



Walsall Council

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY the TENTH day of JANUARY, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 30th day of December, 2010.

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 meeting of the Council held on 8 November, 2010.
4. Declarations of interest.
5. Mayor's announcements.
6. To receive any petitions.

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

(a) From the public

Mr. R. Day, Littleton Road, Willenhall (Councillor Harris)

“Could the Cabinet member explain why some of the Borough were not informed about the change from brown bin to green bin collections as not all residents receive free newspapers?”

(b) From members of the Council

(1) **Councillor Smith – Benefits based charging (Councillor McCracken)**

Given that the Cabinet at a meeting on 15 December 2010 received a report outlining a so called “estimated net saving” of £10.5 million over the 3 years 2011/2014 through the scrapping of the fairer charging policy and the introduction of a benefits based charging system to those in need of care services and given that this will mean new care charges to those who previously had services at no cost, big increases in charges for many more recipients of care, risks to life and the quality of life for those who feel they cannot afford this and thus go without care as well as bringing about what might be a “hidden agenda” goal of a sharp decline in the uptake of local authority community based services, would you, the portfolio holder accept that the implementation of this policy would amount to nothing less than the exploitation of some of our most vulnerable citizens and their use by the Council as the “cash cow” to help fill the Council’s depleted coffers?

(2) **Councillor Smith – Grit boxes (Councillor Harris)**

Would the portfolio holder for transport inform me, this Council and the public how many grit boxes (plastic or concrete) are located in each of the 20 wards of our borough, with numbers listed ward by ward?

(3) **Councillor Smith – Stafford Street, Walsall (Councillor A. Andrew)**

Would the portfolio holder inform me, the Council and the public what action, if any, this Council has taken over the last decade to address the situation of long time boarded up properties on one of the main arterial routes to Walsall from the north of the borough, namely Stafford Street ... whose dilapidated appearance in many locations on the street, not only flies in the face of the Council’s so called priorities (namely “improving the quality of our environment” and “increasing enterprise and making Walsall a vibrant borough”) but is also a disgrace to the borough and is undermining those businesses that are struggling to operate along this street amongst the surrounding dilapidation and dereliction?

(4) **Councillor Smith – Remodelling the library service
(Councillor Harris)**

Given that the Cabinet received a report on 15 December 2010 which outlined possible net savings of £1,347,748 (a fairly precise figure), in the 2 years from 2012 to 2014 from “remodelling of the library”, would the portfolio holder like to inform me, the Council and the public, how many libraries in the Borough are likely to be closed or cease to be Council run libraries as a result?

(5) **Councillor Smith – Walsall Council job losses (Councillor Towe)**

Given that Walsall Council’s agreed “vision” and so called 9 priorities include “reducing worklessness and creating opportunity and potential”, can I ask the appropriate portfolio holder to envisage and share with me, the Council and the public, an estimate of the number of people who will lose there jobs with Walsall Council over the next 4 years as a result of the savage cuts being planned?

(6) **Councillor Smith – Security in parks cemeteries and playgrounds
(Councillor Harris)**

Given that Walsall Council’s agreed “vision” and so called 9 priorities include “reducing crime and feeling safe”, would the portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public, of the number of post holders with security related responsibilities in the borough’s parks, cemeteries and playground sites, especially given what seems to be a growing level of vandalism, criminal damage, theft and arson on many of these sites and especially given that on 15 December 2010 Cabinet approved a report which outlined the deletion of 5 park ranger posts despite a warning in the same report of associated risks of vandalism, graffiti, criminal damage and arson?

(7) **Councillor Smith – Transport for social services care clients
(Councillor McCracken)**

Given that at the Cabinet meeting of 15 December 2010, Cabinet approved a report outlining an estimated net saving of £300,000 over the 3 years 2011 to 2014 on transport for social service care clients and given the report includes a somewhat questionable assessment that “the proposal; has no adverse affect on service users”, why is it, therefore, that such savings were not made earlier?

(8) **Councillor Smith – Green, grey and brown bin service
(Councillor Harris)**

Can the portfolio holder assure me, the Council and the public that there will be no changes (as part of the spending review) to the green, grey and brown bin service that will result in any of these bins being emptied less frequently than is presently the case?

8. **Mayorality 2011/2012.** Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 2(vi) to name the Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for 2011/2012 in accordance with the powers contained in Sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

9. To note the result of the by-election for the **Rushall Shelfield Ward** held on 11th November 2010 as follows:

Names of candidates	No. of votes polled	Candidate elected
Beech, Mark William	42	
Melville, Timothy Neil	90	Lorna Jean Rattigan
Rattigan, Lorna Jean	639	
Vaughan, William Ralph	141	
Worrall, Richard Vernon	611	

Turnout 15.95%

10. To confirm the following recommendation of **Cabinet**::

Black Country Joint Core Strategy

That Black Country Joint Core Strategy be adopted at the same time as other authorities on 3 February 2011 in accordance with Section 23(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

(Note: Report to Cabinet on 15 December 2010 reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

11. **Corporate parenting strategy** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

12. **Designation of Statutory Scrutiny Officer.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

13. **Local Admission Forum – appointment of members.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

14. **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2011.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

15. **Portfolio holder briefings.** To receive 5 minute presentations from the following portfolio holders:

- Communities and partnerships (Councillor Ali)
- Leisure, culture and environment (Councillor Harris)

Copies of the presentations are reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

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

16. **Membership of Scrutiny and Performance Panels:**

To note the following changes in membership for the remainder of the current municipal year:

- Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel – Councillor Rattigan in place of Councillor Douglas-Maul.
- Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel – Councillor Rattigan in place of Councillor O'Hare.

17. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors Robertson, Burley, Wilkes, Oliver, Chambers, Westley and Cassidy:**

"This Council notes with concern the vast sums of money spent on agency social workers within children's specialist services - just under £3.8m over the last 3 years.

With a substantial reduction in spending in mind, coupled with the need to provide ever more efficient specialist services to our most vulnerable children and young people, this council resolves to urgently address this waste of tax payers money by;

- Agreeing to increase the levels of pay of social workers in Walsall to match that of our neighbours in the rest of the West Midlands and Staffordshire as they are currently 30% less than Staffs County Council and the second lowest in the black country and
- ensuring that current recruitment and retention processes are thoroughly reviewed as a matter of urgency to see where they can be improved"

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

18. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors I. Shires and D.A. Shires:**

Council notes that the last Labour government closed over 5,000 Post Offices including many across Walsall borough.

Council welcomes the coalition government's plans for post offices, where there will be investment of £1.3 billion in the post office network and post offices will become one-stop shops and a central point of community life. Post offices will open longer with 80% of bank accounts will be accessible in your local post office, they will also offer information for jobseekers with post office services being offered at the shop till. Small local shops will also be able to provide post offices services.

Council will endeavour to put as much business through the post office network as possible i.e. Council tax payments and other Council services.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Postal Affairs Minister, Ed Davey MP giving this Council's full support.

(Note: Report to follow.)

19. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillor Oliver:**

"This Council offers its support to the democratic campaign by students in Walsall and across the country against the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) by the coalition government.

This Council notes the relatively low attainment and achievement of many of our young people through the educational system, and supports such measures which encourage our communities to improve their skills, qualifications and life chances. We believe that the EMA enhances the opportunities for young people from less well-off backgrounds to remain in education - as opposed to the alternative for many of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training)."

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)