



# Walsall Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY the 11<sup>th</sup> day of APRIL, 2016 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2016.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:

1. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
2. Apologies.
3. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
4. Declarations of interest.
5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**  
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
6. Mayor's announcements.
7. To receive any petitions.



8. To answer any questions in accordance with Council procedure rules:

(a) From the public:

(1) **Mr P Bassford of Aldridge**

“Why was a mature oak tree (T979) in Portland Road, Aldridge removed despite assessments by Marlow Consulting Ltd. on 26.3.12 and 30.7.14 stating that it was worthy of retention and why was the tree said to be of poor amenity value on 22.2.16 and not merit a Tree Preservation order despite my letter objecting to the felling of the tree which was not considered at the time the decision was made?”

(b) From members of the Council:

(1) **Councillor Worrall – Winterley Lane, Rushall infilling of mineshafts**

“Planning consent for the infilling and capping of 19 limestone shafts at land off Winterley Lane expired at the end of March.

Given that, in answer to my previous question at February Council, you stated that just one out of nineteen shafts had been filled with only weeks to go before expiry of planning consent, and given the widespread local perception that this is not so much a serious land reclamation project as a lucrative long-term high-volume aggregates recycling business in the green belt, would you now explain to Council how long the operators will be allowed to once again continue without the benefit of planning consent, what options for effective action are available to Planning Committee and the Environment Agency, who will pay for the ongoing costs of repairing the carriageway and any damage to adjoining property, and restoring roadside hedgerows and trees now being damaged or destroyed by HGVs, and when it is expected that the land will be restored to peaceful green belt grazing?”

(2) **Councillor D Coughlan – Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

“Can you please explain to me what we as councillors have to do to get a Notice under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 issued to require proper maintenance of land.”

(3) **Councillor P. Smith – Pupil Premium**

“Given that Pupil Premium funding is additional funding given to schools, based on eligibility for free school meals and intended to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged learners and their more affluent peers and furthermore given that 2 years ago, in March 2014 four Walsall primary schools were named in a letter of concern from the Rt. Hon David Laws MP to Rose Collinson (The Interim Head of Children’s Services in Walsall) regarding their poor performance

against Pupil Premium on the previous year's data and given that 2 years have since passed by, would the Portfolio holder comment with regard to the use of Pupil Premium funding in Walsall Schools and its effectiveness in achieving the outcomes for which it is intended, with particular reference to:

- a) What is the amount of Pupil Premium funding allocated to all Walsall Schools in total?
- b) To what extent you are satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that every school receiving Pupil Premium funding is using the funding specifically and directly to narrow the gap between the disadvantaged learners and their more affluent peers?
- c) To what extent are you satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the intended outcomes of narrowing the learning gap using Pupil Premium funding are being achieved by all schools in receipt of such funding?"

**(4) Councillor Smith – Council tax arrears**

"Would the Portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public, how much Council tax arrears, (attributable to the introduction, by the former administration, of the 25% Council tax payers to over 19,000 Walsall residents from April 2015 who were previously exempt from making any Council tax contribution) is still outstanding?"

**Advanced Notice of a Supplementary Question (for the advanced attention of the Portfolio holder)**

(4 a) Can you confirm that Walsall Council received £828,712 in Discretionary Housing Payment funding in the financial year 2015/16 and indicate how much of that amount has been spent by the end of that financial year?

**(5) Councillor Smith – Properties in the ownership of WHG**

"Can the appropriate Portfolio holder comment with regard to properties (for residential use) in the ownership of Walsall Housing Group (whg) and with particular reference to;

- a. How many applicants are presently on their waiting list for a whg tenancy?
- b. How many of their properties they have sold or auctioned off in the last 3 years?
- c. How many properties (for residential use) whg owns outside the Borough of Walsall?"

**(6) Councillor Smith – Academies**

“From an evidence based perspective, can you inform me, this Council and the public, especially members of the public with children at school, whether those schools that have become academies in recent years have seen their standards improve as a consequence, especially with regard to exam results and the narrowing of the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers?”

**Advance notice of a supplementary Question:**

(6a) “What is your considered assessment of the announcement by the Government that all schools will be turned into academies?”

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

**Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education**

That the Agreed Syllabus be approved, to be implemented from 1 September 2016 - Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

10. **Portfolio holder briefings.** To receive a 5 minute presentation from the following portfolio holders:

(1) Personnel and Business Support. (Councillor Bennett)

(2) Shared services and procurement. (Councillor Arif)

(Note: A member of the Council may ask the portfolio holder any question and another associate question without notice upon each report. Questioning by members is limited to 10 minutes for each report presented.)

11. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillor S. Coughlan**

The Conservative government’s announcement that every school will be an academy by 2020 heralds the final episode in the destruction of democratically accountable state education.

This flies in the face of any evidence about the validity of the Academy model as a vehicle for school improvement. This starts with the Education Select Committee who said that ‘There is at present no convincing evidence of the impact of academy status on attainment in primary schools’.

Even OFSTED boss Sir Michael Wilshire now implicitly questions academisation. His recent report condemned several Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) for paying fat cat salaries, feckless support and failing the most disadvantaged children. Wilshire compared them to the worst Local

Authorities of yesteryear, but that's unfair. At least an LA could be held accountable at the ballot box.

At the recent Overview Scrutiny Panel, the panel was informed that children's progress and attainment in council controlled schools is better and improving more quickly than in Academies.

Therefore;

This Council condemns the government policy of forced academisation, and calls on the Leader of the council to write to the Chancellor stating that taking power away from local Government regarding schools, undermines the whole Devolution project of Combined Authorities and the Governments Locality policy.

Note: report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

**At this point the Council to consider the following item as charitable trustees**  
*When the Council is acting in this capacity, Council procedure rules do not apply. A corporate trustee is a corporation which has been appointed to act as a trustee of the charity. Trustees should bear in mind that when they are dealing with the business of the charity, their overriding duty is to act in the best interests of that charity.*

12. **Annual report of Barr Beacon Trust Management Committee** - Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.
13. **Leamore Park** - Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.