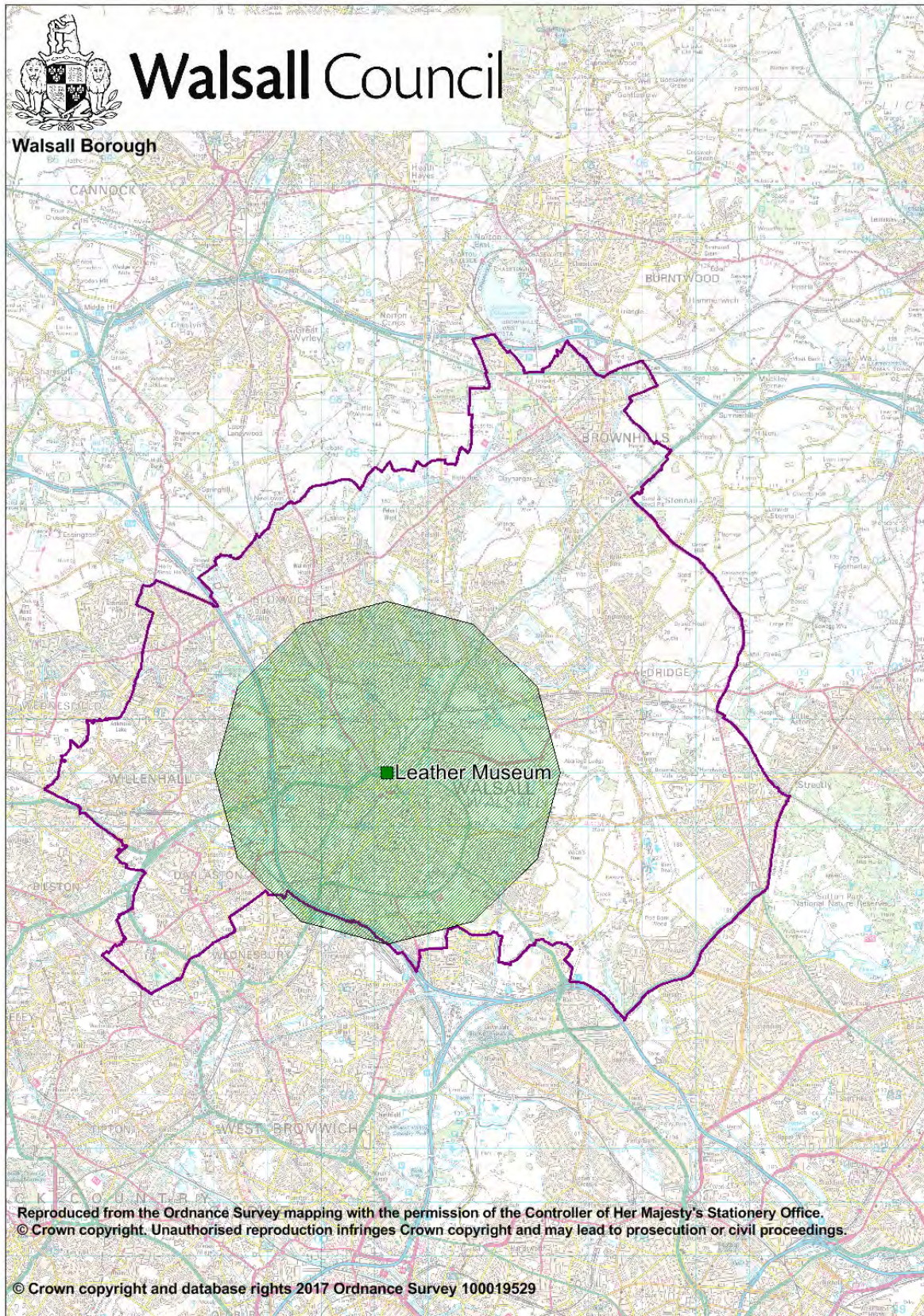
Map 3 – All respondents who prefer option 3 in survey



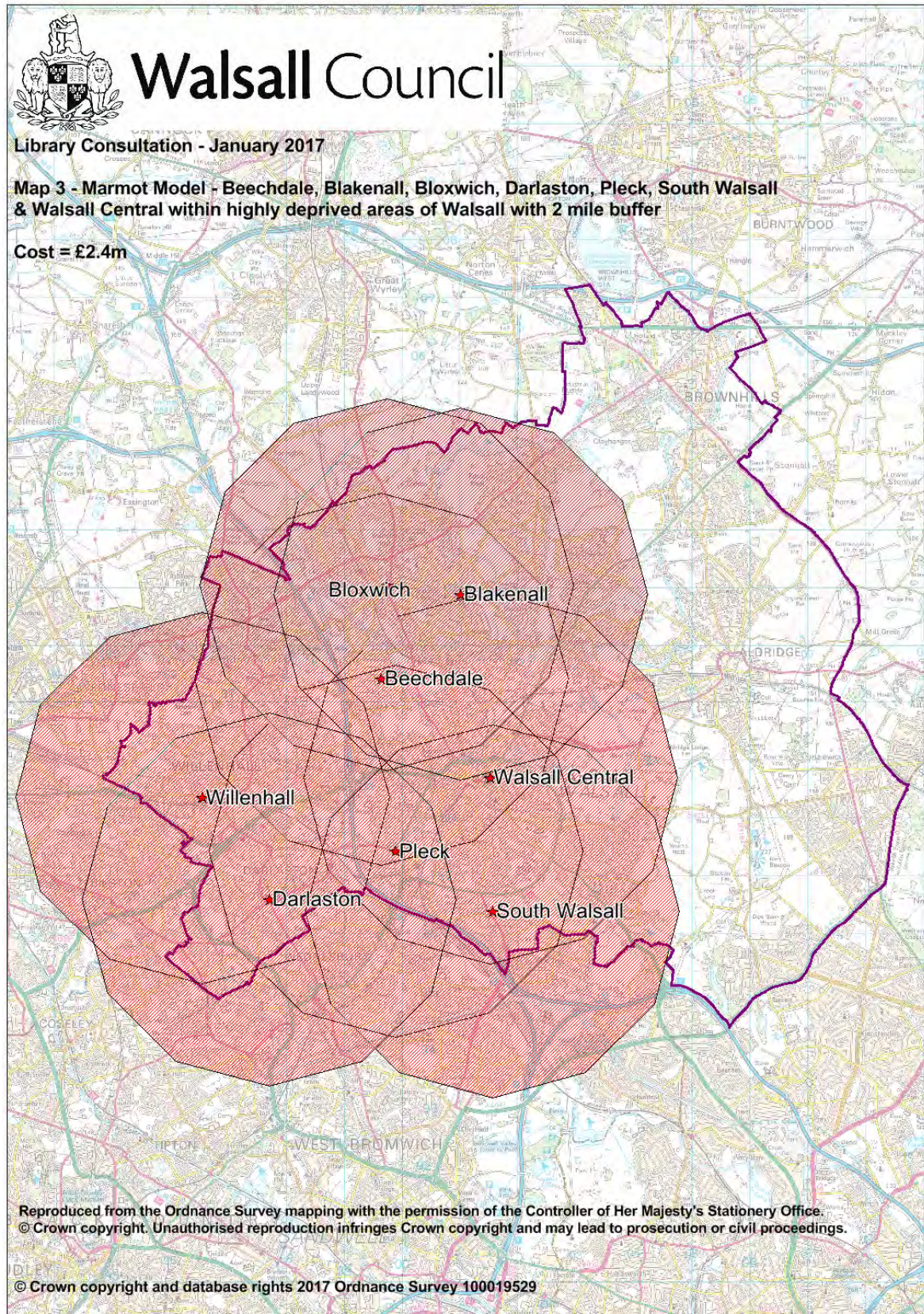
Map 4 - Regular Users



Map 5 – Leather Museum retained in situ



Map 6 – Marmot Model



Map 7 – Walsall Hub (Library & Local History Centre) & 5 District Centres and Leather Museum

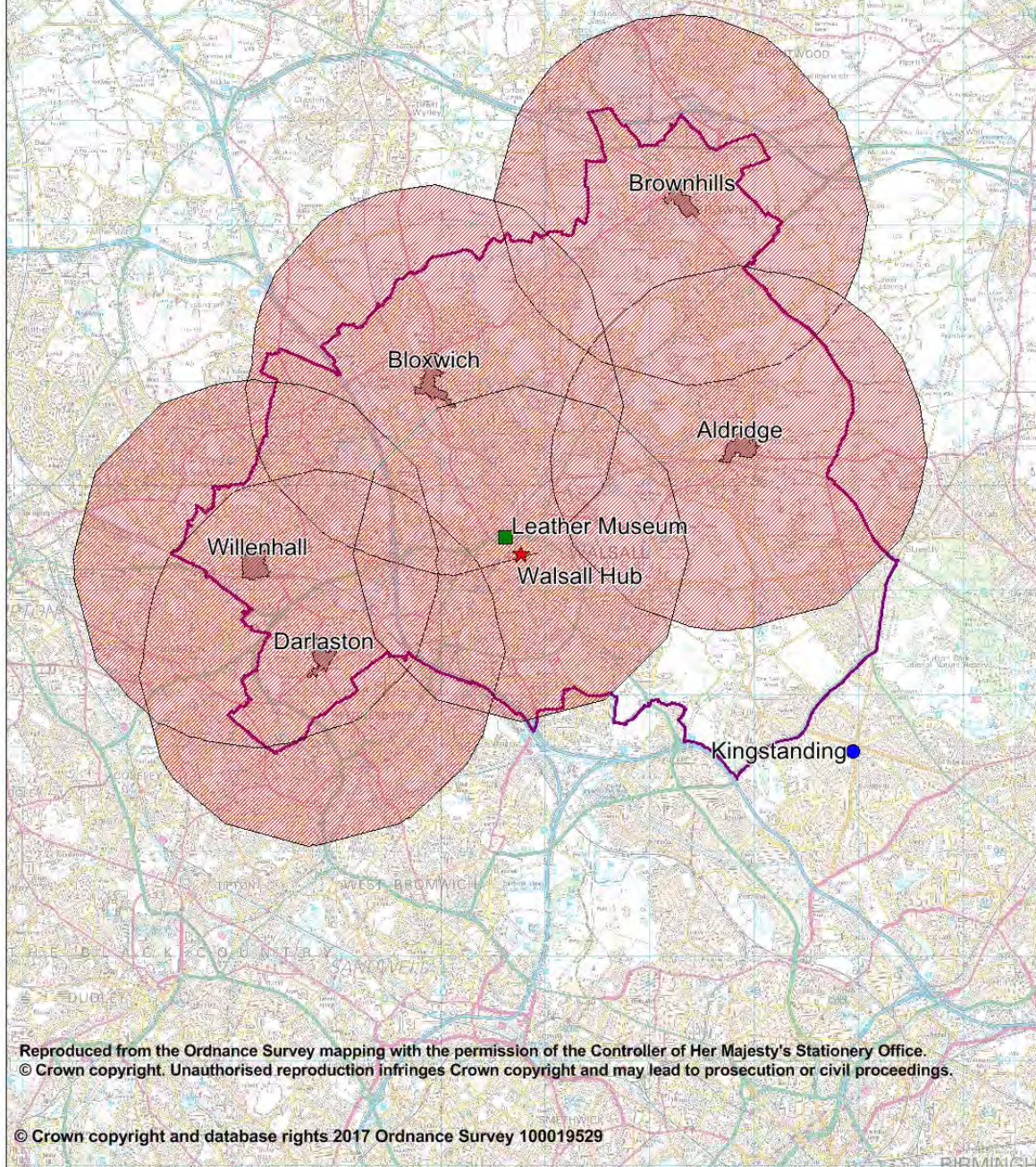


Walsall Council

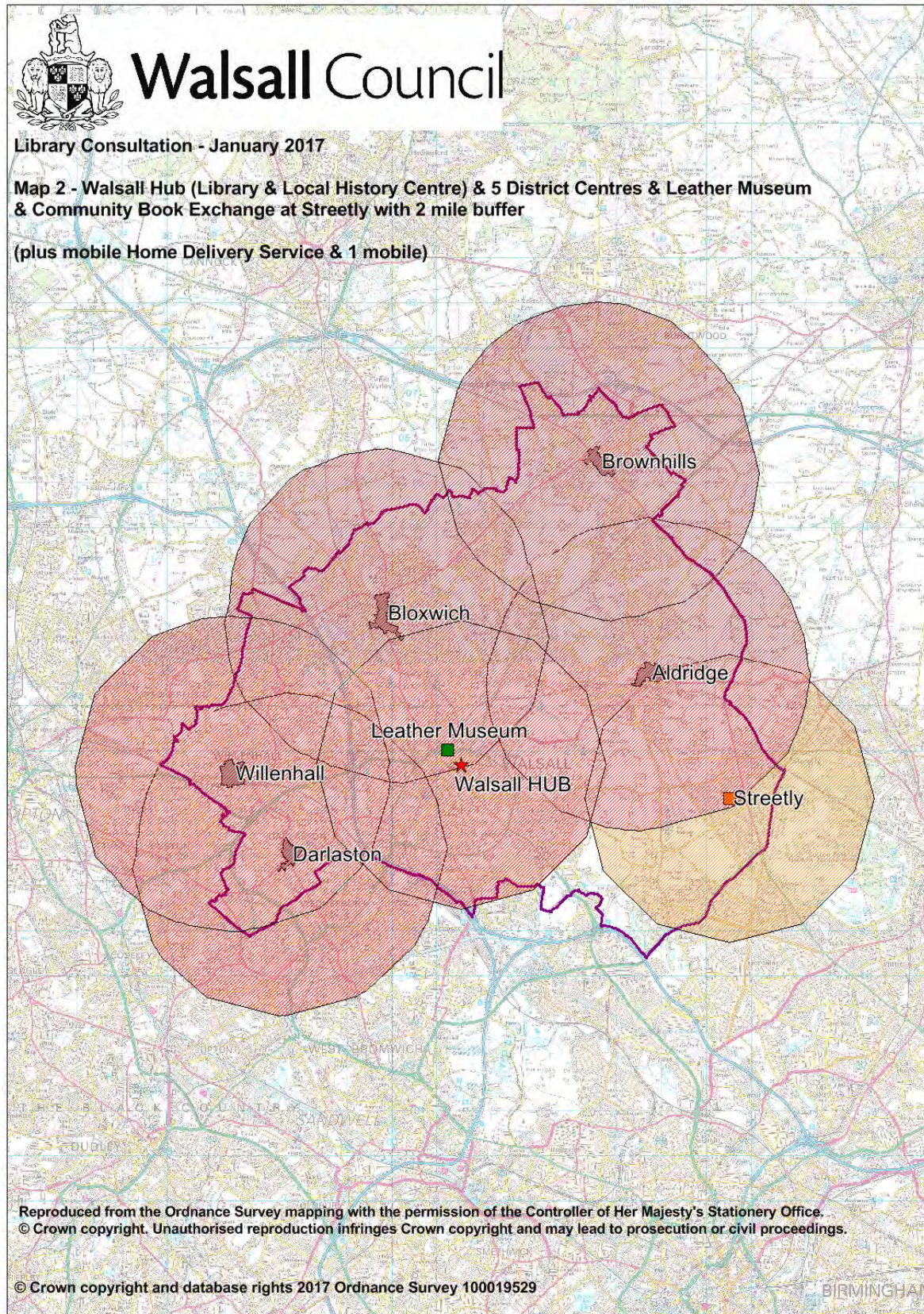
Library Consultation - January 2017

**Map 1 - Walsall Hub (Library & Local History Centre) & 5 District Centres & Leather Museum
with 2 mile buffer**

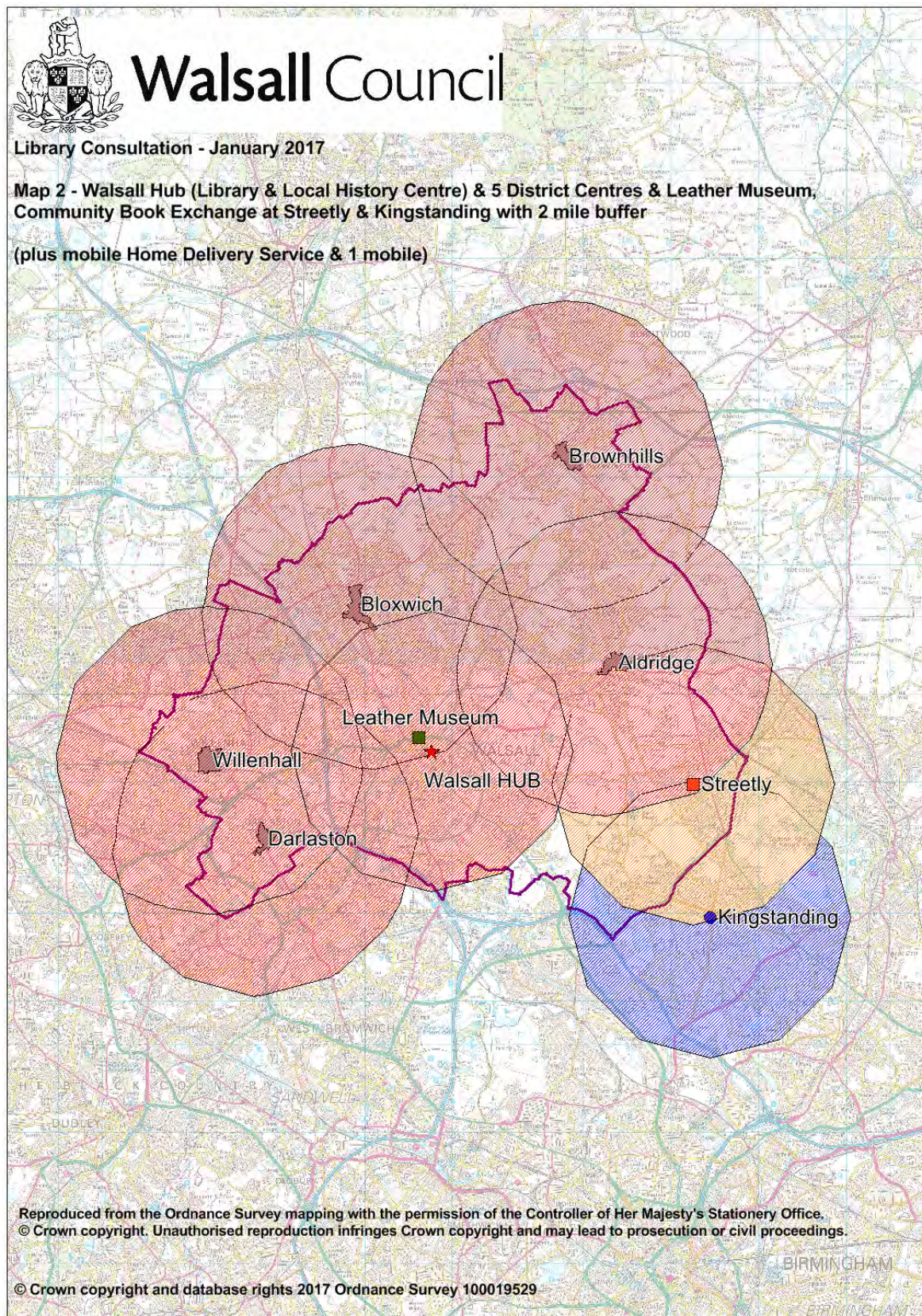
(plus mobile Home Delivery Service & 1 mobile)



Map 8 - Walsall Hub (Library & Local History Centre) & 5 District Centres and Leather Museum & Community Book Exchange at Streetly



Map 9 - Walsall Hub (Library & Local History Centre) & 5 District Centres and Leather Museum & Community Book Exchange at Streetly, Kingstanding with 2 mile buffer



Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no.	32	Title	A Re-design of the Borough's Library Service
Description of proposal			
<p>The proposal is to reduce the number of libraries within the borough subject to public consultation and the viability of the service. The proposal also includes the redesign and transfer of the Local History Centre and Leather Museum into the Lichfield Street Central Library premises.</p> <p>Option 1: Reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to 1, keeping Walsall Central Library (Lichfield Street, Walsall), retaining one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. The single library site would be redesigned and developed as a "Hub" in conjunction with an integrated Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum for approximately £1m. <i>This is the council's preferred option.</i></p> <p>Option 2: Close Walsall Central library and reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to no more than 5, keeping one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. A minimal local history & archive service would operate from one of the retained libraries. There is a budget of approximately £1m for this option. Unless a suitable, alternative location is found for Walsall Leather Museum, it would close.</p> <p>Option 3: Your alternative option, retaining any number and selection of libraries and/or the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum, within a budget of approximately £1m per year.</p>			
Estimated Net Saving			
2017 / 2018 £	2018 / 2019 £	2019 / 2020 £	Implementation / Investment cost £
2,900,000	0	0	2,000,000 Year 1* 2,000,000 Year 2*
Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation			
<p>Summary</p> <p>Due to the complexity and borough-wide nature of the budget savings proposals relating to the library service, Local History Centre & Archive and the Leather Museum the council, undertook a detailed programme of consultation beginning on 27 October closing on 31 December 2016.</p> <p>Consultation on budget saving proposal ref 32 was conducted in several ways;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A postal questionnaire sent to 11,600 random households in the borough • A detailed on-line questionnaire, open to anyone (similar to the postal questionnaire) 			

- Unannounced face-to-face interviews at each library, Leather Museum and the Local History Centre & Archive
- Feedback via letters and emails, and any feedback through dialogue

Findings from consultation

The Postal Questionnaire

The research took place through a random sample postal survey of residents in the borough. A sample of 11,600 addresses was drawn, from which 1,212 responses were received (10.4% response rate).

Being a random sample postal survey control is maintained over who can respond and how many times, this minimises bias and means that results can be generalised to all households. To further improve accuracy data was weighted back to the known population profile of Walsall to counter-act non response bias. Based on the number of households in the borough and the number of responses received, analysis at the borough level is accurate to within $\pm 2.8\%$.

The following is taken from the executive summary of the detailed report of findings *'Consultation on options for a redesigned library service - Postal Survey of Households Report of findings January 2017* (please refer to separate detailed report).

56% of respondents were active library users, having used a Walsall library within the last 12 months. 41% were non library users.

For a fifth of respondents, Walsall Central library was their closest library. For 10% of respondents Aldridge was their closest followed by Bloxwich 9%. Between 7% and 2% identified another library as being their closest.

Most active library users use the library that is closest to where they live. However, the results also show that some library users do not necessarily always solely use their closest library, accessing a mix of libraries.

Most active library users travel to the library they use most often on foot (48%). A third travel by car (33%). 11% rely on public transport and 1% cycle. Compared to White groups, BME groups are more likely to travel to the library by car. Females are slightly less likely than males to travel to the library they use most often, on foot.

Amongst active library users, borrowing books (adults) is the most common library service used (70%), followed by finding information (40%), borrowing books for children (38%) and using computers (37%). Results also show that people use different libraries for different things.

Few respondents (5%) had used the mobile library service and home delivery service (1%). 14% of respondents had used the Local History Centre & Archive in the last 12 months, with most (40%) travelling there by car.

Just over a fifth of respondents (22%) had visited the Leather Museum in the last 12

months, 46% travelling there by car.

Amongst library users and non users most (45%) prefer option 1; a Central library “Hub” incorporating the Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive. 30% preferred option 3; and suggested their own combination of services to retain to the value of £1m. Whilst 20% preferred option 2; a five library scenario (closing Central library) and therefore suggesting their own mix of libraries to retain, with 1 mobile, home delivery service, minimal local history centre and closure of Leather Museum if no suitable alternative found.

Amongst library users only, the overall preference remained the same; with option 1 preferred by 39% compared to 37% who prefer option 3 and 24% option 2.

Non library users have a strong preference for option 1, with over two thirds (67%) of respondents preferring this option.

Far more respondents who use Central library preferred option 1 compared to those who used other libraries. 69% of Central library users preferred option 1 compared to 25% of both district library users and small library users who preferred this option. Users of district and small libraries were most likely to prefer option 3.

There is no clear option preference amongst users of the Local History Centre & Archive or Leather Museum based on the portal survey.

Looking at options overall, it appears the message is there is an appetite for a “Hub” approach, but respondents also want to retain some sort of wider borough provision.

Respondents identified a range of potential impacts option 1 may have on them. Many felt that a single central library “Hub” in Walsall town centre is too far for them and others to travel to. The distance and need for transport (private or public) was particularly off-putting and overall wholly inconvenient. Lack and cost of parking was a particular concern for many.

Many respondents said that if option 1 was approved it would mean they would no longer visit the library.

Some, particularly non users and those who's closest library was Central, felt that option 1 would have no / minimal impact on them. Some respondents felt that option 1 offered the best all round solution.

Many other comments were made including the closure of libraries would mean a loss of important community assets and resources. Some felt that there would be a potential negative impact on the education and development of children as well as mental health and well-being. Some indicated the need to use the mobile library instead.

Amongst those who preferred option 2, the top 5 most frequently selected libraries to retain were; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Pelsall, Walsall Wood and Streetly (all respondents, and active library users select the same libraries). Non users select a slightly different range of libraries; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Willenhall, Pelsall and Pleck. (All selections

exceed the budget allocation for option 2).

When providing preferences under option 2 people are asked to consider the bigger picture when determining options for future library provision. However, results intimate that respondents struggle to remain objective when selecting libraries for retention. Respondents are more likely to have their own interests at heart when listing libraries they would like to retain.

Many, primarily non library users, felt that should option 2 be approved it would have no/minimal impact on them, in particular if their local / preferred library was retained.

Looking at all respondents the preferred services to retain under option 3 within a £1m budget include; Aldridge, Leather Museum, Bloxwich and Streetly at a cost of £945,000. Including the next service in the list exceeds the budget (LHC&A £187,000).

Amongst library users only who prefer option 3, the selection is different and includes a greater geographical spread; Aldridge, Streetly Willenhall, Walsall Wood and Blakenall costing £945,000.

Non users would like to see Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge retained, costing £1,030,000.

Over half (54%) would prefer a mobile library that calls at a combination of stops. 17% preferred a community based timetable whilst 11% preferred a service that calls only at care homes and sheltered housing. 17% thought that the council should not operate a mobile library service.

Suggestions for alternative locations for the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum services included; the New Art Gallery, Civic Centre / Town Hall, in one of the retained libraries including Central, locating the LHC&A in the with the Leather Museum, redundant buildings / empty shops, working in partnership with other local authorities, The Black Country Museum.

Alternative suggestions for how these services could be delivered included reducing the opening hours, using volunteers, introducing a charge or through seeking sponsorship.

Half of all respondents said that paying a bit more council tax would have a 'big impact' on them, whilst 38% said it would have 'some impact'. Just 7% of respondents felt that paying more would have no impact on them.

The online survey

The on-line questionnaire was a slightly shorter version of the postal questionnaire.

Being available online anyone could respond and there were no restrictions on the number of times an individual could respond. The open nature of the questionnaire means that the results may not be generalised to the wider population and are simply the views of those who responded which is not equal across all libraries / services.

A summary of the feedback showed: -

- 224 people responded, of which 89% were residents
- 91% were active library users
- Central, Aldridge, Streetly, Bloxwich and Pelsall were the most used libraries
- Preferred libraries to be retained generally reflected the libraries used by respondents
- Retaining a local library service is important to people
- Naturally people want the library they use most often retained
- Option 1 is unpopular due to it being an inconvenient location for most, thus requiring the need to travel. The lack of plentiful free parking close to the central library is also off putting
- Many say they would stop using the library if option 1 was approved
- 70% preferred option 3
- 21% preferred option 2

Option 3 – Preferred services to retain

Option 3 invited respondents to choose any mix of services to retain within a budget of c.£1m. Only two static libraries feature and so this option plus the top four “libraries only” for c£1m are also shown.

Preferred services to retain under option 3	
All services	Libraries only
Aldridge	Aldridge
Home Delivery	Bloxwich
Leather Museum	Streetly
Bloxwich	Pelsall
1 Mobile	-
Local History Centre	-
<i>£1.024m</i>	<i>£1.008m</i>

Option 2 – Preferred libraries to retain

This option automatically included the Home Delivery Service and one Mobile Library. Respondents were invited to select up to five static libraries they would want to see retained. Pleck and Willenhall were equal 5th and so both options are shown below to reflect the different overall costs.

Preferred libraries to retain under option 2	
a.	b.
Aldridge	Aldridge
Bloxwich	Bloxwich
Pelsall	Pelsall
Streetly	Streetly
Pleck	Willenhall
Home Delivery	Home Delivery
1 Mobile	1 Mobile
<i>£1.239m</i>	<i>£1.480m</i>

- Those who use libraries value them highly as local community assets that provide far more than just books
- Many feel that libraries to be retained should be those that are most used, therefore reflecting the value the library holds in the local community
- People want to see the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum retained. Results indicate a preference to keep the leather Museum over the Local History Centre & Archive
- Many feel that the closure of the Leather Museum would be a detriment to the borough
- A mobile library that stops at a mix of locations is preferred

Face-to-face interviews

Between 18 November and 20 December 2016, unannounced face-to-face interviews were undertaken at each library, the Leather Museum and the Local History Centre & Archive. The interviews were undertaken by council staff, independent of the service, who spent a minimum of two hours at each location. Officers followed a semi-structured questionnaire to guide the interview and record their comments. A total of 106 interviews were held.

A summary of the feedback showed: -

- Most wanted to keep their local library (the one where the interview was being conducted).
- Half of those interviewed preferred Option 2.
- Having a local library best served their needs.
- Many are concerned about travelling to Walsall, and parking.
- Some worry about the impact on the elderly and the loss of access to computers.
- A third of people interviewed preferred Option 3; many feel option 3 retains a local (district) library service.
- Some still wanted the Central / Museum / History Centre too.
- Museum / History Centre users keen to retain their locations.
- Generally, people want to keep as many libraries open as possible.
- Many fear that the loss of libraries will affect “social care”.
- Many prefer this option because Central was perceived to be the best resourced and that it keeps the Leather Museum and History Centre too (although most would prefer the Leather Museum to stay in its current site).
- Several respondents felt that option 1 was ‘the best of a bad bunch’ but saw the sense in retaining one central site.
- However, in a centralised scenario the loss of access to computers and Wi-Fi for children / homework was a concern for many.

Very few alternative suggestions were put forward, of those that did, suggestions included:

- Less busy libraries should be closed.
- Keep those with the most services.
- Reduce opening times but keep all sites.
- Put libraries in leisure centres.

- Charge admission fees for the Leather Museum.
- Provide computers in areas of greatest need.

Usage, accessibility, meeting the needs of deprived communities and taking account of the community value/cumulative impact of library closure; were regularly stated as the key considerations to be taken into account when making a decision on this proposal.

Other feedback

A further 162 items of correspondence were received from respondents by e-mail and post. A summary of the feedback showed: -

- Only 41 selected any option (1, 2 or 3).
- Most put forward to just “save my library”.
- Many stated the case for retaining libraries, including the social benefit.
- Many proposals suggested 7, 8 or even 11 sites; greatly in excess of the available budget.
- Several were well thought through proposals.
- The top six sites these respondents wanted to see retained were; Streetly (16%), Bloxwich Library – especially the Theatre (14%), Aldridge (12%) and Central, Pelsall and Willenhall (all 9%).
- Save Streetly Library submitted a separate paper outlining their own case for retaining the library albeit on a slightly reduced budget.

Few respondents put forward alternative suggestions for how the savings could be made. Of those that did, suggestions included;

- Generate more income / open a café.
- Charge a membership fee.
- Charge to borrow books (not permitted).
- Find a sponsor.
- Local History Centre and Leather Museum to merge.
- Move the Local History Centre and/or Leather Museum into New Art Gallery (NAG).
- Move the Central Library and Leather Museum into NAG.
- Close the NAG and use the funds to save local libraries.
- Establish a charitable trust.

Many respondents spoke of the proposals being ‘*unrealistic*’, ‘*regrettable*’, ‘*a backwards step*’, ‘*tragedy*’, ‘*wholly impractical*’, ‘*devastating*’, etc

Feedback gathered in relation to proposal 36 (New Art Gallery) and 32, 33 and 34 (libraries, Leather Museum, Local History Centre & Archive) has shown that many people think the NAG could be a suitable alternative location for some of these services.

Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum

Respondents were asked to make suggestions for how the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum could be delivered or where else they might be located. Of the 161 comments made, many said do not move the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum. Alternative suggestions included locating the Local History Centre & Archive in with the Leather Museum and others suggested housing both services in one of the remaining libraries or in the New Art Gallery.

Other general comments included: -

Local History Centre & Archive

- Noted that the archive is a statutory function.
- Deliver the service from the Central library.
- Generate income by charging.
- Source funding from educational budgets.
- Could be scaled down and make information available on the internet.
- Parking is not as good in the town centre.

Leather Museum

- A valued and well used asset for Walsall.
- Important that the Museum remains in the former leather factory.
- Would be very sad to lose the Museum.
- Charge an entry fee.
- A vital role in highlighting the town's history.
- Not very interesting for children.
- It's one of the best things that Walsall has.

Overall the feedback was to retain the town and local library model, retain the Leather Museum in its current site and to develop a central "Hub" (Town Centre library incorporating the Local History Centre & Archive). A Mobile Library and the Home Delivery Service was also to be retained.

Petitions

A number of petitions were submitted in relation to these budget proposals, these being: -

1. "Save Streetly Library" containing approximately 1,600 signatures. A report went to Council on 9 January 2017,
2. "Save Darlaston Library" containing 401 signatures was submitted on 09/12/16. This will be responded to by the Executive Director (Economy and Environment),
3. "Save Bloxwich library" contained 544 signatures was submitted on-line on 11 November 2016. A further petition was submitted to Council at its meeting held

on 9 January 2017. The total number of signatures has triggered a debate at a future meeting of the Corporate and Public Services Scrutiny Committee to be held on 21 February 2017,

4. "Save Rushall Library" contained 532 signatures was submitted on 22 December 2016 by Cllr Rattigan on behalf of Rushall Development Committee. This will be debated at a future meeting of the Corporate and Public Services Scrutiny Committee to be held on 21 February 2017,
5. "Save Pheasey Library" containing 660 signatures was submitted to Council on 9 January 2017. This will be debated at the Corporate and Public Services Scrutiny Committee on 21 February 2017,
6. "Save Aldridge Library" containing 1,540 signatures was submitted to Council on 9 January 2017. This will be considered at Council on 23rd February 2017 and
7. "Save Walsall Leather Museum" containing 2,534 signatures was submitted by Cllr Cooper. This will be considered at Council on 23rd February 2017.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation (which closed 31 Dec 2016)

Residents are broadly in favour of a combination of option 1 (the Walsall town centre "Hub") and option 3 (district provision) as well as to retain the Leather Museum at its existing site, a mobile library and the Home Delivery Service.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment.

B – Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

The Cabinet's preferred model (Option 1) to have the Lichfield Street "Hub" (including Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive) along with one mobile and the Home Delivery Service, on its own, does not meet the feedback from the council's consultation exercise.

The council has now finalised its budget spending and income assumptions, and as a result, has been able to release further funds which members have chosen to prioritise to allow a "Hub" plus local library offer. Through Members making a variety of choices across the whole breadth of the council's budget, additional funding has been identified which allows a total budget of £2.5m to be allocated to the Library Service, Local History Centre and Leather Museum to deliver a service which is in-line with residents' feedback.

As a result, the Cabinet is now minded to consider the following model to cover the borough: -

- Walsall Town Centre “Hub” (including the Local History Centre & Archive),
- The Leather Museum remaining “as is” at the Wisemore factory,
- A service of local libraries that covered the whole borough,
- One Mobile Library and a Home Delivery Service
- A community library, augmented with local volunteers

Using the universally recognised two-mile radius (not a legal requirement) to each library coverage, the South East corner of the borough would not receive library provision. It is acceptable to assume that access to Birmingham’s Kingstanding library could provide a service however this would be outside of Walsall’s own library service. A proposition to support the “Save Streetly Library” campaign group could mean that the uncovered area would fall under Walsall’s provision. One small area of sparsely populated Walsall would still not meet the two-mile radius however these dwellings are very close to the A34 Birmingham Road, a major bus route and links to the town centre. If necessary, consideration to redesigning the Mobile Library bus route may also be required.

Where the remaining nine library buildings are surplus to the requirements of the statutory Library Service, officers will work with the community on a Transition Plan(s) to seek new uses for the buildings and to consider how volunteer local book exchanges might continue to be delivered.

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Depending on which option is chosen, the impact varies. A generic summary of the impacts could be taken as: -

Option 1 (Central “Hub”)

This option allows for a single, well resourced town centre site in Walsall. It retains the redesigned (albeit smaller) Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive and so is inherently better value for money and “saves” these services. Putting several services together can offer economies of scale and more staff overall to run operate the building. Opening hours / days may be extended.

Residents who can walk to Walsall, have a car and can park in the town or can access a good public transport service would be unaffected by the proposal. By having no district or smaller libraries, residents who live further away would be affected with regard to accessibility, time and cost. Their library use, particularly for the young and elderly would be likely to reduce although a mobile library and Home Delivery Service would be retained. Home work opportunities for children without ICT or Wi-Fi would be affected unless other provision could be found in their localities.

Option 2 (de-centralised)

This option allows for a number of district libraries to be selected across the borough. A mobile library and Home Delivery Service must be retained.

Ease of access to these smaller libraries would be better for those residents living

close to them and with good transport and/or bus routes. Existing users of the libraries chosen would welcome their selection. Users of libraries not chosen may choose not to transfer to their next nearest local library and stop using the service, however some may transfer to the chosen sites and overall attendance could increase.

The available budget of £1m would not permit local district libraries as well as retaining the “Hub”. This would mean no town centre provision but would also lead to the closure of the Leather Museum and Local History Centre unless other funding could be found. An alternative model of delivery would be necessary for the statutory Archive function.

Option 3 (mixed approach)

This option allowed for a choice of any mix of service (from whole list: Central, libraries, Museum, History Centre, mobile library, Home Delivery Service).

Ease of access to these sites would be better for those residents living close to them and with good transport and/or bus routes. Existing users of the sites chosen would welcome their selection. Users of sites not chosen may choose not to transfer and stop using the service altogether. Some may transfer to the chosen sites and overall attendance could increase.

As with option 2 the available budget of £1m would not permit local district libraries as well as retaining the “Hub”. This would mean no town centre provision but would also lead to the closure of the Leather Museum and Local History Centre unless other funding could be found. An alternative model of delivery would be necessary for the statutory Archive function.

Overall it is difficult to forecast what the actual impact might be. Some people may say that they will not use a library again however an improved service may in fact become a better destination. Frequency by individuals may fall, although overall attendances (by more individuals) may actually increase. It would however be reasonable to conclude that the elderly would be negatively affected by Option 1 by being less able to get to Walsall by public transport. The disabled, children and parents with pushchairs are likely to be similarly affected.

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref 32

Cabinet are minded to develop a town centre and district centre library model along with one mobile library and the home delivery service. The Local History Centre & Archive will relocate into the Lichfield Street “Hub”. The Leather Museum will remain in its existing Wisemore building. Streetly Library will operate as a Community Library as part of the Library Service, but will be augmented by volunteers and for a reduced budget.

Transition Plan(s) will be developed alongside community groups to find alternative uses for the library buildings that are no longer required for the statutory Library Service.

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

Proposal name	Options for redesign of Library Service incorporating the Local History Centre and Leather Museum			
Directorate	Economy and Environment			
Service	Leisure, Culture Operations			
Responsible Officer	Chris Holliday			
EqIA Author	Chris Holliday			
Proposal planning start	September 2016	Proposal start date	February 2017	
		Completion (by)	October 2017	
1	What is the purpose of the proposal?		Yes / No	New / revision
	Policy		Y	New
	Procedure			
	Internal service			
	External Service		Y	
	Other - give details			
2	What are the intended outcomes, reasons for change? (The business case)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council, as with all local authorities, is experiencing significant financial challenges. Since the emergency budget of 2011/12, the council has reduced its spending by £84m, and needed to save a further £86m in the Corporate Spending Review (CSR) period from 2016/17 to be able to balance its budget by 2019/20. There is a widening gap in the council's finances due to a combination of reducing funding and increasing costs. It is clear that funding for key priorities will be significantly diminished and that the council will not be able to sustain services at the current level. Funding for the development and continuity of services will need to be met from the redirection of existing resources and the identification of new or revised income sources. The council needs to reduce its expenditure by approximately £31m (2017/18), £31m (2018/19), £15m (2019/20) and £9m (2020/21). The profile for these savings may change however the overall savings equate to c. £86m. Various proposals have been considered in recent years with a view to reconfigure the borough's Library Service. Different schemes have been considered by Cabinet, Scrutiny and Council since 2010 however as yet no significant changes have been implemented. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet the year 1 (2017/18) budget pressures, savings were initially identified of: £2.9m from Libraries, £0.187m from the Local History Centre & Archive, and £0.171m from the Leather Museum Following development work with Cabinet CMT and a Cabinet (Libraries) Working Group, three options were developed so that consultation could take place from Thursday 27 October 2016. Through previous library proposals; suggestions have been put forward for specific library closures, but under the current proposal feedback has been sought; more about libraries to be retained, thereby retaining a borough-wide provision and a <i>comprehensive</i> service. The underlying principle is to now have a service that operates at significantly less cost but meets both the statutory need for a library service and archive, and supports discretionary services like the Local History Centre and Leather Museum that residents and visitors value. Consultation commenced 27 October 2016 and concluded on 31 December 2016 and consisted of various methods of consultation as set out in section 4 and gave 3 options to consider; <p>Option 1: Reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to 1, keeping Walsall Central Library (Lichfield Street, Walsall), retaining one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. The single library site would be redesigned and developed as a "Hub" in conjunction with an integrated Local History Centre & Archive and the Leather Museum. This would be for a budget of circa £1m. This was the Cabinet's preferred option.</p> <p>Option 2: Close Walsall Central library and reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to no more than 5, keeping one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. A minimal local history & archive service would operate from one of the retained libraries. There is a budget of approximately £1m for this option. Unless a suitable, alternative location is found for Walsall Leather Museum, it would close.</p> <p>Option 3: Your alternative option, retaining any number and selection of libraries and/or the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum, within a budget of approximately £1m per year.</p> <p>Mobile libraries Currently two mobile library buses operate in the borough. One runs Monday to Friday and stops at 40 locations in local communities throughout the borough. The other mobile library runs Monday to Friday and stops at around 10 care homes and sheltered housing for older people.</p>		
3	Who is the proposal potential likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All	Y	The current Library Services operates from 16 libraries

			throughout the borough																				
	Specific group/s	Y	<p>The proposal will affect all service users including those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Potential impact on:</p> <p>Range of community groups</p> <p>LGBT</p> <p>Black History Month</p> <p>International Women's day</p> <p>Mother and Toddlers groups – Elderly</p>																				
	Council employees	Y	A reduction in service will result in redundancies																				
	Other		Anyone who, for some reason, finds it difficult to travel out of their locality to use a library.																				
4	Evidence, engagement and consultation (including from area partnerships, where relevant)																						
4.1	<p>The council's generic consultation ran from 27 October to 9 December 2016. Due to the complexity and scale of the outline proposals for the Library Service, consultation for libraries was run for a longer period; 27 October to 31 December 2016 to ensure that the Gunning principles were met.</p> <p>A range of consultation and engagement opportunities were undertaken. In addition to what has been received in writing and through email, there has been targeted consultation as follows: -</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Type</td><td>Pick up information / hand-out at all libraries, Local History Centre and Leather Museum. Feedback encouraged.</td><td>Date</td><td>From 27 October 2016</td></tr> <tr> <td>Audience</td><td colspan="3"> Service users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call for feedback is likely to have prompted engagement through a range of the opportunities made available. As a result, we received 162 responses via email and letters. </td></tr> <tr> <td>Protected characteristics</td><td colspan="3">Disabled / Age - elderly and the young</td></tr> <tr> <td>Feedback</td><td colspan="3">See section 4.2. Analysis of this feedback also available.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Type</td><td>Postal questionnaire to 11,600 households across</td><td>Date</td><td>From 4 Nov. to 31 Dec. 2016</td></tr> </table>			Type	Pick up information / hand-out at all libraries, Local History Centre and Leather Museum. Feedback encouraged.	Date	From 27 October 2016	Audience	Service users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call for feedback is likely to have prompted engagement through a range of the opportunities made available. As a result, we received 162 responses via email and letters. 			Protected characteristics	Disabled / Age - elderly and the young			Feedback	See section 4.2. Analysis of this feedback also available.			Type	Postal questionnaire to 11,600 households across	Date	From 4 Nov. to 31 Dec. 2016
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Feedback	See section 4.2. Analysis of this feedback also available.																						
Type	Postal questionnaire to 11,600 households across	Date	From 4 Nov. to 31 Dec. 2016																				

	the borough (random sample)		
Audience	Residents of the borough - service and non service users <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Random sample survey of 11,600 households.• 1,212 completed questionnaires received (10.4% response rate). As a random sample survey the results may be generalised to the wider population. Results are accurate to within $\pm 2.8\%$ at the borough level.• To counter-act non response bias data has been weighted back to the known population profile; weights have been applied for age within gender bands and ethnicity.		
Protected characteristics	Older people, people with disabilities and families / children		
Feedback			
See section 4.2. Report of survey also available.			
Type	Face to Face at all libraries, Local History Centre and Leather Museum	Date	18 Nov. to 20 Dec. 2016
Audience	Service users <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On-site, unannounced, face to face interviews with library users were completed at each static library, the Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive.• 106 interviews were held.		
Protected characteristics	Older people, people with disabilities and families / children		
Feedback			
See section 4.2. Report of face to face feedback available.			
Type	Version of postal survey made available for those not within the random sample.	Date	From 4 Nov. 2016
Audience	Residents of the borough - service and non-service users		

		Anyone could have their say via an open online survey; which was adapted for online format and hence a slight shorted version of postal survey. Information was made available online and also in print format in all libraries, with instructions for how to respond.	
	Protected characteristics	Older people, people with disabilities and families / children	
	Feedback		
	See section 4.2. Report of survey is available.		
4.2	Concise summary of evidence, engagement and consultation (including from area partnerships, where relevant)		
	<p>The results of the postal survey provide the views of both library users and non users, therefore providing a broadly balanced picture of opinion. However, consideration should also be given to how the views of library users and non users are balanced against each other.</p> <p>To counter-act non response bias, data is weighted back to the known population profile of Walsall; weighting has therefore been applied for age within gender bands and ethnicity.</p> <p>56% of respondents were active library users, having used a Walsall library within the last 12 months. 41% were non library users.</p> <p>Although option 1 appears to be the preferred option across the board, option preferences for a redesigned library service vary amongst users and non users as well as where they live.</p> <p>Retaining an accessible local library service is important to library users, particularly those who do not / cannot / would not use Walsall Central library. People generally wanted to see their local library retained.</p> <p>Non library users however take a different view; most feel that a single Central library “Hub” offers a good solution with no / minimal impact on them.</p> <p>Results indicate people felt that option 1 (the central library “Hub”) may adversely impact older people, people with disabilities and families / children more than other groups, particularly in terms of ability to travel. As a result, many say that if option 1 was approved they would stop using the library service altogether. The potential closure of local libraries (district and smaller libraries) would be viewed as a loss to communities. Libraries, and in particular the buildings that contain them, are valued assets, providing far more than just places to access and borrow books. The wider impact of their closure should be considered.</p> <p>Walsall’s heritage is valued and closing the Leather Museum is perceived to be a great detriment to the borough and the town’s historical heritage.</p> <p>A total of 56% of respondents were ‘active library users’ and 41% were non users.</p>		

Active library users were most likely to say they visit the library about once a month (18%).

Females (62%) are more likely to use libraries than males (48%). Usage is slightly higher amongst BME communities (64%), compared to white groups (56%); with BME groups more likely to use the library at least once a week (20%) than the average (15%).

Notably, BME communities are far more likely to say that Walsall central library is closest to where they live (32%) compared to borough average (20%). This is likely to broadly reflect the central borough geographical location of Walsall's BME population. Hence, as seen later on in this report, this is most likely to explain why Option 1, of all the options, best suits their needs for the future.

Most active library users travel to the library they use most often on foot (48%). A third travel by car (33%). 11% rely on public transport and 1% cycle. Compared to White groups, BME groups are more likely to travel to the library by car. Females are slightly less likely than males to travel to the library they use most often on foot.

BME library users are far more likely to prefer option 1 (51%), than those from white groups (33%). Probably, this is because this group are more likely to indicate that Walsall Central Library is closest to them. Hence, as a group they are less likely to prefer Option 2 (19%) than white groups (27%) as this option involves closure of the central library.

They are also less likely to prefer Option 3 (30%) compared to White groups (41%).

Non library users have a strong preference for option 1, with over two thirds (67%) of respondents preferring this option. This trend is mirrored across BME communities.

The online survey: also available in hard copy

The on-line questionnaire was a slightly shorter version of the postal questionnaire.

Being available online anyone could respond and there were no restrictions on the number of times an individual could respond. This was also made available in hard copy at libraries and upon request. The open nature of the questionnaire means that the results may not be generalised to the wider population and are simply the views of those who responded; which is not equal across all libraries / services.

A summary of the feedback showed: -

- 224 people responded, of which 89% were residents
- 91% were active library users
- Central, Aldridge, Streetly, Bloxwich and Pelsall were the most *used* libraries

- Preferred libraries to be retained generally reflected the libraries used by respondents
- Retaining a local library service is important to people
- People want to retain the library they use most often
- Option 1 was unpopular due to it excluding the option for local libraries to be retained
- The central library was seen as an inconvenient location for most, thus requiring the need to travel. The lack of plentiful free parking was also off putting
- Many say they would stop using the library if option 1 was approved
- 70% preferred option 3
- 21% preferred option 2

Option 3 – Preferred services to retain

Option 3 invited respondents to choose any mix of services to retain within a budget of approximately. £1m. Only two static libraries (*) feature and so this option plus the top four “libraries only” for £1m are also shown.

Preferred services to retain under option 3	
All services	Libraries only
Aldridge *	Aldridge
Home Delivery	Bloxwich
Leather Museum	Streetly
Bloxwich *	Pelsall
1 Mobile	-
Local History Centre	-
£1.024m	£1.008m

Option 2 – Preferred libraries to retain

This option automatically included the Home Delivery Service and one Mobile Library. Respondents were invited to select up to five static libraries they would want to see retained, again within a budget of approximately £1m. Pleck and Willenhall were equal 5th and so both options are shown below to reflect the different overall costs.

Preferred libraries to retain under option 2	
a.	b.
Aldridge	Aldridge
Bloxwich	Bloxwich
Pelsall	Pelsall
Streetly	Streetly
Pleck	Willenhall
Home Delivery	Home Delivery
1 Mobile	1 Mobile
£1.239m	£1.480m

Summary

- Those who use libraries value them highly as local community assets that provide far more than just books
- Many feel that libraries to be retained should be those that are most used, reflecting the value the library holds in the local community
- People want to see the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum retained.
- Results indicate a preference to keep the Leather Museum over the Local History Centre & Archive
- Many feel that the closure of the Leather Museum would be a detriment to the borough
- A mobile library that stops at a mix of locations is preferred

Face-to-face interviews

Between 18 November and 20 December 2016, unannounced face-to-face interviews were undertaken at each library, the Leather Museum and the Local History Centre & Archive. The interviews were undertaken by council staff, independent of the Library Service, who spent a minimum of two hours at each location. Officers followed a semi-structured questionnaire to guide the interview and record their comments. A total of 106 interviews were held.

A summary of the feedback showed: -

- Most (85%) expressed a preference for Option 2 and 3, with many reflecting the need to retain libraries within the community and keeping their local library (the one where the interview was being conducted).
- Half of those interviewed preferred Option 2.
- Having a local library best served their needs.
- Many are concerned about travelling to Walsall, and parking.
- Some worry about the impact on the elderly and the loss of access to computers.
- A third of people interviewed preferred Option 3. - many feel option 3 retains a local (district) library service.
- Some still wanted the Central / Museum / History Centre too.
- Museum / History Centre users keen to retain their locations.
- Generally, people want to keep as many libraries open as possible.
- Many fear that the loss of libraries will affect “*social care*”.
- Many prefer this option because Central was perceived to be the best resourced and that it keeps the Leather Museum and History Centre too (although most would prefer the Leather Museum to stay in its current site).
- Several respondents felt that option 1 was “the best of a bad bunch” but saw the sense in retaining one central site.
- However, in a centralised scenario the loss of access to computers and Wi-Fi for children / homework was a concern for many.

Very few alternative suggestions were put forward, of those that did, suggestions included: -

- Less busy libraries should be closed.
- Keep those with the most services.
- Reduce opening times but keep all sites.
- Put libraries in leisure centres.
- Charge admission fees for the Leather Museum.
- Provide computers in areas of greatest need.

Usage, accessibility, meeting the needs of deprived communities and taking account of the community value/cumulative impact of library closure; were regularly stated as the key considerations to be taken into account when making a decision on this proposal.

Other feedback

A further 162 items of correspondence were received from respondents by e-mail and post. A summary of the feedback showed: -

- Only 41 selected any option (1, 2 or 3).
- Most put forward to just “save my library”.
- Many stated the case for retaining libraries, including the social benefit.
- Many proposals suggested 7, 8 or even 11 sites; greatly in excess of the available £1m budget.
- Several were well thought through proposals.
- The top six sites these respondents wanted to see retained were; Streetly (16%), Bloxwich Library – especially the Theatre (14%), Aldridge (12%) and Central, Pelsall and Willenhall (all 9%).
- The Save Streetly Library campaign group submitted a separate paper outlining their own case for retaining the library albeit on a slightly reduced budget.

Few respondents put forward alternative suggestions for how the savings could be made. Of those that did, suggestions included;

- Generate more income / open a café.
- Charge a membership fee.
- Charge to borrow books (not permitted).
- Find a sponsor.
- Local History Centre and Leather Museum to merge.
- Move the Local History Centre and/or Leather Museum into New Art Gallery (NAG).
- Move the Central Library and Leather Museum into NAG.
- Close the NAG and use the funds to save local libraries.
- Establish a charitable trust.

Many respondents spoke of the proposals being '*unrealistic*', '*regrettable*', '*a backwards step*', '*tragedy*', '*wholly impractical*', '*devastating*', etc

Feedback gathered in relation to proposal 36 (New Art Gallery) and 32, 33 and 34 (Libraries, Leather Museum, Local History Centre & Archive) has shown that many people think the NAG could be a suitable alternative location for some of these services.

Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum

Respondents were asked to make suggestions for how the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum could be delivered or where else they might be located.

Of the 162 comments made, many said do not move the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum. Alternative suggestions included locating the Local History Centre & Archive within the Leather Museum and others suggested housing both services in one of the remaining libraries or in the New Art Gallery.

Other general comments included: -

Local History Centre & Archive

- Noted that the archive is a statutory function.
- Deliver the service from the Central library.
- Generate income by charging.
- Source funding from educational budgets.
- Could be scaled down and make information available on the internet.
- Parking is not as good in the town centre.

Leather Museum

- A valued and well used asset for Walsall.
- Important that the Museum remains in the former leather factory.
- Would be very sad to lose the Museum.
- Charge an entry fee.
- A vital role in highlighting the town's history.
- Not very interesting for children.
- It's one of the best things that Walsall has.

Overall feedback was to retain town and district centre libraries, retain the Leather Museum in its current site and to develop a central hub (Town Centre library incorporating the Local History Centre and Archive).

The Council has listened to the feedback and amended the proposal to meet needs objectively i.e. Identified additional funding to enable the provision of a town and district centre model along with a community library at Streetly augmented with community volunteer support as well as keeping a mobile and housebound library service. It was also decided to retain the Leather Museum in

its current location.

Taking into account all of the available feedback it is considered that no further consultation is required. Resources will be put into embedding the new approach and helping residents to successfully access the new library model.

Mitigation / Alternative Options

If libraries were to close in-line with the proposals in the consultation, there would still be a static library service point within 2 miles of every household in the Borough with the exception of a small area in the extreme west of Pheasey. Extending the radius to 2½ miles from the Central “Hub” and Streetly along with a reconfiguration of the mobile library service can ensure full borough-wide coverage. Pheasey residents also have access to Birmingham’s Kingstanding library and it is understood that there are currently no plans to change the operating model or hours of opening at this site.

2 miles is considered to be a reasonable distance to expect people to travel as it is in line with the national Public Library Standards, published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and used to monitor Library Authorities’ performance up to 2009. Whilst these standards are no longer a statutory requirement, local authorities are encouraged to benchmark their activities using these standards as a test of reasonableness.

To mitigate for the closure of libraries in local areas, the council will approach community organisations to assess their interest in providing community “book exchanges”, either from the site of the old library or from their own buildings. These facilities would provide access to books for loan to local residents who would have difficulty accessing a library service point if their local library closes. Such a provision would be outside of the council’s strategic library service.

Some expressions of interest have been received from various communities for the provision of community based book exchanges and these will be investigated further once Cabinet agree the format for the strategic Library Service.

Decision tree

	<p>We consulted widely</p> <p>↓</p> <p>We've listened to all the feedback.</p> <p>↓</p> <hr/> <p>Understood rationale; i.e. individuals justification for the feedback; taken it all on board and looked at this objectively.</p> <p>↓</p> <hr/> <p>This has influenced our thinking</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Rationale has informed development of new operating model (Town & District and Hub approach) and possible options have been mapped including alternative options i.e. Marmot model.</p> <p>↓</p> <hr/> <p>Options have been fully evaluated against criteria for new operating model.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Sought advice from Consultation Institute and taken that on board.</p> <p>↓</p> <hr/> <p>Spent a lot of time giving this conscientious consideration and taking on board advice and feedback, ratified our thinking.</p> <p>↓</p> <hr/> <p>All options seem to come back to one overall operating model: the town & district model. Districts are where people can access wider offer, good transport links and are well used libraries. Coverage of which deals with meeting both need and demand.</p> <p>↓</p> <hr/> <p>Therefore questioning the need to consult again, assuming we have the risk appetite to make this decision now, based on what we already know.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Concentrate efforts on delivering the new Library Operating Model at the earliest opportunity</p>			
5	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative or neutral.			
	Characteristic	Effect	Reason	Action needed Y or N
	Age	Negative	Children, young people, older people because of their difficulties travelling to another service point - 32% of respondents say they would stop using libraries if their local one closed. Children and older people - Loss of the library as community hub would increase	Y

		<p>isolation; there is a strong sense of community instilled by libraries and they are seen as a place to meet and to integrate into the community.</p> <p>Children and young adults - computer facilities would decrease the work/study / homework opportunities and the availability to job search/applications Children, young people, older people – the loss of activities and informal learning opportunities for people of all ages e.g. Mother and Toddler groups, adult and teenage reading groups and 50+ clubs</p>	
Disability	Negative	<p>Problems travelling to another service point Loss of the library as community hub offering a meeting place and activities.</p>	Y
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Loss of materials will be reallocated to other libraries	N
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	N/A	N
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	<p>Problems travelling to another service point Loss of the library as community hub offering a meeting place e.g. Mother and Toddler groups</p>	Y
Race	Neutral	<p>When we look at this by ethnicity; active BME library users are far more likely to prefer option 1 (51%), than those from white groups (33%). Probably, this is because this group are more likely to indicate that Walsall Central Library is closest to them. Hence as a group they are less likely to prefer Option 2 (19%) than white groups (27%) as this option involves closure of the central library. They are also less likely to prefer Option 3 (30%) compared to White groups (41%).</p>	Mobile library service could concentrate on those areas.
Religion or belief	Neutral	N/A	N
Sex	Neutral	No significant apparent adverse	N

			impact by gender, however, acknowledging that females (62%) are more likely to use libraries than men (48%)	
	Sexual orientation	Neutral	Loss of relevant materials will be reallocated to other libraries.	N
	Other (give detail)	No		
	Further Information	Where libraries are part of centres which provide other community amenities, these may be negatively impacted by the withdrawal of the library and its customers. However, a full assessment of this risk will be undertaken as part of the operating model.		
6	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative affect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details below.			(Delete one) No
7	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation suggest you take? (Bold which one applies)			
	A	No major change required		
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better		
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact		
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal		

As a result of the extensive consultation, the Cabinet's current proposal for a comprehensive borough-wide Library Service, Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive is to deliver a service that includes: -

- Walsall Town Centre "Hub" (including the Local History Centre & Archive)
- The Leather Museum will remain at the Wisemore factory
- Five District libraries (Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall)
- A Community Library at Streetly, augmented with community volunteer support, and
- One Mobile Library and a Home Delivery Service, the mobile service route to be redesigned to meet Marmot objectives and greatest need

The libraries not included in the new borough model would be: Beechdale, Blakenall, New Invention, Pelsall, Pleck, Pheasey, Rushall, South Walsall and Walsall Wood.

An offer would be made to the community to take on these sites as local "book exchanges" or venues for community activities as required, run by volunteers. These sites will not form part of the council's statutory library service.

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
April 2017	As a minimum, ensure that Town Centre and District libraries will still be open.	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		The District and Town Centre model will ensure borough-wide coverage together with the mobile and housebound library service.
April 2017	There will be a library service point within approximately 2 miles of every household in the Borough	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		The new model ensures widespread geographical coverage of library services where this is not the case, the mobile library service together with neighbouring local authority library provision will be available
April 2017	Effective communication with residents and people with protected characteristics during the implementation of the new delivery model	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		Communication with customers to ensure that they are able to fully engage in and access the new library provision
April 2017	Mobile Library Service has appropriate coverage to support the new delivery model	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		The mobile library service will be reviewed to reflect the needs within the new delivery model
April 2017	Support those people who are housebound to receive a service from the Housebound Library Service.	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		The housebound services will be reviewed to reflect the needs within the new delivery model
April 2017	Provide accessible information and signposting at the retained libraries for learning opportunities, meeting places and activities - particularly for people identified as negatively impacted	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		We will investigate the needs of any groups that currently meet within those libraries to close so that their activities may relocate elsewhere within the local community

Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
April 2017	Ensure that library services are available online: including access to e-book downloads, reservation and renewal facilities, the catalogue of stock, library addresses and opening times; events and activities and the facility to make enquiries	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		This service will continue to compliment the new delivery model
April 2017	Monitor the impact of reductions in the service and seek to implement appropriate mitigating actions. Investigate partnerships with local community organisations to provide local "book exchange" facilities based either in a community building or the old library and managed by the community.	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		A rigorous review will be undertaken of those libraries to close in order to assess the gaps that this leaves and identify appropriate mitigating actions including the offer of support to community led options
April 2017	Library Services will work with schools and other organisations to give children access to books, encourage reading and improve literacy. In particular, working with communities in addressing homework help and mother's and toddlers support, as identified in consultation.	Chris Holliday, Head of Leisure Culture and Operations		The new delivery model will still offer a borough wide library provision with good accessibility to town and district centres in which they are situated. This will be undertaken as part of the holistic review of impact in reductions in service
October 2017	The Local History Centre & Archive will have moved the majority of its service from Essex Street to the town centre "Hub"	Holly Holdsworth, Principal Registration Manager		The Local History Centre & Archive will operate from its new location
October 2017	The Leather Museum will refocus its attention on becoming more commercially minded along with the sale of more leather goods	Mike Glasson, Senior Museums Curator		Additional income will be generated and greater focus made on attracting more visitors to see new exhibits

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
13 February 2017	An updated EqIA would be provided if the 8 February 2017 Cabinet decide on a different model for the Library Service

Consultation on options for a redesigned library service

Postal Survey of Households Report of findings

January 2017

Date 16.01.17
Version V2.1

Executive Summary

This report summarises the results from a random sample postal survey of households in Walsall about options for a redesigned library service

In early November 2016, 11,600 questionnaires were posted to households. By the closing date of 31 December, 1,212 completed questionnaires had been received (10% response rate)

Being a random sample survey the results may be generalised to the wider population. Results are accurate to within $\pm 2.8\%$ at the borough level

To counter-act non response bias data is weighted back to the known population profile of Walsall (weights have been applied for age within gender bands and ethnicity)

56% of respondents were active library users, having used a Walsall library within the last 12 months. 41% were non library users

For a fifth of respondents, Walsall Central library was their closest library. For 10% of respondents Aldridge was their closest followed by Bloxwich 9%. Between 7% and 2% identified another library as being their closest

Most active library users use the library that is closest to where they live. However, the results also show that some library users do not necessarily always solely use their closest library, accessing a mix of libraries

Most active library users travel to the library they use most often on foot (48%). A third travel by car (33%). 11% rely on public transport and 1% cycle. Compared to White groups, BME groups are more likely to travel to the library by car. Females are slightly less likely than males to travel to the library they use most often on foot

Amongst active library users, borrowing books (adults) is the most common library service used (70%), followed by finding information (40%), borrowing books for children

(38%) and using computers (37%). Results also show that people use different libraries for different things

Few respondents (5%) had used the mobile library service and home delivery service (1%)

14% of respondents had used the Local History Centre & Archive in the last 12 months, with most (40%) travelling there by car

Just over a fifth of respondents (22%) had visited the Leather Museum in the last 12 months, 46% travelling there by car

Amongst library users and non users most (45%) prefer option 1. (a Central library 'hub' incorporating the Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive). 30% preferred option 3. and suggested their own combination of services to retain. 20% preferred option 2. a five library scenario (closing Central library) and suggesting their own mix of libraries to retain

Amongst library users only, option 1 is preferred by 39% compared to 37% who prefer option 3 and 24% option 2

Non library users have a strong preference for option 1, with over two thirds (67%) of respondents preferring this option

Far more respondents who use Central library preferred option 1 compared to those who used other libraries. 69% of Central library users preferred option 1 compared to 25% of both district library users and small library users who preferred this option

Users of district and small libraries were most likely to prefer option 3

There is no clear option preference amongst users of the LHC&A or Leather Museum

Respondents identified a range of potential impacts option 1 may have on them. Many felt that a single central library 'hub' in Walsall town centre is too far for them and others to travel to. The distance and need for transport (private or public) was particularly off-putting and overall wholly inconvenient

Lack and cost of parking was a particular concern for many

Many respondents said that if option 1 was approved it would mean they would no longer visit the library

Some, particularly non users and those who's closest library was Central, felt that option 1 would have no / minimal impact on them. Some respondents felt that option 1 offered the best all round solution

Many other comments were made including the closure of libraries would mean a loss of important community assets and resources. Some felt that there would be a potential negative impact on the education and development of children as well as mental health and well-being. Some indicated the need to use the mobile library instead

Amongst those who preferred option 2, the top 5 most frequently selected libraries to retain were; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Pelsall, Walsall Wood and Streetly (all respondents, and active library users select the same libraries). Non users select a slightly different range of libraries; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Willenhall, Pelsall and Pleck. (All selections exceed the £850,000 budget allocation for option 2)

When providing preferences under option 2 people are asked to consider the bigger picture when determining options for future library provision. However, results intimate that respondents struggle to remain objective when selecting libraries for retention. Respondents are more likely to have their own interests at heart when listing libraries they would like to retain

Many, primarily non library users, felt that should option 2 be approved it would have no/minimal impact on them, in particular if their local / preferred library was retained

Looking at all respondents the preferred services to retain under option 3 within a £1m budget include; Aldridge, Leather Museum, Bloxwich and Streetly at a cost of £945,000. Including the next service in the list exceeds the budget (LHC&A £187,000)

Amongst library users only who prefer option 3, the selection is different and includes a greater geographical spread; Aldridge, Streetly Willenhall, Walsall Wood and Blakenall costing £945,000

Non users would like to see Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge retained costing £1,030,000.

Over half (54%) would prefer a mobile library that calls at a combination of stops. 17% preferred a community based timetable whilst 11% preferred a service that calls only at care homes and sheltered housing. 17% thought that the council should not operate a mobile library service

Suggestions for alternative locations for the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum services included; the New Art Gallery, Civic Centre / Town Hall, in one of the retained libraries including Central, locating the LHC&A in the with the Leather Museum, redundant buildings / empty shops, working in partnership with other local authorities, The Black Country Museum

Alternative suggestions for how these services could be delivered included reducing the opening hours, using volunteers, introducing a charge or through seeking sponsorship

Half of all respondents said that paying a bit more council tax would have a 'big impact' on them, whilst 38% said it would have 'some impact'. Just 7% of respondents felt that paying more would have no impact on them.

Conclusions

These results provide the views of both library users and non-users, therefore providing a broadly balanced picture of opinion. However, consideration should be given to how the views of library users and non users are balanced against each other.

Although option 1 appears to be the preferred option across the board, option preferences for a redesigned library service vary amongst users and non users as well as where they live.

Retaining an accessible local library service is important to library users, particularly those who do not / cannot / would not use Walsall Central library. People want to see their local library retained.

Non library users however take a different view; most feel a single Central library 'hub' offers a good solution with no / minimal impact on them.

Results indicate that option 1 (central library 'hub') may adversely impact older people, people with disabilities and families / children more than other groups, particularly in terms of ability to travel. As a result, many say that if option 1 was approved they would stop using the library service.

The potential closure of local libraries (district and smaller libraries) would be viewed as a great loss to communities. Libraries are highly valued assets, providing far more than just places to access and borrow books and the wider impact of their closure should be considered.

Walsall's heritage is valued and closing the Leather Museum is perceived to be a great detriment to the borough.

Based on findings from this survey, a redesigned service that retains the Central library incorporating the Leather Museum and Local History Centre and Archive, plus a network of local libraries is most desired. Achieving this within the available budget will prove a significant challenge.

Introduction

Walsall Council needs to make savings of £86 million over four years, and from 27 October to 9 December 2016, consultation on draft budget proposals took place.

One of the draft proposals put forward was to redesign the library service, including the Local History Centre & Archive and the Leather Museum, with anticipated savings of approximately £2.9m.

Walsall currently has 16 “static” libraries in buildings all over the borough, 2 mobile libraries and a home delivery service for people who are housebound. To balance the budget, the cost of the service needs to be reduced from approximately £4m (net) to £1m a year. Three different options were put forward for consultation, and between 27 October and 31 December 2016, residents were consulted on which of the options they would prefer.

Fig. 1 Option 1 – Central Hub

Option 1

This option costs approx £1m per year and is the council's preferred option

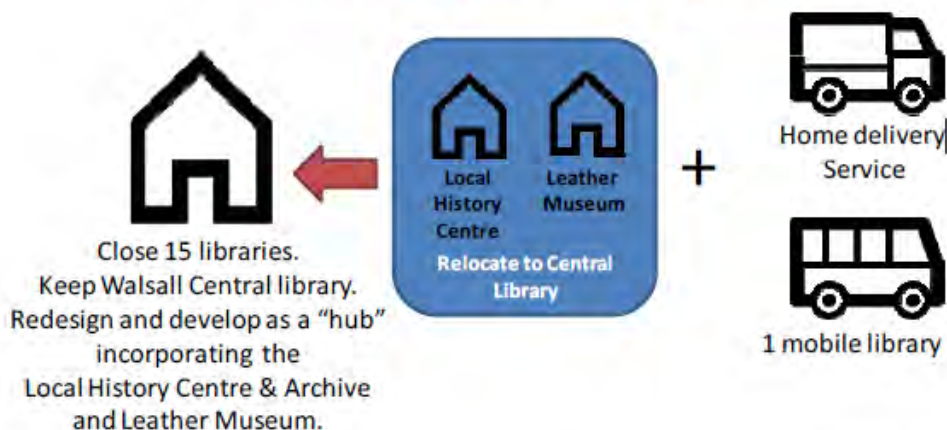


Fig. 2 Option 2 – Five library scenario

Option 2

There is a budget of approx £1m per year for this option

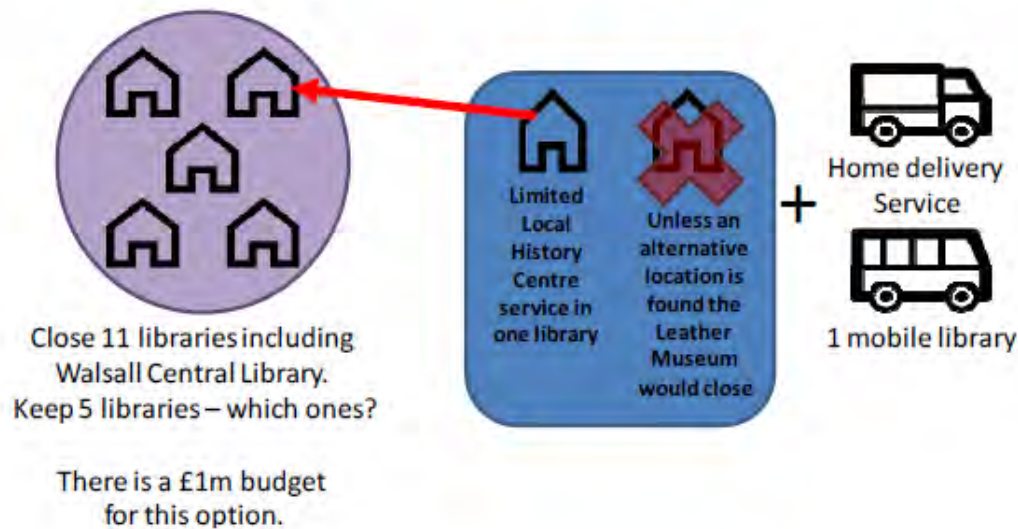


Fig. 3 Option 3 – Any alternative suggestion

Option 3

There is a budget of approx £1m per year for this option

Which services should be kept?



The postal survey

The research took place through a random sample postal survey of residents in the borough.

Specifically, the questionnaire examined the following:

- Library including mobile and home delivery, Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum usage (frequency and location)

- Preferred option for a redesigned library, Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum service

- Preference for which libraries to retain

- Suggestions for how the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum could be delivered or located

- Impact of proposal 1 and 2 should either be approved

- Thoughts on paying more to protect libraries

- Demographics including all protected equality characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability / illness, sexuality, gender identity, pregnancy/maternity, marital status) plus access to a vehicle and home postcode.

A sample of 11,600 addresses was drawn from the council's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). A questionnaire (see Appendices) was sent to each address in the sample on 4 November 2016. No reminder was issued.

30 questionnaires were returned undeliverable meaning a final sample size of 11,570. The response rate achieved was 10% which represents 1,212 valid responses.

Data were weighted back to the known population profile of Walsall to counter-act non response bias. Data are weighted by age within gender bands and ethnicity. The weighting profile was based on the 2011 Census for age within gender and ethnicity.

Statistical reliability and margins of error

The survey was designed to be representative at borough level and therefore analysis at this level is accurate to within $\pm 2.8\%$. For more information, see the section 'statistical reliability' at the end of this report.

The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total "population", so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been surveyed. But we can predict the variation between the sample results and the "true" values from knowing the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The base size – i.e. the number of respondents providing a valid response – was different for each question answered in this survey. The number of respondents for each question is shown on the questionnaire in Appendix A.

Sub-level analysis, particularly where bases (the number of people answering the question) are low should be treated with caution when interpreting the results. Percentages based on a small number of people can be misleading.

Percentages may not total 100% due to questions being multiple response or computer rounding. Figures indicated with * are less than 0.5%.

Additional research

In addition to the random postal survey, anyone could have their say via an open online survey. Information was made available online and in print format in all libraries, with instructions for how to respond.

On-site, unannounced, face to face interviews with library users were also completed at every static library, the Leather Museum and Local History Centre & Archive (just over 100 interviews were completed).

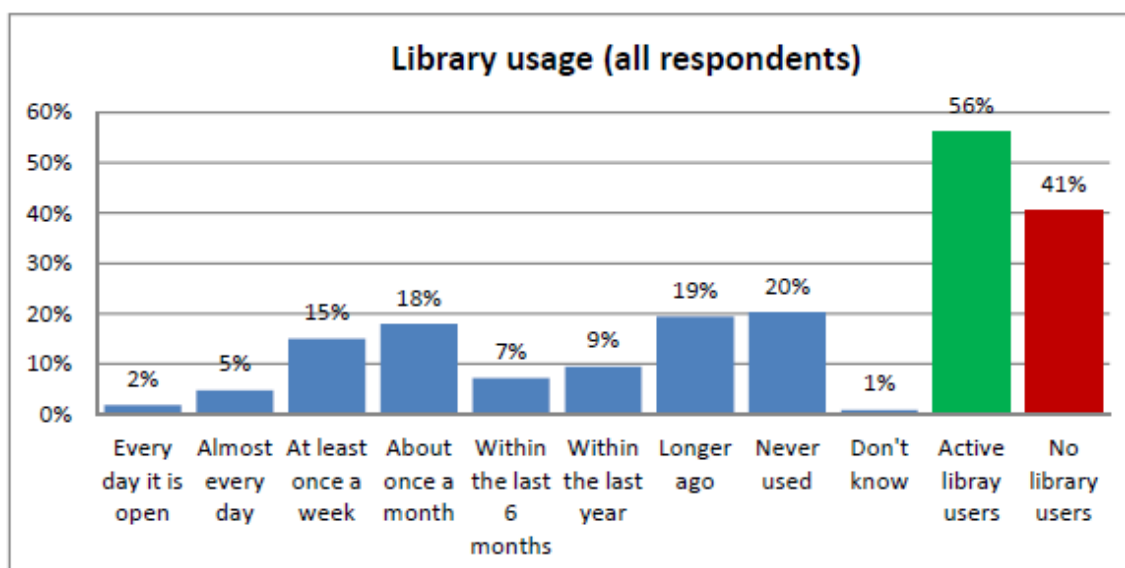
As these approaches were not random, i.e. there was no control over who could respond, or in some cases how many times, the results may not be generalised to the wider population. The findings are therefore presented and reported separately.

Main findings

Library usage

A total of 56% of respondents were 'active library users'¹ and just over two fifths of respondents (41%) were non users. Active library users were most likely to say they visit the library about once a month (18%).

Females (62%) are more likely to use libraries than males (48%). Usage is slightly higher amongst BME communities (64%), compared to white groups (56%); with BMG groups more likely to be use the library at least once a week (20%) than the average (15%).



All respondents were asked which library was their closest. Table 1. below shows the results

Table 1. Closest library to where you live is...			
*Walsall Central Library	20%	Walsall Wood	4%
*Aldridge	10%	South Walsall	4%
*Bloxwich	9%	Pheasey	4%
*Darlaston	7%	Pleck	3%
*Willenhall	7%	Rushall	3%
Pelsall	5%	Beechdale	2%
*Brownhills	5%	Blakenall	2%
New Invention	5%	Don't know	1%
Streetly	5%	Do not use any Walsall libraries	3%

**Denotes Town Centre and District Centre libraries.*

Notably, BME communities, are far more likely to say that Walsall central library is closest to where they live (32%) compared to borough average (20%). This is likely to broadly reflect the central borough geographical location of Walsall's BME population. Hence, as seen later on in this report, this is most likely to explain why Option 1 of all the options best suits their needs into the future.

Respondents were asked to state which library, if any, they used most often. Table 2. Below shows, amongst active library users only, which libraries they use most often compared to the library which is closest to where they live.

Most active library users use the library that is closest to where they live. However, the results also show that some library users do not necessarily always solely use their closest library, accessing a mix of libraries. For example, respondents living closest to South Walsall library are almost as likely to use central library.

Table 2: Closest library v library most used (active library users only)				
Closest library	Library used most often			
*Aldridge (81)	Aldridge 85%	Central 7%		
Beechdale (19)	Beechdale 63%	Central 25%		
Blakenall (10)	Bloxwich 40%	Blakenall 30%	Central 20%	Pelsall 10%
*Bloxwich (65)	Bloxwich 83%	Central 6%	Darlaston 4%	
*Brownhills (38)	Brownhills 83%	Aldridge 7%	Pelsall 7%	
*Darlaston (46)	Darlaston 91%	Central 6%		
New Invention (21)	New Invention 61%	Central 7%	Willenhall 11%	Bloxwich 11%
Pelsall (45)	Pelsall 85%	Aldridge 6%		
Pheasey (33)	Pheasey 88%	Aldridge 8%	Central 4%	
Pleck (10)	Pleck 82%	Central 18%		
Rushall (23)	Rushall 43%	Central 29%	Aldridge 10%	Pelsall 10%
South Walsall (25)	South Walsall 41%	Central 36%	Bloxwich 9%	Aldridge 5%
Streetly (48)	Streetly 89%	Central 7%	Aldridge 2%	
Walsall Wood (31)	Walsall Wood 69%	Central 12%	Pelsall 12%	
*Willenhall	Willenhall 55%	Central 17%	Bloxwich 7%	Darlaston 7%
*Walsall Central Library	Central 88%	Aldridge 3%	Bloxwich 2%	Streetly 2%

*Bases shown in brackets. Some low bases. *Denotes Town Centre and District Centre libraries.*

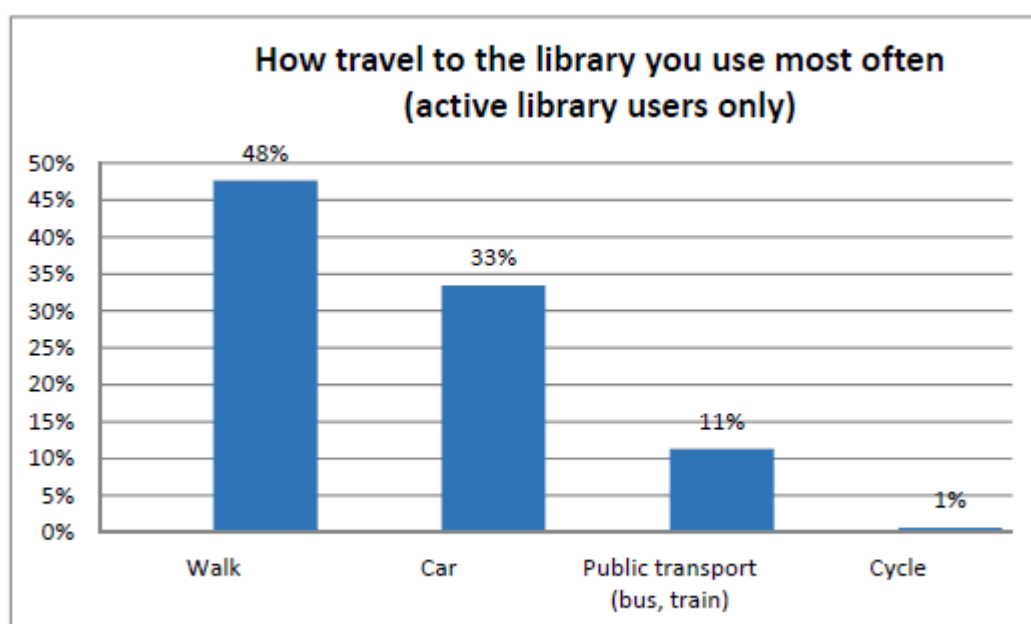
Uniquely, respondents for whom Blakenall is their closest library, slightly more say they use Bloxwich library as opposed to their closest library. Although not asked, a range of factors are likely to influence why an individual uses a particular library e.g. accessibility, working patterns and hours, children's school, shopping and leisure patterns, opening hours, library facilities etc. In terms of assessing the role that Walsall's central library plays amongst respondents who are active library users, results show that for 11 out of the 15 community libraries, the second most often used library was Central library. Only Pelsall and Brownhills library users do not say they also access central library.

Travel to libraries

Most active library users travel to the library they use most often on foot (48%). A third travel by car (33%). 11% rely on public transport and 1% cycle. However, in terms of ethnicity, BME groups are more likely to travel to their library by car (50%) than walk (37%) compared to the average (33%) and those from white groups who tend to walk (51%) rather than arrive by car (32%). There is little difference demographically on usage of public transport.

Males are slightly more likely to walk to a library (53%) compared to females (51%).

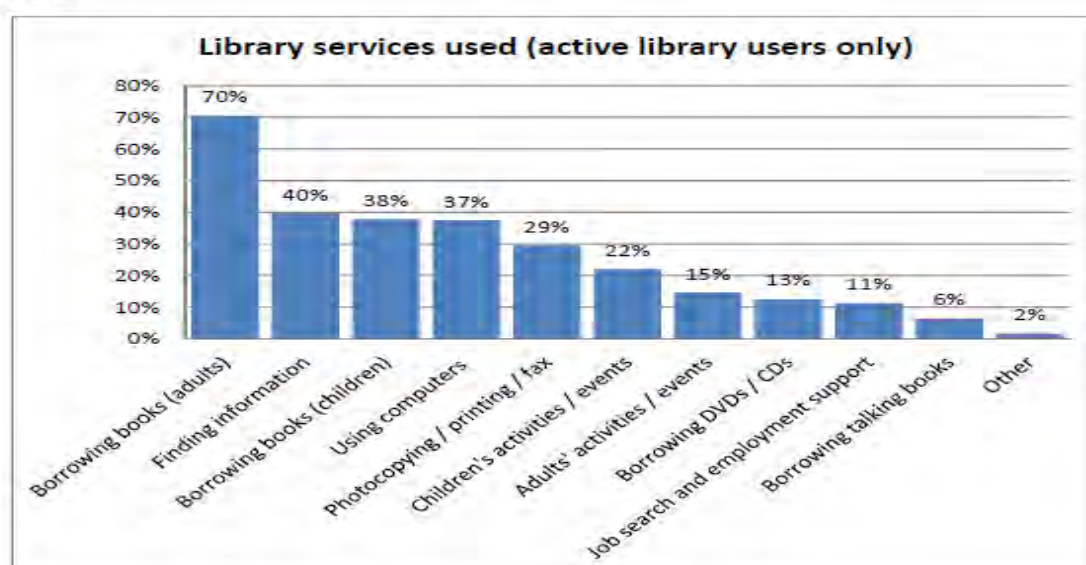
Fig.2



Library services used

Borrowing books (adults) was the most common library service used, with 70% of active users saying they had borrowed books for adults in the last 12 months. 40% had used the library to find information, whilst 38% had borrowed books for children and used the computers (37%).

Fig.3



Over a quarter (29%) of active library users had used the library for photocopying / printing / fax whilst just over a fifth (22%) had attended children's activities / events and 15% attended adult's activities / events.

Less popular services included borrowing DVDs / CDs, undertaking job search and employment support or borrowing talking books.

When we look at what services active library users are accessing in the library they use most often, whilst care should be taken with this data because some bases are low in number, table 3 highlights (as shaded) the top 3 by frequency of services used in each library. We have already seen that holistically, people are using libraries for four key purposes; book borrowing (adults & children), finding information and using computers and information at individual library reiterates this. However, table 3 shows that people use different libraries for different things; for example, at Aldridge and Walsall Wood libraries photocopying is a relatively popular service there. At Pelsall library children's activities/events appears a key reason for visiting the library; noting that Pelsall shares its base with other facilities in which children's services are also provided and hence possibly people are referring to visiting the library when they mean Pelsall Village centre.

Some services appear better used in some libraries than others and this table helps present a picture of the niche services that local libraries are popular for. Though overall it also shows that libraries are used to some extent for a wide range of reasons, and this information might help inform what services are key to library provision, how services might be better tailored into the future, provided elsewhere or not at all depending on what future delivery option is decided upon.

Table 3: The services that active library users are accessing in the library they use most often																	
Purpose for using library	Aldridge	Beechdale	Blakenall	Bloxwich	Brownhills	Darlaston	New Invention	Pelsall	Pheasey	Pleck	Rushall	South Walsall	Streety	Walsall Wood	Willenhall	Walsall Central Library	TOTAL
Borrowing books (adults)	43	7	-	55	20	30	10	22	14	20	6	6	35	16	11	82	377
Borrowing books (children)	15	5	-	24	16	12	6	21	5	18	3	2	23	13	6	37	206
Borrowing talking books	2	-	-	4	1	8	-	1	0	3	1	-	2	-	2	7	31
Borrowing DVDs / CDs	10	2	-	8	2	3	-	4	0	1	1	-	3	4	2	20	60
Using computers	18	3	1	29	11	20	2	13	6	14	1	1	6	7	4	62	198
Finding information	26	2	1	25	8	14	5	15	6	20	-	3	22	13	5	51	216
Children's activities / events	9	5	-	15	5	2	5	17	3	8	2	1	11	8	4	23	118
Adults' activities / events	5	5	1	8	5	3	-	8	5	3	1	2	6	3	5	18	78
Photocopying / printing / fax	20	3	2	17	3	12	1	10	4	6	1	3	4	10	4	44	144
Job search and employment support	1	1	2	14	2	4	1	2	3	9	-	-	-	5	2	15	61
Base	56	12	3	67	28	41	13	35	16	25	7	6	42	21	16	168	556

Use of the mobile library and home delivery service

Just 5% of respondents were active users of the mobile library service, 88% had never used it. Just 1% were active users of the home delivery service.

Female respondents were far more likely to be users of the mobile library service than males.

Usage of the Local History Centre and Archive (LHC&A)

14% of all respondents were active users of the Local History Centre and Archive. 68% had never used the service.

Of the 181 active LHC&A users 40% travel to the LHC&A by car, 22% take public transport whilst 14% walk. Ethnicity causes little difference in this trend.

Usage of the Leather Museum

22% of respondents had visited the Leather Museum within the last year. Of those who had visited most said they had visited in last 12 months (11%). Over three quarters of respondents (77%) had not visited the Leather Museum.

Most visitors to the Leather Museum travel there by car (46%) or public transport (23%). 11% walk to the Leather Museum.

Whilst numbers are low and care therefore is needed on interpretation, it does appear that museum users from BME communities are significantly more likely to travel to the museum by car, hence far less likely to use public transport.

Preferred option for a redesigned library service

Three options were put forward for consultation;

Option1: Reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to 1, keeping Walsall Central Library (Lichfield Street, Walsall), retaining one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. The single library site would be redesigned and developed as a "Hub" in conjunction with an integrated Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum. This is the council's preferred option.

Option2: Close Walsall Central library and reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to no more than 5, keeping one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. A minimal local history & archive service would operate from one of the retained libraries. There is a budget of approximately £1m for this option. Unless a suitable, alternative location is found for Walsall Leather Museum, it would close.

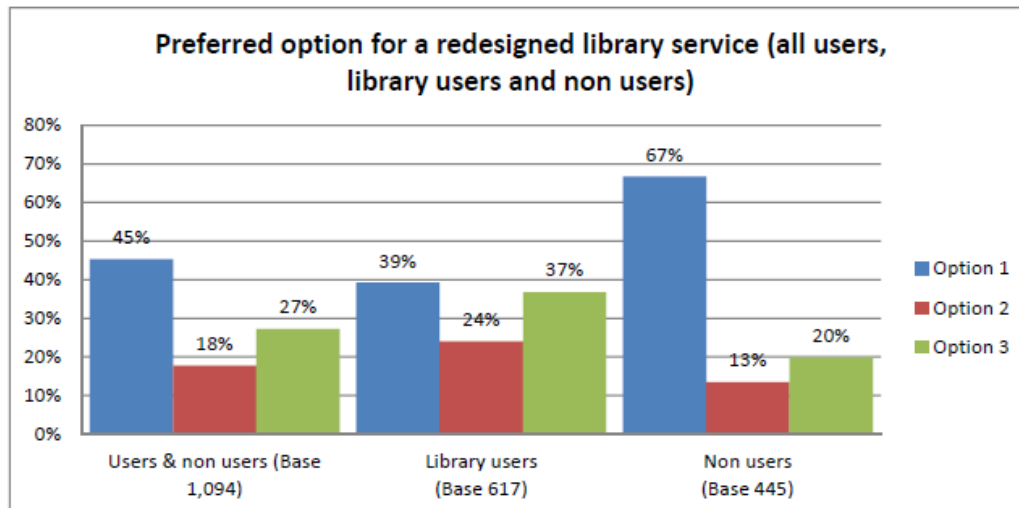
Option 3: Your alternative option, retaining any number and selection of libraries and/or the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum, within a budget of approximately £1m per year.

To help inform their decision, respondents were encouraged to review a range of supporting information available on the council website including maps, usage figures, accessibility assessments and more. As a minimum approximate running costs were provided and instructions were provided.

Overall preference

Amongst library users and non users who answered the question (1,094 people) most (45%) preferred option 1. 30% preferred option 3 and 20% preferred option 2.

Fig.4



Looking at responses from active library users only, almost equal proportions prefer option 1 as do option 3 (39% and 37% respectively). Just under a quarter (24%) prefer option 2. Option 2 and 3 reflect a more flexible and localised arrangement and together 61% of library users prefer these options.

When we look at this by ethnicity; active BME library users are far more likely to prefer option 1 (51%), than those from white groups (33%). Probably, this is because this group are more likely to indicate that Walsall Central Library is closest to them. Hence as a group they are less likely to prefer Option 2 (19%) than white groups (27%) as this option involves closure of the central library. They are also less likely to prefer Option 3 (30%) compared to White groups (41%).

Non library users have a strong preference for option 1, with over two thirds (67%) of respondents preferring this option. This trend is mirrored across BME communities.

Far more respondents who use Central library preferred option 1 compared to those who used other libraries. 69% of Central library users preferred option, 1 compared to 25% of both district library users and small library users who preferred this option.

Users of district and small libraries were most likely to prefer option 3.

There is no clear preference for any option amongst users of the LHC&A. 39% prefer option 3 and 35% prefer option 1. A quarter prefer option 2. (Based on responses from 170 active LHC&A users).

Likewise, there is no clear preference amongst users of the Leather Museum. 43% prefer option 3 and 42% option 1. Just 14% selected option 2.

Impact of option 1

Respondents were asked how, if approved, option 1 may impact on them.

Many respondents, particularly those who did not use the library, or whose preferred library was Walsall Central felt that option 1 would have no impact on them.

"No impact. My family could continue to use the service if required."

"I only use Walsall central anyway so it wouldn't. More likely to visit history centre if central."

"Impact would be minimum as long as the library is expanded with more resources and books as there will be a greater demand and more people using the only library."

Some felt that although they would not be impacted themselves, they were concerned for the impact it may have on others.

"It would not impact on me greatly but it would impact on younger children and elderly people who need and use the service."

"No impact, but one must be mindful of others."

Many felt that a single central library 'hub' in Walsall town centre is too far for them and others to travel to. The distance and need for transport (private or public) was particularly off-putting and overall wholly inconvenient.

"Not be as convenient, have to travel by bus walk through town to reach it, possibly not use as much."

"I have to drive kids, make a planned trip rather than dropping in, on foot either planned or just passing by."

Lack of parking was a particular concern for many.

"I would rarely use it as the distance to get there and parking would deter me from going there."

"It's not convenient for me to travel to central library. Too much traffic, no where to park."

"Too inconvenient to visit library at all with the parking and carrying books."

"No easy parking. I wouldn't go."

"It means I would have to travel and pay parking fees to use the library."

"Difficult to access as parking in town is restricted and expensive."

Many respondents said that if option 1 was approved it would mean they would no longer visit the library.

"I would be unlikely to use Walsall central library as I never go into Walsall."

"Difficult to get to would probably not bother going as carrying books is heavy on the bus and don't have money for bus fare."

"I probably wouldn't use it due to location."

"I would stop using the library service completely."

"I would never visit a library as too far away."

Some respondents felt that option 1 offered the best all round solution.

"Town centre better bus services for all concerned."

"No problems at all. Why are units separate when they could be incorporated into one unit in a convenient position."

"The savings from the cuts would help with keeping council tax down and keeping a hub library with museum etc. Sounds great."

"This means the most sense and would make for a good day out."

Many other comments were made including the closure of libraries would mean a loss of important community assets and resources. Some felt that there would be a potential negative impact on the education and development of children as well as mental health and well-being. Some indicated the need to use the mobile library instead.

Option 2 – libraries to retain

Respondents who preferred option 2 were asked to specify which 5 libraries they think should be retained. In doing so respondents were asked to take into consideration economic and social need, usage, cost and accessibility and encouraged to review additional information on the website. Approximate annual running costs were provided.

As option 2 already included one mobile library and the home delivery service, a budget of £850,000 was specified.

Looking at the top 5 most frequently selected libraries to retain (because respondents were asked to identify no more than 5 libraries), amongst all respondents, and active library users, the top 5 libraries are the same; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Pelsall, Walsall Wood and Streetly. Non users select a slightly different range of libraries; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Willenhall, Pelsall and Pleck.

Table 4. Preferred libraries to retain under option 2			
	All	Users	Non users
Aldridge (£296,000)	12.9%	13.1%	11.9%
Bloxwich (£355,000)	9.3%	8.9%	9.3%
Pelsall (£234,000)	8.2%	8.6%	7.5%
Walsall Wood (£89,000)	7.5%	8.2%	6.2%
Streetly (£123,000)	7.3%	7.4%	7.0%
Darlaston (£412,000)	6.6%	6.7%	5.7%
Pleck (£81,000)	6.4%	6.2%	7.5%
South Walsall (£83,000)	6.2%	6.2%	7.0%
Brownhills (£331,000)	6.1%	6.5%	4.8%
Rushall (£78,000)	6.1%	5.7%	6.6%
Willenhall (£322,000)	6.1%	5.0%	8.8%
New Invention (£111,000)	5.9%	6.4%	4.8%
Beechdale (£98,000)	5.0%	5.2%	5.3%
Pheasey (£134,000)	3.4%	3.0%	3.5%
Blakenall (£115,000)	3.0%	2.9%	4.0%

Amongst users and non-users the top 5 most frequently selected libraries for retention under option 2 exceed the £850,000 budget.

In terms of all respondents and library user's preferences the £850k budget would be exceeded if only Aldridge, Bloxwich and Pelsall libraries were delivered. Geographically these libraries would only serve the north and eastern areas of the borough.

Taking on non users preferences for this option, their preference for retaining Aldridge, Bloxwich, and Willenhall provides slightly better geographical coverage but well exceeds the available budget.

Respondents find it hard to remain objective when selecting Options 2

When providing preferences under option 2 people are asked to consider the bigger picture when determining options for future library provision. However, results intimate that respondents struggle to remain objective when selecting libraries for retention.

Instinctively perhaps, and not unsurprisingly; respondents are more likely to have their own interests at heart when listing libraries, they would like to retain and don't necessarily cater for the wider communities' interests when making their selection. What Table 5 attempts to show is that respondents are quite likely to have a strong preference for the library closest to where they live being the first one they wish to see retained (as highlighted in table 5); probably because that's the one they more frequently use or that

they value having in their community, followed by ones that are close by and they are familiar with before giving consideration to other determinants when choosing their preferred list of libraries.

So for example, most of the respondents where Aldridge library is their closest library put this library top of their list for retention, those living nearest Bloxwich library have this library as the one they most want to see retained and so on.

But for those living nearest some other libraries like Beechdale, Blakenall, New Invention, Pheasey, Walsall Wood and Willenhall, we can see that their closest library isn't necessarily the one they most prefer to see retained. That said some bases for this analysis are low and hence care needs to be taken on interpretation, though this still shows an interesting pattern that is worth consideration and further exploration if needed in reaching a decision on future library provision.

These respondents still often have their closest library high on their list for retention but they seem more open to other options, possible wider considerations.

Another indication that people have struggled to grapple with this question is that the numbers of respondents tails off significantly when asked to detail their preferences with a few respondents saying that they think the council need to make this decision, or they just avoid answering and show their frustrations in their comments when asked about impact.

'I don't think this is in question, Adults and Children need to have services available to read and learn new skills.'

'I feel annoyed at continual budget cutting.'

Table 5: Libraries that respondents prefer to keep under option 2 - all respondents, relationship to their nearest library

Closest library	Aldridge	Beechdale	Blakenall	Bloxwich	Brownhills	Darlaston	New Invention	Pelsall	Pheasey	Pleck	Rushall	South Walsall	Streetly	Walsall Wood	Willenhall	No preference
Aldridge (28)	25	1	6	6	5	4	8	9	8	5	6	7	12	5	7	1
Beechdale (2)	1	2		2							1	2			1	
Blakenall (1)			1			1		1				1	1	1	4	
Bloxwich (30)	3	9	8	22	11	1	8	4	2	8	3	7	4	3	1	3
Brownhills (11)	5		1	1	7		1	5		1	3	1	3	5	6	2
Darlaston (21)	5	3	1	5	3	14	5	2		5	5	4	2	3	5	3
New Invention (10)	5	1		4	1	4	5	2	1	1	1	4	3	1	4	2
Pelsall (21)	18		2	8	2	2	4	18	2	4	2	1	2	7	2	1
Pheasey (6)	2	1	1		1		1	1	4	4	1	1		1	2	1
Pleck (12)	8	9	1	2		10				12	2	1		9		
Rushall (2)	1	1			1		1	1			2	1	1	1		
South Walsall (6)	1	4	1						1	5	4	5	5	1		4
Streetly (18)	8	6	2	2	1	2	5	2	4	3	7	6	11	3	1	4
Walsall Wood (7)	1	2			5		1	4			4			5	6	1
Willenhall (13)	2	1		6	1	5	4	1		1		3	1	1	3	5
	85	40	24	58	38	43	43	50	22	49	41	44	45	46	42	27

Impact of option 2

Many, primarily non library users, felt that the proposal would have no/minimal impact on them. Most felt that the impact would be minimal if their local / preferred library was retained, as such many comments expressed that the impact 'depends' on which libraries were retained.

"As long as we have a library in walking distance it will be OK."

“Impact would depend on the nearest library.”

“Depending on which libraries are left open we felt that this could be the best option if Aldridge is one of the libraries left open.”

“If my local library was one of the 5 chosen then I would continue to use it. It would be sensible to relocate Local History and Archive service to a library with sufficient room and access to accommodate the service.”

Many preferred option 2 as a better option to option 1.

“I think this actually the best option with 5 libraries but cannot see it being within budget.”

“I would have a choice of libraries to visit.”

Similar comments in response to the impact of option 1 were made; that they may have to travel further, that it would be difficult to access the library if it's not close by or they would stop using it.

Option 3 – services to retain

Respondents who preferred option 3 were asked to specify which services they think should be retained at a cost of £1m per year. In doing so, respondents were asked to take into consideration economic and social need, usage, cost and accessibility and encouraged to review additional information on the website. Approximate annual running costs were provided.

Option 3 specified a budget of £1m. As the number of respondents who use the Leather Museum, Local History Centre, housebound library and mobile services are relatively smaller in comparison to overall number of respondents who use libraries; this could be why these services do not feature in people's preferences. As most respondents are focussed on retaining library services rather than looking at wider service delivery needs.

Looking at all respondents the preferred services to retain under option 3 within a £1m budget include (table 6); Aldridge, Leather Museum, Bloxwich and Streetly at a cost of £945,000. Including the next service in the list exceeds the budget (LHC&A £187,000).

Table 6 Preferred services to retain under option 3 (£1m budget)			
	All	Users	Non users
Aldridge (£296,000)	37%	38%	36%
Leather Museum £171,000	36%	15%	8%
Bloxwich (£355,000)	32%	8%	3%
Streetly (£123,000)	28%	36%	26%
LHC&A (£187,000)	27%	16%	6%
Home delivery 'housebound' service (£90,000)	25%	22%	17%
Walsall Central Library incorporating the LHC&A and Leather Museum (£850,000)	22%	24%	30%
Willenhall (£322,000)	21%	32%	47%
Darlaston (£412,000)	20%	19%	38%
One mobile library (£112,000)	20%	10%	12%
Pelsall (£234,000)	20%	23%	17%
Pleck (£81,000)	17%	21%	21%
Walsall Central	17%	17%	5%
Rushall (£78,000)	16%	19%	14%
Two mobile libraries	15%	18%	12%
South Walsall (£83,000)	14%	15%	15%
Walsall Wood (£89,000)	14%	31%	23%
Beechdale (£98,000)	13%	15%	15%
Brownhills (£331,000)	13%	16%	25%
Pheasey (£134,000)	13%	19%	25%
New Invention (£111,000)	11%	17%	8%
Blakenall (£115,000)	6%	26%	9%
Don't know	24%	5%	13%
The approximate total cost of retaining the top preferred services under option 3 within a £1m budget is...			
All respondents	£945,000		
Users		£945,000	
Non users			£1,030,000

Amongst library users only, the selection is different and includes a greater geographical spread; Aldridge, Streetly Willenhall, Walsall Wood and Blakenall costing £945,000.

Non users would like to see Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge retained costing £1,030,000.

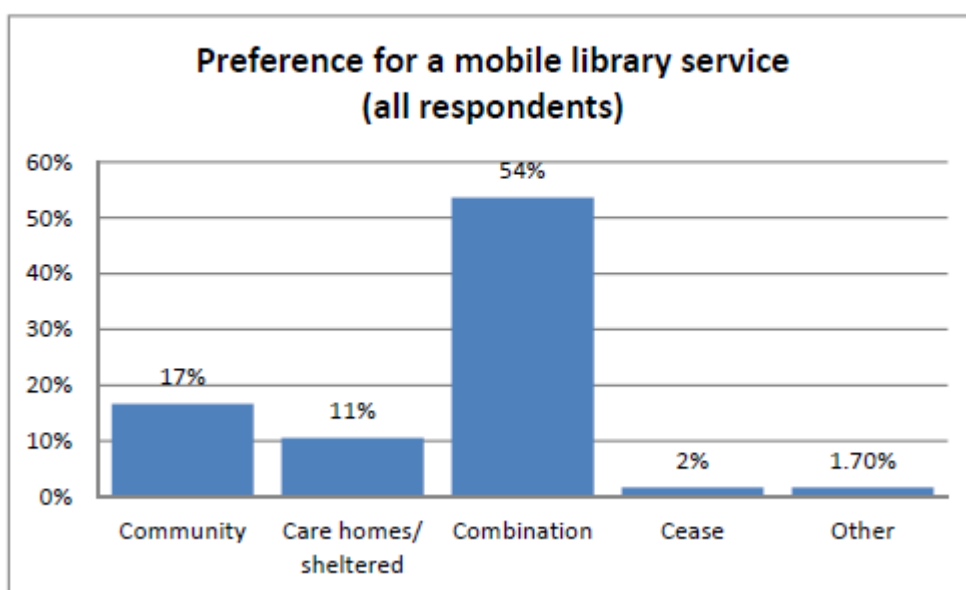
Mobile libraries

Currently two mobile library buses operate in the borough. One runs Monday to Friday and stops at 40 locations in local communities throughout the borough.

The other mobile library runs Monday to Friday and stops at around 10 care homes and sheltered housing for older people. Each mobile library costs approximately £112,000 a year.

Respondents were asked, if a mobile library service was retained, what type of service it should be. Of the 1,120 people who answered the question, over half (54%) would prefer a mobile library that calls at a combination of stops. 17% preferred a community based timetable whilst 11% preferred a service that calls only at care homes and sheltered housing. 17% thought that the council should not operate a mobile library service.

Fig. 5



Amongst active mobile library users (46 people), slightly more prefer a combination of stops (48%) rather than community stops only (44%).

Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum

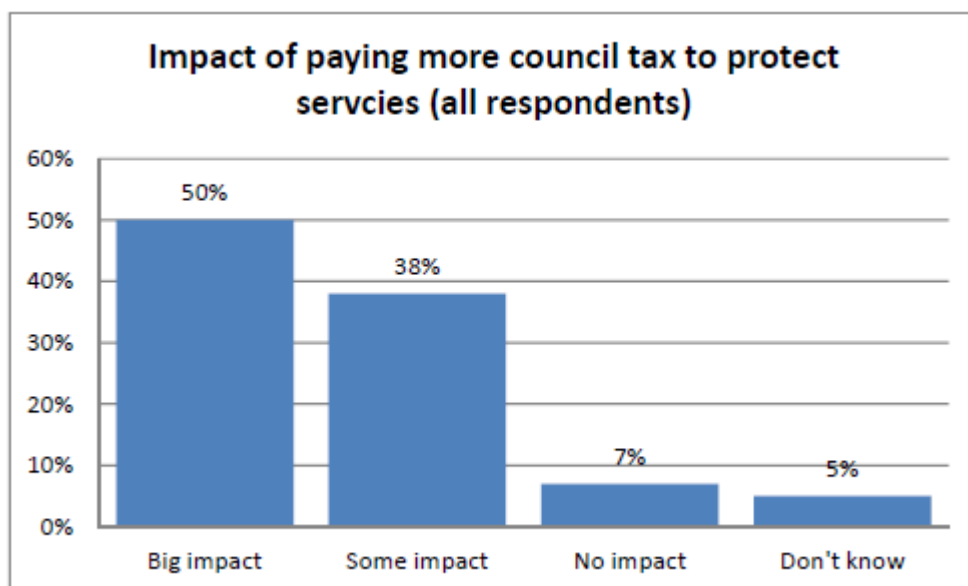
Suggestions for how or where the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum could be located / delivered were sought. Whilst many people did not make any comment popular suggestions for where to locate these services included the New Art Gallery, Civic Centre / Town Hall, in one of the retained libraries including Central, locating the LHC&A in the with the Leather Museum, redundant buildings / empty shops, working in partnership with other local authorities, The Black Country Museum.

Alternative suggestions for how these services could be delivered included reducing the opening hours, using volunteers, introducing a charge or through seeking sponsorship.

Paying more to protect services

Half of all respondents said that paying a bit more council tax would have a 'big impact' on them, whilst 38% said it would have 'some impact'. Just 7% of respondents felt that paying more would have no impact on them.

Fig 6.



BME respondents are more likely to say that paying a bit more council tax would have a big impact (57%) on them than those from white groups (46%). However, in terms of overall impact in terms of the concept of paying more there is actually little difference by ethnicity; white groups (87%) compared to BME (89%) and borough average (88%); big + some impact.

Respondent Profile

Questions were voluntary. Percentages are based on all respondents including those who said 'prefer not to say'.

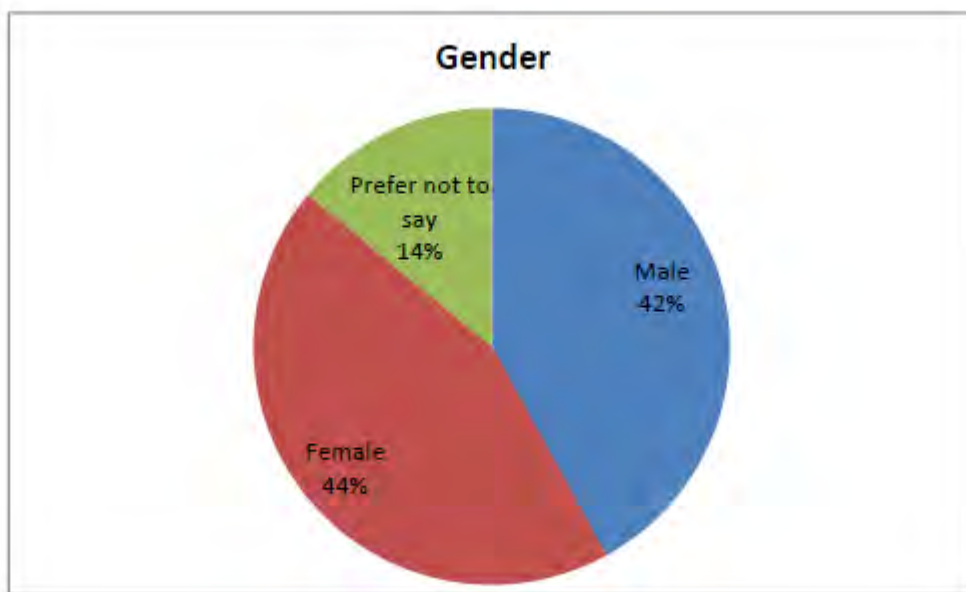
79% of respondents said they have access to a vehicle whether as a driver or passenger; this rises to 82% amongst BME groups, compared to white groups (77%)

The average age of all respondent was 66, the youngest respondent was 16 and the oldest respondent was 99.

16 of respondents said they had a disability or had a long term illness. 67 said they hadn't got any disability and 17% preferring not to say.

In terms of ethnicity, 71% of respondents were from white groups, and 16% from BMG groups. 13% preferred not to state their ethnicity.

Slightly more females than males responded; 44% female and 42% male; 14% of respondents preferred not to state their gender.



Technical report

Sample frame and design

The council's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) was used as the sampling frame. This was chosen as it comprises the most up-to-date source of addresses available.

A sample of 11,600 residential addresses was drawn.

1212 responses were completed in total (with adults aged 16+). The response rate achieved from the sample was 10% (taking into account incorrect or non-existent / inaccessible addresses and other invalid addresses in the sample).

Survey approach

The research took place through a postal survey of residents in the borough. A questionnaire and covering letter were sent out to each address in the sample on Nov 4. No reminders were sent. Fieldwork closed on 31 December 2016.

Weighting

Pro-Tel Fieldwork Ltd weighted the data back to the known population profile of Walsall to counteract non-response bias. Data are weighted by age within gender bands, ethnicity. The weighting profile was based on the 2011 Census for age within gender, ethnicity.

Data analysis, editing and coding

All completed postal questionnaires were processed through manual data entry by Pro-Tel Fieldwork Ltd, entered directly into Snap Survey software. A 30% check back of questionnaires was completed through re-entry.

Statistical reliability

The survey was designed to be representative at borough level and therefore analysis at this level is accurate to within +/- 2.8%.

The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total “population”, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been surveyed and responded. But we can predict the variation between the sample results and the “true” values from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within a specified range.

The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95% confidence interval”. An indication of approximate sampling tolerances is given in the table below. Strictly speaking, the tolerances shown here apply only to random samples, so the comparison with postal research is indicative.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	10%/90% ±	30%/70% ±	50%/50% ±
3,000	1.1%	1.6%	1.8%
2,000	1.3%	2.0%	2.2%
1,212	1.7%	2.6%	2.8%
500	2.6%	4.0%	4.4%

Population (number of residential households) 116,000

For example, with a sample of 1,212 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been surveyed) will fall within the range of plus or minus 2.6 percentage points from the sample result.

It is important to note that the above calculations relate only to samples that have been selected using strict random probability sampling methods. However, in practice it is reasonable to assume that these calculations provide a good indication of the confidence intervals relating to this survey and the sampling approach used.

Sub-level analysis, particularly where bases (the number of people answering the question) are low should be treated with caution when interpreting the results. Percentages based on a small number of people can be misleading.

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Topline questionnaire

This survey is being administered by Walsall Council in line with the MRS code of conduct. The information that you provide in this survey will be used by Walsall Council to analyse opinions on options for the draft budget proposal affecting libraries. Protel Fieldwork Ltd has been contracted by Walsall Council to capture and process the information you provide in this questionnaire. Any information that you supply will be treated as confidential and will not be used by Walsall Council or Protel Fieldwork Ltd for any other purpose nor shared with any other organisation. Any information published will not identify you or your household. Data will be held securely and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The deadline for responses is 31 December 2016.

Q1. How often, if at all, do you visit any Walsall library building?

22 (2%) Every day it is open
 57 (5%) Almost every day
 182 (16%) At least once a week
 217 (19%) About once a month
 88 (7%) Within the last 6 months
 114 (10%) Within the last year
 235 (20%) Longer ago
 247 (21%) Never used
 10 (1%) Don't know

Q2.a Which library is closest to where you live?

121 (10%) Aldridge
 28 (2%) Beechdale
 25 (2%) Blakenall
 104 (9%) Bloxwich
 58 (5%) Brownhills
 82 (7%) Darlaston
 58 (5%) New Invention
 64 (5%) Pelsall
 43 (4%) Pheasey
 42 (4%) Pleck
 35 (3%) Rushall
 46 (4%) South Walsall
 57 (5%) Streetly
 51 (4%) Walsall Wood
 80 (7%) Willenhall
 242 (20%) Walsall Central Library
 40 (3%) Do not use any Walsall libraries
 8 (1%) Don't know

Q2.b Which library, if any, do you use most often?

72 (8%) Aldridge
 12 (1%) Beechdale
 7 (1%) Blakenall
 81 (9%) Bloxwich

32 (3%) Brownhills
 58 (6%) Darlaston
 17 (2%) New Invention
 42 (5%) Pelsall
 24 (3%) Pheasey
 28 (3%) Pleck
 11 (1%) Rushall
 8 (1%) South Walsall
 44 (5%) Streetly
 26 (3%) Walsall Wood
 30 (3%) Willenhall
 234 (25%) Walsall Central Library
 188 (20%) Do not use any Walsall libraries
 10 (1%) Don't know

Q3. How, if at all, do you normally travel to the library you use most often?

348 (38%) Car
 1 (0%) Motorbike / scooter / moped
 105 (12%) Public transport (bus, train)
 2 (0%) Taxi
 417 (46%) Walk
 4 (0%) Cycle
 2 (0%) Community transport (e.g. Ring & Ride)
 20 (2%) I have not visited any Walsall library
 0 (0%) I use the mobile / home delivery
 'housebound' service
 7 (1%) Other

Q3.a How, if at all, do you normally travel to the library you use most often? State the ONE that makes up the majority of your journey e.g. car, bus, walk.

7 (100%)

Q4. How often, if at all, do you use a) the mobile library service and b) the home delivery 'housebound' service - MOBILE LIBRARY

	Every time it visits	Almost every time it visits	About once a month	Within the last 6 months	Within the last year	Longer ago	Never used	Don't know
a) Q4A - Mobile library	29 (2%)	3 (0%)	17 (1%)	10 (1%)	2 (0%)	44 (4%)	1070 (90%)	8 (1%)
b) Q4B - Home Delivery	4 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (1%)	5 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (1%)	1038 (96%)	21 (2%)

Q5. Which Walsall library service, if any, have you used in the last 12 months?

502 (42%) Borrowing books (adults)
 262 (22%) Borrowing books (children)
 43 (4%) Borrowing talking books
 83 (7%) Borrowing DVDs / CDs
 273 (23%) Using computers

282 (24%) Finding information
 150 (13%) Children's activities / events
 100 (8%) Adults' activities / events
 218 (18%) Photocopying / printing / fax
 81 (7%) Job search and employment support
 128 (11%) None of these
 324 (27%) I have not used any Walsall library
 17 (1%) Other
 Other
 16 (100%)

Q6. How often, if at all, do you visit the Local History Centre and Archive (Essex Street, WS27AS)?

12 (1%) Every day is it open
 23 (2%) At least once a week
 39 (3%) About once a month
 41 (3%) Within the last 6 months
 65 (5%) Within the last year
 149 (13%) Longer ago
 829 (70%) Never used
 27 (2%) Don't know

Q7. How, if at all, do you normally travel to the Local History Centre?

73 (51%) Car
 0 (0%) Motorbike / scooter / moped
 40 (28%) Public transport (bus, train)
 0 (0%) Taxi
 25 (18%) Walk
 1 (1%) Cycle
 0 (0%) Community transport (e.g. Ring & Ride)
 0 (0%) I have not visited the Local History Centre
 3 (2%) Other

Q7.a How do you normally travel to the Local History Centre? Write in the ONE that makes up the majority of your journey e.g. car, bus, walk.

3 (100%)

Q8. How often, if at all, do you visit Walsall Leather Museum (Wisemore, WS2 8EQ)?

10 (1%) Every day is it open
 9 (1%) At least once a week
 44 (4%) About once a month
 58 (5%) Within the last 6 months
 132 (11%) Within the last year
 342 (29%) Longer ago

582 (49%) Never visited
13 (1%) Don't know

Q9.a How, if at all, do you normally travel to the Walsall Leather Museum?

117 (56%) Car
0 (0%) Motorbike / scooter / moped
59 (28%) Public transport (bus, train)
0 (0%) Taxi
28 (13%) Walk
2 (1%) Cycle
0 (0%) Community transport (e.g. Ring & Ride)
1 (0%) I have not visited any Walsall library
0 (0%) I use the mobile / home delivery
'housebound' service
4 (2%) Other

Q9.B How, if at all, do you normally travel to the Walsall Leather Museum? Write in the ONE that makes up the majority of your journey e.g. car, bus, walk.

4 (100%)

Draft proposals for how the redesigned service could be delivered have been put forward. Whilst no decision has yet been made, Walsall Council's preferred option is option 1, delivering a library service integrated with the Local History Centre and Archive and Walsall Leather Museum which is achievable within a budget of approximately £1m and saves £2.9m from the libraries budget.

If we do not make these savings extra money will have to be found by changing, reducing, or ceasing other important council services and / or by increasing fees and charges or increasing council tax.

Q10. Which of the following options do you prefer?

549 (50%) **Option 1:** Reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to 1, keeping Walsall Central Library (Lichfield Street, Walsall), retaining one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. The single library site would be redesigned and developed as a 'Hub' in conjunction with an integrated Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum. *This is the council's preferred option.*

214 (20%) **Option 2:** Close Walsall Central library and reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to no more than 5, keeping one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. A minimal local history and archive service would operate from one of the retained libraries. There is a budget of approximately £1m for this option. Unless a suitable, alternative location is found for Walsall Leather Museum, it would close. 330 (30%)

Option 3: Your alternative option, retaining any number and selection of libraries and / or the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum,

within a budget of approximately £1m per year.

Before answering Q11 and Q12 you may wish to review the supporting information on our website which includes maps, usage figures, accessibility assessments and more.

Don't forget to check that your option comes within budget!

Approximate annual operating costs are shown in brackets. All costs are based on the current service delivered in the same way, in the same building. The quoted figures do not reflect cost efficiencies that are possible.

Q11. Option 2. Taking into account economic and social need, usage, cost and accessibility choose up to 5 libraries you think should be kept.

Your selection of libraries should cost approximately £850,000 a year. One mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' service is automatically included in this option, costing approximately £150,000 a year. Walsall Central Library cannot be kept as part of this option. A minimal local history and archive service would operate from one of the retained libraries. Unless a suitable, alternative location is found for Walsall Leather Museum, it would close.

110 (41%) Aldridge (£296,000)
43 (16%) Beechdale (£98,000)
26 (10%) Blakenall (£115,000)
79 (30%) Bloxwich (£355,000)
52 (20%) Brownhills (£331,000)
56 (21%) Darlaston (£412,000)
49 (19%) New Invention (£111,000)
70 (26%) Pelsall (£234,000)
29 (11%) Pheasey (£134,000)
55 (21%) Pleck (£81,000)
52 (20%) Rushall (£78,000)
53 (20%) South Walsall (£83,000)
62 (23%) Streetly (£123,000)
64 (24%) Walsall Wood (£89,000)
52 (19%) Willenhall (£322,000)
41 (15%) No preference

Approximate annual operating costs are shown in brackets. All costs are based on the current service delivered in the same way, in the same building, apart from the 'Hub'.

Q12. Option 3. Using the supporting information provided choose which libraries / services you think should be kept.

You may choose as many as you like, ensuring the total operating cost is approximately £1m a year.

118 (37%) Aldridge (£296,000)
40 (13%) Beechdale (£98,000)

20 (6%) Blakenall (£115,000)
 103 (32%) Bloxwich (£355,000)
 41 (13%) Brownhills (£331,000)
 65 (20%) Darlaston (£412,000)
 35 (11%) New Invention (£111,000)
 64 (20%) Pelsall (£234,000)
 43 (13%) Pheasey (£134,000)
 54 (17%) Pleck (£81,000)
 52 (16%) Rushall (£78,000)
 46 (14%) South Walsall (£83,000)
 91 (28%) Streetly (£123,000)
 55 (17%) Walsall Central Library (£965,000)
 45 (14%) Walsall Wood (£89,000)
 67 (21%) Willenhall (£322,000)
 66 (20%) One mobile library bus (£112,000)
 48 (15%) Two mobile library buses (£224,000)
 80 (25%) Home Delivery 'housebound' service (£90,000)
 86 (27%) Local History Centre and Archive (£187,000)
 115 (36%) Walsall Leather Museum (£171,000)
 69 (22%) Walsall Central Library incorporating the
 Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum (£850,000)
 24 (7%) Don't know

Q13. How might the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum be delivered and where else could they be located?

394 (100%)

Q14. If option 1 was approved, how, if at all, would it impact on you?

Option 1: Reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to 1, keeping Walsall Central Library (Lichfield Street, Walsall), retaining one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. The single library site would be redesigned and developed as a 'Hub' in conjunction with an integrated Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum. 888 (100%)

Q15. If option 2 was approved, how, if at all, would it impact on you?

Option 2: Close Walsall Central library and reduce the total number of libraries from 16 to no more than 5, keeping one mobile library and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. A minimal local history and archive service would operate from one of the retained libraries. There is a £1m budget for this option. Unless a suitable, alternative location is found for Walsall Leather Museum, it would close. 678 (100%)

Currently two mobile library buses operate in the borough. One runs Monday to Friday and stops at 40 locations in local communities throughout the borough. The other mobile library runs Monday to Friday and stops at around 10 care homes and sheltered housing for older people. Each mobile library costs approximately £112,000 a year.

Q16. If a mobile library service is retained, what type of mobile library service do you think should be delivered?

187 (17%) Mobile library that stops in communities
119 (11%) Mobile library that stops at care homes and sheltered housing
600 (54%) A combination of stops in the community and at care homes/sheltered housing
195 (17%) Do not operate a mobile library service
19 (2%) Other
Other type of mobile library service, please tell us
19 (100%)

Currently 16% of the council's income comes from Council Tax. Raising council tax for all households would generate additional funding which would be used to keep cuts to a minimum and help protect services.

Q17. How would paying a bit more council tax impact on you?

590 (50%) Big impact 445 (38%) Some impact 86 (7%) No impact 60 (5%) Don't know

Q18. Why do you say this? Please write below.

953 (100%)

Q19. How much more council tax a year would you be willing to pay to help keep cuts to a minimum and protect services? Please write in the amount in £ per year.

885 (100%)

Some of the following questions may seem irrelevant to you, however this section is really important as it helps us to gain a better understanding of the views of different people and how they could be impacted by any changes. This information will remain confidential and will be used for analysis purposes only. Your personal information will not be published and individuals or households will not be identified in any part of the analysis or reporting process. These questions are voluntary.

Q20. What is your home postcode? Please just tell us the first half of your postcode plus the first digit of the second half e.g. WS2 8 or WV12 3.

1175 (100%)

Q21. Do you have access to a car / van either as a driver or passenger?

930 (79%) Yes 251 (21%) No

Q22. What is your age? Please write in the box or leave blank if you prefer not to say.

1212 (100%)

Q23. Are you...?

509 (42%) Male 533 (44%) Female 170 (14%) Prefer not to say

Q24. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

1016 (84%) Yes 8 (1%) No 188 (16%) Prefer not to say

Q25. What is your sexual orientation?

19 (2%) Bi-sexual
6 (0%) Gay man
9 (1%) Gay woman / lesbian
903 (75%) Heterosexual / straight
6 (1%) Don't know
269 (22%) Prefer not to say

Q26. Are you...?

269 (22%) Single, that is, never married and never registered in a same-sex civil partnership
548 (45%) Married
25 (2%) Separated, but still legally married
71 (6%) Divorced
86 (7%) Widowed
2 (0%) In a registered same-sex civil partnership
2 (0%) Separated, but still legally in a same-sex civil partnership
1 (0%) Formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved
5 (0%) Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership
203 (17%) Prefer not to say

Q27. Are you currently pregnant or providing care for a baby up to 26 weeks old?

52 (4%) Yes 952 (79%) No 207 (17%) Prefer not to say

Q28. Do you consider yourself to be disabled or have a long term illness (as set out under the Equality Act 2010)?

190 (16%) Yes 813 (67%) No 208 (17%) Prefer not to say

Q29. What is your ethnic group?

812 (67%) White British
24 (2%) White other
24 (2%) Mixed or multiple groups
158 (13%) Asian or Asian British
24 (2%) Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
12 (1%) Other
158 (13%) Prefer not to say
Other ethnic group, please state 0 (0%)

Q30. What, if any, is your religion or religious belief?

258 (21%) None
614 (51%) Christian (All denominations)
5 (0%) Buddhist
25 (2%) Hindu
1 (0%) Jewish
60 (5%) Muslim
50 (4%) Sikh
14 (1%) Any other religion
186 (15%) Prefer not to say

Once completed please return in the pre-paid envelope provided by 31 December 2016.

Q31. DP Initials

287 (24%) DW
120 (10%) AA
384 (32%) JS
0 (0%) EL
420 (35%) DC
0 (0%) ABA
0 (0%) BK

Budget Consultation financial year 2017/18

Libraries online survey 2016 – Summary of results

This questionnaire was a slightly shorter version of the postal questionnaire that was distributed to 11,600 households in the borough. Being available online anyone could respond and there were no restrictions on the number of times an individual could respond. The open nature of the questionnaire means that the results may not be generalised to the wider population and are simply the views of those who responded which is not equal across all libraries / services.

By the closing date of 31 December 2016, 224 people had responded

Most respondents were residents of Walsall (89%) and council employees (7%)

Other responses included; 5 from the education sector, 2 from community / voluntary organisations, 2 from other public sector organisations, and 2 from other local authorities

Former residents and visitors from outside the borough also responded

Organisations / groups who responded included; an Advocacy Service, the University of Antwerp and a volunteer at the Local History Centre.

Service usage

Most respondents (45%) visit a Walsall library at least once a week with 21% visiting about once a month. Overall 91% of respondents were 'active users' and 8% were non users (having used the library longer than a year ago).

The libraries respondents had used most often were; Walsall Central (28%), Aldridge (27%), Streetly (17%) Bloxwich (17%) and Pelsall (16%). 8% or fewer respondents had used the other libraries.

The proportion of respondents who visit the Local History Centre & Archive was much lower with 35% being 'active users' and 66% 'non users'.

45% of respondents had visited the Leather Museum in the last 12 months 'active users'.

Preferred option

When asked which of the three options for a redesigned library service they preferred, most (70%) preferred option 3. 21% preferred option 2 and 9% option 1.

Those who said they preferred option 2 (47 people) were asked to choose up to 5 libraries they think should be kept. The five libraries that were selected most often were; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Pelsall, Streetly and equally Willenhall and Pleck. Apart from Willenhall and Pleck, the preferred libraries for retention naturally reflect the libraries respondents use most often.

Option 2 assumed the retention of one mobile library and the home delivery service.

Table.1

Libraries to retain (option 2)			
*Aldridge (£296,000)	49%	Beechdale (£98,000)	21%
*Bloxwich (£355,000)	45%	Blakenall (£115,000)	21%
Pelsall (£234,000)	40%	South Walsall (£83,000)	21%
Streetly (£123,000)	36%	Pheasey (£134,000)	9%
Pleck (£81,000)	28%	New Invention (£111,000)	9%
*Willenhall (£322,000)	28%	Rushall (£78,000)	6%
*Brownhills (£331,000)	23%	Walsall Wood (£89,000)	6%
*Darlston (£412,000)	23%	No preference	4%

If the top five libraries listed in table 1 plus one mobile library and the home delivery service were retained, the cost would be approximately £1,239,000 (Pleck option) and £1,480,000 (Willenhall option) both including £150,000 for the Home Delivery Service and one mobile Library

Respondents who preferred option 3 (156 people) were asked to specify what services they think should be retained. Table 2 below shows, in order of popularity, which libraries / services respondents feel should be retained.

Table.2

Libraries / services to retain (option 3)	
*Aldridge (£296,000)	49%
Home Delivery 'housebound' service (£90,000)	44%
Walsall Leather Museum (£171,000)	37%
*Bloxwich (£355,000)	37%
One mobile library bus (£112,000)	36%
Local History Centre and Archive (£187,000)	32%
Streetly (£123,000)	31%
Pelsall (£234,000)	31%
*Willenhall (£322,000)	26%
Pleck (£81,000)	25%
*Brownhills (£331,000)	24%
Pheasey (£134,000)	24%
*Walsall Central Library (£965,000)	22%
Two mobile library buses (£224,000)	21%
*Darlaston (£412,000)	21%
Walsall Central Library incorporating the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum (£850,000)	21%
Beechdale (£98,000)	21%
South Walsall (£83,000)	19%
Rushall (£78,000)	17%
Blakenall (£115,000)	15%
Walsall Wood (£89,000)	15%
New Invention (£111,000)	11%
Don't know	7%

* District libraries. Based on 156 responses.

Working to an approximate £1m budget, only two static libraries (Aldridge and Bloxwich) feature in the top preferred services to retain. Retaining the top 5 services preferred under option 3 would cost approximately £1,024,000 and includes Aldridge and Bloxwich libraries, the home delivery service, Walsall Leather Museum, one mobile library and the Local History Centre and Archive.

The borough's smallest libraries tend to feature towards the bottom of the list.

Looking at libraries only under option 3 (Table 3) the top preferred libraries to retain are; Aldridge, Bloxwich, Streetly, Pelsall and equally Willenhall, Pleck, Pheasey and Brownhills, thus reflecting the libraries respondents use most often.

Retaining the top four libraries alone costs approximately £1,008,000.

Table. 3

*Aldridge (£296,000)	12%
*Bloxwich (£355,000)	9%
Streetly (£123,000)	8%
Pelsall (£234,000)	8%
*Willenhall (£322,000)	6%
Pleck (£81,000)	6%
Pheasey (£134,000)	6%
*Brownhills (£331,000)	6%
*Walsall Central Library (£965,000)	5%
Beechdale (£98,000)	5%
Walsall Central Library incorporating the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum (£850,000)	5%
*Darlaston (£412,000)	5%
South Walsall (£83,000)	5%
Rushall (£78,000)	4%
Blakenall (£115,000)	4%
Walsall Wood (£89,000)	4%
New Invention (£111,000)	3%

** District libraries. Based on 156 responses. Libraries only.*

Again the borough's smallest libraries tend to feature towards the bottom of the list.

Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum



Respondents were asked to make suggestions for how the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum could be delivered or where else they might be located. Of the 161 comments made, whilst many said do not move the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum, most suggested housing these services in one of the remaining libraries or in the New Art Gallery.

"The local History centre should be located at one of the larger libraries that is kept.

Unsure about where the Leather museum could be relocated.”

“Could be merged into one building with a library.”

“Perhaps they could both be housed within one of the larger libraries which would reduce costs.”

“Local history centre could be based at one of the larger libraries. Could the leather museum use space in the art gallery.”

“Neither of these centres are as well used as Libraries, but they are a unique service. If we could still keep the Art Gallery surely it would make more sense to have these centres within the same building? It would cut down on costs due to shared services and also add to visitor numbers.”

“I feel the Local History Centre and/ or Leather Museum could be amalgamated into Walsall Art Gallery. There seems to be a lot of empty space in this building that could be utilised.”

Other suggestions included locating the Local History Centre & Archive in with the Leather Museum.

“Would it be possible to move the History Centre to the same building as the Leather Museum? Maybe make the Leather Museum smaller?”

“The leather museum is a lovely building, situated close to car parks and is much more accessible and inviting than the local history centre. These services could be combined into the leather museum building. The building could also be hired out for events and meetings. The courtyard at the rear of the building is beautiful and would be great for parties and weddings.”

Impact of option 1

A single central library is inconvenient and off putting for many

Respondents were asked how, if at all, option one might impact on them if it were approved. Most respondents said that just having one library in Walsall would result in them not using the library or using the service less frequently. The need to travel, makes visiting Central library inconvenient for most people, the cost of transport and the lack of parking also makes this an unattractive option.

“I am 87 years old, effectively it would mean the end of libraries for me. Books have been an outlet for me since becoming a widow 3 years ago - this option takes this away from me.”

“It would deny me any access to library services. It would also deny any young people independent access to libraries as they would not be able to get there independently. There is also no parking at the central library. Others, like me would not be able to carry books to either their cars on distant car parks, (if they could afford parking costs), or to a bus stop and from the bus home!”

"It would mean that both myself and my young children would lose access to the library service, severely reducing the chance they have to utilise the invaluable facility a library provides. We can currently walk to the library & if closed would mean driving (a 15min car drive on a good day) and paying to park just to access 'free' library lending. It would probably result in us never using the library again."

"I can't see myself using the library at all. Access in to Walsall is harder due to parking time limits or having to make over an hour journey there and back, to swap some children's stories for my kids. Hardly seems worth the hassle! A small car journey or walking distance is great for popping in, swapping books and using the computers."

"If this option was approved we would probably not use the library as much, if at all. We come into town very rarely now and would certainly not make the journey just to go to the library. We would rather have the library within walking distance and have immediate access to books and information."

"I would prefer more libraries to be kept open so would prefer a number of smaller local libraries to survive in preference to just the central one. However, if Aldridge is not one of the survivors I would still have to travel by car and thus incur extra costs and the likelihood of a decreased number of visits."

The need to travel and a lack of parking put many off option 1

Many, particularly older people, express that travelling to a library in Walsall town centre from where they live would be difficult for them. Some feel that the trip for parents with small children would be difficult.

"It would mean my children and I would no longer have a library service which we could/would use. It would be too remote and too troublesome to use. It is fair to say that although I live in Walsall borough (Streetly), I very rarely visit Walsall town centre and it is most unlikely that I would do so in order to access the library."

"Going to Walsall by car or bus would only be possible at weekends and I'd be put off by doing so because of town centre busyness / lack of suitable parking."

"Access to this library is inconvenient....many elderly and children prefer outlying libraries away from town."

"The library is not that easy to access for disabled clients, there is very little/poor parking provision."

"Many residents will not or may not be able to journey into Walsall; car parking is expensive, it would also be difficult for a mother with 2 or 3 children to travel on the bus to carry 15 books each. Many children can visit the local library unaccompanied to do homework, attend clubs etc, but would not be allowed into the town alone."

Libraries are highly valued local assets

Many comments relate to the loss of a community asset and a valuable resource which people rely on for many things, not just books.

"We would not have easy access to a library. Also there would not be anywhere for clubs and societies that use the library."

"The closure of all public libraries except for central would have a massive impact on all residents of Walsall as they are such a valuable resource to adults and children alike. For myself and for the group I run which is based in the library building it would most likely mean the closure of the group."

"Excellent holiday activities would be impossible to access in a one building for whole of the borough. Also toddler group attend now would be majorly oversubscribed if only one location if allowed to operate in the new option meaning early experiences of books, libraries, rhymes and socialising with others would/ could end- a huge impact for this child."

"You have to be joking. BLOXWICH library is a life line to the folk of BLOXWICH computers are used for folk looking for work how else are they meant to do that . Children's activities summer reading scheme is a fantastic tool. Cinema club is a life line to folk who have a small income."

"I would not be able to get to a library and all the groups who meet in Rushall library would have nowhere to meet."

"If I lost the use of Pelsall library, I would move to another part of Britain. This library has groups for children to elderly, disadvantaged to lonely. It must be retained or the community will suffer."

Impact of option 2

People naturally prioritise the library they use

Respondents were asked how, if at all, option two might impact on them if it were approved. Most respondents felt that should their local library stay open the impact of this option would be minimal.

"If Pelsall library were one of the libraries to stay open it would be perfect for me and my family. I do not use the leather museum or the local history centre so this does not impact on us."

"This would work for me if my local library was still open."

Many feel the loss of the Leather Museum would be a detriment to the borough

Although most felt that retaining libraries was most important, some felt that the closure of the Leather Museum would be detrimental to the borough's heritage and should be retained as something to be proud of.

"Walsall Leather Museum should be kept open. It could be run voluntarily as a Trust. It is part of the heritage of the area + is too valuable to be closed. More use could be made of it with local schools."

"The closure of the leather museum is totally unacceptable."

"A better idea but I'm totally against the closure of the leather museum. This is a place that we should be proud of."

"Closing the Leather Museum is to lose part of Walsall's heritage for generations to come, which should not be allowed to happen because of short-term budget problems. It would also deprive the town of one of its few tourist attractions."

"I would prefer to see the budget reduction revised; scaled back slightly, so that at least there's a library retained within strategically placed positions across the borough, i.e. five plus Walsall central library, to house the local history centre. Leave the leather museum where it is, as its position within a former leather factory is key to its purpose, doesn't make heritage sense otherwise."

Retain libraries that are most used and therefore valued

A number of respondents ask that when selecting libraries to retain they should be selected on the basis of those that are most used and therefore valued. Whilst some think that libraries should be in areas of most need, others argue that affluent areas are equally entitled to a library.

"It's better than option one but it would depend on which libraries were selected to remain open. I would hope that the more deprived areas would be given priority and not those buildings that cost the cheapest kept open."

"If you need to close libraries it should be those that are expensive to run and underused such a Beechdale and Blakenall village. Well used libraries are vital for communities, social point for the elderly and literacy aid for young readers. To take this away from people who truly use and cherish the service would be an abomination."

"Look at visitor numbers and close those libraries with the fewest."

"This idea appeals to me more, but still how do you pick the 5 libraries to remain open. I foresee those saved will be in under privileged areas....but why.....please look at usage and community engagement. Richer areas still have people who use and need libraries....they are at the heart of the community."

Mobile library service



Almost two thirds of respondents (63%) think that a mobile library service should include stops both in the community and at care home / sheltered housing sites. Just 12% felt just stops in the community were needed and 10% just stops at care homes / sheltered housing sites. 16% felt that a mobile library service is not needed.

Some suggested a different mobile service. Comments included;

"The mobile library should consist of two vans, servicing both communities and the vulnerable. It does not service enough people to warrant the expense."

"Run libraries within the care homes."

"A housebound library service with two small vans?"

"If both mobile services are well used then they should both be kept going."

"I would not want a mobile library to replace my local library."

"Maybe consider school visits by the bus, if option one is used operate more than one bus to help keep libraries accessible to all residents."

"Can you have a virtual library where books ordered could be delivered to suitable local places such as schools, community centres, churches?"

"The mobile libraries are too expensive and cannot be justified based on the visitors and borrowing statistics."

Respondent demographics (where stated)

Over two thirds of respondents (69%) were female. The average age of respondent was 49, the youngest 17 and the oldest 94.

14% reported having a disability or a long term illness.

91% of respondents were White British with 9% identifying their ethnic group as Black or Minority Ethnic, the largest group being Asian or Asian British (4%).

Key findings

Retaining a local library service is important to people.

Naturally people want the library they use most often retained.

Option 1 is unpopular due to it being an inconvenient location for most, thus requiring the need to travel. The lack of plentiful free parking close to central library is also off putting.

Many say they would stop using the library if option 1 was approved.

Those who use libraries value them highly as local community assets that provide far more than just books.

Many feel that libraries to be retained should be those that are most used, therefore reflecting the value the library holds in the local community.

People want to see the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum retained. Results indicate a preference to keep the leather Museum over the Local History Centre and Archive.

Many feel the closure of the Leather Museum would be a detriment to the borough.

A mobile library that stops at a mix of locations is preferred.

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Date: 3 January 2017

Budget Proposal 32 - Libraries, Leather Museum and Local History Centre face to face conversations

Report of findings December 2016

Background and findings

Forming part of budget consultation plans relating to proposal no 32; a series of face to face conversations were undertaken within all libraries, the Leather Museum, and the Local History Centre.

Conversations were facilitated by a small group of Walsall council staff who act as consultation facilitators.

As Table 1 indicates, a total of 106 conversations were held with service users with variance in the number of conversations held reflecting the number of people available and willing to participate on the day and in the time allocated. Conversations took place between 18 November and 20 December 2016. Dates were chosen by the staff facilitators who were present for a minimum of two hours' duration in each location.

Venue and number of conversations regarding Budget Proposal 32			
Location	Date	Time	Conversations
Aldridge Library	29/11/2016	am	7
Beechdale Library	23/11/2016	am	8
Blakenall Library	23/11/2016	pm	11
Bloxwich Library	30/11/2016	am	6
Brownhills Library	01/12/2016	am	5
Darlaston Library	08/12/2016	pm	4
New Invention Library	24/11/2016	pm	2
Pelsall Library	29/11/2016	am	3
Pheasey Library	20/12/2016	am	3
Pleck Library	22/11/2016	pm	10
Rushall Library	18/11/2016	pm	7
South Walsall Library	09/12/2016	pm	5
Streetly Library	29/12/2016	pm	7
Walsall Central Library	24/11/2016	pm	3
Walsall Wood Library	07/12/2016	am	7
Willenhall Library	08/12/2016	am	5
Leather Museum	09/12/2016	pm	8
Local History Centre	30/11/2016	pm	5
Total			106

Conversations followed an interview question guide and feedback was taken down in

writing and entered into a database in order for views to be recorded and systematically analysed. All comments have been read and the key issues summarised within this paper.

The three options discussed are:

Option 1: Keep Walsall Central Library (Lichfield Street, Walsall), keep one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery “housebound” Service. The single library site would be redesigned and developed as a “Hub” and include the Local History Centre and Archive and Leather Museum. This option costs approximately £1m.

Option 2: Close Walsall Central library and reduce the total number of “static” libraries from 16 to no more than 5. Keep one mobile library bus and the Home Delivery 'housebound' Service. A minimal Local History Centre & Archive service would operate from one of the retained libraries. Unless a suitable alternative location is found for Walsall Leather Museum, it would close. There is a budget of approximately £1m for this option.

Option 3: Retain any number and selection of static or mobile libraries and / or the Local History Centre & Archive and Leather Museum, within a budget of approximately £1m per year. Just over half (51) of all participants who gave their preference (base= 100) on service delivery options said they preferred **Option 2**. Over a third (37) preferred **Option 3**: and with 12 preferring **Option 1**; this being the councils preferred approach.

Preference for **option 2** mostly reflects the fact that having a local library service best suits their needs. The local library is easily accessible and something people value as a local community asset and should therefore be retained within the community. Regularly used and therefore a service people have become accustomed to having and would miss if not available. Some participants have issues with travelling into Walsall to access a library service, with unfamiliarity of the central library, cost of travel, parking and image issues amongst their concerns. Some worry about impact on elderly. There are also concerns about loss of internet use, which for some offers a lifeline; i.e. job searches and for homework.

‘Because of local accessibility - travel. Travel is over-riding issue.’

‘Communities need access to libraries - within the community and not Walsall TC. Aldridge is a district centre library and needs to be retained. Walsall isn’t easy for parents with young children to get to so Aldridge is accessible and well used.’

‘Geographical access, provincial libraries offer better opportunities for social contact and form part of the local community...’

‘Never been to Walsall Library- too far.’

‘Parking issues in Walsall. Some people could walk (to a district library). Cost of transport. Save time.’

‘If they close my local library, it would have a negative impact on the older generation; - Local libraries fulfil an important role combating social isolation.’

Those expressing a preference for **option 1** tended to reflect that Walsall Central Library was well resourced and accessible, better than their local library. Some appeared pushed into preferring option 1 as the best of a bad bunch of options, because ideally they didn't like any of the options, but saw the sense in retaining one centrally accessible facility. For some the key issue is retention of a library service, rather than interest in Leather Museum or Local History Centre, though others chose option 1 specifically as it retains those services best.

'Its (the central library) well used and the facilities are second to none. I'm not sure how many people use the Local History Centre or Leather Museum; these are less important to me. Central library is most important. Rushall Library has always been quiet when I have visited, it's not cost efficient to run with so few visitors.'

'All proposals are pretty terrible. Do not like option 2. Central library is the main library and most used. Begrudgingly prefer option 1.'

'So the Leather Museum and Local History Centre can be kept.'

Those showing preference for **Option 3** tended to be because of the ability to retain a level of local community library service which was broadly preferred over retaining Walsall Central, though some still wanted both central library and some local libraries saved, alongside retaining the Leather Museum and Local History Centre.

Unsurprisingly, location of interview had an influence on preference with users of the Leather Museum and LHC expressing the importance of both services, especially the leather Museum which people generally do not want to see moved from its current location.

'I am of the opinion that it is much better to have a number of smaller libraries located across Walsall rather than a central one in town.'

'Not easy for everyone to get to just one library. More libraries equal more clubs like toddler clubs.'

'Prefers this option as it keeps as many libraries open as possible. The library already serves 4 schools. The removal of local libraries takes away social care for a whole range of people.'

Usage and accessibility are the key factors to be taken into consideration when determining either option 2 or 3.

Those showing a preference for options 2 and 3 were asked what factors they thought should be taken into consideration when determining options.

Usage, accessibility, meeting the needs of deprived communities, and taking account of the community value/cumulative impact of library closure; were, in varying combinations were regularly stated as the key considerations to be taken into account when making a decision on this proposal. About a half of those giving their views cited usage and accessibility alone as key determinants.

'Most popular libraries, footfall easy access good parking facilities.'

'I believe that less-busy libraries should be closed.'

'There are a number of factors that should be taken into account: - Footfall - Levels of deprivation - Relationship/proximity with local schools.'

'Libraries with the biggest range of services and facilities.'

'Look at usage and uptake of services. The libraries that are kept should be the ones that are valued by the local community. Provide access to computers in areas of need - deprived areas. It's particularly important for job seekers.'

Library users find it difficult to relinquish their love of local libraries.

When asked what libraries they thought should be kept open; not unsurprisingly, most respondents said they wanted 'their local library'; the one they were being interviewed in to be kept open. Some expanded on their selection to be retained to include other libraries local to them, or their local library and Walsall Central. Some distinguished the need to retain district centre libraries though that was often those whose library is in a district centre. A few just reiterated they really wanted them all kept open, whilst others looked at the broader issues of deprivation and usage.

Walsall Town Centre is seen as a barrier to accessing a library service, because of town centre image, ease of access, notably parking issues especially for elderly and children and young people who value more local services.

The key theme arising from feedback about Option 1, 'Hub approach' is people's dislike of the town centre's central library provision due to concerns about town centre image, parking facilities, and general ease of access. Especially for elderly and younger residents who value having libraries close by; with mobility issues being an issue for both.

'I am a car owner but find parking in Walsall difficult.'

'Every fortnight I come to the library and walk home I wouldn't go on a bus, especially to Walsall.'

'Would not go to Walsall Library. Hate it.'

'I don't use any other services so to travel to Walsall just to borrow books is unrealistic.'

'I have image issues with Walsall TC - it's not clean, untidy and not a nice place to be, not safe.'

'I would not go to a library in Walsall on principle.'

'I avoid Walsall town centre because of the drugs - I don't feel safe.'

Young people in particular value the ICT resources especially where that's not available at home, and the homework resources that are available.

'I couldn't access it for homework the extra travel costs lack of access to books would impact upon my school work.'

'Bus costs for those that can't walk to the central library. Reduced opportunity for homework services wouldn't feel safe going to a library after school..not close to home.'

'I would be devastated I use the internet as there's no Wi-Fi at home I do my homework there.'

People say that not having services locally would have an adverse impact on the local community, and cause social isolation for those who see the broader value of libraries such as access to groups, meeting people, sense of community.

'Loss of computers, book borrowing, keeps my mind active in old age.'

'...feel Aldridge is an important asset for the community. My wife relies on books for her health and well being. I worry about cumulative impact on older people of all the cuts to services people like us use, we value our libraries.'

'Lose 3 social outlets; 1- Social life would need to find somewhere else and would cost potentially. 2- No public conveniences. 3- Lack of computer for school children doing home work.'

'Impact on people's wellbeing and mental health is not mapped. People coming to library groups, ESOL learning etc are important factors beyond just borrowing books.'

Some of those interviewed said that having a 'Hub' would just mean they would stop using the library service, or use it less, or they would be forced to travel out of borough.

'I may use the library in West Bromwich if South Walsall closes.'

'I would use the library but I wouldn't go as often, maybe once or twice a year.'

'I would never use the library, this is a ridiculous option.'

Interviewees in the Leather museum are concerned about the move out of the Leather Centre and into a 'Hub' which they feel is probably not the right historical setting for it. They feel that people just won't visit once it's moved and that would lead to its eventual demise.

'I think it would result in the museum being lost altogether as it will not work in a place with no history...'

'The museum won't work in the library.'

'The leather museum is unique, it's part of our heritage.'

Users of both the Leather Museum and Local History Centre worry about the lack of space there will be to house all facilities together.

'I don't see how all these resources can be fitted into one location and enable access to archives and local history.'

'To fit the Leather museum and local history centre into one hub would have to mean a reduced provision ... Implication of storage for a repository for the archive collection (including the environment). Storage space proposed is not sufficient for records accessed frequently.'

Half of interviewees struggled to make any alternative suggestions for how savings might be made. Those that did suggested a generally reduced borough wide library service, shared services, making savings elsewhere, introducing fees/charges and use of volunteers.

'Reduce the opening hours of libraries....no need to have them open in the day could just have them after school time and in the evening a few days then open at the weekend. Need to rethink the prices of some services...people would be willing to pay more.'

'Reduce opening hours of libraries; - Implement a rota system for all local libraries.'

'Keep libraries open but reduce opening times.'

'Set up libraries in schools or empty units in housing estates.'

'Put libraries in leisure centres.' *'Cuts in the wrong place, look somewhere else.'*

'Make savings on really high cost services.'

'Admission fees can be charged for entry to Leather Museum.'

'Volunteers could help to support library use.'

About Participants

The following describes the profile of participants taking part in this consultation exercise. Not all participants provided their information.

The average age of participants was 49. The youngest person spoken to was aged 6, and the oldest aged 88.

60 participants said 'yes' and 42 said 'no' when asked if they have access to a car, van either as a driver or passenger. (base 102)

There was a fairly even split of participants by gender; 56 females and 48 males (base 104)

Most participants (95) said they didn't have a disability; 6 people said they had.

(base 101)

Most participants were of White British ethnicity (82), whilst the remainder started their ethnicity as Asian or Asian British (15), Black, African, Caribbean or Black British (5) or from Mixed or multiple groups (2). One person explicitly refused to provide that information. (Base 104)

**For Approval by Cabinet and
Recommendation to Council:**

**Corporate Budget Plan and
Treasury Management and
Investment Strategy**

2016/17 to 2019/20

February 2017

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Part 1 – Revenue and Capital Budget Plan

1. Financial planning and management: matching resources to the vision

The council's budget is a financial representation of the organisation's plans for the forthcoming financial year and beyond. In times of economic uncertainty, it is imperative that the council plans over the medium term. This budget looks over the lifetime of the spending review period 2016/17 to 2019/20 in some detail and is constructed as an integral part of the council's planning processes. It is aligned to its priorities and objectives and specifically the council's corporate plan, strategic economic plan, and our workforce development plan.

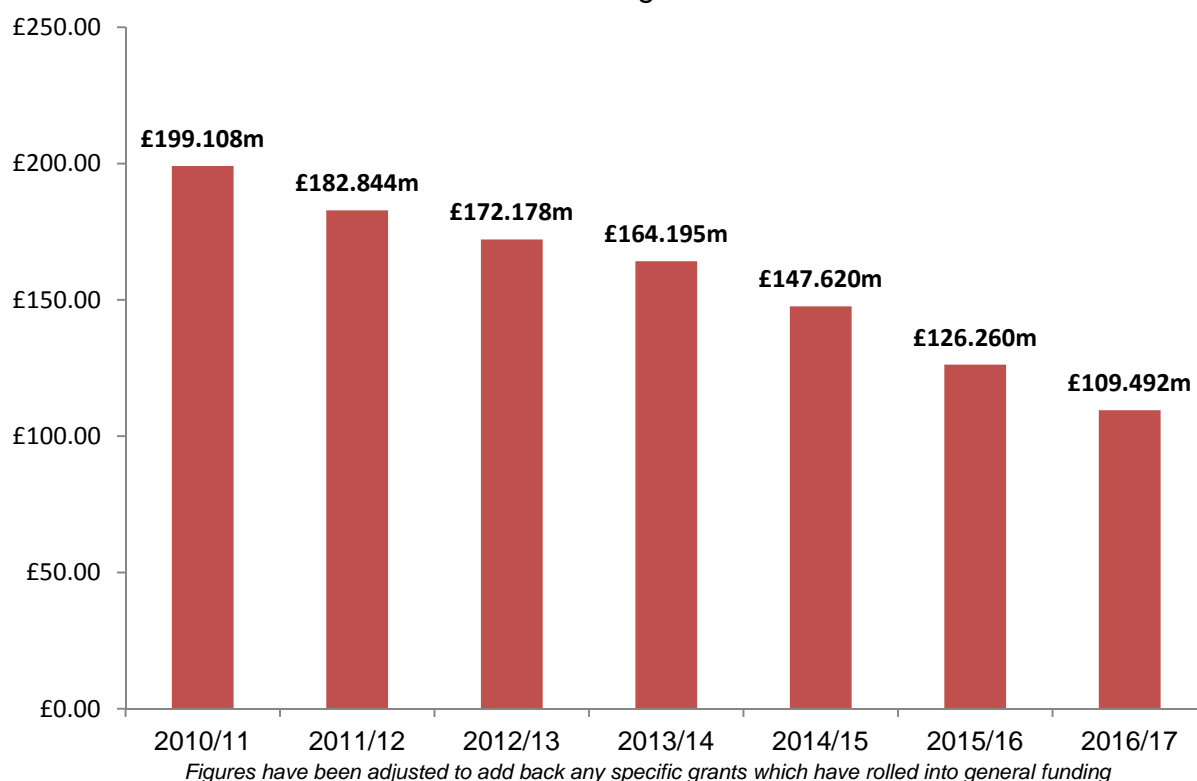
Walsall Council exists to serve the people and communities of Walsall, by representing and working with them to protect and improve the quality of life for all, particularly the most vulnerable. Walsall Council will provide strong, fair, open and honest leadership for the borough and its people and work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

By 2020 the council will be a key enabler of improvements to Walsall and its' Districts as a place to live, learn and work; working innovatively and collaboratively with strong and resilient communities, public sector partners, schools and businesses to shape services that deliver real and sustainable improvements to people's lives. The council will by necessity be smaller, doing fewer things, and those services that we continue to provide will be delivered in a very different way to how they are now. Our efforts will be focussed on reducing health, social and economic inequalities and creating an environment where the potential of the area, local businesses, communities and people can be maximised.

Our Challenges

The vast majority of Walsall's funding comes from Government grant (60%). In 2010, Walsall received £199m of Government core funding support to deliver services, alongside income generated from council tax. Between 2010 and 2016, Government has cut funding by £90m. Alongside cost pressures over the same period savings totalling £137.5m have had to be implemented.

Government Funding 2010/11 to 2016/17



By the end of the current Parliament, Walsall will be subject to a further reduction in revenue support grant of £28.21m, which, along with cost pressures, results in an additional saving requirement of c£55m from 2017/18 to 2019/2020, on top of the c£30m required for 2016/17 (c£85m over the four years). Total forecasts for core funding are shown overleaf.

	2016/17 £M	2017/18 £M	2018/19 £M	2019/20 £M	Total (Reduction) / Increase £M
NNDR (BRR) Income adj for expected income collection	30.311	30.917	31.814	32.832	2.521
NNDR Top Up grant	33.421	34.079	35.084	36.205	2.784
Revenue Support Grant *	45.759	33.757	25.687	17.551	(28.208)
Total Cash Limit	109.491	98.752	92.584	86.589	
2017/18 Reduction		(10.739)			
2018/19 Reduction			(6.168)		
2019/20 Reduction				(5.995)	
Total Reduction					(22.903)

* assumed to be incorporated in the BRR.

By 2020/21 local government is expected to become fully self-funding, with core revenue support grant ceasing and the introduction of 100% localisation of business rate retention (BRR), (as opposed to the current 49%). The Government expects national increases in

growth in rate yields to fully offset the reduction in core funding.

In October, Cabinet approved that Walsall be part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) 100% business rate retention (BRR) pilot. Government has indicated that this will be at 'no detriment' to participating authorities; however, there remains some uncertainty as to the final impact of full BRR.

The council's next largest source of funding is council tax (17.6% of the council's gross spend is funded from council tax). Government has historically placed restrictions on the amount that can be raised from this income stream, previously through 'capping', and now through the referendum principles. The draft budget currently assumes council tax increases of 4.99% in 2017/18, including a 3% adult social care precept, as allowed by Government.

Despite Walsall signing up to and being accepted for the multi-year settlement, future funding continues to be very challenging with significant uncertainties in future grant, including public health, better care fund, etc. Additionally, as part of BRR, the Government is consulting on transferring additional responsibilities to local authorities. This could lead to further pressures if these are not fully funded.

Alongside reductions in funding, the council also faces increasing cost pressures, due both to rising demand (for example, as a result of welfare reforms reducing individual's disposable incomes further, larger numbers of older people requiring support to remain independent, etc) and new burdens imposed by Government, but without the corresponding funding. There are numerous cost pressures in the system, the most significant being;

- Looked after children numbers and costs. There were 488 in March 2011, compared to 629 in March 2016. Average costs of a care package for a looked after child at March 2016 was £497.48 per week.
- Children social worker costs - arising from recruitment difficulties.
- Adult social care packages and placements costs. These have risen by £10.64m in 5 years from £56.21m in 2010/11 to £66.85m in 2016/17.

Further information on cost pressures and how these are being managed within the medium term financial outlook are outlined in section 2 and summarised in **Annex 4**.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The MTFS is a strategic framework and policy document within which the council's finances are constructed and managed. It is part of a suite of policy documents that together comprise the council's approach to effecting sound governance and good practice. It is the translation of our vision, aims and objectives into a financial plan, which thereby facilitates delivery of these through the portfolio planning process.

The MTFS is a key document in bringing together the level of available resources with the demands for service delivery and investment, facilitating sound financial and service risk and opportunity management. It also links to the impact on the council's capital resources and external funding opportunities.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the various components of the financial framework. The MTFS is the overarching corporate financial policy sitting below the Corporate Plan and above the other elements of the financial cycle. It is the driver for all other financial activity. Below the MTFS sit the other financial strategies; the capital strategy and the treasury management strategy.

For a number of years' the council has adopted a policy-led, medium term approach to financial planning. We seek to ensure our budgets are clearly linked to our vision, aims and objectives. We are committed to maintaining financial stability and delivering value for money through effective and efficient services.

The main objective for the council is to maintain good long-term financial health. Achieving this allows us to deliver good quality, value for money services, shaped by our customer demand. Services that are modern, efficient, effective, and fit for purpose. This requires a framework that delivers both continuous, adaptive improvement and core strength.

How we will achieve this is through:

1. Financial Governance and Leadership
2. Financial Planning
3. Finance for Decision making
4. Financial Forecasting and Monitoring
5. Financial Reporting

Figure 1: Financial Framework

THE FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK					
CATEGORY	OVERALL	REVENUE	CAPITAL	TREASURY MANAGEMENT	RISK MANAGEMENT
Strategies	Medium Term Financial Strategy				
			Capital Strategy	Treasury Management (TM) Strategy	Risk Management Strategy
Guidance	CIPFA and technical guidance	Budget Guidelines	Capital Guidelines	CIPFA Code of Practice for TM	Risk Management Toolkit
Plans	MTFO	Annual Budget	Capital Programme and Asset Management Plans	Treasury Policy Statements	Risk Management Action Plans (where appropriate)
Governance	Constitution	Budget Management and Control Manual And the Annual Governance Statement		Prudential Indicators & Annual Report	Risk reporting and review
	Contract and Finance Rules				Audit Committee Reports and Annual Report
	Internal and External Audit Plans and our response to inspection and audit				

Financial Governance and Leadership

1. Our top management will be financially literate and able to understand fully the financial environment in which the council operates.

Financial Planning

1. Our financial planning will be inextricably linked to the council's strategic and corporate planning process. Our financial plans will reflect the councils key strategic priorities.
2. An annual medium term financial outlook, covering a four year time horizon, will integrate current expenditure plans and investment programmes, with cash-flow and balance sheet projections, developed in the context of a longer-term strategy, which supports the council's strategic plan.

Finance for decision making

1. In developing our strategic and corporate plan we will consider the value for money achieved by allocating resources to different activities.
2. We will understand the financial implications of current and potential alternative policies, programmes, and activities.
3. We will analyse our cost profiles and cost drivers and how they will behave under different circumstances.
4. We will understand the whole-life costs associated with capital investment.

Financial Monitoring and Forecasting

1. Top management will assure itself that financial performance to date and forecast financial outturns are in line with the plan, including cash-flow and balance sheet projections.
2. Variances will be identified as soon as possible, so that management can either take corrective action to manage unfavourable variances or apply any favourable variances to corporate priorities.
3. The underlying costs of the organisation's key activities and how these are profiled over time will be monitored and reviewed.
4. Financial information will be integrated with non-financial performance and activity information. Together, such information forms the basis for financial forecasts and enables value for money to be monitored.
5. The financial information used both for setting the budget and internal accountability, monitoring and forecasting throughout the year is derived from the same systems that are used to generate the results reported externally in the organisation's statutory financial statements.

Financial Reporting

1. To run the organisation effectively, top management will have up-to-date financial and non-financial performance information on a timely basis.
2. Reports will be presented in a form that is tailored to user needs, are easy to understand and highlight the key financial issues that they need to be aware of.
3. For its part, top management needs to provide timely, accurate and balanced information about its stewardship and use of resources and its non-financial performance to the organisation's different stakeholders. Such information will be presented in a form tailored to meet their needs.

2. Revised estimates 2016/17

The forecast outturn position for 2016/17 is referred to in the Corporate Financial Performance report to Cabinet on 8 February 2017. A robust risk assessment of the 2016/17 budget was undertaken prior to the budget being set in February 2016, however a series of significant and ongoing demand and cost pressures, mainly with Children's Services and Adult Social Care, have arisen during the financial year, which, if left unaddressed, would have depleted general reserves by year end.

Robust action has been taken to address this overspend, including a corporate review of all spend and introduction of a "making every penny count" exercise to review spend against corporate plan priorities. As a result of this, a forecast overspend of £14.33m has been reduced to £9.75m. Additional mitigating actions (use of alternative funding sources, reserves, windfall income, etc.) have delivered £6.79m of reductions and a further £470k of actions due to be delivered by 31 March 2017. This reduces the overspend to £2.49m. This overspend would equate to c0.4% of gross spend.

Revised estimates have been prepared to undertake the necessary cash limit changes to reflect the revised outturn position. Additionally, where possible, ongoing action plans to meet pressures will continue into 2017/18 with a permanent virement of budgets to ensure these costs are managed into 2017/18 and beyond. However, as indicated by the size of the overall potential deficit, many of these pressures cannot be managed from within existing cash limits, and as such, significant investment has been planned for and included within the 2017/18 budget.

The 2016/17 to 2019/20 budget therefore includes revised cash limits for 2016/17 as well as proposals for the following three years. The cash limits by portfolio, as referred to in Annex 3, include revised budgets for 2016/17 to reflect the reallocation of budgets to fund identified in year pressures.

3. Summary of the 2017/18 Revenue Budget

The budget has been prepared over the period of the current Parliament and Government's Efficiency Plan period, 2016/17 to 2019/20, however the focus in this section is 2017/18, as this is the year for which Council are required to set the forthcoming financial envelope (the 'statutory determinations' or gross expenditure and gross income), the council tax requirement and the band D council tax level. Section 5 provides further detail on 2018/19 and beyond.

2017/18 Revenue Budget Headlines

The revenue budget is constructed in accordance with the council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS), the Corporate Plan, and all relevant corporate financial protocols and presents a draft balanced budget, with:

- A focus on a policy-led, medium term, risk assessed budget setting approach using priorities established by Cabinet,
- A total net council tax requirement of **£108.471m**
- A 4.99% council tax increase, equivalent to a Band D Council Tax of **£1,570.35** (excluding precepts) and **£1,744.04** (including precepts) subject to confirmation of final precepts
- Investment of **£9.78m** for Adult Social Care - £4.2m covering ongoing pressures and £5.58m for demographic changes, joint funding arrangements and contractual inflation.
- Investment of **£6.62m** for Children's Services cost pressures primarily to cover Looked after Children, management of caseloads, demographic changes and contractual inflation.
- Provision for inflationary pressures outside of Adult and Children services of **£0.34m**
- Provision for other known budget pressures, including cost pressures and reduced levels of income or grant, of **£5.92m**.
- Savings of **£22.00m**, plus changes in council tax funding of £7.48m.
- Appropriate use of prudential borrowing to support capital investment where affordable and sustainable with revenue costs being reflected in this report
- Opening general reserves of **c£12.4m** in line with our Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The financial implications arising from the draft capital programme 2017/18 are contained within the draft revenue budget.

Net Council Tax Requirement

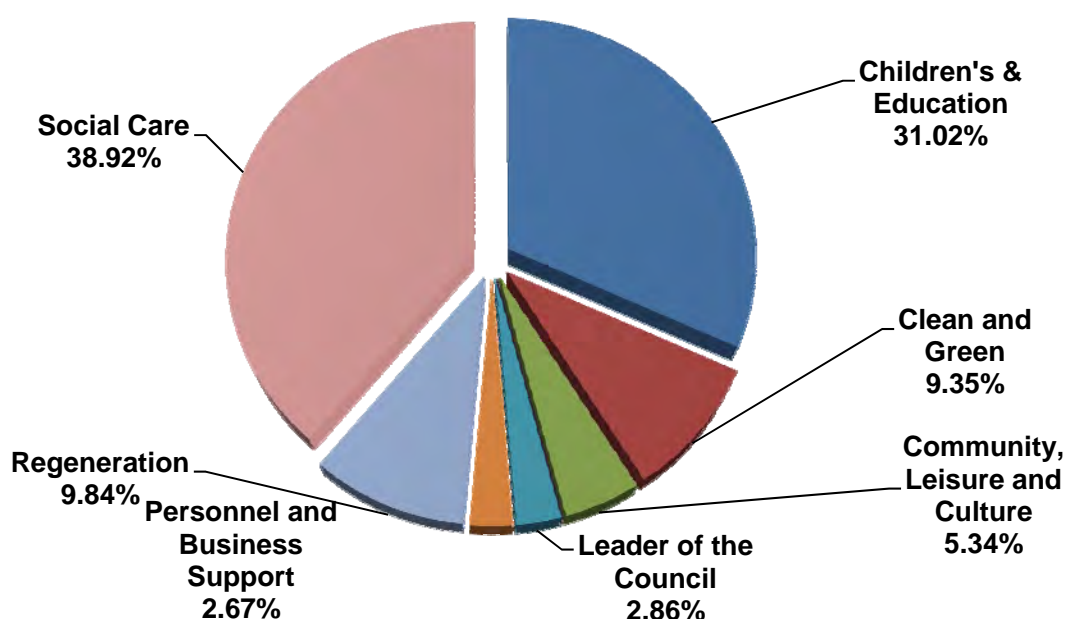
The gross revenue expenditure budget for 2017/18 will be **£617.394m**, and gross income will be **£508.923m**, resulting in a net council tax requirement of **£108.471m**.

It has been possible to commit to £22.66m (**Table 1**) to address key priorities, funding of essential cost pressures, 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 change in council tax requirement from 2016/17 to 2019/20 is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 : Council Tax requirement 2016/17 – 2019/20 (Movements)				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Council tax Requirement	93.70	100.99	108.47	112.80
<i>Cost Pressures:</i>				
Investment / cost pressures (<i>see Annex 4</i>)	26.25	22.66	13.50	11.38
Base budget adjustments	(1.72)	5.87	(11.10)	11.09
Savings approved for 2016/17 (Feb 16)	(25.11)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Policy savings (<i>see Annex 5</i>)	0.00	(12.59)	(9.47)	(17.14)
Operational savings (<i>see Annex 6</i>)	0.00	(9.41)	(3.02)	(3.36)
Changes to grant / income	1.30	(0.28)	(3.81)	(3.82)
<i>Funding changes:</i>				
Revenue Support Grant	15.02	45.76	0.00	0.00
Business Rates	(0.29)	(41.66)	7.55	7.61
Top Up Grant	(0.28)	(0.85)	(1.00)	(1.12)
Collection fund (surplus) / deficit	(2.89)	(2.61)	6.01	0.00
Use of reserves – looked after children	0.00	(1.00)	1.00	0.00
Use of reserves – growth programme	0.00	(1.27)	1.27	0.00
Use of reserves – Public Health	0.00	(0.75)	0.75	0.00
Use of reserves - DSG	0.00	(1.38)	1.38	0.00
One off use of general reserves – 2016/17	(0.35)	0.35	0.00	0.00
Use of earmarked reserves – 2016/17	(2.15)	2.15	0.00	0.00
Replenishment of growth reserve	0.00	0.00	1.27	(1.27)
Use of reserves - 2016/17 overspend	(2.49)	2.49	0.00	0.00
Revised Council Tax Requirement	100.99	108.47	112.80	116.17
Council Tax Increase – General	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
Council Tax Increase – Adult Social Care	2.00%	3.00%	2.00%	1.00%

Figure 2 – Net council tax requirement by portfolio



This would result in a band D council tax for the Walsall Council element only of £1,570.35, representing an increase of 4.99% from 2016/17 levels (3% of which is to be ring fenced to Adult Social Care). Most properties in Walsall (67.67%) are in bands A or B. (**Annex 2**). **Table 2** shows the calculation at Band D.

Table 2: Net Council Tax Requirement and Council Tax Levels 2017/18		
Element of budget	2017/18 budget and grants £	Council Tax Band D £
WMBC element - required from council tax	108,471,439	1,570.35
Police & Crime Commissioner precept	8,050,655	116.55
Fire & Rescue precept	3,946,928	57.14
Total from council tax	120,469,022	1,744.04

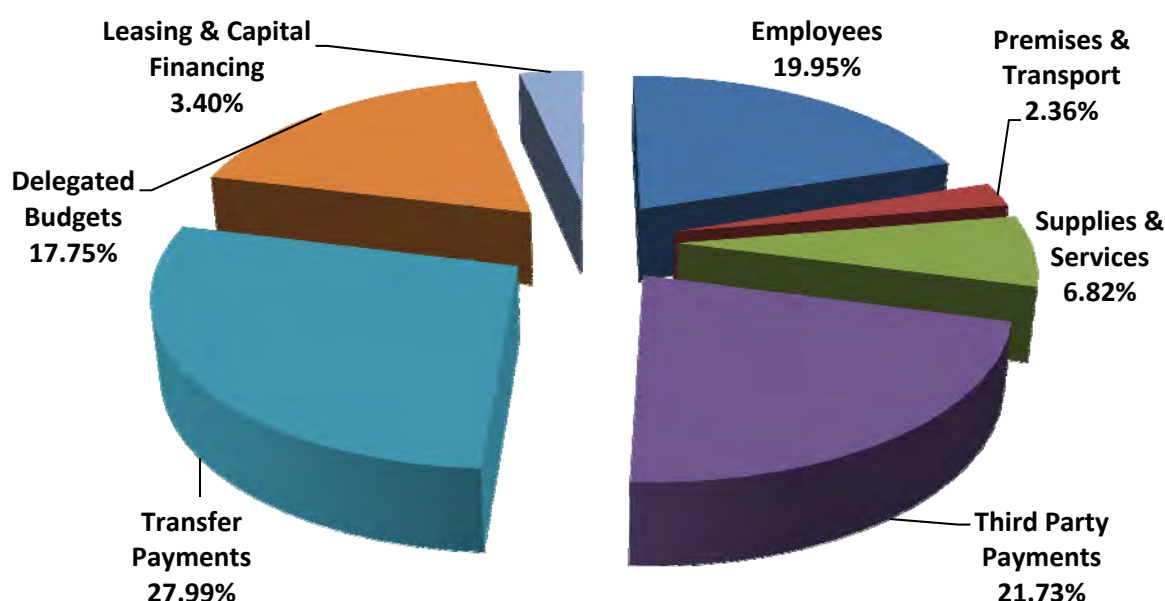
NB: based on an approved council tax base of 69,074.69 band D equivalents.

Expenditure analysis

The council analyses its expenditure by category, as referred to in **Table 3**, and illustrated in **figure 3**.

Table 3: Expenditure by Category of Spend	
Type of Expenditure	£ million
Employees	123.165
Premises and Transport	14.573
Supplies and services	42.134
Third Party Payments	134.150
Delegated Budgets	109.562
Leasing and Capital Financing	20.977
Transfer Payments	172.833
Total Expenditure (excluding Internal Recharges)	617.394

Figure 3 – Spend by Type of Expenditure

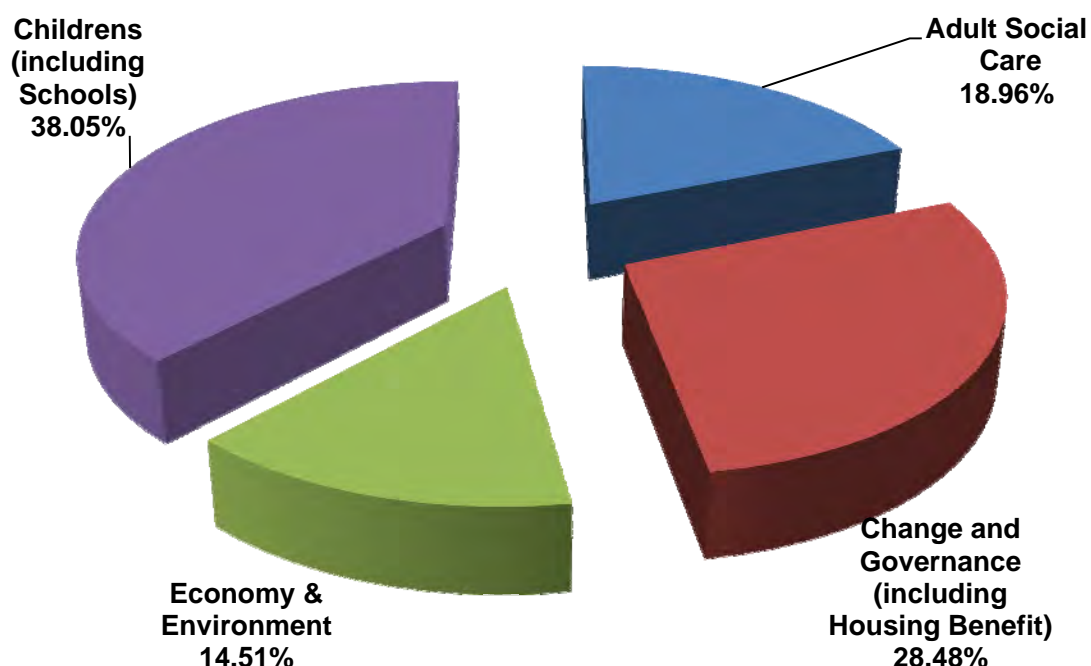


Notes

- *Transfer payments include expenditure such as special education needs, rent allowances and social services direct payments – for example payments for which no goods or services are received in return by the local authority.*
- *Delegated budgets include budgets for schools, community associations and allotments.*
- *Third Party Payments include payments to external contractors.*

The £617.39m total council expenditure is analysed by directorate in **figure 4**. For Change and Governance 18.8% of the 28.48% relates to Housing Benefit payments. For Children's Services 25.68% of the 38.05% relates to Schools.

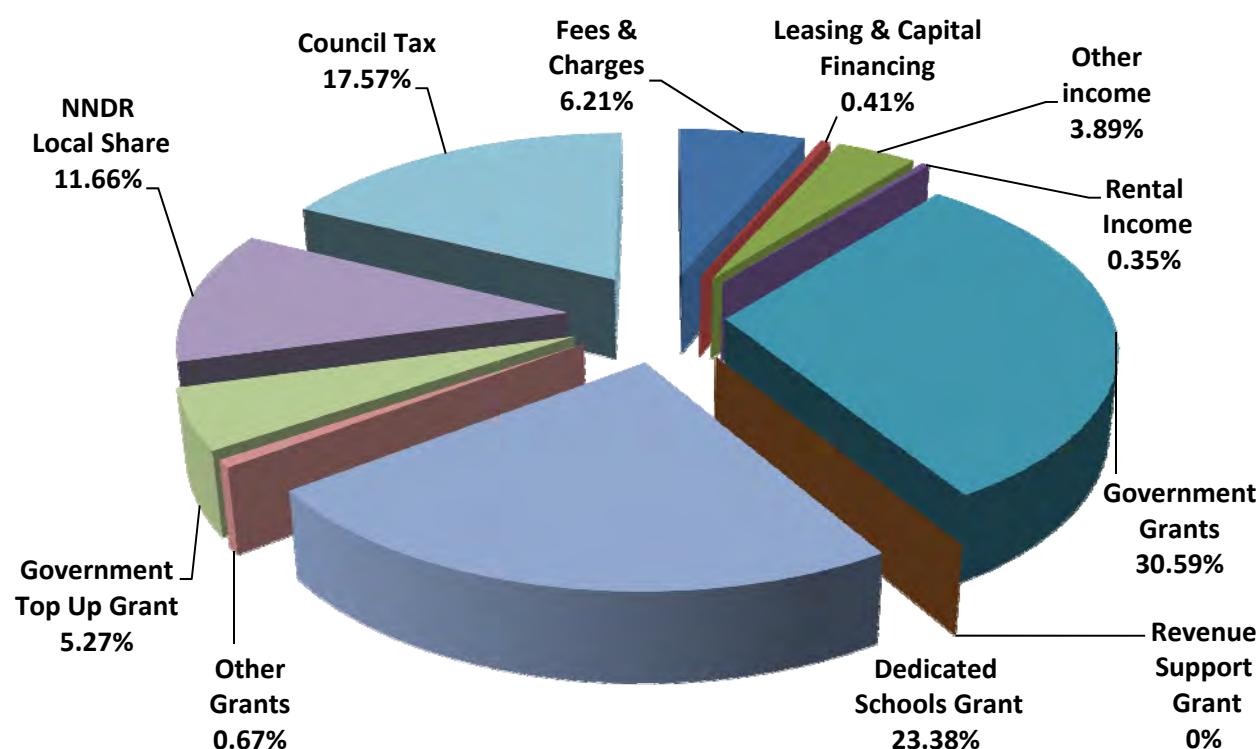
Figure 4 – Gross expenditure by directorate



Income analysis

The council receives income from a number of sources including council tax, central Government grant and specific grants to help pay for certain services including schools and social care. The council also charges for parking, use of leisure facilities and other services. In 2017/18 the council tax will account for 17.6% of total income. **Figure 5** shows all the main sources of income.

Figure 5 – Sources of funding



Government central funding and business rate retention

The Government provides funding to councils through a grant redistribution system (previously referred to as formula grant) which includes the redistribution of business rates collected and revenue support grant.

The Government replaced the way it funds councils with a new scheme known as Business Rate Retention (BRR) from April 2013.

By the end of this parliament the government has announced that local government will retain 100% of business rates (as opposed to the current 49%). Areas that have agreed a Devolution Deal have the opportunity to be involved in a 100% business rates retention pilot, which will begin from 1 April 2017. This provides the opportunity to shape national thinking about the eventual scheme, and to take forward further devolution. As such Walsall, along with the other six West Midlands Authorities, will pilot the scheme from 1 April 2017. This will mean that Walsall will retain 99% of business rates collected with the other 1% being paid over to the Fire Authority.

There is a change in funding under the 100% business rates scheme in that revenue support grant (RSG) is no longer paid to the authority. Funding will continue to be paid to the authority through a top up and retained business rates.

There remains considerable uncertainty in respect of the amount of income we will receive in Government funding from 2017/18 onwards, despite Government confirmation that Walsall is part of the multi-year settlement. The Autumn Statement, announced on 23 November 2016, reiterated that departmental spending plans remain in line with those previously published. The Government confirmed that it has changed its commitment to eliminate the current deficit by the end of this parliament. It is now forecasting a deficit of

£21.9bn in 2019/20 as opposed to the surplus of £10.4bn previously forecast. There is still a commitment to return a surplus but this will now be as soon as is possible in the next parliament.

The 2017/18 finance settlement, announced on 15 December 2016, represents the fifth year in which the BRR scheme is the principal form of local government funding, summarised as follows:-

- Business rates local share - **£71.97m in 2017/18** – this is an estimate of what Walsall will collect and retain in business rates, this local share is not guaranteed and is based on the council retaining 99% of what we actually collect in 2017/18, as part of the pilot scheme.

Government set Walsall a baseline figure under the business rates retention scheme of £69.818m for 2017/18 which is made up of the business rates local share, top up grant and section 31 grant in relation to business rates relief. They also set a safety net threshold of £64.581m for 2017/18. If the safety net threshold is triggered, then any income loss below the threshold is funded by government. Any shortfall between £69.818m and £64.581m has to borne by the council (99%), and fire authority (1%). Walsall is currently estimating the baseline to be £71.971m, slightly above the government baseline and so no safety net would be payable. Volatility in business rates will therefore need careful monitoring throughout the year.

- Top up grant – **£32.57m** in 2017/18. Some authorities collect more business rates than their calculated baseline funding level, and are therefore required to pay a tariff to Government in excess of their allocated share. Council's like Walsall have a greater baseline funding level than the business rates they can collect and will be paid a top up grant from Government.

The West Midlands combined Authority will pilot 100% business rates retention from 2017/18. This will be without detriment to the resources that would have been available to individual authorities under the current local government finance regime (with any "detriment" payments funded from outside the Settlement). The detail of the changes to our top up grant is currently being finalised with the pilot areas, and DCLG's intention is to confirm them in the final Settlement. Before the beginning of the financial year, the Government will also make changes to secondary legislation to confirm the new shares of business rates income and safety-net thresholds.

Government measure local authority expenditure by "*spending power*". Spending power is based on each local authority's power to influence and not control local spending levels. This will include the council tax requirement, business rates retention, specific grants and NHS funding for social care (the latter being spend which the council may have an influence over but does not control).

Walsall's direct funding, as determined by government, represents a reduction of 8.4% from 2016/17. Direct funding under the new pilot scheme, compared to funding received in previous years, is set out in **Table 4**.

Table 4 : Government Settlement funding Assessment			
	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m
Revenue Support Grant	59.0	45.8	0.0
Business Rates Baseline (99% retained from 2017/18 including effect of revaluation)	34.7	35.0	72.0
Top Up Grant	33.1	33.4	32.6
Total Government Settlement	126.8	114.2	104.6
Adjusted Settlement Funding Assessment	149.3*	128.6*	114.2
Grant increase/-decrease (adjusted) - £m	(22.5)	(14.4)	(9.6)
Grant increase/-decrease (adjusted) - %	-15.1%	-11.2%	-8.4%

*Adjusted to include rolled in grants

Changes in other Specific Grants

The following specific grants are also awaited, along with the assumptions built into the draft budget

- Confirmation of a one off Adult Social Care support grant of £1.4m in 2017/18.
- New Homes Bonus – a predicted reduction of c£2m over the next 3 years as the grant is expected to be paid over a reduced period from 6 to 4 years. Walsall has received notification of its New Homes Bonus allocation for 2017/18 of £4,783,764, a reduction of c£1.2m on our 2016/17 allocation.
- Public Health - a reduction of £1.4m over the next 3 years. Walsall has received notification of its Public Health allocation for 2017/18 of £18.119m, a reduction of £458k on our 2016/17 allocation.
- DSG - allocated based on schools funding formula - to be paid directly to schools from 2019/20
- Education Services grant now rolled into schools funding formula, and not directly given to the authority of c£3m in 2017/18
- Housing Benefit grant expected to reduce annually as the Benefit moves to Universal Credit
- Discretionary Housing Payments - expected reduction of 20% per annum
- Other grants are expected to continue at current levels unless informed otherwise
- Forecast £10m increase in BCF expected from 2016/17 to 2019/20

Inflationary Pressures / Financing Options / Service Cost Pressures

The draft budget for 2017/18 includes provision for investment and cost pressures of £22.66m, as shown in **Annex 4**, which are proposed to address known service demand pressures linked to council priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan, and the prioritisation of key services. The following are provided for:

- 1 *Provision for pay and pensions;*
 - 1% pay increase per annum and provision for pay increments
 - Provision for the national living wage
 - Impact of pension auto-enrolment and tri-annual employer pensions contributions based on the latest valuation information

- 2 *Inflationary pressures;*
 - Provision for contractual increases including utilities, care packages, etc.
 - No provision for general inflation – services are required to manage this within existing budgets
- 3 *Demographic changes within Adult Social Care and Children’s Services;*
 - Increases in placement costs for looked after children
 - Increased social workers to manage down caseloads
 - Increased care package costs within Adult Social Care arising from an increased ageing population and the pressure from hospital admissions
- 4 *Other cost pressures;*
 - Ongoing shortfalls in income for planning, markets, and building design fees
 - Review of maintenance costs for council buildings
 - Provision for the Government imposed new apprenticeship levy to be paid from April 2017

Savings requirement

In order to set a balanced budget, and after a review of available resources from central Government grant, taking into account additional known and likely pressures, total revenue reductions of just under £30m were required for 2017/18. Savings of £22m have been included in the budget and a further £7.48m has been realised from changes in council tax funding.

Savings proposals were reported to Cabinet on 26 October 2016, and referred to in the draft budget report to Cabinet on 14 December 2016. These were split into two categories, as referred to in table 1 :

1. *Policy Savings* - with a direct impact on services, and which require an Executive (Cabinet) decision to proceed. These proposals have been subject to public consultation and equality impact assessment, with feedback reported in **Section A**. The “Policy Options” are as shown in **Annex 5**, along with any changes following the outcome of public consultation.
2. *Operational Savings* – savings which officers have delegations to implement, and have minimal impact on front line service provision. These are shown in **Annex 6**, and cover the following:
 - Review of senior management and administration
 - Review and reduction of back office and support functions
 - Use of a reduced number of agency staff
 - Reduction in general operational costs
 - Review of building related costs including energy consumption
 - General efficiencies
 - Grant funding and income opportunities
 - Rescheduling of existing borrowing
 - Review of procurement of council expenditure and contracted services.

Table 5 below summarises savings by portfolio -

Table 5: 2017/18 Savings/efficiencies/income changes by Portfolio			
Portfolio	Policy savings (Annex 5) £m	Operational savings (Annex 6) £m	Total Savings £m
Leader of the Council	0.07	1.41	1.48
Children's Services and Education	1.71	1.85	3.56
Clean and Green	0.98	1.04	2.02
Community, Leisure and Culture	2.12	1.40	3.52
Health	1.13	0.08	1.21
Personnel and Business Support	0.09	0.78	0.87
Regeneration	0.33	0.50	0.83
Social Care	4.79	1.25	6.04
Central Savings	1.37	1.10	2.47
Total Savings / efficiencies	12.59	9.41	22.00

The £2.47m corporate savings relate to £1.37m in relation to the review of employee terms and conditions which was approved in 2016/17 (balance allocated to specific portfolios), £0.1m Asset review and £1m for contracts review. The savings for the asset and contracts reviews will be allocated to services once the review of these areas are complete.

Collection Fund

The collection fund is accounted for separately to the revenue general fund and accounts for income collected from council tax and business rates. In January of each financial year, an in-depth appraisal is undertaken to assess the estimated level of collection (as aggregated to include that relating to the current and previous years), the likely balance of the fund and to advise the precepting authorities (Fire and Police) of their share of the council tax surplus/deficit to enable them to take this into account in their own budget calculations. The assessment undertaken in January 2017 revealed an estimated surplus of £6.01m for Walsall in relation to council tax and a deficit for business rates of £0.67m (actual deficit is £1.37m of which Walsall funds 49%).

Referendum

In recent years central Government has capped the level of council tax rises. Capping principles are determined on a year by year basis.

Since 2012/13, each authority is required to determine whether their council tax increase requires a referendum, seeking the support of the local electorate. Schedule 5 of the Localism Act introduced a new chapter into the Local Government Finance Act 1992, making provision for council tax referendums to be held if an authority increases its council tax by an amount exceeding principles determined by the Secretary of State and agreed by the House of Commons.

This would mean if a local authority seeks to raise its relevant basic amount of council tax by 2% or more for 2017/18, local people would have the right to keep council tax bills down through a binding referendum veto.

The local government finance settlement announced on 15 December 2016 outlined plans for local authorities to relax the referendum rules on the social care precept element of the council tax (2% introduced in 2016/17) to allow local authorities to increase the precept element to 3% in 2017/18 (increase of 1%), as long as the increase over the three year period to 2019/20 is no more than 6%.

Levies and Precepts

Table 6 shows the levy to be made on Walsall Council by the West Midlands Combined Authority for transport, and the levy by the Environment Agency.

Table 6: Levies 2017/18				
Levy	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	Increase / (Decrease) £	Increase / (Decrease) %
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	12,186,851	11,843,851	(343,000)	(2.82%)
Environment Agency	77,207	77,207	0	0%

Walsall's precepting authorities are the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authorities, as shown in **Table 7** below.

Table 7: Precepts 2017/18				
Precepting Authority	2017/18 Amount £	Band D 2017/18 £	Band D 2016/17 £	Band D Increase %
WM Police and Crime Commissioner	8,050,655	116.55	111.55	4.48%
WM Fire and Rescue	3,946,928	57.14	56.01	2.01%

General Reserves, Earmarked Reserves and Contingencies

The Council's financial strategy sets out how the council will structure and manage its finances now and in the future to ensure is to continue to demonstrate financial stability and to ensure this facilitates delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan objectives.

The Council's Statutory S151 Officer produces the Strategy, and advises on the level of reserves, in accordance with statute, best practice, professional opinion and the council's MTFS. In accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to comply with CIPFA guidance on local authority reserves and balances, the S151 Officer is required to formally consider and report to members upon the adequacy of reserves in respect of the 2017/18 budget.

Additionally, this requirement covers reporting on the robustness of the estimates used for the purpose of calculating the budget.

The Government is fundamentally changing the way in which local government is funded, which increases the financial risk to the council. As such, and in accordance with statute and best practice, the level and nature of reserves have been reviewed as part of the budget process.

The MTFS requires the Council to set opening general reserves of between 1% and 2% of the gross revenue budget approved by Council each year, the precise level being informed by a risk assessment and to be set by the S151 officer. For 2017/18, that would equate to opening general reserves of between c£6.2m and c£12.4m.

The review of reserves has included a review of existing reserves, along with an assessment of potential future financial risks. Risks have been considered alongside the probability of each happening. This informs the S151 Officer's recommendations on the most prudent and appropriate level of reserves for 2017/18, taking into account the opportunity cost of maintaining those reserves.

The level of opening balances for 2017/18 is partially dependent on the level of closing balances for 2016/17. General balances, based on forecasts as at December monitoring, are estimated to be in the region of c£10m as at 31 March 2017. This assumes the current level of overspend does not increase.

The outcome of the review is that the current forecast level of balances required would be insufficient at this point in time to cover the major risks facing the council. The S151 Officer recommends an opening general reserve of £12.4m to cover this increased risk. It is therefore recommended that the opening level of balances is increased. It is expected that this additional requirement for £2.4m will be released from the review undertaken of specific earmarked reserves.

Further, the S151 Officer intends to review both the minimum and maximum level set out within the MTFS during 2017/18 and also to seek to further add to reserves during the year, should circumstances allow.

The following details general reserves as at 31 March 2016, together with proposed use of and transfer to reserves for 2016/17, and the resulting balance as at 1 April 2017, to secure the opening level of reserves recommended by the S151 Officer.

General Reserves	£k
Balance as at 1 April 2016	14.131
Use of reserves in 2016/17 budget (approved by Council)	(0.349)
Use of reserves approved in year (by Cabinet)	(1.245)
Use in year to fund forecast overspend	(2.494)
Estimated closing balance as at 31 March 2017	10.043
Release of specific earmarked reserves / reduction in general reserves required to fund 2016/17 overspend	2.357
Estimated opening balance as at 1 April 2017	12.400

This level of balances is considered prudent for a number of reasons:

- Uncertainty over the level of funding going forwards, particularly in light of the fundamental changes being undertaken in relation to central funding and business rate retention.
- The Council is not permitted to budget for a level of general reserves below that determined by the MTFS *and* the S151 officer.

- Balances are predicated on total savings of c£22m being achieved in 2017/18. Whilst an assessment of delivery plans has been undertaken to ensure there are robust plans in place to deliver these savings, if total savings are not made, balances could be below the minimum required by the MTFS, which would put the Council in breach of its own rules.

Further detail is provided in **Annex 8**. That section has been written by the Council's S151 Officer, and deals with the requirements of the Act and professional guidance. Consideration of all these issues has been comprehensive and complex. **Annex 8** provides further information and signposts to the various activities, documents and other evidence that have contributed to the decision and declaration, and does not seek to reproduce them here.

Transformation Fund Reserve.

For 2017/18 the council is establishing a transformation fund reserve. This has been established to fund one-off expenditure to support delivery of the council's objectives and specifically reviews and redesign of different service delivery models, spend to save and spend to avoid costs initiatives.

4. Summary of the 2017/18 Capital Programme

The council has an asset portfolio of around £534m. Therefore managing and maintaining these assets is a key issue for the council to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose and their value is maintained. The capital programme is key to delivering the council's vision and priorities.

Due to the diverse nature of capital expenditure, each capital scheme impacts on residents in different ways according to their use of council facilities and services. The capital programme has been constructed within the principles outlined in our Capital Strategy. This document drives the construction and management of the capital programme. The strategy reflects and enables delivery of the council's vision and priorities and approved schemes must deliver that aim. It also requires the council to optimise successful partnership working for example through the Walsall Partnership, NHS Walsall, registered social landlords and regionally with other councils.

The 2017/18 capital programme totals £52.55m and is presented in two parts:

- Mainstream council funded programme (£15.88m) - funded through borrowing and capital receipts (**Table 9**). Of this £0.75m is identified for council wide schemes, funding to support essential works including health and safety and other projects that cannot be guaranteed at the start of the year.
- Non-mainstream programme (£36.67m) - funded from capital grants (**Table 10**).

In addition, the council's leasing programme for 2017/18 is £1.3m – revenue costs of which are funded from services own budgets (**Table 11**).

Capital resources will continue to be limited in the future inevitably placing more pressure on our ability to make future capital investment decisions. Funding will be more reliant on the council's ability to secure capital receipts from sale of land and buildings or affordable additional borrowing. A strategic review of assets is undertaken as part of the 'Asset Management' project which informs the revision of the Capital Strategy and formulation of future years capital programmes.

Mainstream Programme: Funded from Walsall's own resources

Funding

The council's mainstream capital programme is normally funded from borrowing, capital receipts and the carry forward of unspent allocations from previous years.

Borrowing going forward is required to be funded from council's own resources – generated through savings, and/or paid for via council tax. (This is also commonly known as unsupported or Prudential borrowing). Councils are allowed to borrow in accordance with the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The current capital financing / services cash limits is forecast to be able to support £5.40m of additional borrowing to fund high priority items in 2017/18.

Capital receipt projections of £1.5m for 2017/18 are based on professional estimates of property colleagues. Any additional receipts received in year (excluding those earmarked for specific schemes e.g. Lower Farm Car Park and Rushall JMI School) will be considered to fund projects identified on the reserve list of schemes as referred to in **Annex 7**.

Table 8 shows currently estimated resources to fund the mainstream capital programme for the four years from 2016/17.

Table 8 : Mainstream Capital Programme (Council funded)				
Category	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Capital receipts projected	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Earmarked capital receipts – Essex Street	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00
General borrowing	4.46	5.40	5.40	5.40
Borrowing for Active Living	1.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
Borrowing for Smarter Workplaces Living	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.00
Borrowing for Wheeled Bins	0.38	0.00	0.00	0.00
Borrowing for Libraries	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
Uncommitted previous years underspends	1.72	1.57	0.00	0.00
Use of reserves / contingency	0.48	1.10	0.00	0.00
Revenue contribution to capital	1.10	0.11	0.04	0.04
Additional borrowing / receipts	0.00	6.20	6.45	0.03
Total Mainstream resources	11.85	15.88	13.59	6.97

Capital Schemes

For 2017/18 services were asked to review approved schemes in 2016/17 and the expected re-phasing or underspends to help fund future capital programmes. In addition, new bids were considered in line with the Capital Strategy and council priorities. Details can be found in **Annex 7** and are summarised in **Table 9** below.

Table 9: Mainstream Capital Programme 2017/18 by Portfolio (Council funded)				
Portfolio	Prior Year Approvals £m	Rolling Programme £m	New Allocations £m	Total Mainstream £m
Leader of the Council	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Children's Services and Education	0.00	0.00	1.25	1.25
Clean and Green	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.05
Community, Leisure and Culture	0.00	0.00	2.54	2.54
Health	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personnel and Business Support	0.00	0.00	4.32	4.32
Regeneration	0.81	2.80	1.16	4.77
Social Care	0.00	0.82	1.38	2.20
Centrally held budgets *	0.00	0.75	0.00	0.75
Total Council Funded Capital	0.81	4.37	10.70	15.88

**Centrally held relates to funding to support essential works, including health and safety e.g. LSVT retained housing land, asbestos removal, statutory testing, legionella, fire risk, demolition of redundant buildings, planned maintenance, risk management and self insured property damage.*

Schemes are recommended to go ahead for a number of reasons:

- Address policy including;
 - ✓ Support with cost of living
 - ✓ Creating jobs and helping people get new skills
 - ✓ Improving educational achievements
 - ✓ Helping local high streets and communities
 - ✓ Help create more affordable housing
 - ✓ Promoting health and wellbeing
- Return on investment / Asset management - schemes that unlock external investment in the Borough; drive out long term revenue savings; support the strengthening of the borough's economy; deliver an efficient and effective operational estate linked to the asset management plan; and invests in assets to grow future income streams for the council.
- Capital insurance reserves: to protect the council's position, for which funding is available should the need arise to draw it down.
- Priority schemes for which external funding can be drawn down and which may or may not require a contribution from the council's own resources.

All capital schemes were reviewed by the Asset Strategy Group and corporate management team prior to formal approval by Cabinet for recommendation to Council. 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 2017/18 with indicative allocations which are subject to further review for 2018/19 onwards.

Externally Funded Programme

Full details of externally funded schemes are found in the draft capital programme at **Annex 7** and are summarised in **Table 10** below. Many of these are indicative allocations pending formal notification from the respective funding bodies, and the capital programme will be adjusted in year to reflect final allocations. Certain schemes can go ahead as these are either fully funded by grant or have the necessary mainstream match funding already approved. If grant or mainstream funding is unavailable then the scheme will not go ahead.

Table 10: Externally Funded Capital Programme 2017/18 by Portfolio			
Portfolio	Government Funding £m	Third Party / External £m	Total Funding £m
Leader of the Council	0.00	0.00	0.00
Children's Services and Education	9.76	0.00	9.76
Clean and Green	0.00	0.00	0.00
Community, Leisure and Culture	0.00	0.09	0.09
Health	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personnel and Business Support	0.00	0.00	0.00
Regeneration	23.92	0.00	23.92
Social Care	2.90	0.00	2.90
Total Externally Funded Capital	36.58	0.09	36.67

Leasing Programme

The 2017/18 leasing programme totals £1.3m, summarised in **Table 11** below. Leasing minimises the call on capital resources by spreading the acquisition cost over a number of years. Revenue funds are required to finance operating leases, and are included in the revenue budget.

Table 11 : Leasing Programme 2017/18 by Portfolio		
		Revenue
Portfolio	Asset cost	Leasing Cost
	£m	£m
Clean & Green		
Refuse Vehicles	0.13	0.37
Light Commercial Vehicles	0.95	0.48
Tractors & Agricultural Machinery	0.05	0.19
Welfare Vehicles	0.36	0.06
Sub total	1.49	1.10
Community, Leisure & Culture		
Equipment	0.00	0.20
Total Leasing	1.49	1.30

5. Medium term financial outlook – 2018/19 plus

Revenue

Key sources of funding, in particular fees and charges, Government grant and specific grant are assessed on a regular basis, along with emerging cost pressures. The focus is on forward planning to ensure financial risk is managed and mitigated and all known liabilities are funded, including the cost of capital investment decisions.

As referred to in Part 1, by 2020/21 local government is expected to become fully self-funding, with core revenue support grant ceasing and the introduction of 100% localisation of business rate retention (BRR), (as opposed to the current 49%). The Government expects national increases in growth in rate yields to fully offset the reduction in core funding. The reality is that Walsall, due to its relative need and business rate yield, will be unable to fully cover this further significant funding shortfall.

The council, via the West Midlands Combined Authority have been designated a pilot for the 100% business rates retention scheme. We await full details of the pilot scheme.

Assumptions have been made in our medium term financial outlook around overall reductions to Government spending for this period, along with known cost reductions and pressures.

Beyond 2017/18, funding allocations still remain uncertain but the government have issued local authorities with indicative figures for 2017/18 – 2019/20 as part of the multi-year settlement offer. Indicative projections show further reductions in funding of c£6m in both 2018/19 and 2019/20, subject to confirmation.

All well as proposing a balanced budget for 2017/18, Cabinet have also extended their focus to the following years, such that the budget proposals presented also cover 2018/19 and 2019/20. At their meeting on 8 February, Cabinet intend to approve a number of changes to service delivery for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Additionally, it will approve further consultation to be held on areas such as charging for green waste collection and the reconfiguration of recycling collections to introduce 'twin stream' collections.

Cabinet's draft budget contains sufficient proposals to represent a balanced budget, not just for 2017/18, but for the full three-year period to 2020. Further work is in hand in relation to the profiling of some of the proposals between 2018/19 to 2019/20, however, by focusing on the medium term, and not just 2017/18, this provides the Council with a sound opportunity to plan ahead and seek to rebalance the budget to deliver its Corporate Plan priorities, and allows it some flexibility to adapt to an ever changing climate.

Annex 3 outlines the cash limit for 2016/17, the proposed cash limit for 2017/18, subject to Council approval, and indicative cash limits for the following two years, and this is summarised in **Table 12**.

Table 12: Revenue Cash Limits by Portfolio				
Portfolio	Revised 2016/17 £m	Proposed 2017/18 £m	Indicative 2018/19 £m	Indicative 2019/20 £m
Leader of the Council	7.50	5.59	6.70	6.20
Children's Services and Education	58.21	60.63	60.76	60.68
Clean and Green	19.71	18.29	17.68	16.85
Community, Leisure and Culture	10.97	10.43	8.53	7.06
Health	0.14	(0.16)	(0.18)	(1.90)
Personnel and Business Support	4.09	5.22	4.88	4.76
Regeneration	21.79	19.23	18.84	17.80
Social Care	81.11	76.07	68.69	60.86
Net Portfolio Cash Limits	203.52	195.30	185.90	172.31
Levies	12.26	11.92	11.86	11.86
Central budgets *	(114.79)	(98.75)	(84.96)	(68.00)
Council Tax Requirement	100.99	108.47	112.80	116.17

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

Capital

Capital programme resources are limited. The financing for capital expenditure on new investments is heavily reliant on grants and other funding received from the Government. The Government is clearly, in the medium term, planning to significantly reduce government financed capital spending.

The remaining flexibility is currently through capital receipts and borrowing. Capital receipts projections however are limited, and fully dependent on when council assets are sold. Earmarking of capital receipts beyond what we are statutorily obliged to do is not recommended without overall strategic consideration of the entire capital programme. Use of unsupported borrowing incurs ongoing revenue debt charges and impacts on council tax payers.

Capital allocations and grants from Government and other sources have not yet been published, therefore best estimates have been used, based on published information to date. Any further reduction in funding will require amendments to the draft programme.

Despite the above difficulties, significant investment is planned and funded over the three years 2017/18 to 2019/20 and the draft capital programme is balanced for each year, subject to annual review. The council is able to fund all existing commitments and has, through prioritisation of bids and resources and sound treasury management, been able to support new investment into key services, and areas of capital investment need.

The list of capital schemes included in the draft capital programme for 2017/18 to 2019/20 are shown in **Annex 7. Table 13** shows the draft capital programme against predicted available resources. **Table 14** summarises the draft capital programme by portfolio.

Table 13 : Draft Capital Programme				
	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
<u>Anticipated Capital Resources</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
Council resources as shown in table 8	11.85	15.88	13.59	6.97
External Funding	60.48	36.67	21.31	25.90
<i>Total capital resources</i>	<i>72.33</i>	<i>52.55</i>	<i>34.90</i>	<i>32.87</i>
<u>Capital Bids</u>				
Prior Year Approvals	2.98	0.81	1.73	0.20
Rolling Programme Schemes	5.74	4.37	4.37	4.37
New capital bids	3.13	10.70	7.49	2.40
<i>Total council funded schemes</i>	<i>11.85</i>	<i>15.88</i>	<i>13.59</i>	<i>6.97</i>
Externally funded schemes	60.48	36.67	21.31	25.90
Total draft capital programme	72.33	52.55	34.90	32.87
Funding shortfall (surplus)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Centrally held relates to funding to support essential works, including health and safety e.g. LSVT retained housing land, asbestos removal, statutory testing, legionella, fire risk, demolition of redundant buildings, planned maintenance, risk management and self-insured property damage.*

Table 14 : Draft Capital Programme by portfolio			
Portfolio	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£m	£m	£m
Leader of the Council	0.00	0.00	0.00
Children's Services and Education	11.01	6.88	6.88
Clean and Green	0.05	0.10	0.00
Community, Leisure and Culture	2.63	4.59	0.41
Health	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personnel and Business Support	4.32	1.68	0.96
Regeneration	28.69	17.09	20.15
Social Care	5.10	3.81	3.72
Centrally held budgets *	0.75	0.75	0.75
Draft Capital Programme	52.55	34.90	32.87

Annex 1: Summary of Corporate Revenue Budget 2017/18 by Portfolio

PORTFOLIO / SERVICE / LEVY ETC.	2016/17 REVISED FORECAST £	IN YEAR MOVEMENTS £	INVESTMENT AND PRESSURES (Annex 4) £000	NEW POLICY SAVINGS (Annex 5) £000	NEW OPERATIONAL SAVINGS (Annex 6) £000	2017/18 FORECAST BUDGET £000
Leader of the Council	7,497,919	-515,816	83,964	-65,806	-1,413,746	5,586,515
Children's Services and Education	58,208,752	-641,799	6,623,000	-1,708,329	-1,846,728	60,634,896
Clean and Green	19,711,686	316,180	281,879	-980,729	-1,036,185	18,292,831
Community, Leisure and Culture	10,973,264	2,914,931	71,302	-2,124,011	-1,405,934	10,429,552
Health	142,609	907,247	0	-1,128,152	-82,000	-160,296
Personnel and Business Support	4,089,574	802,929	1,200,000	-95,768	-771,797	5,224,938
Regeneration	21,789,548	-2,176,934	447,701	-328,738	-501,016	19,230,561
Social Care	81,105,683	-8,781,786	9,783,433	-4,788,884	-1,249,194	76,069,252
SUB TOTAL SERVICES	203,519,035	-7,175,048	18,491,279	-11,220,417	-8,306,600	195,308,249
Non-service specific prudence/central items	-112,738,558	16,688,389	4,164,416	-1,371,143	-1,100,000	-94,356,896
Levies:						
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	12,186,851	-343,000	0	0	0	11,843,851
Environment Agency	77,207	0	0	0	0	77,207
NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE	103,044,535	9,170,341	22,655,695	-12,591,560	-9,406,600	112,872,411
(Use of)/contribution to reserves	-2,053,642	-2,347,330	0	0	0	-4,400,972
GRAND TOTAL COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	100,990,893	6,823,011	22,655,695	-12,591,560	-9,406,600	108,471,439

Annex 2: Council Tax Data 2017/18

A. LEVELS FOR PROPERTIES WITH TWO OR MORE RESIDENTS (67% of Properties)

BAND	WEIGHT	2016/17 C.TAX	2017/18 C.TAX	ANNUAL CHANGE	ANNUAL INCREASE
		£	£	£	%
A	6/9	997.14	1,046.90	49.76	4.99%
B	7/9	1,163.33	1,221.38	58.05	4.99%
C	8/9	1,329.52	1,395.86	66.34	4.99%
D	9/9	1,495.71	1,570.35	74.64	4.99%
E	11/9	1,828.09	1,919.31	91.22	4.99%
F	13/9	2,160.47	2,268.28	107.81	4.99%
G	15/9	2,492.85	2,617.25	124.40	4.99%
H	18/9	2,991.42	3,140.70	149.28	4.99%

2. OVERALL COUNCIL TAX INCLUSIVE OF PRECEPTS

A. LEVELS FOR PROPERTIES WITH TWO OR MORE RESIDENTS (67% of Properties)

BAND	WEIGHT	2016/17 TOTAL C.TAX	2017/18 WMBC C.TAX	ESTIMATE - ACTUAL T.B.A		OVERALL (INC PRECEPTS)
				2017/18 FIRE PRECEPT	2017/18 POLICE PRECEPT	2017/18 TOTAL C.TAX
		£	£	£	£	£
A	6/9	1,108.86	1,046.90	38.09	77.69	1,162.68
B	7/9	1,293.67	1,221.38	44.44	90.65	1,356.47
C	8/9	1,478.48	1,395.86	50.79	103.59	1,550.24
D	9/9	1,663.29	1,570.35	57.14	116.55	1,744.04
E	11/9	2,032.91	1,919.31	69.84	142.45	2,131.60
F	13/9	2,402.53	2,268.28	82.53	168.35	2,519.16
G	15/9	2,772.15	2,617.25	95.23	194.24	2,906.72
H	18/9	3,326.57	3,140.70	114.28	223.10	3,478.08

B. LEVELS FOR PROPERTIES WITH ONE RESIDENT (25% DISCOUNT) (33% of Properties)

BAND	WEIGHT	2016/17 TOTAL C.TAX	2017/18 WMBC C.TAX	ESTIMATE - ACTUAL T.B.A		OVERALL (INC PRECEPTS)
				2017/18 FIRE PRECEPT	2017/18 POLICE PRECEPT	2017/18 TOTAL C.TAX
		£		£	£	£
A	6/9	831.64	785.18	28.57	58.28	872.02
B	7/9	970.25	916.04	33.33	67.99	1,017.36
C	8/9	1,108.86	1,046.90	38.09	77.70	1,162.69
D	9/9	1,247.47	1,177.76	42.86	87.41	1,308.03
E	11/9	1,524.68	1,439.49	52.38	106.84	1,598.70
F	13/9	1,801.90	1,701.21	61.90	126.26	1,889.38
G	15/9	2,079.11	1,962.94	71.43	145.69	2,180.05
H	18/9	2,494.93	2,355.53	85.71	174.83	2,616.06

3. SPREAD OF PROPERTIES

The proportion of properties within Walsall MBC within each Council Tax band at 1st December 2016 is as follows:

BAND	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL
PROPERTIES (No)	50,577	26,707	18,058	10,123	5,535	2,373	770	50	114,193
PROPERTIES (%)	44.29	23.39	15.81	8.86	4.85	2.08	0.67	0.04	100
CUMULATIVE TOTALS	67.67%								
			83.49%						
				92.36%					

4. WEEKLY INCREASE IN COUNCIL TAX (WALSALL MBC ELEMENT)

BAND	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	0.95	1.11	1.27	1.43	1.75	2.07	2.39	2.86

Annex 3 : Revenue Cash Limit 2016/17 to 2019/20 by Portfolio

This appendix outlines the cash limits by portfolio, subject reallocation of central costs / savings.

1. Leader of the Council Portfolio

Overall responsibility for Council strategy, the corporate plan, communications and public relations, emergency planning, government relations and liaison with local MPs and West Midlands leaders. Association of Black Country Authorities and Black Country Joint Committee. Strategic and operational financial management and administration, insurance, risk management, policy led budgeting. Financial Regulations, Audit, Legal and Democratic Services, Performance, Member Development.

Leader of the Council Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	7.72	7.50	5.59	6.70
Base budget adjustments including funding changes	(0.22)	(0.51)	0.03	(0.22)
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4		0.08	1.70	0.16
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(0.07)	(0.02)	
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(1.41)	(0.60)	(0.44)
Revised cash limit	7.50	5.59	6.70	6.20

2. Children's Services and Education Portfolio

Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, education services, interagency cooperation, involvement of children and young people, youth parliament, children's trust arrangements, youth offending services, youth service, schools meals commissioning, transition arrangements with Adult Social Care. Adult learning, catering services.

Children's Services and Education Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	56.50	58.21	60.63	60.76
Base budget adjustments including funding changes	1.71	(0.64)	(0.13)	(0.03)
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4		6.62	2.71	3.23
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(1.71)	(1.52)	(2.27)
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(1.85)	(0.93)	(1.01)
Revised cash limit	58.21	60.63	60.76	60.68

3. *Clean and Green Portfolio*

Gateways and corridors, pollution control, waste strategy, refuse collection, recycling, street cleaning, parks and the Council's vehicle fleet.

Clean and Green Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	19.96	19.71	18.29	17.68
Base budget adjustments including funding changes	(0.25)	0.32	(0.03)	(0.04)
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4		0.28	0.03	0.03
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(0.98)	(0.45)	(0.78)
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(1.04)	(0.16)	(0.04)
Revised cash limit	19.71	18.29	17.68	16.85

4. *Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio*

Area co-ordination, community engagement and consultation, community associations, voluntary and community sectors, leisure and culture services including the New Art Gallery, libraries, sports and museums. Cemeteries and crematoria. Community Safety, Safer Walsall Partnership, public protection.

Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	11.96	10.97	10.43	8.53
Base budget adjustments including funding changes	(0.99)	2.91	(0.90)	
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4		0.07	0.01	0.12
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(2.12)	(0.69)	(1.19)
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(1.40)	(0.32)	(0.40)
Revised cash limit	10.97	10.43	8.53	7.06

5. *Health Portfolio*

Public health, Health and Wellbeing Board

Health Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	0.14	0.14	(0.16)	(0.18)
Base budget adjustments including funding changes		0.91	0.45	0.44
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4				
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(1.13)	(0.47)	(2.06)
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(0.08)		(0.10)
Revised cash limit	0.14	(0.16)	(0.18)	(1.90)

6. *Personnel and Business Support Portfolio*

Issues relating to governance and decision making processes including the corporate plan. HR function, shared services, including ICT, procurement, facilities management.

Personnel and Business Support Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	2.91	4.09	5.22	4.88
Base budget adjustments including funding changes	1.18	0.80	(0.17)	
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4		1.20		
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(0.09)		
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(0.78)	(0.17)	(0.12)
Revised cash limit	4.09	5.22	4.88	4.76

7. *Regeneration Portfolio*

Economic development, physical development, markets, property and asset management, Black Country Consortium, sub regional regeneration issues. Town and district centres, planning policy and local development framework. Strategic housing role. Traffic and transportation, car parks, strategic transport and highways. Business liaison and skills

Regeneration Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	21.35	21.79	19.23	18.84
Base budget adjustments including funding changes	0.44	(2.18)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4		0.45	0.14	0.23
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(0.33)	(0.33)	(1.12)
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(0.50)	(0.18)	(0.13)
Revised cash limit	21.79	19.23	18.84	17.80

8. *Social Care Portfolio*

Care services for older people and people with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities and people with mental health needs, health partnership, community meals, supporting people, protection for vulnerable adults and transition arrangements with Children Services. Money Home, Job.

Social Care Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20				
	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Opening cash limit	76.23	81.11	76.07	68.69
Base budget adjustments including funding changes	4.88	(8.78)	(4.82)	(5.31)
Investment / cost pressures – see Annex 4		9.78	3.73	2.95
Less: Policy Savings – see Annex 5		(4.79)	(5.99)	(4.71)
Less: Operational Savings – see Annex 6		(1.25)	(0.30)	(0.76)
Revised cash limit	81.11	76.07	68.69	60.86

Annex 4 : Summary of Investments and Cost Pressures

Detail of investment / cost pressure	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
Leader of the Council Portfolio			
Democratic Services – mayoral transport income	3,964		
Capital Financing including borrowing	80,000	1,702,536	160,000
Total Leader of the Council Portfolio	83,964	1,702,536	160,000
Total Children's Services and Education Portfolio			
Looked after children caseloads - recruitment of additional social workers to reduce case-loads to 12	3,469,000	422,000	(254,000)
Looked after children placement costs	2,500,000		
Contractual inflation	110,000	120,000	120,000
Increase in costs relating to changes in demographics	170,000	1,140,000	1,140,000
Fall out of Education Services Grant		450,000	1,500,000
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	194,000	604,112	722,000
Out of borough looked after children placements - bringing them back in borough into an internal residential setting (4 a year) (Further £150k in capital programme)	150,000		
Foster care recruitment one off cost for recruitment/advertising campaign	30,000	(30,000)	
Total Children's Services and Education Portfolio	6,623,000	2,706,112	3,228,000
Clean and Green Portfolio			
Contractual Inflation	281,879	24,634	25,000
Total Clean and Green Portfolio	281,879	24,634	25,000
Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio			
Fall out of grant / correction of income shortfalls	71,302	10,962	123,202
Total Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio	71,302	10,962	123,202
Personnel and Business Support Portfolio			
Increased maintenance costs within Integrated Facilities Management (IFM)	200,000		
Shortfall in design fee income within IFM	1,000,000		
Total Personnel and Business Support Portfolio	1,200,000	0	0
Regeneration Portfolio			
Shortfall in planning income	30,157	29,253	28,375
Contractual inflation	62,000	62,000	61,634
Fall out of ESF / ERDF grant income		29,299	32,734
Increased staffing in planning development to help meet performance requirements	80,000		
Shortfall in markets income	105,022	18,451	17,898
Support to Black Country Consortium	13,322		90,000
Reinstate 2016/17 saving to develop alternate income streams to cover costs not deliverable	67,200		
Reinstate 2016/17 saving for reduction in management structure	90,000		
Total Regeneration Portfolio	447,701	139,003	230,641
Social Care Portfolio			
Contractual inflation including new living wage	2,087,938	2,019,626	1,960,574
Increase in costs relating to changes in demographics	1,215,495	1,433,799	974,020

Detail of investment / cost pressure	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
Ongoing pressures in relation to cost of adults social care	4,200,000		
Joint Funding Arrangements	2,200,000		
Fall out of Housing Benefit Administration grant	50,000	131,000	
Reduction in subsidy incentive grant			15,300
Additional moderation of care – linked to savings		150,000	
Council tax reduction scheme consultancy	30,000		
Total Social Care Portfolio	9,783,433	3,734,425	2,949,894
Corporate investment			
Reinstatement part terms and conditions saving from 2016/17	1,000,000		
Contribution towards Combined Authority costs	351,045		
Increase in service demand for looked after children		2,000,000	1,000,000
Additional allocation to cover redundancy / pension costs		1,000,000	1,000,000
Allocation for revenue implications for capital programme			500,000
Apprenticeship Levy	500,000		
Pay related (to be allocated) – increment, etc.	2,313,371	2,180,344	2,159,523
Total Council Wide	4,164,416	5,180,344	4,659,523
Total investment / cost pressures	22,655,695	13,498,016	11,376,260

Annex 5 : Summary of Final Revenue Policy Savings by Portfolio

Year 1 and 2 (excluding those marked # where further, *specific*, consultation is required) have been consulted on and, where required, equality impact assessed. Section A of the budget report contains the feedback from these. For proposals commencing in year 3, consultation and equality impact assessment will be undertaken prior to further consideration by Cabinet.

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
1	Charging for Deputyships	30,000		
2	Charging for Appointeeships #		15,000	
3	Apply decrease to Members allowances at same level as decrease in staff pay. Requires a Council decision to implement.	7,055		
52	Cease retirement awards	26,000		
	Terms & Conditions – car allowances	2,751		
Total Leader of the Council Portfolio		65,806	15,000	0
4	Review and develop children centre service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model	208,126		
5	Review demand for transport from children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) – Removed following budget consultation			
6	Review demand for SEN transport. More provision of Special School Places will reduce transport and existing travel costs			200,000
7 pt	Review demand for Out of Borough SEN short breaks – Removed and replaced with £102k operational savings following budget consultation			
8 pt	Review and reduce short breaks – Removed and replaced by operational savings following budget consultation			
9	Reduction of spend on Looked after Children including those in Out of Borough Placements		300,000	600,000
10	Review and reduce Looked after Children numbers & associated costs	680,044	462,044	1,223,044
11	Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service	64,000	64,000	
12	Reduce or identify alternative contribution for Children's Safeguarding Board – removed following budget consultation			
13	Review and reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model	266,500	421,301	110,572
14	Aim to identify alternative funding to support School Improvement Services	235,599	271,198	135,599

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
	Terms & Conditions – car allowances	254,060		
Total Children's Services and Education Portfolio		1,708,329	1,518,543	2,269,215
15	Every other week bin collections – Decision approved by Cabinet 16 December 2015	460,500		
16	Reduction in Public Health investment to lifestyle services - £60k brought forward from 2019/20 to replace saving no. 27	105,000		145,000
17	Introduce charging for garden waste collections #		300,000	
18	Reconfigure recycling collections to introduce 'Twin stream' collections #		150,000	
19	Review HWRC site and Transfer Station provision			137,772
20	Reduction in large grass cutting areas	27,312		
21 pt	Consider cessation of bowling green and cricket wicket provision - Removed and replaced by operational savings following budget consultation			
22	Reduction in herbicidal weed spraying of highways	23,750		
23a / b	Reduction in Street Cleansing service	257,907		
24	Further review of waste collection arrangements			500,000
25	Reduce grass cutting on highway verges in rural areas	49,702		
26	Reducing green waste collection season by 1 month - To be deferred and considered as part of garden waste review			
27	Reduction of one tree gang - Removed following budget consultation			
	Terms & Conditions – car allowances	56,558		
Total Clean and Green Portfolio		980,729	450,000	782,772
28	Consider withdrawal of contract with Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA)			168,795
29	Cease funding to Relate Walsall and First Base Walsall - Removed following budget consultation			
30	Consider withdrawing funding to Community Associations - Removed following budget consultation			
31	Remove Cohesion non staffing budget - Removed following budget consultation			
32	Option for redesign of Library service – revised proposal following budget consultation to combine Option 1 with a local offer	1,800,000		

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
33	Relocate Leather Museum into Lichfield Street Central Library with Local History Centre – Removed following budget consultation			
34	Relocate Local History Centre into Lichfield Street Central Library with Leather Museum	93,405	93,405	
35	Removal of the council's revenue subsidy to the Forest Arts - Removed in 2017/18 following budget consultation		100,000	185,000
36	Removal of the council's revenue subsidy to the New Art Gallery – year 3 amended following review	100,000	(20,000)	50,000
37	Additional income from Active Living to fully recover costs of Darlaston Pool and Walsall Gala baths		519,383	783,559
38	Create a Local Authority Trading company, initially to manage Active Living sports sport and leisure services – Removed due to statutory guidance change			
39	Change to provision of out of hours for Community Protection service	22,370		
40	Review of the operation of the council's pest and animal control service to control demand, target resources more effectively and increase income	20,000		
	Terms & Conditions – car allowances	88,236		
Total Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio		2,124,011	692,788	1,187,354
41	Reduction in Public Health investment in drug and alcohol	143,000	250,000	500,000
42	Re-procurement of lifestyle services	260,000		
43	Reduction in Healthy Child 5-19 in school services	125,000		100,000
44	Re-commissioning of 0-5 services	100,000		400,000
45	Reduce scope of healthy lifestyles services			250,000
46	Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes	175,152		
47	Reduction of Public Health Stop Smoking services	200,000	200,000	
48	Cease falls prevention service			295,000
49	Reduce capacity in sexual health services			500,000
50	Reduce scope of infection control services		20,000	20,000

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
51	Reduction in the Public Health Transformation Fund investment in domestic abuse services	50,000		
76	Reduction in grant to Citizens Advice Bureau – public health funding	75,000		
Total Health Portfolio		1,128,152	470,000	2,065,000
53	Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing wardens	85,000		
	Terms & Conditions – car allowances	10,768		
Total Personnel and Business Support Portfolio		95,768	0	0
54	Energy saving from major street lighting invest to save # <i>subject to a separate options appraisal and Cabinet report</i>		50,000	450,000
55	Reduction in the mtce of road signs	15,000		64,000
56	Reduced maintenance of road drainage following pilot on drainage and streams			72,000
57	Reduced maintenance road markings			31,500
58	Reduction in highways maintenance resulting from the re-procurement of the Highway Maintenance contract	150,000		
59	Additional reduction in Highways maintenance revenue budgets		100,000	
60	Increase cost of parking permits	6,000	6,000	6,000
61	Increasing Town Centre off street Parking Charges	15,000		
62	Introduction of an additional charge for vehicle dropped crossings to cover the costs of preparing quotations	10,000		
63	Introduction of a street and roadworks permit scheme		100,000	
64	Redesign and reduce the traffic management function		75,000	
65	Reduction in the reactive Highways maintenance budget	50,000		
66	Merge Strategic Planning team with those of other Councils – <i>Removed following budget consultation</i>			
67	Reduction in Economic Development – <i>Removed following budget consultation</i>			
68	Stop cleansing after markets / collecting and disposing of market traders waste - <i>Removed following budget consultation</i>			
69	Increase district centres market fees - <i>Removed following budget consultation</i>			

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
70	Cessation of landscape service	40,000		
71	Removal of all economic intelligence services – Removed following budget consultation			
72	Significant reduction in Economic Development capacity – Removed following budget consultation			
73	Review of investment portfolio			500,000
	Terms & Conditions – car allowances	42,738		
Total Regeneration Portfolio		328,738	331,000	1,123,500
74	Combined Welfare Rights service, Housing Advice and Crisis Support	200,000		
75	Closure of banking hall in Civic Centre	100,000		
76 pt	Reduction in grant to Citizens Advice Bureau – element supported by Money Home Job removed in 2017/18 following budget consultation and re-phased in future years		57,458	45,966
77	Consider cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services – Wilbraham Court reinstated in 2017/18 and further reductions following budget consultation	757,843	1,032,729	
78	Review of respite and day services – part re-profiled into 2018/19 following budget consultation	400,024	400,024	
79a	Improving demand management for Adult Social Care	1,718,750	3,062,500	1,218,750
79b	Improving demand management for Adult Social Care		1,145,833	2,854,167
80	Housing and Care 21 – year 2 & 3 subject to further consultation	137,000	295,000	590,000
81	Removal of jointly funded vacant posts	826,627		
82	Improved charging and collection arrangements for community based services	474,894		
	Terms & Conditions – car allowances	173,746		
Total Social Care Portfolio		4,788,884	5,993,544	4,708,883
	Terms and Conditions *Approved by Personnel Committee 28 June 2016 – Car allowances element allocated to portfolios above	1,371,143		
	Channel Shift – roll out of digital solutions for contacting the council			5,000,000
Total Central savings / funding changes		1,371,143	0	5,000,000
Total Policy Savings		12,591,560	9,470,875	17,136,724

Annex 6: Summary of Final Revenue Operational Savings by Portfolio

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
Leader of the Council Portfolio				
83	Increase in income by the Insurance team	40,678	26,313	
84	Dividend review – Birmingham Airport	419,835	304,453	311,437
85	Treasury management – review of debt portfolio	85,646	173,855	
86	Treasury management – rescheduling of existing borrowing	500,000	0	0
87	Review and restructure in Finance and Financial Administration	309,191	65,472	65,003
88	Review of staffing in Legal Services	45,396	31,612	62,433
89	Review of Internal Audit Contract	13,000		
Total Leader of the Council Portfolio		1,413,746	601,705	438,873
Children's Services and Education Portfolio				
7 pt	Operational savings – part replace policy saving no. 7 following budget consultation	102,000		
8 pt	General efficiencies and improved commissioning – part replace policy saving no. 8 following budget consultation	100,000	100,000	
90	Reduce administrative support	217,952	333,010	403,313
91	Review and reduce Early Help 0-19 model			100,000
92	Restructure business intelligent functions	100,000		
93	Review demand for SEN short breaks		23,000	140,000
94	Review and reduce Children's Social Care Provider Services	130,000		
95	Reduce agency social workers	494,000	227,000	227,000
96	De-layering Children's Services management	405,596	193,135	43,135
97	Review and reduce Children's Social Care Workforce Training & Practice Development	97,256		44,744
98	Redesign and reduce School Support Services	72,924		
99	Review and reduce Children's Youth Justice Services or identify alternative contributions		50,000	50,000
100	Increase income from traded activity within Information, Advice and Guidance Services	50,000		
101	Redesign and reduce School Support Services – charging of DBS checks	77,000		
Total Children's Services and Education Portfolio		1,846,728	926,145	1,008,192
Clean and Green Portfolio				
21/23b pt	Operational savings – continuation of 'Every Penny Counts', procurement of mechanical sweeper and recycling disposal costs - part replace policy saving no's. 21 and 23b following budget consultation	226,680		
102	Redesign of management roles	56,216		
103	Reduction in management	37,451		
104	Removal of one post within Strategy Management	88,743		
105	W2R PFI contract income	270,000		

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
106	Waste collection 4 day working week over a Monday to Friday - part re-profiled into 2018/19 following budget consultation	83,095	63,095	
107	Service redesign – Operational Team Leaders	14,000	7,000	
108	Reduction of Operational Manager		48,410	
109	Efficiency savings within Clean and Green	45,000		
110	Changes to working practices – legal HGV driver maintenance checks	60,000		
111	Reduction in grounds winter maintenance works	120,000		
112	Fleet services redesign			40,000
113	Charging for tipping at Fryers Road transfer station – private businesses		5,000	
114	Environmental enforcement	10,000		
141	Reduction in the Pollution Control supplies and services budget	10,000		
143	Review of Pollution Control service and reduction in resource	15,000		
144	Further review of Pollution Control		42,000	
Total Clean and Green Portfolio		1,036,185	165,505	40,000
Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio				
21/23b pt	Operational savings – continuation of ‘Every Penny Counts’ - part replace policy saving no’s. 21 and 23b following budget consultation	19,500		
115	Removal of post to support community development to the voluntary sector	12,058		
116	Reduce Community Safety non staffing budget	15,000		
117	Restructure Area Management and Town Centre Management	50,000		
118	Remove council subsidy to the Creative Development Team	66,998		
119	Increase bereavement fees (10% for cremations, 3% for burials)	20,000		
120	Increase Crematoria fees further (8%/6%/6%)	240,000	180,000	180,000
121	Registrars to cover all direct costs by 2018/19	20,000	20,000	30,000
122	Cemeteries management restructure			70,000
123	Additional income from Active Living Centres	875,444		
124	The Sports Development team to become self sustaining	61,934		
125	Staff savings within regulatory / enforcement		100,000	100,000
126	Building Control management restructure	25,000	25,000	22,000
Total Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio		1,405,934	325,000	402,000
Health Portfolio				
127	Staff savings in Sports and Leisure	42,000		
128	Staff savings in Public Health	40,000		102,000
Total Health Portfolio		82,000	0	102,000
Personnel and Business Support Portfolio				
129	Management review within Integrated Facilities Management	62,392		

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
130	Reduce Trade Union facility time - reduced following budget consultation	27,000		
131	Restructure of Human Resources	546,491	101,470	102,197
132	Review of Human Resources contracts – part re-phased into 2018/19 due to the delay in implementation	15,750	5,250	
133	Efficiency savings within ICT – reduced to take out Tamworth backup facility	111,304	60,321	
134	Efficiency savings across Procurement	8,860	8,783	17,340
Total Personnel and Business Support Portfolio		771,797	175,824	119,537
Regeneration Portfolio				
136	General efficiencies within Planning, Engineering and Transportation			10,000
137	Full year effect of re-procuring highways maintenance contract		50,000	
138	Restructure lighting maintenance support		14,000	
139	Reduction in highways maintenance asset management budget	15,000		
140	Introduce new Asset Management practices		25,000	25,000
142	Review charges for the naming and numbering service	10,000		
145	Review arrangements for winter service salt purchase	15,000		
146	Review of parking warden contract	25,000		
147	Parking warden contract re-procurement			50,000
148	Traffic signal energy efficiencies	1,000		
149	Deletion of vacant post in highways maintenance service	42,000		
150	Lighting PFI budget one off contribution	100,000		(100,000)
151	One off use of bus lane enforcement reserve	50,000	(50,000)	
152	Use of grant reserves to replace LLPG ICT costs for one year only	20,000	(20,000)	
153	Development & Delivery staffing review	101,930		
154	Management reduction in Development and Delivery	61,086		
155	Reductions in services provided by Economy & Environment Directorate Support	60,000	61,000	50,000
156	Reduction in senior management capacity		100,000	100,000
Total Regeneration Portfolio		501,016	180,000	135,000
Social Care Portfolio				
158	Review & restructure across Money Home Job	673,679	300,000	764,000
159	Removal of vacant posts and restructure of staffing across Adult Social Care	495,303		
160	Restructure management within Safeguarding	80,212		
Total Social Care Portfolio		1,249,194	300,000	764,000
135	Contracts review	1,000,000		
157	Asset Management review	100,000	350,000	350,000
Total Central savings		1,100,000	350,000	350,000
Total Operational Savings		9,406,600	3,024,179	3,359,602

Annex 7 : Draft Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2019/20 by Portfolio

Capital project	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Source of funding
Children's Services and Education Portfolio				
Two year old provision placements funded from revenue contribution from Schools DSG resources	1,097,642			Council
Basic Need - Estimated DfE allocation	4,101,269	4,101,269	4,101,269	External
Devolved Formula Capital - Estimated DfE allocation	553,772	553,772	553,772	External
Capital Maintenance - Estimated DfE allocation	2,222,387	2,222,387	2,222,387	External
Fibbersley School – rephasing school expansion project	1,915,129			External
King Charles School – rephased school expansion project	967,500			External
Looked after children out of borough placements - one off costs for each site to bring the identified buildings up to a standard needed to look after children or for any additional temporary wrap around care/support the children may need if bringing back in borough	150,000			Council
Total Children's Services and Education	11,007,699	6,877,428	6,877,428	
Clean and Green Portfolio				
Broadway West playing fields – improvements to car park to compliment recent remediation of playing surface, and refurbish/improve existing changing room provision	50,000	100,000		Council
Total Clean and Green Portfolio	50,000	100,000	0	
Community, Leisure and Culture Portfolio				
CCTV upgrade to equipment	250,000	100,000	100,000	Council
Improvement to Walsall Gala Baths - brine pool and filter replacement		340,000		Council
Darlaston Swimming Pool refurbishment – to provide a higher standard of customer experience, to make it more attractive to users		150,000		Council
Willenhall Lawn Cemetery extension – development of land for burials in Walsall		1,154,219	176,571	Council
Memorial Safety in Walsall cemeteries - ensuring that Walsall Council complies with statutory obligations to provide a safe environment in its eight borough cemeteries	40,000	40,000	40,000	Council
Streetly Crematorium - Installation of air conditioning units and refurbishment of public toilets		160,000		Council

Capital project	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Source of funding
Proactive repair of roads and pathways in Walsall Cemeteries		100,000	100,000	Council
Second phase of Register Office renovation		350,000		Council
Leisure management system	88,000			Council
New Art Gallery – contribution from HLF and WM&G Development Fund to upgrade of building management system and facilities	88,334			External
Library redesign including the review of the Local History Centre and Leather Museum	2,160,000	2,200,000		Council
Total Community, Leisure and Culture	2,626,334	4,594,219	416,571	
Personnel and Business Support Portfolio				
Essential refurbishment of the Council's digital data storage facilities	1,224,081			Council
Essential maintenance, warranty extension and eventual replacement of Council server	75,200	229,000	229,000	Council
Essential investment to remove cyber attack vulnerabilities	98,000			Council
Essential warranty extension and replacement of hardware for Council's Financial systems	30,000		155,000	Council
Procurement of system for Human Resources and Oracle financials	719,000		525,621	Council
Service improvement for single mobile device management solution (removal of Blackberry technology)	76,000	51,000	51,000	Council
Essential Microsoft upgrades and foundation for Office 365	102,000	225,000		Council
Essential maintenance for data storage growth	78,000			Council
Essential investment in information security classification and secure data transfer tools		55,000		Council
Service improvement initiative – Windows 10 laptop/tablet device deployment for senior managers		126,000		Council
Redesign of school kitchens to meet health and safety, food and fire regulations	250,000	250,000		Council
Council House building management system to control and monitor mechanical and electrical equipment (ventilation, lighting, power, fire and security systems)	70,000			Council
Council House photovoltaic panels to be installed on the roof of the building to utilise natural energy source		150,000		Council
Civic Centre heating	600,000	600,000		Council
Council House rewiring	1,000,000			Council
Total Personnel and Business Support	4,322,281	1,686,000	960,621	

Capital project	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Source of funding
Regeneration Portfolio				
Highways maintenance improvements to uneven cobble stones at High Street	70,000			Council
Hatherton Road multi-storey car park – development of demolition plan to address structural repair issues	200,000	1,375,000		Council
Migration of existing Urban Traffic Control analogue communication network - The communications network used to control parts of the traffic signal network has been in place for over 25 years and is based on obsolete analogue technology which is in need of replacement.	185,000	155,000		Council
Traffic Signals - Replacement of obsolete traffic signal control equipment – Prior year approval - the Council has a statutory duty to maintain all its traffic signal infrastructure and this provides a programme of planned pedestrian crossing replacements to ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians	200,000	200,000	200,000	Council
Provision of community dropped crossings along footways to permit access for wheelchairs, pushchairs and mobility scooters	20,000	20,000	20,000	Council
Highway Maintenance Programme – Council has a legal responsibility to maintain the highway network	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000	Council
Highway Maintenance DfT Challenge Fund Local Contribution - The application for challenge funding revolved around the economic benefit of investment into the strategic highways of the region. In order to access this funding a contribution of 11% is required.	223,000			Council
Walsall Town Centre Public Realm Improvements. It is proposed that the public realm across the town centre needs to be surveyed, with specific regard to the upcoming and future town centre developments	100,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	Council
Darlaston Strategic Development Area Access Project - The project was developed in response to poor traffic access to and through the Darlaston Green area, especially for heavy goods vehicles.	200,000			Council
Highways maintenance DfT Challenge Fund – investment for strategic highway network	1,800,000			External

Capital project	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Source of funding
LTP Highway Maintenance Programme – distributed by the Integrated Transport Authority to maintain our highways network	2,400,000	2,400,000	2,400,000	External
West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (STP) - The programme is designed to address road safety issues, progress the Council's major scheme aspirations; and resource 'local contributions' to approved major schemes	1,283,000			External
Growth Deal - The Growth Deal will create the skills, connections and locations for further high value manufacturing success and support growth in the Black Country's automotive, aerospace and construction sectors	18,440,070	9,137,422	13,728,216	External
Acquisition of Reservoir Place to support the Phoenix 10 project as approved by Cabinet 14 December 2016, to be funded from future business rates as part of the enterprise zone	775,000			Council
Total Regeneration Portfolio	28,696,070	17,087,422	20,148,216	
Social Care Portfolio				
Mosaic implementation phase 3 (financials) – social care case management system	747,130			Council
Mosaic mobile working – provision of mobile tablet technology for Social Care workforce within both Adult and Children's Services to aid working practices	634,076			Council
Aids and Adaptations, Preventative Adaptations and Supporting Independence – Assists households to maintain greater independence and live in their homes for longer through providing low cost adaptations, and assistance with community projects to enable residents to access local services. Supports the statutory requirement to provide disabled facility grants (lifts, hoists)	750,000	750,000	750,000	Council
Health through warmth – continuation of project up to March 2020 – to help provide a safety net for those who can't access other funding sources, available as a loan charged on the property that is repaid upon sale or relevant transfer of their home.	75,000	75,000	75,000	Council
Willenhall Lane travellers site redesign and refurbishment of plots		85,000		Council

Capital project	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Source of funding
Disabled Facilities Grant – this project directly supports the council's statutory requirement to provide disabled facility grants (DFGs). The project has a direct positive impact on the number and subsequent varied costs to the council from the increasing level of demand for home adaptations.	2,895,213	2,895,213	2,895,213	External
Total Social Care Portfolio	5,101,419	3,805,213	3,720,213	
Centrally held budgets				
Funding to support essential works including health and safety, and other projects that cannot be programmed at start of year e.g. Asbestos removal, statutory testing, legionella, fire risk, statutory testing of buildings, demolition of redundant buildings, general repair and maintenance	750,000	750,000	750,000	Council
Total Centrally Held budgets	750,000	750,000	750,000	
Total Draft Capital Programme	52,553,803	34,900,282	32,873,049	

Further strategic schemes will be subject to a separate business case to be reported to Cabinet in year 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.

The following summarises the reserve list of schemes, which will be released in year subject to funding being confirmed and linked to council priorities:

- Family Contact Centre provision
- Shared heating system for EDC and Rushall JMI
- Sneyd PRU / SEN project
- Increased capacity in Special Schools
- Promotion of Community Health and Safety
- Further provision for Aids and Adaptations / Preventative Adaptations and Supportive Independence as required
- Further provision for Health Through Warmth – tackling fuel poverty as required

Annex 8 - Section 151 Officer Report on the Adequacy of Reserves and Robustness of the Budget

Context

In accordance with the Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 (“the Act”) and to comply with CIPFA guidance on local authority reserves and balances, the Section 151 Officer is required to formally report to members on the robustness of the estimates used for the purpose of calculating the budget and the adequacy of proposed reserves. The S151 Officer is appropriately qualified under the terms of Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. In signing off this overall revenue budget report, the signature of the Assistant Director of Finance who holds the post of S151 Officer constitutes the formal declaration required under the Act that these conditions are met (based on the available information at the time of signing).

Adequacy of reserves

A minimum level of reserves must be specified in the Budget. The Council's medium term financial strategy sets a minimum level which is 1% of gross revenue expenditure for the year in question. However, Section 25 of the Act requires the S151 Officer to report on the adequacy of proposed reserves and make a recommendation on a specified level which Council is required to consider in setting the overall budget envelope.

The S151 Officer assesses and determines the appropriate level of reserves (including school's reserves), provisions and contingencies using a variety of mechanisms, including;

- Being significantly involved in the budget setting process, the annual financial cycle, and engaged in the strategic leadership of the organisation as an attendee of the corporate management team;
- The annual refresh of the medium term financial outlook. Challenging the budget at various stages of construction, including the reasonableness of the key budget assumptions, such as estimates of financial pressures, realism of income targets, robustness of plans to deliver savings, and the extent to which known trends and liabilities are provided for;
- Meetings with specific colleagues and partners to examine particular areas or issues;
- Review of financial risk assessments;
- Review of the movements, trends and availability of contingency, provisions and earmarked reserves to meet unforeseen cost pressures in the context of future pressures and issues;
- The use of professional experience and best professional judgement;
- The use of appropriate professional, technical guidance and local frameworks (CIPFA guidance, LAAP55, Local Government Act 73, Localism Act 2011);
- Knowledge of the colleagues involved in the process, particularly finance professionals, including their degree of experience and qualifications;
- Review of the strength of financial management and reporting arrangements, including internal control and governance arrangements.
- Review of the current year's financial performance in services, actions to address areas of pressure, known future service delivery changes, the level of schools reserves and the financial performance of schools.

- Review of the robustness of saving delivery plans, including capacity, to deliver saving proposals identified within the budget.

This is undertaken in consultation with relevant colleagues and in consultation with the Cabinet portfolio holder for finance.

It is prudent for councils to maintain an adequate level of general reserves. They provide a buffer and mitigate against risk such as unavoidable and unknown demand and other costs pressures which may arise in the year. In the last two financial years, it has been necessary to draw on reserves in year to meet these reserves. They allow the council to manage the impact of these and to manage change without the need for immediate reductions in services.

There is no overall formula for calculating what an appropriate level of reserves should be. Whilst the MTFS sets out a guide as to what should be a minimum level, the actual level is based on best practice guidance, best professional judgements, known risks, budgetary pressures and an assessment of national and local factors.

As well as sound professional judgement, a risk assessed approach is used to determine the required level of reserves, contingencies and provisions. The MTFS is annually updated and approved by Cabinet to reflect the changing environment in which we work – the latest being approved by Cabinet in June 2016. Reserves and contingencies are addressed within the strategy, demonstrating our acknowledgement of the importance of sound governance and the priority this issue is given.

The level of contingency is set as follows:

- Revenue - A central contingency of between 0.1% and 0.15% of the year's gross revenue budget will be established for each financial year, the precise level being informed by risk assessment and set by the Section 151 Officer. For 2017/18 this is to be set at £740k.
- Capital - a prudent central contingency will be set, not exceeding 10% of the annual council funded element of the capital programme requirement, to accommodate unforeseen / unbudgeted expenditure (i.e. where, due to the level of uncertainty, the financial impact is not certain at the time of setting the programme). The exact level to be determined by a risk assessment and set by the S151 Officer. The contingency will be funded either from drawing down the earmarked capital reserve or from an annual revenue contribution to capital outlay from the project reserve (subject to there being sufficient funds to replenish this at year end). For 2017/18 this is to be set at £500,000.

The level of general reserves, in the same way as central contingency, is index linked to the level of the gross revenue budget and continues to be informed by an annual risk assessment. The council will have opening general reserves as required by the MTFS; the precise level determined by risk assessment.

The MTFS also sets out the authority's financial framework including, as the first of ten themes of operational principles, calls on reserves and contingencies. A key principle is that reserves should not be considered to be or used as a budget and any in-year calls on the working balance should be replenished. Services cannot approve unbudgeted expenditure on the assumption that it will be met from the working balance. This matter

is reserved to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance. A central contingency supports prudent financial management.

In recommending an adequate level of reserves, the S151 Officer considers and monitors the opportunity costs of maintaining particular levels of reserves and balances and compares these to the benefits accrued from having such reserves. The opportunity cost of maintaining a specific level of reserves is the 'lost' opportunity for example, of investing elsewhere to generate additional investment income, or using the funds to invest in service improvements. In assessing this it is important to consider that reserves can only be used once. Therefore, any use of general reserves above the lower minimum threshold is only ever used on one-off items of expenditure. The level of reserves is also determined by use of a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure they represent an appropriately robust "safety net" which adequately protects the council (a complex and multi-disciplinary metropolitan district local authority) against potential unforeseen and therefore unbudgeted costs.

In the current climate, there continues to be uncertainties around funding, particularly in light of major proposed changes to central funding and business rates in particular. In the forthcoming year, for which this report is made, uncertainties remain around the anticipated level of successful business rate appeals. The review of the level of reserves has therefore included a risk assessment of business rate collection rates and the impact of potential changes in business rate yield on the council's budgetary position.

Additionally, the continued need to make major savings and maintaining the organisational capacity to deliver this at the required scale and pace and potential further 'unknown' demographic and demand cost pressures, increase the risk and therefore the need for adequate levels of reserves to be maintained in current and future years.

Government's continued changes to the welfare system; making councils accountable for payments for crisis loans, community grants and council tax reduction scheme have placed additional risk on the council's finances.

Schools Reserves

The S151 Officer, as part of this statement is required to confirm that school's balances are adequate. In 2006/07, DfES introduced expectations on local authorities with regard to their schemes of financial management. Part of this legislation required schools to agree a balance control mechanism. This mandatory requirement was subsequently removed. Walsall Council and Walsall Schools Forum have considered the options around balance control and given the authority powers to investigate and claw back balances in excess of a specified percentage of the school budget share. Walsall Council notes that the latest Academies handbook has removed the need for balance control for many academies.

Walsall Schools Forum is mindful of value for money in all that schools do, looks for medium term financial planning and encourages an adequate working balance as part of that process. This is supported by regular reports to Walsall Schools Forum on medium term funding and more recently linking value for money and performance.

The adequacy of balances is reviewed annually by the S151 Officer. For the current financial year, 4 schools have made the council aware of a potential deficit budget, however, plans are in place to support the relevant schools to manage these pressures.

The levels of reserves will be kept under regular review, along with any exceptional balances. Walsall Council and Walsall Schools Forum has identified that the implementation of a new National Fair Funding Formula from 2018/19 is a financial risk.

Earmarked Reserves

The Council maintains a number of reserves, earmarked for specific purposes, all of which are set at the levels required to meet future commitments. These cover:

- Council liabilities. These reserves cover expenditure where the council has a legal obligation to pay costs, such as redundancies, legal costs, business rate appeals, insurance claims, pension costs.
- Grants received in advance (where the council has received money in advance of the next accounting period or money that covers more than one accounting period), which will be spent in line with the grant conditions.
- Treasury reserves. These reserves are to minimise the impacts of interest rate changes and finance early redemption of loans to reduce the Council's future interest exposure
- Demand. These reserves are primarily to provide short term additional funding for Children's and Adult Social Care where a spike in demand will create overspends. Additionally, an amount is provided for Housing Benefits.
- Projects. These reserves are to finance service modernisation and major capital projects. Regeneration of the borough.
- Schools reserves held by but not controlled by the council

An annual review of earmarked reserves is undertaken and funds adjusted as required or released where liability is accessed as ceased.

Overall Assessment of Reserves

The minimum opening balance required @ 01.04.2017 is c£6.2million. The S151 Officer has assessed the current year's financial performance and actions taken to address the £16m of underlying pressures. This has demonstrated that the minimum level of balances required by the MTFS is currently insufficient for 2017/18 and beyond. As such, when the next MTFS is reviewed in Summer 2017, the minimum level will be revised and increased.

In considering the above, alongside the financial risk assessment, the previous financial year's financial performance, and the significant risks and potential pressures facing the organisation, **The S151 Officer recommends that opening reserves are set at £12.4m.** This is the recommended MTFS maximum and is considered prudent, given the current pressures in the system and future uncertainty around remaining funding streams.

This is considered to be sufficient for most possible events, over the short-term i.e. for 2017/18. The council is, however, facing real and present financial challenges beyond this. In the context of this funding environment, wherever possible reserves will be built up further during 2017/18 beyond the maximum level recommended within the MTFS. Consideration will also be given to amending the maximum level of permitted reserves during 2017/18.

In this context, it is considered that a level of reserves set at £12.4m presents an optimum balance between risk management and opportunity cost. The S151 Officer is satisfied that the benefits accrued in maintaining these at the recommended level outweigh the potential lost opportunity from investing these reserves in other ways. This maintains a suitable and sustainable level of reserves, which include ensuring sound governance and financial stability in the short and longer term.

The above assessment demonstrates that general reserves, if set at £12.4m, will be at an appropriate level; as determined in accordance with the MTFS and the S151 Officer's professional advice. The risk assessment described elsewhere in this report has informed the established level of general and earmarked reserves. The council follows the CIPFA guidance (LAAP 55) on the use of reserves.

Robustness of the Estimates included within the Budget

The S151 Officer has been involved throughout the entire budget process, including input to the drafting of the budget, the ongoing financial monitoring and reporting process, evaluation of investments and savings, engagement with members of the executive and overview and scrutiny, advising colleagues, challenge and evaluation activities, and the scrutiny and approval of various reports.

The budget is risk assessed, to ensure adequate funding for all known liabilities, and provide sufficient resources to enable service change and transformation. It covers an assessment of current year's performance and ensuring any need to adjust current cash limits due to unavoidable demand or other pressures is covered in future budgets, assessment of income targets, estimates of future cost and demand pressures.

The following sections of this statement signpost to particular activities and documents and have been used by the S151 Officer in coming to his overall conclusion on the adequacy of reserves and robustness of the estimates:

Process - a robust budget process has been used in developing the 2017/18+ budget, within the overall context of the MTFS. Plans have been developed, tested and challenged by the Chief Executive and the corporate management team. The process, timetable and the overall budget framework were approved by Cabinet. The S151 Officer's nominee (Head of Finance) has reviewed the saving options and cash limits during this process to test the validity of the financial assumptions.

The current budget plan provides a balanced budget for 2017/18 to 2019/20 overall, subject to further consultation on a number of proposals for 2018/19 onwards. In finalising the 2018/19-2019/20 budget, clear and robust plans will need to be agreed by the Executive to go to consultation in late spring of 2017.

Timetable - the process commenced in spring 2016 and draft budget options were available by September before the provisional Government financial settlement. This enabled Cabinet to meet in October 2016 to consider its priorities and draft budget proposals in the context of estimated resources. Formal overview and scrutiny meetings have been held in November 2016 to consider Cabinet's draft budget options. Formal public consultation has been ongoing since October 2016. The final budget is due to be set at Council on 23 February 2017.

Member involvement and Scrutiny - both informal and formal member involvement has been extensive, particularly through the Cabinet portfolio holder for finance, individual portfolio holders in conjunction with executive directors, and budget meetings with Cabinet. Cabinet formally considered draft budget options on 26 October 2016 and 14 December 2016. Overview and Scrutiny panels have each had opportunity to make recommendations and comments to Cabinet, both on the services within their individual remit and the overall budget. Budget briefings have also been offered to each political group.

Consultation - internally and externally, has been comprehensive as outlined in this and previous reports submitted to Cabinet.

Challenge - there are various points of challenge at various stages of the budget, including throughout corporate management team and Cabinet budget meetings, meetings of various directorate management teams, corporate management team meetings, stakeholder consultation and the scrutiny process.

Budget monitoring - reports continue to be submitted to Cabinet, scrutiny panels, corporate management team, and Audit Committee and management teams across the council throughout the year. The council's employee performance appraisal process also requires review of financial performance for individual managers, complementary to the formal accountability process at executive director level.

Referendum – Following implementation of the Localism Act 2011, councils are required to consult the electorate in the form of a referendum should a council wish to increase the council tax above a level prescribed by the Secretary of State. For 2017/18, this has been determined as 5% or above of the council's relevant amount of council tax (i.e. excluding levies), on the basis that 3% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care.

Ownership and accountability - the budget has progressed through various filters during its construction including endorsement by management teams within services and corporate management team itself. Executive directors are required to test and validate saving proposals and spending plans to ensure that services can be delivered lawfully within the funding envelop allocated. These officers are accountable for ensuring services are delivered within the approved budget.

Current financial position - the budget is a statement of financial intent, reflecting the council's vision, plans and priorities. It also sets the financial spending parameters for each financial year and as such, the S151 Officer assessment of the adequacy of reserves also includes the risk of services overspending and/or underspending their budgets and the impact of this on the financial health of the council and its level of reserves. The current financial position has been reported on throughout the year. The S151 Officer has reported a significant overspend at the end of quarter 2. Mitigating action plans have been put in place to reduce this in the remaining periods, however in year it was recognised that the unprecedented level of pressures facing Adult Social Care and Children's Looked After services could not be mitigated within existing budgets and Cabinet has agreed to allocate additional resources to these two areas. These costs have also been accommodated within the 2017/18 budget on an ongoing basis.

Key assumptions

The cost assumptions and prices used in the budget are derived from current intelligence and are considered appropriate. Demand changes have been identified and are reflected in budget increases identified in the appendices where appropriate. Fees and charges have been reviewed and changes are reflected in the overall budget. The capital receipts and borrowing requirement to be used for the draft capital programme are based on professional estimates both of timing and value. Assumptions on funding, including government funding, business rate and council tax levels, inflation, income assumptions, increases in costs arising from demographics and demand, borrowing requirements, balances and contingencies, are set out within the main report and are considered appropriate.

Significant investment has been included to cover those areas of most demand and volatility, adult and children's social care.

Savings

Savings contained within the budget have been included on the basis that Directors and Portfolio Holders have confidence in their delivery. They have been subject to officer, Cabinet and Member scrutiny. Service delivery plans for large value and complex proposals have been reviewed and challenged. Some changes have been made as a result of this challenge, and the impact reflected in the final budget. Responsibility and accountability for delivery rests with the relevant Director and progress will be monitored and reported throughout the forthcoming year.

Consideration of the impact of budget proposals has been taken into account in formulating this budget. Equality Impact assessments have been undertaken, where required, on individual proposals, and as a result of these assessments, a number of proposals have been amended or withdrawn. The financial implications of this has been accommodated within the final budget.

Risks, including Strategic, Operational and Financial

In the budget, due regard is made to the strategic and operational risks facing the Council. Some of these relate to the current economic condition, other to potential regulatory or national issues which may have a local impact. Estimates and forecasts include all known significant financial risks over the next year and medium term to inform spending decisions. The council continues to use an embedded good practice risk assessment approach both when setting the budget and in validating estimated outturns. This continues for the 2016/17 outturn and 2017/18+ budget.

The risk assessment has highlighted the following areas of financial risk:

- Demand – the risk of further demand, specifically in children's' and adult social care, above the levels incorporated into the budget.
- New Burdens / national policy implications on local budgets – the risk that Government changes in policy will lead to a transfer of responsibility / new burdens, without the transfer of funding to support those activities; or potential costs arising from inspections arising after the budget was set.
- Grant reductions not published or known about at the time the budget is set.
- Unbudgeted income shortfalls during the financial year.
- Unknown liabilities that may arise after the budget is set, for example from changes in legislation or statutory guidance.
- Cost pressures – i.e. inflationary pressures, pressures arising from a severe winter (i.e. gritting, gully cleaning), pressures from economic changes. Or arising from the actions of residents (i.e. waste contamination), or arising from a major emergency.
- Delays in delivery of savings, for example, arising from challenge.

These have been assessed, and a value risk value assigned. Professional and best estimates have been made of the scope of the financial risk. Sensitivity analysis has been used where appropriate, to determine an appropriate risk value. The assessment confirms that a reserve value at the top end of the MTFS guidelines is required.

The Budget in Context

The budget includes the allocation of financial resources to different services and projects, any proposed contingency funds, the council tax reduction scheme, setting the council tax and decisions relating to the control of the councils borrowing requirement, the control of its capital expenditure and the setting of virement limits. The budget has been constructed in accordance with the principles and direction of the MTFS.

All cost pressures, efficiencies and savings have been appraised to ensure accuracy of costings and deliverability. Individual officers are identified as accountable for their implementation. The council is working to improve performance outcomes on a range of activities which are monitored throughout the year. Budget provision has been identified for the priorities outlined in the council's corporate plan.

Summary

Best endeavours have been made to ensure that the budget and reserves are adequate using the information available at this date. The budget has been constructed with a professional policy-led medium term strategic framework, using appropriate assumptions, linking investment and spending to key priorities and having undertaken a comprehensive assessment of risk.

In summary, I can confirm that, the budget as it stands is robust, taking into account the information known at this time and that the level of reserves at £12.4m is sufficient to cover known events and reasonable possible events, however should a series or a combination of unforeseen or unusual events occur, the level of reserves may be insufficient.



James T Walsh, B Hum (Hons), ACMA, CGMA
S151 Officer

Part 2 – Treasury Management

Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2017/18 Onwards

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. On occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet council risk or cost objectives.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

Reporting requirements

The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

Prudential and Treasury Indicators and the Treasury Strategy covering:

- the capital plans (including prudential indicators);
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
- the Treasury Management Strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including Treasury Indicators; and
- an Investment Strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

A mid-year Treasury Management Report – This will update Members with the progress on the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether any policies require revision.

An Annual Treasury Report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny

The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by the Audit Committee.

1.2 Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18

The Strategy for 2017/18 covers two main areas:

Capital issues

- capital plans and the prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy.

Treasury management issues

- the current treasury position;
- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the council;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy;
- policy on borrowing in advance of need;
- debt rescheduling;
- the investment strategy;
- creditworthiness policy;
- policy on use of external service providers.

These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, CLG MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and CLG Investment Guidance.

1.3 Training

The CIPFA Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. This especially applies to members responsible for scrutiny. Annual treasury management briefings are held and further training is arranged as and when required.

1.4 Treasury management consultants

The council uses Capita Asset Services as its external treasury management advisors. The council recognises that the responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers.

1.5 Treasury management Monitoring

Local and Prudential indicators are used to monitor treasury management activities which are produced monthly and reported at least quarterly to the treasury management panel. The indicators that are monitored during the year are detailed in **Annex 1**.

2 THE CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2017/18 – 2019/20

The council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of these plans is reflected in the prudential indicators which are designed to assist members' overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

2.1 Capital Expenditure - Prudential Indicator 1

This prudential indicator is a summary of the council's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. Members are asked to approve the capital expenditure forecasts. The financing need below excludes other long term liabilities, such as PFI and leasing arrangements which already include borrowing instruments. The current capital plans which this strategy supports is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 : Current Capital Programme					
	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Estimated	2017/18 Estimated	2018/19 Estimated	2019/20 Estimated
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total capital expenditure	88.326	89.648	52.554	34.900	32.873
Resourced by:					
• Capital receipts	0.790	2.500	1.500	1.700	1.500
• Capital grants	56.042	73.285	36.667	21.310	25.901
• Capital Reserves	0.000	0.000	1.098	0.000	0.000
• Revenue	6.052	1.658	1.680	0.040	0.040
• Borrowing	25.442	12.205	11.609	11.850	5.432
Total resources available	88.326	89.648	52.554	34.900	32.873

2.2 Affordability Prudential Indicators

The prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the council's overall finances. Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – Prudential Indicator 2

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital financing (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the council's net revenue stream.

	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Estimate	2018/19 Estimate	2019/20 Estimate
Ratio	6.4%	9.5%	11.0%	11.0%	11.0%

Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on council tax – Prudential Indicator 3

This indicator (see Table 3) identifies the revenue costs associated with proposed changes to the capital programme recommended in the budget report compared to the council's

existing approved commitments and current plans. This indicator will change during the year if the council makes changes affecting the borrowing required to support the capital programme.

Table 3 : Prudential Indicator 3					
	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Estimate	2018/19 Estimate	2019/20 Estimate
Band D Council tax	£30.33	£7.98	£12.90	£13.16	£6.03

2.3 The council's borrowing need (Capital Financing Requirement) – Prudential Indicator 4

Prudential indicator 4 is the council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure which has not immediately been paid for will increase the CFR. The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the borrowing need in line with each assets life.

The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. PFI schemes, finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the council's borrowing requirement, these types of schemes include a borrowing facility and so the council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The council currently has £6.796m of such schemes within the CFR. Council is asked to approve the CFR projections in Table 4 which shows that the council's net borrowing need for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 is estimated to be an increase of £14.465m. The council's borrowing strategy is discussed in section 4.

Table 4 : Analysis of CFR				
	2016/17 Estimate £m	2017/18 Estimate £m	2018/19 Estimate £m	2019/20 Estimate £m
Opening CFR	328.021	336.573	344.171	350.473
Less MRP and other financing movements	Cr 3.653	Cr 4.011	Cr 5.548	Cr 13.419
Additional Borrowing	12.205	11.609	11.850	5.432
Movement in CFR	8.552	7.598	6.302	Cr 7.987
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	336.573	344.171	350.473	342.486

The MRP policy (see **Annex 5**) details the council's policies for calculating the annual amount charged to revenue for the repayment of debt. The council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the CFR) has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk is relatively high.

3. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Background to Annual MRP policy Review

A local authority shall determine each financial year an amount which it considers to be prudent to be set aside for the repayment of accumulated borrowing relating to capital expenditure. This is known as the minimum revenue provision (MRP). There are 4 ready-made options for calculating MRP, however authorities do have discretion to determine their own MRP, and other approaches are not meant to be ruled out, as long as it is properly reasoned and justified in doing so.

3.2 MRP Policy Objectives

- The council shall determine for each financial year an amount of revenue provision for the future repayment of debt that it considers to be prudent.
- To set aside funds at a rate such that future generations who benefit from the assets are contributing to the associated debt and also avoiding the situation of future generations paying for the debt on assets that are no longer useable.

3.3 MRP Policy Review 2017/18

Full Council is required to approve an MRP Statement each year. A variety of options are provided to councils, so long as there is a prudent provision. The MRP review in 2015/16 was comprehensive and approved by Council on 26 February 2016. It amended the implementation date of the MRP policy introduced in 2014/15. It was considered an appropriate and prudent approach for the council, agreed with by our external auditors and fully consistent with the statutory duty to make prudent revenue provision for the redemption of debt.

The Statement is detailed in **Annex 2** and there are no changes proposed.

The MRP Policy is regularly monitored, and because the Policy has to be approved by Council each year there is an opportunity to revisit the Policy and the prudent provision as required.

4 BORROWING

The resourcing of capital expenditure plans set out in **Section 2** provides details of the service activity of the council. The treasury management function ensures that the council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes so that sufficient cash is available to meet this service activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The Strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual Investment Strategy.

4.1 Current portfolio position

The council is expected to end 2016/17 with borrowing, over a 1-year length, of £250m against an asset base of approximately £533m, and short term investments of between £80m and £120m. These will be proactively managed to minimise borrowing costs and maximise investment returns within a robust risk management environment. The increase in borrowing prior to year-end is due to a planned advanced pension payment in April 2017. In 2017/18 estimated annual interest payments are £9.231m (£9.481m in 2016/17) and net investment interest income is £0.555m (£0.905m in 2016/17). The net budget for capital financing in 2017/18 is £16.565m (£17.488m in 2016/17). The treasury management budget required for the running of the treasury management function for 2017/18 is £0.162m (£0.167m in 2016/17). By having a proactive approach to managing cash flows and investments it is estimated that investment income of £0.620m above the bank base rate will be generated.

The council's treasury portfolio position at 31st December 2016 is shown in Table 5; year end forward projections for the following three years are summarised in Table 6. It shows the actual external borrowing (the treasury management operations) against the capital borrowing need, operational debt, and highlights any over or under borrowing. It shows that the council's underborrowing position is expected to continue for the medium term.

Table 5 : Borrowing and Investments			
	Borrowing £ m	Investments £ m	Net Borrowing £ m
31 March 2016	232.789	Cr 129.799	102.990
31 December 2016	237.758	Cr 144.843	92.915
Change in year	4.969	Cr 15.044	Cr 10.075

Table 6: Borrowing Forward Projections			
Borrowing profile	2017/18 £ m	2018/19 £ m	2019/20 £ m
Under 12 months	55.000	43.000	22.000
12 months to within 24 months	43.000	22.000	20.000
24 months to within 5 years	50.266	44.541	51.379
5 years to within 10 years	22.087	19.866	11.984
10 years and above	94.658	94.658	94.658
Total Borrowing	265.011	224.065	200.021
Operational Debt – Prudential Indicator 6	329.445	336.359	328.971
(Under) / Over Borrowing	(64.434)	(112.294)	(128.950)

Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the council operates its activities within defined limits. **Prudential Indicator 7** relates to the councils need to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2016/17 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

The Chief Finance Officer reports that the council complied with **Prudential Indicator 7** in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in this budget report. In accordance with **Prudential Indicator 8** the council has adopted and complies with the Cipfa Code of Practice for Treasury Management.

4.2 Treasury Indicators: Limits to Borrowing Activity

The Authorised Limit for External Debt - Prudential Indicator 5

This prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by Full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, whilst not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

1. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.
2. The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Table 7 : Authorised Limit £m – Prudential Indicator 5				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total	360.965	362.390	369.995	361.867

The Operational Boundary - Prudential Indicator 6

This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. It has been calculated by deducting the other long term liabilities, Birmingham Airport investment and the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (totalling £15.578m in 2016/17) from the capital financing requirement (CFR).

Table 8 : Operational Boundary £m – Prudential Indicator 6				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total	328.150	329.445	336.359	328.971

4.3 Prospects for interest rates

The council has appointed Capita Asset Services as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the council to formulate a view on interest rates. Table 9 below gives Capita Assets' view on Interest rate prospects. If this is significantly changed before the report goes to Council for approval then the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy may be updated.

Table 9: Prospects for Interest Rates				
Date	Bank Rate %	PWLB Borrowing Rates %		
		5 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Mar-17	0.25	1.6	2.9	2.7
Jun-17	0.25	1.6	2.9	2.7
Sep-17	0.25	1.6	2.9	2.7
Dec-17	0.25	1.6	3.0	2.8
Mar-18	0.25	1.7	3.0	2.8
Jun-18	0.25	1.7	3.0	2.8
Sep-18	0.25	1.7	3.1	2.9
Dec-18	0.25	1.8	3.1	2.9
Mar-19	0.25	1.8	3.2	3.0
Jun-19	0.50	1.9	3.2	3.0
Sep-19	0.50	1.9	3.3	3.1
Dec-19	0.75	2.0	3.3	3.1
Mar-20	0.75	2.0	3.4	3.2

The current economic outlook and structure of market interest rates and government debt yields have several key treasury management implications - see below. **Annex 3** provides a detailed Economic commentary.

The key conclusions are:

- Investment returns are likely to remain relatively low during 2017/18 and beyond;
- There will remain a cost of carry to any new borrowing which causes an increase in investments as this will incur a revenue loss between borrowing costs and investment returns;
- There is tremendous market uncertainty particularly in relation to Brexit.

4.4 Borrowing Strategy

Our borrowing objectives are:

- To minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a balanced loan portfolio.
- To manage the council's debt maturity profile, ensuring no single future year has a disproportionate level of repayments.
- To maintain a view on current and possible future interest rate movements and borrow accordingly.
- To monitor and review the balance between fixed and variable rate loans against the background of interest rate levels and prudential indicators.
- Short term borrowing may be taken to assist cash flows where it is deemed advantageous.

Specific Borrowing Objectives

- L1.** Full compliance with the Prudential Code - **No Change**
- L2.** Average maturity date between 15 and 25 years - **No Change**
- L3a.** Financing costs as % of council tax requirement – **Reduced from 25% to 20%.**
- L3b.** Financing costs as % of tax revenues (council tax requirement and NNDR contribution) - **Reduced from 13.5% to 12.5%.**
- L4.** Actual debt as a proportion of operational debt range is maintained in the range 65%- 85% - **No Change.**
- L5.** Average interest rate for internally managed debt will rise due to the scheduled repayments of PWLB loans **4.61% - No change**
- L6.** Average interest rate for total debt (including other local authority debt) will be equal to or less than **4.72% - No change**
- L7.** The gearing effect on capital financing estimates of 1% increase in interest rates increase must not be greater than **5% - No change.**

The council is currently maintaining an under borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (CFR) has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk is still an issue that needs to be considered.

- Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2017/18 treasury operations. The Treasury Manager will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances. For example, if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper rise in long and short term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps

arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.

Any changes will be reported to the treasury management panel at the next available opportunity.

4.5 Treasury Management Limits on Activity

There are three debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these is to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. These limits have been reviewed. The indicators the Council is asked to approved are in Table 10 overleaf:

Table 10: Borrowing Limits	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Prudential Code Indicator 9 Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposures.	95%	95%	95%
Lower limits on fixed interest rate exposures	40%	40%	40%
Prudential Code Indicator 10 Upper limits on variable interest rate exposures	45%	45%	45%
Lower limits on variable interest rate exposures	0%	0%	0%
Prudential Code Indicator 11/12 Lower limits for the maturity structure of borrowings:			
Under 12 Months	0%	0%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	0%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	5%	5%	5%
10 years and above	30%	30%	30%
Upper limits for the maturity structure of borrowings:			
Under 12 Months	25%	25%	25%
12 months and within 24 months	25%	25%	25%
24 months and within 5 years	40%	40%	40%
5 years and within 10 years	50%	50%	50%
10 years and above	85%	85%	85%

The council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved CFR estimates and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the council can ensure the security of such funds.

4.6 Debt rescheduling

As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, there may be potential opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the current treasury position and the size of the cost of debt repayment (premiums incurred). The reasons for any rescheduling include:

- the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings;
- helping to fulfil the treasury strategy;
- enhancing the balance of the portfolio (amending the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

Consideration will also be given to identify if there is any residual potential for making savings by running down investment balances to repay debt prematurely as short term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on current debt. All potential rescheduling would require the approval of the treasury management panel.

5. ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

5.1 Introduction: Changes to Credit Rating Methodology

The main rating agencies have, through much of the financial crisis period from 2008 – 2015, provided some institutions with a ratings “uplift” due to implied levels of sovereign support. Commencing in 2015, in response to the evolving regulatory regime, all three agencies began removing these “uplifts” with the timing of the process determined by regulatory progress at the national level. The process has been part of a wider reassessment of methodologies by each of the rating agencies. In addition to the removal of implied support, new methodologies are now taking into account additional factors, such as regulatory capital levels. In some cases, these factors have “netted” each other off, to leave underlying ratings either unchanged or little changed.

It is important to note that these rating agency changes do not reflect any changes in the underlying status or credit quality of the institution. They are merely reflective of a reassessment of rating agency methodologies in the light of changes to the regulatory environment in which financial institutions operate. While some banks have received lower credit ratings as a result of these changes, this does not mean that they are suddenly less credit worthy than they were formerly. Rather, in the majority of cases, this mainly reflects the fact that implied sovereign government support has effectively been withdrawn from banks. They are now expected to have sufficiently strong balance sheets to be able to withstand foreseeable adverse financial circumstances without government support. In fact, in many cases, the balance sheets of banks are now much more robust than they were before the financial crisis when they had higher ratings than now.

5.2 Investment Policy

The council’s Investment Policy has regard to the CLG’s Guidance on Local Government Investments (“the Guidance”) and the revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes (“the CIPFA TM Code”). The council’s investment priorities will be security first, liquidity second, then return.

In accordance with the above guidance from the CLG and CIPFA and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the council applies minimum acceptable credit criteria in order to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which also enables diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the Short Term and Long Term ratings.

Ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution; it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To this end the council will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as “credit default swaps” and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.

Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust

scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties. Counterparty limits are set through the council's treasury management practices – schedules. This year the practices have been reviewed to ensure that the new Banking Regulation changes are appropriately reflected to make certain that the security of the council's deposits remain the highest priority whilst the council seeks a fair return for its investment (See TMP 1 section on Credit and Counterparty Risk Management paragraph h). TMP 1 also allows the undertaking of non-specified investments on the approval of the Chief Finance Officer e.g. loans to housing associations, property funds and bond issues by other public sector projects. The use of property funds can be deemed to be capital expenditure, and as such will be an application (spending) of capital resources. This Authority will seek guidance on the status of any fund it may consider using.

5.3 Creditworthiness Policy

Approved Organisations for Investments

Only organisations that are eligible to receive investments from local authorities may be used. The council's credit worthiness policy was reviewed and approved by Audit Committee on 21st November 2016 and by Council on 9th January 2017.

5.4 The Monitoring of Investment Counterparties

The credit rating and financial resilience of counter parties are monitored regularly. The council receives credit rating information from Capita Asset Services as and when ratings change and counterparties are checked promptly. On occasion ratings may be downgraded when an investment has already been made. The criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list by the Treasury Manager, and if required, new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

5.5 Investment strategy

The general policy objective for this council is for the prudent investment of its treasury balances. The council's investment priorities are:

- The security of capital
- Liquidity of its investments
- All investments will be in sterling
- The council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

In-house funds. Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for interest rates.

Investment return expectations. Bank Rate is forecast to stay flat at 0.25% until quarter 2 2019 and not to rise above 0.75% by quarter 1 2020. Bank Rate forecasts for financial year ends (March) are:

2016/17	0.25%
2017/18	0.25%
2018/19	0.25%
2019/20	0.50%

Capita Assets suggest the investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to 100 days during each financial year for the next eight years. The list below shows a dramatic drop between the investments earnings suggested this year compared to last years.

	Predicted last year	Now
2016/17	0.90%	0.25%
2017/18	1.50%	0.25%
2018/19	2.00%	0.25%
2019/20	2.25%	0.50%
2020/21	2.50%	0.75%
2021/22	3.00%	1.00%
2022/23	3.00%	1.50%
2023/24	3.00%	1.75%
Later years	3.00%	2.75%

5.6 Specific Investment Objectives

The specific investment objectives below reflect the reduction in rates available.

L8. Average interest rate received on STI Versus 7 day Libid rate – **0.5%**

L9. Average interest rate received on:

At call investments – **0.30%** a change from **0.40%**

Short term investments – **0.75%** a change from **0.90%**

Long term investments – **1.20%** a change from **1.80%**

L10 Average rate on at call and short term investments will be equal to or greater than **0.70%**

L11 Average rate on all investments will be equal to or greater than **0.75%**

L12 % daily bank balances within a target range of **98%**.

However, it should be noted that the downside view reflects the uncertainty over the final terms of Brexit. If growth expectations disappoint and inflationary pressures are minimal, the start of increases in Bank Rate could be pushed back. On the other hand, should the pace of growth quicken and / or forecasts for increases in inflation rise, there could be an upside risk i.e. Bank Rate increases occur earlier and / or at a quicker pace.

Investment treasury indicator and limit - total principal funds invested for greater than 364 days. These limits are set with regard to the council's liquidity requirements and to reduce the need for early sale of an investment and are based on the availability of funds after each year end.

The Council is asked to approve Prudential Indicator 13. Treasury indicator and limit:

Prudential Indicator 13 Maximum principal sums invested > 364 days			
£m	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Principal sums invested > 364 days	£25m	£25m	£25m

End of year investment report

At the end of the financial year, the council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Report.

Annex 1 - IN YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS TO BE MONITORED

No.	Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
PCI 1	a. Capital expenditure - Council Resources	16.363	15.887	13.590	6.972
PCI 1	b. Capital expenditure - External Resources	73.285	36.667	21.310	25.901
PCI 2	Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream	10.5%	11.0%	11.0%	11.0%
L.3	a. Financing costs as % of council tax requirement	25.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
L.3	b. Financing costs as % of tax revenues	13.5%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
L.4	Actual debt versus operational debt within the following range	65%-85%	65%-85%	65%-85%	65%-85%
L.5	Average interest rate of debt excluding OLA less than	4.61%	4.61%	4.61%	4.61%
L.6	Average interest rate of debt including OLA	4.72%	4.72%	4.72%	4.72%
L.8	Average interest rate received on STI Versus 7 day LIBID rate	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
L.9	Average interest rate received on:				
	(a) At call investments	0.40%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%
	(b) Short Term investments	0.90%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%
	(c) Long Term investments	1.80%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%
L.10	Average interest rate on all ST investments. (ST and At call)	0.80%	0.68%	0.69%	0.69%
L.11	Average rate on all investments	1.10%	0.77%	0.78%	0.78%
L.12	% daily bank balances within target range	98%	98%	98%	98%

There are no changes proposed

MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION 2017/18 ONWARDS

Under the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2010, local authorities have a duty to produce an annual statement on its policy for making a minimum revenue provision (MRP).

For the financial years **2008/09** onwards the authority will be adopting the following policies in determining the MRP:

1. For any capital expenditure carried out prior to 31 March 2008 or financed by supported borrowing capital expenditure, the authority will be charging MRP at 2% of the balance at 31 March 2013 (which has been adjusted as per the 2003 regulations), fixed at the same cash value so that the whole debt is repaid after 50 years.
2. For any capital expenditure carried out after 1 April 2008 being financed by borrowing the authority will be adopting the asset life method. This is where MRP will be based on the capital expenditure divided by a determined asset life or profile of benefits to give annual instalments. The annual instalment may be calculated by the equal instalment method, annuity method or other methods as justified by the circumstances of the case at the discretion of the Chief Finance Officer.
3. The authority will treat the asset life as commencing in the year in which the asset first becomes operationally available. Noting that in accordance with the regulations the authority may postpone the beginning of the associated MRP until the financial year following the one in which the asset becomes operational, there will be an annual adjustment for Assets Under Construction.
4. In all years the CFR for the purposes of the MRP calculation will be adjusted for other local authority transferred debt.
5. The Section 151 officer shall on an annual basis review the level of MRP to be charged, as calculated as per paragraphs 1,2 and 3 above to determine if this is at a level which is considered prudent. Dependant on this review the Section 151 officer shall be able to adjust the MRP charge. The total cumulative adjustment will never exceed the calculated CFR variance of £24.6m. The amount of MRP charged shall not be less than zero in any financial year.

Finance Leases

In accordance with legislation the council will make a MRP for finance leases equivalent to the principal payment contained with the lease terms.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

This Economic Commentary is based upon information provided by our Treasury Management Advisors – Capita Asset Services. Key topics are denoted in bold.

UK. GDP growth rates in 2013, 2014 and 2015 of 2.2%, 2.9% and 1.8% were some of the strongest rates among the G7 countries. Growth is expected to have strengthened in 2016 with the first three quarters coming in respectively at +0.4%, +0.7% and +0.5%. The latest Bank of England forecast for growth in 2016 as a whole is +2.2%. The figure for quarter 3 was a pleasant surprise which confounded the downbeat forecast by the Bank of England in August of only +0.1%, (subsequently revised up in September, but only to +0.2%). During most of 2015 and the first half of 2016, the economy had faced headwinds for exporters from the appreciation of sterling against the Euro, and weak growth in the EU, China and emerging markets, and from the dampening effect of the Government's continuing austerity programme.

The **referendum vote for Brexit** in June 2016 delivered an immediate shock fall in confidence indicators and business surveys at the beginning of August, which were interpreted by the Bank of England in its August Inflation Report as pointing to an impending sharp slowdown in the economy. However, the following monthly surveys in September showed an equally sharp recovery in confidence and business surveys so that it is generally expected that the economy will post reasonably strong growth numbers through the second half of 2016 and also in 2017, albeit at a slower pace than in the first half of 2016.

The **Monetary Policy Committee, (MPC), meeting of 4th August** was therefore dominated by countering this expected sharp slowdown and resulted in a package of measures that included a cut in Bank Rate from 0.50% to 0.25%, a renewal of quantitative easing, with £70bn made available for purchases of gilts and corporate bonds, and a £100bn tranche of cheap borrowing being made available for banks to use to lend to businesses and individuals.

The **MPC meeting of 15 December** left Bank Rates unchanged at 0.25% and other monetary policy measures also remained unchanged. This was in line with market expectations, but a major change from the previous quarterly Inflation Report MPC meeting of 4 August, which had given a strong steer, in its forward guidance, that it was likely to cut the Bank Rate again, probably by the end of the year if economic data turned out as forecast by the Bank

The latest MPC decision included a forward view that the **Bank Rate** could go either up or down depending on how economic data evolves in the coming months. Our central view remains that the Bank Rate will remain unchanged at 0.25% until the first increase to 0.50% in quarter 2 2019 (unchanged from our previous forecast). However, we would not, as yet, discount the risk of a cut in Bank Rate if economic growth were to take a significant dip downwards, though we think this is unlikely. We would also point out that forecasting as far ahead as mid 2019 is highly fraught as there are many potential economic headwinds which could blow the UK economy one way or the other as well as political developments in the UK, (especially over the terms of Brexit), EU, US and beyond, which could have a major impact on our forecasts.

The pace of Bank Rate increases in our forecasts has been slightly increased beyond the three year time horizon to reflect higher inflation expectations.

The August quarterly Inflation Report was based on a pessimistic forecast of near to zero GDP growth in quarter 3 i.e. a sharp slowdown in growth from +0.7% in quarter 2, in reaction to the shock of the result of the referendum in June. However, **consumers** have very much stayed in a 'business as usual' mode and there has been no sharp downturn in spending; it is consumer expenditure that underpins the services sector which comprises about 75% of UK GDP. After a fairly flat three months leading up to October, retail sales in October surged at the strongest rate since September 2015 and were again strong in November. In addition, the GfK consumer confidence index recovered quite strongly to -3 in October after an initial sharp plunge in July to -12 in reaction to the referendum result. However, in November it fell to -8 indicating a return to pessimism about future prospects among consumers, probably based mainly around concerns about rising inflation eroding purchasing power.

Bank of England GDP forecasts in the November quarterly Inflation Report were as follows, (August forecasts in brackets) - 2016 +2.2%, (+2.0%); 2017 1.4%, (+0.8%); 2018 +1.5%, (+1.8%). There has, therefore, been a sharp increase in the forecast for 2017, a marginal increase in 2016 and a small decline in growth, now being delayed until 2018, as a result of the impact of Brexit.

Capital Economics' GDP forecasts are as follows: 2016 +2.0%; 2017 +1.5%; 2018 +2.5%. They feel that pessimism is still being overdone by the Bank and Brexit will not have as big an effect as initially feared by some commentators.

The Chancellor has said he will do 'whatever is needed' i.e. to **promote growth**; there are two main options he can follow – fiscal policy e.g. cut taxes, increase investment allowances for businesses, and/or increase government expenditure on infrastructure, housing etc. This will mean that the PSBR deficit elimination timetable will need to slip further into the future as promoting growth, (and ultimately boosting tax revenues in the longer term), will be a more urgent priority. The Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, had warned that a vote for Brexit would be likely to cause a slowing in growth, particularly from a reduction in business investment, due to the uncertainty of whether the UK would have continuing full access, (i.e. without tariffs), to the EU single market. He also warned that the Bank could not do all the heavy lifting to boost economic growth and suggested that the Government would need to help growth e.g. by increasing investment expenditure and by using fiscal policy tools. The Chancellor, Phillip Hammond, announced, in the aftermath of the referendum result and the formation of a new Conservative cabinet, that the target of achieving a budget surplus in 2020 would be eased in the Autumn Statement on 23 November.

The other key factor in forecasts for Bank Rate is **inflation** where the MPC aims for a target for CPI of 2.0%. The November Inflation Report included an increase in the peak forecast for inflation from 2.3% to 2.7% during 2017; (Capital Economics are forecasting a peak of just under 3% in 2018). This increase was largely due to the effect of the sharp fall in the value of sterling since the referendum, although during November, sterling has recovered some of this fall to end up 15% down against the dollar, and 8% down against the euro (as at the MPC meeting date – 15.12.16). This depreciation will feed through into a sharp increase in the cost of imports and materials used in production in the UK. However, the MPC is expected to look through the acceleration in inflation caused by external, (outside of the UK), influences, although it has given a clear warning that if wage inflation were to rise significantly as a result of these cost pressures on consumers, then they would take action to raise Bank Rate. What is clear is that **consumer disposable income** will come under pressure, as the latest employers' survey is forecasting median

pay rises for the year ahead of only 1.1% at a time when inflation will be rising significantly higher than this. The CPI figure has been on an upward trend in 2016 and reached 1.2% in November. However, prices paid by factories for inputs rose to 13.2% though producer output prices were still lagging behind at 2.3% and core inflation was 1.4%, confirming the likely future upwards path.

Gilt yields, and consequently PWLB rates, have risen sharply since hitting a low point in mid-August. There has also been huge volatility during 2016 as a whole. The year started with 10 year gilt yields at 1.88%, fell to a low point of 0.53% on 12 August, and hit a new peak on the way up again of 1.55% on 15 November. The rebound since August reflects the initial combination of the yield-depressing effect of the MPC's new round of quantitative easing on 4 August, together with expectations of a sharp downturn in expectations for growth and inflation as per the pessimistic Bank of England Inflation Report forecast, followed by a sharp rise in growth expectations since August when subsequent business surveys, and GDP growth in quarter 3 at +0.5% q/q, confounded the pessimism. Inflation expectations also rose sharply as a result of the continuing fall in the value of sterling.

Employment had been growing steadily during 2016 but encountered a first fall in over a year, of 6,000, over the three months to October. The latest employment data in December, (for November), was distinctly weak with an increase in unemployment benefits claimants of 2,400 in November and of 13,300 in October. **House prices** have been rising during 2016 at a modest pace but the pace of increase has slowed since the referendum; a downturn in prices could dampen consumer confidence and expenditure.

USA. The American economy had a patchy 2015 with sharp swings in the quarterly **growth rate** leaving the overall growth for the year at 2.4%. Quarter 1 of 2016 at +0.8%, (on an annualised basis), and quarter 2 at 1.4% left average growth for the first half at a weak 1.1%. However, quarter 3 at 3.2% signalled a rebound to strong growth. The Fed. embarked on its long anticipated first increase in rates at its December 2015 meeting. At that point, confidence was high that there would then be four more increases to come in 2016. Since then, more downbeat news on the international scene, and then the Brexit vote, have caused a delay in the timing of the second increase of 0.25% which came, as expected, in December 2016 to a range of 0.50% to 0.75%. Overall, despite some data setbacks, the US is still, probably, the best positioned of the major world economies to make solid progress towards a combination of strong growth, full employment and rising inflation: this is going to require the central bank to take action to raise rates so as to make progress towards normalisation of monetary policy, albeit at lower central rates than prevailed before the 2008 crisis. The Fed. therefore also indicated that it expected three further increases of 0.25% in 2017 to deal with rising inflationary pressures.

The result of the **presidential election** in November is expected to lead to a strengthening of US growth if Trump's election promise of a major increase in expenditure on infrastructure is implemented. This policy is also likely to strengthen inflation pressures as the economy is already working at near full capacity. In addition, the unemployment rate is at a low point verging on what is normally classified as being full employment. However, the US does have a substantial amount of hidden unemployment in terms of an unusually large, (for a developed economy), percentage of the working population not actively seeking employment.

Trump's election has had a profound effect on the **bond market and bond yields** rose sharply in the week after his election. Time will tell if this is a reasonable assessment of his election promises to cut taxes at the same time as boosting expenditure. This could lead to a sharp rise in total debt issuance from the current level of around 72% of GDP towards 100% during his term in office. However, although the Republicans now have a

monopoly of power for the first time since the 1920s, in having a President and a majority in both Congress and the Senate, there is by no means any certainty that the politicians and advisers he has been appointing to his team, and both houses, will implement the more extreme policies that Trump outlined during his election campaign. Indeed, Trump may even rein back on some of those policies himself.

In the first week since the US election, there was a major shift in **investor sentiment** away from bonds to equities, especially in the US. However, gilt yields in the UK and bond yields in the EU have also been dragged higher. Some commentators are saying that this rise has been an overreaction to the US election result which could be reversed. Other commentators take the view that this could well be the start of the long expected eventual unwinding of bond prices propelled upwards to unrealistically high levels, (and conversely bond yields pushed down), by the artificial and temporary power of quantitative easing.

EZ. In the Eurozone, **the ECB** commenced, in March 2015, its massive €1.1 trillion programme of quantitative easing to buy high credit quality government and other debt of selected EZ countries at a rate of €60bn per month. This was intended to run initially to September 2016 but was extended to March 2017 at its December 2015 meeting. At its December and March 2016 meetings it progressively cut its deposit facility rate to reach - 0.4% and its main refinancing rate from 0.05% to zero. At its March meeting, it also increased its monthly asset purchases to €80bn. These measures have struggled to make a significant impact in boosting economic growth and in helping inflation to rise significantly from low levels towards the target of 2%. Consequently, at its December meeting it extended its asset purchases programme by continuing purchases at the current monthly pace of €80 billion until the end of March 2017, but then continuing at a pace of €60 billion until the end of December 2017, or beyond, if necessary, and in any case until the Governing Council sees a sustained adjustment in the path of inflation consistent with its inflation aim. It also stated that if, in the meantime, the outlook was to become less favourable or if financial conditions became inconsistent with further progress towards a sustained adjustment of the path of inflation, the Governing Council intended to increase the programme in terms of size and/or duration.

EZ GDP growth in the first three quarters of 2016 has been 0.5%, +0.3% and +0.3%, (+1.7% y/y). Forward indications are that economic growth in the EU is likely to continue at moderate levels. This has added to comments from many forecasters that those central banks in countries around the world which are currently struggling to combat low growth, are running out of ammunition to stimulate growth and to boost inflation. Central banks have also been stressing that national governments will need to do more by way of structural reforms, fiscal measures and direct investment expenditure to support demand and economic growth in their economies.

There are also significant specific political and other risks within the EZ:

- **Greece** continues to cause major stress in the EU due to its tardiness and reluctance in implementing key reforms required by the EU to make the country more efficient and to make significant progress towards the country being able to pay its way – and before the EU is prepared to agree to release further bail out funds.
- **Spain** has had two inconclusive general elections in 2015 and 2016, both of which failed to produce a workable government with a majority of the 350 seats. At the eleventh hour on 31 October, before it would have become compulsory to call a third general election, the party with the biggest bloc of seats (137) was given a majority confidence vote to form a government. This is potentially a highly unstable situation, particularly given the need to deal with an EU demand for implementation of a package of austerity cuts which will be highly unpopular.

- The under capitalisation of **Italian banks** poses a major risk. Some **German banks** are also undercapitalised, especially Deutsche Bank, which is under threat of major financial penalties from regulatory authorities that will further weaken its capitalisation. What is clear is that national governments are forbidden by EU rules from providing state aid to bail out those banks that are at risk, while, at the same time, those banks are unable realistically to borrow additional capital in financial markets due to their vulnerable financial state. However, they are also 'too big, and too important to their national economies, to be allowed to fail'.
- **4 December Italian constitutional referendum** on reforming the Senate and reducing its powers; this was also a confidence vote on Prime Minister Renzi who has resigned on losing the referendum. However, there has been remarkably little fall out from this result which probably indicates that the financial markets had already fully priced it in
- **Dutch general election 15.3.17**; a far right party is currently polling neck and neck with the incumbent ruling party. In addition, anti-big business and anti-EU activists have already collected two thirds of the 300,000 signatures required to force a referendum to be taken on approving the EU – Canada free trade pact. This could delay the pact until a referendum in 2018 which would require unanimous approval by all EU governments before it can be finalised.
- **French presidential election**; first round 13 April; second round 7 May 2017.
- **French National Assembly election June 2017.**
- **German Federal election August – 22 October 2017.** This could be affected by significant shifts in voter intentions as a result of terrorist attacks, dealing with a huge influx of immigrants and a rise in anti EU sentiment.
- The core EU, (note, not just the Eurozone currency area), principle of **free movement of people** within the EU is a growing issue leading to major stress and tension between EU states, especially with the Visegrad bloc of former communist states.

Given the number and type of challenges the EU faces in the next eighteen months, there is an identifiable risk for the EU project to be called into fundamental question. The risk of an electoral revolt against the EU establishment has gained traction after the shock results of the UK referendum and the US Presidential election. But it remains to be seen whether any shift in sentiment will gain sufficient traction to produce any further shocks within the EU.

Asia. Economic growth in **China** has been slowing down and this, in turn, has been denting economic growth in emerging market countries dependent on exporting raw materials to China. Medium term risks have been increasing in China e.g. a dangerous build up in the level of credit compared to the size of GDP, plus there is a need to address a major over supply of housing and surplus industrial capacity, which both need to be eliminated. This needs to be combined with a rebalancing of the economy from investment expenditure to consumer spending. However, the central bank has a track record of supporting growth through various monetary policy measures, though these further stimulate the growth of credit risks and so increase the existing major imbalances within the economy.

Economic growth in **Japan** is still patchy, at best, and skirting with deflation, despite successive rounds of huge monetary stimulus and massive fiscal action to promote consumer spending. The government is also making little progress on fundamental reforms of the economy.

Emerging countries. There have been major concerns around the vulnerability of some emerging countries exposed to the downturn in demand for commodities from China or to competition from the increase in supply of American shale oil and gas reaching world markets. The ending of sanctions on Iran has also brought a further significant increase in oil supplies into the world markets. While these concerns have subsided during 2016, if interest rates in the USA do rise substantially over the next few years, (and this could also be accompanied by a rise in the value of the dollar in exchange markets), this could cause significant problems for those emerging countries with large amounts of debt denominated in dollars. Financial markets could be vulnerable to risks from those emerging countries with major sovereign wealth funds, that are highly exposed to the falls in commodity prices from the levels prevailing before 2015, especially oil, and which, therefore, may have to liquidate substantial amounts of investments in order to cover national budget deficits over the next few years if the price of oil does not return to pre-2015 levels.

Brexit timetable and process

- March 2017: UK government notifies the European Council of its intention to leave under the Treaty on European Union Article 50
- March 2019: two-year negotiation period on the terms of exit. This period can be extended with the agreement of all members i.e. not that likely.
- UK continues as an EU member during this two-year period with access to the single market and tariff free trade between the EU and UK.
- The UK and EU would attempt to negotiate, among other agreements, a bi-lateral trade agreement over that period.
- The UK would aim for a negotiated agreed withdrawal from the EU, although the UK may also exit without any such agreements.
- If the UK exits without an agreed deal with the EU, World Trade Organisation rules and tariffs could apply to trade between the UK and EU - but this is not certain.
- On exit from the EU: the UK parliament would repeal the 1972 European Communities Act.
- The UK will then no longer participate in matters reserved for EU members, such as changes to the EU's budget, voting allocations and policies.
- It is possible that some sort of agreement could be reached for a transitional time period for actually implementing Brexit after March 2019 so as to help exporters to adjust in both the EU and in the UK.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Authorised Limit	Level of debt set by the council that must not be exceeded.
Bond	A government or public company's document undertaking to repay borrowed money usually with a fixed rate of interest.
Borrowing	Obtaining money for temporary use that has to be repaid.
Capital expenditure	Expenditure on major items e.g. land and buildings, which adds to and not merely maintains the value of existing fixed assets.
Capital grants	Specific targeted grants to cover capital expenditure.
Capital receipts	The proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets. Capital receipts can be used to fund new capital expenditure but cannot be used to finance revenue expenditure
Cash flow Management	The management of the authority's receipts and payments to ensure the authority can meet its financial obligations.
Counter party limits	Maximum amount that the council may lend to other institutions will vary according to size and credit rating of other intuitions.
Dividends	Sum to be payable as interest on loan.
ECB	European Central Bank
EU	European Union
EZ	Euro Zone
GDP	Gross Domestic Product – the total market value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a given year, equal to total consumer investment and government spending, plus the value of exports minus the value of imports.
IMP	International Monetary Fund – an organisation of 187 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.
Investments	The employment of money with the aim of receiving a return.
Libid rate	London Interbank Bid Rate (the rate that banks are willing to borrow from each other)
LOBO	Lenders Option Borrowers Option. A type of loan arrangement.
Liquidity	How easily an asset including investments may be converted to cash.
Long Term Borrowing	Borrowing of money for a term greater than one year.
Long Term Liabilities	Amounts owed by the council greater than 12 months old.
Market convention	The rules and regulations by which all brokers and dealers should abide by. It includes standards of practice and calculation conventions for interest. They are defined in the London Code of Conduct ("The London Code") published by the Bank of England.
MPC	Monetary Policy Committee – group that sets the bank base rate for the Bank of England
Temporary borrowing	Borrowing of money for a term of up to 364 days.

TERM	DEFINITION
Treasury management	The management of the local authority's cash flows, its borrowings and its investments, the management of associated risks, and the pursuit of the optimum performance or return consistent with those risks.
Treasury Policy Statement	A statement of key policies that an organisation follows in pursuit of effective treasury management, including borrowing limits and strategy.
Variable debt	This is money that has been borrowed at a variable interest rate, and as such is subject to interest rate changes.
Unsupported borrowing	Borrowing taken through the remit of the Prudential Code for which the council will not receive any government funding and will fund from own resources.
Definition of Fitch Primary Credit Rating Scales	
Long Term Ratings A: High credit quality.	A' ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.
Short-Term Ratings F1: Highest short term credit quality.	Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added "+" to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.
Definition of Moodys General Credit Rating	
LongTerm Corporate Obligation Ratings A	Obligations rated A are considered upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.