

Cabinet – 21 June 2023

We are Walsall 2040 Strategy Consultation

Portfolio:	Councillor Perry, Deputy Leader & Resilient Communities Councillor Murphy, Street Pride
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 during 2022 and over 8,000 views received. The insight from this engagement and from analysis of data about Walsall informed the development of a draft We are Walsall 2040 plan. This plan was presented to Cabinet in February 2022 and was agreed to proceed to consultation for a period of 6 weeks to gauge further views from residents, community groups, businesses and partners on the draft vision and priorities.
- 2.2 The draft strategy framework was shared online through the Commonplace consultation platform and with flyers and posters in public buildings and venues. An extensive response was generated with 358 surveys completed with over 533 different comments or likes. The comments from the public and partners have been analysed and the strategy refined and amended accordingly.

3. Recommendations

3.1. That Cabinet approve the We are Walsall 2040 strategy.

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 Throughout the summer of 2022 data analysis was carried out to develop a rich insight into the 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. 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.
- 4.4 Throughout the listening and 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 We are Walsall strategy is to articulate to the public what public partners and agencies will do to enable residents to feel supported to work with their communities and to help themselves.
- 4.5 Partners have played a key role in shaping and developing the We are Walsall 2040 strategy. A strategy development group was convened in early 2022 to co-design the engagement and communications activities and ensure collective discussion and shaping of the content within the 2040 strategy. The draft strategy framework was approved for consultation by Cabinet in February 2022. It contained a vision for the borough, four overarching strategic ambitions and twelve (three per ambition) priority themes to be addressed collectively by partners, businesses, and residents between now and 2040.
- 4.6 Aligned to the 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.
- 4.7 **Ambition 1: Thriving and happy**
- Child friendly borough
 - Empowered communities
 - Feeling safe

4.8 **Ambition 2: Healthy and well**

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

4.9 **Ambition 3: Prosperous and innovative**

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

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

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

4.11 The draft strategy was sent out for consultation with the public, Members, businesses, and partners for 6 weeks. The consultation was hosted through the consultation and engagement platform Common place, with flyers and posters generated with the QR code to encourage those with smart devices to access and respond. These flyers and posters were placed in all Council buildings, partner venues and venues across the borough. Consultation packs were also created and distributed to Schools, and Cadets further views from young people. The draft and online link was circulated to partners and community groups and attendance at local events to engage in dialogue with residents. Further information was supplied on how hard copies could be obtained as required. In total 348 responses were received from Commonplace and ten via hardcopy response.

4.12 The majority of respondents (57%) agree with the vision of We are Walsall 2040 with only 20% disagreeing. Those that disagree wanted more specificity in the vision around community safety and borough cleanliness and more ambition.

4.13 The majority of respondents agreed with the four ambitions and twelve supporting priority themes (see appendix 2). The minority who disagreed did not disagree with the ambitions of themes per se; rather they wanted more specificity on detail within those themes rather than a different focus. Further, some respondents and partners and Members have urged for a greater level of ambition in several of the outcome statements, these have been amended to ensure that we are clearer on the level of ambition we aim to achieve across the outcome statements.

4.14 On the 'So you can' statements only 46% of respondents are in favour of these as an approach with a fifth (18%) disagreeing. Following discussions with partners it is agreed that these will be further developed and collectively refined with partners and the public as a separate supporting piece to the Borough strategy, rather than be included within the strategy document itself. These will come forward separately for consideration and approval in the autumn following some further reflection, development, and collective socialisation to strengthen.

4.15 The vision has been amended to be clearer that we want to be the most improved borough in the region and setting up front that we aim to be safe, healthy, and green.

Amended Vision: Walsall in 2040 will be the most improved borough in the region, a vibrant place where people are proud to live and residents in all neighbourhoods have the same life chances.

We will:

- *be a safe borough.*
- *be a healthy borough.*
- *be a green borough.*

4.16 Whilst themes and ambitions have not been changed a number of statements have been tweaked and new outcomes included to reflect partner feedback. Amends include:

- Refinements to outcomes within the Child friendly borough theme to ensure we are more ambitious regionally and nationally.
- Refinements to outcomes within Felling safe to reflect the key priority this is for residents and the level of improvement and ambition sought by the public and partners to be most improved regionally.
- The inclusion of a new outcome under Empowered Communities theme to support the borough become a volunteering borough.
- Refinements to the level of target and ambition within the Living active lives theme to ensure we are most improved regionally on smoking and drugs and go further in our ambitions to address life expectancy inequalities.
- Refinements to the outcomes under the theme of Strong economy for all so that we go further in addressing entrenched deprivation, skills gaps, and debt awareness across the borough.
- Refinements to ensure that the importance of lifelong learning is reflected rather than just education and skills from a children and young people perspective.

4.17 In general respondents reiterated that they want to feel safe in towns, neighbourhoods, and streets, have a clean and green borough that is tidy and litter free and want to see regeneration across the borough to create a vibrant destination town centre. The hundreds of comments received underpin that the ambitions and vision outlined in the draft are the right ones for the borough with a few amendments to specific outcome statements.

Risk management

4.18 The key risk associated with We are Walsall 2040 is that the delivery 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.

4.19 The breadth and scale of engagement activities carried out ensure that the strategy is built on a solid foundation of co-produced insight, based on need and public priorities.

4.20 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. Work is already underway to turn the strategy into strategic deliverables across the family of Walsall partnerships.

Financial implications

- 4.21 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

- 4.22 There are no direct legal implications from this report. An Equality impact assessment has been developed and is presented alongside this report.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.23 There are no direct procurement implications from this report., however the strategy will sit alongside the Council Plan as a strategic framework for the Council to consider and to inform decision making with respect to contracts, procurement, and social value.

Property implications

- 4.24 There are no direct property implications from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.25 Health and wellbeing has 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 communities health.
- 4.26 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

- 4.27 There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.28 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

- 4.29 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

4.30 The 2040 plan is based on extensive engagement that was carried out as outlined in this report.

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 and consultation feedback received through the 2040 programme as well as ensuring alignment against existing strategies (e.g., Health and Wellbeing, Economic strategy, Street Scene strategy, Mental Wellbeing strategy etc...). The amendments presented in this report are due to the effective consultation and listening to residents, staff, Members, and partners since the draft was published in February 2023.

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 strategic deliverables on our journey towards the 2040 ambitions.

7. Review

Updates against performance in the delivery plan will be provided to the Walsall Proud Partnership, and Cabinet to ensure performance against the We are Walsall 2040 strategy is on track.

Background papers –

[Cabinet December 2021 The borough plan- 'Our Walsall Story'](#)

[Cabinet December 2022 We are Walsall 2040 Engagement feedback](#)

[Cabinet February 2023: We are Walsall 2040 Strategy Consultation](#)

Annexes:

Appendix 1: We Are Walsall 2040 Strategy

Appendix 2: Summary of consultation

Appendix 3: EQIA

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Signed



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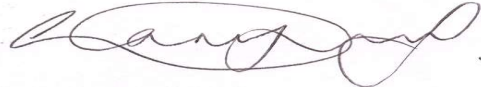
Signed



Councillor K Murphy
Portfolio Holder – Street Pride

21 June 2023

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