



# Walsall Council

Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 7th January 2013 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

## Present

### Councillor D.A. Anson (Mayor) in the Chair

#### Councillor M. Nazir (Deputy Mayor)

“ A.J.A. Andrew  
“ R.E. Andrew  
“ T.G. Ansell  
“ M. Arif  
“ I. Azam  
“ D.J. Barker  
“ O.D. Bennett  
“ M.A. Bird  
“ C. Bott  
“ P. Bott  
“ R. Burley  
“ B. Cassidy  
“ K. Chambers  
“ A.G. Clarke  
“ J. R. Cook  
“ D. Coughlan  
“ S.P. Coughlan  
“ C.U. Creaney  
“ A. Ditta  
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul  
“ J. Fitzpatrick  
“ S.F. Fitzpatrick  
“ M. D. Flower  
“ A.D. Harris  
“ L.A. Harrison  
“ E.F. Hughes  
“ G. Illmann-Walker

#### Councillor D. James

“ L.D. Jeavons  
“ T.J. Jukes  
“ P. Lane  
“ M. Longhi  
“ Mrs. B.V. McCracken  
“ J. Murray  
“ T.S. Oliver  
“ G. Perry  
“ K. Phillips  
“ L.J. Rattigan  
“ J. Rochelle  
“ E.B. Russell  
“ H.S. Sarohi  
“ K. Sears  
“ Mrs. D.A. Shires  
“ I. Shires  
“ P.E. Smith  
“ R.M. Thomas  
“ C.D.D. Towe  
“ A. Underhill  
“ S. Wade  
“ V. Whyte  
“ V.G. Woodruff  
“ R.V. Worrall  
“ A. Young  
“ Zahid Ali

72. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Hussain, Martin, Turner and Westley.

73. **Minutes**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2012 copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed.

74. **Declarations of interest**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer (Mr. Cox) gave an explanation to members on general and specific dispensations as introduced under the Localism Act 2011 and advised members that in relation to the recommendation from Cabinet relating to Council tax discounts for empty properties and more particularly in relation to second homes, members declaring a pecuniary interest should leave the room.

The following members declared their interest in the item indicated:

Councillor D. Coughlan	}	
Councillor S. Coughlan	}	
Councillor Flower	}	
Councillor McCracken	}	
Councillor Murray	}	} Item 9(2) – Council tax discounts for } empty properties (pecuniary)
Councillor Longhi	}	
Councillor Hussain	}	
Councillor Arif	}	
Councillor Perry	}	
Councillor Nazir	}	

75. **Petitions**

The following petitions were submitted:

- (1) Councillor James – Walsall Private Hire Association proposing amendments to conditions - parity with hackney carriage vehicle conditions.
- (2) Councillor McCracken – Planning application - 1 Woodside Close, Walsall – demolition of existing shops and construction of 14 flats.

- (3) Councillor D. Shires – Meadow House establishment of a medical centre on the site for the benefit of all.

## 76. **Questions by members of the Council**

### (1) **Taxi services**

Councillor James asked the following question of Councillor Sears:

“Does the Council agree that parity should be established between Private Taxi Operators and Hackney Taxi Operators in the rules on age of vehicle replacement, age of vehicle renewal and standard on Taxi Advertising?. This would improve the quality of Taxi Services for all and promote an equitable system across Taxi Operators in Walsall.”

Councillor Sears replied that there was a good reason that there were different requirements applicable to hackney carriage and private hire fleets. Hackney carriages were primarily specially designed vehicles or based on commercial vehicle models. They were designed and built for a higher intensity of use and mileage. He said that manufacturers recommended a working life of 10-11 years for London style cabs and 6-9 years for Euro style vehicles. It was also a requirement that hackney carriages were wheelchair accessible. Private hire vehicles, on the other hand, were typically saloon cars designed for domestic use.

Councillor Sears said that if parity of age limits was introduced for private hire vehicles this could increase the age of the fleet with domestic cars being used until they were 15 or 18 years of age. This would not be to the benefit of the customer and other road users. If the Council introduced parity of age of replacement vehicles, this would also potentially bring in the requirement for private hire vehicles to be new when first licensed, increasing costs to the operators in these financially difficult times.

The requirements on advertising were virtually the same for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in that the licensing service must give permission for advertising on vehicles. In addition, hackney carriages may not carry advertising for private hire operators. This latter requirement was introduced after being raised by the Hackney Carriage Association.

Councillor Sears informed the Council that these matters were discussed by the Licensing and Safety Committee on 28th November 2012. He said that the Law Commission was carrying out a fundamental review into the private hire and hackney carriage legislation that operated throughout England and Wales. The Committee resolved not to make premature decisions now, but to await the outcome of the review, which was expected, together with the draft Bill, by November 2013.

Councillor James asked the following supplementary question:

Would it be possible to meet urgently with the operators on this as waiting for the Law Commission was putting businesses at risk?

Councillor Sears replied yes.

(2) **Bloxwich Road, Leamore Lane and Harden Road junctions**

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Ansell:

“Whilst welcoming your plan to bring much needed improvements to the Bloxwich Road/Leamore Lane/Harden Road junctions; a plan which will provide better pedestrian crossing facilities, remove the ineffective bus lane, increase traffic movement for all vehicle users travelling in all directions and replace the old signal equipment with new “intelligent” signal equipment which will mean less queuing traffic, will you nevertheless, address the genuine concerns of the shopkeepers from Furniture Corner to the Post Office (Bloxwich Road) by shortening the proposed length of double yellow lines and installing a single yellow line instead on the stretch of road outside the shops, where double yellow lines were proposed in the original plan, thus allowing more time restricted parking?”

Councillor Ansell replied that the improvements at the Rosum junction were intended to tackle local congestion and promote better road safety for both drivers and pedestrians. He acknowledged the concerns of the shopkeepers from Furniture Corner to the Post Office on Bloxwich Road, but he could not ignore the potential conflict between vehicles waiting to turn right into Harden Road and vehicles travelling southbound on Bloxwich Road if any vehicle parked between ASK Motors and Hot Chilli’s (600 Bloxwich Road).

The Council as the “highway authority” had an obligation to facilitate the safe and smooth movement of traffic along its road network in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004. The proposed extension of the prohibition of waiting and loading was considered to be the appropriate restriction for this location to safely achieve this aim, whereas a single yellow line permitting parking at certain times would mean that the potential for a collision would remain.

He said that the proposals would encourage the turnover of the available parking outside the shops by introducing limited waiting (30 minutes, no return within an hour). He believed that this had the potential to compensate for any loss of capacity by removing any “all day parking” which might currently exist.

Councillor Ansell assured the Council that the proposals had been designed to minimise impact on local traders, the right turn lane had been reduced to an absolute safe minimum so as to minimise the loss of any parking capacity. The improvements would also result in the junction being less congested and safer, making it a more attraction location overall.

There was plentiful parking provision for shoppers in the immediate vicinity of the shops in question, both on-street in Bloxwich Road and in the car park opposite and this would continue to be the case in the proposed junction layout.

Councillor Smith thanked Councillor Ansell for his reply and asked the following supplementary question:

In outlining what will hopefully lead generally to a much safer system for both pedestrians and vehicle users, he asked further, on the issue of safety, to explain what action enforcement officers have taken or are likely to take with regard to a vehicular access, between Bloxwich Road and the ASK Motors site (formerly the Black Horse) being built and opened up in a different position and angle to that given in the planning permission, leading to vehicles now driving on and off the site using this access and therefore posing a potentially serious threat to both road and pedestrian safety, so near to the Rosum traffic lights?

Councillor Ansell replied that he had only just been made aware of this and would get it looked at tomorrow. There was already access to the furniture store so there was no reason for ASK Motors to use the access in this way.

(3) **The Friends around the Lea, Harden and Goscote**

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor A. Andrew:

“Since Council leaders and Whg, made the much welcomed decision in May 2012 to abandon plans to build on Harden and Goscote’s green belt land known as “The Lea” and following the setting up of a local residents group known as “The Friends Around the Lea”, would you outline some of the progress that has been made to date as well as plans for the future with regard to the assistance that the Council has given and will be giving to the Friends Around the Lea to help them achieve their aspirations?”

Councillor Andrew replied that greenspaces had been working extremely closely with the Friends Group to draw strategic plans together to raise the value and quality of the Lea. In the new Greenspaces Strategy the site had been designated with a “strategic greenspace” title meaning in short that it was a priority focus over the next 5 years for investment and use of Council resources.

He said that in partnership with the Friends of the Lea, the Council had undertaken a number of quick hits in partnership with the Community Payback Team which had seen shrub planting at the entrance points faced back to improve the welcoming and accessible nature of the site and the hedge along the frontage reduced in height. The Community Payback Team had been working to remove fly tipping and litter. New enforcement signage had been installed and street pride operational services had been assisting with litter collection, removal of drug paraphernalia and fly tipping on the abandoned estates and public highways to the rear of the green space.

Councillor Andrew further said that the Council had provided a sum of £31k (£24k from greenspace resources and £7k from regeneration services) towards the cost of £40k required to deliver a series of high profile big impact improvements to improve access and usage of the green space as follows:

- Removal of the various overgrown and unmanageable mounds/bunds along the frontage and within the site.
- Construction of a new footpath through the site to link up to the existing footpath network. This would improve access and increase positive usage.
- Replacement of the poor quality football goals with two new sets of informal seven-a-side goals and pitches which could be rotated to reduce wear and tear on the grass playing area.
- Installation of anti motorcycle barriers at key entrances.
- The group had also applied for funding to install a bench and bin and a number of trees along the new path.

Councillor Smith on behalf of the Friends Around the Lea thanked Councillor Andrew for the Council's commitment to ensuring The Lea now remains green belt, for the efforts and actions to date by Walsall Council and Community Payback working in partnership with the volunteer Friends Around the Lea to bring about much improvement and asked the following supplementary question:

Could I ask for your continued support in ensuring that this land that was written off as scrub land not fit for purpose by some Councillors at a Planning Committee meeting as recently as March 2012, be fully restored to its former glory as a green, clean open space, a sanctuary for wildlife and a recreational asset to the local and wider community?

Councillor Andrew said that Friends Around the Lea and Community Payback had made a difference and the Council would support them in the future.

**(4) Beddows Road, Ryecroft - regeneration**

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor A. Andrew:

“Since most of the properties in Beddows Road, Ryecroft, Walsall were demolished some years ago, leaving empty swathes of land that have, on occasions, been a magnet for fly-tippers, could the Portfolio holder for Regeneration outline what progress has been made to date with regard to the regeneration of this land, as there is a great need locally for new homes, especially homes at affordable rents?”

Councillor Andrew replied that the land at Beddows Road was jointly owned by Walsall Housing Group and private sector house builder Lovell's. Whg had progressed the site to detail planning consent and the scheme would comprise 96 new build homes of which 56 would be for outright sale and 46 for affordable rent tenure. Whg were currently seeking funding solutions in recognition that the rented element would require external funding/subsidy to achieve a financially viable scheme. The scheme was included within Whg's 2014/15 programme subject to funding provision.

Councillor Andrew said that Whg had significantly escalated the scale of their development programme during the past 3 years having been successful in obtaining Homes and Community Agency (HCA) funding which would enable 195 new build homes to start on the site prior to March 2013. The Council would continue to develop the next phase of strategic development sites during the next 12 months and Beddows Road remained an integral part of the Whg's planned future programme.

Councillor Smith thanked Councillor Andrew for his response which seemed to suggest that there was some "light at the end of the tunnel" with regard to the regeneration of the Beddows Road land in the Coalpool/Ryecroft area and asked the following supplementary question:

Given that over the last 12 years, as New Deal and other investments, the majority of which took place in the Bloxwich East part of Blakenall, brought a new Blakenall Village Centre, improvements to the shopping area of Blakenall, a new Blakenall Library and Health Centre and furthermore given that these improvements coincided with the loss of facilities for the Coalpool/Ryecroft area, such as the loss of the Coalpool Library, the loss of the Coalpool Clinic, the loss of the only local butchers shop, the loss of the only fresh fruit and vegetable shop and a decline in local community facility investment in Coalpool/Ryecroft, could you offer some hope that any such regeneration of local lands might also provide opportunities to consider further investment possibilities into the Coalpool/Ryecroft area in general, which many residents feel has become a "forgotten corner"?

Councillor Andrew said that Whg would be leading on overall investment in the area and the Council would support investment in the area, not just housing but regeneration generally.

**(5) Poets Estate and Goscote Estate – regeneration of brownfield sites**

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor A. Andrew:

"Since Council leaders and Whg, made the much locally welcomed decision in May 2012 to abandon plans to build on Harden and Goscote's green belt land known as "The Lea", is the Portfolio holder for Regeneration able to outline what progress has since been with regard to new regeneration plans for the brownfield sites where properties were demolished on Poets Estate and Goscote Estate, lands which have been and still are a constant source of nuisance and magnets for anti-social behaviour?"

Councillor Andrew said that Whg were currently preparing a revised development and business plan for the project, based upon some of the design principles contained in the Goscote Lane Corridor Design Masterplan, and further development cost appraisals which would together enable Whg to submit a revised planning application. That application would exclude any development of the land known locally as "the Lea".

He said that Whg would undertake a procurement process to attract and secure house builder partners to take on the redevelopment and continue to explore options for public funding subsidy to support the delivery of future phases of the project. Financial subsidies would be needed to deliver the project as the current market appetite for residential development remained low, however, it was hoped that the momentum created by the redevelopment of Barracks Lane and Well Place would improve investor confidence in the area.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Though it was pleasing that there were signs of positive co-operation and promised initiatives between Walsall Council, Whg and local residents (via Friends around the Lea) on issues relating to these empty sites, such as; requests for CCTV cameras, signposts to deter fly tippers, concern over horses on land near to residential properties, clean up proposals by Community Payback and others, the need to re-position and make aesthetically more attractive the concrete blocks at the end of the decommissioned roads and the resetting up of the local Goscote Regeneration group, and bearing in mind that long suffering local residents on the Poets Estate in particular have now endured almost 10 years of the sights and sounds of fire engines, police cars and ambulances, the smell of burning tyres and other debris, almost 10 years of fly tipping and other anti-social behaviour, a decade of dereliction of which they have had their fill, would Councillor Andrew assure me, this Council and the public that Walsall Council's Regeneration department will make every effort to use its powers and influence on Whg, the government and other appropriate agencies to ensure that these lands are regenerated as soon as possible with much needed and affordable homes.

Councillor Andrew replied yes.

**77. Mayoralty 2013/14**

It was **moved** by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Ditta and:

**Resolved**

That Councillor M. Nazir be nominated as Mayor and Councillor S.P. Coughlan be nominated as Deputy Mayor of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council for the municipal year 2013/2014.

**78. Recommendations of Cabinet**

**(1) Localised Council tax support scheme 2013/14**

The report to Cabinet was submitted.



Councillor Towe drew the Council's attention to an error in the Cabinet report on page 15 in Option 2, the word "current" should be deleted.

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

### **Resolved**

- (1) That, after considering the outcomes of the consultation and the equality impact assessment, option 1 (to continue with the current Council tax benefit scheme and fund reduction in grant from other sources) be adopted for the 2013/14 localised council tax reduction scheme, with amendments for the full disregard of all war disablement and war widows' pensions.
- (2) That the Chief Finance officer be delegated authority to make amendments to the scheme to reflect any changes required by legislation and or government guidance, in consultation with the portfolio holder.

### **(2) Council tax discounts for empty properties**

The report to Cabinet was submitted:

It was **moved** by Councillor Towe, seconded by Councillor Bird and:

### **Resolved**

- (1) That approval be given to change the level of discount from Council tax for an unoccupied and unfurnished property to 100% over a 3 month period (class C exemption).
- (2) That approval be given to change the level of discount from Council tax for uninhabitable properties requiring structural repairs to 50% over a 12 month period (class A exemption).
- (3) That approval be given to change the level of discount from Council tax for a property that is no one's sole or main residence, but still furnished to 0% (second home).
- (4) That approval be given to introduce an additional 50% premium for properties that have remained unoccupied and unfurnished for greater than two years.
- (5) That the Chief Finance Officer be delegated authority to amend the discounts or premium being applied to reflect any changes required by legislation and/or government guidance, in consultation with the portfolio holder.

79. **Recommendation of Audit Committee – Treasury management mid-year position statement 2012/13**

The report to Audit Committee was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Hughes, seconded by Councillor Chambers and it was:

**Resolved**

That the Treasury Management mid-year position statement April to September 2012 be noted.

80. **Recommendations of Licensing and Safety Committee - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011**

A report was submitted.

(1) **Late night levy provision**

It was **moved** by Councillor Sears, duly seconded and it was:

**Resolved**

That the Council does not wish to progress further the introduction of the late night levy provisions contained in the Police and Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011/

(2) **Early morning alcohol restriction orders**

**Resolved**

That the report relating to Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Orders be noted.

81. **Pay and reward policy**

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Towe, seconded by Councillor Bird and:

**Resolved**

- (1) That Council approves the Pay and Reward Policy, with attached appendices.
- (2) That Council re-affirms the procedure for the appointment of Chief Officers as set out in the constitution.

82. **Council tax base 2013/14**

The report was submitted.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the Council tax base for 2013/14 be set at 60,664.11 band D equivalents.
- (2) That the Chief Financial Officer be delegated authority to approve any final changes to the Council tax base in order to inform preceptors of the final figures by 31 January 2013, in consultation with the Leader and portfolio holder for finance and personnel. Final figures will be reported to Council on 21 February 2013 within the budget report.

83. **Safeguarding children update**

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor R. Andrew, seconded by Councillor Bird and:

**Resolved**

That the progress and direction of travel against the strategic improvement priorities be noted.

84. **Members' allowances 2013/14**

The report was submitted.

Professor Steve Leach, the Chair of the Independent Panel on members' allowances introduced the panel's report and explained their recommendations.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and seconded by Councillor A. Andrew:

- (1) That the Council adopt Option 3 as set out in Table 2 of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- (2) That that the Independent Remuneration Panel be convened every 4 years, unless major changes in Council structures and members' responsibilities are introduced.
- (3) That the present criteria for the annual updating of members' allowances – to be in line with the annual JNC pay award for officers – should continue to be applied.

- (4) That the carers allowance continue to be claimed at the present level, but not as a Special Responsibility Allowance.
- (5) That all travel and subsistence rates remain the same.
- (6) That members' entitlement to pension rights be maintained.
- (7) That the job description of the Deputy Leader of the Council be redrafted to provide more detail.
- (8) That Special Responsibility Allowances not be provided to non-Councillor members of the Standards and Audit Committee.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried – 22 members voting in favour and 8 against. Councillors C. Bott, P. Bott and Smith asked for their names to be recorded as voting against the motion.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Council adopt Option 3 as set out in Table 2 of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- (2) That that the Independent Remuneration Panel be convened every 4 years, unless major changes in Council structures and members' responsibilities are introduced.
- (3) That the present criteria for the annual updating of members' allowances - to be in line with the annual JNC pay award for officers – should continue to be applied.
- (4) That the carers allowance continue to be claimed at the present level, but not as a Special Responsibility Allowance.
- (5) That all travel and subsistence rates remain the same.
- (6) That members' entitlement to pension rights be maintained.
- (7) That the job description of the Deputy Leader of the Council be redrafted to provide more detail.
- (8) That Special Responsibility Allowances not be provided to non-Councillor members of the Standards and Audit Committee.

## **85. Portfolio holder briefings**

### **(a) Leisure and culture**

Councillor Harris, portfolio holder for Leisure and culture gave a presentation.

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

At this point in the meeting, the time being 8.45 p.m., it was **moved** by Councillor Bird, duly seconded and:

### **Resolved**

That Council procedure rules be suspended to enable the business of the meeting to be completed.

#### **(b) Public protection**

Councillor Ali, portfolio holder for Public protection gave a presentation.

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

#### **86. Notice of motion – School buildings**

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Oliver:

This Council notes:

- The significant concerns raised through a range of condition surveys of the need for major refurbishment and re-build of many of our school buildings across the borough, with the consequent impact on the quality and educational achievement of our young people – and the potential creation of significant regeneration and local employment opportunities.
- That six Walsall secondary schools were scheduled for re-build and/or major refurbishment under the Building Schools for the Future Wave 6a, which was controversially scrapped by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, on coming into office (Alumwell BEC, Frank F. Harrison, Joseph Leckie, Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, Shire Oak, the Streetly School). Furthermore that the subsequent waves under both BSF and the Primary Capital Programme would also have continued to deliver major projects and benefit to Walsall schools.
- Walsall Council subsequently made a bid under the new government Priority School Building Programme PFI scheme, to a total of £60.2 million, which was turned down by the Secretary of State in April 2012 (Frank F. Harrison, Joseph Leckie, Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, Willenhall School, Hatherton Primary, Rushall JMI).

- The public statement by the Walsall cabinet portfolio holder, Councillor Rachel Walker in June 2012 that “We remain confident we can satisfy our ambition for making all Walsall school buildings the envy of the UK”.

The Council therefore requests an urgent statement from the portfolio holder as to the detail of plans to achieve this ambition, and further resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education to outline our dismay at the impact of his decisions on the borough of Walsall.

**Amendment** moved by Councillor S. Coughlan and duly seconded:

That the last paragraph of the motion be deleted and replaced with the following:

This Council further notes:

- (1) The recent Ofsted rating of Walsall primary schools at 130 out of 151.
- (2) The continuing (bottom quartile of worse) performance at all key stages in Department of Education league tables.
- (3) The “inadequate” judgement from the 2012 Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and looked after children.
- (4) The highly critical Cordis Bright report into service provision for children in disability.

In the light of this catalogue of failed policies and leadership, this Council believes that that time has come for the current portfolio holder for children’s services to stand down from her post.

At this point in the meeting in response to comments by a number of Councillors that this amendment was out of order, the Chief Executive referred members to Council procedure rule 15.6(b)(iv) and that it appeared to officers that this amendment was relevant and had advised the Mayor accordingly. The Mayor indicated that he would accept the amendment.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost – 26 members voting in favour and 28 against.

**Amendment** moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor P. Bott:

That the following words be added at the end of the final paragraph of the motion:

“and calls on the Secretary of State to reconsider the 2012 bid”

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried – 29 members voting in favour and 25 against.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was:

### **Resolved**

This Council notes:

- The significant concerns raised through a range of condition surveys of the need for major refurbishment and re-build of many of our school buildings across the borough, with the consequent impact on the quality and educational achievement of our young people – and the potential creation of significant regeneration and local employment opportunities.
- That six Walsall secondary schools were scheduled for re-build and/or major refurbishment under the Building Schools for the Future Wave 6a, which was controversially scrapped by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, on coming into office (Alumwell BEC, Frank F. Harrison, Joseph Leckie, Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, Shire Oak, the Streetly School). Furthermore that the subsequent waves under both BSF and the Primary Capital Programme would also have continued to deliver major projects and benefit to Walsall schools.
- Walsall Council subsequently made a bid under the new government Priority School Building Programme PFI scheme, to a total of £60.2 million, which was turned down by the Secretary of State in April 2012 (Frank F. Harrison, Joseph Leckie, Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, Willenhall School, Hatherton Primary, Rushall JMI).
- The public statement by the Walsall cabinet portfolio holder, Councillor Rachel Walker in June 2012 that “We remain confident we can satisfy our ambition for making all Walsall school buildings the envy of the UK”.

The Council therefore requests an urgent statement from the portfolio holder as to the detail of plans to achieve this ambition, and further resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education to outline our dismay at the impact of his decisions on the borough of Walsall and calls on the Secretary of State to reconsider the 2012 bid.

### **87. Notice of motion – Concessionary travel scheme**

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor D. Shires and seconded by Councillor Cook:

Council recognises that young unemployed people are particularly disadvantaged by the current economic situation and that they deserve extra support to move onto the first steps to permanent employment.

Council notes and supports the £1 billion Youth Service Contract – launched by the coalition government as a result of Liberal Democrat intervention – that opens up various opportunities for young people.

Council further acknowledges that the cost of transport to job centres, job interviews, work experience and apprenticeships can be a tall order for young people.

Council, therefore, requests the Chief Executive to write to Centro to enquire the feasibility of extending the concessionary travel scheme to include 18-24 year olds in receipt of job seekers allowance or undertaking apprenticeships and to report back to Council in three months.

**Amendment** moved by Councillor I. Shires and seconded by Councillor D. Shires:

Council recognises that young unemployed people are particularly disadvantaged by the current economic situation and that they deserve extra support to move onto the first steps to permanent employment.

Council notes and supports the £1 billion Youth Service Contract – launched by the coalition government as a result of Liberal Democrat intervention – that opens up various opportunities for young people.

Council further acknowledges that the cost of transport to job centres, job interviews, work experience and apprenticeships can be a tall order for young people.

Council, therefore, requests the Chief Executive to write to Centro to sign off the Jobcentre Plus funding application which extends the concessionary travel scheme to unemployed people. The scheme should complement the new Government bus travel to help jobseekers and priority should be given to support those aged 18-24 year olds in receipt of job seekers allowance or undertaking apprenticeships and to report back progress to the Council in three month.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried.

Further **amendment** moved by Councillor James:

That the following be added to the motion as the final paragraph:

Further, whilst Council welcomes the incentives to local employers to take on apprentices under the Walsall Works apprenticeship programme, it is noted that less than 50% of the available opportunities have been taken up by employers. Council therefore requests the Chief Executive to take urgent action to improve the delivery of this initiative, and report back to Council in three months.



The Mayor informed Councillor James that he considered that this amendment was out of order as it related to the apprentice programme and not travel.

The amendment moved by Councillor I. Shires was put as the substantive motion and declared carried and it was:

### **Resolved**

That this Council recognises that young unemployed people are particularly disadvantaged by the current economic situation and that they deserve extra support to move onto the first steps to permanent employment.

Council notes and supports the £1 billion Youth Service Contract – launched by the coalition government as a result of Liberal Democrat intervention – that opens up various opportunities for young people.

Council further acknowledges that the cost of transport to job centres, job interviews, work experience and apprenticeships can be a tall order for young people.

Council, therefore, requests the Chief Executive to write to Centro to sign off the Jobcentre Plus funding application which extends the concessionary travel scheme to unemployed people. The scheme should complement the new Government bus travel to help jobseekers and priority should be given to support those aged 18-24 year olds in receipt of job seekers allowance or undertaking apprenticeships and to report back progress to the Council in three month.

The meeting terminated at 10.20 p.m.

Mayor:

Date: