

Our Council Plan 2022-25

Together We Are Proud: *Proud of our Past, Our Present and for our Future*

Page 1:

Foreword from Leader of the Council

This plan sets out our Council's ambitions for the next three years where we have a happier, healthier population, better opportunities for all people; a future where we have safe, clean and vibrant town centres and our children have the best possible start in life.

There is no doubt that we have been through an extremely challenging period. I am incredibly proud of how our council staff, services and partners have pulled together with the people of Walsall to help each other deal with the practical, economic and social impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

I have seen the very best of the Borough, as our communities have come together to protect the vulnerable and to put us into a position where we can look forward with optimism and with confidence.

Despite the challenges that we have faced together we have continued to deliver our services and a broad range of programmes.

We have secured £42.6 million to invest in Bloxwich and Walsall Town centres, investment which will transform our towns, making them more attractive and safe places for us to visit and to spend time in.

We have delivered £80.6 million of grants and £36 million of Business Rates Relief to local businesses; and together we have supported over 1,000 local people into work through apprenticeships and training.

Together with our neighbours we have put forward the Black Country Plan which sets out our long-term development needs for housing and for employment.

Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund we have developed a new approach to unlocking the potential of our Borough's unique heritage. Walsall's Heritage Strategy will help us to further reduce inequalities and inspire creativity.

Our Children's Services are rated as good, with Ofsted describing the service as having "exceptional practice". I could not be prouder.

Walsall is my home. It is a great place to live, work and visit and this plan will show you how we intend to make it better still. We want to make Walsall a borough fit for the future - providing excellent services, support and opportunities for our communities and we remain committed to ensuring that our growth will improve the lives of our residents, staff and businesses.

I believe the priorities and outcomes set out in the following pages show how, together, we can continue to build a Borough fit for the future.

Mike Bird
Council Leader

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Introduction from Chief Executive

Welcome to our Council Plan for 2022-2025. This plan sets out ambitions for the Council and for the Borough. It sets out the outcomes that we will achieve and explains how we will measure our progress towards those outcomes.

The plan sets out our commitment to be a financially sustainable Council where our resources are prioritised. It is in line with our four-year Budget Plan.

The pandemic continues to challenge all of us, but one of the most positive and one significant changes that we have seen has been the way that people interact with the Council and with each other. We have always been proud of working together with our communities and partners. Over the last two years we have seen those relationships strengthen so that many positive things can be achieved.

Trust is really important, particularly in challenging times and to see that our residents have trusted the Council's response to the pandemic has been very encouraging to see and has demonstrated our clear commitment to our all our communities¹.

Having such a positive response to the Council has only been possible because we have changed the way we work and how many of our Council services are delivered. We have shown that we are a flexible and agile organisation so that we are able to meet the needs of our communities. We have used technology to help our residents contact us, find information and increase their independence. These changes have seen an increase in satisfaction rates amongst our customers

We have an ambition for Walsall Council to be an employer of choice. Over the last year, we have set out our Workforce Strategy and Organisational Development Plan [insert link] to ensure we have the right workforce and that all employees are supported with access to training and development.

We have developed into a Council that wants to take a more active role in engaging with our residents, businesses and partners – and to share our pride in the Borough. We recognize that there is still much to do. Our Council Plan has therefore been developed by listening to the voices and priorities of our communities, Councillors and employees. We have also clearly described what we intend to do and what will be achieved by the successful delivery of these priorities as we work to shape the conditions and opportunities for happy, healthy, thriving, connected communities.

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive Walsall Council

¹ Here in Walsall, we took part in a national study called Beyond Us and Them which shows how people's trust in local Councils, including our Council, has improved during the pandemic. The research focused on the impact of the pandemic on social cohesion in Britain and included Walsall [insert link]

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ABOUT WALSALL

- Page will data on the demographics, population, housing, employment, etc numbers

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OUR PLAN

Together We Are Proud: *Proud of our Past, Our Present and for our Future*

Our Aim: *Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised. Together we are committed to developing a healthier, cleaner and safer Walsall and creating an environment that provides opportunities for all residents, communities and businesses to fulfil their potential and thrive.*

Our Proud Journey – moving to the next phase

The Global Covid-19 pandemic has presented the Borough and Council with many challenges. To meet those challenges we have changed the way we work.

We have built on our relationships with our local and regional partners, working together to achieve positive outcomes for our residents.

As we have seen communities respond to the pandemic, the Council has also responded. We have seen a tangible shift in our culture towards adopting new ways of thinking and agile ways of working.

Covid-19 has accelerated our the implementation of our new ways of working and the delivery of our Proud Promises (figure XX):to improve outcomes and customer experience; improve employee satisfaction and engagement; and improve service efficiency and performance.

Over the last year we have seen improvements to our Customer Satisfaction scores and improved performance in many of our services (as measured through our markers of success).

The results of a recent Employee Survey (October-November 2021) showed improvements in overall employee engagement, with an increase in the number of employees speaking positively about the Council as an employer (figure/table XX).

Progress evident on the key drivers of employee engagement identified Comparing 2017 and 2021:	
	% increase
I feel valued and recognised for the work I do	+20
Walsall Council recognises high quality performance / work	+3
My own personal morale at work is good	+14
I feel that Walsall Council is going in the right direction	+9
Walsall Council values new ideas and innovations from staff	+10

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Our Key areas of focus**

There are a number of key factors that make a thriving Borough:

- investing in and supporting our people through up-skilling, training and providing new employment opportunities;
- having clean and green environments which are well connected;
- having vibrant places with affordable working and living spaces;
- a creative and open culture and
- local government decision making that is transparent and responds to residents' needs.

This is why our five key areas of focus are:

1. **Economic** - Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses
2. **People** - Encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing
3. **Internal focus** - Council services are customer focused effective, efficient and equitable
4. **Children** - Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well
5. **Communities** - Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.

The following pages set out the significance of each area of focus, the outcomes which we aim to achieve and how we will monitor our progress.

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ECONOMIC – Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.

Our focus is to build a balanced, vibrant and resilient economy going beyond improving Walsall's economic infrastructure. We will develop initiatives which strengthen cohesion and community resilience and give all local people opportunities through inclusive sustainable growth.

Outcomes	Markers of Success
1. Supporting a dynamic, resilient and diverse economy where businesses invest and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place	1. Better connectivity, improved reliability and well maintained transport networks creating an environment where businesses are supported to thrive and grow
	2. Regenerating the borough to support places where people are proud to live and work, delivering affordable homes and attracting inward investment
2. Education, training and skills enable people to contribute to their community and our economy	3. Provide access to education, apprenticeships and training to improve productivity and skills
	4. Reducing unemployment through collaborative working with employers and partners

Why did we choose these Outcomes?

A brighter future for Walsall is a future where there are opportunities for all of our residents and where businesses thrive. The regeneration of the Borough will help us to attract new investment and to create more local jobs for local people. Through education, training and apprenticeships we will develop a skilled workforce to meet the needs of a growing and diverse economy.

When we achieve our outcomes we will improve:

By promoting a modern, dynamic and outward-looking image of Walsall we will attract greater inward investment, support business to give back to local residents, enhance partnerships with developers to deliver affordable housing that meets our changing needs. By reducing the need to travel outside the Borough to live or to work and sourcing goods and services more locally we will reduce our carbon footprint.

Improvements in our town and district centres will attract more visitors providing positive experiences within a safe, clean and attractive environment. Targeting our education and training programmes will help us to reduce inequality and enable our residents to reach their full potential.

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PEOPLE – Encourage our residents to lead active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.

Our focus is to enable residents to be active, healthy and independent, for as long as they can be. We will achieve this by building on community strengths to meet the needs of our residents and by supporting their wellbeing. We want all of our residents to be safe from avoidable harm and to realise their aspirations, whatever their circumstances.

Outcomes	Markers of success
3. People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home	5. People are supported to build on their strengths and those in their communities to maintain and/or maximise their independence.
	6. People feel safe in their home and community.
4. People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life	7. People know how to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing and get timely support for this, where required.
	8. People can access timely social care support and reablement to prevent a hospital admission or facilitate a timely discharge.

Why did we choose these Outcomes?

Putting people at the heart of what we do, working with them to be active, healthy and independent, for as long as they can be, not only supports a resilient economy, it strengthens cohesion and sense of community.

When we achieve our outcomes we will improve:

An active and independent population is a healthier population, living in an environment where good health and wellbeing are cherished. An active and independent population will reduce health inequalities in our Borough, will help to support a growing economy and enable all residents, communities and businesses to fulfil their potential and thrive.

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INTERNAL – Council services are customer focused effective, efficient and equitable

Our focus is to build on the past three years changes to the way we work with further investment and modernisation in our technology, improving our customer and staff satisfaction and delivering financial benefits. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with our partners, communities and residents by providing more opportunities to ensure that the Council has engagement with our customers, residents and businesses.

Outcomes	Markers of Success
5. We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use	9. Services will be accessible and easy to use with improved customer satisfaction
	10. Customers and partners report that they would recommend working with us in the future
6. The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring	11. Services will provide value for money measured through delivery of outcomes within agreed resources
	12. Services are trusted and customer focused measured through staff satisfaction/ engagement scores.

Why did we choose these Outcomes?

We are here to serve the residents and businesses of the Borough. Customers are at the forefront of our service delivery. We will continue to increase performance, efficiency and champion the design of services to meet the needs of our customers. Being that trusted and fair organisation provides confidence in our residents and businesses so we can deliver better outcomes for Walsall.

When we achieve our outcomes we will improve:

Having the right skills, and capabilities in place through training and development support with the right technology and policies will help us have a motivated, high performing and engaged workforce who will actively contribute to making Walsall a great place to work and live. We will be an employer of choice while improving the wellbeing for all.

Working with our partners, we will provide equitable access, so no one is excluded and through our rigorous democratic processes, all Council services are accountable for the delivery of quality customer-focused services.

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CHILDREN – Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well

Our 'Walsall Right 4 Children' programme, sets out our ambitions to make sure that the right children and young people receive the right help at the right time. Our recent Ofsted inspection recognised that we have delivered tangible and sustainable improvements. We will continue on this improvement journey in developing our children's alliance with a greater focus on children's mental wellbeing and those with special educational needs.

Outcomes	Markers of Success
7. Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential	13. Children and young people have access to high quality education and training opportunities and schools are more inclusive
	14. Children and young people with additional needs or in specific circumstances are identified and supported to have their health and education needs met.
8. Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere	15. Services and support is responsive to needs of different communities, partners are proactive in responding to these needs and children and families have easier and timelier access to services.
	16. Children and families are better connected with community resources to enable them to build resilience, are involved in developing their plans and can provide regular feedback.

Why did we choose these Outcomes?

Physical, intellectual and emotional development are laid in early childhood. What happens during early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects and prospects for our children and young people. By focusing on our children and young people's early development pays dividends later on in life in educational attainment, life prospects and contributions to the economy and society.

When we achieve our outcomes we will improve:

Children's educational attainment will improve across the Borough at every key stage, leading to their future life aspirations being met or exceeded. We will have more children with additional needs or in specific circumstances having more fulfilled lives, and their families better supported. Children will have a voice, which will give influence to our services and support offered. Together with our partners our services and support will respond appropriately to our wonderfully diverse communities creating a safer and better place in which to live, learn, and grow up.

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COMMUNITIES – Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.

Our focus remains on creating a Borough that is welcoming, safe and supportive for all of our residents. Our communities are at the heart of what we do and who we serve. Working with, responding to feedback and adjusting our approach to their needs will help create more resilient and supportive communities.

Outcomes	Markers of Success
9. Our communities will be more resilient and supportive of each other	17. There will be a vibrant and diverse community and voluntary sector providing help and support where people need it with a range of volunteering opportunities
	18. Trust will be built within and between communities across the Borough
10. The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough	19. The Borough's streets are clean, green and welcoming, with more waste recycled and less going to landfill
	20. People feel safe in their local area and anti-social behaviour and crime – particularly environmental crime is reduced

Why did we choose these Outcomes?

Having strong communities across our Borough gives a sense of belonging, enables social connection and support and can help create fulfilling lives. They can create opportunities for people to reach their potential, give back to others and reduce isolation and inequalities.

When we achieve our outcomes we will improve:

Relations within and across our communities will be strengthened, with our residents feeling that they are acknowledged, listened to, safe and included. We as a Council will be able to understand and adapt to the changing needs and aspirations of our communities sharing the pride in our Borough and creating the conditions and opportunities for happy, healthy, thriving, connected communities.

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How We Are Investing Our Resources

One key focus is to ensure that our Council services are effective, efficient and equitable. Our commitment to drive up efficiency, to change the way that we work and to build on relationships with our partners has delivered more than £50m worth of savings over the last 5 years. We have a robust medium-term financial plan and actions required to meet it, to ensure our Council is financially sustainable for the long-term.

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We are taking a more strategic budgeting approach that maps the Council's financial resources to the delivery of the Council's key areas of focus, outcomes and measures of success. These are set out in our annual Budget Plan. This approach will enable a greater understanding of how we are spending our money to achieve the outcomes and better deliver services to benefit our customers, residents and businesses across the Borough.

The table below shows the baseline 2021/22 budget allocated to achieving the Council's key priorities and outcomes and the movements in the 2022/23 budget for the year ahead capturing the significant pressures, changes in funding and required savings and efficiencies as detailed above.

Our Summary of Corporate Revenue Budget 2022/25 by Outcome:

Priorities	Outcomes	2022/25 £m
ECONOMIC	1. Supporting a dynamic, resilient and diverse economy where businesses invest and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place	
	2. Education, training and skills enable people to contribute to their community and our economy	
PEOPLE	3. People can access support in their community to keep safe, well and independent at home	
	4. People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life	
INTERNAL	5. All services will be innovative, high-performing and efficient, using technology, insight and new ways of working to bring equitable services to our customers	
	6. The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring	
CHILDREN	7. Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential	
	8. Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere	
COMMUNITIES	9. Our communities will be more resilient and supportive of each other	
	10. The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough	

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OUR APPROACH

Our Council values are key to the delivery of our priorities. They highlight the foundation of how the Council – its Councillors and employees, work with our residents, our partners and within our local communities. Our values (PLATE) influence our choices and our behaviours:

Professionalism,

Leadership,

Accountability,

Transparency and

Ethical working

These are reflected in:

- The commitment of our Councillors who not only represent their constituents, and focus on areas of service across the Borough to ensure that inequality is reduced and all residents and businesses have the opportunity to maximise potential.
- Our ambition to create opportunities for all residents, communities and businesses to fulfil their potential and thrive.
- Our commitment to deliver our Proud promises: Improve outcomes and customer experience; Improve employee satisfaction and engagement: and Improve service efficiency and performance.
- The consolidation of our partnership opportunities and building on the digital programme and our commitment to make local democracy more transparent
- Our commitment to continue to work in partnership with organisations, particularly recognising our place within the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the Integrated Care System (NHS),
- Our ambition to develop our Borough Plan - setting our story for Walsall and what collectively we want to achieve by 2040.
- Every employee's Annual Performance Conversation (APC) – tracking how staff are meeting these values, how their individual objectives link to Our Council Plan with support through a Personal Development Plan.
- The Council's commitment to creating an environment that provides opportunities for all employees. Staff are supported through Personal Development Plans and are given regular management support which is reinforced through the delivery of our Organisational Development Plan.

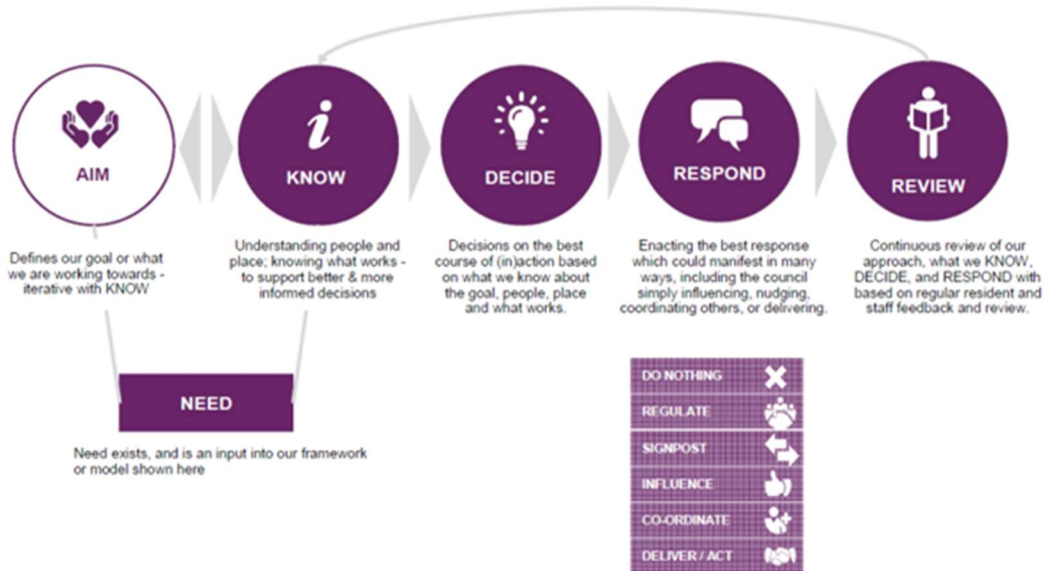
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Our 'Ways of Thinking'

The framework below (**figure XX**) sets out the approach we take to our decision making across the Council. It is centered on being clear about our aims and what we are working towards, understanding customer needs, setting out the best course of action, how we will

deliver and how we will review our progress. This provides a consistent and transparent approach to decision making across the Council and is embedded in our Cabinet decisions.

A 'ways of thinking' framework for the organisation that can be applied to all decision-making for the council



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Accountable delivery and measuring success

Comprehensive plans to deliver our ambitions will be developed with Cabinet Members. We have set out 20 measures of success aligned to 10 outcomes, within our 5 areas of focus (EPICC). These 20 measures will have a balanced scorecard underneath enabling the Council to assess its progress in an open and transparent way. These measures will be monitored internally through the Corporate Management Team and presented publicly to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. This will allow councillors, scrutiny committees and residents to monitor our progress and review the steps we are taking to continue to change our organisation to get the best outcomes for our residents.

Priority	Outcomes	Lead Portfolio Holder for Outcome	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
ECONOMIC	1. Supporting a dynamic, resilient and diverse economy where businesses invest and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place	Regeneration	Economy and Environment
	2. Education, training and skills enable people to contribute to their community and our economy	Education and Skills	Education
PEOPLE	3. People can access support in their community to keep safe and	Adult Social Care	Social Care and Health

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	well and remain independent at home		
	4. People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life	Health and Wellbeing	Social Care and Health
INTERNAL	5. We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use	Leader	Scrutiny Overview
	6. The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring	Internal Services	Scrutiny Overview
CHILDREN	7. Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential	Children's	Children's
	8. Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere	Resilient Communities	Scrutiny Overview
COMMUNITIES	9. Our communities will be more resilient and supportive of each other	Resilient Communities	Scrutiny Overview
	10. The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough	Clean and Green	Economy and Environment