



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 4th day of November 2024 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Public access via: www.WalsallCouncilWebcasts.com

Dated this 25th day of October, 2024.

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 23rd September, 2024– **(pages 6 –27)**
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: **None**
 - (b) From members of the Council:

Councillor Smith

Given that there is a housing crisis in Walsall and beyond, that Whg, with already around 18,000 on its waiting list has effectively closed its books on new applicants and that Walsall Council, despite having no properties of their own, has opened a waiting list of its own which runs in to many thousands and is growing week by week, with very little prospect of ever meeting the demand,

and given further that the Council, over 2 decades ago legally transferred ownership of its housing stock to a wholly independent registered social housing provider (Whg) through a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT), and that the legislation, whilst providing for an LSVT, does not provide for a reversal of that arrangement,

and given that legally Walsall Council still has the power to provide Council housing,

and finally given that the new Government has indicated a commitment to provide extra finances to build more Council homes in the future towards its national target of building 1.5 million new homes over the next 5 years,

would the appropriate Portfolio holder explore the future possibility and feasibility of Walsall Council, venturing into building homes for letting at affordable rents, under Council ownership?

Councillor Smith

Given that once again this Council is on the “same old tripple-whammy merry go- round” of a further £28million cuts to front line services, increases in many service charges AND the maximum Council tax rise allowed (4.99%)

and futher given that some of the cuts under consideration for the next financial year include: the phasing out of most school crossing wardens, the removal of Council funding for festive lights across the Borough, even less frequent grass cutting, increased charges for the collection of bulky items, increases in Council car park charges, reduced cleaning for Council owned buildings, a massive £7.4 million cuts/increased charges to Children’s

Services and an even bigger £8.7 million cut/increased charges to Adult Care and Public Health services

and finally given that present projections seem to promise similar cuts to services, increased charges for many services and maximum Council tax rises, year on year at least up to 2028/29, can the Portfolio holder convince me, this Council and the public that the so called public consultation exercise on the Budget proposals commencing October 17 and ending 29 November is nothing less than a necessary but meaningless exercise that will make very little difference to the proposals already “oven baked” and ready to serve and furthermore can he suggest an answer to this on going annual ritual of more cuts, more service charges and maximum Council tax rises?

Councillor Smith

As winter approaches, could the appropriate Portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public of the following;

- a) Does Walsall Council have figures or at least an estimate of the numbers or “rough sleepers” in our Borough,
- b) To the Council’s knowledge, what provision has been made /is going to be made available for those in Walsall who are homeless and face the prospect of living on the streets this winter, and,
- c) How will rough sleepers be made aware of such provision?

9. To confirm the following recommendation of **Audit Committee**:

Annual Audit Report 2023/24

- 1.1 That Audit Committee review and provide feedback on the proposed Annual Report.
- 1.2 That, subject to any changes arising from recommendation 3.1, the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023/24 be approved and that the Chair of the Audit Committee present the report to the next meeting of Council.

(Note: Report to Audit Committee held on 25 September, 2024 reproduced for this meeting (**pages 28 to 36**))

10. To confirm the following recommendation of Licensing and Safety Committee

Street Trading Review – Change of Designation to Consent Streets

- 1) That the Council, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it by virtue of Section 3 and schedule 4 paragraph 2 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, authorises the designation of all streets in the controlled borough of Walsall as consent streets with effect from 1 December 2024; and that the prescribed statutory notice of intention be published; accordingly, and
- 2) note that the relevant changes to permits for existing licence holders will be made at the renewal stage in April 2025.

(Note: Report to Licensing and Safety Committee held on 18 September, 2024 reproduced for this meeting (**pages 37 to 74**))

11. **Appointment of an Independent Member to Audit Committee**

That Council confirms the appointment of Mr D Walsh as an Independent Member to the Audit Committee with immediate effect for a four-year Term of Office concluding at the end of the 2027/28 Municipal Year. (**pages 75 to 77**)

12. **Planning Committee Appointment**

To appoint Councillor Waheed Rasab to replace Councillor Singh Sohal, following his resignation.

13. **Appointment of Planning Committee Chair**

To appoint a Chair of the Planning Committee.

14. **Appointment to Outside Body**

To confirm that Councillor Russell be appointed to serve as Trustee for the Harpers, Marsh, and Crumps Almshouse Charity for the remainder of the municipal year.

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

- a. Deputy Leader and, Economic Growth and Regeneration – Councillor Andrew (**pages 78 to 88**)
- b. Children and Young People – Councillor Elson (**To Follow**)

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

16. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by Councillors Perry, Andrew, Murphy, Wilson and Martin

Motion:

This Council acknowledges the persistent problem posed by off-road bikes in our neighbourhoods, which have become a societal scourge affecting residents across the Walsall Borough, county, and indeed the country. Despite with our partners our ongoing operational response, the challenges presented by these machines extend beyond mere law enforcement and require a comprehensive approach.

We resolve to:

1. **Recognise the Challenge:** Acknowledge that off-road bikes are a significant nuisance in our communities, creating safety hazards and disrupting the quality of life for residents.
2. **Advocate for Legislative Change:** Urge the government to consider enacting legislation that makes it an offence to supply these machines to young people. Additionally, we call for enhanced powers for law enforcement to enter premises and seize these vehicles more effectively.
3. **Enhance Operational Responses:** Continue our operational responses to this issue, while recognising that current efforts often result in minimal outcomes at court. We seek to balance immediate action with long-term solutions.
4. **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Direct our officers to collaborate with local partners, and neighbour authorities' following proven successful strategies to tackle this issue more effectively.
5. **Public Awareness Campaign:** Implement a public awareness campaign to educate residents about the risks and consequences associated with off-road biking, fostering community support for solutions.

Conclusion:

The Council calls on all members to support this motion as we seek to address the challenges posed by off-road bikes in a holistic manner. Together, we can work towards creating safer, more peaceful communities for all residents.

Action Requested:

Resolve to write to the Minister of State for Crime and Policing outlining the above and seeking a commitment to investigate strengthening the law.



Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 23 September, 2024, at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Present

Councillor A. Harris (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillors: G. Ali
A. Andrew
B. Bains
H. Bashir
M.A. Bird
C. Bott
P. Bott
R. Burley
J. Chapman
S.J. Cooper
M. Coulson
S.K. Ditta
S. Elson
K. Ferguson
M. Follows
N. Gandham
A. Garcha
P. Gill
F. Hassan
A.J. Hicken
A. Hussain
I. Hussain
K. Hussain
T. Jukes
P. Kaur
R. Larden
N. Latham
E. Lee
K. Margetts
R. Martin
R. K Mehmi
E. Morgan
K. Murphy
J. Murray
L. Nahal
S. Nasreen
A.A. Nawaz
A. Parkes
K. Pedley
G. Perry
L.J. Rattigan
E. Russell
S. Samra
K. Sears
G. Singh Sohal
P. Smith
C.A. Statham
M.A. Statham
C.D.D. Towe
M. Ward
V.J. Waters
J. Whitehouse
T. Wilson

35. Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Cheema, Flint, Gultasib, Harrison, and Rasab.

36. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July, 2024, a copy having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record.

37. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

38. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

Resolved

There were no items in private session.

39. **Mayor's announcements**

Retirement of Dave Nash

The Mayor referred to the retirement of Dave Nash, Corporate Building Assistant, who would be retiring on 30 September, 2024. Dave supported the work of Council as a Mace Bearer for many years, and also at Mayoral events such as Remembrance Sunday, mayor making, and church services at Saint Matthews. The Mayor thanked Dave Nash for over 40 years of service and Councillors Nawaz, Perry, Hicken, Bird, Ward, and P. Bott paid tribute.

Death of Stan Evans

The Mayor referred to the death of former Member, Stan Evans, who served as a member from 1963 to 1966 on Aldridge District Council and then on Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council from 1980 to 1990. Councillors Perry, Bird, Ward, and Nawaz paid tribute to former Councillor Stan Evans, following which it was **moved** by the Mayor, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That this Council have heard with deep regret of the death of former Councillor Stan Evans, a member from 1963 to 1966 on Aldridge District Council and then on Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council from 1980 to 1990 and places on record their appreciation of his services to the Borough and expresses its condolences to his family at this sad time.

40. **Petitions**

The following petitions were submitted:

(1) Councillor Nawaz – Petition calling for effective traffic calming measures in and around Union Street in St Matthews Ward.

(2) Councillor Martin – Traffic Calming Mouse Hill and Allens Lane, Pelsall

41. **Questions**

(a) From the public: None

(b) From members of the Council:

Councillor Smith

As a result of the new Labour Government’s announcement on the withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Allowance, worth up to £300 each year, for millions of pensioners, could the appropriate Portfolio holder share with me, this council and the public, the impact of this decision on the pensioners of our Borough by giving a ward by ward breakdown of the numbers of pensioners who will lose the Winter Fuel Allowance as a result of the Chancellor’s recent announcement?

Councillor Garcha gave the following response:

In September 2023, 45,992 households received Winter Fuel Payments, and of this, only 2705 pensioners are eligible for pension credit meaning around 36,000 households are set to lose out. This is an incredibly anxious time for our pensioners here in Walsall, with such little notice and the uncertainty about the winter ahead, particularly with the energy price cap set to rise by 10 per cent on 1 October. This will see the average energy bill increase by around £149. Whilst I don’t have a breakdown of pensioners per ward, I do have a breakdown of pensioners who are in receipt of council tax reduction but don’t receive pension credit.

Ward	Those not in receipt of Pension Credit
Aldridge Central & South	159
Aldridge North & Central	179
Bentley & Darlaston North	245
Birchills & Leamore	283
Blakenall	184
Bloxwich East	245

Bloxwich West	273
Browhills	211
Darlaston South	228
Paddock	89
Palfrey	187
Pelsall	168
Pheasey Park Farm	100
Pleck	209
Rushall Shelfield	189
Short Heath	189
St Mathews	149
Streetly	73
Willenhall South	164
Willenhall North	218
Total	3742

In total there are 3742 who are in receipt of council tax reduction, but are not in receipt of pension credit, and of those, only 1037 might be eligible for pension credit. This leaves a gap of around 2705 pensioners. This is an incredibly worrying time as these pensioners are some of the most vulnerable and deprived pensioners in our Borough. Whilst this poor decision by the Labour Government has left so many pensioners anxious and worried, this council will ensure we can maximise any opportunities that might ease the anxiety.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Given this shocking information that so many of our pensioners are going to be robbed of between £200-£300 a year. This is at a time when the energy cap from 1 October causes an increase in energy bills of 10 per cent which is about £150 average per household, that's about £14.50 per month. Given the fact that those who have not yet applied for pension credit and apparently there's 800,000 across the county are now too late to retain the Winter Fuel Payment for this winter because the qualifying week was 16 to 22 September which has now passed.

Given the fact that many pensioners have limited online competence and there's a formidable 15 plus page document to work through and a rather intrusive requirement to furnish details of earnings, benefits, pensions, savings, and investments; some residents may be reluctant to share with council officials that might be helping or staff at the hubs which might wish to help, you can understand that reluctance.

Given all that and the fact that there is local evidence from some of our local hubs that have been assisting, it can take many weeks for an application for pension credit to be considered, can you inform me what more the council can do to advise and encourage more pensioners to apply for pension credit.

Councillor Garcha gave the following response:

In terms of the council's campaign for uptake of pension credit, I think it is only right to highlight all the other areas of support that might be available for our pensioners over the winter.

So, the council's campaign to encourage uptake of pension credit will be starting imminently to allow time for pensioners to plan ahead for winter. The council will attempt to contact the 1037 residents identified to advise them of their potential eligibility for pension credit. This will take part in two stages, initially the pensioners identified will be contacted through the council's letter replacement service, so where the council holds a phone number or email, this will allow the council to track the engagement and to track whose opened the communication. If the council is unable to contact someone via this service or they fail to open the communication the council will then follow up by post. As part of this the council will outline the application process for pension credit which can be done online, over the phone, or by post.

There is also additional support available that might be useful for those pensioners who are affected, and I am sure you are aware, but the household support fund has been extended by a further 6 months and is something that I know the Leader lobbied the new Government to do. The council is still waiting guidance for this scheme but once we are aware we will be able to develop a draft plan for how to use the fund to better support our residents.

Additionally, Walsall Connected will also actively encourage the use of our benefits calculator to assess residents' income and check eligibility for additional benefits. The council will be revisiting training on 'Entitled to', to remind staff and volunteers of the tool when helping vulnerable residents. This may identify support such as Attendance Allowance or Carers Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for those who don't already receive it.

Across Walsall there are various activities and initiatives offered through the voluntary and community sector, and we owe them a great deal of gratitude for stepping in when its most needed to support vulnerable residents. This can include free coffee mornings, subsidised lunches and social and physical activity clubs – community organisations regularly open their doors to welcome residents into their warm and inclusive spaces. Walsall's Wellbeing Directory, easily accessible from the council's website, is kept up to date with what is available in the community. Through the Walsall Connected network we actively promote this information to residents. Customer Experience Centre staff are aware of the directory and encouraged to signpost residents to appropriate services and support.

Alongside the support offered by Walsall Council and our voluntary community sector, there are also external services that might be useful for pensioners during this difficult time and includes:-

UK Energy Support who offers grants for 60+ years old – one of the qualifying benefits is State Pension.

Warmer Home Grants who provides funds for home improvements to improve energy efficiency.

Green Dr project aims to delivery energy saving support and can assist with fuel debt.

South Staffs Water have an Assure tariff for customers needing extra support with finances.

Of course, all Members across the Chamber are encouraged to promote the pension credit uptake amongst their communities and when Members feel that there is a particular resident in need of additional support, please ask them to get in touch with the council.

Councillor Latham

Exposure to asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer or another fatal cancer called mesothelioma which is a cancer of the lining of the lungs. According to the all-party parliament group on Health and Safety (Asbestos in schools) It is estimated that 75% of Britian's state schools contain asbestos much of which is badly maintained, meaning that staff and pupils are exposed to this killer fibre.

Having researched this issue, it seems there is a lack of awareness across schools and in particular amongst staff in relation to asbestos in school and the role everyone should play in keeping themselves and others safe. We support the call for asbestos removal in schools but in the meantime, we urge the relevant cabinet member to ensure the authority is supporting and ensuring that schools are managing the risk effectively.

Under a FOI request to all Local Authorities in 2015 Walsall local authority reported that 71 schools and 2 short stay units contained asbestos. Can you provide us with an update on this and the outcome of any recent audits or inspections the authority may have carried out in relation to management plans for schools where the LA is the employer? Can you also advise if any such audits or information is gathered for other schools in the borough, where there may not have a legal obligation but one would certainly hope, some kind of moral obligation and duty of care to the authority's children and young people?

This matter was bought to our attention by a former Walsall school teacher who dedicated her career to teaching in the borough and has recently been

diagnosed with Mesothelioma and wants to raise awareness of the issue to prevent more people from going on to develop the disease unnecessarily. I commend them for bringing this to our attention at a time of extreme personal difficulty.

Councillor Kaur gave the following response:

The council takes the appropriate and safe management of asbestos and compliance with statutory requirements in buildings very seriously and has established processes to ensure that the potential risks are managed. The responsibility for the management of asbestos in schools lies with the Governing Body and Head Teacher. Where the council is the employer (community and voluntary controlled schools), the council retains a liability under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Whilst the responsibility for the management of risks arising from asbestos lies with the school, the council provides schools with School Safety Guides which include advice on the management of asbestos and school caretakers and other staff are trained in asbestos awareness.

The Health and Safety team undertakes health and safety audits of all community and voluntary controlled schools on a two-yearly basis and these audits include asbestos record keeping and management approach. These audits are also extended to those non-maintained schools which buy in the council's Health and Safety service.

Following audits, schools are provided with an action plan setting out any issues identified that need to be addressed. The school is asked to return the action plan with the actions to be taken to address the issues, who has been assigned the task and the target date for completion.

All schools have had asbestos surveys, and the council has prepared and issued an Asbestos Management Plan template to them. Schools are encouraged to complete the template plan to create a register of all asbestos containing materials within the property and the requirements for the monitoring of these materials.

There are currently 63 maintained schools (8 nursery, 50 primary, 5 special) and 2 short stay units within Walsall. For the purposes of asbestos management, any property constructed before the year 2000 is assumed to have some asbestos containing materials. One maintained school was constructed since 2000. All high-risk asbestos identified in schools has been either removed or encapsulated/sealed/isolated to ensure that it can be safely managed within the building. From the 2-yearly health and safety audits undertaken in maintained schools, it is known that all schools are informed about Asbestos Management Plans and are encouraged to update theirs using the latest template.

There are currently 10 academy/voluntary aided/foundation schools which buy in the council's health and safety services and benefit from health and safety audits and support as provided to maintained schools. The remaining schools, where the council is not the employer, have their own arrangements for complying with their legal obligations under asbestos management legislation.

The Council does challenge schools where they need to manage the correct levels of asbestos, and they are not following the correct process or if Councillors have an issue with a particular school, you can follow the cause for concern process.

Councillor Russell

The Mayor announced that as Councillor Flint was not in attendance, a response would be provided in writing to Councillor Russell's question relating to safety arrangements for cycling and those walking in the arboretum and cycling lanes across the town centre.

Councillor Ward

Could the portfolio holder please confirm how much council tax was uncollected for the year 2023-2024? How many times bailiffs were instructed in 2023-2024 and at what financial cost?

Councillor Garcha gave the following response:

I can confirm that a total of £165.8m council tax was billed for the financial period of 2023/24. A total of £12.8m remained unpaid from this as of 31st March 2024, but this had reduced to £9.8m as at 31th August 2024.

Presently there are 2,946 accounts with enforcement agents for the 2023/24 council tax year.

A total of 9,780 liability orders were passed to enforcement agents in 2023/24. It should be noted that this number is does not exclusively relate to liability orders linked to charges raised in 2023/24. I can also confirm, there is no cost to the council for using enforcement agents.

All attempts are made to work with residents that are having difficulties in paying their council tax to avoid the need for any enforcement action. Messages are tailored to the financial circumstances to the residents to encourage engagement and the best outcome for both sides. The service works closely with advice agencies both locally and nationally and the council is a registered referrer to the Money Adviser Network, this allows residents in financial difficulties to get immediate access to free money and debt advise.

The council aims to strike a fair balance between recovering council tax owed whilst being compassionate to those residents who are facing financial difficulties. Of course, we will see the impact of the removal of the Winter Fuel Payment and what the autumn budget has in store.

Councillor Smith

Given that the most recent “Blakenall Ward Profile 2024” though admittedly based on statistics from 2021 to 2023, reveals some alarming findings, such as that:

- Blakenall is the most deprived ward within Walsall, with every neighbourhood falling within the 20% most deprived areas in England, facing challenges across domains, particularly: • Adult Skills Education and Training • Income • Children and Young People--- and ranking within decile 1: the 10% most deprived areas in England for those specific domains.
- Almost half of all households (45%) in the Blakenall ward are families with limited resources who budget to make ends meet... mainly low earning families with limited educational qualifications, multiple children, poor quality housing and little disposable income. This group is most vulnerable to economic shocks like fuel/energy/cost of living inflation.
- 70.2% of households by working age and before pensionable age, in the Blakenall ward claim Council tax reduction, this being the 2nd highest of Walsall’s 20 wards and higher than the Borough average of 64.1%.
- The general level of development for children (GLD) living in the Blakenall ward is 7% lower than the Borough average and 13% lower than the national average.
- In terms of recorded crime, Blakenall ward ranks 5th highest in the Borough.... considerably higher than the Borough average.
- Blakenall ward ranks 4th highest in the Borough for recorded ASB.

Given all of the above, which are specifically mentioned in the “Blakenall Ward Profile 2024” and given also that my subjective recollection of being on this Council for much of the time, over the last 42 years, is that hardly any change of significance has taken place in the Borough's wards’ “pecking order” of deprivation and all that this entails, despite refreshed Reports on a regular basis during this time... a time when we have had both Labour led Governments and Conservative led Governments, can the Leader of the Council inform me, this Council and the citizens of Blakenall ward and beyond:

- a) To what extent will the Ward Profiles influence/shape/determine, future policy of this Council especially in respect of tackling the inequalities that have continued to beset particular neighbourhoods within wards for many decades and still do,
- b) How will measures to address such inequalities and levels of relative

socio-economic deprivation be assessed as to their success or otherwise and how will this be made clear to all Councillors,

- c) Whether you agree with me that the fairly regular regurgitation and refreshing of similar previous Reports that have been telling us much the same story for half a century is a basis for but no substitute for identifiable, measurable and successful action, and;
- d) To what extent, do you think that the Council's success in tackling socio-economic inequality and deprivation locally is very much restricted by, dependent on and determined by, the macro-economic and social policies of central government?

Councillor Perry gave the following response:

Of course it's influenced by national policy, because essentially that is what funds us and that's where those political choices lie in terms of the money we have coming in and what we are able to redistribute across the borough depends on the needs of our services.

A few weeks ago, we set out our Council Plan for 2022-2025, and a part of that sets out our vision to reduce inequalities and to ensure that all potential is maximised.

When I was elected to be the Leader of this council in June, I set out my 5 point plan to:

- Transform Walsall for Tomorrow
- Maintain Financial Stability
- Put People First
- Lead with Empathy
- And to Celebrate Success

There are no quick wins and as a council we face considerable challenges, none greater than tackling deprivation.

How we go about improving the lives of all of our residents will be based on evidence and insight.

Walsall's 20 wards vary significantly from each other. Analysing their characteristics helps us to understand what the needs of residents might be, and the services they might require, and given the recent census, it's important that those profiles were updated, considering movements in people but also jobs, skills, and access to local services. Our Business Insights team produces a 'Ward Profile' for each ward. These bring together a wide variety of data from multiple sources to deliver a snapshot of each ward's profile – including demographic, deprivation, economic, health, education, and crime information.

These profiles, combined with the developing performance framework in the new Council Plan, will allow us to make data the basis for understanding the needs of our communities and the impact of initiatives.

I could go on in terms of some of the things that we are doing in terms of transforming the borough, The Walsall Town Centre Masterplan, the SPARK development just off the M6 motorway creating the 21st century logistics and manufacturing hub offering global and local occupiers 620,000 sq ft of high-specification employment floor space, creating new jobs and employment sources.

There is something awry with tackling deprivation in this borough and in certain areas. An area like Blakenall has not, not received significant investment over the years, it has, and I think I quoted recently in this council, £70m in different funds and grants. That's no criticism of people who worked under those, for example New Deal being an example. Overall, that envelope of investment is significant compared to other parts of Walsall. I know just a portion of that in my ward would solve many things that my residents speak to me about on a week-to-week basis. So Bakenall has had significant investment but there's something not quite right about the impact that has had at a local level. I am seeking to understand more about why it has not had that desired impact. When you look at crime and antisocial behaviour, you look at the standards of conditions and housing in the ward and the role of the whole community. We need to ask ourselves why it hasn't delivered the impact that it ought to have done and why those insights were not used to better effect.

That's what we're starting to grapple with when we look at the work we are doing around crime, community safety, getting under the radar, but also providing those opportunities for young people. We won't change the narrative of what has happened already, because some of that is ingrained in those areas. What we can do is change the narrative going forward in terms of what is required to engage not just with Blakenall but other areas that are significantly deprived compared to everywhere else.

A final point I wish to make and that is a credit to the voluntary and community sector in that footprint who work alongside statutory agencies in challenging difficult circumstances day in day out. They are putting to better effect things like the household support fund and the work of our community associations to support those vulnerable young people, families, individuals and older residents as well. It's a great credit to them that they work alongside us and others in delivering that vital support when it's required. It is a key platform of my 5-point plan and I will do what I can to reduce those inequalities where they exist.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Given that Blakenall is the most socio-economically deprived ward in the borough, as outlined in the plan, would Councillor Perry agree with me that the withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Allowance for so many of our local pensioners will add to the problems and probably make the deprivation even worse.

Councillor Perry gave the following response:

Yes, and we will come on to that.

Councillor Ward was unable to receive a response to the following question as the time permitted for questions had expired. The Mayor advised that a response would be provided in writing.

The draft 2025-29 Council Plan commits to:

“Explore how we as a Council can drive social value keeping Walsall money in Walsall and supporting community wealth building activities”.

Social Value and Community Wealth Building are mentioned in the recent Commercial Strategy report considered by the Cabinet.

Given that the 2022 Walsall Council Peer Review recommended it had much to learn from other councils about keeping the pound in Walsall and achieving Social Value the Labour Group is concerned that could just be a tick box exercise and that residents of Walsall will not experience the benefits of CWB.

Against this background the Labour Group is asking for:

1. A breakdown of social value required for and achieved by Council service departments, including contracts connected with the Borough's £1.5 billion regeneration programmes, since the Council last reported on this.
2. Could you confirm how much in financial terms of the Council's contracts go to business/organisations go to those based in Walsall?
3. Will the Council commit to a more robust corporate social value strategy which includes staff and member training?
4. Whilst achieving social value is an integral part, community wealth building goes much wider. Harnessing not only what a council spends but it's public sector partners, amounting to millions of pounds, procuring services in a council area. What actions will this Council take to ensure officers and members are informed about this approach and how it can be achieved in Walsall?

42. **Committee Appointment – Standards**

It was **moved** by Councillor Ward, seconded by Councillor Jukes and:

Resolved

That Councillor Burley be appointed as Vice-Chair of Standards Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

43. **Black Country Consortium Limited Appointment**

It was **moved** by Councillor Andrew, seconded by Councillor M. Statham and:

Resolved

That Councillor Perry be appointed to the Black Country Consortium Limited for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

44. **Appointments Panel**

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Andrew and:

Resolved

That Council:-

1. Dissolve Personnel Committee;
2. Establish an Appointments Panel and approved the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
3. Approved an amendment to the Constitution to reflect the changes set out in 1 and 2 above.
4. Appoint the following members to the Appointments Panel:-

Councillors G. Perry, A. Andrew, P. Gill, A. Hicken, M. Ward, T. Jukes and A. Nawaz
5. Appoint the Leader of the Council (G. Perry) as Chair and Associate Leader (A. Andrew) as Vice Chair.
6. Establish 2 Employment Appeal Sub Committees and agrees the membership including Chairs and Vice Chairs detailed below:-

Employment Appeals Sub-Committee A	Employment Appeals Sub-Committee B
Chair: Councillor Gill Vice-Chair: Councillor A. Hussain	Chair: Councillor Whitehouse Vice-Chair: Councillor Martin
Conservative x 4 seats: Councillors Cooper, A. Hussain, Gill and one vacancy.	Conservative x 4 seats: Councillors I. Hussain, Martin, Rasab and Whitehouse.

Labour x 2 seats: Councillors Russell and Margetts.	Labour x 2 seats: Councillors T. Jukes and Coulson.
Independent Group x 1 seat: Councillor Nawaz.	Independent Group x 1 seat: Councillor Gultasib.

7. Notes that Councillor T. Jukes replaced Councillor S. Hussain on Employment Appeals Committee B.

45. To confirm the following Recommendations of **Cabinet**:

(a) Treasury management Annual Report

The report to Cabinet held on 17 July, 2024 was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor M. Statham, seconded by Councillor Perry and:

Resolved

That in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2021)), the Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators (Appendix A) be noted.

(b) Walsall Youth Justice Plan

The report to Cabinet held on 11 September, 2024 was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson, seconded by Councillor Hicken and:

Resolved

That Walsall's Youth Justice annual strategic plan be approved.

46. **Portfolio Holder Briefings**

Adult Social Care

Councillor Pedley gave a presentation.

He asked that his gratitude be officially noted for the Director of Adult Social Care and their team for their exceptional work.

Members asked questions in relation to the presentation which were responded to by Councillor Pedley.

Upon the conclusion of the item and with the consent of Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7.37 p.m.

The meeting re-convened at 7.49 p.m.

47. **Notice of Motion – Winter Fuel Payments**

The following notice of motion was **moved** by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor K. Hussain that:-

Given that the Winter Fuel Payments, have been made available to everyone above State Pension age in the UK (most recently, this included those born on or before 24 September 1957) – which will no longer be the case from this winter as a result of a statement recently made by the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, and that,

Until this winter approximately 11.4million pensioners were entitled to a winter fuel payment of between £100 and £300 per year but as from this year only about 1.5 million pensioners on pension credit and other benefits will be eligible to receive this allowance, thus taking the allowance away from approximately 10 million pensioners nationally and thousands of pensioners locally, and given further that

The Energy Price Cap is likely to rise by 10% this October and stay high across the winter, leaving most energy bills nearly double those before the energy crisis at levels unaffordable for millions,

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council calls on the Government to review, in time for the forthcoming winter, its recently announced plans to scrap the winter fuel allowance for all pensioners other than for those who receive Pension credit and other benefits, which will deprive over 10 million senior citizens, nationally, and potentially thousands of pensioners in the Borough of Walsall, of between £100 and £300 per year.

The following Amendment was moved by Councillor Perry (additional wording in bold), and seconded by Councillor Andrew that:-

Given that the Winter Fuel Payments, have been made available to everyone above State Pension age in the UK (most recently, this included those born on or before 24 September 1957) – which will no longer be the case from this winter as a result of a statement recently made by the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, and that,

Until this winter approximately 11.4million pensioners were entitled to a winter fuel payment of between £100 and £300 per year but as from this year only about 1.5 million pensioners on pension credit and other benefits will be eligible to receive this allowance, thus taking the allowance away from approximately 10 million pensioners nationally and thousands of pensioners locally, and given further that

the Energy Price Cap is likely to rise by 10% this October and stay high across the winter, leaving most energy bills nearly double those before the energy crisis at levels unaffordable for millions.

In Walsall alone, 45,992 households received winter fuel payments up until September 2023. However, under the new means-tested rules, approximately 36,000 pensioners over the age of 65 are set to lose out, with only an estimated 2,705 of those eligible for Pension Credit. The abrupt nature of this change, with just three months' notice, leaves little time for those affected to find alternative support, exacerbating the already dire situation.

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council calls on the Government to review, in time for the forthcoming winter, its recently announced plans to scrap the winter fuel allowance for all pensioners other than for those who receive Pension credit and other benefits, which will deprive over 10 million senior citizens, nationally, and potentially thousands of pensioners in the Borough of Walsall, of between £100 and £300 per year.

To write to all four Walsall MPs requesting they support this call and request from the Government a full and open impact assessment which takes into account the inevitable pressure this will place on local services including health and housing and not one produced in the eleventh hour which purely focusses on those losing out.

At this juncture, Councillor Andrew **moved**, and it was duly seconded, that Standing Order 9a be suspended in order to enable the remaining business to be transacted. The meeting consented.

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

For the amendment - 48	Against the amendment - 0	Abstained - 1
Cllr: G. Ali “ A. Andrew “ H. Bashir “ M.A. Bird “ C. Bott “ P. Bott “ R. Burley “ J. Chapman “ M. Coulson “ S. Elson “ K. Ferguson “ M. Follows “ A. Garcha “ P. Gill		Cllr: A. Harris

“	F. Hassan		
“	A.J. Hicken		
“	A. Hussain		
“	I. Hussain		
“	K. Hussain		
“	T. Jukes		
“	P. Kaur		
“	R. Larden		
“	N. Latham		
“	E. Lee		
“	K. Margetts		
“	R. Martin		
“	R. K Mehmi		
“	E. Morgan		
“	K. Murphy		
“	J. Murray		
“	L. Nahal		
“	S. Nasreen		
“	A.A. Nawaz		
“	A. Parkes		
“	K. Pedley		
“	G. Perry		
“	L.J. Rattigan		
“	E. Russell		
“	K. Sears		
“	G. Singh Sohal		
“	P. Smith		
“	C.A. Statham		
“	M.A. Statham		
“	C.D.D. Towe		
“	M. Ward		
“	V.J. Waters		
“	J. Whitehouse		
“	T. Wilson		

There being no further amendments, the Mayor put the **substantive motion** to the vote which was declared **carried**, the voting being recorded as follows:

For the amendment - 48	Against the amendment - 0	Abstained - 1
Cllr: G. Ali “ A. Andrew “ H. Bashir “ M.A. Bird “ C. Bott “ P. Bott “ R. Burley “ J. Chapman “ M. Coulson “ S. Elson		Cllr: A. Harris

“	K. Ferguson		
“	M. Follows		
“	A. Garcha		
“	P. Gill		
“	F. Hassan		
“	A.J. Hicken		
“	A. Hussain		
“	I. Hussain		
“	K. Hussain		
“	T. Jukes		
“	P. Kaur		
“	R. Larden		
“	N. Latham		
“	E. Lee		
“	K. Margetts		
“	R. Martin		
“	R. K Mehmi		
“	E. Morgan		
“	K. Murphy		
“	J. Murray		
“	L. Nahal		
“	S. Nasreen		
“	A.A. Nawaz		
“	A. Parkes		
“	K. Pedley		
“	G. Perry		
“	L.J. Rattigan		
“	E. Russell		
“	K. Sears		
“	G. Singh Sohal		
“	P. Smith		
“	C.A. Statham		
“	M.A. Statham		
“	C.D.D. Towe		
“	M. Ward		
“	V.J. Waters		
“	J. Whitehouse		
“	T. Wilson		

Resolved:

Given that the Winter Fuel Payments, have been made available to everyone above State Pension age in the UK (most recently, this included those born on or before 24 September 1957) – which will no longer be the case from this winter as a result of a statement recently made by the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, and that,

Until this winter approximately 11.4million pensioners were entitled to a winter fuel payment of between £100 and £300 per year but as from this year only about 1.5 million pensioners on pension credit and other benefits will be eligible

to receive this allowance, thus taking the allowance away from approximately 10 million pensioners nationally and thousands of pensioners locally, and given further that

the Energy Price Cap is likely to rise by 10% this October and stay high across the winter, leaving most energy bills nearly double those before the energy crisis at levels unaffordable for millions.

In Walsall alone, 45,992 households received winter fuel payments up until September 2023. However, under the new means-tested rules, approximately 36,000 pensioners over the age of 65 are set to lose out, with only an estimated 2,705 of those eligible for Pension Credit. The abrupt nature of this change, with just three months' notice, leaves little time for those affected to find alternative support, exacerbating the already dire situation.

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council calls on the Government to review, in time for the forthcoming winter, its recently announced plans to scrap the winter fuel allowance for all pensioners other than for those who receive Pension credit and other benefits, which will deprive over 10 million senior citizens, nationally, and potentially thousands of pensioners in the Borough of Walsall, of between £100 and £300 per year.

To write to all four Walsall MPs requesting they support this call and request from the Government a full and open impact assessment which takes into account the inevitable pressure this will place on local services including health and housing and not one produced in the eleventh hour which purely focusses on those losing out.

48. **Notice of Motion – Funding Children’s Hospice Care for Life-Limited and Life-Threatened Children in Walsall**

The following notice of motion was **moved** by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Gill that:-

Acorns Children’s Hospice provides essential care and support for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions, as well as their families, in Walsall. This care includes respite, end-of-life care, and bereavement support, among other critical services. However, Acorns is facing significant financial challenges due to rising costs and stagnant local NHS funding, which has not increased since 2021/22. Currently, Acorns relies on fundraising, donations, and profits from charity shops for two-thirds of its income.

Without sustainable funding, Acorns may be forced to reduce services or turn away children for the first time in its 36-year history, which would have a devastating impact on local families who depend on their support.

Motion:

This Council notes that:

1. Acorns Children's Hospice is a vital resource for children with life-limiting conditions and their families in our constituency.
2. The Children's Hospice Grant, a ringfenced NHS fund, is crucial for the continued operation of children's hospices like Acorns, enabling them to provide essential services.
3. There has been no increase in local NHS funding for children's hospices since 2021/22, despite rising operational costs, which has led to increased reliance on external fundraising efforts.
4. The current Children's Hospice Grant is only guaranteed until 2024/25, leaving future funding uncertain.

This Council believes that:

1. The UK government must ensure equitable and sustainable long-term funding for children's hospices, including Acorns, to safeguard the essential services they provide to local families.
2. Maintaining and protecting the Children's Hospice Grant as a centrally distributed, ringfenced grant is critical to ensuring that children's hospices can continue to support the health and well-being of life-limited and life-threatened children.

This Council resolves to:

1. Support the campaign led by Acorns Children's Hospice, calling on the UK government to:
 - Protect and maintain the Children's Hospice Grant as a directly distributed, ringfenced grant.
 - Guarantee the Children's Hospice Grant for at least five years.
 - Increase the Grant annually by the rate of inflation.
2. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, urging the government to commit to the above actions to secure the future of Acorns and other children's hospices.
3. Engage with local MPs and stakeholders to advocate for the continuation and enhancement of funding for children's hospices.
4. Raise awareness within our community about the importance of Acorns Children's Hospice and encourage local support and engagement with their fundraising efforts.

Action:

The Council requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and local MPs, expressing this Council's support for the campaign led by Acorns Children's Hospice, and urging them to take immediate steps to secure sustainable funding for these vital services.

Resolved

Acorns Children's Hospice provides essential care and support for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions, as well as their families, in Walsall. This care includes respite, end-of-life care, and bereavement support, among other critical services. However, Acorns is facing significant financial challenges due to rising costs and stagnant local NHS funding, which has not increased since 2021/22. Currently, Acorns relies on fundraising, donations, and profits from charity shops for two-thirds of its income.

Without sustainable funding, Acorns may be forced to reduce services or turn away children for the first time in its 36-year history, which would have a devastating impact on local families who depend on their support.

Motion:

This Council notes that:

5. Acorns Children's Hospice is a vital resource for children with life-limiting conditions and their families in our constituency.
6. The Children's Hospice Grant, a ringfenced NHS fund, is crucial for the continued operation of children's hospices like Acorns, enabling them to provide essential services.
7. There has been no increase in local NHS funding for children's hospices since 2021/22, despite rising operational costs, which has led to increased reliance on external fundraising efforts.
8. The current Children's Hospice Grant is only guaranteed until 2024/25, leaving future funding uncertain.

This Council believes that:

3. The UK government must ensure equitable and sustainable long-term funding for children's hospices, including Acorns, to safeguard the essential services they provide to local families.
4. Maintaining and protecting the Children's Hospice Grant as a centrally distributed, ringfenced grant is critical to ensuring that children's hospices can continue to support the health and well-being of life-limited and life-threatened children.

This Council resolves to:

5. Support the campaign led by Acorns Children's Hospice, calling on the UK government to:
 - Protect and maintain the Children's Hospice Grant as a directly distributed, ringfenced grant.
 - Guarantee the Children's Hospice Grant for at least five years.
 - Increase the Grant annually by the rate of inflation.
6. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, urging the government to commit to the above actions to secure the future of Acorns and other children's hospices.
7. Engage with local MPs and stakeholders to advocate for the continuation and enhancement of funding for children's hospices.
8. Raise awareness within our community about the importance of Acorns Children's Hospice and encourage local support and engagement with their fundraising efforts.

Action:

The Council requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and local MPs, expressing this Council's support for the campaign led by Acorns Children's Hospice, and urging them to take immediate steps to secure sustainable funding for these vital services.

The meeting terminated at 9.23 p.m.

Mayor:

Date:

25 September 2024

Annual Report of the Audit Committee to Council for 2023/24

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: All

Purpose: Approve

1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide Council with oversight of the work of the Audit Committee during 2023/24 in accordance with good practice.
- 1.2 To provide assurance that the Audit Committee continues to provide robust and effective challenge to the council's governance arrangements and internal control framework.
- 1.3 To confirm that the Audit Committee complies with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022 and provide the outcome of the Audit Committee's review of its effectiveness.
- 1.4 To provide an opportunity for Council members to provide feedback or query the work of the Committee.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report presents the proposed Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023/24 and seeks approval for the Chair of Audit Committee for that year to present this report to full Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Audit Committee review and provide feedback on the proposed Annual Report.
- 3.2 That, subject to any changes arising from recommendation 3.1, the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023/24 be approved and that the Chair of the Audit Committee present the report to the next meeting of Council.

4. Report detail – know

- 4.1 The Council is not obliged by law to appoint an Audit Committee; however, this has been done in line with good governance practice and guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police).

- 4.2 The report complies with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022 (the “Statement”) on Audit Committees which sets out the key principles that CIPFA recommends for Audit Committees operating in local government. In that the Committee should *“report annually on how the Committee has complied with the Statement, discharged its responsibilities, and include an assessment of its performance.”*
- 4.3 The draft annual report is included as appendix 1 and outlines the responsibilities of Audit Committee and summarises the work completed in 2023/24.

Control Environment

- 4.4 Audit Committee’s work is a major aspect of the council's corporate governance and internal control framework. Its wide-ranging remit includes providing independent assurance on the adequacy of the internal control environment. It provides an independent review of governance, risk management, financial reporting and other governance processes, as well as overseeing the work of internal and external audit. This provides assurance to local taxpayers and other stakeholders on the adequacy of the council's arrangements in these regards.

Assurance of Controls

- 4.5 The production of an Annual Report to Council on Audit Committee’s work strengthens assurance reporting and governance. This is further strengthened by the Chair of the Audit Committee reporting to Council on the activities of the Committee.

Strategic Risks

- 4.6 The role of the Audit Committee in reviewing the adequacy of internal controls is an existing control in the management of Strategic Risk 12 *“Significant Failure of Governance – a breakdown in governance to merit formal external intervention either from auditors or central government”*.

Annual Statements

- 4.7 This report is to present the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24 prior to it being presented at the next meeting of Council.

5. Financial information

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6. Reducing Inequalities

- 6.1 Effective governance arrangements ensure a focus on delivering of Council Plan objectives, a key driver of which is reducing inequalities.

7. Decide

- 7.1 The Committee can approve the Annual Report as set out or make suggestions for improvement.

8. Respond

- 8.1 Following consideration of this report, it will be presented to Council at the next available meeting.

9. Review

- 9.1 Any feedback received from Council members will be utilised in further Annual Reports going forward.

Background papers –

Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022

CIPFA Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police – The Audit Committee Member in a Local Authority

Guiding the Audit Committee - Supplement to Audit Committee Member in a Local Authority guidance (CIPFA)

Audit Committee agendas, minutes and reports for the municipal year 2023/24.

Report Author:

Helen Dudson

Assurance Manager

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**Walsall Council
Annual Report of the Audit
Committee
Municipal Year 2023/24**

1. Introduction from the Chair of the Audit Committee

This is the tenth Annual Report of the Audit Committee and relates to its work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

The Council, like all other local authorities and public services continued to face significant challenges, notably the impact of inflationary and cost of living pressures and the increasing demand for services from residents and businesses, both of which in turn put pressure on the financial position of the Council.

In such difficult times the need for strong organisational governance is of paramount importance, as has been recognised from the independent investigations into financially challenged local authorities.

It is therefore both pleasing and important that the Council continues to support the Audit Committee, recognising the significance of the Committee's role and the positive contribution it makes to the Council's overall governance and accountability arrangements for the benefit of the residents of the borough, other stakeholders, and indeed the Council itself.

It is also pleasing that Group Leaders have again acted upon Audit Committee's request for consistency in membership through municipal years and there has been minimal change to the Committee membership in the past 2 years. In the Committee's view, this will enable it to provide more consistent and effective support to the Council to discharge its governance responsibilities.

Section 4 of this report provides a summary of the work undertaken during 2023/24, and I hope that this will reassure Council as to the

comprehensive level of oversight of governance arrangements provided by the Audit Committee.

The latest guidance issued by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) places increased importance on this Annual Report to Council, including on how the Committee has discharged its responsibilities; section 4 of this report provides a summary of the work undertaken during 2023/24, and I hope that this will reassure Council as to the comprehensive level of oversight of governance arrangements provided by the Audit Committee.

The CIPFA guidance also recommends that Audit Committees undertake an assessment of their performance. Consequently, the Committee undertook a review of its effectiveness using CIPFA's best practice checklist over the Summer of 2023, asking for and welcoming input into this from senior officers, External and Internal Audit.

The outcome was that the Committee is substantially compliant with CIPFA guidance and is considered effective overall, with some minor improvements identified. An action plan has been established and progress reported to the Committee; this is set out at Appendix C for completeness.

Looking ahead to 2024/25 an extensive programme of work has been approved for the Committee which has been assessed and updated against the revised CIPFA guidance.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members and officers for their invaluable contributions to and support of the work of the Audit Committee in the past year.

**Mr Andy Green,
Independent Chair of the Audit
Committee 2023/24**

25 September 2024

1. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference within which the Committee operated in the 2023/24 municipal year are detailed at the following link:

[Audit Committee Role and Remit 2023/24](#)

The terms of reference were subject to a fundamental review and update following publication of updated Best Practice guidance as issued by CIPFA.

[Congruent to the important principle of transparency in governance,](#) Audit Committee meetings are open to members of the public and continued to be streamed live. It has been encouraging to see the public continue to access the meetings via the streaming service that has been available in recent years.

2. Member and Officer Attendance

The Audit Committee met 5 times during 2023/24.

Membership of the Audit Committee during 2023/24 and their attendance is detailed at Appendix A.

A number of Audit Committee members also sat on various other Council Committees and bodies.

Members considered whether there was a conflict of interest by sitting on both a Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee. Members felt that the simple matter of exempting themselves from any item under discussion, which had or was being considered by a Scrutiny Committee of which they were a member, was sufficient to manage any conflict.

Members are mindful of their responsibilities in terms of declaring an interest if they believe they may have a conflict of interest for any agenda item. Although Audit Committee is not a decision making body, members have been open and transparent, and there have been a small number of occasions where an interest has been declared.

The Audit Committee is intended to be “a-political” in nature and members are expected to be independent in mind and thought when present. This important concept, as recognised by the Council is further strengthened by the appointment of Independent Members on the Audit Committee. Following the standing down of one Independent Member in 2023, there are now two vacancies on the Committee and recruitment is currently underway with a view to further strengthening the knowledge and skill set available to support governance oversight.

Senior officers from the Council also attended the Audit Committee as required, including the Chief Executive, the S151 Officer and his deputies, the Monitoring Officer, Executive Directors and Directors/Heads of Service. Both the Head of Internal Audit to the Council and appointed External Auditor also attend each meeting and in accordance with good practice and may be required to meet the Committee without other officers being present.

3. Training and Effectiveness

Members of the Audit Committee are provided with training appropriate to the role of the Committee. During the year training was made available in matters such as the function of the Audit Committee, the nature of the internal control environment; risk management and assurance framework; the role of Internal and External Audit; accounting policies and financial statements; and counter fraud. Induction sessions were

also provided for new members of the Committee. Members of the Committee are aware they can seek further training and support from officers that support the work of the committee.

Following the assessment of its own effectiveness against CIPFA’s best practice guidance an action plan was developed to deliver improvement actions identified. Progress against this action plan has been positive and will continue to be monitored by the Committee to ensure it fully complies with CIPFA guidance.

4. The Work of the Audit Committee during 2023/24

In fulfilling its terms of reference, a summary of the business conducted by the Audit Committee during 2023/24 is detailed at Appendix B, and covers the following broad themes:

- Internal Audit;
- External Audit (and Inspection);
- Financial Reporting;
- Risk Management;
- Corporate Governance.

These are discussed in more detail below:

4.1 Internal Audit

The work of Internal Audit remains the prime source of assurance for the Committee.

The Committee received the Head of Internal Audit Opinion for 2023/24 in June 2024, which states:

“On the basis of our audit work, our opinion on the framework of governance, risk management, and control is Moderate in its overall adequacy and effectiveness. Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of

governance, risk management and control.”

This opinion is consistent with that provided in 2022/23. The report went further and added:

“Whilst certain weaknesses and exceptions were highlighted by our audit work, none of our reviews concluded with unsatisfactory assurance. Of the 35 reviews for which an assurance opinion was provided, 14 provided substantial assurance, 16 moderate assurance and 5 limited assurance. We have raised 6 high priority recommendations, 77 medium priority recommendations and 46 low priority recommendations during the period. These matters have been discussed with management, to whom we have made several recommendations. All of these have been, or are in the process of being addressed, as detailed in our individual reports.

Our Follow up work confirmed that good progress has been made on implementing outstanding high priority recommendations. These will continue to be followed up as part of the follow up programme for 2024/25”.

During 2023/24, the outcome of all Internal Audit reports was provided to the Audit Committee. Those reports that were afforded a limited assurance opinion were submitted to Audit Committee for consideration.

The Committee also received reports on the performance of the Internal Audit function which indicated that the service performed well against the majority of its performance measures; notably all key financial systems and high priority audits were completed within the plan.

The Audit Committee also endorsed Internal Audit’s work plan for 2024/25.

4.2 External Audit / Inspection

The main responsibilities of the External Auditor are to obtain and report on whether the council's financial statements have been properly prepared and are free from material misstatement, and whether the council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Grant Thornton LLP, the Council's appointed Auditor provided an unqualified opinion in their Audit Findings Report on the 2022/23 accounts and reported that:

- The financial statements gave a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2023 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- The financial information in the Financial Report was consistent with the financial statements.

The Committee also received and reviewed progress against recommendations of the External Auditor contained in its Annual Audit Findings Report; the Committee's oversight of the council's governance arrangements to support the External Auditor's annual risk assessment for financial reporting.

In addition, Audit Committee and subsequently Council received the third Annual Audit Report (2022/23) on the council's value for money arrangements in relation to:

- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- Governance; and
- Financial sustainability.

No significant weaknesses were identified by the Auditor. Furthermore, no improvement recommendations were made in relation to Governance and a total of ten recommendations were made across the remaining two criteria for the

council to consider. Progress in dealing with these recommendations are reported to the Audit Committee.

4.3 Financial Reporting

During 2023/24, the Committee scrutinised the 2022/23 statement of accounts and also received reports on accounting policies adopted by the Council.

The Committee also received an update in relation to the Overview of Local Audit and Transparency of Local Authority Reporting (Redmond Review) and noted that the Council had addressed all the recommendations that were assigned to local authorities.

4.4 Risk management

Audit Committee received reports on risk management and reviewed the Strategic Risk Register at its meetings in September 2023, November 2023 and February 2024. Additionally, during the year, the committee has considered five specific strategic risks with relevant accountable officers attending Committee meetings to provide reassurance that actions were being taken to manage the identified risks. The five risks selected by the committee are detailed below:

- In September 2023 the committee considered strategic risk 4b concerning increased demand for services to vulnerable people.
- Strategic risk 2 relating to the Council's Proud Improvement activity was considered at the meeting in November 2023.
- At the February 2024 meeting, the Committee sought assurances for strategic risk 8 (risk of cyber security attacks) and strategic risk 9 (threats of failing to comply with legal obligations for GDPR).

- The final meeting for the committee for the municipal year 2023/24 was in April 2024 and the strategic risk 12 (failure of governance to merit formal external intervention) was reviewed.

Where appropriate feedback from the committee is shared with the Corporate Management Team for their consideration as part of their regular reviews of the Strategic Risk Register.

4.5 Corporate governance

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and review of effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control for the 2022/23 financial year was presented to the Audit Committee by the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) and Leader of the Council and concluded with reference to the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit, and the work of the Audit Committee that the effectiveness of the system of internal control was adequate overall.

Assuring the adequacy of the Council's counter fraud arrangements is an important duty of the Committee and reports on progress in relation to the Counter Fraud Response Plan were considered in November 2023 and April 2024. A review of the existing Counter Fraud Policy and Whistleblowing is also in train.

The Committee sought assurance as to the arrangements put in place for the implementation of the Elections Act 2022 and Voter ID and a further update has been requested for 2024/25 in relation to the effectiveness of implementation.

The Committee was also consulted on the Council's update to its Local Code of Governance and provided feedback and suggestions for improvement, which were incorporated into a revised Code which has now been published.

A Committee decision tracking report was again utilised in 2023/24 to track all of its decisions for which a follow-up is required. This has enabled Committee members to monitor any outstanding actions and seek updates at future meetings where applicable.

5. Conclusion

The Audit Committee is an important element of a strong governance system and as can be seen has undertaken a comprehensive work programme in furtherance of its duties and objective to provide assurance of the satisfactory operation of the control system at the Council.

The Committee will continue to focus on fulfilling its role and responsibilities in supporting the council to demonstrate strong corporate governance.



REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

18 SEPTEMBER 2024

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982,
SCHEDULE 4, PARAGRAPH 2**

**STREET TRADING REVIEW – CHANGE OF DESIGNATION TO CONSENT
STREETS**

1.0 Summary of Report

- 1.1 This report is to inform members of the committee that it is the intention of the licensing service to change the designations of the streets in the borough to consent streets following consultation.
- 1.2 Currently, streets in Walsall are designated as prohibited streets, licensed streets and consent streets. Appendix 1 is a list of the streets under the different designations.
- 1.3 Consultation took place between 22/07/2024 - 30/08/2024
- 1.4 An email was sent to all Councillors and existing Street traders on 22/07/2024 with a link to the online consultation and the information page relating to the consultation.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That, having regard to the consultation responses set out at 3.7 of this report and attached as appendix 6 the licensing and safety committee recommends Council as follows:

That the Council, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it by virtue of Section 3 and schedule 4 paragraph 2 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, authorises the designation of all streets in the controlled borough of Walsall as consent streets with effect from 1 December 2024; and that the prescribed statutory notice of intention be published accordingly.

- 2) To note that the relevant changes to permits for existing licence holders will be made at the renewal stage in April 2025.

3.0 Background information

- 3.1 An email was sent to the Chief Officer of Police and Highway Authority on the 22/07/2024 informing them of the consultation. A copy of the Notice is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.2 An email was sent to all Councillors and existing Street traders on the 22/07/2024 with a link to the online consultation and the information page relating to the consultation.
- 3.3 A copy of the notice was advertised in the Express and Star on the 22 July 2024 as per 3(a) Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. A copy of the advertisement can be found attached as Appendix 3.
- 3.3 To help with getting the consultation out to as many people as possible, Licensing liaised with Print & Design to create 50 posters to be displayed in local authority buildings and libraries. 5,000 leaflets were also made and left at these premises for members of the public. A further 160 waterproof (external) signs were created and displayed on all the streets that are currently designated as prohibited. The signs were put up on the prohibited streets (Appendix 1) by the 26/07/2024. All the posters and signs were created with a QR code which takes members of the public straight to the consultation page. A copy of the posters, and notices are attached as Appendix 4.
- 3.4 A list of the buildings where posters were displayed, and leaflets left can be found at Appendix 5.
- 3.5 Text messages with a link to the consultation was sent out to all the existing licence/consent holders in August 2024. This was followed up by a visit to all street traders (with a fixed location) on the 21 August 2024 handing out leaflets and ensuring that they have had site of the consultation and been able to respond to the consultation.
- 3.6 The consultation ended on the 30 August 2024. A total of 66 respondents completed the consultation.
- 3.7 Below is a brief summary of the consultation responses:

Licensed streets to be designated as consent streets:

Agreed – 37

Disagree – 21

Don't Know – 12

Prohibited streets to be redesignated as consent streets:

Agree – 33

Disagree – 26

Don't know – 7

Should the council attract and encourage safe, legal, compliant and high quality streets traders:

Agree – 49

Disagree – 16

Don't know – 1

A copy of the full consultation report can be found attached as Appendix 6. The consultation also include comments from members of the public that also needs to be taken into consideration.

- 3.8 Currently 4 Local Authorities within the West Midlands have all their streets designated as consent streets. One Local Authority within West Midlands have consent and licensed streets and 2 (Walsall Council being one) have Prohibited, Licensed and Consents streets in the borough.
- 3.9 Following the consultation and upon the decision made by members, the concerns raised by members of the public will be reviewed and the service will be looking to amend the council's conditions and policy.

4.0 Resource Considerations

- 4.1 **Financial:** The Licensing Service is fully funded through the income it receives from the licensing of street trading. The Service sets the fees for such applications based on relevant guidance. There is not a huge turnover of these applications, however the change to consent may bring more enquiries. The change of designation must be advertised in a newspaper and cost will be met from current fees.
- 4.2 **Legal:** The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 enables a District Council to control street trading by resolution to “designate any street in their district as a prohibited, licensed street or a consent street”.
- 4.3 Schedule 4 Paragraph 2 specifies several steps to designate or re-designate a street as prohibited, licensed or consent:
- Publish a prescribed notice of intention to pass a resolution designating a particular street in a local newspaper for two weeks. The notice must contain a draft of the resolution to be passed.
 - Serve a copy on the chief officer of police and any responsible highway Authority, or, where relevant the British Railway Board and some other Statutory bodies.
 - At least 28 days must elapse before the resolution can be passed Confirming the proposed designation.
 - The Council shall consider representations before resolution is passed
- 4.4 The intention of the recommendation therefore is to enable progress whilst providing a degree of protection for existing traders. It is

proposed that for existing licence holders that their licenses are not converted into street trading consents and that the current licence holders will be required to apply for a consent prior to the expiry on their licence. In the absence of some exceptional circumstances and/or a change of policy by either the Council or the Licensing Committee that this will remain the case. For the avoidance of doubt this does not in any way bind the Council in perpetuity to the existing scheme. Any challenge of the Licensing Authority’s Statement of Principles is by way of Judicial Review.

- 4.5 The main difference between licence and consent is the level of control that the council may exert. A summary of the differences is tabled below:

Licence	Consent
1. District council obliged to grant a licence unless the application ought to be refused on one or more of the grounds specified in the Act.	District council under no duty to grant a street trading consent and need not specify statutory grounds for refusal.
2. District council may only revoke or refuse to renew a licence on the statutory grounds.	No statutory limitation on a district council’s power to revoke or refuse to renew a street trading consent.
3. Statutory grounds of appeal against the refusal, revocation or variation of a principal term of a street trading licence are contained in the Act.	There is no similar right of appeal against the refusal to grant or renew a consent or against the revocation or variation of a consent.

- 4.6 Designating all streets in the borough as consent streets will encourage entrepreneurs to come and test their trade in the borough and then won’t be too onerous and would be more appealing due to the cost involved.
- 4.7 Covid has had a big impact on the borough with businesses shutting down, empty shops, street traders not able to continue financially.
- 4.8 Having prohibited streets in the borough restricts the options available to businesses to set up their trade. The current designation of streets took place upon the implementation of the act and is now out of date.
- 4.9 The licensing authority has received numerous enquiries from members of the public looking to set up trading in Walsall but have been unsuccessful as the Street is prohibited or the cost to set up with a licence is too much for them.
- 4.10 The licensing authority have spoken to the Highways department who are consulted on each application. Therefore, as a statutory responsible authority under the act, if Highways and West Midlands Police are consulted on each application, it would make sense to designate all streets in the borough to a consent street.

- 5.3 **Staffing issues:** None arising from this report.
- 6.0 Citizen Impact**
- 6.1 None arising from this report
- 7.0 Community Safety**
- 7.1 None arising from this report
- 8.0 Environmental Impact**
- 8.1 Nothing arising from this report.
- 9.0 Performance and Risk Management Issues**
- 9.1 Nothing arising from this report.
- 10.0 Equality Implications**
- 10.1 An Equality Impact assessment is not required.
- 11.0 Consultation**
- 11.1 Paragraph 3.7 of the report and Appendix 6 sets out a summary of the consultation responses.
- 12.0 Associated Papers**
- 12.1 Appendix 1- List of current street designation
Appendix 2 - Copy of Notice to Chief Officer of Police and Highways
Appendix 3 - Copy of the Newspaper Advert
Appendix 4 - Copy of Posters, leaflets and signs
Appendix 5 - List of Council premises and Libraries
Appendix 6 - Copy of Consultation Response
- 13.0 Contact Officer**
- 13.1 Muhammed Sayful Alom (Licensing Team Leader) –
sayful.alom@walsall.gov.uk

Licensing of Street Traders

That in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it by virtue of Section 3 and schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1982, the Council hereby makes the following designation, such designation to come into force on the 30th January 1984, and that the director of legal Administrative services be authorised to make the necessary statutory advertisements:-

(Please note any streets not listed are classed as Consent Streets)

Aldridge Central and South

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Street
Aldridge Road (A454)	Bakers Lane
Aldridge Shopping Precinct & Walkways	Birmingham Road (Part)
Anchor Road	Churchill Road
Barr Common (B4154)	Gretton Crescent
Beacon Hill (B4151)	High Ridge
Bosty Lane (B4154)	High Street
High Street By Pass (A454)	Leighswood Road
Little Aston Road (A454)	Myatt Avenue
Longwood Road (B4154)	Myatt Way
Northgate (B4152)	Paddock Lane
Sutton Road (Part) (B4151)	Portland Road
Walsall Road (A454)	Rookery Lane
	Tynings Lane
	Walsall Wood Road
	Whetstone Lane (Seven acres to Churchill Road)

Aldridge North and Walsall Wood

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Brownhills Road (B4152)	Adams Road
High Street, Walsall Wood (A461)	Bradbury close
Lichfield Road (A461)	Chester Road
Lindon Road (B4152)	Lazy Hill Road (Walsall Wood Road to Copyhall Grove)
Northgate (B4152)	Mob Lane
Salter's Road (B4152)	Paul's Coppice
	St Mark's Road
	Streets Corner Shopping Precinct
	Walsall Wood Road

Bentley and Darlaston North

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Blockall (A462)	Bills Street
Church Street (A41)	Churchill Road (Cunningham's Road to Cairn Drive)
High Street	Cramp Hill
King Street	Crescent Road
Midland Road (A462)	Cunningham Road
St Lawrence Way (A462)	Dale End
The Green (Part) (A462)	New Street
Walsall Road (A4038)	Queen Elizabeth Avenue (Cunningham Road to Churchill Road)
Wolverhampton Road West (A454)	Rectory Avenue
	Slater Street
	Victoria Road
	Waverley Road

Blakenall

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Street
Bloxwich Road (B4210)	Beeches Road (Elm Road to Bloxwich Road)
	Blakenall Lane (Chapel Street to Walker Road)
	Broadstone Avenue (Forest Avenue to Warner Place)
	Darhmouth Avenue (Jubilee Close to Junction of Coalpool Lane)
	Harden Road (Walker Road to Junction Goldsmith Road and Oakwood Road)
	Hollomeadow Avenue (Guild Avenue to Broadstone Avenue)
	Blakenall Lane (Chapel Street to Walker Road)

Bloxwich East

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
High Street	Buxton Road
Lichfield Road (A4124)	Church Street
Stafford Road (A34)	Field Road
	Harrison Street (High Street to Revival Street)
	Park Road
	Pinfold
	Victoria Avenue (high Street to Field Road)

Birchills and Leamore

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Bloxwich Road (B4210)	Birchills Street
Green Lane (Part) (A34)	Edison Road (Priestley Road to Arkwright Road)
Wolverhampton Road (A454)	Forest Lane
	Leamore Lane
	Old Birchills
	Upper Green Lane

Bloxwich West

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Bell Lane (A4124)	Central Drive
Broad Lane (B4210)	Cresswell Crescent (Pershore Road to Sneyd Lane)
Elmore Green Road (B4210)	Elmore Row
High Street	Nursery Road
Sandbank (A4210)	Reeves Street
Sneyd Lane (A4124)	Sneyd Hall Road (Central Drive to Croxdene Avenue)
Somerfield Road (A34)	Station Street
Stafford Road (A34)	

Brownhills

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Bricklin Street	Castle Street
Chase Road	Deakin Avenue
Church Road (Junction with High Street/to junction with Short Street)	Howdles Lane (knaves castle place to Watling Street)
High Street	Kennet Close
Lichfield Road (B4155)	New Road
Ogley Hay Road (B5011)	Pier Street
Pelsall Road (A4124)	Severn Road
Ravenscourt Shopping Precinct adjoining car park and entrance	Shannon Drive
Watling Street (A5)	Short Street
Silver Court Gardens	Silver Court Gardens
	Silver Street
	Tamworth Close
	The Parade

Darlaston South

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Darlaston Road (A462)	Glyn Avenue
Great Bridge Road (A4098)	Junction of Peacock Road & Hall Street
High Street, Moxley (A41)	Roberts Parade, Burns Road
Holyhead Road (A41)	Wolverhampton Street (Dorset Road to Pinfold Street)
Moxley Road (A4038)	
Pinfold Street (A4038)	
Walsall Road (A4038)	

Paddock

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Birmingham Road (Part) (A34)	Gillity Avenue (Sutton Road to Gillity Close)
Broadway (A4148)	Junction of Wood End Road to Sutton Road
Broadway North (A4148)	Liskeard Road
Sutton Road (Part) (A4151)	Woodside Road/Woodside Close
	The Crescent (Broadway North to King George V1 Avenue)

Palfrey

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Bescot Road (Part) (A461)	Bescot Crescent
Broadway (A4148)	Broadway West (Bescot Crescent to Wallows Lane)
Corporation Street	Delves Green Road (Delves Crescent to Botany Road)
Wednesbury Road	Hawes Close
West Bromwich Road (A4031)	Milton Street (Whitmore Street to Earl Street)
West Bromwich Street	Walstead Road (Hawthorne Road to West Bromwich Road)
Weston Street	

Pelsall

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Lichfield Road (A4124)	Allens Lane (Commercial Road to Walsall Road)
Norton Road (B4154)	Brewers Terrace
Walsall Road (B4154)	Chapel Street
Wolverhampton Road (A4124)	Church Road
	Green Lane
	Highfield Road
	High Street
	Mob Lane
	Spring Lane
	Wood Lane (Trevor Road to Wolverhampton Road)

Pheseey

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Beacon Road (B4154)	Appledore Road
Queslett Road (A4041)	Collingwood Drive
Sutton Road (Part) (B4151)	Hillingford Avenue
	Moreton Avenue
	Old Hall Lane
	The Crescent
	Wimperis Way

Pleck

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Bescot Road (A4148)	Bridgeman Street (from Pleck Road to Long Street)
Darlaston Road (A4038)	
Old Pleck Road (A4148)	
Pleck Road (A4148)	
Wallows Lane (A4148)	
Wednesbury Road	
Wolverhampton Road (A454)	
Wolverhampton Street	

Rushall/Sheffield

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Aldridge Road (A454)	Autumn Lane
Arboretum Road	Autumn Drive
Bosty Lane (B4154)	Barns Lane
Broadway North (A4148)	Bickley Road
Daw End Lane (B4154)	Bridge Road
Lichfield Road (A461)	Chesnut Drive
Lichfield Street (A461)	Dean Road
Littleton Street East (A4148)	Four Crosses Crescent
Mellish Road (A454)	Four Crosses Road
Pelsall Lane (B4154)	King George Crescent
	Kings Road
	Mob Lane
	Queens Road (Kings Road to Linley Road)
	Rushall Square
	Spring Lane
	Spring Road
	Station Road
	Sycamore Road
	Winterley Lane

Short Heath

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Clarkes Lane (A462)	Lucknow Road (Spring Lane to Hayes Lane)
Coltham Road (Part) (A462)	Pool Hayes Lane (Ravencroft Road to Lucknow Road)
High Road (A462)	Stroud Avenue (Birchtree Hollow to Furzebank Way)
Sandbeds Road (A462)	Wood Lane (Henley Road to Oaken Drive)
Straight Road (A462)	
Wesley Road (A462)	

St Matthews

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Ablewell Street	Birchills Street
Birmingham Road (from Birmingham Street to Junction with Broadway)	Caldmore Road (from Vicarage Place to Mount Street)
Broadway (A4148)	Forest Lane
Broadway North (A4148)	Old Birchills
Green Lane (A34) (from Blue Lane West to Green Lane Bridge)	Stafford Street (Link Road North to Bloxwich Road)
Lichfield Street (from Broadway to Lichfield Road)	
Springhill Road (B4210)	
West Bromwich Street	

Streetly

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Beacon Hill (B4151)	Blackwood Road
Beacon Road (B4154)	Boundary Road
Foley Road East (B4151)	Briar Avenue
Foley Road West (B4151)	Bridle Lane
Queslett Road (A4041)	Chester Road
Thornhill Road (B4138)	Egerton Road
	Ferndale Road
	Hardwick Road
	Hawthorn Road
	Hundred Acre Road
	Manor Road
	Valentine Close/Goodwood Drive

Willenhall North

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Cannock Road (A462)	Nottingham Drive
Essington Road (A462)	The Square New Invention
Lichfield Road (A4124)	Wood Lane (Henley Road to Oaken Drive)
Sneyd Lane (A4124)	
Wesley Road (A462)	

Willenhall South

Prohibited Streets	Licensed Streets
Bilston Lane (A454)	Albion Road
Bilston Road (A463)	Albion Street
Bilston Street (B4157)	Bloxwich Road South
Clarkes Lane (A462)	Bow Street
Crescent Road (A454)	Cheapside
Cross Street	Dimminsdale
Fibbersley (B4484)	Durham Avenue (Lincoln Avenue to Clarkes Lane)
Field Street (Part) (B4484)	Farmbridge Close
Market Place	Farmbridge Road
New Road (B4464)	Gipsy Lane
Owen Road (A462)	Hall Street
Pinson Road (B4484)	John Street
Rose Hill (B4157)	Lowre Lichfield Street
Shepwell Green (A454)	Monmore Island
Somerford Place (B4464)	St Annes Road
Stafford Street	Upper Lichfield Street
Temple Bar (B4484)	Waterglade Lane
The Keyway (A454)	
Union Street (Part)	
Walsall Road (B4464)	
Walsall Street (B4464)	
Wednesfield Road (B4484)	
Wellington Place (B4484)	
Wolverhampton Road West (A454)	
Wolverhampton Street (Part)	

ST. MATTHEWS

The St. Matthews Ward incorporates the Walsall Town Centre Which is defined as follows:-

Blue Lane West from the junction of Wolverhampton Street to Green Lane;

The future line of the Ring Road from the Blue Lane/Green Lane junction to Littleton Street West/Wisemore junction;

Littleton Street West from Wisemore to Hatherton Street;

Littleton Street East from Hatherton Street to Lichfield Street;

The line of the Church Hill Ring Road from the Littleton Street East/Lichfield Street junction to the Ward Street/Walhouse Road junction;

Lower Rushall Street from Walhouse Road to Ablewell Street;

Upper Rushall Street from Ablewell Street to High Street;

The line of the Church Hill Ring Road adjoining Peal Street and Dudley Street from High Street to Caldmore Road;

Vicarage Place from Caldmore Road to Bradford Street;

A line from the Vicarage Place/ Bradford Street junction to Long Street/Bridgeman Street junction;

Navigation Street and Upper Navigation Street from Bridgman Street to the Canal Arm;

A line along the Canal Arm and through the old Public Works Depot to the Wolverhampton Street/Blue Lane West junction.

A map of the Town Centre area is appended hereto.

The Council has designated all streets in the Town Centre as licensed streets.

WALSALL COUNCIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982, SCHEDULE 4 PARAGRAPH 2

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO PASS A RESOLUTION ON STREET TRADING AND THE DESIGNATION OF ALL STREETS IN THE BOROUGH AS CONSENT STREET

Notice is hereby given that the Council's Licensing and safety committee intend to pass a Resolution under Para 2 Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (subject to consultation responses) that all the Street (as defined by s329 of the Highways Act 1980) in the Borough of Walsall be designated as consent streets.

The terms of the draft resolution are as follows:

That all 'streets' as defined in schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 i.e all road, footways, service areas (as defined by section 329 of the Highways Act 1980), beaches or other areas to which the public have access without payment in the controlled borough of Walsall be designated as consent streets allowing trade at specific locations and specific times of the day, subject to a full application and consultation process..

Representations relating to the proposed resolution may be made in writing to the council: The Licensing Unit, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP or via email to Streettradingreview2023@walsall.gov.uk. Representations must be received no later than:
30 August 2024

David Elrington, Head of Community Safety and Enforcement, Walsall Council, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, WS1 1TP.

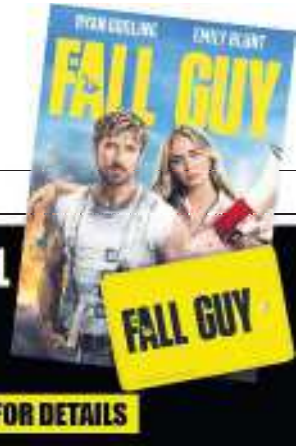
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A young runner loving the bubbles

Bubbles are no trouble!

This year's Bubble Rush event in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice was 'fantastic', according to organisers.

About 1,000 people joined in the fun in Walsall Arboretum running through mountains of bubbles and raising vital funds at the same time.

Kate Vousden, events manager at Acorns, said: "What a fantastic day! It was incredible to see the mountains of bubbles and the smiles."

● More photos - Page 6

Sainsbury's closed as IT outage still causing problems

Sainsbury's was forced to close its St Marks superstore in Wolverhampton yesterday.

The closure was blamed on "technical difficulties" as several businesses still struggled to cope with global Microsoft problems which crippled companies worldwide on Friday.

A post on Facebook said: "We are currently closed to customers due to technical difficulties, so please don't make a wasted journey."

There were reports the tills were down at the Raglan Street store despite working on Saturday. The petrol station adjoining the superstore was also closed for business.

Customer Rebekah Katy said: "The tills were down and the engineer had been there since 10.30am. We asked when they would be open and they said they did not know."

Meanwhile the Gunmakers Arms pub in Wolverhampton told customers yesterday "cash only again today, sorry for the inconvenience".

A flawed update rolled out by cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike knocked many businesses around the world offline on Friday.

TRIBUTE TO MAN KILLED IN CRASH

West Midlands Police are appealing for witnesses after a 91-year-old man was knocked down and later died.

Armando Mazzone, 91, a much-loved great-great-grandfather, was taken to hospital with serious injuries after he was struck by a car on Penn Road, Wolverhampton at around 9.20am on Thursday, July 11.

Mr Mazzone died in hospital days later. His family are being supported by specialist police officers.

Following the incident, the driver of the vehicle remained at the scene to assist police with their investigation. Now police want to speak to

DANIEL WALTON

daniel.walton@mnamedia.co.uk

witnesses or anyone with information.

Meanwhile Mr Mazzone's family paid tribute to a man 'whose family meant everything to him'.

A statement from his family released through police read: "The best grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather, a role he wore with pride.

"His family meant everything to him and he was the heart of our family. He was fiercely independent and had a real zest for life.

"He planned for a future he never got to live out. Even at 91 he still had more years left in him.

"But he was so cruelly taken from us. He fought in hospital for four days with his family at his bedside, surrounded by love.

"His passing has left a massive hole in our hearts and our lives."

Anyone who has information on the crash is asked to contact West Midlands Police via the 101 number, or alternatively via the Live Chat service on the force website.

Sergeant Julie Lyman, from the Serious Collision Investigation Unit, said: "Our thoughts are with Mr Mazzone's family at this awful time. We are doing all we can to identify the exact circumstances. We would like to hear from people who were driving in the area and have dashcam footage."



Armando Mazzone, who was 91

OLYMPICS 2024

EIGHT-PAGE GUIDE TO LOCAL ATHLETES HEADING TO THE GAMES - INSIDE



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Public Notices



WALSALL COUNCIL
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982, SCHEDULE 4 PARAGRAPH 2
NOTICE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION TO RE-DESIGNATE THE STREETS IN THE BOROUGH TO CONSENT STREETS

Notice is hereby given that the Walsall Council, in accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 is undertaking a public consultation on the designation of the streets in the borough to consent streets. As per the legislation, it is a requirement for this notice to include the proposed resolution, should the council decide to proceed with the designation. Below is the draft resolution:

"In pursuance of the powers conferred upon the council by virtue of schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) act 1982, the council hereby makes the decision that all the streets within the borough of Walsall including any road, footway, or other area to which the public have access without payment to be designated as consent streets and shall come in to force on the 01/11/2024"

The consultation will end on the **30/08/2024**. The consultation is to designate all the streets in the borough to Consent streets. Currently streets in the borough are designated as prohibited streets, licensed streets and consent streets.

You can view details of the consultation at:
<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/street-trading>
 Representations to the consultation can be made completing the survey on the link above or by emailing:
Streettradingreview2023@walsall.gov.uk

David Elrington, Head of Community Safety and Enforcement, Walsall Council, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, WS1 1TP.
 Date: 22/07/2024

Public Notices

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1)
DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
(TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF MEARS COPPICE, QUARRY BANK)
ORDER 2024

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council intends to make an Order, the effects of which will be the temporary closure of Mears Coppice, at the bridge over the River Stour. The purpose of the restrictions is to safely facilitate bridge deck replacement works on or near the affected road. The Order will come into force on Monday 5th August 2024 and the works are anticipated to be completed on Friday 27th September 2024. The Order may remain in force for a period of up to 18 months, or until the works are completed, whichever is the earlier.

Access to properties on Mears Coppice will be via Lawnsdown Road. Access to frontages and for emergency services will be maintained where safe to do so.

Any queries on the temporary restrictions imposed, should be made on (01384) 815453.

To request this document in large print easy read formats, or an alternative language, call 0300-555-2345

The Council House, Priory Road, Dudley, DY1 1HF
 DATE OF ISSUE: 22 July 2024

10 PERSONAL

Personal

WIDOWER 64
 Wishes to meet lady with view to permanent relationship, interests include cinema, eating out and trips out.
 Brierley Hill area.
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 Express and Star,
 8th Floor Mander House,
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Personal

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PUBLIC NOTICE
THE WOLVERHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL (LEA ROAD/JEFFCOCK ROAD) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2024

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Wolverhampton City Council propose to make an Order under Section 14(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as substituted by the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991, prohibiting vehicles from proceeding on the following stretches of road:


- Lea Road closed in both directions between its junctions with Lyndhurst Road and Copthorne Road.
- Lea Road closed one way, in a south-western direction, between its junction with Copthorne Road/Jeffcock Road and its junction with Stubbs Road. Vehicular Diversion Route: Stubbs Road, Penn Road and vice versa.
- Jeffcock Road to operate one way in a north-western direction for its entire length, from its junction with Lea Road to its junction with Bradmore Road. Vehicular Diversion Route: Bradmore Road and Birches Barn Road.

The Order may operate for a maximum period of eighteen months, but it is anticipated that the works will be undertaken from 31 July 2024 until 2 August 2024.

The Order is required to facilitate remedial carriageway reinstatement works by Severn Trent Water.

Dated 22 July 2024

David Pattison
 Chief Operating Officer
 and Solicitor to the Council
 Civic Centre, St Peter's Square
 Wolverhampton WV1 1RG



PUBLIC NOTICE
DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972 - SECTION 123(2A)
AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PLANNING AND LAND ACT, 1980

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council proposes to dispose of land forming part of Public Open Space, namely:

LAND ADJACENT TO 258 BROMLEY LANE, KINGSWINFORD
 Containing approximately 0.010046 hectares or thereabouts.

A plan showing the boundaries of the land referred to may be inspected at the main noticeboard in the main foyer area of Dudley Council Plus, 259 Castle Street, Dudley, DY1 1LQ between 10.00a.m. and 3.00p.m. Monday to Friday. Objections to the proposed disposal should be sent to me at the under mentioned address, quoting reference: 27094/FMSF3/VJ, by no later than **MONDAY 12th AUGUST 2024**.

H. MARTIN DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENTERPRISE
 REGENERATION AND ENTERPRISE, 4 EDNAM ROAD, DUDLEY
 WEST MIDLANDS, DY1 1HL

Consultation: Proposed Changes To Where Street Trading Can Take Place In The Borough

Walsall Council is considering changing licensing rules so that all streets in the borough of Walsall could be used for street trading purposes. If approved, it would mean that street traders would be able to apply for a licence to trade on any street (subject to certain conditions, consultation and restrictions).

The council believes that this change would:

- help enhance the vitality and diversity of the local economy
- provide more choice and convenience for shoppers
- support small businesses and entrepreneurs
- make the policy clearer and easier to administer.

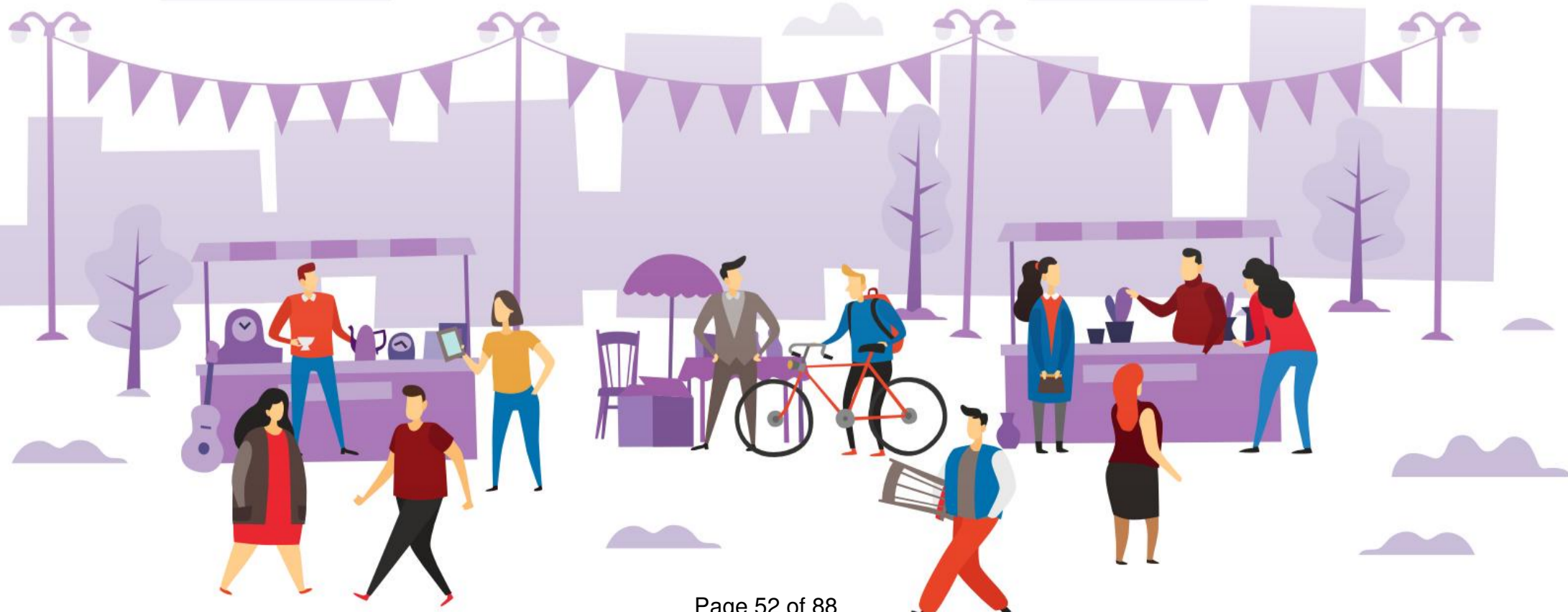
Find Out More And Have Your Say

You can read more about street trading and the proposed change on our webpage, where you can also have your say: online1.snapsurveys.com/street-trading



Your feedback will be used alongside other information to inform the final decision in September 2024. If you require any further information, need it in an alternative format or need support to respond, please email streettradingreview@walsall.gov.uk

The consultation closes on 30 August 2024.



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Walsall Council

WALSALL COUNCIL
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS
PROVISIONS) ACT 1982, SCHEDULE 4
PARAGRAPH 2

NOTICE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION TO RE-DESIGNATE
THE STREETS IN THE BOROUGH TO CONSENT STREETS

Notice is hereby given that the Walsall Council, in accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 is undertaking a public consultation on the designation of the streets in the borough to consent streets. As per the legislation, it is a requirement for this notice to include the new resolution should the council decide to proceed with the designation. Below is the draft resolution:

“In pursuance of the powers conferred upon the council by virtue of schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) act 1982, the council hereby makes the decision that all the streets within the borough of Walsall including any road, footway, or other area to which the public have access without payment to be designated as consent streets and shall come in to force on the 01/11/2024”

The consultation will end on 30/08/2024. The consultation is to designate all the streets in the borough to Consent streets. Currently streets in the borough are designated as prohibited streets, licensed streets and consent streets.



You can view details of the consultation here:
online1.snapsurveys.com/street-trading

Representations to the consultation can be made completing the survey on the link above or by emailing: streettradingreview2023@walsall.gov.uk.

David Elrington
Head of Community Safety and Enforcement,
Walsall Council, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, WS1 1TP.

Date: 22/07/2024

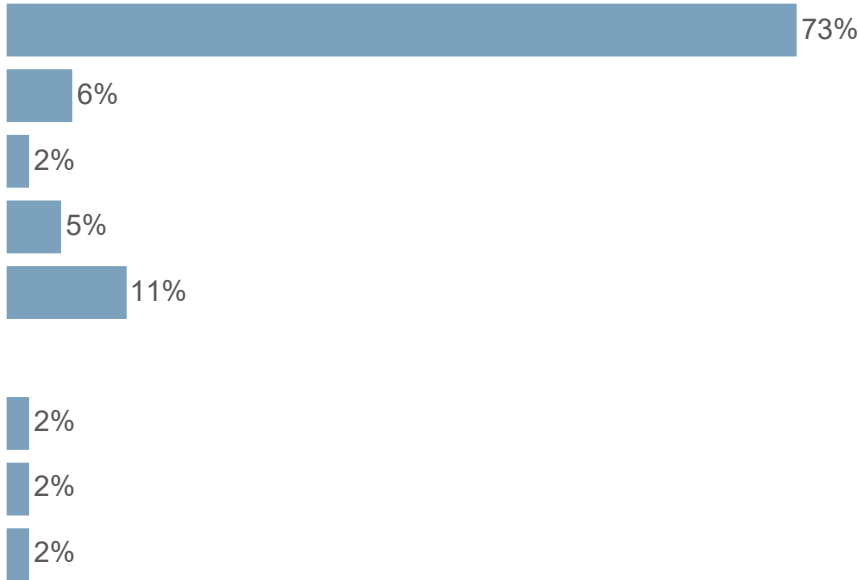
Libraries - Community Hubs
Aldridge Community Library, Rookery Lane, Aldridge WS9 8NP
Bloxwich Community Library, High Street, Bloxwich WS3 2DA
Brownhills Community Library, Park View Centre, Chester Road North, Brownhills, WS8 7JB
Darlaston Community Library, 1 King Street, Darlaston WS10 8DE
Lichfield Street Hub (Walsall Central Library and Archives), Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TR
Streetly Community Library, Blackwood Road, Streetly B74 3PL
Willenhall Community Library, Walsall Street, Willenhall WV13 2EX
Aaina Community Hub, Bath Road, Caldmore, Walsall, WS1 3BS
Birchills Neighbourhood Community Hub, Sons of Rest, Talbot House, Walsall WS2 8SP
YMCA Black Country Group, Small Street, Walsall, WS1 3PR
Bloxwich Community Partnership, The Stan Ball Centre, Abbots St, Walsall, WS3 3AZ
Brownhills Community Association, Brownhills Community Centre, Pelsall Road, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 7JS
The Collingwood Centre, Collingwood Dr, Birmingham B43 7NF
Frank F. Harrison, The Hive Community Hub, 28 The Square, Lichfield Road, Walsall, WV12 5EA
Frank F. Harrison, Beechdale Longlife Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Walsall, WS2 7DY
Manor Farm Community Association, King George Crescent, Rushall, Walsall, WS4 1EU
The MindKind Projects, The MindKind WellBeing Centre, 10 Proffitt St, Walsall WS2 8AP
Moxley Peoples Centre Charity, 3 Queen Street, Moxley, Wednesbury, WS10 8TA
Nash Dom CIC, Sun Street, Walsall, WS1 4AL
Old Hall People's Partnership, Wing Close, Bentley, Walsall, WS2 0LS
Palace Play, Shop, Eat - Blakenall, Blakenall Row, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 1LW
Pelsall Community Association, Station Rd, Pelsall, Walsall WS3 4BQ
The Refugee and Migrant Centre, 41-45 Bridge Street, Walsall, WS1 1JQ
Ryecroft Community Hub, 28 New Forest Rd, Walsall, WS3 1TR
Streetly Sports and Community Association, Foley Rd E, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, B74 3HR
Walsall Black Sisters Collective, Black Womens Centre, 17 Wednesbury Road, Walsall, WS1 3RU
Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, Manor Hospital, Moat Rd, Walsall, WS2 9PS
Willenhall CHART, 19 Gomer St, Willenhall, WV13 2NS
Walsall Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1

Final Summary report - Taxi Licensing_All respondents 2023

Street trading public 2024

This report was generated on 04/09/24. Overall 84 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

Are you responding as...?



Please provide the name of the responsible authority, organisation or group you represent.

- Love walsall
- Walsall Eyes
- Markets Service

As a resident or business owner in the borough of Walsall, to help us better understand the results of the survey, please state your home or business / trading postcode.

- WS1 [redacted]
- WS2 [redacted]
- Ws1 [redacted]
- Ws3 [redacted]
- Ws9 [redacted]
- WS3 [redacted]
- WS5
- WS3 [redacted]
- WS4 [redacted]
- Ws4 [redacted]
- Ws3 [redacted]

Street trading public 2024

As a resident or business owner in the borough of Walsall, to help us better understand the results of the survey, please state your home or business / trading postcode.

WS8 [redacted]

WS8 [redacted]

Ws1 [redacted]

Ws3 [redacted]

Ws1 [redacted]

WS4 [redacted]

Ws3

Ws3

WS9 [redacted]

WS3 [redacted]

Ws2 [redacted]

ws3 [redacted]

Ws8 [redacted]

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WS4 [redacted]

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B744 [redacted]

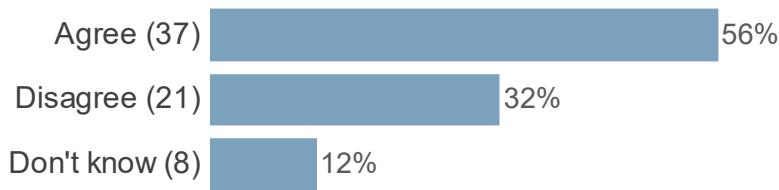
Ringside Refreshments,Unit 1, Spring Cottage Ind' Est' Neachells Lane, Willenhall WV13 3RG

Before answering this survey, were you aware that Walsall Council is responsible for issuing, ensuring compliance and enforcement of street trading permissions in the borough?



Street trading public 2024

Do you agree or disagree that streets currently designated as 'licensed streets' should be redesignated 'consent streets'?



Why do you say this?

- Illegal car traders are not stopped in the Paddock/StMatthews constituencies

- There are so many street traders already. You can get approached half a dozen times in Park St alone. More licencing, not less.

- Improves opportunities for potential traders.

- Untidy, will encourage more illegal street trading making it difficult to police, regulate and ensure licensed. It already intrudes on public pathways creating difficulty for those with disabilities/wheelchairs/pushchairs, mobility issues, etc., to navigate easily, particularly for those with loss of sight

- Licensed streets provide clarity, greater accessibility and stability by having a fixed site in the street. The option to redesignate licensed streets as consent streets poses a risk of streets being more crowded as traders can choose where to operate. Additionally a licence is a more robust and powerful way of authorisation than simply consent. I fear that the option of consent rather than a licence would allow more rogue traders to operate.

- Several shops in Park Street have set out stalls outside their shop fronts, selling low quality goods. It makes the street look cluttered and shabby and puts me off shopping there.

- This is not really what Walsall needs as any road within the Borough you could give your consent for a shop stall or whatever. In terms of Diversity this is not really the case as most of the shops are for Vapes Barbers take away shops of mainly other cultures that exclude some people from using them.

- More responsive to views of public assuming decisions include consultation stage

- I would need to know which streets

- Allows more trade into Walsall and more verity

- It would be better for the town centre and simplify the system

- To tighten up control of how trading takes place

- Need less regulation and complication

Why do you say this?

Walsall Eyes is a charity representing people with visual impairments living in and around Walsall. Our members experience varying levels of sight loss, from total blindness to partial vision. Many use additional mobility aids such as long canes, symbol canes, and guide dogs. Our understanding of the changes, although the documentation is not entirely clear, is that licensed streets involve traders at fixed locations who may or may not have permission to display goods on pavements, provided they comply with public highway laws. In contrast, consent streets imply temporary traders who can operate anywhere on a street, in any manner, as long as they do not break highway laws. Our primary concern is the unpredictable and volatile environment this would create for people with visual impairments. Recent council decisions have already made the town center more hostile for our community. For example, anti-terrorist barriers were installed with little to no consultation with disability groups, and planters intended to be visually appealing have become obstacles. A street with constantly changing contents poses several problems for people with visual impairments: Lack of Permanent Landmarks: People using canes or guide dogs rely on landmarks (doorways, walls, permanent street furniture) to navigate. Pop-up stalls, pasteboards, mobile tables, and food stands distract guide dogs and complicate navigation for cane users. Litter and Lack of Bins: Main streets like Park Street have already been identified by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association as challenging due to high litter levels, especially food waste. An increase in consent streets would likely correlate with more litter, impacting guide dogs' ability to work effectively. Irresponsible Use of Street Space: Even with the current licensed street model, some traders occupy excessive space on pavements. Examples include Midland Market on Digbeth and Bits and Bobs on Park Street. One of our members had to involve the police to get Sports Direct to remove displays blocking the footpath. Given the current state of shopping streets, we have little faith in the council's ability to maintain order and safe highways, especially with a model allowing temporary trader setups. In conclusion, the proposed changes to street trading regulations could significantly worsen the accessibility and safety of our town for people with visual impairments. We urge the council to reconsider these changes and to consult with disability groups to ensure a safer and more inclusive environment.

I think this would impact on other traders and shops and create more problems and traffic and parking issues

Less agro re licencing and easier to manage. More money for economy.

I think all potential stall holders should hold a licence and are checked for counterfeit goods. As someone who may like a stall in the future I think it's important that the appropriate checks have been fully completed working alongside trading standards

to support local business and attract business to the town

Better for everyone to apply

Agree that having 3 categories is confusing

There are already enough street traders in Walsall without encouraging others. Lower Park Street is already overcrowded with some 'shop' traders using the street in front of their shops for trading of what can only be described as low quality 'cheap goods' and these traders should be forced to remove those goods which are displayed on the street before encouraging to do the same. Walsall is losing its attraction for 'quality' shopping because it is being replaced by these cheap goods. Walsall Trading Officers should walk around Park Street and The Bridge in order to see for themselves the devastation being caused there by these awful traders!

There are enough businesses in residential streets. Most streets are overcrowded as it is.

flexibility in dealing with licensing issues

There are too many poor quality traders allowed to block our streets already. We need safer environments.

As any applications have to go through consultation process, I am confident that should there be any concerns then potentially an application could be refused

There are a number of cabin type businesses on Aldridge that are not accessible and create a precedent that is of concern to the quality of the local environment

Not sure if there is much difference between both, as long as there is consultation

Why do you say this?

It still requires a consultation and consent to be granted.

They are our streets not the council. The council is voted in by a minority of the public.

We do not want our street to be a consent street when it is currently a restricted street and that status should remain. Safety and major impact on residents are our primary reasons for objection.

We need our towns alive with shoppers and traders

It will promote more illicit trading.

It is deregulation of street trading that requires strict controls. The likelihood of hazards and antisocial behaviour as a result of street trading in modern society in my view is high and therefore requires the strictist of control measures.

I cant see the benefit or it is not explained in clear terms in your consultation. I am also concerned that these powers may be used when for example a resident may want to have a garage sale one off type or very rare type instance, eg selling their personal car (not car trading from their address)

I already have a street trading consent

From what you have written in relation to consent and licensed their doesnt appear to be any difference other than your text which says 'licensed = fixed location' and 'consent = mobile'. Are you inferring that a consent trader will be able to choose where to site his vehicle/trading set up where he chooses? If not, then nothing seems different as currently I am fixed (other than I have to drive my trailer on and off site each day). It would of course be nice to leave the trailer overnight (saves fuel, reduces traffic, enables more time for customer service instead of set up/ set down each day), however, security in town is very poor, therefore would not feel safe leaving on site. Is it just a case of reducing admin/fees (very welcome), giving opportunity to increase trading sites within licensed streets or anything else. Please can you explain in more detail.

don't think it makes a lot of difference and it does work out cheaper

Not sure it makes any difference

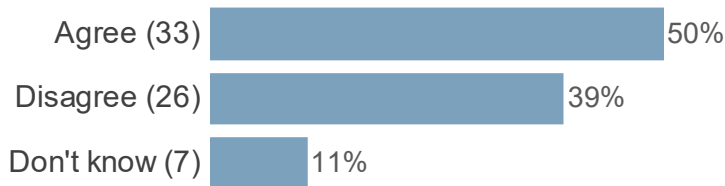
A street trading licence should be mandatory

It seems that most Council districts have adopted in favour of consent streets rather than licensed streets, why is that? My understanding is that consent streets give more power to the council to revoke with limited appeal impacting to the street trader's livelihood should it not go in their favour, whereby the issuing of a licensed street gives more security to street traders, livelihoods being safer and allowing them to invest. does Walsall Council know of any council district that has only adopted licensed streets and not consent streets ? If it is that Walsall Council have already adopted licensed streets why should it feel that it needs to re-designate as or to consent streets? I agree that all prohibited streets should be lifted and changed to allow either a licensed or consent streets for the purpose of allowing Council consideration to trade.

Need a change

I have been trying to be licensed for 3 years but can't as street is prohibited.

Do you agree or disagree that streets currently designated as 'prohibited streets' should be redesignated 'consent streets'?



Why do you say this?

Too many nuisance car selling

Need to keep some prohibited streets.

Some streets are just not suitable for street trading such as busy main arterial routes, or where pavements are too narrow or are regularly used for parking. Some of these pavements are too narrow to accommodate mobility scooters.

Fot reasons already given.

I disagree that prohibited streets should be redesignated as consent streets as I think this will open the floodgates of where trading could commence.

Please don't let standards decline. If you want to attract shoppers please maintain a minimum standard.

For the same reasons as given previously.

Again gives more control to community

Prohibited streets seem to be main roads; those which wouldn't be safe to trade from. I agree it should be kept that way.

Again, depends on the street

More stalls more markets more business into walsall

The more space available the better

To have one approach

We need foot fall everywher

While this perspective is not solely focused on visual impairment, we believe these streets were designated for specific and valid reasons—perhaps public safety, convenience, or other social or ethical considerations. Redesignating these streets would expose them to the issues we described earlier, allowing busy streets to change significantly over time without sufficient consultation or means of notifying affected individuals.

This will impact on other businesses and the quality of life of residents in these streets

More places to buy from, more choice.

If they are prohibited they should remain so as you state that very few are so what is the point in changing it

to support the local economy

Because it opens more areas up

Fair process

The streets are overcrowded already, too many taxi drivers and people having businesses from their homes.

flexible approach, good revenue earner. and the right to say no

We have enough street traders already. They make our streets uninviting and contribute to the low life that congregate around them

They are prohibited for a reason.

It allows for specific street trading to be more available and controlled

There should be regulation

People will abuse the system

I wanted trade in a street and got told its prohibited even though there was enough space on the street

Some of the prohibited streets need to be protected in order to contain trading otherwise even more of our streets will end up in a mess.

Everyone should get chance to get permission. Will make easier to buy things

Why the constant need for change. Whos profiting out of this

Why do you say this?

Our street should remain prohibited. The major negative impact on safety and the residents are our primary reason for objecting.

I do not have any confidence that Walsall will be able to police these areas significantly across the whole borough.

Industrial sites and trading areas have to kept separate from residential areas. To reduce the hazards caused by increased traffic and antisocial behaviour.

I cannot give a blanket answer

There would be a reason why it's prohibited

As you say, the landscape has changed. Growing economy ties in with enabling opportunity, reducing red tape and creating employment. Most prohibited streets im aware of tend to be main roads, so council would need to make provision for some parking allowance to support anyone setting up roadside.

I would like to trade on some streets that are prohibited as they are good locations

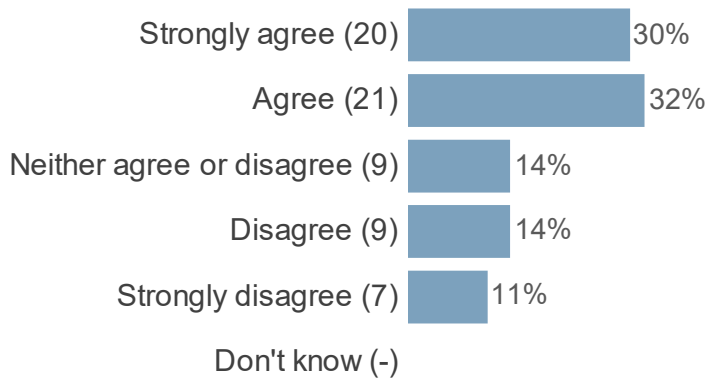
Prohibited street policies should be totally abolished, this allows fair trade and in response to public interest that wish to use those street trading services. Traders will determine whether those services are viable, and if not then traders will surrender their license to trade.

Licences cost too much.

Could have too many places selling goods

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

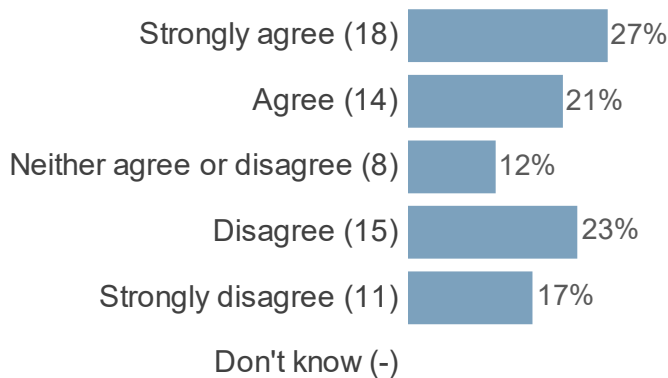
Street trading.... (...brings added economic value and variety a local area)



Street trading public 2024

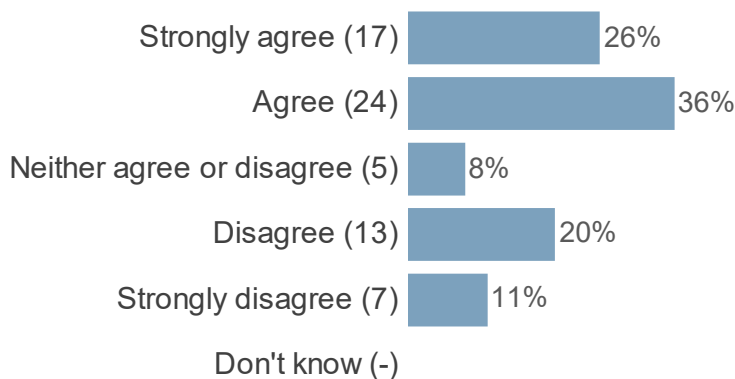
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

Street trading.... (**...contributes positively to the character and atmosphere of a local area**)



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

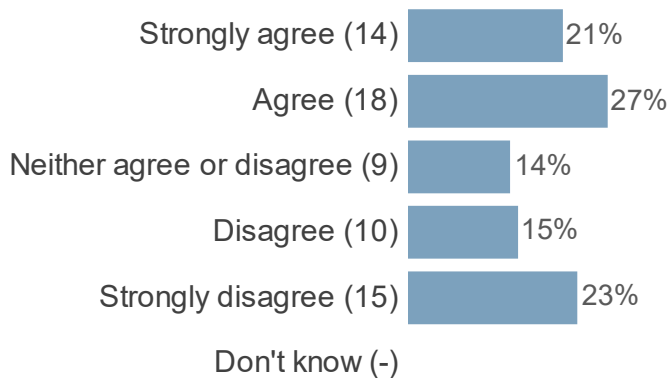
Street trading.... (**...encourages entrepreneurship and supports small businesses / start-ups**)



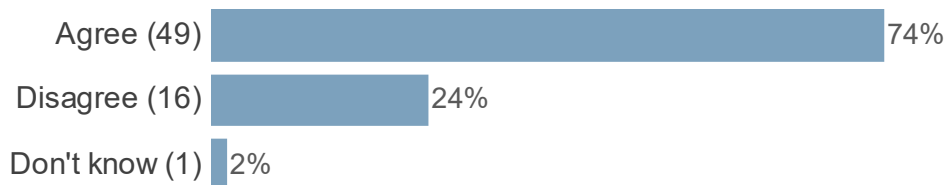
Street trading public 2024

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

Street trading.... (...is generally positive for a local area)



Do you agree or disagree that the council should do everything possible to attract and encourage safe, legal, compliant and high-quality street traders to areas of the borough?



Why do you say this?

- They do not stop illegal car selling where many cars are parked on the highway and residents have nowhere to park.

- Walsall council has driven out street traders just take a look at the once great market

- Too many bracelet etc selling people, obv not regulated in Park St. We have markets for street selling.

- Common sense

- Only if all those conditions are adhered to. Such a move could encourage startups.

- Issue is those already street trading in Walsall town centre (market hill and Park street), legal and compliant or otherwise, new business or otherwise, are not providing high quality products. There will be more of the same

- I think the Council has a strong responsibility to protect it's constituents from rogue street traders and ensure safe, legal, compliant and high quality street traders are in place and regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure the safety of the borough's constituents is protected.

- It depends where they trade. Park Street and the Bridge look cluttered and unattractive. Please designate High Street as the main area for street trading and markets.

- I think the right shops in the right Areas are good but this never seems to happen

- Because this helps Walsall's community and visitors to access greater choice, and safer products

- Council should use resources according to pyramid of needs. First, use your money to house and feed people

- As a small business being able to travel with my mobile cake van is a massive part of making my Business a success.

Street trading public 2024

Why do you say this?

It will enliven High Streets

We need more market stalls as none of the stupid shops are suitable please ask why do we need vape and cheap tat toys with selli no suitcases .. these shops need to go each other shop is this

I agree as long as the street traders are not just stalls selling cheap Chinese crap that I can buy from temu

To stop the endless trading of low quality and sometimes counterfeit goods. High quality traders will encourage people to come to the town

Why not

We appreciate the council's intention to attract and encourage safe, legal, compliant, and high-quality street traders to areas of the borough. However, we have significant concerns regarding the council's ability to enforce compliance and legality effectively. Our primary worry is that the council may prioritize revenue generation over the safety and comfort of visitors with disabilities. Even if all traders were legal and compliant, designating every street as a consent street would still lead to issues of unpredictability, increased litter, and poor use of street space. These challenges disproportionately affect people with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments. Therefore, while we agree that attracting high-quality traders is beneficial, it must not come at the expense of accessibility and safety. We urge the council to carefully consider these factors and consult with disability groups to ensure that any changes do not undermine the inclusivity and safety of our town.

Better for trading to be in an area such as a market where there is an element of control and scrutiny and not impacting on other residents

More trade is what UK economy needs. I may be encouraged to start a business

there are a lot of counterfeit goods on the markets and the standard of quality is poor. The cost of stalls is too high for genuine small businesses like myself. Instead traders who buy cheap products in bulk are then selling on poor quality products to the public. There is not enough checks and people are now not interested in the continual rubbish being sold and therefore footfall in the town has decreased significantly

to enhance public space and bring vibrancy to the town

Brings in variety

What spoils this is when shop owners extend our into pavement. It becomes unsightly and a potential hazard

Walsall Council should do everything possible to encourage 'high quality traders' they should not encourage low quality ones and should prosecute those who flaunt the by laws by displaying 'cheap goods' in front of their shops on the streets without permission or licence.

The streets are overflowing with cars, vans, lorries as it is. More trading will create more traffic and parked cars.

it provides an array of providers including food vendors. just wish it wasnt all fatty burgers and meat

Street trading is not a pleasant environment. It is not the same as market trading which is a thing of the past.

I think the council should reduce rental costs on market stalls and also commercial premises. Designated areas are better, how are street traders going to be regulated on such a big area.

It is reassuring to know that Street traders will be regulated, and vetted through the application/consultation period

Regelation should primarily focus on existing shop premises.

We need to stop shops from closing down rather street trading which will make the problem worse.

More business will make town like before. No closed shops

The council should keep their noses out of business. They cant keep the town centre clean and tidy. I wouldn't trust walsall council to run a whist drive

Why do you say this?

The town centre was popular when good market traders operated throughout the town centre, it brought business to the town. Now, the quality has deteriorated due to people trading in other areas due to having street trading

There are so many empty shop premises so these should have priority

Crime is on the rise. Police and local authorities cannot cope with local communities now. Having street trading in a "Del boy" fashion is too open to unscrupulous people.

I have experienced street trading at the front of my home and it is disruptive and dangerous. A van selling cakes had been parking in Beechtree Road. There was a queue of people, some of whom were shouting. Kids were running in the roads and screaming. This is a residential area where myself and other residents retreat from the public and seek sanctuary. It is not acceptable to turn a quiet road into a trading area. Trading in the street also represents a hazard to both queuing customers and other road users. From both moving and dangerously parked vehicles.

Walsall is littered with poor quality street traders, scammers approaching you in the town centre trying to sell fake or non-existent goods as distraction techniques for commonly gangs or clans of often Roma people. Numerous people have been victims of these "fake" sellers many elderly. They watch the banks in Park Street and make the town centre feel very unsafe. Control the street traders we have first and those shops who have decided to take over the streets and footpaths with their goods instead of keeping it inside their shops. This is common all across the town centre and surrounding areas.

I do not believe that street traders always attract "Safe, legal compliant" business safety and legality are vital

Would help small businesses

As your text has stated, it's a gateway to developing business skills at a more affordable level. It gives the opportunity for traders to trial and deliver a range of products not commonly available, this in itself can attract greater levels of custom, shoppers and employees crave variety. Overall quality is key if you want to attract a regular client base and more affluent shoppers.

big businesses are making it difficult, and street traders help each community area so my elderly parents may not have to travel far if the trader comes to their street

Walsall needs to change. Boarded shops derelict building. Walsall had one of the best markets in the UK

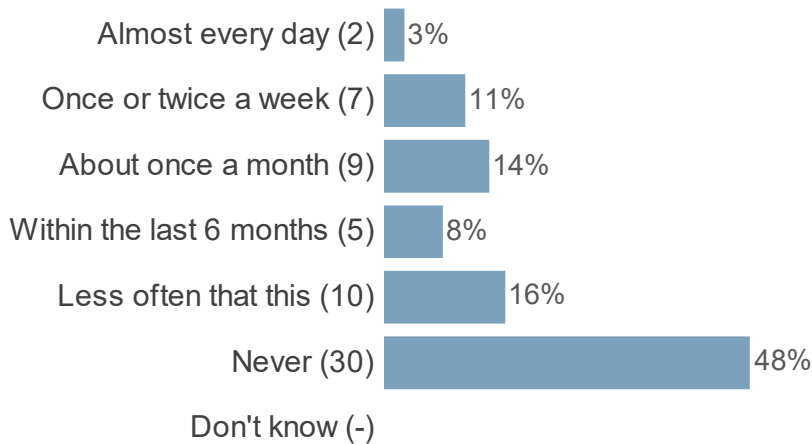
Prevent sale of stolen goods. Prevent sale of goods that are unregulated

The council and mobile street traders have a responsibility to ensure it is fully compliant in the interest of public safety in area(s) where they have access including non- and paying locations.

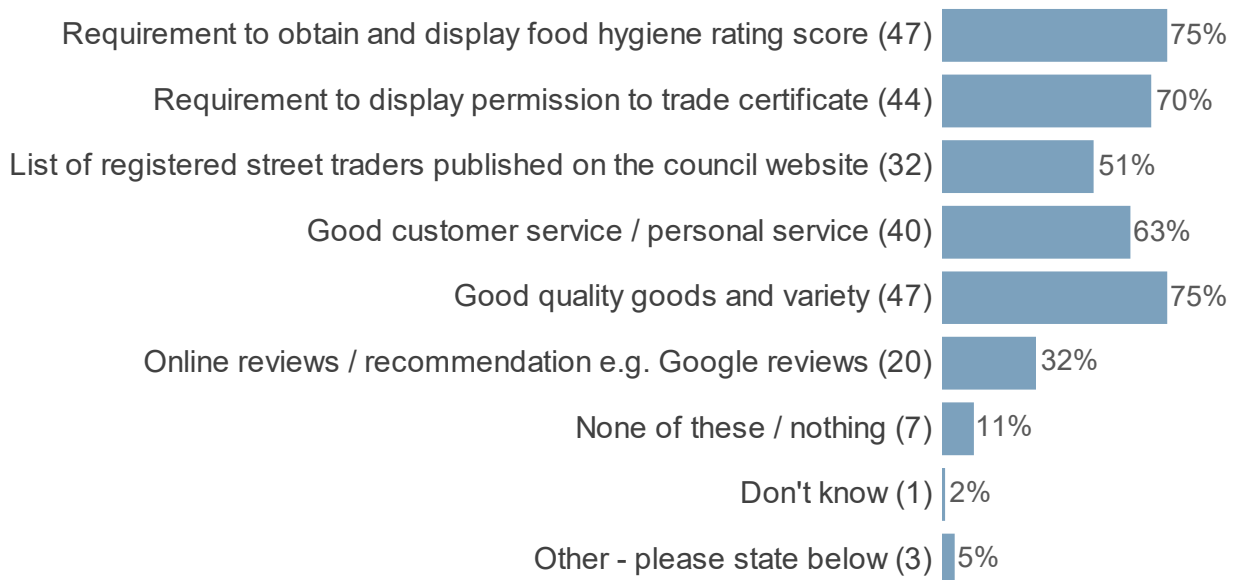
Help new people who want to do this for a living

Street trading public 2024

How frequently, if at all, do you visit / purchase goods from a street trader (not a regular market stall) in the borough of Walsall?



Which of the following, if any, would encourage you to purchase goods from a street trader? Select all that apply.



The trader's stall and goods need to be visually attractive.

No more clvape shops selling suitcases we need clothes and branded shops back

Get rid of cannabis smells on high street...ur dumbass police can't smell it or they just ignorant to it none in the area i shop

The council should stay out of business

Street traders selling food in residential have no toilet facilities.

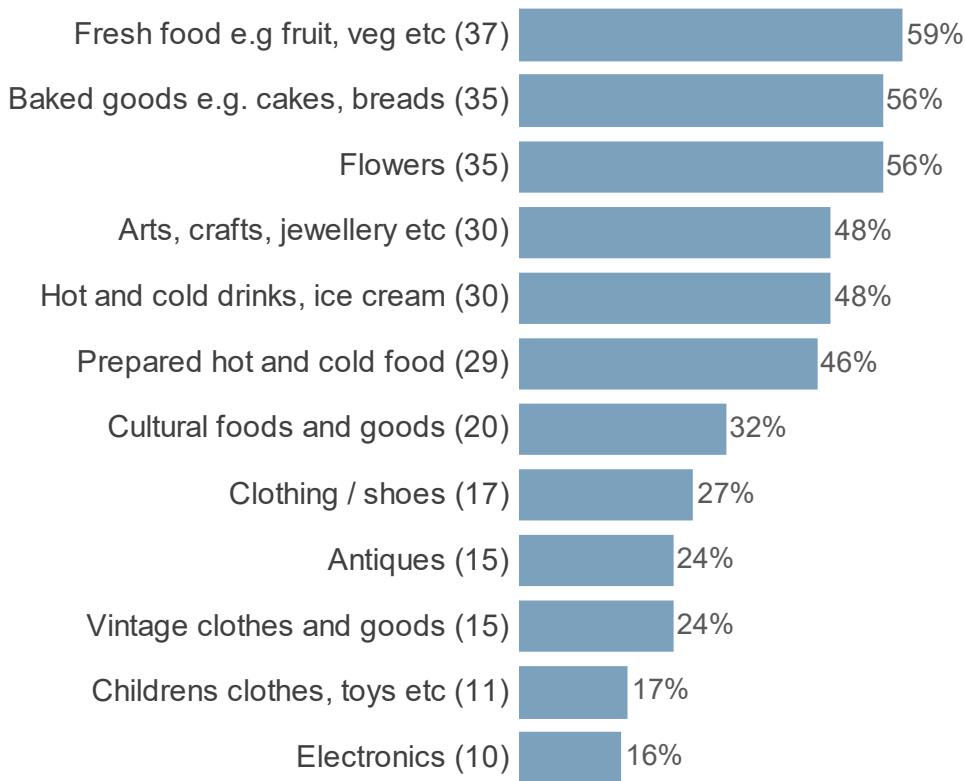
Reasonable prices, clean environment,

healthy products being sold - we need more healthy food vendors in the centre!

Criminal checks on everyone employees license holders

Street trading public 2024

Which of the following types of street trading, if any, would you most like to see in the borough of Walsall? Select all that apply.



Vinyl

Farm produce

Good quality produce locally sourced

All if it designated areas not streets

Market trading should only be licenced in shopping areas where traders have access to toilets and washing facilities.

Outdoor dining areas/al fresco

Do you have any further comments you would like to add about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

Please stop illegal second hand car selling where cars are stored on the public highway.

I love the daily market and happy to have that expanded but the other people trying to sell stuff/approaching shoppers in the streets cannot be regulated. At weekends there are lots of groups singing/playing music really loudly. It's unpleasant and the shops hate it, they have to work in it.

No

Street trading can encourage antisocial behaviour and needs careful supervision by both the Police and Council, something I'm not sure can happen in the current environment . Street stalls outside of schools selling unhealthy food should be prohibited.

Walsall town centre already has a bad reputation, dont discourage those with money to spend to further go elsewhere

There are too many market stalls that sell the same thing, I would like to see greater variety in the market stalls currently in Walsall

Street trading public 2024

Do you have any further comments you would like to add about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

I visited Walsall town centre on Saturday and it struck me how untidy some of the shop fronts were, in particular those selling from tables outside their shop fronts. It was also sad to see where there was once a strong market is now a smaller offering with worse quality. There were also too many religious pitches, some with loud speakers. I wanted to shop without being accosted by people wanting me to sign up to whatever they're selling. It doesn't do anything to encourage me to come back.

If the street trader wants to set up then that stall should befit the Area.

Please can we assess why we have so many shops selling vapes cheap tatty toys and suitcases . These are an eyesore and we don't need these types of shops. More clothes shops high st end and food venues . With children areas

Let's make this process easy and fair for small businesses and entrepreneurs

At the moment there seems no enforcement of traders spilling over from their shops into the street. (Park St and the Market especially) The streets filled with cheap awful stuff is not acceptable. These "traders" should be dealt with or asked to rent an overflow shop. Unless you have enforcement the town will not improve

Yes too many local quangos in walsall dictating thier will with no consideration for local needs. Power hungry council middle managers getting in the way of any progress.

The answers given here only represent the views of a small number of our members. There are likely to be far more varied and equally valid viewpoints from our wider membership. Therefore, if the council really do appreciate the views of its citizens and truly do, as one of Counsellor Perry's 5 pillars state, want to make Walsall a positive and inclusive place for everyone, we strongly urge you to get in touch with our group where we would be delighted to meet with you to discuss our concerns further. You may email us at: enquiries@walsalleyes.org.uk Or contact our chairman, Steve Mellor, on 07969 547 704 (please do not send text messages as he is unable to read them)

Most of the Street trading, especially in Walsall town centre is an eyesore and of no real value.

No

U need to seriously look into the drugs problem on high street. U can clearly smell weed everywhere so that means it's being smoked without caution, puts me off shopping on high street. So Gary, do something about it....don't play dumb!!!

The borough, especially Walsall town centre has many fast food retailers, both in stores and street vendors. As the borough has an obesity and health problem I firmly believe that these types of traders should be kept to a minium.

Regular pop up markets would be great. Like a vintage market on the first Sunday of the month. A plant and farmers market. A mini food festival Look at Bristol and see the types that they have they create great areas to meet, socialise and buy various items

Walsall needs to reflect it's diversity without looking like a scruffy migrant town

The expansion of shop traders exhibiting their goods on the pavement in front of their shops without permission is not acceptable and certainly does nothing for the reputation as a quality shopping place in the West Midlands. These goods also block pavements making it difficult for those less mobile to walk along the pavements. It is definately a reason to report the matter to government.

I can't find my area in the list of streets available. I live in the Butts and it's not on any of your lists. Does this mean they are all consented streets?

If harbours tax dodgers and discourages proper shops.

None

Existing traders would be disadvantaged. The shops should be supported not compete with this type of vendor . The quality of the environment would be degraded .

first time I have heard of street trading consultation happening in Walsall in 30 years

We need to re-invigorate the town centre with shops

Street trading public 2024

Do you have any further comments you would like to add about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

Id like to see more. Walsall council in its total stupidity will discourage traders. They put more and more regulation and barriers in the way of anyone wanting to start up and give it a go. De regulate and watch business thrive. Regulate watch business die

Invest in town centre, rather than making it a street casino with betting shops. Walsall should bring in trade for local traders not for anti social behaviour and betting shops

Street rubbish in our community is at its worst in over thirty years. Street trading would do nothing to improve this, if anything would make it worse. Shops in our are and some residents do not care about packaging being dropped on the floor no sooner have they left the shop. Councils rubbish bins are not emptied often enough either.

I have experienced street trading at the front of my home and it is disruptive and dangerous. A van selling cakes had been parking in Beechtree Road. There was a queue of people, some of whown were shouting. Kids were running in the roads. and screaming. This is a residential area where myself and other residents retreat from the public and seek sanctuary. It is not acceptable to turn a quiet road into a trading area. Trading in the street also represents a hazard to both queuing customers and other road users. From both moving and dangerously parked vehicles. The shops on the High Street behind my home cause noise and disruption that continues late into the night and early morning. The traders have no respect for residents. Music plays loudly, they shout at each other. There is the sound of metallic objects crashing into each other. Another shop offers dog grooming and distressed dogs yelp continually during the afternoons. All the rear doors of the premises are left open. Extractor fans that require maintenance vibrate loudly. Historically these unpleasant antisocial issues have been reported. A near by car park is used by a local Taxi company and drivers will sound their horns and shout loudly till the early hours of the morning. They show no consideration to people trying to sleep. The potential for street trading is unacceptable and these problems and more could escalate to include trading at the front of my home. Industrial sites and trading areas have to kept separate from residential areas.

If you do not manage this well you will end up with all kinds of tat and junk being sold, fenced and offered up, how exactly will you ensure trading only takes place by only those with licenses and not an army of those claiming to operate under said license, most likely cash in hand and also a major risk for money laundering! This is Walsall after all. The residents deserve quality to be ensured and not any old approach once a license is issued or this could be one more nail in the coffin for the town.

If food is sold ALL the staff MUST have undergone high quality hygiene training and each pitch MUST have at least one staff member with full "first responder" training and each pitch MUST be in 5 meters of a full first aid kit including "pen" I cannot think of the correct word which deals with those who have reacted against for example milk

I agree as long as it doesn't affect my business

No comment

So as currently trading in town centre as a food vendor, this is partly difficult to answer as still awaiting the start of the gateway refurbishment project. Their is still uncertainty on how this affects current traders in relation to positioning, anticipated increases in footfall and if will encourage longer stay shopping for customers. Decent outdoor seating has proven popular in many other towns. Flanked by shrubs/greenery adds to the attraction. Power points to connect to would be very useful as enable more diversity in the food products I could supply, removing the need for noisier and polluting generators. Council could do more to promote the town with more town centre events - stuff that gets people away from online shopping! I certainly would invest more in the town if I believed the council were committed and demonstrated a clear timescaled plan to attract more custom. A more thorough and consistent approach to moving on beggars/addicts and stolen goods street sellers would also help improve image.

Currently their is no Police patrols in town centre where childrens are smoking cannabis and drugs, which stops customers comming to my business. We need to increase Police officers.

There is no identification to see if they are licensed or have permission. Why can't the council issue proper identification

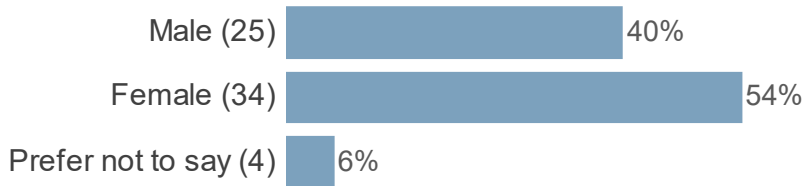
Do you have any further comments you would like to add about street trading in the borough of Walsall?

I'd like the council to consider sensible street trading fees on a cost recovery basis, street trading applications renewal forms should be simple and uncomplicated with fresh applications unknown to the council, having more rigorous test, for example, a DBS certification, National insurance number, and character reference.

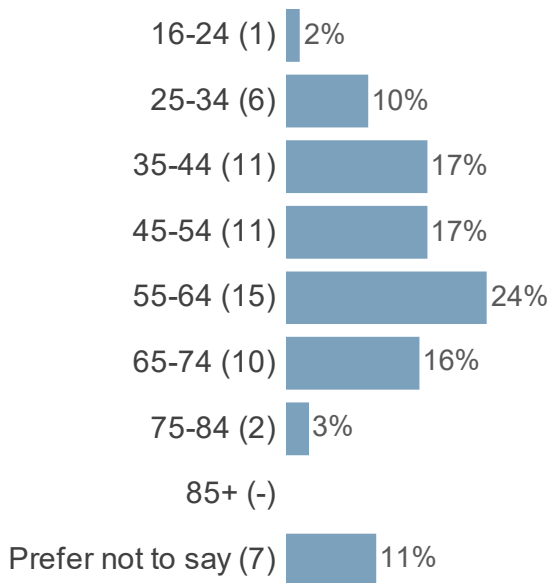
Are all the places selling fruit and veg outside shops licensed?

Prohibited stopping people like me from earning a living. Walsall needs a change to help people

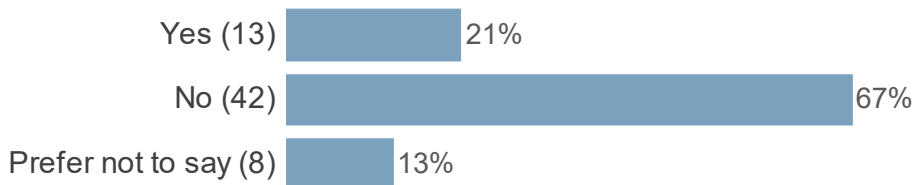
Are you?



How old are you?

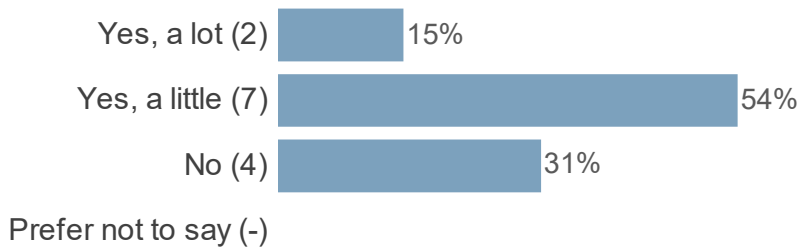


Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

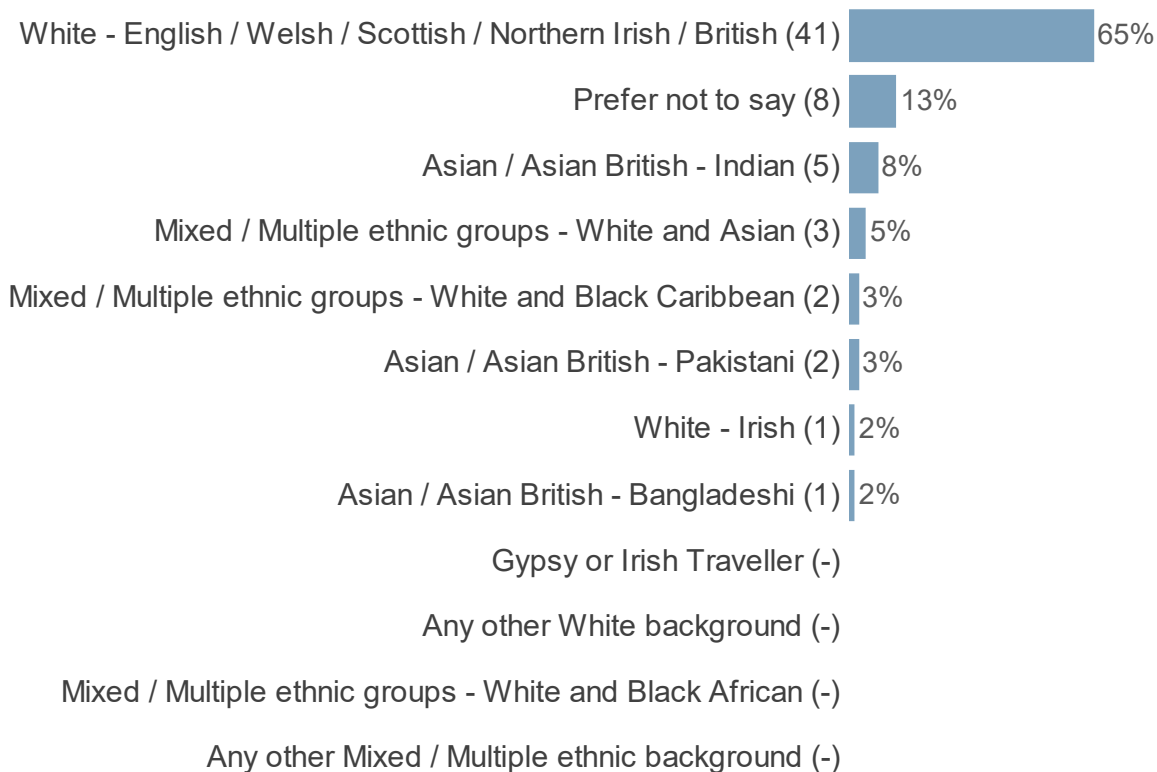


Street trading public 2024

Does your condition or illness\do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?



To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (Ethnic background)



Are there any particular equality aspects you feel should be taken into account when making our final decisions about the designation of streets in the borough?

- Older people need to be considered.

- No

- It can feel intimidating people approaching you in the street, whoever you are.

- Get rid of diversity equality and inclusively

- No. All areas, regardless of ethnic make up, should be treated the same.

- Disability primarily.

- Accessibility of streets e.g. pedestrian access and ensuring that if trading takes place in a street it is not in a crowded street to ensure there is enough room for those with accessibility needs e.g. disabled people in wheelchairs.

- You should be looking at the type of street people who live there and what is being sold.

Street trading public 2024

Are there any particular equality aspects you feel should be taken into account when making our final decisions about the designation of streets in the borough?

Street access should be key consideration

No but get rid of these stupid vape shops it's a sore and makes Walsall Look cheap and rundown

No

You must ensure that traders do not affect access for those with disabilities.

Yes you should consider all organisations and not bias minorities , equality means equality not bias to any trend or fashion.

We are a registered charity representing people with visual impairments, and disability equality is of paramount importance to us. However, we recognize that many of our concerns may also be shared by other disability groups. For instance, people with physical disabilities or those on the neurodivergent spectrum might also struggle with crowded and unpredictable environments, which temporary street trading would exacerbate.

No.

No

Ask local community to see if they welcome it, not just council surveys. Do trial runs from businesses who are looking to expand into other locations!!! Not rocket science

Quality and accessibility

None.

None

Race should not be allowed to influence such decisions or influence them.

ensure that all street traders comply with size and noise - no noisy generators;

Yes. Make sure all residents are treated equality and do not pander to minorities.

The Density of the amount of street trading stalls, Lower density along more streets promotes movement which in turn promotes other areas to be visits

I am concerned that you ask questions regarding age gender etc . I would like to be informed about how you use this information

change should be positive. it's nice sometimes to have a change and maybe someone selling fruit and veg can come to my street rather than me making my way to shop

No

No

How does equality affect street trading? Stupid question from a 'woke' council sadly out of touch with its citizens

I think you should also consider the environmental factors, and rubbish street trading may bring into streets,.

A mixture of trades or sellers should be balanced. Not just car boot items or 50p item stalls. Environmentally friendly goods should be available and not just cheap goods. The reason why Park street struggles to be popular is down to expensive parking fees and non-subsidised public transport. You mention the 1980's but have done little to revive trading by allowing so many out of town shopping centres.

All residents of Walsall should be treated equally and their right to a private and peaceful home life facilitated.

None, the quality of the offer, consistency and demand should be concerned.

My real concern is for the safety of pedestrians especially those with poor sight or who are in wheel chairs or who are pushing children in prams who could have their mobility limited. I would paint a line on the footpath and if a trader has any part of their pitch or its contents is either on or across the line they would be fined £10 for each inch on over the line. Three breaches and the licence is revoked and the owner is street banned from ALL street trading for 5 years

Street trading public 2024

Are there any particular equality aspects you feel should be taken into account when making our final decisions about the designation of streets in the borough?

None

No

Yes, drop the 'e'. Focus on the quality, not whos delivering!

Variety in food

Council – 4th November, 2024

Appointment of Independent Person

1. Summary of report

To request the Council to agree to the appointment of an Independent Person to the Audit Committee.

2. Recommendations

That Council confirms the appointment of Mr D Walsh as an Independent Member to the Audit Committee with immediate effect for a four-year Term of Office concluding at the end of the 2027/28 Municipal Year.

3. Report detail

3.1 Audit committees are a key component of an authority's governance framework. Their function is to provide an independent and high-level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management. The purpose of an audit committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. By overseeing both internal and external audit it makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place. The Council's audit committee should adopt a model that establishes the committee as independent and effective. The committee should:

- act as the principal, advisory function supporting those charged with governance;
- be independent of the decision making committees of the Council and include an independent member where not already required to do so by legislation;
- have clear rights of access to other committees/functions, for example, service committees, corporate risk management and other strategic groups; and
- be directly accountable to the authority's governing body.

3.2 Best practice dictates that governance, risk management and strong financial controls be embedded in the daily and regular business of an organisation. The existence of an audit committee does not remove responsibility from senior

managers, members and leaders, but provides an opportunity and resource to focus on these issues.

- 3.3 CIPFA considers that Audit Committees must also actively explore the appointment of at least one independent member to the Committee. This is in line with good practice to demonstrate good governance principles and independence from the executive and other political allegiances.

4. Recruitment Process

- 4.1 The independent person, subject to appointment by the Council, has been selected through a process of public advertisement, application and interview. At its meeting held on 25th September, 2024, Audit Committee considered and recommended Mr Walsh' appointment to Council,.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Whilst Independent on Audit Committees is not a requirement, it is considered Best Practice by CIPFA.

- 5.2 All Independent Persons are required to sign a declaration to confirm that they have:

- a. received a copy of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council's Code of Conduct for Members, currently in force and have been encouraged to read the same; and
- b. that in performing any of their functions as an Independent Member of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council's Standards Committee they will observe and uphold the Code of Conduct for Members, currently in force and any subsequent Code of Conduct; and I understand that I will not be permitted, by operation of law, to act in such capacity, unless and until I have given this written declaration to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

- 5.2 Independent Persons are also asked to complete a declaration of interest form.

- 5.3 The term of office is for a period of 4 years but may be extended by Council.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 Mr Walsh is entitled to a subsistence allowance of £750 per year which will be met from within existing budgets.

5. Equality implications

- 5.1 Arrangements for dealing with complaints will ensure that complaints are investigated impartially and fairly, which is to be of benefit to both the complainant and elected member or co-opted member.

Background papers

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance on the function and operation of audit committees; "Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police, 2018 edition"

Author

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✉ neil.picken@walsall.gov.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Cox". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a rectangular box.

Signed: Anthony Cox

Director of Governance

Date: 25.10.24

Portfolio Holder Briefing

Associate Leader - Economic Growth and Regeneration



4th November, 2024



Walsall Council

Associate Leader* - Economic Growth & Regeneration

Cllr Adrian Andrew

* Statutory Deputy Leader as required by Schedule A1 of the Local Government Act 2000

Areas of Responsibility	Lead Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regeneration• Economic Development• Planning Policy (Inc. Walsall Borough Local Plan)• Planning and Building Control Service• Employment Growth• Strategic Housing• Strategic Use of Assets• Strategic transport• Markets• Corporate Landlord	Economy, Environment and Communities – Dave Brown

Partnership Board Membership

Walsall Economic Forum

Town Deal Board

WMCA: Board, Economic Board, Land & Delivery Board, Investment Zone Committee

West Midlands Growth Company

West Midlands Employers Shareholder Board

Council – 4 November 2024

Portfolio Holder Report Associate Leader – Economic Growth & Regeneration

1. Foreword

The council continues to drive a transformative place making programme to create the conditions for increased investment, quality homes, the right jobs and skills in the right places. While the council is leading on several major projects to transform the town centre and wider borough, we work to develop excellent relationships with a range of developers, businesses and providers to arrive at flexible solutions to place making as part of the picture of the £1.5bn investment generated in Walsall.

I am pleased to present the report which will set out the considerable work of councillors, staff and partners to work towards the Councils vision, plans and strategies. Working collaboratively is integral to the work of all services and I am especially pleased to highlight the work of SPARK, one of the biggest employment opportunities in the West Midlands and Walsall Council has led and driven the remediation which has just been concluded this month.

2. Strategic Context

Through the delivery of our strategic regeneration aims and ambitions we will be directly contributing to the delivery of the core objective of Walsall 2040 but particularly around the themes of delivering quality homes, supporting healthy communities and a driving a strong economy for all communities

The economy is one of the priorities of the council plan and has emerged as a key issue in our long-term strategy – We Are Walsall 2040.

3. Key achievements, impact and ongoing work

Our Strategies

Walsall Borough Local Plan (WBLP)

The council is progressing a comprehensive borough-wide local plan – the WBLP - that will seek to prioritise brownfield sites and address local housing and employment needs. As part of the plan making process, the council has already administered a successful call for sites process, resulting in over 300 sites being submitted for assessment, not only from major developers but also from local residents.

Walsall Place Based Strategy

This will be part of the framework for how the government's devolved Single Settlement allocation to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will be prioritised, targeted and spent in the region over future spending review periods starting from 2025. The aim of the PBS is for the council to set out the vision and interventions for how the single settlement functions will come together to bring transformation and target investment in the borough. The PBS will articulate the interventions needed to deliver existing local strategies and the Walsall 2040 vision.

Walsall Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy sets out our ambition that Walsall residents should be able to live in a decent home that meets their needs and aspirations. We do this through working with partners to ensure good quality new homes, tackling poor housing conditions, making homes more energy efficient, and minimising homelessness. The Strategy will be fully reviewed in 2025 to ensure homes fit for the future.

Town Centre Masterplan

The vision driving the town centre masterplan is that "Walsall will attract visitors based on its leisure and culture offers, including its internationally significant art gallery. The town centre environment will be easily navigable with healthy streets, which encourage walking and cycling and maximise the value of significant public spaces through regular events and activities".

Our Projects

Housing Development

In recent years substantial investment has been directed towards housing development, resulting in approximately 1,000 new homes completed at Hollyhedge Lane, Goscote Lodge Crescent, Goscote Lane, and the former Caparo site. Collaboration with the West Midlands Combined Authority, and key developers has enabled the transformation of brownfield sites into thriving residential areas.

Work continues to bring forward new housing opportunities such as the Council led scheme being progressed for Moat Street/Villiers Street in Willenhall that proposes 107 new homes, the first phase of these have been subject to a recent CPO process led by the Council which we are awaiting the outcome.

Employment Sites

The end of the first stage of the £100 million regeneration project at SPARK has been reached as the two-year remediation project draws to a close. SPARK is the largest employment site in the borough and construction of 620,000sqft of new manufacturing and logistics floor space will begin early in 2025.

SPARK



Over the last twelve months we have also seen the completion of Parallel 113 and this site is now occupied, new businesses moving into high quality employment space at Reedswood and businesses operating from Impact Park in Leamore, all which contributes nearly 1m sq.ft of new high quality employment floorspace in Walsall.

Connected Gateway

A joint initiative funded by the Future High Street Fund and the council aims to create a landmark arrival experience to Walsall's town centre, improving connectivity between transport hubs and establishing a new public square as well as improving the Saddlers Centre (both Park Mall and Bradford Mall).



Walsall Town Deal

Town Deal funded projects include the Construction Skills Academy, Advanced Electric Vehicle Technology Centre, Adult Learning Centre, Active Travel and Connectivity schemes, Digital Skills Hub, Creative Industries Enterprise Centre, Active Public Spaces and Community Capital initiatives.



Bloxwich Town Deal Schemes

Bloxwich also has several Town Deal projects, demonstrating our drive to support and improve the economies of the wider borough, including those related to active travel, construction skills, community capital, incubation space and digital access, and green initiatives to promote community health and well-being.

Strategic Transport

From 2026, new local train services, and re-routed intra-regional train services, will operate along the electrified rail line serving the new stations at Willenhall and Darlaston. A business case has also been developed to extend train services to a proposed new station at Aldridge with scheme development funding ringfenced in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

The construction phase of the £78m major highway improvement scheme at M6 Junction 10 was completed in March 2024. The scheme has been an example of positive partnership working and effective engagement with both stakeholders and the local community. The additional capacity created at the junction helps unlock new development, especially in the Walsall to Wolverhampton corridor.

M6 J10



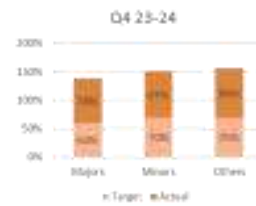
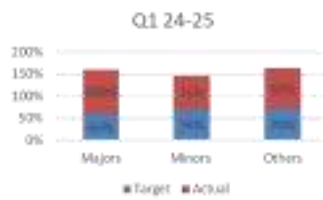
Our Service Delivery

Planning and Development:

Development Management

Our agreed backlog reduction strategy has resulted in a significant reduction of our historic planning application backlog. Combined with investment in our workforce through our award-winning organisational development team and a robust recruitment and retention process we now have a more stable and high-performing planning team

Backlog down
71%



Decisions issued: 1247

Full apps approval rate

■ Permission Granted ■ Permission Refused



The introduced a planning customer charter provides a clear and transparent commitment to our customers on what to expect for all paid-for services and is a consistent framework for our team to work to moving forward.



We are also embracing technological advances and will be implementing an artificial intelligence planning validator tool early 2025 which will help our customers understand at an early stage whether an application is likely to be considered valid or not and will help our team to validate, register and process planning applications more quickly.

Business Growth Team

Business Growth West Midlands

Launched formally in October 2023, Business Growth West Midlands (BGWM) is a hub and spoke model for delivery of public sector business support across the combined authority area.

Walsall businesses have been successful in securing over £250,000 from the regional net zero and decarbonisation programme and have access various programmes including:

- SME Productivity Grants
- Net Zero & Decarbonisation
- The Walsall High Growth Programme
- Start Up Walsall

Walsall Borough Economic Forum (WEBF)

Relaunched officially in February 2024, the WEBF has met three times at the time of writing this report. The WEBF is made up of a range of partners, including Walsall College, whg, Black Country Chamber and WMCA, as well as

businesses such as Jhoots Pharmacy, Walsall FC, Babcock Engineering, ASSA ABLOY, Barclays, RAC, Menfor Construction and Old Bank Business Centre.

Employment & Skills

Walsall Works

The employment and skills service continues to provide advice, guidance and employability support to all our local residents who are looking for work and training. We identify client barriers to work and in partnership with local organisations find solutions for our participants.

Restart

Walsall Council is one of the best performing suppliers in the contract with Serco, and have supported 796 people on the programme, 331 of whom have progressed into a new job and 182 have reached the sustained earning target of £4,750.

Multiply

Multiply is the UK Government's programme aimed to improve functional numeracy skills for adults. Local authorities engage with local providers to deliver flexible courses which are designed to improve people's ability to use maths in their daily life.

Commonwealth Games Legacy

This funding stream is being used to deliver support to inactive and unemployed residents and has enabled us to embed our delivery in 20 community settings. 563 people have received locally based job support.

Shared Prosperity Funding

We are the lead on the People and Skills Pillar, through direct delivery and commissioning of grant to the voluntary sector, to delivery targeted support to economically inactive residents.

Careers Enterprise Company

We are improving the CIAG offered within our secondary schools, through the appointment of two CEC Co-ordinators to support deliver of the national Gatsby benchmarks, a tool that measures how many employer interactions a child has whilst in education

Transport

The council has continued to work towards the implementation of a number of key transport projects including:

- Walsall Electric Vehicle ChargePoint Strategy
- supporting West Midlands Police in their multiagency road safety operations
- A series of walking, cycling, scooting and road safety
- The council has delivered a variety of local network improvements
- Work on extending the cycle network in the Willenhall

Asset Management

The council is transforming its property portfolio management to a corporate landlord model, focusing on strategic asset planning and disposal of surplus assets. The asset management team is supporting regeneration projects like Connected Gateways and Town Centre projects.

Housing Standards and Improvement

Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households

In just over 12 months the Council has managed to bring 16 empty homes back into use, including 4 secured through Compulsory Purchase Order, to use as much needed temporary accommodation for homeless households.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

In 2023/24 the team approved 568 DFGs. The DFG programme facilitates housing adaptations for residents with disabilities, including much needed stairlifts and wet rooms, to enable residents to live independently in their own homes.

Tackling fuel poverty

The team continue to tackle fuel poverty by helping to secure new, or improved, Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) for private rented homes.

Local Authority Delivery scheme (LADs)

The council secured funds of circa £6.5m for round 3 to assist residents with various energy savings measures e.g. external wall, loft and cavity insulation, also solar PV panels

Home Upgrade Grant Scheme (HUGs) 2

The council has secured HUGS funding worth £1.2m to help those households on low income in energy efficiency homes and who do not have gas as a source of home heating.

Retrofit

In July 2023 we secured £185K revenue from the Midlands Energy Hub as part of the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) project to deliver home based detailed retro-fit advice and support.

Household Support Fund

In 2023/24 to date a total of £250,000 has been delivered to replace defective boilers in low-income households. This scheme assisted 64 households

Gas Safety Charity Hardship Fund

£21k has been provided by Foundation Independent Living Trust to address gas safety, gas leak or CO poisoning for repairs, servicing, testing and replacements.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

In March 2024, £125,000 was awarded for targeted help to residents on topics such as energy saving, bill reduction, carbon saving and support of the voluntary sector in the same areas.

Additional (HMO) Licensing scheme launched

Following comprehensive statutory consultation, the first area of the borough for additional licensing of house in multiple occupation launched in September 2022. This licensing scheme covers 4 wards and includes all private rented HMOs that have 3 or more tenants from more than 1 household.

Housing Enforcement

In 2023/24 the service has received 882 enquiries about housing standards of which 196 warranted a follow-up property inspection. In most cases landlords have complied with requests to improve properties but statutory action was required in others.

4. Outside Bodies

We continue to work closely with key partners in delivering our regeneration objectives.

5. Thank you

All this does not without experienced and dedicated Officers who work tirelessly to the political priorities that the experienced Administration set. The partnership working on a Black Country level, wider regional level and nationally has contributed a great deal to our success in Walsall Borough and a successful region leads to a successful Walsall Borough.



Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. J. ...'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Associate Leader and Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth and Regeneration