

Cabinet – 8 February 2023

We Are Walsall 2040 Strategy Consultation

Portfolio:	Councillor Perry & Councillor Murphy
Related portfolios:	All
Service:	Policy & Strategy Unit
Wards:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 We Are Walsall 2040 is an opportunity for us to listen to residents, businesses and communities and understand what is important now and for the future. It gives us a unique opportunity to shape the borough that we want to work in and live in and create a better tomorrow for those born today.
- 1.2 We are ambitious for the borough and want to create a thriving place with healthy and happy people. The We Are Walsall 2040 strategy allows us to create a shared narrative of the Walsall we all want to create by 2040. It enables a redefined agreement between public agencies, community groups and residents on what we can work together to deliver and how people can help themselves, help each other and their communities.

2. Summary

- 2.1 A range of engagement activities were carried out with residents, businesses, community groups, schools and partners throughout June-November 2022. In total over 8,000 views have been received through the We Are Walsall engagement programme and the insight has helped us consider the key priorities to inform the development of this 2040 draft borough plan.
- 2.2 The draft strategy framework has incorporated these many resident, partner, and business views in shaping the vision and four strategic ambitions. Each ambition consists of three themes of focus with high level outcomes to be achieved by 2040 for each theme.
- 2.3 The strategy articulates Our Walsall story, what partners will work together to achieve over the next 18 years and redefines our relationship with residents and

communities. It outlines what we expect residents and communities to do to ensure we co-design and co-deliver a borough of which we are all proud.

- 2.4 The draft strategy framework will be sent out for consultation to partners, community groups and the public in February 2023 for a short consultation to finish before the pre-election period. The final full strategy will be approved at Council in June 2023.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet approve the We Are Walsall 2040 strategy high level framework as appended to this report.
- 3.2. That Cabinet recommend the We Are Walsall 2040 framework to Scrutiny Overview Committee for consideration as part of the consultation.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 A paper was taken to Cabinet in December 2021 outlining our plans to work with partners to develop a borough plan for 2040 (The borough plan-‘Our Walsall Story’) that will provide a framework for future collaboration across all communities and partners with a shared ambition, priorities and outcomes to create a borough that works for everyone.
- 4.2 The plan signals Walsall’s ambition of place to encourage regional and national collaboration and to create a thriving borough of opportunity to attract investors and developers to the Borough.
- 4.3 Through the summer of 2022 data analysis was carried out to develop a rich and insight needs of Walsall now and for the future. This insight has been used alongside engagement feedback to develop the focus of the borough plan to ensure we can work towards a Walsall where all can thrive in 2040.
- 4.4 A comprehensive programme of engagement was designed to capture a breadth of real voices from residents, community groups, businesses and partners throughout the summer and autumn of 2022. This included commissioning a range of engagement activities using qualitative and quantitative methods and co-delivery of activities by community leaders and trusted voices to ensure we were as open to as many views as possible.
- 4.5 Approximately 8 thousand responses have been analysed over recent weeks to create a clear picture of emerging views, priorities and needs for Walsall 2040. A paper was taken to Cabinet in December 2022 outlining the detailed findings of the engagement programme and shared with We Are Walsall 2040 partners.
- 4.6 Through the engagement responses we have heard the clear desire from residents and communities to focus on our regeneration ambitions to revamp

and revitalise town centres and create a draw for businesses and leisure and retail opportunities. They want Walsall to be a destination of choice -create a pull for them and others to come to the borough to shop and socialise, live and work.

- 4.7 The cost-of-living crisis has compounded people's concerns for their immediate needs and we heard from many residents that they are keen for Walsall to have more opportunities for jobs and skills, good quality homes available for all and opportunities to stay healthy and well. Residents have also shared that they want to feel safe in towns, neighbourhoods, and streets, have a clean and green borough that is tidy and litter free, with the excellent parks and green spaces maintained for now and the future, and for Council and partners to do more to help reduce environmental impact of waste and address the challenges around Climate change.
- 4.8 Throughout the engagement residents and community groups have told us they want to do more to help themselves, their communities, and the borough. Many have acknowledged that they can play a greater role in shaping the communities and centres within which they live and work. One of the key aims of the Borough Plan is to articulate to the public what public partners and agencies will do and what we expect residents to do for themselves. It redefines our relationship with residents and communities by highlighting what we expect residents and communities to do to work with us to create a borough of which we are all proud. This is captured in the 'You will' sections of the draft strategy as outlined below.
- 4.9 The draft strategy framework is attached at **Appendix 1**. The vision is *Walsall in 2040 will be a place where people are proud to live and residents and businesses work with public services to create a thriving borough of opportunity.*
- 4.10 Aligned to this vision are principles by which the public can expect all partners to operate:
- We are sustainable
 - We are accessible
 - We are local
 - We are resident focussed
 - We are honest
- 4.11 The draft strategy consists of four strategic ambitions. Each ambition consists of three themes of focus and under each the following which can be seen in **Appendix 1**:
- high level outcomes to be achieved by 2040;
 - what partners will do - 'We will'; and
 - what we expect residents to do – 'So you can'
- 4.12 Ambition 1: **Thriving and happy**
- Child friendly borough
 - Empowered communities
 - Feeling safe

4.13 Ambition 2: **Healthy and well**

- Living active lives
- A community that cares
- Good mental wellbeing

4.14 Ambition 3: **Prosperous and innovative**

- Quality homes
- A strong economy for all
- Connected borough

4.15 Ambition 4: **Proud of our borough**

- Clean and green borough
- Celebrating our culture and heritage
- Vibrant towns

4.16 The draft strategy will be sent out for consultation with the public, Members, businesses and partners until 23 March when consultation will cease due to the pre-election period. The feedback will be considered in developing the full final document and to shape the supporting 3/5-year delivery plan. The final full strategy will be approved at Council in June 2023.

Risk management

4.17 The key risk associated with We Are Walsall 2040 is that the plan is not fit for purpose leading to lack of buy-in from key partners and the public and failure to impact on delivering much needed ambition for the borough.

4.18 The breadth and scale of engagement activities carried out between June-November 2022 - the thousands of people consulted ensure that the strategy is built on a strong foundation of c-produced insight, based on need and public priorities.

4.19 Partners have been presented with the engagement findings and involved in drafting the borough plan to ensure wider partner buy-in and support and creation of a collective vision and ambition.

Financial implications

4.20 Whilst there are no direct financial implications of this report, the strategy will sit alongside the Council Plan as a strategic framework for the Council when setting the strategic direction of financial investments informing strategic decision-making.

Legal implications

4.21 There are no direct legal implications from this report. An Equality impact assessment is in development and will be completed following receipt of formal consultation feedback on the draft strategy and presented alongside the final strategy to June Cabinet and Council.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

4.22 There are no direct procurement implications from this report.

Property implications

4.23 There are no direct property implications from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

4.24 Health and wellbeing have been highlighted as a key priority for residents and many community groups and public have expressed a desire in the engagement feedback to do more to manage their own and their community's health.

4.25 The 2040 borough plan aligns with the new Health & Wellbeing Strategy and work is already underway to embed health within the 2040 delivery plan and take a health in all policies approach.

Staffing implications

4.26 There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

4.27 The We Are Walsall 2040 borough plan considers addressing inequalities as a key cross cutting focus to ensure we can meet the ask of residents to create a borough that thrives. Specific health inequalities are addressed within the **We are healthy and well** strategic ambition.

Climate Change

4.28 Resident feedback from the Postal and online survey has highlighted that 6 in 10 are concerned about climate change and the impacts for their future. Nine in ten residents in both the postal and online surveys have indicated that they want the Council to work with partners in the borough to look at what else we can do to mitigate the impact of climate change. This is therefore a key focus within the **We are Proud of our borough** ambition and the **Clean and green** theme.

Consultation

4.29 The 2040 plan is based on extensive engagement that was carried out as outlined in this report. The draft borough plan will be approved for consultation by Cabinet and open for consultation formally until 23 March 2023.

5. Decide

This is a unique opportunity to develop a borough strategy, which sets out the ambitions for Walsall by 2040. The four strategic ambitions and 12 themes have

been developed through consideration of needs assessment/insight and the engagement feedback received through the 2040 engagement programme as well as ensuring alignment against existing strategies (e.g., Health and Wellbeing, Economic strategy, Street Scene strategy, Mental Wellbeing strategy etc...).

6. Respond

The Council is already undertaking programmes and activities that directly address the priorities and concerns identified by the public through the 2040 conversations. Work will continue to develop a clear 3–5-year delivery plan to ensure that we achieve key milestones and staging posts on our journey towards the 2040 ambitions.

7. Review

Cabinet will have an opportunity to reflect and consider the draft strategy consultation feedback in June 2023 and shape the final strategy before Cabinet and Council in June 2023.

Updates against performance in the delivery plan will be provided to the Walsall Proud Partnership and through portfolio holders to ensure performance against the borough plan 2040 is on track.

Background papers

Appendix 1 – We Are Walsall 2040 Draft Strategy Framework
Cabinet December 2021 The borough plan-‘Our Walsall Story’
Cabinet December 2022 We Are Walsall 2040 Engagement feedback

Author

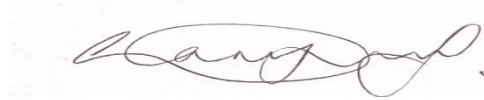
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Simon Neilson
Executive Director

30 January 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Perry', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Councillor Perry
Portfolio Holder

30 January 2023

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