



Walsall Council

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY the FIFTH day of NOVEMBER, 2007, at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 26th day of October, 2007.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Interim Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:-

1. Apologies.
2. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
3. To approve as correct records and sign the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 10th and 27th September, 2007.
4. Declarations of interest.
5. Mayor's announcements.
6. To receive any petitions.

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

(a) From the public.

None

(b) From members of the Council.

(1) Councillor J. Phillips - Street cleaning/sweeping (to Councillor Walker)

“Could the responsible Cabinet member please tell me what percentage of streets have had their street cleaning/sweeping reduced in frequency since January 2006, both across the Borough as a whole, and on a ward by ward basis?”

(2) Councillor Smith – Cost of employee grievance claims (to Councillor Griffiths)

“Without of course identifying individual details, would the portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how many grievances and claims by Walsall MBC employees were settled in each year since April 2003, and what were the corresponding total costs in settlement amounts, legal costs and other quantifiable associated costs in each year of those same years?”

(3) Councillor Smith – Brown bins (to Councillor Walker)

“Can the portfolio holder tell me, this Council and the public how much of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds (NRF) have been used to pay for brown bins in the last 5 years?”

(4) Councillor Smith – Borough gateways (to Councillor Andrew)

“Can the portfolio holder tell me, this Council and the public how much of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds (NRF) have been used to pay for so called Borough gateways in the last 5 years?”

(5) Councillor Smith – Use of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds (to Councillor D. Pitt)

“Can the Chairman of the appropriate Scrutiny and Performance Panel tell me, the Council and the public, following the Special Council meeting of 27th September 2007 and resolutions passed at that meeting, when will the appropriate Scrutiny Panel meet to consider the past and present use of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds prior to Council then considering a report on such?”

- (6) Councillor Smith – Aids and adaptations (to Councillor McCracken)

“Given that at the last Council Meeting, in response to my question on the numbers, ward by ward, currently awaiting aids and adaptations to their homes at estimated costs above £1000, the portfolio gave a ward by ward breakdown for the vast majority of wards but not all of them, would she now inform me, this Council and the public exactly how many cases are waiting for such aids and adaptations of an estimated £1000 or more, specifically in the Blakenall ward, Bloxwich West ward, Willenhall South ward, Willenhall North Ward and Short Heath ward?”

- (7) Councillor Smith – Closed properties in Ryecroft shopping area (to Councillor Andrew)

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how many closed and/or boarded up properties in the Ryecroft “shopping area”, in Dartmouth Avenue and Coalpool Lane are in Council ownership and what action is being taken by the Council to address this unsatisfactory situation?”

- (8) Councillor Robertson – Advertisements on lamp posts (to Councillor Andrew)

“Could you please clarify whether the delegations to Highways to authorise advertisements on street lamp posts are blocked at all by such applications needing to receive planning permission and could you give an up to date figure since the contract was signed for the loss of expected income from these lost adverts which has had to be paid over to Amey under the terms of this contract?”

- (9) Councillor Smith – Mobility scooters (to Councillor McCracken)

“Given the fact that a growing number of disabled Walsall Borough residents are increasingly depending on electric mobility scooters to give them the freedom, independence and mobility that they require, would the portfolio holder consider adopting supportive policies to address the increasing likelihood of access problems associated with these mobility scooters, highlighted recently to me in a case where a WHG tenant feels like a “prisoner in his own home” since he can get neither permission to use a temporary ramp for access to and from his ground floor flat and since neither WHG or Walsall Council seem willing to fund a permanent ramp, the latter stating that there is no mention or reference to electric mobility scooters in any of its policies?”

(10) Councillor Robertson – Staff survey (to Councillor Griffiths)

Noting that the recent Walsall Council annual staff survey was returned with a record 34% response from those approached, how does the responsible Cabinet member react to the fact that 49% do not have confidence in the management of this Council, 54% believe we are not providing good value for money and over 30% (an increase of 7% since 2004) believe communications in Walsall are getting worse even after this Council spending £1m on our new communication system and should it not worry us Councillors that only 12% have any confidence in us and 33% believe we have no clear vision of where this Council is going?

8. Walsall rail services and facilities improvement plan. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

9. Nominations to Charities. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. Council to agree the recommendations set out in the report.

10. Welfare Rights Service: Report of Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel to follow.

11. Education and Inspections Act. Report of the portfolio holder for Children's Services to follow.

12. Review of Polling Districts and Stations. Report to follow.

13. Guild of former Mayors. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. Council to agree the recommendation set out in the report.

14. Membership of Committees. Council to note the following changes in membership for the remainder of the municipal year:

- (a) Audit Committee – Councillor Clarke in place of Councillor Sanders with effect from 3rd November 2007.
- (b) Employment Appeals A – Councillor Micklewright in place of Councillor Mushtaq Ahmed with effect from 12th October 2007.

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

In the interests of democratic accountability and transparency and given that Walsall Council and its partner organisations work hard to achieve some praiseworthy results for the benefit of the Borough and its citizens, this Council resolves to give consideration to altering the Council's Constitution in time for the next municipal year in order to provide an opportunity for the Council to receive and consider on a regular basis; reports by Cabinet portfolio holders on the work done in their respective areas.

Furthermore, whilst recognising the Council's inability to direct policy or change decisions made by the following organisations, Council resolves to give consideration to altering the Constitution in time for the next municipal year in order to provide opportunities for Council to receive reports from:

- (a) The Police and Fire authorities;
- (b) Partner organisations such as the Walsall Strategic Partnership, Walsall's New Deal for Communities, WHG and any other organisations that work closely with Walsall MBC, have Walsall MBC representation on their bodies and are deemed worthy of being given such an opportunity.

16. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by Councillors J. Phillips and Young:

This Council recognises the vital contribution made to all our communities across the Borough of Walsall by our partnership with the voluntary sector.

However, we notice also, that difficulties and concerns have arisen with our partners who also work with the voluntary sector including WHRA (the community warden service) Community Associations, Walsall Council for Voluntary Action, DIAL, the domestic violence forum and a significant number of smaller local groups, which we believe indicate a lack of effective overall strategy.

Council therefore requests that a report is brought from Cabinet on how this Council can engage more effectively with all sections of the voluntary and community sector .

17. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by Councillor Coughlan:

This Council recognises the importance of the Locksmiths House, to the people of Willenhall, its importance to the industrial heritage of our borough, and the need to preserve local buildings of importance by asking the Cabinet to ensure that the financial future of the Locksmiths House is secured through this years budget process, enabling the building to remain in our town and saving the portfolio holder from repeating his comment about another historic building lost to the borough.