



Walsall Council

Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 26th February, 2007, at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor Mrs. B.V. McCracken (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor M.G. Pitt (Deputy Mayor)

“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ T.G. Ansell
“ D.A. Anson
“ M. Arif
“ C.M. Ault
“ J.M. Barton
“ L.A. Beeley
“ A.G. Bentley
“ Mrs. J. Beilby
“ M.A. Bird
“ P. Bott
“ M.R. Burley
“ K. Chambers
“ A.G. Clarke
“ J. R. Cook
“ S.P. Coughlan
“ C.U. Creaney
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ M. D. Flower
“ A.E. Griffiths
“ A.D. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ E.F. Hughes
“ A.D. Johnson
“ H. Khan

Councillor M. Longhi

“ S.W. Madeley
“ Mrs. C. Micklewright
“ M. Nazir
“ J.G. O'Hare
“ T.S. Oliver
“ A.J. Paul
“ G. Perry
“ J.D. Phillips
“ K. Phillips
“ I.C. Robertson
“ R.S. Robinson
“ B. Sanders
“ K. Sears
“ Mrs. D.A. Shires
“ I. Shires
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ D.J. Turner
“ W.T. Tweddle
“ A. Underhill
“ R.A. Walker
“ G. Wilkes
“ V.G. Woodruff
“ M. Yasin
“ P.A. Young
“ Zahid Ali

83. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Rochelle, Cassidy, E.E. Pitt and Sarohi.

84. Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2007 copies having been sent to each member of the Council be approved as a correct record and signed.

85. Declarations of interest

The following members declared an interest in the items indicated:-

Councillor Andrew	Any item relating to his membership of the following (personal): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management Committee of Collingwood Centre• Merrions Wood Trust• Regeneration Zone Board• WHELP Board• Walsall College
Councillor Sears	Acorn Home Care (personal)
Councillor Robinson	Goscote Resource Centre
Councillor Young	Goscote Resource Centre

86. Mayor's announcements

CPA results

The Mayor called upon the Leader of the Council to make a statement with regard to the recent announcement by the Audit Commission with regard to CPA results.

The Leader said that he was grateful for the opportunity to inform members of this year's announcement by the Audit Commission about the performance of local authorities.

Walsall Council retained its 3 star status and was specifically commended by the Chief Executive of the Audit Commission for the progress that has been made.

In addition, the performance of individual services has shown marked improvements.

Walsall Council is the only local authority in the West Midlands conurbation to achieve the top score of 4 out of 4 for its environment services, and one of only two to achieve the top score for housing. In addition, the score for the Council's use of resources has increased significantly, making Walsall one of the best performing Councils in the region for this.

What is particularly pleasing is the results of the Audit Commission's surveys into the views of Walsall residents. These show rapidly increasing levels of satisfaction with Council services overall and with specific services such as parks, recycling, libraries and leisure centres.

I'm sure all members will wish to join me in thanking staff for this achievement and urging them to continue the good work.

My message to Walsall residents is this: Walsall Council is now recognised as one of the fastest improving local authorities in the country. But there is no room for complacency. We all know there is more to be done and it is the role of every elected Councillor to support this effort and to help the Council continue these very positive and welcome improvements.

87. Petitions

The following petitions were submitted:

- (a) Councillor J. Phillips – Cavendish Road and Stephenson Avenue – request for action to prevent anti social behaviour.
- (b) Councillor Griffiths – Against erection of mobile phone mast at Lichfield Road, Shelfield .

88. Question by member of the public

Garden waste recycling bins

Mr. P.E. Smith of 65 Harden Road, Leamore asked the following question of Councillor Walker:

Whilst I am sure that the Council taxpaying households of the Borough who are presently without a Brown garden waste recycling bin will welcome the Council's plans to extend this service in the forthcoming financial year, which will not only add weight to the Council's commitment to recycling but will also partially address the inequality issue which presently exists with regard to the provision of this service, can you explain on what criteria will the decision be made as to which households will benefit from this extension of the service in the forthcoming financial year?

Councillor Walker said that the criteria for determining which households would be eligible for a brown bin remained the same as when they were introduced in 1997. The additional bins would be distributed across the borough to ensure all eligible households received one. The decision was based on: whether the property could generate sufficient garden waste to regularly put their bin out, whether the property could accommodate an additional bin and whether the property met “operational requirements”, that it does not necessitate unreasonable journey time or distance for crews/wagons. These criteria were necessary to ensure the service operated efficiently and effectively to the maximum benefit for the borough. The list of properties would be distributed to all members for informal consultation to ensure it was as accurate as possible. This additional list had been compiled from areas in existing brown bin collection zones that have been previously missed, properties identified from petitions and properties identified through “tell us” enquiries and through the complaints/comments system.

The Mayor asked Mr. Smith if he had any supplementary question and subsequently ruled the question that he put to Councillor Walker out of order.

89. Recommendations of Cabinet

(1) Towards a sustainable community strategy/community plan

A report was submitted:

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

Resolved

That the combined refreshed Community Plan and Progress Report be noted as part of the Corporate Integrated Performance Planning Framework.

(2) Corporate Plan 2007/8

A report was submitted:

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

Resolved

That the Corporate Plan 2007/8 be adopted.

(3) Capital Programme 2007/8 to 2011/12

A report was submitted.

Resolved

That the Capital Programme 2007/8 to 2011/12 as set out in the following tables be approved, bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by unsupported borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place:

MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/8	
SCHEME	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Schools access initiative	521,579
New pupil places	929,999
Local Transport Plan	4,282,000
Modernisation – primary	1,406,775
Modernisation – secondary	1,328,758
Disabled Facilities Grants	400,000
Risk Management	100,000
Uninsured property damage	200,000
Contingency	250,000
Clear major adaptations	3,261,000
Environmental regeneration capital programme	240,000
Shop Maintenance	115,077
Regenerating Walsall	500,000
Palfrey Park HLF	75,000
Willenhall Lane travellers site	150,400
Public lighting PFI	200,000
Library modernisation plan	325,000
Highways maintenance - capital rather than revenue funding	595,000
Targeted capital bids	202,500
Regeneration schemes falling within the Council's priorities	1,620,000
East locality (Accommodation)	12,000
Walsall arboretum restoration programme	50,000
Memorial safety	100,000
Streetly cemetery extension phase B	100,000
Youth service building refurbishment	100,000
Access for disabled people (Buildings)	200,000
Decriminalisation of parking enforcement	200,000
Asbestos removal	250,000
Improving security In local neighbourhoods	200,000
Secondary school re-development of dining facilities	260,000
Energy efficiency improvements	250,000
Strategic corridors and gateways	400,000
Work to secure safe water supplies	400,000
Town, district and local centres	1,050,000
Highways maintenance	1,000,000
Additional data storage	250,000
Communications network	400,000
Corporate PC refresh programme	490,000
Corporate Printer refresh programme	10,000

Corporate Server refresh programme	140,000
Customer relationship management	200,000
Enterprise servers	2,950,000
Information management	100,000
Network resilience	75,000
Remote data centre	200,000
Remote telephone systems	50,000
Systems upgrade	100,000
Thin client	50,000
Wireless networking	25,000
Replacement of SOSCIS - PARIS project	215,000
Priority 1 backlog - school building repair	2,000,000
Garden waste kerbside collection	289,000
Civic building air condition replacement	50,000
Major repairs to non-education premises	1,189,290
Private sector renovation grants	1,765,000
Housing needs and demand studies	10,000
Private sector house condition survey	50,000
Darlaston Strategic Development Area	200,000
Local access customer service bus	150,000
TOTAL	32,233,378

NON MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME – SCHEMES FUNDED FROM GRANT 2007/8	
SCHEME	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Devolved formula capital	5,296,454
Modernisation – primary	602,903
Modernisation – secondary	569,468
Extended services	880,459
Targeted capital bids	9,000,000
Childrens centres - phase 2	2,574,510
Town Centre Transport Package	5,412,000
Bus showcase	1,000,000
Red routes	2,000,000
Recycling initiatives	527,204
Community Regeneration in Walsall	572,292
Palfrey Park HLF	225,000
Daw End limestone infilling	500,000
Bridge Street/Ablewell Street THI – AWM	50,000
Bridge Street/Ablewell Street THI – HLF	51,071
Bloxwich Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas	100,000
Bloxwich Townscape Heritage Initiative	52,399
Lichfield Street Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme	4,601
New deal for communities	2,347,600
Disabled Facilities Grants	600,000
Willenhall Lane travellers site	451,200

Private sector renovation grants	1,235,000
Improving information grant (PARIS project)	155,000
Improving care homes	380,000
TOTAL	34,587,161

LEASING PROGRAMME 2007/8	
DIRECTORATE	TOTAL BUDGET £'000'S
Neighbourhood Services	6,241
Regeneration	0
Social Care and Inclusion	393
Childrens Services	96
TOTAL	6,730

(4) Corporate Revenue Budget Plan 2007/8 to 2011/12

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor O'Hare and seconded by Councillor Ansell:

That the resolution of the Cabinet set out below as amended to take into account the final levies and precepts be approved:-

(a) That the net levies for outside bodies be noted:

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority	12,842,844
Environment agency	93,574

(b) That approval be given to an opening working balance for 2007/8 set at a prudent level of £4.6m in line with the council's medium term financial strategy.

(c) That the following opening cash limited budgets for 2007/8 be approved:

BUDGET	2007/8 BUDGET (£)
DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:	
Corporate services	24,607,868
Social care and inclusion	62,387,374
Children and young people	74,251,491
Neighbourhood services	61,868,086
Regeneration	2,804,971
CORPORATE PROVISIONS/CONTINGENCIES ETC:	
Capital financing	13,018,085
Non-service specific central items	1,698,119
Contribution to general reserves	961,974
Less: Capital Charges	-41,610,294

LEVIES:	
Passenger Transport Levy	12,842,844
Environment Agency Levy	93,574
WALSALL MBC NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	212,924,092

(d) That the following statutory determinations be noted (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992):

- I. **£635,770,275** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
- II. **£422,846,183** being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act.
- III. **£212,924,092** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32 (4) as its budget requirement for the year.
- IV. **£117,678,357** being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (**£100,194,631**); Revenue Support Grant (**£16,814,726**); and the Collection Fund Surplus(**£669,000**).
- V. **95,245,735** being the amount at (c) above, less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the Council Tax Base of **76,388**, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

VI. Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) above by the proportions set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act and calculated in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act of 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
£831.25	£969.79	£1,108.33	£1,246.87
E	F	G	H
£1,523.95	£1,801.03	£2,078.11	£2,493.74

(e) That the precept from the Fire & Civil Defence Authority and the precept for the Police Authority, 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 be noted.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
Police	A	B	C	D
	£60.98	£71.14	£81.31	£91.47
	E	F	G	H
	£111.80	£132.13	£152.45	£182.94
Fire & Civil Defence	A	B	C	D
	£29.62	£34.56	£39.49	£44.43
	E	F	G	H
	£54.30	£64.18	£74.05	£88.86

- (f) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (f) and (g) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2007/8 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

A	B	C	D
£921.85	£1,075.49	£1,229.13	£1,382.77
E	F	G	H
£1,690.05	£1,997.34	£2,304.61	£2,765.54

- (g) 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 Observer”; and the “Walsall Advertiser” being newspapers circulating in the Authority’s area.
- (h) That the appropriate officers 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.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried, the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:

**For the motion -
28 members**

Cllr: Ansell
Andrew
Arif
Ault
Beilby
Bird
Clarke
Douglas-Maul
Flower
Griffiths
Harris
Harrison
Hughes
Longhi

**Against the motion -
24 members**

Cllr: Oliver
I. Shires
Anson
Barton
Bentley
Bott
Burley
Chambers
Cook
Coughlan
Creaney
Johnson
Khan
Madeley

McCracken	Nazir
Micklewright	J.D. Phillips
O'Hare	K. Phillips
Paul	Robertson
Perry	Robinson
M.G. Pitt	D.A. Shires
Sanders	Underhill
Sears	Wilkes
Towe	Woodruff
Turner	Young
Tweddle	
Walker	
Yasin	
Zahid	

and it was:

Resolved

That the resolution of the Cabinet set out below as amended to take into account the final levies and precepts be approved:-

(a) That the net levies for outside bodies be noted:

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- VI Valuation bands
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- (h) That the appropriate officers 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.

(5) Annual review of Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

A report was submitted.

Resolved

That the 2007/08 treasury management and investment strategy document set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved and the Prudential Indicators set out in section E of Appendix 1 be endorsed.

90. Review of the Council's Constitution with respect to changes in planning and regeneration

The report was submitted.

Resolved

That the findings of the Joint Member Officer Working Group as set out in this report be noted and the changes to the constitution as set out in the report be approved, with the new arrangements being adopted from 1st March 2007.

91. Barr Beacon Trust

The report was submitted.

Resolved

That a Barr Beacon Trust Management Committee be established in accordance with the terms of reference attached in the appendix to the report now submitted and that the Management Committee be delegated authority accordingly.

The meeting terminated at 8.15 p.m.