



Walsall Council

Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 25th February, 2008, at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor M.G. Pitt (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor T.G. Ansell (Deputy Mayor)

“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ D.A. Anson
“ M. Arif
“ C.M. Ault
“ J.M. Barton
“ L.A. Beeley
“ Mrs. J. Beilby
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ P. Bott
“ B. Cassidy
“ K. Chambers
“ A.G. Clarke
“ S.P. Coughlan
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ A.E. Griffiths
“ A.D. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ E.F. Hughes
“ P.F. Hughes
“ A.D. Johnson
“ H. Khan
“ M. Longhi
“ S.W. Madeley
“ Mrs. C. Micklewright

Councillor Mrs. B.V. McCracken

“ Mushtaq Ahmed
“ M. Nazir
“ J.G. O'Hare
“ T.S. Oliver
“ A.J. Paul
“ J.D. Phillips
“ D.J. Pitt
“ I.C. Robertson
“ J. Rochelle
“ B. Sanders
“ H.S. Sarohi
“ K. Sears
“ Mrs. D.A. Shires
“ I. Shires
“ P.E. Smith
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ D.J. Turner
“ W.T. Tweddle
“ A. Underhill
“ R.A. Walker
“ G. Wilkes
“ V.G. Woodruff
“ M. Yasin
“ P.A. Young
“ Zahid Ali

93. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cook, Flower, Martin, Perry, K. Phillips and E.E. Pitt.

94. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2008, copies having been sent to each member of the Council be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the name of Councillor Arif being included as the mover of the amendment in minute no. 92 in place of Councillor McCracken.

95. **Declarations of interest**

The following members declared their interest in the items indicated:

Councillor Oliver	Capital Programme and Corporate Revenue Budget Plan - Employee of Palfrey Community Association.
Councillor Sears	Acorn Home Care (personal)

96. **Petitions**

The following petitions were submitted:

- (1) Councillor Madeley – Proposed closure of Darlaston Multi-Purpose Centre
- (2) Councillor Cassidy – Closure of footpath between Poole Crescent and Lawnoaks Close, Brownhills
- (3) Councillor Anson – Residents only parking on Manor Road, Pleck
- (4) Councillor M.G. Pitt – Residents of Somerfield Road and Odell Road, Bloxwich – gating of alleyways and new fencing.

97. **Questions**

(a) **From members of the public**

Brown bin collection

Mr. R. Day, the member of the public who gave notice of the question did not attend the meeting.

(b) **From members of the Council**

(1) Referrals to Standards Board for England

Councillor Smith asked the following question of the Mayor:

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how many referrals to the Standards Board for England have been made by Walsall Council’s Monitoring Officer, year by year, since the Standards Board for England was established?”

The Mayor replied that each Council has a statutory responsibility to establish a Standards Committee. The functions of the Standards Committee are not an executive function and therefore it is not appropriate to have a portfolio holder for the committee which is chaired by an independent committee member who is not a councillor.

He said that the Standards Board for England was established under the Local Government Act 2000. Part of its role is to receive and arrange for complaints of alleged breaches of the code of conduct for members to be investigated. Walsall council adopted the mandatory code of conduct effective from May 2003.

Complaints can be made direct to the Standards Boards by members of the public, officers and elected members and therefore there is and was no requirement on individual local authorities to record and maintain details of the numbers of allegations referred for investigation since they would not have the complete picture. The information on complaints is partially from our own records and those kept by the standards board, although they only keep records from 2004 onwards.

Year	Total Number of complaints	Referrals by the Monitoring Officer
2003	Not known	1
2004	24	0
2005	1	0
2006	6	0
2007	15	1
2008	To date, 1	To date, 1

Members do not receive information until the cases are published.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Can you confirm that in each and every case the Monitoring Officer consulted the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council prior to referral?

The Mayor undertook to provide Councillor Smith with a reply in writing.

(2) Improvements to Norfolk Place depot

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how much money has been spent on improvements/alterations to/refurbishing of, the Council’s depots in Norfolk Place, Walsall, year by year in the last 5 years, including the projected spend for the financial year 2007/8?”

Councillor Andrew replied that investment to improve conditions at the Council’s Norfolk Place Depot over the last 5 years was as follows, 2003/04 £37,647, 2004/05 £68,561, 2005/06 £154,385, 2006/07 £158,530 with an estimated spend of £200,361 in 2007/08. This included costs for electrical improvements in 2005/06, the refurbishment of MOT bays in 2006/07 and £120,000 allocated for Health and Safety improvements in 2007/08

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question;

Could the portfolio holder confirm or deny that the Council has plans to sell off the Norfolk Place site in the next 2 or 3 years.

Councillor Andrew undertook to speak to Councillor Smith direct on this matter in view of possible commercial sensitivity.

(3) Improvements to Civic Centre and Town Hall

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how much money has been spent on improvements/alterations to/re-modelling of/refurbishment of, rooms and working areas within the Town Hall and Civic Centre year by year over the last 5 years, including the projected spend for 2007/2008?”

Councillor Andrew confirmed that the following investment on the Town Hall and Civic Centre during the period in question was:

2003/2004	£834,483
2004/2005	£557,601
2005/2006	£182,122
2006/2007	£210,569
2007/2008	£385,583

This included Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Do you consider this money well spent when front line services have suffered and when important services such as aids and adaptations to older and disabled people of the borough was still in crisis and people were waiting longer as more was being spent on the Town Hall and Civic Centre, probably for the benefit of inspectors?

Councillor Andrew stated that considering Councillor Smith recently spoke at a conference in London to launch a new workers party, I hope he is not suggesting that this investment in the environment in which Walsall Council employees work should not be improved. In his view, it was a good investment as the working environment impacted on looking after staff and tackling sickness absence; the investment was to improve the working environment.

(4) Brown bin scheme

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Walker:

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder tell me, this Council and the public what percentage of households, ward by ward, in ascending order, are presently not included in the Council’s brown bin recycling scheme?”

Councillor Walker stated that unfortunately, as this is an operational issue the information is based on rounds and areas and not wards and was therefore unable to supply the answer to the question. Information giving lists of round names and the number of household who have brown bins can be supplied to Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Does the portfolio holder not think that it is worrying that no one Councillor in the Council could get an answer regarding their particular ward regarding homes with or without brown bins?

Councillor Walker informed the Council that the area responsible for delivering the brown bin service and ensuring that they are collected would be able to complete that exercise. Councillor Smith could be given the information needed to enable him to obtain the percentages rather than taking staff from their work.

(5) Brown bin scheme – update for Blakenall Ward

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Walker:

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder give me, this Council and the public an update as to when all those Council tax paying households in the Blakenall ward with a garden and presently without a brown bin such as those households in Alderley Crescent, Ashfield Close, Awlmaker Grove, Bloxwich Road, Brewer Street, Cannon Street, Cannon Street North, Cartbridge Crescent, Cartbridge Walk, Chaucer Road, Church View Close, Coalpool Place, Dalby Road, Dartmouth Close, Dartmouth Place, Deans Place, Derby Street, Dryden Road, Epping Close, Essex Street, Forest Lane, Forest Place, Goldsmith Road, Goscote Close, Goscote Place, Halford Crescent, Henley Close, Hereford Street, Holden Crescent, Holden Place, Hunter Crescent, Jubilee Close, Keats Road, Kent Close, Kent Street, Leckie Road, Marlow Street, Masefield Road, Mill Place, Mill Street, New Forest Road, North Street, Oswin Place, Oswin Road, Pinfold, Portland Street, Proffitt Close, Proffitt Street, Raymond Close, Roberts Road, Rose Bank Drive, Rutland Street, St. Peters Terrace, St. Thomas Close, Stag Crescent, Wareham Close, Webster Road, Whateley Place and Whateley Road will be treated equally and fairly and issued with a brown garden recycling bin?”

Councillor Walker stated that by 26 February 2008, 941 households from the list provided by Councillor Smith would be allocated brown bins, however, some streets in the list did not fulfil the criteria.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Would the portfolio holder agree to look into obvious anomalies that seemed illogical in terms of the recent issue of brown bins to which Councillor Walker has referred. With regard to the Poets Estate, all roads except Goldsmith Road have brown bins, this seemed illogical.

Councillor Walker undertook to look into this matter if Councillor Smith could forward the details to her.

(6) Brown bin scheme – NRF funding

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Walker:

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public, following revelations at the 5 November 2007 Council meeting that at least £84,000 and possibly £134,000 of NRF money was used to finance brown bins in those “11 neighbourhoods identified as being deprived or at risk”, how it is that one of the most, if not the most, deprived wards in the Borough, namely the Blakenall ward, still has amongst the lowest percentage of households included in the brown bin scheme, whereas the least economically deprived wards have amongst the highest percentage of households included in the brown bin scheme?”

Councillor Walker informed the Council that, in the two years that she had been responsible for the portfolio that included the allocation of brown bins, an additional 3,000 bins have just been distributed. Funds had been allocated to provide 4,000 bins to properties in deprived areas.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Would Councillor Walker agree that some of the environment portfolio holder would be restricted by cut backs to the planned extension of brown bins within the budget proposals. This could put her in a position that would restrict her manoeuvrability and increase the ill feeling that so many householders in the borough have whilst others did not, although they all had gardens and paid Council Tax?

Councillor Walker indicated that she did not.

(7) Employee sickness

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Griffiths:

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public as to the circumstances, if any, that would justify Walsall Council sanctioning house surveillance on its employees off work through sickness?”

Councillor Griffiths replied that under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, 2000 (RIPA), a local authority can undertake directed surveillance of its employees if information concerning potential wrongdoing by an employee is brought to the attention of senior officers.

For the purposes of the Act, directed surveillance will be covert, but not intrusive, and must satisfy at least one of 7 set criteria. In the case of an employee potentially working privately while sick, the relevant criteria would be “for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime or preventing disorder”. Before commencing any surveillance, the activity must be formally approved by an officer authorised for this purpose under the Council’s Constitution. In practice this is presently the Chief Internal Auditor and the Head of Human Resources. The Executive Director for Corporate Services could also approve, when an individual is in post.

Essentially, the authorising officer must be satisfied that the proposed surveillance is legitimate, necessary and proportionate.

The Council operates any direct surveillance activity fully in accordance with its RIPA Corporate Policy and Procedure on Directed Surveillance and approved Employee Surveillance Protocol (agreed following Trade Union consultation).

Councillor Griffiths said that there have been a number of instances where employees, absent from work on sick leave, have been reported as potentially being seen, or suspected to be, working privately or undertaking physical activities not commensurate with the reason for their absence. This in the main has been considered to be potentially fraudulent employee activity. In the last 2 years there have been 10 instances of approved employee surveillance, 5 relating to sickness absence. Subsequent disciplinary action has resulted in 4 of the 5 employees leaving the Council's employment.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Could Councillor Griffiths assure us that no surveillance of any employee off sick has taken place without full and proper legal authorisation in the last two years?

In giving his assurance that this was correct, Councillor Griffiths stated that absenteeism in this Council cost the Council tax payers many millions of pounds. Council tax payers in your ward should be asked to consider whether surveillance was necessary or not.

(8) Welfare Rights Service

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Griffiths:

“Can the portfolio holder tell me, the Council and the public whether the 7.5 post strong Income Maximisation Team (in the Welfare Rights Team) which incidentally has been short-listed for an award in the “Annual Citizen Impact Award” category of the Council's Celebration of Achievements Awards Ceremony on April 4 2008 presumably for their achievement in bringing millions of pounds of extra and permanent income to mainly older and disabled residents of the Borough, will still be in post by the time the Awards take place or is their sterling work to be rewarded by the deletion of their posts by 31st March 2008?

Councillor Griffiths said that Welfare Rights received £354k Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) in 2006 for a 2 year project with an end date of 31 March 2008. The purpose of this funding was to carry out a health survey, and promote targeted health promotional activities, such as warm front initiative.

Over 30,000 households, 50,000 residents have been visited and interviewed providing valuable information on residents health, and benefit take-up.

8 staff were recruited to work on the NRF 2 year project. Each was issued with a contract with an end date of 31 March 2008 which clearly stated that funding would cease 31 March 2008.

The recruitment of these temporary employees had no impact on the welfare rights permanent staffing structure which remained unchanged.

Income maximisation is a key priority for this council, and that is why we employ on a permanent and ongoing basis 24 staff to carry out this function ..

The allocation of the funding will be decided shortly, based on WBSP recommendations and consultation with our key partners and I am hopeful that a successful bid will be achieved. In addition efforts are also being made to secure funding from other sources.

It is hoped that at least £51k will be secured which will enable us to retain the staff for a further 3 months by which time we should know if we have been successful with our WNF bid which will enable us to retain them longer.

He indicated that his concern at down sizing the Welfare Rights Service had never been an issue, the permanent staff were looking forward to taking the service to greater heights.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

Would Councillor Griffiths accept and look into the accusation that the NRF grant included main streaming of 7.5 staff as its exit strategy after NRF finished?. He therefore asked Councillor Griffiths to look into the possibility that he may have been misinformed

Councillor Griffiths undertook to look into this matter.

(9) Consultation on children's education

Councillor Chambers asked the following question of Councillor Zahid Ali:

“Does the Cabinet believe that consultation with parents about potential major changes to their children's education should be a priority - and in particular before formal public decisions are made to pursue a change of status away from Local Authority control?”

In response Councillor Ali reported that any major changes to children's education goes through extensive consultation. Should and if it meant that there could be a change to education consultation would take place and in particular where there was a change away from a Walsall maintained school to another status of school, there would be extensive consultation as well as ensuring compliance with statutory consultations that took place around the community of the school. Consultation would take place with governors, the wider community, parents and carers.

Councillor Chambers asked the following supplementary question:

Would Councillor Ali explain why Cabinet formally pursued a report to approach the Secretary of State with an expression of interest with named sponsors that promote an ethos that could be contrary to a least 25% of pupils?

Councillor Ali confirmed that Cabinet had not pursued this course of action. The report to Cabinet indicated an expression of interest and the Department for Children, Schools and Families had requested the Council, in terms of the overall improvement of schools by the Academy Unit, to allow a feasibility study fully funded by the DCSF that would be submitted to Council for consideration. There was no endorsement by Cabinet in respect of the tests to be addressed prior to deciding on any changes, the tests being:

- Would it raise educational standards
- Would it lead to enjoyment and attainment for pupils and create a better learning environment
- Would it create better life chances for children
- Would it create better chances for our children to realise their full potential

(10) School curriculum

Councillor Cassidy asked the following question of Councillor Zahid Ali:

“Does the Cabinet support the concept of teaching (and promoting) the doctrine of “creationism” with equal status within the school curriculum?”

As the time allowed for dealing with questions had run out, the question would be dealt with by a written reply.

98. Recommendations of Cabinet

(1) Corporate Plan 2008/2009

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor O’Hare, seconded by Councillor Andrew and:

Resolved

That the Corporate Plan 2008/2009 be adopted.

(2) Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Griffiths, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That the 2008/9 treasury management and investment strategy document set out in Appendix A to the report and the adoption of the prudential indicators set out in Appendix B to the report be approved.

(3) **Capital Programme 2008/2009 to 2012/2013**

Councillor Oliver left the meeting during consideration of this item.

A report was submitted.

Resolved

That the draft capital programme set out in the following tables be approved bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by unsupported borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place:

MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/9	
SCHEME	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Schools access initiative	586,620
Education basic need	1,443,204
Modernisation - all schools	3,517,114
Education ICT	313,209
Local Transport Plan	2,127,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	610,000
Risk Management	100,000
Uninsured property damage	200,000
Contingency	346,915
Shop Maintenance	117,379
Additional data storage	180,000
Corporate PC refresh programme	450,000
Corporate Printer refresh programme	36,000
Corporate Server refresh programme	140,000
Information management	126,000
Network solution	270,000
Remote data centre	190,000
Remote telephone systems	45,000
Systems upgrade	90,000
Thin client	45,000
Replacement of SOSCIS - PARIS project	215,000
Youth service building refurbishment	100,000
Work to secure safe water supplies	400,000
Asbestos removal	250,000
Memorial safety	100,000
Energy and water conservation measures in council buildings	250,000
Improving physical access to services (DDA)	200,000
Improving security In local neighbourhoods	200,000
Highways maintenance annual revenue replacement	595,000
Regenerating Walsall	250,000

Town, district and local centres	850,000
Strategic corridors and gateways	350,000
Environmental regeneration capital programme	200,000
Clear major adaptations	3,687,000
Targeted capital bids	750,000
Library modernisation plan	375,000
Highways maintenance	1,000,000
Palfrey Park HLF	75,000
Private sector house condition survey	50,000
Upper Rushall Street car park extension	350,000
Major repairs to non-education premises	1,000,000
Replacement of Local History Centre air conditioning system	60,000
Streetly Crematorium – mercury abatement equipment/new cremators	75,000
Decriminalisation of parking enforcement	75,000
Waste collection service	1,300,000
Internal alterations to Darlaston health centre	66,000
Software to automate benefit application forms	100,000
Statutory testing of mechanical and electrical supplies	300,000
Disabled facilities at pedestrian crossings	180,000
Upgrading of fire alarm system and emergency lighting at central library	15,080
Joseph Leckie sons of rest structural works	180,000
Walsall TCTP ring road land acquisition	150,000
Public lighting PFI	200,000
Maintenance of cemetery chapels	125,000
Darlaston town hall refurbishment	100,000
Essential maintenance of non-education premises – backlog of repairs	300,000
Walsall arboretum restoration programme	153,085
Redhouse community centre	50,000
Redundant buildings – ongoing maintenance and demolition costs	50,000
Darlaston Strategic Development Area	150,000
Clear major adaptations – additional funding	700,000
Private sector renovation grants	1,500,000
TOTAL	28,009,606

MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/9	
RESERVE BIDS – NOT CURRENTLY FUNDED	ESTIMATED VALUE
	£
Benchmarking software	15,000
Implementation of 2 cashier machines	75,000
Workflow software to automate post summons recovery action	50,000
Redundant buildings – ongoing maintenance and demolition costs	175,000

Energy and water conservation measures in council buildings	250,000
Office accommodation review	50,000
Bridge strengthening	80,000
TOTAL	695,000

NON MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME – SCHEMES FUNDED FROM GRANT 2008/9	
SCHEME	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Childrens centres maintenance	57,907
Devolved formula capital	4,871,184
Early years	1,015,217
Extended schools	507,472
Harnessing technology grant	934,468
Streetly school new changing room block	362,822
Sure start, early years and child care grants	208,574
Bloxwich library project	867,765
Specific road safety grant	20,000
Town Centre Transport Package	1,632,000
Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Townscape Heritage Initiative – AWM	150,000
Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Townscape Heritage Initiative – HLF	174,707
Bus showcase	800,000
Local transport plan	2,739,000
New deal for communities	1,300,000
Red routes	1,670,000
Willenhall Townscape Heritage Initiative - Heritage Lottery Fund	50,000
Willenhall Townscape Heritage Initiative - VIEW contribution	25,000
PARIS implementation - single capital pot	129,000
Mental health	138,000
Targeted capital fund	3,000,000
Palfrey park restoration programme	296,500
Disabled Facilities Grants	915,000
Private sector renovation grants	1,500,000
Walsall arboretum restoration programme	6,331,931
TOTAL	29,696,547

LEASING PROGRAMME 2008/9	
DIRECTORATE	TOTAL BUDGET £'000'S
Neighbourhood Services	4,272
Social Care and Inclusion	331
Childrens Services	114
TOTAL	4,717

(4) **Corporate Revenue Budget Plan 2008/2009 to 2012/13**

Councillor Oliver left the meeting during consideration of the amendment on the removal of £40,000 of the £75,000 saving for the reduction of discretionary relief on National Non Domestic Rates.

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Griffiths and seconded by the Mayor:

(a) That the net final levies for outside bodies be noted:

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority	13,319,197
Environment agency	79,848

(b) That approval be given to an opening working balance for 2008/9 set at a prudent level of £5.175m in line with the council's medium term financial strategy.

(c) That the following opening cash limited budgets for 2008/9 be approved:

BUDGET	2008/9 BUDGET (£)
DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:	
Corporate services	15,880,830
Social care and inclusion	74,239,767
Children and young people	53,736,518
Neighbourhood services	66,589,845
Regeneration	5,432,799
CORPORATE PROVISIONS/CONTINGENCIES ETC:	
Capital financing	14,822,776
Non-service specific central items	4,074,157
Contribution to general reserves	500,000
Less: Capital Charges	-21,254,456
LEVIES:	
Passenger Transport Levy	13,319,197
Environment Agency Levy	79,848
WALSALL MBC NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	227,421,281

(d) That the following statutory determinations be noted (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992):

- I. **£666,280,468** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
- II. **£438,859,187** being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act.
- III. **£227,421,281** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (II), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32 (4) as its budget requirement for the year.

- IV. **£128,923,198** being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (**£113,104,177**); Revenue Support Grant (**£15,745,021**); and the Collection Fund Surplus (**£74,000**).
- V. **£98,498,083** being the amount at (III) above, less the amount at (IV) above, all divided by the Council Tax Base of **76,771**, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(e) Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (V) above by the proportions set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act and calculated in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act of the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
£855.34	£997.90	£1,140.45	£1,283.01
E	F	G	H
£1,568.13	£1,853.24	£2,138.35	£2,566.02

- (f) That the precept from the Fire & Civil Defence Authority and the precept for the Police Authority, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below be noted.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
Police	A	B	C	D
	£63.11	£73.63	£84.15	£94.67
	E	F	G	H
	£115.71	£136.74	£157.78	£189.34
Fire & Civil Defence	A	B	C	D
	£30.49	£35.58	£40.66	£45.74
	E	F	G	H
	£55.90	£66.07	£76.23	£91.48

- (g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) and (f) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2008/9 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

A	B	C	D
£948.94	£1,107.11	£1,265.26	£1,423.42
E	F	G	H
£1,739.74	£2,056.05	£2,372.36	£2,846.84

- (h) That notice be given of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the “Walsall Observer”; and the “Walsall Advertiser” being newspapers circulating in the Authority’s area.
- (i) That the appropriate officers be instructed to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.

Amendment was moved by Councillor Coughlan and seconded by Councillor I. Shires:

That Council be recommended to amend the budget to provide funding in the sum of £15,000 to support the Willenhall Lock Museum and the Jerome K. Jerome Museum for the heritage of the borough and for its young people, to be provided from a reduction in the Communications and Media budget.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** – 23 members voting in favour and 30 members voting against.

Amendment moved by Councillor J. Phillips and seconded by Councillor Smith:

That Council be requested to earmark £235k of reserves as at 1 April 2008 to secure the 7.5 FTE posts in the Welfare Rights Service currently funded via NRF/other external funds. Should alternative funding be allocated through ABG/WNF or other funding, then the earmarked reserve would be returned to general reserves. Council is further requested to recommend the mainstreaming of this project in the 2009/10 budget setting process and beyond.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** – 23 members voting in favour and 30 members voting against.

Amendment moved by Councillor Robertson and seconded by Councillor Oliver:

That Council be requested to earmark £165k of reserves as at 1 April 2008 to allow the continuation of the domestic violence forum project. Should alternative funding be allocated through ABG/WNF or other funding, then the earmarked reserve would be returned to general reserves. Council is further requested to recommend the mainstreaming of this project in the 2009/10 budget setting process and beyond.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost**

Amendment moved by Councillor Coughlan and seconded by Councillor J. Phillips:

That Council be recommended to remove £40k of the saving of £75k for the reduction of discretionary relief on NNDR, funding in 2008/9 to be from a one-off earmarking of reserves. This £40k relates to the removal of discretionary top up relief which is recommended not to go ahead. Council is further requested to recommended the mainstreaming of this in the 2009/10 budget setting process and beyond.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost**.

It was **moved** by Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Andrew and:

Resolved

That Council procedure rule 9(a) be suspended for the remainder of the meeting in order to enable the business to be completed.

Amendment moved by Councillor Robertson and seconded by Councillor Smith:

That Council is requested to earmark funding of £42k to allow the continuation of the Dartmouth Neighbourhood Forum project. Should alternative funding be allocated through ABG/WNF or other funding, then the earmarked reserve would be returned to general reserves. Council are further requested to recommend the mainstreaming of this project in the 2009/10 budget setting process and beyond.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost**.

Amendment moved by Councillor Madeley and duly seconded:

That Council is requested to amend the 2008/09 budget and remove the saving of £10k for the reprovision of Darlaston Multi-Purpose Centre, the funding to be provided from a £10k reduction in the communications and media budget.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost**.

The motion was put the vote and declared carried – the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:

**For the motion -
30 members**

**Against the motion -
1 member**

Cllr: O'Hare
Ahmed
Andrew
Ansell
Arif
Ault
Beeley
Beilby
Bird
Clarke
Douglas-Maul
Griffiths
Harris
Harrison
E. Hughes
Longhi
McCracken
Micklewright
Paul
D. Pitt
M.G. Pitt
Rochelle
Sanders
Sears
Towe
Turner
Tweddle
Walker
Yasin
Zahid

Cllr: Smith

and it was:

Resolved

(a) That the net final levies for outside bodies be noted:

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority	13,319,197
Environment agency	79,848

(b) That approval be given to an opening working balance for 2008/9 set at a prudent level of £5.175m in line with the council's medium term financial strategy.

- (c) That the following opening cash limited budgets for 2008/9 be approved:

BUDGET	2008/9 BUDGET (£)
DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:	
Corporate services	15,880,830
Social care and inclusion	74,239,767
Children and young people	53,736,518
Neighbourhood services	66,589,845
Regeneration	5,432,799
CORPORATE PROVISIONS/CONTINGENCIES ETC:	
Capital financing	14,822,776
Non-service specific central items	4,074,157
Contribution to general reserves	500,000
Less: Capital Charges	-21,254,456
LEVIES:	
Passenger Transport Levy	13,319,197
Environment Agency Levy	79,848
WALSALL MBC NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	227,421,281

- (d) That the following statutory determinations be noted (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992):

- VI. **£666,280,468** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
- VII. **£438,859,187** being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act.
- VIII. **£227,421,281** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (II), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32 (4) as its budget requirement for the year.
- IX. **£128,923,198** being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (**£113,104,177**); Revenue Support Grant (**£15,745,021**); and the Collection Fund Surplus (**£74,000**).
- X. **£98,498,083** being the amount at (III) above, less the amount at (IV) above, all divided by the Council Tax Base of **76,771**, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

- (e) Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (V) above by the proportions set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act and calculated in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act of the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
£855.34	£997.90	£1,140.45	£1,283.01
E	F	G	H
£1,568.13	£1,853.24	£2,138.35	£2,566.02

- (f) That the precept from the Fire & Civil Defence Authority and the precept for the Police Authority, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below be noted.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
Police	A	B	C	D
	£63.11	£73.63	£84.15	£94.67
	E	F	G	H
	£115.71	£136.74	£157.78	£189.34
Fire & Civil Defence	A	B	C	D
	£30.49	£35.58	£40.66	£45.74
	E	F	G	H
	£55.90	£66.07	£76.23	£91.48

- (g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) and (f) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2008/9 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

A	B	C	D
£948.94	£1,107.11	£1,265.26	£1,423.42
E	F	G	H
£1,739.74	£2,056.05	£2,372.36	£2,846.84

- (h) That notice be given of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the "Walsall Observer"; and the "Walsall Advertiser" being newspapers circulating in the Authority's area.
- (i) That the appropriate officers be instructed to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.

99. **Notice of motion – charge for replacement wheelie bins**

A report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor J. Phillips

This Council calls for the portfolio holder for Environment to reconsider the Council's present policy of charging householders a flat rate charge for the replacement of wheelie bins, irrespective of householders' ability to pay or the circumstances surrounding the need for a replacement bin and for such a reconsideration to be reported to the next meeting of Council.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **lost**.

The meeting terminated at 9.37 p.m.